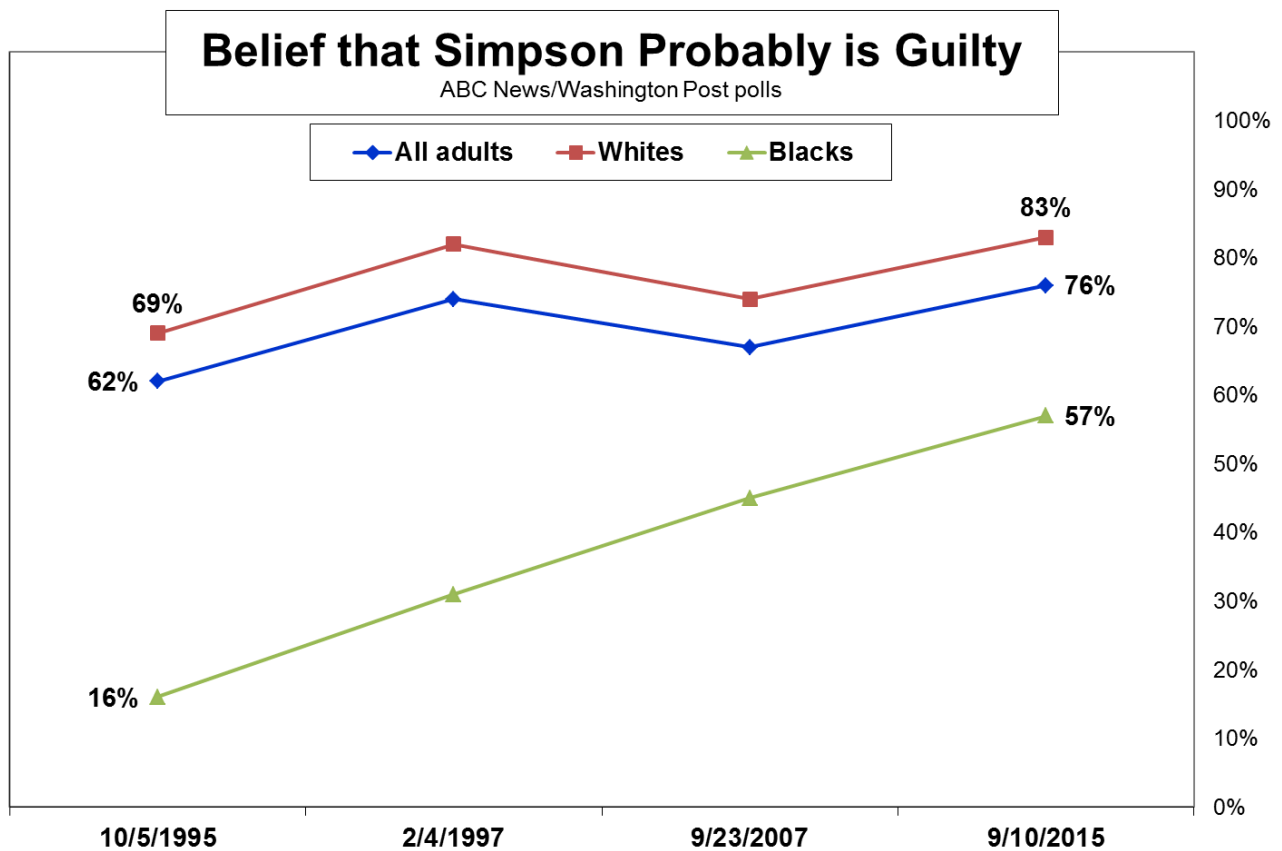


Twenty Years Out, Racial Gap Narrows on Simpson Verdict

Twenty years after a criminal court jury acquitted O.J. Simpson of killing his ex-wife and her friend, the racial gap on the verdict has narrowed: Three-quarters of Americans, for the first time including a majority of blacks, think he probably is guilty.

The public by a broad 76-9 percent in a new ABC News/Washington Post poll says Simpson probably or definitely was guilty of the killings, dividing essentially evenly between those options. After the jury's verdict in 1995, it was 62-33 percent.

A key difference is in the views of blacks. After Simpson's acquittal on criminal charges, just 16 percent of blacks saw him as probably or definitely guilty, compared with 69 percent of whites. Today far more blacks – 57 percent – suspect Simpson's guilt, as do 83 percent of whites.



