

In 1994, Oliver Stone directed a film, using a Quentin Tarantino-written script about a pair of lover serial killers, (partially using the "Bonnie and Clyde" theme) entitled "Natural Born Killers." This film portrayed the main two characters who, at the point between innocent teen-ager and experienced adult, defy society, and get lost in their own little world, killing, and robbing whoever they come across. Although still on Earth, they live by their own morals, beliefs, and at the end of the film, expose the media and the law for its flaws. The truth to this movie is that it was not made to reproduce the Bonnie and Clyde theme, but it was almost an exact parallel to one man, with similar experiences in the late nineteen-sixties; Charles Manson. Oliver Stone stated later, in an interview related to the movie "The idea was that he would become more like Charlie Manson." (describing an interview with Mickey Knox, the serial killer in Natural Born Killers.) The parallels from the film to the most stunning murders in the sixties can be seen from the similarities in the interviews between Manson and Knox, to the setting and time period. The point being that the movie was later considered one of the most daring-movies of all time, thus just scraping the surface of the severity of the story behind Charles Manson and his so-called "family."

Charles Manson was born near 1935 to an unknown father, and a prostitute. Not much is known about his past, just abstract things. Manson went to a foster home at age three, and his mother later was arrested for robbery. From then to the age of eighteen and

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past, he was moved around from foster home to foster home, juvenile prison to juvenile prison. His prison record included two counts of forgery, two counts of mail theft, check forgery, probation violation, pimping, and GTA. It was around this time in his life that he met the early members in his family.

Patricia Krenwinkle was an average girl growing up in the suburbs. She got average grades, and sang in her school's glee club. She had one sister, a mother, and their father was an insurance agent. At age eighteen, she was a secretary, and had just joined the hippie movement. She met Charles Manson at a party at the house of her sister's friend. He was playing an original, yet sad song on his guitar. She was drawn to him by his karma, mood, and attitude, which led to their sleeping together that same night. He inticed her, by words of love and happiness, to an extent that she was happy whenever he was around, and never wanted to leave him. Two days after meeting him, they, with others, left for San Francisco. *3 transition sentence*

Leslie Van Houten had a similar upbringing. She was a suburbanite, who sang in a church choir, and was later the homecoming princess at her high school. Other than the fact that her father left the family when she was young, she had an uneventful early life. At her late teenage years, she wanted more than normal girls had at that time. She heard about Manson, how he had the answers, and how closely he portrayed christ. She too met him, and fell into what might not be called "love", but possibly an obsession, with him and with the happiness that he appeared to bring with him. With Manson she later explained her actions "I followed him because I anticipated a positive change."

Others like Krenwinkle and Van Houten had gotten word of Manson's unearthly

beliefs and prophecies. Charles "Tex" Watson, once an All-American high school athlete, later became Manson's biggest believer. Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, whose father was an Aeronautical Engineer, was also a follower, and later was the acting head of the family when Manson was not around. These people, and dozens others followed Manson out West, first to San Francisco, and then further South, winding up at a place called Spahn Ranch.

Charles Manson would later have a "family" of these followers, who literally did whatever he asked. They found happiness in his and each other's presence. It was mainly a piece of the hippie movement, a way to stray from the norm and live opposite of what one was raised to learn. The structure was simple; he was the leader, the christ, the martyr of the group, and they listened to and did what he said. This type of control, however innocent the motives, could be considered a cult, and was later labeled as such. Yet, the main principals behind their family was, and only was, Manson's will. [The Mind and Motives of Charles Manson, and society's counteractions are best described when his beliefs, his actions to support and uphold these beliefs, and society's laws to stop him are taken into account.] - T

Manson has been proclaimed by many to be insane. The question of whether or not he is insane is a question of opinion, which cannot have a "true" right answer. However, his beliefs, which fueled his and his family's actions between 1968 and 1975 conflicted with society's morals, around which this country revolves. The severity of Manson and his family's doings are reasoned behind his beliefs toward himself, his family, nature, other people, and the law.

Charles Manson, on many occasions, has compared himself to Jesus Christ. He

believed that he was Christ, and the world had made him suffer. just as Christ did two thousand years ago. He also had his family believing that he was christ. He said in an interview, when asked how he got his followers to believe that he was Jesus, "I was just being myself..... all men <sup>is</sup> Jesus Christ." He also believed that he was Satan, to come to Earth and start Helter Skelter, what he called a prophetic armageddon.

