

Charles Milles Manson (born Charles Milles Maddox, November 12, 1934)<sup>[2]</sup>:136–7 is an American convicted mass murderer and former cult leader who led what became known as the Manson Family, a quasi-commune that arose in California in the late 1960s. Manson's followers committed a series of nine murders at four locations in July and August 1969. In 1971 he was found guilty of first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit murder for the deaths of seven people – most notably of the actress Sharon Tate – all of which were carried out by members of the group at his instruction. Manson also received first-degree murder convictions for two other deaths. Manson was originally sentenced to death, but his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment when California invalidated the state's death penalty statute in 1972. He is currently serving multiple life sentences at California State Prison in Corcoran.

Manson believed in what he called "Helter Skelter", a term he took from the Beatles' song of the same name. Manson believed Helter Skelter to be an impending apocalyptic race war, which he described in his own version of the lyrics to the Beatles' song. He believed the murders would help precipitate that war. From the beginning of his notoriety, a pop culture arose around him in which he ultimately became an emblem of insanity, violence and the macabre.

At the time the Family began to form, Manson was an unemployed former convict, who had spent half of his life in correctional institutions for a variety of offenses. Before the murders, he was a singer-songwriter on the fringe of the Los Angeles music industry, chiefly through a chance association with Dennis Wilson, drummer and founding member of the Beach Boys. After Manson was charged with the crimes of which he was later convicted, recordings of songs written and performed by him were released commercially. Various musicians have covered some of his songs.

**The Tate murders** were the notorious and brutal killings of five people and one unborn child by members of the Manson Family on August 8-9, 1969. Four members of the Family invaded the home of married celebrity couple, actress Sharon Tate and director Roman Polanski at 10050 Cielo Drive in Los Angeles. They murdered Tate (who was eight months pregnant), along with three friends who were visiting at the time, and an 18-year-old visitor, who was slain as he was departing the home. Polanski was not present on the night of the murders as he was working on a film in Europe.

The murders were carried out by Tex Watson under the direction of Charles Manson. Watson drove, with Susan Atkins, Linda Kasabian, and Patricia Krenwinkel, from Spahn Ranch to the residence on Cielo Drive. Manson, an aspiring musician, had previously attempted to enter into a recording contract with record producer Terry Melcher, who was a previous renter of the house along with musician Mark Lindsay and Melcher's then-girlfriend, actress Candice Bergen. Melcher had snubbed Manson, leaving him disgruntled. Many law enforcement officers have theorized that Manson ordered the attack in retaliation, thinking that Melcher still owned the house, but which had by then been rented to Polanski.

Extracted from the police case file

## TATE FIRST HOMICIDE INVESTIGATION PROGRESS REPORT

DR 69-059 593

DECEASED : FOLGER, Abigail Anne, CC N o . 69-8794

FRYKOWSKI, Wojciech, CC N o . 69-8793

PARENT, Steven Earl , CC N o . 69-8792

POLANSKI, Sharon Marie, CC No. 69-8796

SEBRING, Thomas John CC N o , 69-8795

DATE AND TIME OCCURRED: August 9 , 1969, 2400-0415 hours

LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE : 10050 Cielo Drive

DIVISION OF OCCURRENCE: West Los Angeles Division

TO: Lt . R. J. Helder, Supervisor of Investigations, Robbery-Homicide

### Parent

Parent was wearing a red, white and blue plaid shirt, blue denim pants, white socks and black shoes. Parent's **left wrist** was bare; however, a wrist watch, later identified as his, was found in the left rear passenger seat. The band was severed. Parent had a **laceration**, indicative of a **defense wound, on the palm of his left hand between the little and ring fingers**. The wound runs vertical with his arm and the band on the wrist watch was undoubtedly severed when Parent received this wound. This was the only laceration that was apparent on Parent's body. It appeared that Parent **had been shot in the face, left**

**arm and chest**. At that time an extreme degree of rigor mortis was evident throughout all parts of the body. Post-mortem lividity was **evident in the buttocks area of Parent's body, the back of his neck and the calves of his legs**, which is consistent with the position that the body was discovered in

### Frykowski

The next body observed was that of Wojciech Frykowski. He was lying on his right side, his head resting on his right arm, **his forearm and right hand running parallel with his body (=near the body)**. His left arm was at his side, with the left forearm running perpendicular with the ground and his left hand clutched the grass where he was lying. His body was in a north/south direction, the head to the southwest and the lower body to the northeast. Frykowski was attired in a purple shirt, multi-colored pants and brown high-top shoes and socks. Both his shirt and pants were drenched in blood. **Numerous stab wounds were noted about his body with most of them on his left side**. He also had **stab wounds on his back and defense wounds to his right hand**. Rigor mortis was evident in an extreme degree throughout all parts of the body. Post-mortem lividity was noted all along the right side of the victim, which is consistent with the position that he was found in.

**Abigail Folger** was the next victim observed lying in the front yard in front of the Polanski home. She was lying in an east/west direction in a supine position. Her head was to the east and feet to the west. She was attired in a white, full-length nightgown which was completely drenched in blood **from the breast area** downward. **Numerous stab wounds were noted in the upper anterior torso** of Folger. She also had **several severe lacerations to the left side of her face**. **Defense wounds were noted on both her right and left hands**. Rigor mortis in an extreme degree was noted throughout the entire body. Post-mortem lividity was noted on the posterior of the deceased consistent with the position in which she was found.

### Sharon Tate

The next victim found was Sharon Polanski. She was inside the living room of the Polanski home, lying on her left side directly in front of a sofa which faces the fireplace. Her head was to the south and her legs, which were tucked up towards her body in a fetal position, were to the north. **Numerous stab wounds were noted about her breasts, a wound in the upper abdominal region and**

**one stab wound in the right leg.** She was obviously several months **pregnant.** There was dried blood smeared over the entire body. It appeared to investigating officers that someone had handled the victim, as in moving her from one location to another and the blood from the stab wounds had been smeared over other parts of the body. A nylon rope, approximately 3/4 inches in diameter, was wrapped around Polanski's neck two turns. The two ends of the rope then went in a southerly direction, running parallel with Polanski's body. One end of this rope was wrapped around Sebring's neck, the remainder of this rope going underneath Sebring, parallel with the body. The remaining end which came from Sharon Polanski's body went up and over a ceiling beam, the loose end hanging on the other side of the beam, touching the floor. Polanski was attired in a bikini-type nightgown consisting of bra and pants. They were multi-colored and blood drenched. There was an extreme degree of rigor mortis evident in all parts of the body. Post-mortem lividity was noted **in the posterior portion of the body** consistent with the position in which the body was found .

### **Sebring**

The fifth victim, Jay Sebring, was also located in the living room area of the Polanski home. Approximately 4 feet separated him from Sharon Polanski. He was on his right side in an east/west direction. His head was to the east and his lower upper torso was to the west. His legs went out at an angle perpendicular to the body, the feet in a northerly direction. A light colored towel, blood drenched, covered his head and face in a manner similar to that of a hood. The abovedescribed rope which was wound around Polanski's neck was also wrapped around Sebring. The one end of the rope which came from Polanski was wrapped around Sebring's neck 1 1/2 times. The loose end went underneath the body, running parallel with the upper torso and continuing toward the fire hearth in a westerly direction. **Stab wounds were noted on Sebring's body and a large abrasion appeared on the left side of his face at the bridge of the nose. His left eye was bruised and swollen.** His clothing was blood drenched and consisted of a blue shirt, white pants with black vertical stripes and black high-top boots.