The change has happened in stages. Views of Simpson as probably guilty increased after he was found liable in civil court in 1997 for the battery of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and wrongful death of her companion, Ronald Goldman. After that verdict, views of Simpson as likely guilty doubled among blacks, to 31 percent, as well as rising among whites.

Blacks' suspicions about Simpson grew further, to 45 percent, in a Washington Post poll in September 2007, following his arrest on armed robbery and kidnapping charges in an unrelated case. Only now, though, does a majority of blacks see him as definitely or probably guilty in the murders of his ex-wife and Goldman.

Simpson, convicted of the 2007 crime, is serving a 9- to 33-year sentence at the Lovelock Correctional Center near Reno, Nevada. The ABC News program 20/20 is presenting an hour-long special on the Simpson case, hosted by ABC News anchor Elizabeth Vargas, tonight at 10 p.m. Eastern.

Even as the racial gap has narrowed, whites remain much more certain of Simpson's guilt in the 1995 killings. This poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that 44 percent of whites see him as definitely guilty, compared with 17 percent of blacks. Four in 10 blacks instead say he probably was guilty, and 19 percent have no opinion, up from 4 percent after the verdict in the sensational, nationally televised criminal trial.

It should be noted that seeing someone as "probably" guilty wouldn't suffice in criminal court, where juries must find guilt "beyond a reasonable doubt." Civil verdicts have a lower standard, based on a preponderance of the evidence.

Suspicions of Simpson's guilt peak at 80 percent or more among seniors, women, higher-income earners, whites and Republicans. Views that he's definitely or probably not guilty crack the 20 percent mark only among blacks; it's in the single- or low double-digits in most other groups.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Sept. 7-10, 2015, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points for all adults, including the design effect; it's 4 points for whites and 10.5 points for blacks.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y. See details on the survey's methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Chad Kiewiet de Jonge.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

1-30 previously released

31. The O.J. Simpson case occurred 20 years ago. A criminal court jury found Simpson not guilty of charges that he killed his wife and a friend of hers. A civil court jury later said Simpson was responsible for these killings. What's your own opinion - do you think Simpson was definitely guilty, probably guilty, probably not guilty, or definitely not guilty of these murders?

	----- Guilty -----			----- Not guilty -----			No opinion
	NET	Definitely	Probably	NET	Probably	Definitely	
All:							
9/10/15	76	38	39	9	7	2	14
Compare to:							
9/23/07*	67	31	37	19	11	8	14
2/4/97**	74	34	41	19	14	6	7
10/5/95	62	29	33	33	20	14	4
10/3/95	63	29	34	30	17	13	7
9/27/95	68	31	37	26	18	8	6
7/17/95	71	29	42	24	16	8	6
3/19/95	63	20	43	27	20	7	10
1/29/95	59	17	41	32	22	11	9
1/9/95	65	18	48	23	18	5	12
7/20/94	57	10	47	27	20	7	16
Whites:							
9/10/15	83	44	39	6	5	2	11
Compare to:							
9/23/07*	74	33	41	13	8	5	13
2/4/97**	82	39	43	12	9	3	7
10/5/95	69	32	37	27	18	9	5
10/3/95	70	33	37	24	15	9	6
9/27/95	77	35	41	18	14	4	5
7/17/95	78	32	46	16	12	3	6
3/19/95	69	20	48	21	16	4	11
1/29/95	66	19	47	24	17	7	10
1/9/95	70	20	51	18	15	3	12
7/20/94	63	11	52	20	17	3	17
Blacks:							
9/10/15	57	17	40	24	17	7	19
Compare to:							
9/23/07*	45	22	23	40	25	14	16
2/4/97**	31	3	28	62	37	25	7
10/5/95	16	6	10	81	36	45	4
10/3/95	18	4	14	74	33	41	8
9/27/95	20	5	15	72	47	24	9
7/17/95	22	5	17	71	39	31	7
3/19/95	20	6	14	72	45	28	7
1/29/95	18	8	10	78	42	36	5
1/9/95	26	1	26	60	38	22	13
7/20/94	22	3	19	65	36	30	13

*2007 (Washington Post): And thinking back about a decade, a jury found O.J. Simpson NOT guilty in the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ron Goldman. Regardless of the verdict, what is your opinion of the case now? Do you think Simpson was definitely guilty, probably guilty, probably not guilty, or definitely not guilty?

**1997 and previous: Whether you agree with the jury or not, do you think Simpson is definitely guilty, probably guilty, probably not guilty, or definitely not guilty of these murders? ("Of these murders" added 2/4/97)

*** END ***