

The New York Times
nytimes.com



August 7, 2007

O.J. Simpson Ordered to Pay Goldmans Over Game

By REUTERS

Filed at 4:32 p.m. ET

SANTA MONICA, California (Reuters) - Relatives of murder victim Ron Goldman won a court order on Tuesday seizing any money O.J. Simpson earns for lending his name and likeness to a football video game with a fictional team called the Assassins and a knife-wielding mascot.

The legal victory was part of an effort by Goldman's estate to satisfy a \$33.5 million judgment won against Simpson in a wrongful death suit brought against him in the 1994 stabbing deaths of Goldman and Simpson's ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson.

The former star running back was acquitted of criminal charges in 1995 at the end of a sensational murder trial but was found legally responsible for their deaths by a civil court jury two years later.

Simpson has maintained his innocence and vowed never to pay the jury award voluntarily.

Last week, Goldman's estate, led by his father Fred Goldman, secured rights to Simpson's aborted book, "If I Did It," containing his hypothetical first-person account of the murders, after a long legal fight with the now-bankrupt company set up to collect Simpson's reported \$1 million advance.

In their latest bid to collect on the civil judgment, the Goldmans went after any licensing fees, royalties or other compensation Simpson was paid or will be paid for his name and likeness in the new video game, "All-Pro Football 2K8."

The game is published by Take-Two Interactive Software, the company behind such controversial video game titles as "Grand Theft Auto" and "Manhunt 2," which was banned in Britain and given the equivalent of an adults-only rating in the United States.

TEAM OF "ASSASSINS"

"All-Pro Football" features the likenesses of 240 retired National Football League players, including Simpson, whom game users can assign to fictional teams with preset names, one of which is "The Assassins."

As previewed on a Web site for video game promotional trailers, the team mascot is a hooded figure who makes stabbing motions with a large knife in the end zone when the Assassins score. Simpson does not have to be assigned to that team, but he was in a clip shown on the Game Trailers Web site.

Take-Two has declined to say how it obtained rights to Simpson's name and likeness but said he was compensated. The company also has issued a statement saying the knife-wielding Assassins mascot is "not

specifically associated with O.J. Simpson, and the game does not promote any such connection."

Under the order issued by Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Gerald Rosenberg, any earnings to Simpson that "have been paid, are due or may be due in the future" for use of his image and likeness in the video game must be turned over to the Goldman estate.

Moreover, Simpson was ordered to turn over copies of his Take-Two contract and related documents, as well as any other financial deals he has yet to disclose.

"Basically he (the judge) said to Mr. Simpson, 'Pay up,'" Goldman attorney David Cook said after the hearing.

Ronald Slates, a lawyer for Simpson, argued against the order, saying the California court lacked jurisdiction over his client, who has lived in Florida for several years.

Copyright 2007 Reuters Ltd.

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)