

Jayla Cintron  
Kieran Reichert  
3/31/2021

## The Manson Family Cult

Pop culture has had its fair share of interesting controversial stories...but one in particular that always catches my gaze is The Manson Family Cult. We all know Charles Manson was a peculiar person but what exactly was it that drove him and his members to do what they did? This alone intrigues me so much just because everything they did was so brutal and left such a huge mark on Hollywood history for all of the wrong reasons. It's one of those things you don't just forget about overnight. Even though I only know a vague description of some of the things that happened I would like to fall in the loophole even more and get an in depth look into the entire thing. When I do my research for this topic, I expect it to mostly be surface level descriptions of the events that occurred that don't really bother getting into the provocations and everything else that led up to them. However, if I do end up finding some in depth information I'll be surprised and stand corrected.

Serratore "What You Need to Know About The Manson Family Murders" *Smithsonian Magazine*, July 25th, 2019

This article starts off by giving a quick description about the Quentin Tarantino film "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" that's based off the events that actually took place with the cult in the late sixties and how Tarantino's main goal of the film was to dig deeper into the case. The writer then starts to talk about Charles Manson's rocky upbringing and how when he grew up he would purposely get himself in and out of prison because he was so used to being institutionalized and even enjoyed it. But one time when he got released he took it upon himself to jump around different cities in California to search for "young people looking to embark on a new way of life." so that he could obtain a group of followers and be able to make them do whatever he wanted by manipulating them. Him and his followers that were mostly women would then flee to Los Angeles in hopes of pursuing music careers and since Manson had a way with words it led him and his followers to end up charming, mingling, and befriending high end celebrities including Dennis Wilson who was a member of The Beach Boys. "Through Wilson, Manson met other music-industry players and grew increasingly fixated on stardom, all the while exercising greater and greater control over the group that came to be known as the Manson Family." , and since it was mostly girls that were in his cult they were known as the "Manson Girls" and Charles would use them to "lure other men to both join the group and to support it."

The family would eventually reside in a ranch where Charles reportedly “instructed others at the ranch to take LSD and listen to him preach about the past, present and future of humanity.” and the members were restricted from wearing glasses or having their own money. After having his music career flop, “Manson became increasingly focused on violence.” and that is when all the killing started. The writer then gets into The Manson Family’s most infamous killing which was the murder of Sharon Tate. “On the night of August 8, 1969, Manson Family members Tex Watson, Patricia Krenwinkel, Susan Atkins, and Linda Kasabian (who would later turn state’s witness against the others) drove to Tate and Polanski’s home (the director was out of town working on a film). The eight-months pregnant Tate, who appeared in 1967’s *Valley of the Dolls* and was considered one of Hollywood’s most promising up-and-comers, was relaxing at home with her friends: celebrity hairstylist Jay Sebring, coffee heiress Abigail Folger, and Folger’s boyfriend Voytek Frykowski. None of them had any tangible connection to Manson or the Family other than being physically in the house previously occupied by someone Manson knew (Terry Melcher)...Tate and her friends all died at the hands of Watson, Krenwinkel, and Atkins, as did Steven Parent, a teenaged friend of the house’s caretaker who happened to be pulling out of the driveway as the killers arrived.” Earlier in this article, it is mentioned that the house Tate bought from Manson’s former friend Terry Melcher was where his music career flopped and the house was a constant reminder of the failure. The day after those killings, The Manson Family went out and committed more murder’s. “They drove to the house of grocery business executive Leno LaBianca and his wife, Rosemary, in the Los Feliz area of Los Angeles. LaBianca was totally unknown to the Manson Family—some of its members had reportedly been to a party in the neighborhood. According to Bugliosi, the LaBiancas were chosen at random after several hours of driving around upscale Los Angeles neighborhoods.” Afterwards, the writer then concludes the article by talking about how The Manson Family murder’s shook up hollywood because of how it “touched upon some of the deepest fears of the American psyche—the idea that you might not be safe at home, for one, and the idea that even ‘good girls’ are a few moves away from committing unspeakable crimes.”

I must say that this article is quite informative. It does a good job at breaking down significant events into different parts in a way that helps whoever is reading it understand what exactly went on. It even gave me new information on things I didn’t know before, like the fact that Manson had a music career and that his cult was mostly girls. Also the fact that Sharon Tate was a victim of his simply because she bought the house that used to be his former friends. Though this was a well executed article, I still do have some questions, like why didn’t the writer get more into what happened when they got caught and went on trial for it? After they talk about the murder of the LaBianca’s they just move on to the conclusion where they talk about how it stunned hollywood. I’m also curious as to why they only discussed two of the murders, I would have liked to hear about more. Regardless of that, this read was still really easy to understand the writer did a good job at getting their point across, this article informs my research because it gave me a basic rundown of why Manson became the way he was and how he started his entire

cult in the first place. So it's safe to say I finished this article more informed than I was when I started it.

