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Simpson's Shoe Size Fits Bloody Prints Left at the Crime Scene, an F.B.I. Expert Says

By DAVID MARGOLICK

LOS ANGELES, June 19— An expert from the Federal Bureau of Investigation testified today at O. J. Simpson's trial that the person who left a trail of bloody shoe prints along the walkway in front of Nicole Brown Simpson's home last June wore size 12 shoes, the same size worn by Mr. Simpson.

The witness, William J. Bodziak, an authority on shoe prints and tire treads, retraced his quest to track down the model of the shoes that left the prints, which took him to two factories in eastern Italy. He said the make, distributed only in 1991 or 1992, was Bruno Magli, a model he described as "high-end" -- that is, costing roughly \$160 a pair.

The shoes worn by the killer or killers of Mrs. Simpson and Ronald L. Goldman a year ago, like the assailants' presumably blood-soaked clothes, have not been recovered. Nor have prosecutors thus far offered evidence that Mr. Simpson ever owned this kind of shoe. But as Mr. Bodziak placed a pair of similar Bruno Magli shoes sole-to-sole against a pair of Mr. Simpson's Reeboks, he testified that "for all practical purposes they were identical in the size and the shape."

"The person wearing one would certainly be a candidate for wearing the other," Mr. Bodziak said.

Hank Goldberg, a Deputy District Attorney, asked Mr. Bodziak whether there was any indication that more than one pair of shoes -- that is, more than one person -- was involved in the crime.

"No, there was not," Mr. Bodziak replied.

When asked if Mr. Simpson could have worn the model of shoes that left the prints, the witness said, "Yes, I could include him as a candidate who could have worn those shoes."

Conducting his first cross-examination in several weeks, the defense lawyer F. Lee Bailey challenged Mr. Bodziak's hypothesis that there were dozens of footprints at the crime scene because a single perpetrator walked away from the corpses, then retraced his steps, "re-bloodying" his shoes enough to leave a second trail as he exited.

Instead, Mr. Bailey suggested to the witness the defense's latest theory: that a pair of professional

assassins, knowing that footwear "can be almost as dangerous as fingerprints," tracked down and wore two pairs of the same rare Italian designer shoe -- only 299 pairs of size 12 were ever distributed in the United States -- in an effort to confound the police.

Mr. Bodziak dismissed that hypothesis as "ridiculous," noting that anyone seeking to camouflage his identity would hardly opt for such distinctive footwear rather than something more common, like the Reeboks that Mr. Simpson said he had worn on the day of the killings.

It took considerable time and numerous digressions for Mr. Bailey to reach what was perhaps his most compelling point: that, as Mr. Bodziak had testified, citing Footwear Market Insights magazine, 9 percent of the shoes sold in the United States are size 12, and millions of people with feet slightly smaller or larger can fit into them. Mr. Bodziak noted that such improvising would leave criminals "stumbling all over the place" as they fled.

Earlier, in exacting detail, Mr. Bodziak described his detective work to match the bloody honeycombed tread found at the crime scene at 875 South Bundy with a particular make of shoe. There was no such shoe print, he said, in the F.B.I.'s own extensive file, although he speculated that the shoes were expensive and made by a South American or Italian manufacturer. Letters sent to such manufacturers produced a match with the Bruno Magli model, as did a letter to the national police agency in Tokyo.

The witness -- a blunt man who used foreign pronunciations almost apologetically, as if worrying about sounding pretentious -- then described the complex procedure in which he extrapolated from tread fragments to conclude that the prints had been left by size 12 Bruno Magli shoes, with soles made by a subcontractor called Silga. Superimposing plastic transparencies of prints taken from such shoes over photographs taken at the crime scene, he said that footprint after footprint confirmed his conclusion.

A man who has focused on footwear for 22 years, Mr. Bodziak used both the language of cobblers (like the "lasts" around which "uppers" and "lowers" are stitched) and forensics (like the "squeegee effect," which takes place when blood nestled in a shoe's treads migrates beyond its original location).

For the prosecution, the talk of shoe prints provided a welcome breather after last week's debacle, when Mr. Simpson tried on the gloves that prosecutors say he wore on the night of the killings. Two prosecutors, Marcia Clark and Christopher A. Darden, said in court this morning that they would revisit that issue, presumably to prove that the gloves had shrunk or that Mr. Simpson had been acting when he said they were too tight.

"They haven't had enough of the gloves, Your Honor?" Mr. Simpson's chief lawyer, Johnnie L. Cochran Jr., asked Judge Lance A. Ito almost gloatingly. "O.K., we'll be ready."

Mr. Bodziak's testimony brought the prosecution closer to the end of its direct case, which could be rounded out this week with testimony from at least two witnesses about further instances in

which they say Mr. Simpson struck Mrs. Simpson. Prosecutors will also offer testimony on the statistics involving DNA and about hair and fibers that, they say, link Mr. Simpson to the crime scene. By day's end, a buyer from Bloomingdale's, Samuel Poser, was poised to take the stand.

Seeking to defuse defense arguments that two assailants may have been involved, Mr. Bodziak said that of the shoe prints that were distinct, all were made by the same footwear, and there was nothing to suggest that the indistinct ones had been left by a second person.

Mr. Bodziak said that he had examined the shoes worn by several police officers at the crime scene and that none could have accounted for the shoe prints. But he testified that even with chemical enhancement, it was impossible to say that the same model of shoes had left a faint print found on the carpet of Mr. Simpson's Ford Bronco, though the faint marks were consistent with the Silga sole.

The witness said there were footprint fragments both on an envelope containing eyeglasses belonging to Mrs. Simpson's mother, found at the crime scene, and on the black cocktail dress Mrs. Simpson was wearing when she was killed. As a panel of photographs of that dress was displayed in court, Mrs. Simpson's youngest sister, Tanya Brown, began to sob.

They were not the most graphic photographs on display today. Earlier, prosecutors displayed once again photographs of Mrs. Simpson slumped over in a fetal position, with footprints nearby. And autopsy photographs, visible only to jurors, showed what Mr. Bodziak said appeared to be toe or heel impressions on Mrs. Simpson's back.

Photo: In testimony yesterday, William Bodziak, an F.B.I. authority on shoe prints, compared one of O. J. Simpson's white Reebok shoes with an expensive Italian shoe of the kind he said left bloody tracks at the murder scene. (Pool photo by Lori Sheler)