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PSY 670 G – The Criminal Mind I  
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### Serial Killer Profile: Charles M. Manson

Charles Manson is an “evil person” (Bugliosi, 1975, p. 195). From what is known, Manson manipulated over three dozen individuals into following his every command. They followed his commands, and they killed at least eight people. The “free love” of the 1970s will be forever linked with Manson and “the Family.”

Incarcerated in Corcoran State Prison in California for the last 36 years, Manson is now nearly 70 years old. His 1971 death sentence was reduced to life in prison after the California Supreme Court declared the death penalty unconstitutional. He filed his most recent application for parole in 2002. It was denied for committing 17 “serious” infractions since 1997. He will be able to appeal again in 2007 (“Manson loses”, 2002). It seems unlikely that Manson will ever be free again.

What exactly were the crimes that America has seemed to want Manson punished for? What could have driven a person to commit crimes such as these? A abridged criminal history for Manson will be presented, followed by an application of the motivational model for serial killers/sexual homicide. Next, Manson will be evaluated as having the characteristics of a mixed offender. Finally, a conclusion will be presented to give final understanding to this serial killer.

### Criminal History

Charles Manson is known for many things, but the most infamous of them is the Tate/LaBianca murders that happened in August of 1969. Notorious not only for the notoriety of the victims, but also the *modus operandi* of the crimes, the Tate/LaBianca murders created much fear for many in the following months.

What actually happened on the evening of Friday, August 8, 1969, remains only to the memories of those who were actually involved. 10050 Cielo Drive in Los Angeles, California was the scene of one of the most gruesome murders to ever happen in the United States. In the morning after, the police found a house drenched in blood and five bodies sprawled out over the estate.

The first victim seemed to have been 18 year old Steven Parent who was visiting the caretaker of the estate, William Garretson. His white Rambler was found in the driveway with him inside wearing a shirt and pants steeped with blood. He had apparently been stabbed to death.

Once inside the house, the murderers, probably four, had killed and dragged coffee heiress Abigail Folger and her Polish lover Voytek Frykowski out to the yard. Folger was 25 at the time, and had been staying at the residence for a while. She was found stabbed so many times that her white sleeping gown appeared red. Frykowski, 32, had apparently fought hard for his life. He had been shot twice, hit on the head with a blunt object (the handle of the .22 revolver that was used in the killings) thirteen times, and stabbed fifty-one times.

Most heinous aspect was the fates of Jay Sebring and Sharon Tate. Sebring, 35, was an internationally known male hair stylist who was a friend of Tate. His head was covered with a towel, and a rope was placed around his neck. At the other end of the rope was Tate. Only 26, she was an actress who was married to director Roman Polanski. She was nine-months pregnant at the time of the murder.

The whole crime scene was horrific. Everywhere there were pools of blood. The front door to the residence had the word "PIG" written on it in Tate's blood. Although

forensic science has led to some chronology about the murders, what happened and when it happened is still up to much speculation.

Early Sunday morning, August 10, 1969, Leno and Rosemary LaBianca headed home from a trip. Leno LaBianca, 44, was the owner of a chain of grocery stores. His body was found with multiple stab wounds, the word "WAR" written on his stomach, and a knife and fork protruding from his body. His wife, Rosemary, 38, was stabbed 41 times.

These seven murders are to what Bugliosi would consider the tip of the iceberg (1975). Manson has confessed to dozens of murders. What was strange was his past criminal history consisted of limited violent crimes, but none of them coming to the extent of murder.

Manson's criminal history began at a young age for him. At the age of 13, Manson ran away from Gibault School for Boys. In 1948, Manson committed his first known crime by burglarizing a grocery store. He was sent to a juvenile detention center in Indiana, then sent off to Boys Town in Nebraska. He stayed there for about 3 days before running away again. After committing some more burglaries, Manson was caught again and sent to Indiana School for Boys. He was there for about 3 years until he finally escaped in 1951 after eighteen unsuccessful attempts to escape. He was caught in Utah after stealing a car. For this federal offense, Manson was sent to the National Training School for Boys in Washington, D. C., but stayed long enough to be sent to Natural Bridge Training Camp. In 1952, Manson was transferred to the Federal Reformatory in Pennsylvania, and then went to the Federal Reformatory in Ohio. On May 8, 1954, he was paroled.

