

# Charles manson



**Marilyn Bardsley**

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- The Learning Channel documentary on the Boston Strangler case
- The History Channel documentary, "History vs. Hollywood: The St. Valentine's Day Massacre"
- C-Span on J. Edgar Hoover • Court TV on-air interviews on the D.C. sniper case and terrorist threats, and with radio affiliates on serial killer cases in the news
- Agence France Presse for a feature article on the Green River killer, Gary Ridgway, and the psychology of serial killers
- South African Sunday Times on the Green River killer • Cleveland Plain Dealer on Eliot Ness and the Cleveland Torso Murders of the 1930s.
- NPR on an Al Capone biography • Beyond Computers radio program about crimes and criminals • Israeli radio program on serial killers

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## Chapter 01 - Murder! (Sharon Tate)

Quiet and secluded is just what the young movie star wanted. The canyons above Beverly Hills were far enough away from the noisy glitz of Hollywood to afford some privacy and space. Sharon Tate loved this place on Cielo Drive. To her it meant romance — romance with the man of her dreams and the father of her child, director Roman Polanski.

It was cooler up there too, which was especially refreshing on that hot muggy Saturday night, the 9th of August 1969. The beautiful young woman kept herself company with her attractive and sophisticated friends: Abigail Folger, the coffee heiress and her boyfriend Voytek Frykowski, and an internationally known hair stylist Jay Sebring.

Sharon was eight months pregnant and very lonely for her husband who was away in Europe working on a film. Impromptu gatherings like this one on a weekend night were not at all unusual.

The house was deliberately secluded but not completely insecure. Approximately 100 feet from the house was a locked gate and on the property was a guesthouse inhabited by an able-bodied young caretaker.

That night the Kotts, Sharon's nearest neighbors who lived about 100 yards away, thought they heard a few gunshots coming from the direction of Sharon's property sometime between 12:30 and 1 A.M. But since they heard nothing else, they went to bed.

Around the same time, a man supervising a camp-out less than a mile away heard a chilling scream: "Oh, God, no, please don't! Oh, God, no, don't, don't..."

He drove around the area, but found nothing unusual.

Nearby a neighbor's dogs went into a barking frenzy somewhere between 2 and 3 A.M. He got out of bed and looked around, but found nothing amiss and went back to bed.

A private security guard hired by some of the wealthy property owners thought he heard several gunshots a little after 4 A.M. and called his headquarters. Headquarters, in turn, called Los Angeles Police Department to report the disturbance. The LAPD officer said: "I hope we don't have a murder; we just had a woman-screaming call in that area."



The Tate/Polanski House on Cielo Drive

Winifred Chapman, Sharon Tate's housekeeper, got to the main gate of the house a little after 8 A.M. She noticed what looked like a fallen telephone wire hanging over the gate. She pushed the gate control mechanism and it swung open. As she walked up to the house, she saw an unfamiliar white Rambler parked in the driveway.

When she got to the house, she took the housekey from its hiding place and unlocked the back door. Once inside the kitchen, she picked up the telephone and confirmed that it was a telephone wire that had fallen, completely knocking out all phone service. As she made her way toward the living room, she noticed that the front door was open and that there were splashes of red everywhere. Looking out the front door, she saw a couple of pools of blood and what appeared to be a body on the lawn.

She shrieked and ran back through the house and down the driveway, passing close enough to the Rambler to see that there was yet another body inside the car. She ran over to the Kotts and banged on the door, but they were not home, so she ran to the next house and did the same thing, screaming hysterically.

## **Chapter 02 - The Crime Scene**

LAPD Officer Jerry DeRosa arrived first. He walked up to the Rambler and found a young man slumped toward the passenger side, drenched in blood. At this point, Officer William Whisenhunt joined DeRosa. The two officers, with guns drawn searched the other automobiles and the garage, while a third officer Robert Burbridge caught up with them.

There on the beautifully manicured lawn with its magnificent panorama of Los Angeles lay two bodies. One was a white man that appeared to be in his thirties. Someone had battered in his head and face, while savagely puncturing the rest of his body with dozens of wounds.

The other body was that of a young woman with long brown hair lying in a full-length nightgown with multiple stab wounds.

The three officers cautiously approached the house. No telling what or who may be waiting in there for them. It would have been foolhardy for all of them to enter through the front door. However, as they went near the front door, they saw that one of the front window screens had been removed. Whisenhunt found an open window on the side of the house where he and Burbridge made their entry.

Once the other two officers were inside, DeRosa approached the front door. On the lower half of the door, he saw scrawled in blood the word "PIG." In the hallway they found two large steamer trunks, a pair of horned rimmed glasses and pieces of a broken gun grip.

Then when they reached the couch, they were in for a real shock. A young blond woman, very pregnant, was lying on the floor, smeared all over with blood, a rope around her neck that extended over a rafter in the ceiling. The other end of the rope was around the neck of a man lying nearby, also drenched in blood.

As they looked through the rest of the house they heard a man's voice and the sound of a dog. It was William Garretson the caretaker. The officers handcuffed him and put him under arrest.

Later that Saturday night, Leno and Rosemary LaBianca and Susan Struthers, Rosemary's 21-year-old daughter, drove back from vacation trailering their boat. They dropped off Susan at her apartment and drove home to 3301 Waverly Drive in the

Los Feliz area of L.A. They stopped to pick up a newspaper between 1 and 2 A.M.

It wasn't until the next day that anybody came to the house to see them. Frank Struthers, Rosemary's son by a previous marriage, got a ride home. Around 8:30 P.M., as he carried his camping equipment up the driveway, he noticed things that worried him. First the speedboat was still in the driveway. It was very unlike his stepfather not to put the boat in the garage. Then Frank noticed that all the window shades were down — something his parents never did.

He knocked on the door, but got no answer, so he went to a pay phone and called, but again with no response. He finally got in touch with his sister, who came with her boyfriend to their parents' house.

Frank and the boyfriend found the back door open. They left Susan in the kitchen until they had a chance to look around. When the two young men walked into the living room, they saw Leno in his pajamas, lying with a pillow over his head and a cord around his neck. Something was sticking out from his stomach

They rushed out of the house, dragging Susan with them and called the police at the neighbors' house.

Soon an ambulance and police cars arrived. Leno was found with a blood-drenched pillowcase over his head and the cord of a large lamp tied tightly around his neck. His hands had been tied behind him with a leather thong. A carving fork protruded from his stomach and the word "WAR" had been carved in his flesh.



In the master bedroom, they found his wife Rosemary lying on the floor, her nightgown up over her head. She too had a pillowcase over her head and a lamp cord tied tightly around her neck.

In three places in the house, there was writing which appeared to be in the victims' blood: on the living room wall, "DEATH TO PIGS;" on another wall in the living room, the single word "RISE;" and in the refrigerator door, "HEALTHIER SKELTER," misspelled.

## **Chapter 03 - The Slaughtered - Sharon Tate**

Eventually, all of the victims of the massacre at Sharon Tate's home were identified. The young man in the car was a teenager named Steve Parent who had come to visit Garretson, the caretaker. The two victims found outside the house were Abigail Folger and her lover, Voytek Frykowski. In the living room joined by rope were Sharon Tate and Jay Sebring.

A .22 caliber gun had shot Steve Parent, Jay Sebring and Voytek Frykowski. Of the five victims, all but Steve Parent had been stabbed repeatedly. Sebring had been hit in the face and Frykowski had been repeatedly hit on the head with a blunt object.

The stab wounds suggested that only one knife had been used for the wounds. The nature of the wounds indicated that something like a bayonet was the weapon. A strange knife, a

Buck brand clasp-type pocketknife that the housekeeper could not identify was found very close to Sharon Tate's body.



Sharon Tate

Sharon Tate had been a beauty all of her life. Even as a child she had won beauty contests. But her ambition was not to be a model but a movie actress. Finally in 1963 at the age of 22 she found a sponsor in Producer Martin Ransohoff. With Ransohoff's help, she landed parts in the series *Beverly Hillbillies* and *Petticoat Junction*, and the movies *The Americanization of Emily* and *The Sandpiper*.

In 1965, she got her chance at her first feature role in the *Eye of the Devil* with David Niven and Deborah Kerr. In this movie she played the part of a country girl with special magical powers. While in London in the summer of 1966 for the filming of the movie, she met Roman Polanski, who had just made his mark as a director of the movie *Repulsion* with Catherine Deneuve and *Cul de Sac*, which had won many European film awards.

