

NATION

The pope returns to the U.S. today with popularity ratings a politician would covet /A2



SPORTS

Atlanta wins its playoff opener against Colorado on Chipper Jones' ninth-inning home run /E1



WEDNESDAY

Rain likely today. High 75; low 62. Chance of showers tomorrow. High 78, /B6

50¢

THE BACK PAGE ...D6 ENTERTAINMENT ...D3 THE PROSE4
CLASSIFIEDE9 LOTTERIESA3 SCOREBOARDE8
CLOSE-UPSD6 NATIONA2 TELEVISIOND2
COMICSD4 OBITUARIESB2 TRADING SECRETS F2
EDITORIALSA14 OP/EDA15 WORLDA4

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VIRGINIA'S NEWS LEADER

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'Not guilty'



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GOOD NEWS: O.J. Simpson, flanked by attorneys F. Lee Bailey (left) and Johnnie Cochran Jr., reacted joyously to the news of his acquittal yesterday.

Most predictions followed race lines

Verdicts 'reflective of African experience'

BY GORDON HICKEY
AND MARK HOLMBERG
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITERS

Black Virginians, like African Americans all over the country, were right all along — O.J. Simpson was not guilty.

From the start to the end of the 11-month case, poll after poll has shown that a majority of African Americans were convinced Simpson didn't kill his ex-wife and her friend.

A statewide poll conducted last month by The Times-Dispatch showed that 77 percent of blacks who responded believed Simpson was innocent. Eighty-eight percent of white respondents believed he was guilty.

Salim Khalfani said he "felt like

[Simpson] did it, and still do." But he also said he knows why so many African Americans believed Simpson was not guilty.

"I think it's reflective of the African experience in America with the judicial system and police," said Khalfani, branch and field activities coordinator for the Virginia Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. "People have said they believe he was set up."

Poor people, many of whom are African Americans, have come to believe the justice system is out to get them, Khalfani said. That made them identify with Simpson, Khalfani said.

PLEASE SEE POLLS, PAGE A10 ►

MORE COVERAGE OF SIMPSON VERDICTS INSIDE



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RELIEF: O.J. Simpson's sister, Shirley Baker, a courtroom regular throughout the trial, said later she felt like dancing.

- Nation stops to watch Charles McDowell, Page A2
- Suits, custody fights loom Page A8
- Ordeal ends for jurors Page A8
- Perjury charge for Fuhrman? Page A9
- If O.J. didn't do it, who did? Page A9
- Troubling questions remain Jamie Ruff, Page A9
- A defining moment in history? Page A10
- Virginians deeply divided Page B1
- Time stood still for verdicts Ray McAllister, Page B1
- The show's over Douglas Durden, Page D1
- Football's reaction varies Page E7

Simpson thanks jurors, vows to track real killers

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — O.J. Simpson headed home yesterday, picking up a life of freedom instead of starting life in prison. Acquitted of charges of murdering his ex-wife and her friend, he pledged to track down the real killers who are "out there somewhere."

In a courtroom on the verge of exploding with emotion, a hush fell as Judge Lance Ito's clerk, Dierdre Robertson, read the two words: "Not guilty."

Simpson mouthed the words, "Thank you," at the jury, then clasped his hands together and was embraced by his attorneys.

Tears of anguish and shouts of joy burst from the three families whose lives were torn apart by the bloody June 12, 1994, slayings of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman.

An eerie ending

"Oh my God!" exclaimed Simpson's grown daughter, Arnelle, embracing her brother Jason.

"We did it!" a family member exulted to lead defense attorney Johnnie Cochran Jr.

Perily, the Simpson saga ended much as it had begun, with the fallen football superstar being transported in a white van to his estate while news helicopters tracked him overhead. Yesterday's televised verdicts were the most-watched event since June 17, 1994, when Simpson, in a white Bronco with his friend Al Cowlings driving, led police on a surreal slow-speed chase viewed by millions.

Cowlings was at the door to embrace Simpson when he came home. Later, family members gathered for a champagne party on the lawn of Simpson's estate.

Florists, caterers and musicians pulled up to the house and told reporters they were there for a celebration.

'Nightmare' for Fred Goldman

The celebration stood in marked contrast to the solemn mood in the district attorney's offices.

"Last June 13, '94, was the worst nightmare of my life. This is the second," Goldman's father, Fred, said at a prosecution news conference. "This prosecution team didn't lose today. I deeply believe this country lost today. Justice was not served."

At a defense team news conference, Cochran insisted the issue of race, which he played heavily in the trial, did not overcome the facts.

"This verdict speaks justice," Cochran said. "This was a case based upon the evidence."

He denied playing "the race card," saying instead that credibility had won out.

"Race plays a part in everything in Ameri-

By the numbers

Estimated cost of trial	\$9 million
Days since jury selection began	371
Days Simpson spent in jail	473
Days jurors were sequestered	265
Number of motions filed	433
Exhibits presented	D: 369 P: 488
Witnesses	D: 54 P: 72
Days of testimony	D: 34 P: 99
Number of attorneys who presented evidence	D: 11 P: 9
Length of opening statements	4 days
Length of closing arguments	4 days
Length of official court transcript	Over 50,000 pages
Number of media passes issued	Over 1,000
Number of times judge pulled plug on television	2
Fines imposed	\$5,650
Number of jurors dismissed	10
Average age of jurors	43
Amount earned by each juror	\$1,325 (\$5 a day)
D: defense P: prosecution	
SOURCE: The Associated Press	

TIMES-DISPATCH

Therapy combat zone

Sessions are chance to confront past, plot future, take control



Editor's note: Group therapy is the most common method of helping alcohol and drug abusers recover. For "psychologically addictive" drugs such as cocaine, it is the only widely accepted therapy. A group at 919 W. Grace St., a residential treatment facility of Human Resources Inc., allowed staff writer Clarke Bustard to sit in on a session, on the condition that he not identify the residents. A few days later, former city councilman Chuck Richardson was admitted to the facility.

