

## O.J. Simpson Likely Suffers From CTE, Says 'Concussion' Doctor Bennet Omalu

By Cia Young | February 15, 2016

Former football star O.J. Simpson likely suffers from chronic traumatic encephalopathy, also known as CTE, according to the doctor who discovered the condition over a decade ago.

Dr. Bennet Omalu, who is portrayed in the major motion picture "Concussion" by Will Smith, recently told *People* he is confident that Simpson is stricken with CTE for a variety of reasons, including Simpson's profile and head size.

According to *Tri County Sentry*, CTE is linked to repeated head trauma that leads to the degenerative condition. Over the life of their careers, football players often endure concussions and other types of cranial impact on the field.

Dr. Omalu discovered CTE in 2002 after examining the brain of football player Mike Webster after the athlete's death. The renowned doctor spoke about Simpson to *People*, saying, "I would bet my medical license that he has CTE."



[Image Via Ethan Miller/Getty Images]

*People* reports that in 2008, when Simpson faced trial for armed robbery and kidnapping in a Las Vegas courtroom, he considered using CTE as a defense, arguing concussions he sustained over his many years with the NFL may have contributed to

his behavior. Simpson was found guilty and the presiding judge sentenced him to 33 years behind bars, reports *Heavy*. The Heisman Trophy winner now resides in Nevada's Lovelock Correctional Center and is not eligible for parole until October 2017.

In 2012, attempting to obtain a new trial in the robbery and kidnapping matter, Simpson and his team again argued he suffered from brain damage related to concussions, *People* reports.

Currently, there is no test for CTE, which can only be diagnosed by examining the brain tissue of the deceased. However, symptoms of CTE are evident, which include unprovoked violent outbursts, mood swings, criminal behavior, domestic disputes, and highly exaggerated emotional responses to everyday problems or concerns, according to *People*.

According to Tri County Sentry, Dr. Omalu believes that Simpson's rather large head is just one indicator he likely suffers from CTE. The doctor told *People* that the bigger an individual's head, the heavier it is. Dr. Omalu stressed, "That means the momentum of your impact would be bigger. It's basic physics."

*People* reports that Simpson's head is so big that while playing professional football, the NFL star had to wear custom made helmets.

Dr. Omalu is not the only medical professional who believes Simpson has displayed CTE symptoms over the years. Dr. Robert Huizenga, who can often be seen consulting on NBC's "The Biggest Loser," told *Access Hollywood* CTE could have been part of Simpson's double murder defense if there had been awareness at the time of his trial.



[Image Via Daniel Gluskoter-Pool/Getty Images]

Over two decades ago, Simpson was charged with the murder of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and Ronald Goldman. The subsequent trial revealed that Simpson and his former spouse had a tumultuous relationship. Goldman, a waiter at a local restaurant was at the wrong place at the wrong time, simply returning sunglasses Nicole Brown Simpson's mother had left at the restaurant he worked when the crime took place.

**Dr. Huizenga**, who examined Simpson following the double murders, told *Access Hollywood*, "I think it [CTE] could have been important in the O.J. Simpson case and may have been part of the reason he was in a mindset to do things that doesn't really make sense, that someone else might not have done."



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According to *Access Hollywood* **Dr. Huizenga** stated that, "Aggressive behavior is one of the earlier symptoms, sometimes before outright dementia... that might account for someone for being overly aggressive."

CTE is not only a concern for football players, but just this week WWE star Daniel Bryan announced his retirement from the sport saying he realized what impact it could have on his health. Bryan said, "...a week and a half ago, I took a test that said that maybe my brain isn't as OK as I thought it was," according to *News Press Now*.

*USA Today* reports that during a news conference regarding the suicide of BMX star Dave Mirra, it was revealed the athlete sustained a number of "big hits" throughout his career and that he may have suffered from CTE.

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