Polanski put Sharon as the lead in his campy film *The Fearless Vampire Killers*. During this period she became Polanski's

lover. This relationship lasted quite a long time and shortly after the filming of *Rosemary's Baby*, he and Sharon married. In 1969, they rented the house on Cielo Drive from Terry Melcher, Doris Day's son and moved in mid-February.

Sharon's career never skyrocketed the way Polanski's did even with her role as Jennifer in *Valley of the Dolls*. A good part of the reason her career was going nowhere is that she never had an opportunity to show off whatever acting skills she had. All the roles she had were ones in which all she had to do was look pretty. Her career took a backseat when she became pregnant. The baby and her husband became the center of her life.

She was a unique lady according to most everyone who knew her. In spite of her beauty and remarkable figure, she was a very down-to-earth woman with none of the phoniness normally associated with starlets. She was very sweet and a bit on the naïve side. Everyone seemed to like Sharon even in a jealous, bitchy town like Hollywood.

Sharon's life was ended by five stab wounds in her chest and back, which penetrated her heart, lungs and liver and caused massive internal hemorrhaging. The remaining eleven wounds simply added insult to her savaged body.

Her little boy, Paul Richard Polanski, died with her.

## Chapter 04 - Abigail & Her Lover

Abigail Folger, Sharon's friend was twenty-five years old when she died. As heiress to the Folger coffee fortune, she had led a very comfortable life. She made her debut in San Francisco in 1961. She graduated from Radcliffe. Like many wealthy girls, she looked for something meaningful to do with her time and became very involved in social work.



Victims Folger and Frykowski

In 1968, she met her lover Voytek Frykowski who introduced her to Sharon and Roman Polanski. She became an investor in Jay Sebring's men's toiletries and hair styling business.

Her social work in the ghettos of Los Angeles was beginning to get to her.

She started to feel that her contribution was futile in combatting the enormous problems of ignorance and poverty. She told her friends that she couldn't get away from her work at the end of the day. "The suffering gets under your skin," she said.

Her relationship with Frykowski was also a source of concern to her. The two of them had become much too dependent upon drugs. Both the frustrations of her social work and her problems with Voytek were the subject of her almost daily conversations with a psychiatrist. She had just about built up enough strength to break off her love affair and try to get her life back on track when twenty-eight stab wounds intervened.

Voytek Frykowski was thirty-two when he died. He had been a long-time friend of Roman's from Poland. He was, according to Polanski, "a man of little talent but immense charm." Always a playboy, he had no visible means of support, essentially living off Abigail's money. While he told people he was a writer, there was no evidence that he was anything but a very charming, extroverted and entertaining "druggie."

However dissipated his life was or charming his personality, it came to an abrupt end with two gunshot wounds, thirteen blows to the head and fifty-one stab wounds.

## **Chapter 05 - Jay Sebring**



Jay Sebring was quite the opposite career-wise from Frykowski. He was the top men's hairstylist in the U.S. and was a major force in the development of a market for men's hair products and toiletries. His customers included Frank Sinatra, Peter Lawford, George Peppard, Paul Newman and Steve McQueen. His new company, Sebring International would franchise men's hair styling shops and his line of hair products.

He was known as a ladies man and dated many different women. One of those women had at one time been Sharon Tate, who broke off her relationship with Sebring when she became involved with Polanski.

There was another, darker side to Sebring's exuberant sex life. He would tie up his girlfriends and occasionally whip them before they had sex. In spite of his flashy, successful outward life, there was reason to suspect that the real Jay Sebring was lonely and insecure.

A gunshot wound and seven stab wounds liberated him from his insecurities.

## Chapter 06 – More victims



Aside from Sharon Tate's baby, the youngest victim was 18-year-old Steven Earl Parent who lived with his father, mother and siblings in El Monte. At around 11:45 P.M. Saturday night, Parent had come onto the estate to visit William Garretson, the caretaker who was living in the guesthouse. Parent's hobby was hi-fi equipment and he wanted to show Garretson a radio he brought with him. Garretson wasn't interested and Parent left the guesthouse around 12:15 A.M.

The young man had just graduated from high school in June and worked several jobs so that he could go to college in the fall.

Instead he got four bullets from a .22 caliber revolver.



Victim Leno LaBianca

Leno LaBianca was a respectable businessman. His father was the founder of State Wholesale Grocery Company and Leno went into the family business right out of college. He was a man who was well liked and did not appear to have any enemies. People described him as a quiet, conservative person.

He died from the multiple stab wounds, twenty-six in all.



Victim Rosemary LaBianca

Rosemary LaBianca was an attractive 38-year-old woman of Mexican origin. She had been orphaned as a child and later adopted when she was twelve. She had worked as a carhop and a waitress. She met her first husband in the 1940's and had two children. After they were divorced in 1958, she met Leno when she was a waitress at the Los Feliz Inn.

Rosemary had become a very successful businesswoman. Not only did she run the profitable Boutique Carriage, but also her prudent investments in securities and commodities left her with an estate of \$2.6 million. Not bad for someone who started life with no advantages and spent most of her career as a waitress and carhop.

She had been stabbed forty-one times, six of which were enough to have caused her death.

On two consecutive nights, seven innocent adults and one unborn child lost their lives in what seemed to be a senseless, motiveless crime.



However one feels about the lifestyles of the wealthy and glamorous, it is hard to imagine any social good coming from these vicious murders. Yet over the years, the perpetrators of these crimes and their persistent followers have tried to suggest that these killings were necessary and desirable.

This author hopes that nobody finishing this story will agree.

## Chapter 07 - Suspicion

In his very thorough book on the case, *Helter Skelter*, Prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi heaps a great deal of fault upon the homicide detectives of the Los Angeles Police Department. One of the examples he provides is the LAPD's slowness to connect the Tate murders with the LaBianca murders the following night and with the murder of Gary Hinman a few days earlier. Some of this fault on the part of the LAPD apparently stemmed from its lack of cooperation with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Office.



## Victim Gary Hinman

The LAPD was approached shortly after the Tate-LaBianca murders by two LA Sheriff's Office detectives who told them of the July 31 murder of music teacher Gary Hinman.

On the wall of the dead man's living room was written in his own blood "POLITICAL PIGGY," which seemed very similar to the words written at both the Tate and the LaBianca crimes scenes. Also, Hinman had been stabbed to death as had victims at the Tate and LaBianca homes.

Amazingly enough, the LAPD detectives refused to examine any connection between the deaths of Hinman and the people at the Tate house. Furthermore, the LaBianca murders were squarely in the territory of the LA Sheriff's Office and the LAPD had no interest.



Bobby Beausoleil

Had the LAPD detectives bothered to listen to the LA Sheriff's Office detectives, they would have heard that the Sheriff's Office had arrested a Bobby Beausoleil for the Hinman murder. A Beausoleil who had been living with a bunch of hippies led

by Charles Manson. But, the LAPD had already decided that the Tate murders were a result of a drug deal gone bad and didn't want to hear about any hippies.

On the other hand, the LAPD had in custody one William Garretson, the caretaker on the Tate estate who claimed that he slept through the entire bloody ordeal. The case against the frightened young man never materialized after he passed a polygraph test.

Officials essentially discounted robbery as a motive for the crimes, even though Rosemary LaBianca's wallet and wristwatch were missing. In the two homes of these affluent victims there were many items of value, which had not been touched by the killers. Small amounts of cash lying around the Tate home were still in evidence and the purses and wallets of the Tate victims were intact.

The LAPD did investigate three alleged dope dealers that had once crashed a party at the Polanski's, but one by one the men were cleared of any involvement.

Likewise, Roman Polanski was interviewed for hours by the police and agreed to a polygraph examination. On August 15, he returned for the first time since the murders to the house on Cielo Drive, accompanied by psychic Peter Hurkos.

Polanski had been devastated by the loss of his wife and son and was enraged at the media circus that he walked into when he got back to the States. He lashed out at the newspapers for suggesting that he and his wife were Satanists, indulging in sex and drug orgies. "Sharon," he said, "was so sweet and so lovely that I didn't believe that people like that existed...She was beautiful without phoniness. She was fantastic. She loved

me and the last few years I spent with her were the only time of true happiness in my life..."

He worried to the police that perhaps he was the target not Sharon. "It could be some kind of jealousy or plot or something. It couldn't be Sharon directly." Polanski did not believe that drugs were a motive for the crimes. His wife, although she had experimented with LSD before they met, was not a big drug user. "I can tell you without question," he told the police. "She took no drugs at all, except for pot, and not too much of that. And during her pregnancy there was no question, she was so in love with her pregnancy she would do nothing. I'd pour a glass of wine and she wouldn't touch it."