This writing is a magazine entry, so I'm assuming one of the writer's for that magazine were the one that wrote this. I feel like they did a good job at writing this entry. However, they probably only looked for the fundamental information and wrote about that to give a simple rundown since it's a magazine brand that's mainly focused on science, history, and nature so most of its readers would probably rather hear about something else.

“Charles Manson and the Manson Family” *Crime Museum, August 19th, 2019*

This article starts off by listing all of the members of the Manson Family as well as their victims. They then get into discussing 3 of the murders, first one being the Hinman murder. It starts off by talking about how one of the members of the cult scammed Bernard Crowe in an effort to get some money for Manson. After the failed attempt, Crowe threatened the Manson Family and “soon after, Manson shot Crowe under the false pretense that Crowe was part of the Black Panthers, an African-American leftist organization. However, Crowe did not die, and Manson feared retaliation from Crowe. In order to escape and move into a new territory away from the Spahn Ranch (The Manson Family compound), Manson needed money. In the midst of Manson's escape plan, he was told that his friend Gary Hinman was coming into some money from an inheritance.” So Gary shortly became the main target, and in order to get what he wanted Manson sent 3 of his other members to go and try to convince Hinman to give them the money but it didn't work. So Manson took matters into his own hands and held him hostage for a few days. “After being held hostage for days, Manson came over with a sword and slashed Hinman's left ear. Ultimately, Beausoleil murdered Hinman by stabbing him twice in the chest. Hinman's blood was used to smear “political piggy” on the wall along with the Black Panther's paw to implicate the Black Panther party.” After this murder, Manson didn't get arrested but “Beausoleil was arrested when he was found sleeping in Hinman's vehicle, wearing the bloody clothes worn during the stabbing, and with the murder weapon concealed in the trunk tire.” The writer then moves on to the families next murder which, once again, is about the most talked about one that's about Sharon Tate. This paragraph starts off by talking about how Tate and her friends were hanging out at her house at night when her husband was out of town “Those spending the night with Tate were Abigail Folger, Wojciech Frykowski, and Jay Sebring. Into the late hours of that night, Tate's neighbors claimed to have heard suspected gunshots but did not alert the authorities. There were also reports of a man's screams coming from the Tate residence. Later in the night, a private security guard hired by property owners also heard gunshots coming from the Tate residence and proceeded to notify the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).” The morning after it was reported that the housekeeper came home to all of their dead bodies, the writer then gets into detail about what exactly went down and how Tate and her friends were brutally murdered. After that, they move on to the third murder they write about which is the LaBianca murder. “On August 10, 1969, the night after the Tate murder, Manson and six of the Manson family members (Leslie Van Houten, Steve Grogan, Susan Atkins, Linda Kasabian, Patricia Krenwinkel,

and Charles Watson) committed another murder. Unlike the Tate murder, Manson joined in on the LaBianca murder because he felt that there was not enough panic among the victims from the Tate murder.” They drove around looking for a victim in a neighborhood where they attended a party a year back, eventually, they arrived at a home close by that was owned by the LaBianca’s. “There are the several differing accounts from Manson and six Manson family members, so the exact happenings of the murder are not certain. Manson claims that he approached the home alone and returned later to bring Watson along. When Manson and Watson were in the residence, they tied up the LaBianca couple with a lamp cord and with pillowcases covering their heads. Manson reassured the couple that they would not be hurt and that they were being robbed. All the cash was collected and the bounded Rosemary was returned to her room. Soon after, Van Houten and Krenwinkel entered the premises with the instructions from Manson to kill the couple. Manson left the residence and instructed Van Houten and Krenwinkel to follow Watson’s orders.” Watson along with Van Houten and Krenwinkel then proceeded to stab both Leno and Rosemary Labianca in the stomach multiple times despite their cries for them to stop. After they were finished “On the walls of the living room, “Death to pigs” and “Rise” were written in Leno’s blood. On the refrigerator door, a misspelled “Halter [sic] Skelter” was smeared.” Then the three members fled the scene. The day after the killing, Rosemary’s son, daughter, and her daughter's boyfriend went to the house where they then discovered the bodies and alerted police immediately. The writer then talks about the investigations for each case that then resulted in warrants being sent out for Watson, Krenwinkel, and Kasabian. The writer then talks about Manson's motives towards starting a cult which is based off “Manson’s philosophy of the upcoming Apocalypse was the true motive behind the killings. He told his family that “Helter Skelter” was coming. According to Manson, Helter Skelter was the uprising of a racial war between “blackies” and “whiteys”. He would gain from the racial war by hiding himself and his family in a cave located in Death Valley until the “war” ended.” They then write about the Manson Family when they went on trial and how they all ended up being guilty and were sentenced to life in prison but afterwards they get into what all of the members are doing currently and it turns out that most of them are still in prison, Manson passed away in 2017 from gastrointestinal bleeding, Steve Grogan was paroled, and Kasabian was granted immunity.

