



Rodney King Beating

On March 3, 1991, Rodney King was the driver of a car in Los Angeles, California, and Bryant Allen was a passenger in the back seat. The driver didn't stop when signalled by a police car behind him, but increased his speed. One estimate said that King drove at 100 miles per hour for 7.8 miles.

When police finally stopped the car, they delivered 56 baton blows and six kicks to King, in a period of two minutes, producing 11 skull fractures, brain damage, and kidney damage.

A man named George Holliday, standing on the balcony of a nearby building, videotaped the incident. The next day (March 4), he gave his 81-second tape to Los Angeles TV channel 5. By the end of the day, the video was being broadcast by TV stations worldwide. Unaware that the incident had been videotaped, the police officers filed inaccurate reports, not mentioning the fact that Rodney King was left with head wounds.

On March 15, 1991, four police officers were arraigned on charges of assault with a deadly weapon and use of excessive force. The four police officers who were charged were Sgt. Stacey C. Koon, Ofc. Laurence M. Powell (Larry Powell), Ofc. Theodore Briseno, and Ofc. Timothy Wind. On March 26, they pleaded not guilty.

On a defence motion, the trial of the police officers was relocated from Los Angeles to the suburb of Simi Valley, in Ventura County, despite objections by the prosecution that the two communities have "different demographics." The jury was selected from a neighbourhood in which many people have friends or family members who are police officers, but the likelihood of pro-police bias was not viewed by the court as a form of prejudice to justify dismissing prospective jurors. On April 29, the jury acquitted the four defendants.

Thousands of people in South Central Los Angeles responded to the verdict with several days of rioting. The violence spread to other parts of Los Angeles County. Federal troops and the California National Guard were mobilized to quell the riots. In six days of rioting, 54 people were killed, 2,383 were known to have been injured, and 13,212 people were arrested. There was an estimated \$700 million in property damage in Los Angeles County.

Name _____

Group: _____

Rodney King

1) Why did the officers stop Rodney King?

2) What happened when the police officers finally stopped Rodney?

3) What were the injuries that Rodney King had by the end of the events?

4) Did the officers give an accurate report about the event of March 3, 1991?
Why?

5) What does arraigned mean?

6) Do you think the jury was biased? What evidence from the text gives you your answer? What would be the consequence of the jury being biased?

7) What was the final ruling by the jurors?

8) What happened after the ruling of the court in South Central California?

9) Why do you think people reacted this way?

10) Answer the following questions in an essay format: a) Do you think the police officers were fair? Why? What kind of stereotypes do you think the police officers had of black people? b) Do you think they would have reacted the same way if Rodney King was of another cultural background? c) What could be done to sensitize police officers about civil rights? (Be good... Don't answer anything violent 😊) (100 words)

Write your ideas for each section here then write your essay (do this only if you need to)

a)	b)	c)
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