## **Chapter 08 - Reward**

One month after the murders, Polanski, along with other contributors such as Peter Sellers, Yul Brynner and Warren Beatty, put an ad in the LA area newspapers for a reward:

**REWARD**

**\$25,0000**

*Roman Polanski and friends of the Polanski family offer to pay a \$25,000 reward to the person or persons who furnish information leading to the arrest and conviction of the murderer or murderers of Sharon Tate, her unborn child, and the other four victims.*

It seemed like it was open season on theories. Everybody had a theory. The Mafia did it, the Polish secret police, etc. Sharon's father, Colonel Paul Tate, a former Army intelligence officer, launched his own private investigation. Letting his hair grow long and growing a beard, he started to frequent the hippie joints, the drug markets, hoping that he would get some tidbit of information that would lead to the murderers of his beloved daughter and grandson.

On September 1, 1969, a 10-year-old boy found a gun on his lawn in Sherman Oaks. He carefully took the .22 caliber Hi Standard Longhorn revolver to his father, who immediately called the LAPD. The gun was dirty and rusty and had a broken gun grip.

A couple of weeks earlier, the LAPD forensics experts determined that the .22 caliber revolver with the broken grip used on the Tate victims was none other than a Hi Standard .22 caliber Longhorn revolver, which was relatively unique and rare. Amazingly enough, two weeks later, an identical gun with a broken grip is turned in to the LAPD, tagged, filed away and completely forgotten.



.22 caliber Longhorn revolver

A couple of days later, the LAPD sent out flyers to all personnel describing the murder gun and attaching a photo of the revolver. The flyer was also sent out to other law enforcement agencies around the country and Canada, while all the time, the gun sat in the Property Section of the Van Nuys division.

Three months after the murders, which had been separately pursued by the LAPD and the LA Sheriff's Office, neither group had made any progress. However, the detectives working for the Sheriff's Office were younger and more aggressive than their LAPD counterparts and came to the conclusion that the Tate and LaBianca cases were definitely connected. They had several suspects, one of which was Charles Manson.



The Spahn Ranch

Finally in mid-October, the LAPD began to talk to the Sheriff's Office and decided to investigate similarities between the murder of Gary Hinman and the Tate-LaBianca crimes. The investigation lead to the Spahn Ranch, which was the home of a hippie group that called itself the Manson Family.

The Spahn Ranch was in the mountains near Chatsworth. In the 1920's it had been the site for old cowboy movies. Author John Gilmore in his book *The Garbage People* describes the isolated old movie set:

*The façade of the main street, a cluster of rundown movie buildings, had become a ghost town with its Longhorn Saloon, the Rock City Café, some stables, weathered props and old trailers. Millions of moviegoers once viewed this old "Wild West" setting, but the dust had settled. Rusted car parts littered the grounds and few visitors passed by...*

Bobby Beausoleil, the man charged with the murder of Gary Hinman, had lived at the Spahn Ranch with the Manson Family.

His 17-year-old girlfriend told police that Manson sent Bobby and a girl named Susan Atkins to Hinman's house to get money from him. When Hinman wouldn't give them the money, they killed him. She also recalled that Susan Atkins mentioned a fight with a man who she stabbed in the legs several times.

When police questioned Susan Atkins, who was still in jail, she admitted that she went with Beausoleil to Hinman's home to get some money he had inherited. When he refused, Beausoleil slashed his face. The two of them kept Hinman prisoner in his home until Beausoleil murdered him a couple of days later.

At that point there did not seem to be any direct connection between Beausoleil and the Tate-LaBianca murders, except for some hearsay that Susan Atkins had stabbed a man in the leg. Gary Hinman had not been stabbed in the leg, but Voytek Frykowski had.

## Chapter 09 – Suzan Atkins



Susan Atkins

While she was awaiting trial for the murder of Gary Hinman, Susan Atkins was placed in the Sybil Brand Institute, L.A.'s women's house of detention. Her bed was next to that of 31-year-old Ronnie Howard. Another inmate, Virginia Graham, was a close friend of Ronnie's. Susan Atkins was a real talker. She had an almost unbelievable story that Ronnie and Virginia listened to with absolute amazement.

Atkins acted like a nut case: dancing and singing at the oddest times, oblivious to the seriousness of the charges against her and bubbling over with laughter and delight without any apparent reason.

In the course of conversation, Susan told Virginia that she was in for first degree murder.



"Did you do it?" Virginia wanted to know.

"Sure," Susan answered as though it were the most natural response in the world. But, the police thought that she only held Hinman while Bob Beausoleil stabbed him. In reality, Susan said, it was she who stabbed Hinman while Beausoleil held him.

She also told Virginia that her lover Charlie was Jesus Christ and he was going to lead her to a hole in the earth in Death Valley where there was a civilization down there. After hearing that story, Virginia was convinced that Atkins was completely nuts.

Several days later on November 6, Susan was again in a talky mood and mentioned the Sharon Tate murder. "You know who did it don't you?"

## **Chapter 10 - Confession**

Virginia said she didn't.

"Well, you're looking at her."

Virginia was horrified and asked why she did such a thing.

"Because we wanted to do a crime that would shock the world, that the world would have to stand up and take notice."

Atkins went on to explain that they selected the Tate house because it was isolated. Susan said they knew who the owner was but they didn't know or care who would be at the house that night.

Susan explained that there were four of them, three girls and a man, all of whom had been given their instructions by Charlie. When they got to the gate, the man cut the telephone wires. Next they shot the teenager four times because he had seen them.

When they got in the house, Susan said that in the living room there was a man on the couch and a woman on the chair reading. Then some of Susan's group stayed in the living room, while Susan went into the bedroom where Sharon was sitting on the bed talking to Jay Sebring. They quickly put nooses over Sharon and Jay's heads so that if they moved they would choke.

Frykowski ran for the door. "He was full of blood," she said and claimed that she had stabbed him three or four times. "He was bleeding and he ran to the front part, and would you believe that he was there hollering 'Help, help, somebody please help me,' and nobody came? Then we finished him off."

"Sharon was the last to die," Susan said with a laugh as she described how Sharon was begging her, " Please don't kill me. Please don't kill me. I don't want to die. I want to live. I want to have my baby. I want to have my baby."

Susan said she just looked at Sharon straight in the eye and said, "Look, bitch, I don't care about you. I don't care if you're going to have a baby. You had better be ready. You're going to

die and I don't feel anything about it...In a few minutes I killed her."

Susan said she saw that there was Sharon's blood on her hand and she tasted it. "Wow, what a trip! To taste death, and yet give life."

Flabbergasted, Virginia asked Susan if it didn't bother her to kill a pregnant woman.

"I thought you understood. I loved her, and in order for me to kill her I was killing part of myself when I killed her," Susan explained. She had wanted to cut out Sharon's baby but there wasn't enough time. She had also wanted to take out all the victims' eyes and squash them against the walls and cut off and mutilate all of their fingers, but they didn't have the chance.

Susan told Virginia that after they left the Tate house she realized that she didn't have her knife with her any more. Not only that, she had left her palm print on a desk, "but my spirit was so strong that obviously it didn't even show up or they would have me by now." The four of them drove to a place where they were able to wash their hands and change their clothes.

## **Chapter 11 – The plan**

Susan ended the story with admitting that they killed the LaBianca's the next night. "That's part of the plan," she explained. "And there's more."

This tale of murder had Virginia's head spinning. She told Ronnie Howard, who didn't believe the story. "She's making it all up. She could have gotten it out of the papers," Ronnie reasoned. Virginia came up with a way to test Susan about whether she was telling the truth.

Some years earlier when the Tate house had been up for lease, Virginia had actually been to see the exterior of the house on Cielo drive. When she saw Susan, she asked her if the house was still decorated in gold and white. Susan said no.

Virginia also picked up some miscellaneous pieces of information that tied Charlie and Susan to that house. It used to belong to Terry Melcher, Doris Day's son. Charlie and Susan were angry with Melcher for some reason that was not clear. She babbled something about Melcher being too interested in money.

Later that day, Susan began to talk again and gave Virginia the list of celebrity targets that were next on their list: Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, Frank Sinatra, Steve McQueen and Tom Jones. It was important to select victims that would shock the world.