BY CLARKE BUSTARD
TIMES-DISPATCH STAFF WRITER

Seventy years ago, one of Richmond's leading bankers dined in this room. Now, the mahogany woodwork is rubbed raw and paint flakes off the high molded ceiling. Overhead, old-fashioned globe lights cast a yellow glare and a fan barely stirs the air.

The room is the emotional and spiritual combat zone of a group home for 45 cocaine and heroin addicts. Most living here now are men in their 20s and 30s, trying to recover from addiction to crack cocaine. They stay here from two months

to a year. Some go out to day jobs or to school. They come to this room to confront their pasts, plot their futures, engage their "higher power," take control of their lives.

About two dozen attend tonight's "concern group" — a chance to speak their minds about the house or events in their lives.

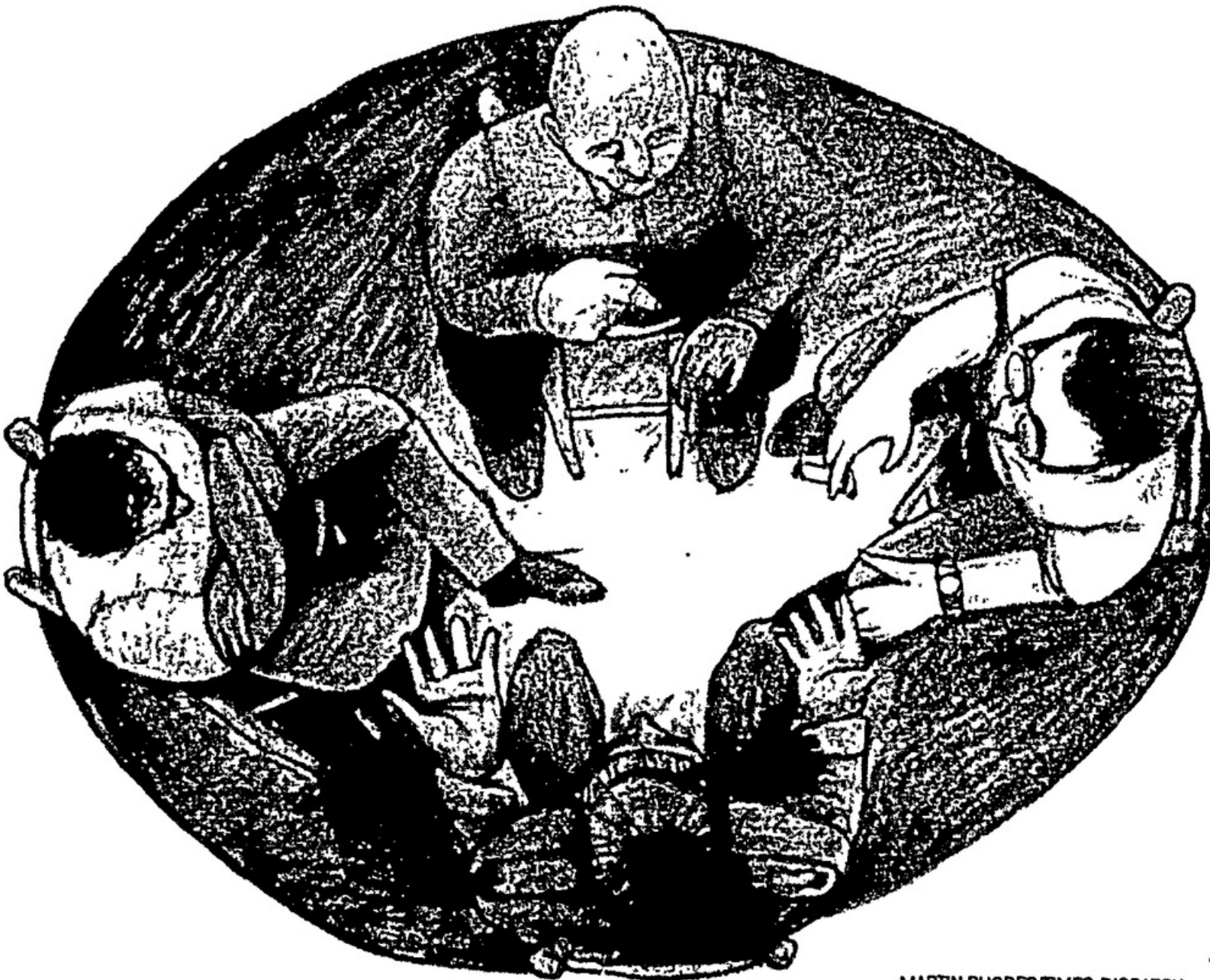
They sit in a circle, crowded against the walls, leaving a wide open space in the middle. Some can't find a chair and lean in doorways.

Jotted on a blackboard: "12 Steps," the route to recovery drawn 60 years ago by Alcoholics Anonymous, the model for therapy in this house. And "Proverbs 16:3." ("Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established.") A few participants pat shoulders or shake

PLEASE SEE THERAPY, PAGE A12 ►

GIVE US A CALL

Your comments on this series are welcome. Call (804) 775-8145 to leave a message, or send a fax to the drug series editor at (804) 775-8059.



MARTIN RHODES/TIMES-DISPATCH

TIME TO TALK. For drugs such as cocaine, group therapy is a widely used treatment.

SECTIONS: VIRGINIA / METRO: B BUSINESS: C REAL ESTATE: D SPORTS / CLASSIFIED: E FOOD: F