In 1955, Manson then married a waitress named Rosalie Willis. They had a child, Charles Jr.. During that time, Manson worked as a busboy and a parking lot attendant, and stole cars on the side. Arrested for auto theft in October of 1955, Manson was sentenced to five years probation. After violating the terms of his probation, Manson was sentenced to three years imprisonment in San Pedro, California. Manson was then released from prison in 1958. Recently divorced with his wife who retained custody of their son, Manson went to work as a pimp in southern California (Newton, 2000).

The 1960's brought about the beginning of the end for Manson. In 1959, he was arrested for forging a check, but given a ten-year suspended sentence. He married again in January of 1960 to a nineteen year old. Still a pimp, Manson was indicted in April because of the Mann Act (see "USAM 9-79.000"), arrested in Laredo, and brought back to California to serve the suspended ten-year sentence (Bugliosi, 1975).

Transferred to a federal penitentiary in Washington in 1961, Manson claimed to be a Scientologist, and was seen by psychiatrists who said he had "deep-seated personality problems" (Bugliosi, 1975, p. 81).

Manson was released from prison at 8:15 A.M. on March 21, 1967, only to be discovered again in 1969. What is odd is that Manson begged to let him stay in prison. After all, in his 32 years of life up to this point, Manson had spent 17 of them in institutions.

#### Childhood Assessment

Born on November 12, 1934, Manson never knew his father; and his mother was frequently in trouble with the law or trying to get rid of him. His mother, Kathleen Mattox, was promiscuous and sixteen at his birth in Kentucky. His father is unknown,

but his mother did win a child-support case against “Colonel Scott,” although he immediately defaulted on making payments (Bugliosi, 1975).

When Manson was five, his mother and uncle were arrested for robbing a filling station in West Virginia. Manson was sent to live with his aunt and uncle in the same state. Several sources report his aunt as being strict and religious (Bugliosi, 1975; George, 1998); however, there is a report that the uncle was sadistic and would emotionally abuse Manson and his masculinity (i.e., reportedly calling him a “sissy” and making him dress as a female) (Newton, 2000). Nonetheless, Kathleen was released when Manson was eight, and he went to live with her. Little less than a year later, Manson was caught stealing and sent to a reformatory.

At 13, Manson committed two armed robberies, and was sent to another reform school. He was shifted from place to place through the reform system as he was persistent and many times successful at gaining freedom by escape from the institutions. At the age of 21, he married and was subsequently arrested for driving stolen vehicles over state lines.

The motivational model of criminals has been used in the past to attempt to begin to understand the criminal mind based upon their childhood. Its beginnings are directly related to the development of the child and their attachment styles. Next, formative events happening in childhood and adolescent are explored, and patterned responses are subsequently delineated. Finally, actions toward others and the feedback filter is shown and explained.

#### *Ineffective Social Environment*

A child who possesses an ineffective social environment fulfills the requirements for the first step. Manson could be seen as being a poster child of this. From birth, he

was ignored. His mother ignored him. His uncle ignored him. Other people ignored him. It seems clear that Manson did feel that he was not wanted. There is a story in which Manson was offered to a barmaid in exchange for a few drinks that his mother had purchased (Newton, 2000). His mother also didn't attempt to intervene when there was a need present: she actually just sent him off to live at a reform school even before his anti-social tendencies started to develop (Bugliosi, 1975).

Manson was shuttled between different relatives during his early childhood. It would seem that he was unaware of his true support. Before the age of 10, he had been in the care of his mother, her brother, his aunt and uncle, the state of Indiana, and numerous other boy's schools in that part of the country. Certainly there was established no support or protection for him: he was free to do whatever he wanted to do (Bugliosi, 1975).

#### *Formative Events*

His childhood was filled with a plethora of formative events. From his supposed physical and emotional abuse by his uncle when Manson was five to his alleged rape in a boy's school when he was around 13 (Newton, 2000), Manson indeed had a very strange and unhealthy childhood. Another formative event would be his mother's arrest when he was still young. Further, assuming that the story about him being gang raped in a youth prison, which would also be a negative road-marker in his life.