She had planned to carve the words "helter skelter" on Elizabeth Taylor's face with a red-hot knife and then gouge her eyes out. Then she would castrate Richard Burton and put his penis along with Elizabeth Taylor's eyes in a bottle and mail it to Eddie Fisher.

Sinatra was to be skinned alive, while he listened to his own music. The Family would then make purses out of his skin and sell them in hippie shops. Tom Jones would have his throat slit, but only after being forced to have sex with Susan Atkins.

## Chapter 12 – More confessions

People who knew them but were not part of the group reported other confessions from Manson and Family members about the same time. On November 12, the L.A. Sheriff's detectives had a chance to interview Al Springer who was a member of the motorcycle gang called the Straight Satans who had been involved with the Manson Family off and on.

The detectives were astonished when Springer told them that a few days after the Tate murders that Manson had bragged to him about killing people: "We knocked off five of them just the other night." Springer stayed clear of Manson after that, but mentioned that Danny DeCarlo, another member of the motorcycle gang lived at the Spahn Ranch with the Family.



Springer and DeCarlo

In the course of the interview Springer asked if anyone had their refrigerator wrote on? "Charlie said they wrote something on the fucking refrigerator in blood...Something about pigs or niggers or something like that."

When the police finally got to Danny DeCarlo, they really got an earful about Charlie and his Family. Not only did DeCarlo confirm their culpability in Gary Hinman's death, but he implicated them in the death of a 36-year-old ranch hand named Shorty, a nickname for Donald Shea. He was killed because he'd tell the owner of the Spahn Ranch what was really happening on his property. "Shorty was going to tell old man Spahn...and Charlie didn't like snitches," DeCarlo explained.



Bruce Davis

DeCarlo had been told what they did to his friend Shorty: "they stuck him like carving up a Christmas turkey...Bruce (Davis) said they cut him up in nine pieces. They cut his head off. then they cut his arms off too, so there was no way they could possibly identify him. They were laughing about that."

Another Family member named Clem told DeCarlo with a big grin that "we got five piggies" the day after the Tate murders.

The two detectives shared this information with the detectives at the LAPD, but the latter did nothing with the information. The L.A. Sheriff's detectives, on the other hand, now focused their

investigation on the Manson family believing that the hippie cult was somehow tied into both the Tate and LaBianca murder cases.

At some point in mid-November, Susan Atkins told her story to Ronnie Howard. Ronnie Howard felt that she had to tell the police about what Susan had revealed, especially since other people were future targets of the group. She asked for permission to contact LAPD, but was repeatedly denied, even though the woman she asked permission was dating one of the Tate case homicide detectives. Virginia Graham, who had been transferred to another facility, was running into the same kind of difficulty when she tried to tell the authorities about Susan.

Finally on November 17, 1969, two LAPD homicide detectives came to Sybil Brand to interview Ronnie Howard. The message was finally beginning to penetrate the collective intelligence of the LAPD that they had just found a gold mine. After they interviewed her, they had her moved for her safety into an isolation unit.

## **Chapter 13 – Charlie**

Just who was this Charlie anyway? Both the LAPD and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Office started to dig through the rubble of his heavily documented 36 years. As information came in about him, it was no surprise that he was in trouble. If ever a kid had a miserable start in life Charles Manson was it.

An illegitimate and unplanned child, he was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, November 12, 1934 to Kathleen Maddox, a promiscuous sixteen-year-old who drank too much and got into a lot of trouble. Two years later, Kathleen filed suit against Colonel Scott of Ashland, KY, for child support, which she was awarded, but never received. Kathleen was briefly married to William Manson who gave his name to the boy.

Charles Manson in Nuel Emmons' book *Manson in His Own Words* describes the Maddox family:

Kathleen was the youngest of three children from the marriage of Nancy and Charles Maddox. Her parents loved her and meant well by her, but they were fanatical in their religious beliefs. Especially Grandma, who dominated the household. She was stern and unwavering in her interpretation of God's Will, and demanded that those within her home abide by her view of God's wishes.

My grandfather worked for the B&O Railroad. He worked long hard hours, a dedicated slave to the company and his bosses...He was not the disciplinarian Grandma was...If he tried to comfort Mom with a display of affection, such as a pat on the knee or an arm around her shoulder, Grandma was quick to insinuate he was vulgar.

For Mom, life was filled with a never-ending list of denials. From awakening in the morning until going to bed at night it was, "No Kathleen, that dress is too short. Braid your hair, don't comb it like some hussy. Come directly home from school, don't let me catch you talking to any boys. No, you can't go to the school dance, we are going to church..." In 1933, at age fifteen, my mother ran away from home.



Other writers have portrayed Mom as a teenage whore...In her search for acceptance she may have fallen in love too easily and too often, but a whore at that time? No!...In later years, because of hard knocks and tough times, she may have sold her body some...

Charlie never knew his father and never had a real father figure. His mother was the kind that children are taken away from and placed in foster homes. Kathleen had a habit of disappearing for days and weeks at a time, leaving Charlie with his grandmother or his aunt. When Kathleen and her brother were both sentenced to the penitentiary for armed robbery, Charlie got sent off to live with his aunt and uncle in McMechen, West Virginia. The aunt was very religious and strict in stark contrast to his mother's permissiveness.

When Kathleen was released from jail, she was not responsible enough to take care of him, preferring her life of promiscuity and hard drinking to any kind of normal lifestyle. There was no continuity in his life: he was always being foisted on someone new; he moved from one dingy rooming house to another; there were only transitory friendships that he made on the streets

## **Chapter 14 – Sold for a pitcher of beer**

Manson tells the story that circulated within his family: "Mom was in a café one afternoon with me on her lap. The waitress, a would-be mother without a child of her own, jokingly told my Mom she'd buy me from her. Mom replied, 'A pitcher of beer

and he's yours.' The waitress set up the beer, Mom stuck around long enough to finish it off and left the place without me. Several days later my uncle had to search the town for the waitress and take me home."

John Gilmore in his insightful book called *The Garbage People* describes how Charlie adapted to this life of emptiness and violence:



Charles Manson at 14

When he was nine, he was caught stealing and sent to reform school and then later when he was twelve, he was caught stealing again and sent to the Gibault School for Boys in Terre Haute, Indiana, in 1947. He ran away less than a year later and tried to return to his mother who didn't want him. Living entirely by stealing and burglary, he lived on his own until he was caught. The court arranged for him to go to Father Flanagan's Boys Town.

He didn't last long at Boys Town. A few days after his arrival, thirteen-year-old Charlie and another kid committed two armed robberies. A few more episodes like that landed Charlie in the Indiana School for Boys for three years. His teachers

described him as having trust in no one and "did good work only for those from whom he figured he could obtain something."

## **Chapter 15 - Institutional politicians**

In 1951, Charlie and two other boys escaped and headed for California living entirely by burglary and auto theft. They got as far as Utah when they were caught. This time he was sent to the National Training School for Boys in Washington, D.C. While he was there they gave him various tests which established that his IQ was 109, that he was illiterate and that his aptitude for everything but music was average.

His keepers said this about him: "Manson has become somewhat of an 'institution politician.' He does just enough work to get by on. Restless and moody most of the time, the boy would rather spend his class time entertaining his friend. It appears that this boy is a very emotionally upset youth who is definitely in need of some psychiatric orientation."

That same year, Dr. Block, a psychiatrist examined him, noting "the marked degree of rejection, instability and psychic trauma." His illegitimacy, small physical size and lack of parental love caused him to constantly strive for status with the other boys. "This could add up to a fairly slick institutionalized youth," Dr. Block concluded, "but one is left with the feeling that behind all this lies an extremely sensitive boy who has not yet given up in terms of securing some kind of love and affection from the world."

For a short time, things started to look up for Charlie. His aunt had agreed to take care of him and his chances for parole were good. Shortly before the parole hearing, Charlie held a razor blade against another boy's throat while he sodomized him. Charlie was transferred to the Federal Reformatory at Petersburg, Virginia, where he was characterized as definitely homosexual, dangerous and safe only under supervision.

In September of 1952, he was sent to a more secure institution in Chillicothe, Ohio. His keepers there saw him as "criminally sophisticated despite his age and grossly unsuited for retention in an open reformatory type institution." For some reason, Manson suddenly changed his attitude. He was more cooperative and genuinely improved educationally so that he was able to read and understand basic math. This improvement led to his parole in May of 1954 at the age of nineteen.

