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Jesse Jackson Statement on O.J. Simpson Verdict

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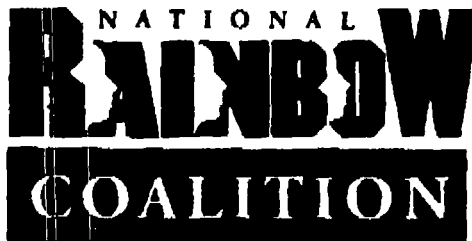


DATE Oct 4, 1995
TO Alejo Herman
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**NEWS
RELEASE**
For Immediate Release



THERESA CALDWELL
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October 4, 1995

JACKSON CALLS FOR "HEALING" FOLLOWING SIMPSON VERDICT

Washington, D.C. - Rev. Jesse Jackson will call for "healing the nation's heightened racial crisis" today, following the verdict in the O.J. Simpson trial. The president and founder of the National Rainbow Coalition will hold a news conference in his office.

SIMPSON VERDICT "CALL FOR HEALING" NEWS CONFERENCE

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4th

1:30 p.m.

**1700 K ST., N.W.
SUITE 800**

Rev. Jackson expects to be joined by Ron Walters, head of Howard University's Political Science Department, as well as local ministers.

For more information, contact Theresa Caldwell at (202) 728-1180.

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Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, President and Founder
Dennis Rivera, Chairman, Board of Directors

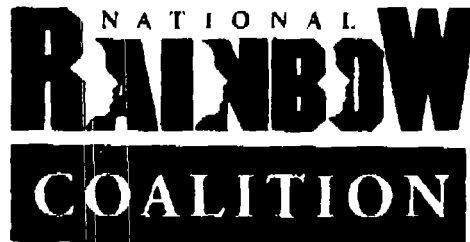
Francisco L. Borges, Treasurer
The Honorable Sallma Siler Marriott, Secretary

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**PRESS
STATEMENT**

For Immediate Release



THERESA CALDWELL
Press Secretary (X-32)
VOICE 202-728-1180
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"A TIME FOR HEALING"

Reverend Jesse L. Jackson
October 4, 1995

"The judicial process has spoken. This protracted drama of recycled pain is over. We should now leave the resolution of the O.J. Simpson case in the judicial process, and not take it out into our streets.

"We have always urged a calm and reasoned approach in times of great social tension. Whether it was Rodney King; O.J. Simpson; a string of continuing cases of police brutality against Blacks and Hispanics in Los Angeles and all across this country--don't forget former Chief Gates commenting on the "strong necks" of Blacks abused by choke holds; the Black homeless man recently shot to death in Chicago--with minor charges filed; or the police shooting of a boy, Philip Parnell, in Teaneck, New Jersey--we have always called for calm and restraint.

"This is a time for measured joy, at most, for the supporters of O.J. It is not a time for wild celebration. This is a legal victory, not a moral victory for social change. O.J. is free, but we have all been diminished during this tragedy.

"O.J. is free today, which is what the jury decided, in light of the requirement for proof beyond a reasonable doubt. But there are still two people dead, two motherless children, careers destroyed, and reputations tarnished. There is more than enough pain to go around. We should not act in haste these next few days, but instead look for avenues of reconciliation.

"This is a time for healing, a time to reflect on the sad fact that domestic violence is all too real. We must continue to struggle against such abuse, and we must not let our federal and state public officials cut off the funding for domestic violence assistance. The lives of many women, our sisters and daughters, may depend on such assistance someday.

"This is a time to distinguish between race and racism. A Black man was accused of killing a white woman and a Jewish man; but at no time was O.J. suspected of acting out of racism or sexism. And for most of this trial, a thoroughly integrated American audience was content to watch, month after month, to see what the result would be. It was the unveiling of Mark Fuhrman as a racist that changed the tone of this trial.

