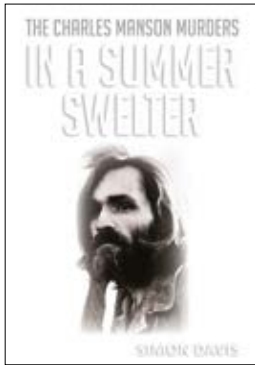


The Charles Manson Murders: In a Summer Swelter

By Simon Davis



It must be very difficult to write about perhaps the most famous criminal trial in the history of the world. Everyone has read something, seen a television program or movie about it and it captivated everyone at the time the trial/trials were in progress. Much too has been written about it, so what more can be said, one might ask?

Simon Davis has done something unique in that he has written a book that deals with many different aspects of this most famous case. What we have first is a summary of 'The Family', who Charles Manson was, what he thought, what he believed in, his misogyny, love of violence, the way he lived and his leadership. We then learn of the shooting of a drug dealer in mid 1969 (a few months before the murder of Sharon Tate), showing the violent way Manson lived at this time and his false protestations of 'doing it' for 'the family'.

We then learn of the murder of Gary Hinman, a friend of 'the family', a kind, gentle man who it seems was killed for his money. Manson and 'family members' Susan Atkins and Bobby Beausoleil were charged with the murder. We then have the remainder of the book dealing mostly with the murders of Sharon Tate and four others who just happened to be staying with her that night i.e. 9 August 1969, and Leno and Rosemary La Bianca, who were found dead on 10 August 1969. Manson and 5 'family members', Tex Watson, Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel, Linda Kasabian and Leslie Van Houten were charged with the murders. There is then a chapter dealing with the murder of Donald Shea, a ranch hand at the ranch that the family were living at at the time. Manson and two other family members were charged

with the murder which occurred in mid-August 1969. Manson had said that Shea was responsible for a police raid on the ranch and that he, i.e. Shea, wanted to have 'the Family' evicted from the ranch.

Finally, Davis gives us a chapter entitled 'Reflections' which is just that. He deals with the question whether justice was done, the motive for the murders, 'The cult of Charlie', Cultish behaviour, whether the time period i.e. 1960's had some significance, the concepts of 'Authorisation and Obedience' and 'Group Conformity' with a reference to the experiments of Stanley Miligram in 1961, and the concept of dehumanisation.

What Davis has done in this book is not only deal with themes and issues that have always surrounded these murders such as 'Helter Skelter', the role of drugs, the role of a cult, the extraordinary 'evil' personality of Manson and his 'hold' over 'family members' and the personalities of the followers, i.e. the family members, particularly those who were charged with such gruesome murders. This book also provides us with details of the charges, what happened during the grand jury hearing, the trials and the appeals, the cross examination of key witnesses and whether it succeeded or failed, the advocacy (which was good, bad and great), the extraordinary largely unethical behaviour of some of the lawyers for the young female co-accused (lawyers who basically

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took instructions from Manson even though they were acting for one of the young females, to implicate the young girls as much as possible in the murders and thereby reduce Manson's role), as well as providing a legal commentary and legal explanation as to, for example, what the prosecution needed to prove, the differences between the charges, how evidence was used and the law at the time. He does all this by referring in detail to court transcripts, the police interviews, police statements, parole hearings and American criminal law cases as well as quotes from numerous sources including books written by Atkins, Watson, the Prosecutor Vincent Bugliosi, an interview with Manson by reporters from *Rolling Stone* magazine on 25 June 1970, other articles in magazines as well as videos/films by the ABC, CNN, Discovery Channel and an interview of Leslie Van Houten by Barbara Walters for the ABC in January 1977.

We also have some photos in this book. We all will recognise most of them, especially that infamous photo of the three young co-accused, Atkins, Krenwinkel and Van Houten, arriving at Court for the first Tate/La Bianca trial, in their prison dresses, short hair, smiling widely. What we have in this book is a detailed account

of all the issues surrounding these murders, written in a style that is easy to understand, is informative of legal issues and the relevant law, yet also tells a narrative, a story, a story of extreme ideas and extreme violence.

Only a few weeks before I wrote this book review, I saw on the news that Leslie Van Houten had been granted parole. The State Governor could still overrule the decision. She is now 68 years of age, has many wrinkles but beautiful totally grey hair (she was 19 years old at the time she brutally stabbed Leno and Rosemary La Bianca).

This book is incredible to read - even if you have read it all before.

Book reviewed by Caroline Dobraszcyk

The Pillars of Digital Security: How to ethically use technology in legal practice

By Philippe Doyle Gray



In 2014 Phillippe Doyle Gray wrote a lengthy article for the Summer edition of *Bar News* called 'The pillars of digital security' in which Mr Gray explored the pitfalls of legal practice in the digital age, and offered helpful suggestions on how to minimise the risk of inadvertent disclosure of confidential information obtained or generated in the course of providing legal services. An online review said of that article that it:

provides a vocabulary for lawyers who know little about technology, and it aims to provide a universal approach to issues of ethics and malpractice, regardless of the operating system, device, or particular technology. His formulation links (1) key terms of ... rules of professional conduct, (2) the way in which computing devices