

Simpson case hinges on motive

By Debbie Howlett
USA TODAY

LOS ANGELES — If prosecutors hope to convict O.J. Simpson of two brutal murders, experts say they have to answer the question foremost in the public's mind: Why?

"It's supremely important to assign a motive," says Robert Hirschhorn, a jury consultant from Texas. "Legally, it's not required. But because TV has shaped our view of the judicial system ... it's critical."

Prosecutors will have to plot a storyline as tidy as an episode of *Murder She Wrote*, persuading jurors an obsessed O.J. Simpson stalked his ex-wife, Nicole Simpson, in the weeks before her murder and that of her friend, Ronald Goldman.

While the defense team declines to talk about motives ascribed to O.J. Simpson, they deny that he ever stalked Nicole Simpson.

And lead counsel Robert Shapiro said last week grand jury transcripts showed O.J. Simpson used "remarkable restraint" in dealing with a man Nicole Simpson started dating before their divorce was final.

But prosecutors' theories may be bolstered by a private investigator who says Goldman told a friend Simpson threatened to kill him.

"Goldman told this person specifically that Simpson threatened his life — words to the effect, 'I could kill you, you son of a bitch,'" says R.W. Peterson, a Denver investigator hired by a group called

Evidence debate to resume Tuesday

By Haya El Nasser
USA TODAY

LOS ANGELES — O.J. Simpson returns to court this week after a week of relative calm in the tumultuous murder case.

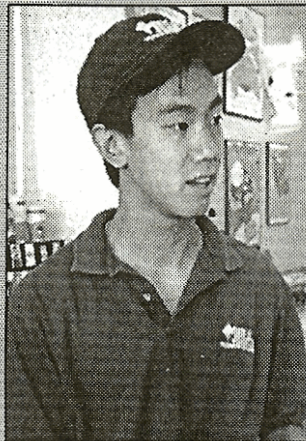
A hearing Tuesday once again will tackle the sensitive issue of just how much evidence the prosecution should turn over to the defense.

Despite the shroud of secrecy, tidbits continue to seep out:

► *Newsweek* reports prosecutors are giving their case a practice run in front of multiracial focus groups — with the help of San Francisco jury expert John Martel. Results are similar to several national polls taken since the June 12 murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman: The groups split along racial lines.

► A cup of partially frozen ice cream found at the crime scene at 12:10 a.m. June 13 may help the defense, according to the newsweekly.

Prosecutors claim the two



By Eric Draper, AP

CHANG: Says he sold ice cream to Nicole Simpson.

were killed between 10:15 and 11 p.m. If the crimes happened later, Simpson could be off the hook since he was on his way to the airport around 11 p.m.

The manager of a Ben & Jerry's store, Bill Chang, 21, says he recognized Nicole Brown Simpson, her children and a man — not Goldman — in his ice cream store the night of the slayings.

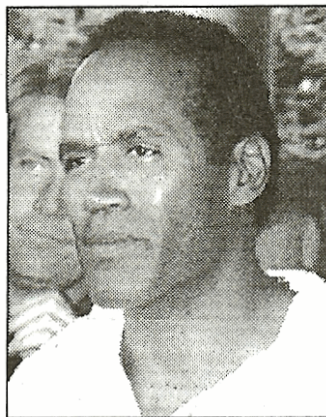
According to Chang, the foursome came into the small store in the upscale Brentwood neighborhood between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m.

► Simpson reportedly bought a wig and mustache at a Burbank costume shop in May.

► Simpson's older children, Jason and Arnelle, have hired Edi M.O. Faal, the prominent lawyer who defended Damian Williams in the famed Reginald Denny beating case.

► Jail officials moved Simpson over the weekend from one part of Los Angeles County Men's Central Jail to another to save on overtime expenses. Simpson was in a high-security wing where he was placed on suicide watch for the first few days — a wing that required special staffing. He's now "in an equally secure location ... routinely staffed with a number of deputies," says Sheriff's Deputy Britta Tubbs.

His experience won't be much different, she says: alone in a cell.



By Fred Prouser, Reuters

SIMPSON: Defense team denies he stalked his ex-wife.

'smoking gun' cases, who cares why the killer did it," says Greg Garrison, an Indianapolis lawyer who prosecuted boxer Mike Tyson.

To that end, prosecutors:

► Are trying to interview Simpson's adult children from a previous marriage, Jason and Arnelle.

► Seized answering machine tapes from Nicole Simpson's house with rambling and angry monologues from Simpson, the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

It's clear from transcripts of the aborted grand jury proceedings that police and prosecutors are considering a strategy that includes painting a portrait of O.J. Simpson as jealous and unstable.

Nicole Simpson's former boyfriend Keith Zlomsowich, who testified before the grand jury, is laying low at the request of the court, says his mother, Lois Zlomsowich.

He told the grand jury he had several intimidating encounters with O.J. Simpson during a month-long affair with Nicole Simpson in 1992.

"Friends of Nicole."

Peterson says "Friends of Nicole" consists of one person keenly interested in spousal abuse issues and two "close friends" of Nicole's.

Nicole Simpson moved out of O.J. Simpson's house for

good on May 24, 19 days before she was killed.

"She dropped the bombshell and he realized that would be it," Peterson says.

"They (his employers) feel there's a good chance he's going to walk because the de-

fense is making such a show of muddying the water and trying to get a hung jury," he says.

Experts say the only sure way of avoiding a hung jury in a case without eye witnesses is to offer a motive.

"If you've got one of those