**O.J. Simpson: An Example of Problems with Evidence Key**

Here are some of the legal errors that students will find in this case:

Two important portions from the OJ Simpson case were large, careless, legal violations:

One involved a Bill of Rights amendment, and several were involved in chain of custody.

*4th Amendment: Protection from Illegal Search and Seizure*

* Detective Mark Fuhrman jumped the wall to OJ’s house the night of the murders. He did not have a warrant when he found a bloody, right-hand glove, blood drops around several cars, and a blood trail from the OJ’s vehicle to the front door. He said he was concerned something had happened to OJ (who was not a suspect at the time), and then that the evidence was in plain view.
* The defense tried to rule this evidence inadmissible, but Judge Ito ruled the evidence as admissible.
* Although Judge Ito gave an angry indictment against the way the search warrant was filed by Detective Phil Vannatter, after the evidence had been found, he called it “negligent and reckless.”

*Chain of Custody*

* The amount of blood drawn from OJ Simpson was not documented. This blood was carried around for several hours before it was entered into the chain of custody (from detective to forensic scientist). So the person drawing the blood could only guess he had drawn around 8cc’s and then only 6cc’s could be accounted for by the LAPD when it was finally entered into custody. So what happened to the vial blood during that time, what it was used for, and why there was some missing was always in question
* There was also a fingerprint on a gate that was initially recorded, but not entered into the chain of custody. This initial fingerprint later disappeared and was never used as evidence
* Some of the blood collected was found weeks after the fact, and not seen in initial photos of the scene or entered right away into chain of custody

*Other Crime Scene Errors*

* Cross-Contamination
  + Nicole’s socks, found at OJ’s house, were together, not separated. And the blood on the sock was not noted until 3 weeks later (transfer of evidence)
  + Goldman’s cap and shirt, with both hair and fiber evidence, were packaged together when found at the crime scene (transfer of evidence)
  + A technician collected blood from OJ and then proceeded to analyze blood evidence from the crime scene wearing the same gloves (cross-contamination of blood)
  + Nicole’s body was covered by a blanket sometime after it was found (transfer of evidence/cross-contamination)
  + Collecting /Packaging Evidence Errors
* A junior detective was unsupervised while collecting blood evidence, and was taped dropping bloody swabs and wiping tweezers with dirty hands (transfer of evidence)
* Some blood evidence from the crime scene was collected with wet swabs, put in plastic bags before drying, and then stored in a hot truck (degradation of blood and DNA)
* There were up to 18 officers at the scene at a time, with many bloody footprints belonging to law enforcement (confusion of evidence)
* Nicole and Ron Goldman’s bodies were not collected until 10 hours after they were found (many evidence errors here)

*General Ethical Errors*

* Mark Fuhrman’s possible comments that were racially prejudiced called his character into question, and caused damage to the prosecution’s case since he was one of the lead detectives
* Mark Fuhrman perjured himself on the stand and then took the 5th Amendment when asked if he had falsified police reports or planted evidence in the Simpson case

Several of the expert witnesses were unable to communicate the complicated, new knowledge and techniques. There was as lack of understanding among many involved, including the jurors, regarding many aspects of forensic science in general and specifically how DNA evidence works.