At first he lived with his aunt and uncle, then his mother for a short period of time. Early in 1955, he married a waitress who bore him a son, Charles Manson, Jr. Charlie worked at various low-paying jobs and augmented his income by stealing cars. One of them he took to Los Angeles with his then pregnant wife. Inevitably, he was caught again and eventually found his way to the prison at Terminal Island in San Pedro, California.

## Chapter 16 – The manipulator

His wife had the good sense to divorce him after he spent three years in jail. In 1958, he was released on parole. This time Manson took up a new occupation — pimping. He supplemented this income by getting money from an unattractive wealthy girl in Pasadena. In 1959, Manson was arrested on two federal charges: stealing a check from a mailbox and attempting to cash a U.S. Treasury check for \$37.50

This time Manson was lucky, a young woman pretended she was pregnant and pleaded with the judge to keep him out of jail. The judge believed the story and had pity on him. While he sentenced Charlie to ten years, he then immediately placed him on probation. A couple of months later, he was arrested by the LAPD for stealing cars and using stolen credit cards, but the charges were dropped for lack of evidence.

Near the end of 1959, Manson conned a young woman out of \$700 in savings to invest in his nonexistent company. To make matters worse, he got her pregnant and then drugged and raped her roommate. He fled to Texas but was arrested and put in prison to serve out his ten-year sentence. "If there ever was a man who demonstrated himself completely unfit for probation, he is it," the judge said. Eventually at the age of 26 he was sent to the U.S. Penitentiary at McNeil Island, Washington.

His record there described Charlie as having "a tremendous drive to call attention to himself. Generally he is unable to succeed in positive acts, therefore he often resorts to negative

behavior to satisfy this drive. In his efforts to "find" himself, Manson peruses different religious philosophies, e.g. Scientology and Buddhism; however, he never remains long enough with any given teachings to reap meaningful benefits."

By 1964, he hadn't changed much, as least as viewed by prison officials: "His past pattern of employment instability continues...seems to have an intense need to call attention to himself...remains emotionally insecure and tends to involve himself in various fanatical interests."

Whatever those "fanatical" interests were, they included an obsession with the Beatles. Manson's guitar was another obsession. He felt that with the right opportunities he would be much bigger than the Beatles. In prison, he became friends with the aging gangster, Alvin Karpis. The former Public Enemy Number One and sole survivor of the Ma Barker gang taught Charlie how to play the steel guitar. The prison record noted in May of 1966 that "he has been spending most of his free time writing songs, accumulating about 80 or 90 of them during the past year...He also plays the guitar and drums, and is hopeful that he can secure employment as a guitar player or as a drummer or singer."

Karpis had some interesting insights into Charlie's true personality: "There was something unmistakably unusual about Manson. He was a runt of sorts, but found his place as an experienced manipulator of others. I did feel manipulated, and under circumstances where it hadn't been necessary."

On March 21, 1967, Charlie was released from prison and given transportation to San Francisco. He was 32 years old and more than half of his life had been spent in institutions. He protested his freedom. "Oh, no, I can't go outside there...I knew

that I couldn't adjust to that world, not after all my life had been spent locked up and where my mind was free. I was content to stay in the penitentiary, just to take my walks around the yard in the sunshine and to play my guitar..." The prison officials ignored his protest and unleashed him on the world again.

## **Chapter 17 – Charlie's followers**

As poorly prepared for life on the outside as he was, Charlie was able to blend in with his guitar into the hippie scene in San Francisco. The high-point of the Haight Ashbury culture was past and the only ones left were the diehards and the last ones to the party. Charlie was never impressed by the hippie culture, but he lived off it and it didn't expect much from him. He learned about drugs and how he could use them to influence people.

Charlie started to attract a group of followers, many of whom were very young women with troubled emotional lives who were rebelling against their parents and society in general. He battered down their inhibitions and questioned the validity of their notions of good and evil. For the most part, Charlie's followers were weak-willed people who were naïve, gullible and easy to lead. LSD and amphetamines were additional tools by which Charlie altered their personalities to his needs.

In spring of 1968, Manson and his followers left San Francisco in an old school bus and traveled around. Eventually, he and a few of his group moved in with Gary Hinman, a music teacher with a house on the Canyon Road. Through Hinman, Charlie

met Dennis Wilson of the Beach Boys. Manson and his girls starting hanging around Wilson every chance they had. Manson tried to leverage the acquaintance with Dennis Wilson but it didn't go anywhere. Eventually, Wilson became uncomfortable with Manson and his girls and told them to split.

About that time, Manson found George Spahn and conned the old man into letting him and his followers live on the Ranch. Squeaky Fromme, one of Charlie's devotees, made sure that the elderly man's sexual needs were fully satisfied. The Manson Family survived by a combination of stealing and scavenging. Much of their food was taken from what the supermarkets discard each day.

Charlie was still hell-bent to market his music to somebody. Through his contacts with Dennis Wilson and another man in the music business, Charlie met Doris Day's son Terry Melcher. The plan was to interest Melcher in financing a film with Manson's music.

At that time, Melcher owned the house on Cielo Drive that was eventually leased to Roman Polanski and Sharon Tate. At various times, Manson had been by the property in a car with Dennis Wilson.

Melcher was asked to listen to Charlie and decide whether or not he wanted to record them. Melcher went out the first time and listened to Charlie sing his own compositions and play the guitar. Some of the girls sang and played tambourines. Melcher went out a second time a week later, but the music was nothing he was interested in recording. What he didn't realize is that Manson had built this recording opportunity with Melcher into something very real in his mind. When nothing



came of it, Charlie was plenty angry and blamed Melcher for his disappointment.

## **Chapter 18 – Helter skelter**

Another facet of Charlie, although not nearly as important to him as his music, was his philosophy. To a large extent, this "philosophy" was a con, something he dreamed up to impress his followers, but he probably believed some of it.

The core of this philosophy was a kind of Armageddon. Charlie preached that the black man was going to rise up and start killing the whites and turn the cities in to an inferno of racial revenge. The black man would win this war, but wouldn't be able to hang onto the power he seized because of innate inferiority.

In 1968, Charlie was forecasting racial war when all of a sudden the Beatles released their White Album, which had the song "Helter Skelter." The lyrics fit Charlie's theory to a tee: "Look out helter skelter helter skelter helter skelter/She's coming down fast/ Yes she is/Yes she is." Now, the racial Armageddon had a name. It was Helter Skelter.

Helter Skelter would begin, according to one of Charlie's devotees, "with the black man going into white people's homes and ripping off the white people, physically destroying them. A couple of spades from Watts would come up into the Bel Air and Beverly Hills district...and just really wipe some people out, just cutting bodies up and smearing blood and writing things on

the wall in blood...all kinds of super-atrocious crimes that would really make the white man mad...until there was open revolution in the streets, until they finally won and took over. Then the black man would assume the white man's karma. He would then be the establishment..."

Charlie and the Family would survive this racial holocaust because they would be hiding in the desert safe from the turmoil of the cities. He pulled from the Book of Revelations, the concept of a "bottomless pit," the entrance of which, according to Charlie, was a cave underneath Death Valley that led down to a city of gold. This paradise was where Charlie and his Family were going to wait out this war. Afterwards, when the black man failed at keeping power, Charlie's Family, which they estimated would have multiplied to 144,000 by that time, would then take over from the black man and rule the cities.

"It will be our world then," Charlie told his followers. "There would be no one else, except for us and the black servants. He, Charles Willis Manson, the fifth angel, Jesus Christ, would then rule the world. The other four angels were the Beatles.

How did this hokey philosophy result in the blood bath at the Tate and LaBianca houses? Well, Charlie the Prophet had already forecast that the murders would start in the summer of 1969, but as the summer went on, it looked as though the "prophet" was wrong. "The only thing blackie knows is what whitey has told him," he said to one of his followers just before the murders. "I'm going to have to show him how to do it."

After the LaBianca murder, one of Manson's girls, Linda Kasabian, was told to take Rosemary LaBianca's wallet and credit cards and leave them in the ladies room of a gas station

in an area heavily populated by blacks. That way, when, theoretically, the credit cards would be used by some black woman, it would appear that blacks were responsible for the LaBianca deaths. However, the credit cards were never used or turned in to the authorities.

## Chapter 19 - Prosecution



Vincent Bugliosi

On November 18, 1969, 35-year-old Deputy District Attorney Vincent T. Bugliosi was assigned the Tate-LaBianca murder cases. Aaron Stovitz, head of the Trials Division of the District Attorney's Office, was assigned as a co-prosecutor, but was later pulled off for another case.