Reverend Jesse L. Jackson, President and Founder
Dennis Rivera, Chairman, Board of Directors

Francisco L. Borges, Treasurer
The Honorable Salima Siler Marriott, Secretary

O.J. Statement
Jesse L. Jackson
October 4, 1995

"There has been a lot of talk about Johnny Cochran playing the race card. Racism was a factor, but it was introduced by Fuhrman. If there was a race card to play in this trial, it was because Mark Fuhrman laid it on the table in the first place.

"There were many 'cards' in this trial--race, domestic violence, sex, celebrity, drugs--all these cards were played, because they all existed already. They were not made up by the lawyers, the prosecution or the defense. They were inherent in the tragedy. In the end, Johnny Cochran hammered away at a key prosecution witness, a witness who repeatedly used racial epithets, racist language, and on tape, talked explicitly of 'setting up' Blacks for crimes. How could this be ignored? The unveiling of Mark Fuhrman as a racist cop changed the whole tone of the trial.

"Mark Fuhrman appears to have perjured himself before the court. That should be taken seriously, and he should be tried for perjury. The question arises: how many innocent Blacks are in jail today that he set up? This is a source of pain and distrust in the Black and Hispanic communities.

"It is also clear that the decent police of this nation must make it their duty to expose the rogue cops that still work in their ranks. The good cops are being tarnished by the racists. In addition, the Justice Department must make it a priority to root out this behavior from every police department in America.

"It is unfair to impugn the integrity of the jury. I understand that many people are upset by this decision. But this was an integrated jury, which reached a unanimous decision. The jury apparently decided that racist police behavior and sloppy evidence cannot survive the test of scrutiny.

"The jury was charged to go beyond a reasonable doubt. In addition to the race credibility factor, which Cochran emphasized, and the domestic violence factor, which Prosecutor Marcia Clark emphasized, the jury kept waiting for the 'smoking gun,' or knives, which they did not see happen. They waited for the key eyewitness, who did not materialize for them. And they apparently had difficulty reconciling the time frame for these killings.

"These factors left this integrated jury with reasonable doubt, which led to their quick, unanimous acquittal.

O.J. Statement
 Jesse L. Jackson
 October 4, 1995

"We can ask: why do Blacks and Whites see this matter so differently? The answer is basic to our society--one group sees the justice system top down, and the other sees it bottom up. Whites believe the justice system is half full; Blacks experience it as half empty, and sinking.

"The facts of our criminal justice system are clear, and stark. (These facts are taken directly from a Sentencing Project study, to be released tomorrow.)

*Nearly one in three African American males in the age group 20-29 is under criminal supervision on any given day--either in prison or jail, or on probation or parole.

*An estimated 827,440 African American males, according to a new study by the Sentencing Project, 32.2%, are now under criminal justice supervision, at a cost of \$6 billion a year.

*African American women experienced a 78% increase in their rate of supervision over the past five years, the highest of any group studied. And the number of Black women imprisoned for drug offenses increased by a staggering 828% from 1986 to 1991.

*Drug policies, and not increases in crime, have been the most critical factor leading to more minority incarcerations. African Americans constitute 13% of monthly drug users, but represent 35% of drug possession arrests, 55% of convictions, and 74% of prison sentences.

"In light of these numbers, the nation should declare a national emergency. Yet that is the crisis in Black America; and that is the prism through which African Americans view the justice system.

"As we search for news of lasting value from this highly celebrated trial, there are a few strong points that emerge:

(1) Those Black jurors would not have been there without their voter registrations, under the 1965 Voting Rights Act--now under attack.

(2) Cochran, Clark, Darden, Judge Ito--two Blacks, a woman, a Japanese-American judge, would not have been there without educational opportunities, voting rights, and the more open society built by Dr. King, the civil rights movement, and the women's movement. Their very presence in the courtroom helped shatter stereotypes about the competence and talent of those who have been historically locked out of the process.

(3) There is no justice in the courtroom without the right to strong legal representation. We must remember that as federal and state authorities attempt to cut back on legal aid, and remove the only source of legal help for the poorest of our people. Justice must not be reserved for the few and the wealthy. Equal protection under the law is a birthright that must be preserved for all."