Although information about his attachment style is unknown, one could assume that he was either anxious ambivalent or anxious avoidant. After all, he had been shifted from one parent to the next in his early years. He didn't have time to develop a healthy attachment to any parental figure (Bugliosi, 1975).

Manson is a prime example of having deviant parental models. Manson's mother didn't want him as a child, didn't really know who the father was, and was incarcerated before he turned six. When she did have him, he was constantly being left places for his relatives to find him (Newton, 2000). This type of neglect seems prevalent in the development of a negative childhood experience.

#### *Patterned Responses*

From both ineffective social environment and formative events in childhood and in adolescence, certain patterned responses developed. Bugliosi (1975) referred to the idea that Manson was most likely socially isolated. He would often escape from the youth detention centers in his childhood, many of them all by himself. He was also transferred around the country so much so that he probably didn't have time to develop any real good friends.

Manson was very rebellious. He tried and succeeded many times in escaping from youth centers many times. Further, he was aggressive. He reportedly raped another youth at knife-point when he was 17. He also had committed armed robberies when he was a youth.

#### *Actions Toward Other/Self*

The only attitudes were are able to see in his childhood that he stole quite a bit. He was caught stealing when he was eight, and from then after, he was frequently caught for it. In Manson's adulthood, however, other than being a pimp, he really didn't exhibit any major negative actions toward others until he was with his "family" on Spahn Ranch. As stated before, no one can accurately predict how many people suffered under the hands of Charles Manson and his underlings, but if the Tate/LaBianca murders are any idea, suffer is not strong enough a word for it.

### Killer Classification

Much of what has been written about Manson seems to display him as being insane. After all, the extent to which these individuals were killed does seem to show traces of insanity. It would therefore seem reasonable to automatically classify him as psychotic, and place his set of murders in the disorganized group. However, this would not do justice to him or to his victims. Manson was a mixed killer with a strong leaning to the organized side of homicide.

Taking a look first at the classification scale of a disorganized killer (C. L. Patrick, personal communications, June, 11, 2004), Manson can be seen as possessing many of the traits. He was of average intelligence (reported to be at 109). Manson had a poor work history in the fact that he would seldom hold jobs due to his ping-pinging in and out of prisons. Manson didn't know his father, so the aspect of his father's work as being unstable didn't really apply. His mother, however, had a very unstable work history (Bugliosi, 1975).

Manson also had very minimal situational stress – there didn't seem to be any triggering factor that made him do what he did. Some could argue that Manson was enraged with society, and that these killings were more of personal vindication against the society that had thus far treated him poorly. Some could also argue that the situational stress was due to his childhood being laced with a history of crime, and that he was angry with his mother (Bugliosi, 1975).

One of the other factors about a disorganized criminal is that they are psychotic, or insane. Manson could be said to be psychotic only on one aspect: his odd/deviant mannerisms. Danny DeCarlo, Bugliosi's star witness in the Manson trials, reported that Manson seemed to be occasionally paranoid about getting caught. Manson's residence

during the killings was Spahn Ranch, a rundown old-movie dude-ranch near Los Angeles. On August 16, 1969, the ranch was raided; following, Manson and a couple others reportedly killed ranch-hand Donald "Shorty" Shea (Bugliosi, 1975). DeCarlo reported that Manson did this because he was said to have been afraid that Shea would snitch. This could be argued as being odd or deviant, but his paranoia was probably at normal levels given the circumstances of the crimes.

The type of killer that Manson most typically resembles seems to be the organized killer. He was socially competent. Susan Atkins (a member of the family who was charged with partaking in the Tate/LaBianca murders) explained in good detail how Manson seemed to possess her with his uncanny ability to tell her about herself without her saying anything (Bugliosi, 1975).

Manson was also very sexually competent. He bedded most of the females in the group. Also, Manson was married twice for a short amount of time, and did have two children (Bugliosi, 1975). It seems clear that he was able to have a consensual sexual relationship with a peer.