Bugliosi had an unbelievably difficult job ahead of him. Not only did he need to prove that members of the Manson Family were responsible for the Tate and LaBianca murders, but he had to prove the Charles Manson ordered them to do it. While

Manson had sent four Family members to the Cielo Drive massacre, he did not go himself. He did, however, tie up Rosemary and Leno LaBianca and gave three others instructions to kill them.

The prosecutor had to establish Charlie's dominance over the members of his Family and convince a jury that Charlie had sufficient motive to want these seven people dead.



Charles (Tex) Watson

At the beginning, he didn't have much of a case. There was Susan Atkins' story as related to Virginia Graham and the stories that Al Springer and Danny DeCarlo told the police, along with some comments from other people interviewed about Manson and his followers. It wasn't until December 3 that Bugliosi knew for certain who of Manson's Family had actually been involved with the murders. Manson had sent Charles "Tex" Watson, Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel, and Linda Kasabian to the Tate residence. Accompanying him to the LaBianca home was Watson, Krenwinkel, and Leslie Van Houten. Atkins, Kasabian and Steve "Clem" Grogan waited in the car.

Atkins' testimony was deemed vital to the prosecution, but she was not offered immunity. However, if she cooperated with the prosecution, they would not seek the death penalty against her in any of the three cases: Hinman, Tate and LaBianca. The extent to which she cooperated would affect whether the prosecution would press for first-degree murder, life sentence, etc.

Things started to look up for the prosecution when a fingerprint of Patricia Krenwinkel's was found on a door inside of Sharon Tate's bedroom. This physical evidence was added to the .22 caliber bullets found at the Spahn Ranch (the gun used at the Tate murders was a .22 caliber revolver).

The first order of business for Bugliosi was to get grand jury indictments against Manson and the individuals involved in the murders. When Susan Atkins testified to the grand jury, she gave the same bloodcurdling story to them that she gave to Ronnie Howard and Virginia Graham. She showed absolutely no sign of guilt or remorse for the ghastly things she did. The jurors stared at her in disbelief.

Biker Danny DeCarlo testified that he, Manson, Watson and others had used a .22 caliber Buntline revolver for target practice at the Spahn Ranch.

He also said that the three-strand nylon rope that was used in the Tate murders was identical to the rope used at the ranch.



Linda Kasabian

It only took the grand jury twenty minutes to hand down the indictments Bugliosi sought: Charles Manson, Charles "Tex" Watson, Patricia Krenwinkel, Susan Atkins, and Linda Kasabian, seven counts of murder and one count of conspiracy to commit murder; Leslie van Houten, two counts of murder and one count of conspiracy to commit murder.

## **Chapter 20 - Evidence**

A few days later, the wallet belonging to Rosemary LaBianca was found in the ladies restroom at the service station where Linda Kasabian left it. The wallet had gotten lodged in the toilet tank. This piece of corroborating evidence was necessary to bolster Susan Atkins' story in case she decided to repudiate her testimony when Charlie started to pressure her.

Another critical piece of evidence was finally "found:" the unusual .22 caliber Hi Standard Longhorn revolver with the broken gun grip which had been found by Bernard Weiss' son and turned over to the police three and a half months earlier. Bernard Weiss after reading about the indictments in the newspaper called LAPD Homicide to see if the revolver he had turned in was the murder weapon.

After being passed around to several people, an officer told Weiss "We don't keep guns that long. We throw them in the ocean after a while."

Weiss said, "I can't believe that you'd throw away what could be the single most important piece of evidence in the Tate case."



Leslie Van Houten

"Listen, mister," was the official answer. "We can't check out every citizen report on every gun we find."

Weiss called a newscaster, who in turn, called the LAPD. The gun was "found" where it had been "lost" in the Van Nuys police station. After the tests had been run, there was no doubt

that it was the murder weapon. One thing remained to be done — linking Manson to that particular revolver. Eventually Randy Starr provided that link. He once owned the revolver and had given it to Manson.

Another important development occurred when the police were contacted by the man who owned the place that the Tate killers had used to clean up right after the murders. The man had remembered the car and the license plate, which was traced to a Spahn Ranch employee, who had let Manson and his girls borrow his car.

## Chapter 21 - Motive



Manson mugshot

Even though it was not necessary for the prosecution to establish the motive for the crimes, Bugliosi considered motive an important piece of evidence, especially since Manson was not physically present at the Tate murders. Bugliosi set out to establish that the primary motive was Helter Skelter: Manson's



belief that he could start a race war and personally gain from it. But certainly, there was the connection between Manson's anger at Terry Melcher and the crimes committed on his former property. To further bolster that motive, it was established that two different people had chased Manson off the property a few months before the murders.

Rudi Altobelli, the man who bought the Cielo Drive property from Melcher, was an important man in the entertainment industry. He represented stars like Katherine Hepburn and Henry Fonda. Because he traveled so much, he rented out the property to the Polanski's and stayed in the guesthouse when he visited the area.

In March of 1969, Manson went to the house where four of the five murdered people were staying. Charlie said he was looking for Melcher. Sharon's houseguest sent him away in not too friendly terms, but not before he saw Sharon, who wondered what the "creepy looking guy" wanted.

Then Manson went to the guesthouse and told Rudi Altobelli that the people in the main house told him to ask at the guesthouse. Altobelli admonished Manson for bothering his tenants and told him he didn't know where Terry Melcher had moved.

Manson knew the layout of the house and he knew who was living in it. It was quite possible that the "Helter Skelter" crimes were committed at that particular house because Charlie wanted to pay back the residents for rejecting him and scare the daylights out of Melcher for not backing his recording career.

Manson himself became a major player as he appeared frequently in the courtroom. Bugliosi studied him and described the behavior he witnessed:

Though he had little formal schooling, he was fairly articulate, and definitely bright. He picked up little nuances, seemed to consider all of the hidden sides of a question before answering. His moods were mercurial, his facial expressions chameleon-like. Underneath, however, there was a strange intensity. You felt it even when he was joking, which, despite the seriousness of the charges, was often. He frequently played to the always-packed courtroom, not only to the Family faithful but to the press and spectators as well. Spotting a pretty girl, he'd often smile or wink. Usually they appeared more flattered than offended.

## **Chapter 22 – The trial**

The trial officially began in mid-June of 1970. Judge Charles Older presided. He decided that the jury, once selected, would be locked up until the end of the trial — "to protect them from harassment and to prevent their being exposed to trial publicity." Older was given a bodyguard and his home was provided with protection.

The twelve jurors selected were five women and seven men with a range of ages spanning from 25 to 73. While many occupations were represented, one was a retired deputy sheriff.

In his opening statement, Bugliosi characterized Manson as "vagrant wanderer, a frustrated singer-guitarist...who would refer to himself as Jesus Christ...and was a killer who cleverly masqueraded behind the common image of a hippie that of being peace loving...but was a megalomaniac who coupled his insatiable thirst for power with an intense obsession for violent death."

Bugliosi stressed that Manson commanded his followers to commit the murders, but that "the evidence will show that they were very willing participants in these mass murders..."

Manson, who first appeared to the jury with a bloody X that he had carved into his forehead, insisted on defending himself. He was assisted by an older lawyer named Irving Kanarek, who was legendary for his attention to detail (much to the frustration of witnesses, judges and juries) and Ronald Hughes, "the hippie lawyer" who was Leslie Van Houten's attorney.

Critical to Manson's defense was maintaining control of the Family. If his followers testified against him, he was doomed. He had to set up and maintain an effective communications network between himself and the other Family members, particularly those under indictment. He needed the Family members who were not in jail to communicate his wishes to those who were.

Just how sinister this communication would be was evidenced by what happened to Barbara Hoyt. Hoyt was one of the prosecution's witnesses, who was threatened that if she testified at the trial, she and her family would be killed. She was then lured to Honolulu by one of Manson's girls and given a lethal dose of LSD. Fortunately, she got to the hospital in time for doctors to save her.

Manson was able to exert a lot of control over his girls in the courtroom. By then Susan Atkins had repudiated her testimony to the grand jury. They came up with bizarre stories that would implicate themselves but spare their beloved Charlie.

As the evidence was presented, things were looking bad for Charlie and the girls. A pattern was developing, according to Bugliosi: "The more damaging the testimony, the more chance that Manson would create a disturbance, thereby assuring that he — and not the evidence itself — would get the day's headlines. Often these disturbances would result in Judge Older removing them from the courtroom.

