

O.J. Simpson might not find the bright lights waiting for him if paroled

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(Photo: AFP)

As the Nevada Board of Parole weighs O.J. Simpson's release Thursday for the 2007 robbery of sports memorabilia collectors in Las Vegas, his prospects of returning to the acting or broadcasting fields remain limited.

"You're not going to see him calling football games," Ben Bogardus, an assistant professor of journalism at Quinnipiac University, told USA TODAY Sports. "I could see him doing a low-brow comedy show where they follow him around, but even that will face a lot of criticism."

The public remains transfixed on Simpson more than two decades after he was arrested -- and later acquitted -- and charged with the murders of ex-wife Nicole Simpson and Ron Goldman.

The popularity of last year's 10-part FX series *The People v. O.J. Simpson* and ESPN's *O.J.: Made in America* documentary prove that.

Yet, if Simpson finds work, he may not be able to keep the proceeds.

Simpson still owes the majority of the \$33.5 million a civil jury ordered Simpson to pay the families of Brown Simpson and Goldman. John Q. Kelly, the lead attorney for the Estate of Nicole Brown Simpson, told USA TODAY Sports in an email that "at least a portion" of Simpson's future earnings "would be subject to seizure pursuant to the judgments."

Bogardus said one path for Simpson is to find a younger audience online.

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"People do still care," Bogardus said. "There's a generation of kids, like those in college now who weren't even born when the trial took place. They just know him from *The People v. O.J. Simpson* and the ESPN documentaries."

His acting work before he went to prison wasn't profitable.

Simpson has one acting credit listed on Internet Media Database IMDB over the last 23 years: *The Jealous Boyfriend*.

"Punk, you stay away from my woman," Simpson exclaimed in *Lemon Twist* as he punched the writer/producer/actor in the 5-minute short. "Stay away. I better not see that ugly face of yours around."

"OJ said, for me, he'd charge me nothing," Arthur Bernstein, the man Simpson leveled in the scene in *Lemon Twist*, told USA TODAY Sports.

Bernstein speaks well of Simpson, who he befriended after he caught Simpson sitting in his Miami Heat seats during a game 2004.

"The first thing I asked him was if he'd do my movie," Bernstein said.

Bernstein had just left his job as a personal assistant for Adam Sandler's production company, Happy Madison, and the short film was designed to be a vehicle to spur his career as a writer and producer.

“O.J. is very talented actor and he did a great job,” said Bernstein, who was the executive producer of the 2015 film on the early years of Walt Disney, *Walt Before Mickey*, and the 2016 comedy about a fictional far-right radio personality, *Swing State*. “Having O.J. in that movie helped build my confidence and led to me producing movies like *Swing State*.”

Bernstein said Simpson still could rebound as a personality if any projects focus on his past, including the speculation he could have suffered the effects of the debilitating effects of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) playing football. Bennet Omalu, the neuropathologist whose study of the brain disease thought to be caused by repeated head trauma, told ABC News it’s “more likely than not” Simpson has CTE.

“He could talk about the effects of taking all those hits to raise awareness,” Bernstein said. “He could also do something that focuses on being a prominent actor and commentator and then going through all his problem, including the domestic violence.”

USA TODAY Sports’ Erik Brady and Josh Peter contributed to this report.

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