As described in the section on Manson's childhood, he also seemed to be the poster-child for having an inconsistent childhood discipline. His mother was very lenient and permissive. His aunt was said to be very strict and religious. Manson was shifted back between them at least one time during his childhood. On top of that, Manson also was incarcerated for much of his childhood, and seemed to feel comfortable with incarceration (especially as seen from his begging the prison officials not to let him out when he was finally released from Terminal Island prison in 1967) (Bugliosi, 1975).

Having a controlled mood during the crime was also an aspect of Manson. He himself wasn't reported as being wild, anxious, or crazy during the crimes themselves. Manson could also be seen as living with a partner. Actually, Manson had multiple partners. Atkins described and DeCarlo similarly reported that Manson had bedded and actually controlled the females of his "family." In an application for a credit card, Manson put down surprisingly that he had 17 dependents. Others have testified that the number in his family was more like 100.

Another aspect of being an organized killer is having mobility. Manson did. He had a dune buggy in good repair that he would travel around in. There were other vehicles on the Spahn Ranch that he was said to have used for the various stages of the killings.

Finally, Manson could be seen as a psychopath. He was superficial (i.e., he used Gary Hinman, but eventually murdered him because Hinman didn't assist when approached for money). Manson typified being grandiose: some of his nicknames included "Jesus Christ," "the Devil," and "God."

Manson has no conscience or remorse for the crimes either. In multiple interviews and court proceedings, Manson doesn't ever seem to offer a real apology for his actions. He is deceitful and manipulative: he had many of his followers doing anything and everything for him.

Emotionally impoverished also very clearly seems to define Charles Manson. His childhood was bare of love, and he tried to make up for that in his adulthood. However, he is never seen as being happy or sad or angry, or showing any type of emotion strongly.

Taking a look at Manson's crimes, however, one can further see the points of him being a mixed serial killer. An organized offender would plan the crime, target a victim or victims, demand submission from the victim, and use restraints, all of which Manson and his group did. However, they also exhibited quite a few characteristics typical of disorganized killer's crime scenes.

Manson attempted to depersonalize the victim. According to Bugliosi (1975), Sharon Tate begged for the life of her child, in which the murderer told her that no one cared. Jay Sebring was found with a hood over his head, which could be a ploy to depersonalize him.

The crime scene was rather sloppy. There were bodies on the yard and inside. Some had been dragged outside, and some had remained inside. One of the weapons used, a handgun, had its wooden handle broken and left inside the Tate house. Blood was everywhere: LAPD had reported pools of blood all over the sidewalk and inside the house.

The bodies again were left out in the open and not hidden. Folger and her lover's bodies were outside on the yard. Tate and Sebring were inside by a house. The young man in the Rambler was left inside his car and not moved. This was the same way with the LaBianca killings where both bodies were left where they were. The only change to this *modus operandi* was when Shea was killed at Spahn Ranch - his body has never been recovered (Bugliosi, 1975).

### Conclusion

Manson is an evil person. His crimes display that, and his behavior defines it. It would seem that will never be let out from prison. If the courts of California would have had their way back when he was sentenced, he wouldn't be alive to this day. Yet

looking past our own feelings on the heinous nature of his crime and of his being, one can see that there are some things to be learned from him.

Manson is a fine example of the reason why the prison system should be reconsidered. That is, Manson's crimes escalated from childhood to his adulthood in which they became increasingly violent. Besides this, he did exhibit some of these tendencies in his youth – much of which could have been identified then.

Further, Manson is an example of a mixed killer. Both his personal characteristics and his crime scenes show tendencies of both an organized offender and a disorganized offender. Although he seems to have greater leanings toward being organized, it might have been a case in which Manson just didn't care about anything during the crime. He had well thought-out the crimes, and wasn't afraid of getting caught for them until after the crimes were committed.

Much can be learned from Manson if people were to look past all the prejudices around him. His control of his group, his personal development into a serial killer, his intense personality: all of these traits together made Manson what he is. One can only hope that by studying someone like Manson, what can be learned is for this type of person to be identified and then proper addressing to the situation be done to further prevent this from happening in the future.

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