The drama hit a high point when Manson got into an argument with Judge Older and jumped towards the judge, yelling, "someone should cut your head off!" Atkins, Krenwinkel and Van Houten stood up and started chanting in Latin.

When Manson and his girls were removed from the court, a shaken Judge Older instructed the jury to disregard what they heard and saw, but the effect was indelible. The jury got a first hand chance to see the real Charles Manson.

After 22 weeks of trial, the Prosecution rested. It was time for the defense attorneys to do their part. Judge Older told the lawyers that were assisting Manson and defending the girls to call their first witness. The defense responded: "Thank you, Your Honor. The defendants rest."

The court was stunned. Then the three girls shouted that they wanted to testify. The judge and everyone else was bewildered. The girls had decided that they would testify that *they* planned and committed the murders themselves and that Charlie had nothing to do with it.

Ronald Hughes, Leslie Van Houten's "hippie lawyer" objected and stood up against Manson's transparent ploy: "I refuse to take part in any proceeding where I am forced to push a client out the window." A few days later, Ronald Hughes had disappeared. After the trial was over, his body was found wedged between two boulders in Ventura County. One of Manson's followers later admitted that the Manson Family had murdered him.

A new lawyer had to be found immediately to take over the defense. Maxwell Keith was appointed. When the court reconvened, Manson and the girls created a disturbance suggesting that Judge Older "did away with Ronald Hughes," which resulted in them being removed again from the courtroom.

For the most part, the lawyers for the defense put forth a disappointing presentation. Paul Fitzgerald, Patricia Krenwinkel's attorney, spent more time defending Manson than his client. Daye Shinn, Susan Atkins' lawyer made a brief defense for his client. Irving Kanarek went on for days in his rambling style. Finally, Judge Older accused him of filibustering. Manson, apparently also tired of Kanarek's exhausting argument, shouted at him: "Why don't you sit down? You're just making things worse."

## Chapter 23 – Verdict



Vanhouten, Atkin and Krenwinkel return to court

On January 15, 1971, seven months after the start of the trial, the jury began to deliberate. Nine days later, it came to a verdict. Security was very tight around the Hall of Justice since a Manson follower had stolen a case of hand grenades from a Marine Base and reportedly had planned a special event on what they were calling "Judgment Day."

The jury had found Charles Manson, Patricia Krenwinkel, Susan Atkins and Leslie Van Houten each guilty of murder and conspiracy to commit murder.

Charles "Tex" Watson, because of extradition proceedings and other legal complications did not stand trial until later in the year and was also found guilty of murder and conspiracy to commit murder.



### Manson Girls shave their heads after Manson verdict

On March 29, 1971, the jury completed deliberations on the penalty phase of the trial. Manson and the three female defendants had shaved their heads for the reading of their verdicts.

"We, the jury in the above-entitled action, having found the defendant Charles Manson guilty of murder in the first degree...do now fix the penalty as death."

Patricia Krenwinkel responded: "You have just judged yourselves."

"Better lock your doors and watch your own kids," Susan Atkins said.

All four defendants received the death penalty.

On April 19, 1971, Superior Court Judge Charles H. Older pronounced the judgment: "It is my considered judgment that not only is the death penalty appropriate, but it is almost compelled by the circumstances. I must agree with the prosecutor that if this is not a proper case for the death penalty, what should be?"

The judge shook the hands of each juror. "If it were within the power of a trial judge to award a medal of honor to jurors, believe me, I would bestow an award on each of you."

At a later date, Robert Beausoleil, Charles Manson, Charles Watson, Bruce Davis and Steve Grogan were tried and convicted for the murders of Gary Hinman and Donald (Shorty) Shea.

Bugliosi wrote," it had been the longest murder trial in American history, lasting nine and a half months; the most expensive, costing approximately \$1 million; and the most highly publicized; while the jury had been sequestered 225 days, longer than any jury before it. The trial transcript alone ran to 209 volumes, 31,716 pages, approximately eight million words."

In 1972, the California Supreme Court abolished the death penalty in the state and all of the defendants are serving life sentences.

## **Chapter 23 - Afterwards**

Right after the trial, there were a number of articles written that were favorable to Manson and his followers. For a while, it appeared that he might become some sort of cult hero. That never really materialized, however, and there is very little left of the Manson Family today. However, Manson still receives a large amount of mail, much of it from young people who want to join the Family.





Lynette Fromme

There have been several plays about him, movies and documentaries and even an opera. Charlie's music has been played by the Guns N'Roses rock band.

Why, when other murderers that were responsible for many more deaths than Manson are forgotten by most people, does Manson remain so notorious?

Perhaps because the people they murdered and the ones they planned to murder were celebrities. Also, perhaps because of Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme's failed attempt to assassinate President Gerald Ford in 1975, even though it is unlikely that Manson put her up to it.

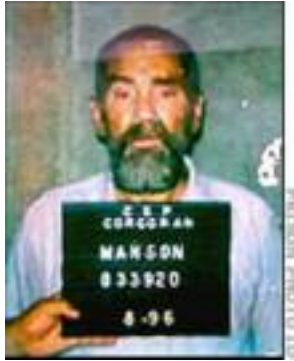
Bugliosi believes the notoriety continues because it is the most bizarre and strange, almost unbelievable, murder case in history. He thinks that Manson has become a "metaphor" for evil, catapulting him to near mythological proportions...People worry about this man the way they worry about cancer and earthquakes."



An older Manson

Manson endures, even as a sixty-year old, comparatively passive prisoner, unlikely to ever be paroled. Bugliosi sums up the continued fascination with the more fanatical elements of society: "Today, almost every disaffected and morally twisted group in America, from Satanists to neo-Nazi skinheads, has embraced Manson and the poisons of his virulent philosophy. He has become their spiritual icon, the high priest of anti-establishment hatred."

## Chapter 25 – Charlie in prison



Charles Manson prison photo

Self-styled guru and one time leader of the Manson family, he is serving a life sentence for murder after his original death penalty was commuted. He is currently being held in California's Corcoran State Prison. Although Manson, who turns 67 in November 2001, has been in prison for the last 33 years, his notoriety has not diminished as he has the dubious distinction of having received more mail than any other prisoner in the United States prison system.

According to a report on the *Access Manson* website, one of the many such sites dedicated to the subject, Charles Manson is currently under "disciplinary custody" in the prison's Security Housing Unit, known as "The Hole." He has been housed in the unit since February 2000 after he allegedly threatened prison staff. Being housed in the Security Housing Unit means Manson is kept isolated in his cell 23 hours a day, forbidden to

interact with other prisoners and kept handcuffed while being moved within the prison.

According to a recent letter Manson sent to the website, he is due to be released from the unit in February 2002.

Manson is no stranger to the harsh conditions of the Security Housing Unit having spent eight stretches there for various offenses. The first was in 1989 when he was transferred to Corcoran from San Quentin State Prison after guards found a bullet in one of his visitor's pockets during a routine search.

During that time his period of detention was extended for "destruction of state property" when he allegedly tore a telephone receiver from the wall unit and "assaulted" a prison officer. The period was later extended to five years after he was accused of plotting to assassinate the President of the United States.

Following his release in May, 1994 he was transferred to the prison's Protective Housing Unit (PHU) and was allowed contact with other inmates and restricted privileges.

Three months later he was returned to "The Hole" pending an investigation of another alleged plot to assassinate the President. No charges were laid and he was released after three weeks.

Manson managed to stay out of trouble until March 1995 when he was charged with narcotics possession. Once again his period of detention was extended for allegedly threatening staff. In June 1995 he returned to the PHU for over a year until he was given a further two weeks detention for threatening a prison staff member with a chair.

In March 1997 he was charged with "conspiracy to distribute narcotics" and transferred to Pelican Bay State Prison in Crescent City, California, one of the toughest institutions in the country. During this period the media reported that Manson was the kingpin of a multi-million dollar drug distribution empire. After serving 14 months he was transferred back to PHU at Corcoran.

Also in 1997, Manson's parole hearing was videotaped and broadcast by *Court TV*. It was his ninth hearing. As before, parole was refused on the grounds that Manson "would pose an unreasonable risk and danger to society and a threat to public safety if released from prison."

In response, Manson stated:

"I accept this decision. That's cool. What I'd like for you to do in your own minds personally, everybody that has a personal mind of their own, could possibly consider that the longer that you let this conviction stand, and this little Helter Skelter scheme of the District Attorney to give his particular reality over into the play, that's going to be the reality that they're perpetuating. That's not the reality that I'm perpetuating. I'm not saying that I wasn't involved. I'm saying that I did not break man's law nor did I break God's law. Consider that in the judgments that you have for yourselves. Good day. Thank you."

