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Memorandum

U.S. Department of Justice
Community Relations Service

Subject

UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES IN PREPARATION
FOR VERDICT IN O.J. SIMPSON TRIAL

Date

September 29, 1995

To John Schmidt
Associate Attorney
GeneralFrom *Jeffrey Weiss*
Jeffrey Weiss
Acting Director

Senior Conciliator Vermont McKinney, team leader for the CRS activities in Los Angeles in preparation for the verdict in the O.J. Simpson trial, has provided the following update report on CRS activities in Los Angeles:

The entire Western Regional staff is on alert. Conciliators from the San Francisco office will be joining the Los Angeles staff on Monday. The entire conciliator staff in all regions is on standby alert.

Our continuous assessment process will be further enhanced during jury deliberations. Through this process, we will be monitoring all activities in the neighborhoods targeted as potential trouble spots for any activity that, in combination with the heightened tensions surrounding the verdict, may result in violent conflict. We will be paying particular attention to any interaction between police and minority community members that might result in a violent reaction. We have also added the potential problem schools to our constant assessments. The Superintendent has put principals in these schools on alert to prepare for possible civil disorders and to activate plans that will put alternative activities in place when the verdict is announced. CRS will reactivate our crisis response plan with the schools if necessary.

We have initiated a coverage schedule for the courthouse that will allow us to have conciliators on site during all jury deliberation hours. The jury will not be deliberating over this weekend, but is expected to deliberate on subsequent Saturdays until deliberations are over. We are also maintaining communication channels and are activating previously agreed upon contingency plans for activities around the courthouse with the Sheriff's Department. The Sheriff's Department has gone on tactical alert and the LAPD is now on modified tactical alert. We have given technical assistance to the Sheriff's Department on controlling demonstrations at and near the courthouse and will have conciliators available on site to provide conciliation to demonstrations at the courthouse.

At the current time, approximately 150 people are at the courthouse each day staging small and mostly unorganized protests. Today those groups were joined by a Jewish Defense League protest group. This will serve to escalate tensions somewhat. Also, today, a small group of protestors in support of the police and in opposition to the defense closing arguments was on the scene.

For the first time today, the police blocked access to streets near the courthouse for part of the day as a crowd control measure. McKinney has been in direct contact with, and will continue to compare notes daily, with the police area commanders for the areas around the courthouse and in other areas that are targeted as hot spots. McKinney also met today with representatives of the Mayor's office at the courthouse. We will stay in constant contact with that office.

McKinney has a meeting Monday morning with First Assistant Chief Ronald Banks of the LAPD to make arrangements for the police department to take part in private meetings CRS will convene of police, community leaders, clergy, school officials, and other responsible community leaders. CRS will facilitate agreements among these attendees on the nature of response they will make to press attention to the verdict and the Goldman, Brown, and Simpson family responses. The purpose of these agreements is to try to have leadership in the community take the opportunity to defuse rather than escalate tensions when they make press statements. Also at the meeting, CRS will be facilitating agreements on crisis response deployment for all groups involved so that all areas of the city are covered and responsible leadership can be used to calm tensions where they occur.

If you have questions about this report, or need more information, please contact the CRS Headquarters Duty Officer, Gail Padgett, at (o)302-492-5969, (h)703-430-2013, or by beeper at 1-800-SKY-Page, PIN 279-2784.

cc: John Hogan, OAG
Nancy McFadden, OAAG
James Vigil, OAAG
DOJ Command Center



U. S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

The Honorable Maxine Waters
Member, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-0535

Dear Congresswoman Waters:

Thank you for your September 1, 1995 letter to the Attorney General expressing concern about police misconduct and requesting that the Department of Justice (DOJ), in light of the recently-surfaced "Fuhrman tapes", conduct an investigation into instances of abuse in the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). The Attorney General has asked me to respond to you.

DOJ shares your view that unwarranted acts of violence by public officials are serious offenses which can have wide-ranging societal repercussions. There are approximately 675,000 law enforcement officers in this country. Needless to say, the vast majority, whether federal, state or local, are honest and law-abiding public servants who risk their lives every day to protect us. Very few engage in this conduct, but, when a police officer violates the very law he is sworn to uphold, not only is a crime committed, but a community's confidence in the rule of law is undermined.

The Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, working in conjunction with the various United States Attorney's Offices around the country, has the authority to investigate and, where warranted, prosecute official misconduct when it constitutes a willful violation of federally protected rights. We recognize the importance of our mission to enforce the federal criminal civil rights statutes, and we do so vigorously.

In addition to the Rodney King-related prosecution which you mentioned in your letter, we have, in the last several years, brought to trial two other cases in the Los Angeles area involving allegations of police abuse. In one case, U.S. v. Hansen, a federal jury convicted an LAPD officer for beating a juvenile Hispanic arrestee. In another case, U.S. v. Ferri, four Los Angeles county sheriff's deputies were prosecuted on federal criminal civil rights charges for assaulting a truck driver. Although vigorously prosecuted, that case resulted in an

acquittal. Additional investigations into other, more recent allegations of abuse are ongoing.

Nationwide, the Department has been actively involved in bringing to justice officers who engage in abusive conduct. Federal criminal civil rights investigations and prosecutions are being conducted against federal, local and state officers in cities all over the country, including New York City, Chicago, New Orleans, Memphis, Oakland, Philadelphia and Los Angeles. In fact, since 1990, over two hundred federal grand jury investigations into abuse complaints have been instituted, resulting in charges being filed against nearly 300 officers. During this same time period, the Department has achieved a conviction rate in the prosecution of cases against law enforcement cases of over 73%. These are difficult cases to prosecute and we are committed to bringing officers who violate the law to justice.

The Attorney General and the Civil Rights Division continue to make enforcement of the criminal civil rights laws a priority. We also intend to pursue aggressively civil remedies to put a stop to department-wide patterns and practices of misconduct.

With respect to your specific request concerning the Fuhrman tapes, we are in the process of reviewing information available to us. Because of the need to avoid any possible interference with the pending People v. Simpson trial, certain aspects of the inquiry may need to be deferred until the trial is concluded. Thereafter, we, in cooperation with the office of the United States Attorney for the Central District of California, Nora Manella, will thoroughly evaluate all available evidence and conduct further investigation as warranted.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Department with any further information. We are committed to seeing that justice is done where there is evidence of police misconduct.

Thank you for writing.

Sincerely,



Andrew Fois *MAF*
Assistant Attorney General

cc: Hon. Nora M. Manella