His family, he believed, had two main spiritual duties: to learn to be him and to act like him, and to also learn and believe in what he did. He and the family lived with each other, living off, what he would consider love, for each other, and the earth. He told them that the happiness is in love. He believed that they should, when necessary, die for him, and not feel remorse. He preached to them that death was not bad, just another high. The family eventually adopted these beliefs, thus putting them at his complete control.

Nature, according to Manson, was one of the most precious things in life. He subscribed to the belief that ATWA (Air, Trees, Water, Animals) kept humans alive, and we should treat ATWA with equal respect. He once metaphored that ATWA was a ship, and the human wastes to the earth, pollution, and forest destruction was like a hole in the bottom of the boat. He, when living at Spahn Ranch, would tell his family to let the scorpions crawl over them, as they were animals, not meant to endanger the family.

Helter Skelter, revenge <sup>2</sup> ~~were~~ part of his beliefs. Humans had corrupted the Earth and ATWA, and were ignorant about it. Manson had felt that society dumped him, and he felt great rage for society, and people, and later found an anthem for his rage. When asked

about his actions, many years after the murders, he had said that he is a part of everyone, that he mirrors people, because they shaped him. The Beatles' "White Album" included

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songs (Helter Skelter, Revolution #9, Piggies, and others) that Manson felt documented his

rage toward society. When at the ranch, he and the family listened to these songs many times over. Manson thought he had heard his name being said in one of the songs. Their thoughts about Helter Skelter, or the armageddon, were brought out by these songs. In Revolution #9, he heard machine gun fire, the oinking of pigs, and a man saying "rise."

His beliefs would later incite Helter Skelter, using his family as a type of "army."

Some people believe that he just brutalized people, that the murders were for no cause,

and

he was just insane. Yet, more than twenty-five years after he and his family were

convicted, he still has the same beliefs, and still can logically explain his actions.

August 9, 1969 and August 10, 1969. These two days carry a dark shadow over

them. Two of the first ritual cult-style mass murders in U.S. history. The first of the two changed the mood of the entire population of L.A. for almost a year. These murders were the coming of Manson's Helter Skelter, the armageddon of the Earth.

Spahn Ranch is a small, run-down ranch near L.A. It was owned by George

Spahn, who was then a decrepid, eighty-year-old wrangler, whose kids had gone away,

and

whose wife had died. He was depressed near death, when a group of hippies came to his

door. They agreed to take care of him, and the ranch in exchange for living space. He

agreed. The group, otherwise known as Manson's family, had Squeaky take the most care

of George, which included cleaning, cooking, making love to him, and other various tasks.

The family, which consisted of twenty-six people, began its cultish life in the desert.

"We played a lot of music, we did a lot of drugs, we loved, we were happy" replies

Manson when later asked about life at the ranch. The family, did these things, and more.

03 They lost their humanity at the ranch. Life was lived "now", for "today." Manson told them to always "live today." The family members never talked about the past, never thought about the past or the future. The initiation of female family members was just that they joined. Male members would pick any woman they wanted and made love to them. Manson's thoughts on this was that that's what women are for, to bait the men. The women were not allowed to deny who picked them. They had no watches, to forget time, and society. Manson would walk up to members daily, and have them mirror his actions, to try to be exactly like him. They took hundreds of acid trips, they did marijuana, and during the acid trips, he would have them reenact the crucifixion. During these times he would ask them if they would die for him, if they would "be him." The members had started to live Manson's reality. Manson would hear about the discrimination against the blacks in the South, and this was partially where he based his proof that Helter Skelter was near. the members started getting more guns, knives, and other weapons. They had lookouts at the ranch. They also robbed places to get money. Leslie Van Houten even robbed her father to get money for the cause.

By August 8, 1969, Manson had already killed a few people for various reasons. These drug dealers, and bums that he did kill are civil compared to the two ritualistic murders, done for Helter Skelter. Manson once tried to get a record contract from a producer, living at 10050 Cielo Dr. in Bel-Air, which later failed. Manson, who had been telling the family for months that they needed to start Helter Skelter themselves, needed money to bail out a member from jail. near midnight, on August 8, he called a meeting about this. He sent Pat Krenwinkel, Susan Atkins, Linda Kasabian, and Tex Watson to

10050 Cielo Dr. to get money. He had told the women to do whatever Tex told them, and

was remembered saying "I don't care how you do it, but do it, and get it done now!"