Seven months later he was back in "The Hole" once again, charged with further "illegal business dealings" and served another two months.

During the following eight months in PHU, he was placed on "restricted status" for refusing to conform to prison regulations and had his visits and phone calls restricted.

As of August 2002, Manson continues to shuttle back and forth between "The Hole" and the PHU.

Manson's most recent and tenth parole hearing was April 24, 2002. He refused to attend it — allegedly because he insisted upon not attending the hearing shackled and the prison would not allow him to attend without handcuffs. No one was surprised when the board refused to grant him parole. The next hearing will be in 2007.

## Chapter 26 - Leslie Van Houten



Leslie Van Houten

Is currently a prisoner at the California Institution for Women, Frontera.

According to CNN, on June 28, 2002, Van Houten, 52, was denied parole. It was her fourteenth application.

One central issue is that prosecutors claimed that she stabbed Rosemary LaBianca 14-16 times, whereas Van Houten maintains that Rosemary was already dead when the stabbing occurred. Rosemary LaBianca was stabbed 42 times.

According to Court TV's John Springer, "after the murders, Van Houten wiped the house clean of fingerprints and changed into a pair of Rosemary LaBianca's shorts. She grabbed cheese and chocolate milk from the couple's refrigerator before the trio hitchhiked back to the ranch where the Manson family lived."

Van Houten told the board, "My heart aches and there seems to be no way to convey the amount of pain I caused. I don't know what else to say."

The parole board suggested that Van Houten needed more therapy "to further understand the enormity of her crime." However, Van Houten's psychiatric evaluations "clearly indicate that she is not a present danger to society and should be found suitable for parole."

Linda Deutsch of Associated Press writes, "Of all the members of Charles Manson's murderous "family," Leslie Van Houten was always seen as the different one — the youngest, the one most vulnerable to Manson's diabolical control."

According to CNN, this latest hearing was supposed to be Van Houten's best chance for winning release because Superior Court Judge Bob Krug said that Van Houten, "has proven to be a model prisoner in the 30 years since her incarceration, completing all available prison programs and assisting other inmates with these programs...She has earned two college

degrees and has maintained a clean disciplinary record in prison...she is serving a life sentence without parole, a sentence unauthorized by law."

Deputy District Attorney Stephen Kay was present at the hearing to argue against parole for Van Houten: "This is not a garden-variety murder case and it should not be treated as such. I commend her for her good acts in prison and she appears to be a model prisoner. I think she should spend the rest of her life being a model prisoner. I feel because of what she did, she is not entitled to parole."

Judge Krug stated that it was the despicable nature of the crime that is preventing Van Houten from winning parole and gave the board two months to show evidence of why she should not be paroled and what exactly she must do to win parole.

Angela Smaldino and Louis Smaldino, relatives of the LaBiancas, were present at the hearing to voice their opposition to granting Van Houten parole. Also, some 30 letters were received by the parole board urging that parole be denied.

Christie Webb, Van Houten's lawyer, highlighted the fact that Van Houten was under heavy influence of drugs when the LaBianca murders occurred. "All that LSD changed the chemistry of her brain...I certainly have sympathies for the victims' families. But Leslie and her family are also among Charles Manson's victims. We are talking about one horrible night of violence in her life when she was clearly not in her right mind."



## Chapter 27 – Where are they now

### Charles "Tex" Watson

Is also serving a life sentence for the Tate/LaBianca murders, and is currently housed in Mule Creek State Prison in Northern California. During his time in prison, Watson has converted to Christianity, written several books, married, fathered four children and trained as a minister of religion. His wife, Kristin and their family live close to the prison where she operates a Web site for their ministry called *Abounding Love Ministries, Inc.*

On October 10, 2001, Watson was turned down again for parole at his thirteenth parole hearing and was told not to apply for another four years.

The Associated Press stated, "Watson made a personal appeal to the two-member panel of the California Board of Prison Terms, saying he takes full responsibility for his crimes and is now a different person who would never do such things again." However, a prison correctional counselor said that "Watson still poses an unpredictable threat to the community should he be released."

Debra Tate, the sister of the brutally murdered Sharon Tate Polanski, tearfully urged the board to deny Watson's request.

## Susan "Sadie" Atkins



Susan Atkins

Is serving her life sentence at California Institution for Women at Frontera. During her time in prison Atkins has married twice. She was denied parole at her last hearing in February 2000. It was the tenth time she had applied.

During the hearing, Atkins told the parole board,

"I don't have to just make amends to the victims and families, I have to make amends to society. I sinned against God and everything this country stands for."

Sharon Tate's sister Debra also attended the hearing and read from a letter written by her father, Paul:

"Thirty one years ago I sat in a courtroom with a jury and watched with others. I saw a young woman who giggled, snickered and shouted out insults, even while testifying about

my daughter's last breath, she laughed. My family was ripped apart. If Susan Atkins is released to rejoin her family, where is the justice?"

Atkins will not be eligible for parole for at least four more years.

### **Patricia "Katie" Krenwinkel**



Patricia Krenwinkel

Is also serving life in prison at California Institution for Women at Frontera. She did not appear at her last parole hearing in 1997. Her next hearing is scheduled for 2002.

### **Linda Kasabian**

Was granted immunity for giving evidence against Manson and other family members. Following the trial she left California. Her present whereabouts are unknown but she is alleged to

have committed other criminal offences and served time in prison.

### **Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme**

Was convicted of attempting to assassinate President Gerald L. Ford in 1975 and sentenced to life in prison. She is currently housed in the Administrative Unit of the Federal Medical Facility at Carswell, Texas. Originally housed in a prison in San Diego, she was later transferred to the Federal Correctional Institution in Pleasanton, California. Since that time she has served time in the Federal Correctional Institution in Alderson, West Virginia, a maximum security prison in Lexington, Kentucky and a maximum security unit at Marianna, Florida.

### **Sandra Good**

Was convicted of "issuing threatening communications through interstate commerce" in 1975 and served ten years at the Federal Correctional Institute, Terminal Island, California. She was later transferred to the Federal Correctional Institute in Pleasanton and later to a prison in Alderson. Following her release, she moved to an area close to Corcoran prison, where Manson is held, and tends his website.

### **Steve "Clem" Grogan**

Convicted and jailed for his part in the murder of Spahn ranch hand, Donald "Shorty" Shea, although Shea's body was never found. In 1979, Grogan agreed to tell authorities the location of the body in exchange for parole. Shea's remains were found

and Grogan was paroled in 1986. His present whereabouts are unknown.

### **Bruce Davis**

Is serving a life sentence in the California Men's Colony, San Luis Obispo, for the murders of Gary Hinman and Donald Shea. He attended his twentieth parole hearing in July of 2000. Parole was again refused.

### **Bobby Beausoleil**

Convicted in 1969 for his part in the murder of Gary Hinman, he remains in prison despite numerous appeals and bail applications. He married in 1982 and is currently serving out his time in Oregon after being transferred there in 1993 at his own request.

He has spent his 30-plus years in prison focused on electronic music and video production. He has also cultivated a number of sponsors, which has resulted in the creation of a video production and audio recording studio in the prison. He is now the director of the Los Hermanos video project and has made 9 videos for "at risk" children. He has also made videos that help prisoners develop cognitive skills that will hopefully reduce recidivism.

### **The Crime Scene**

According to an August 1999 *Reuters* news service report the house at 10050 Cielo Drive, rented by Roman Polanski and Sharon Tate at the time of the murders, was demolished in

1994. An Italian- style mansion has been erected in its place and the street address has been changed. The new mansion was originally priced at \$12.5 million in an attempt to cash in on the locations notoriety but no sale was made. Recently, the price was reduced to \$7.7 million but the house still remains vacant.

Real estate agents in the area believe that it will probably stay vacant as most agencies refuse to list it.

### **Spahn Ranch**

The original headquarters of the Manson family is also on the market. The 43-acre property at Chatsworth, minus the ranch house, which burnt down some time ago, is selling for \$2.7 million.

## Bibliography

The Crime Library particularly recommends two books on Manson. *Helter Skelter* by Vincent Bugliosi is a very thorough examination of the Manson case and trial by the prosecutor. John Gilmore's *The Garbage People: A Trip to Helter Skelter and Beyond with Charlie Manson and the Family* provides good insight into the personalities of Manson and the various Family members, as well as their life together.

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