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Bill Rea ? Not surprised O.J.'s getting out



It's something I wouldn't have even thought of doing some 20 years ago, but I confess I did it last Thursday.
I guess my curiosity got the better of me.
I actually wasted time in the middle of a work day listening to the OJ?Simpson parole hearing from Nevada. In fact, I logged onto the CNN?website and actually got the TV?coverage, but I only listened, continuing to work on a pile of about 200 emails that required my attention that day. I watched only certain portions, such as looking for his reaction when the final decision was announced. I hope my boss isn't too mad at me.
As I stated, I was curious how things would go for the most prominent performer in the judicial system since Perry Mason.
I was not surprise by the result. I had read and heard several opinions expressed by various lawyers and other people who may or may not have known what they were talking about. The concensus appeared to be that there was really no good reason for keeping the man in prison much longer.
Simpson was sent away in 2008 for up to 33 years for a whole bunch of charges, like kidnapping, armed robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, etc. There are some who, I suppose, wonder if he was also doing time for a double murder rap. I have to confess I'm in that group too.
I remember thinking at the time of Simpson's sentencing that he was hit harder than was appropriate, considering it was a first offence of such allegations and he evidently believed he had, at the time, some reason to justify his actions. Despite that, I have watched the sentencing (the broadcast is easy to find on the internet), and the judge asserted his legal history had nothing to do with the sanctions that were being imposed.
And there is considerable evidence that he has tried to make good while in prison. It's been cited that he's mentored others, been active in recreational activities and lobbied for better education programs for inmates.
From what I heard last week, he came across as articulate and well-spoken. And while there was some attempt to justify what he had done to get him sent to the joint, there were also words indicating he accepted responsibility for his actions, and that he regretted them. But of course, he's also an actor.
So while I wasn't surprised, I can't say I was either pleased or displeased with the news. I guess I'm sort of neutral on the whole thing.
I am mindful that Simpson's former wife Nicole and another man, Ron Goldman, were brutally murdered in June 1994. It didn't take too long for suspicion to fall on Simpson.
Like most other people who were conscious at the time, I was aware of the case, but I did not join in with the obsession that seemed to grip so many people. Everyone seemed to be talking about it. I was in a restaurant not too long after the murders, and since I was alone, I had brought a magazine (either Time or Newsweek ? I forget which) to read as I ate. I was looking at an article about OJ. The server noticed what I was reading, and asked me if I thought he had done it. I declined to comment ? it's rude to talk with your mouth full.
There was the memorable Friday night that featured the infamous slow-speed Bronco chase. I missed it because I was otherwise engaged. I was sitting in a theatre watching a movie with the lady I was going with at the time. As of Tuesday of this week, we have been married 19 years. Needless to say, I had a much more productive evening than yee who wasted your time watching that stupidity in L.A.

I read little of the subsequent trial. But as I was driving home at night, there would be lots of details offered on what had gone on in court that day on trusty take radio.

Most of the trial was televised, and I know there were plenty of people who watched in religiously. Since I was gainfully employed at the time, I didn't have time for daytime TV. But there was a day when I was at home during the trial (maybe during my vacation) and curiosity prompted me to tune in. Boredom overcame curiosity after about 10 minutes, and I probably plunked a classic movie into my VCR.

Although I was following the case on a casual basis, as the trial progressed, there was one thing of which I became convinced ? the issue as to whether Simpson actually killed these two people was becoming less important in this proceeding. Thus, I was not too surprised when the not-guilty verdict came down.

Yet we all know there are many who disagree with that verdict.

In 1996, the late Vincent Bugliosi, the man who prosecuted Charles Manson and subsequently co-wrote Helter Skelter, published another book entitled Outrage: The Five Reasons Why O.J. Simpson Got Away with Murder. He was later involved with a video in which he made his case. I've seen it on the internet and I recommend it to anyone who's interested (get comfortable, because it's almost four hours long). He pulled very few punches, slamming what he saw as a bad jury, incompetent prosecutors and a trial judge who left a great deal to be desired, among other things.

That puts me in a rather awkward position. I have always believed in our judicial system which states, among other things, that if a jury decides you're not guilty of something, it means you're innocent. There have been plenty of cases in which people have been found guilty of crimes they didn't commit, so it stands to reason there are lots of others who got off when they should have been punished.

There are some who believe Simpson got away with murder and fret. I accept the verdict of the jury, and wonder.