Later

that night, just after midnight, August 9, they pulled up to the driveway. Tex cut the telephone wires, and, bypassing the electric gate, the women scaled a fence and climbed up a hill to the yard. This house was no longer occupied by the record producer of Manson's acquaintance, but instead a beautiful new actress named Sharon Tate. Her lover and soon-to-be husband Roman Polanski, who was a movie director, was in London at the time. She was pregnant with their eight-month-old baby. She, Jay Sebring, Voytek Frykowski, and Abigail Folger were at the house for the night. Sebring was a world-wide known ~~movie~~ <sup>hair</sup> dresser, owning Sebring International. Folger was the heiress to the Folger coffee fortune. Frykowski was an actor, her lover. Back behind the house in a small shack was William Garretson, who was a caretaker of the house, who would later be an important witness. At the time when the women jumped the fence and were waiting for Tex, they heard four gunshots. He has seen Steven Parent driving up to the residence. He was an acquaintance of Garretson, coming by to visit. He was killed instantly, four shot at point-blank range. Tex then caught up with the women, and walked to the front door. It was locked, so he went through an open window next to the door, letting the women in first. They got the four people into the living room, together. Sebring, who tried to protect Sharon, was bludgeoned in the head once, then shot and stabbed by Tex. The other three people were panicked at this time. Frykowski tried to run out the back door, but was caught up to by Tex. He was clubbed in the head several times, shot, and stabbed. It was

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later counted that he was stabbed fifty-one times. Before his death, Abigail Folger had been tied up, and now was starting to get free. She ran out the back, pursued by Krenwinkle. She was ran down, and stabbed to death. Krenwinkle later recalled her saying "I'm already dead..." (later found to have been stabbed twenty-eight times.) Finally, Sharon Tate, the only one left, was begging for the life of her baby to Tex, who replied "Look bitch, I have no mercy for you." He then stabbed her ~~stabbed~~ to death. After these five brutal murders, the killers wound up taking only seventy dollars before leaving. When returning to the ranch, Manson was remembered saying only two things; "Do you have any remorse?", and "Don't tell anyone."

"Sharon Tate, four others slain in ritualistic murders." These were the headlines the following day in the Los Angeles Times. Even the New York Times, which never printed murder cases on the cover page, printed the Tate murders on the cover for almost a week. The night of August 9, 1969, Leno Labianca and his wife, Rosemary, were driving back from a vacation at Lake Isabella. It was about 3:00 AM. August 10 when they finally arrived back at their house. Manson had picked Krenwinkle, Van Houten, and Tex to go to their house. Manson still needed money, and he said that he went to a party at the neighboring house once before. He had asked Van Houten, "Can you be me, do you believe enough in me to do this?" This time, Manson came with them in a seperate car. They arrived, and walked through the front door. Tex tied up Leno, who was reading the paper in the living room. At this time, Manson had left, leaving no evidence of his presence. The two girls took Rosemary into the bedroom. Manson had told Tex "Don't

scare them like last time, just kill them." Leno was stabbed to death while Rosemary was forced to listen. Tex then came in, stabbed her to death <sup>and she</sup> ~~also~~. He then handed a knife to Van Houten, who then stabbed Rosemary in the back fifteen times. Pat then went out to the dead body of Leno. She took a fork, and stabbed him on the stomach multiple times, and finally left the fork in him. No money was taken.

During the first set of murders, They had written "Piggies" and "Helter Skelter" in Tate's blood on the door. In the second set, they wrote with Leno's blood "Rise". "Death Pigs", and "Helter Skelter" on the walls before they left. These cultish writings were the only things that the police could find in common to the two murders.

By 1970, Manson and his followers had killed more people than the victims in the Tate-Labianca murders, but the severity of the two back-to-back slaughters shocked the nation. Nobody had seen killings like these. Unprovoked, unnecessary, and inhuman.

Four months after the two murderings, police finally caught up with and arrested Manson and his followers for the murders. The cultish actions and Manson's control over the family, however, didn't stop when they were all in custody of the law. It had taken years after the trials for the family to break Manson's will over them.