This read was far more informative than the last one was. I say this with confidence because I have no questions to ask because the writer already went in depth enough and answered all of my initial questions surrounding this situation. However, they could have written about all of the other victims' murders instead of only writing about three, so in future sources I hope to find more information surrounding those. Otherwise, if I could say anything to the author I would tell them they should have done that but regardless, they still were spot on about explaining everything.

This article was written on the website for The Crime Museum so it’s clear that they know what they’re talking about and made sure to share this information with people who are into crime stories like this which I can also assume would be their target audience. The authors writing style was unbiased and mostly fact based which makes this source highly credible.

“How Charles Manson Got Under America’s Skin- For Nearly 50 Years” *History.com* , December 1st, 2017

This article starts off with a three minute video discussing how Manson orchestrated the horrific murders and manipulated his followers by making them use drugs and have group sex with each other. It also mentions how Manson’s prophecy also known as “Helter Skelter” was based on a Beatles song that he was convinced confirmed his sick beliefs and fueled him to enforce them onto his followers harshly. He even brainwashed his followers into thinking he was a messiah. The video then mentions how The Manson Family's reputation made hippie commune life during the 60’s look bad by “confirming” all the negative stereotypes about drug use and living freely like they did. After the video finishes, the article then gets into how the ranch they lived in got raided and the followers were taken into custody but Charles wasn’t there when it happened so he got away with it, and in an interview with one of the ex members in 2013, she says “Charlie said that if he was in jail for a few days or even for years, he’d start acting like ‘Crazy Charlie,’ being strange and not making sense until (the authorities) got so frustrated with him that they’d let him go.” and she later goes on to tell the interviewer that Manson told them not to believe it because it was just an act. Manson kept his word, because while in prison “Charles Manson held the world in fascinated thrall for more than four decades of high-security incarceration, right up to his death on November 18th. Though he was a prisoner, Manson orchestrated everything. And the world couldn’t help but ogle.” It’s also mentioned that “He’d already had considerable practice. In previous prison stints, and in juvenile-delinquent facilities before that, the tiny (5 ft.-3 in.) Manson was often confronted by much larger inmates. Too small and weak to fight them off, he startled them instead with wild rantings and gyrations. This apparent insanity often unsettled the bullies enough for them to leave Manson alone.” So not only was he infamous for running a cult and killing people, he was also known for turning heads and causing scenes whenever he felt it was necessary to do so, and he kept this up by doing multiple interviews and even getting engaged to a 27 year old superfan of his named ‘Star’ that would visit him in prison every weekend when he was 80 years old - but he shortly called the engagement off. There was also another follower in 1975 named Squeaky who attempted to murder the then president Gerald Ford, “ failing only because her semi-automatic handgun failed to fire. Manson denied putting Fromme up to it, but most people believed he’d surely had some influence on the act—that his malignant reach extended far beyond his prison walls. Not even the president was safe from Charles Manson.” The article then talks about how when Manson was convicted for Sharon Tate and the LaBianca murders, it gave him the publicity he truly craved and his reputation got him a best selling book and a spinoff movie. The writer concludes this article by saying “Ultimately, Manson didn’t care what we thought of him, only that we did. He made sure of it.”

This read was the most interesting one by far. It did a good job at describing Manson’s personality and how he never hesitated to do just about anything to get what he wanted. Though it doesn’t really go in depth about the actual murders like the other one did, it still did a good job at giving details about the way him and his followers acted and a rundown of what they would do together outside of the killings. This document informs my research because it gave me an idea of who these people (especially Charles) were and helps recognize how not okay in the head they were.

This writing was made on the History website so it's clear that their target audience is anybody interested in all types of history. I feel like the writer did a good job at explaining how Manson got under peoples skin (hence the title of the article) and everything they wrote matches up with the way it's advertised on the home page.

To sum everything up, I found so many things in this research that I would have never suspected to find when I first started this paper. For example, Manson's prophecies being based off a Beatles song and him making his followers take huge doses of LSD while they listened to him preach about it was quite the shocker, also the fact that after the groups killings they would write stuff on the walls with the victim's blood after killing them. I learned that this cult was darker than I anticipated, and the fact that I didn't even need to hear about all of their killings to come to that conclusion say's a lot about their cult. What I learned is important because it fed my curiosity as well as kind of reminding me to always keep one eye open when I sleep because you never know what kind of crazy is lingering around you. Overall, I feel like people into crime, cults, and pop culture would like to hear about this stuff just for the entertainment and intrigue of it all.