Manson and four of his followers were arrested four months after the murders. He, along with Tex Watson, Susan Atkins, Leslie Van Houten, and Pat Krenwinkel were charged with first degree murder counts on Steven Parent, Sharon Tate, Abigail Folger, Voytek Frykowski, Jay Sebring, Rosemary Labianca, and Leno Labianca. The main pieces of evidence were the revolver that Tex used in the Tate murders, and fingerprints around the residences. The revolver, which was later found in a field near the site, had no

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gun grip, which was found in three pieces at the Tate crime scene.

Along with the seven known murders, Manson and his followers had collected a "tab" of bodies around the L.A. area, for various reasons. These others include Nancy Warren, Clida Delaney, Marina Habe, Mark Walts, Gary Hinman, Donald Shea, John Haught, James Sharp, Doreen Gual, and Ronald Hughes, the last one, in late 1970. Also, Squeaky, Manson's acting head of the family, had attempted to assassinate president Gerald Ford in 1975.

During the trial, Manson had his three female followers do many strange things to confuse the court, including carving X's in their heads, always making stupid symbols in the courtroom, and even taking full blame for all the murders. However, the prosecution, led by Vincent Bugliosi, had verbal evidence from a testimony given to them by Linda Kasabian. She, once a family member, had traded information to the prosecution for a full pardon. It was recalled that a family member screamed at her from outside the courthouse "You're going to kill us all!" After the end of the trials, Manson and his family were all found guilty, partly due to the testimony of Kasbian, and also to the evidence found. They all got the death penalty, which was abolished about a year after the trials. Their sentences were reduced to life in prison. Since then, up until the present, Manson has been living in solitary confinement, without parole. Pat Krenwinkle, Leslie Van Houten, and Susan Atkins are still in prison, are allowed parole attempts, and never receive them. Tex Watson is in jail, but was allowed to marry, and has three kids.

The law of America and the state of California stopped Manson from committing

more murders, and mostly put an end to his family. However, the country has been shocked for twenty-five years hearing about Manson's family. The severity of the Tate-Labianca murders has never diminished, and even though the murders are credited to Manson's ideas, the innocent times of a hippie cult, the family's life at Spahn Ranch can also be credited to him, and his ideas.

To this day, Manson's influence over his followers, and the entire U.S. is still lingering. He always told people he was a crazy old man, but many people followed him. However, his beliefs, and the beliefs of his followers have changed in twenty years.

Cult behavior, for the most part, sprang up after Manson's family affairs in the late 1960's. One good example of the related lifestyle is David Karesch and his followers in the early 1990's. According to Krenwinkle, the scariest thing is when Manson gets a follower from the younger generation. For example, Axel Rose recorded one of Manson's songs, and wears a Manson T-shirt at concerts. "The biggest misconception is people thinking that what we did was OK," says Krenwinkle in a recent interview. *whole same*

To this day, Manson still believes the same things he has all his life. He also says that he had no part of the Tate-Labianca murders, and that the government treated him unfairly. Manson will be in solitary confinement for the rest of his life, saying these things to countless reporters who choose to hear his side of the story.

Pat Krenwinkle, Leslie Van Houten, and Susan Atkins, the three women followers tried with Manson are all in jail to this day. They all have dropped Manson's beliefs, and live commendable lives. Atkins has converted to Christianity. Van Houten and Krenwinkle, who hold jobs, and help kids with drug problems, say "The thing about Charlie is that he says he's crazy to hide under people's awareness. In this way, he can get

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people to do things for him, without them questioning his motives." This is what they say happened to them, and countless others, who subscribed to Manson's beliefs, and suffered the consequences.

Manson's murder case was the most extraordinary of the time period, especially taking into account the hippie era. However, the murders partially stemmed from the era. <sup>As</sup> he had so many people under his control, believing his every word, what he thought <sup>of</sup> turned into a reality. Oliver Stone compliments Manson, when describing his interview with Geraldo Rivera, saying that Manson had the upper hand of the discussion the entire time. Intelligence is not one and the same with sanity, however, which might have explained Manson's retaliation against society. It is of somebody's opinion, to decide whether or not they think Manson is insane. Yet, His mind and motives can explain why he acted how he did, and why society didn't approve.

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#### Works Cited