

Chapter 1: The Prosecutor

“People say I’m an extremely opinionated person. If opinionated means that when I think I’m right I try to shove it down everyone’s throat, they are correct...As for arrogant, I am arrogant and I’m kind of caustic....The great majority of people I deal with are hopelessly incompetent, so there’s an air of superiority about me.”

Vincent Bugliosi, Playboy, April 1997

Vincent Bugliosi was born in 1934 in the northern Minnesota town of Hibbing. That town was named after German immigrant Frank Hibbing. Hibbing was an iron ore prospector who discovered the great Mesabi Iron Ore Range in Minnesota. That range was later purchased by John Rockefeller, sold to Andrew Carnegie, and eventually became part of J. P. Morgan’s United States Steel. Bugliosi’s parents, Vincent and Ida, were immigrants from Italy. His father worked in the iron ore mines, then owned a grocery store, and ended up working as a railroad conductor. Bugliosi attended a Catholic school, played sports in high school, and became quite proficient at tennis. He eventually became Minnesota’s state high school champion and Northwest junior champion. He was good enough at tennis to win a scholarship to the University of Miami, Florida.⁸

It was in college where Bugliosi, at age 20, met his future wife Gail, who was 16. Bugliosi met her while working at a tennis shop in Miami. In July of 1956, a little over a year after they met, they were married.⁹ After graduating from Miami, Bugliosi entered the service. He rose to the rank of captain in the army.¹⁰ After leaving the service, he then attended UCLA Law School. He graduated in 1964 as president of his class.¹¹

Shortly after passing the bar exam, Bugliosi joined the Los Angeles District Attorney’s office. At that time, that office employed about 450 lawyers. In a relatively short amount of time, Bugliosi became one of its busiest and most efficient prosecutors. In the little less than nine years he was there, Bugliosi lost only one felony case, while winning more than one hundred.¹²

There were two cases in particular which made Bugliosi's reputation. The first included the murder convictions of former Los Angeles police officer Paul Perveler and his girlfriend Kristina Cromwell. The two had met in 1965 while working at the Southern California Auto Club. He was an insurance adjuster and she was a receptionist. In December of 1966, Cromwell's husband Marlin was found dead at his home in Highland Park, California. Kristina was visiting her girlfriend in San Bernardino County at the time. In a strange case of life imitating art, the Marlin Cromwell murder was vaguely similar to the story in the classic Billy Wilder film *Double Indemnity*. Marlin's body was found in his home after a fire had damaged it. But yet, the autopsy showed he had been shot to death. Therefore it seemed that perhaps someone had set a fire to camouflage a murder. After he died, Kristina collected his two insurance policies. Shortly after that, Perveler purchased the first of his two taverns. On March 1, 1968, Perveler married his wife Cheryl. Within a week of the marriage, he took out a double indemnity insurance policy on her. Seven weeks after the wedding, on the night of April 20th, she drove to her apartment in her open convertible car. She was shot to death on the front seat of her car after she drove into the garage of their apartment in Burbank. Due to some excellent detective work, Perveler and Cromwell were charged in May of 1968. In February of 1969, after a joint trial, the two were convicted of killing their spouses for the insurance money.¹³ Bugliosi was the lead prosecutor in that case.¹⁴

Seven months later, an even stranger murder case occurred. And this one would rocket Bugliosi into the stratosphere of lawyer-celebrities.

The Tate/LaBianca Murders

On the morning of Saturday, August 9, 1969 Winifred Chapman was late to work. She was the housekeeper for film director Roman Polanski and his wife, actress Sharon Tate. As she entered the home from the kitchen, she picked up the phone and realized the line was dead. She then walked through the dining room and into the living room. She immediately began to notice the splotches of blood on the floor. She also noticed the front door was ajar. She walked up to close it. As she did so, she noted more blood on the front porch. As she looked down the lawn she saw the first dead body.¹⁵ Winifred panicked and began to run back through the house and outside. As she did, she noticed a strange car at the front of the house with another dead body inside. She ran to the nearby home of the Asin family. There, the housekeeper began screaming about what she had seen. Young Jim Asin, age 15, then dialed the police emergency number.¹⁶ The police eventually discovered the

corpses of five persons at 10050 Cielo Drive in the Bel Air section of Los Angeles. In addition to Sharon Tate, there was men's hair stylist Jay Sebring, coffee heiress Abigail Folger, her boyfriend, Victor Frykowski, and recent high school graduate Steve Parent. Parent had been visiting his acquaintance, caretaker William Garretson.

The very next evening, Frank Struthers called his sister Suzan at work. He was puzzled because he noted the shades all pulled down at the house at 3301 Waverly Drive in Los Feliz. Also, the speedboat that Leno LaBianca used that weekend was still attached to the car in the driveway. Frank knew that was not usually what his stepfather did. He always placed the boat inside the garage overnight. When Suzan and her boyfriend Joe Dorgan arrived at the house they opened the back door and went inside. They first found the body of Leno in the living room. There appeared to be a throw pillow over his head and a cord around his neck. The three then left and went to a nearby house. The neighbors called the police for them. When the police arrived, they searched the house and discovered the body of Leno's wife, Rosemary, in the master bedroom.¹⁷

These two gruesome discoveries formed the beginning of the infamous Tate/LaBianca murder cases. Since both homes were in the city of Los Angeles, the local DA's office handled the cases. Aaron Stovitz was one of the top administrative officials in the office, the head of the Trials Division. He picked the 35-year-old Bugliosi to aid him. Forgetting about both the Charles Lindbergh child kidnapping case, and the assassination of President Kennedy, assistant Bugliosi was quick to ordain the multiple homicides as "the case of the century".¹⁸

Due to the huge amount of publicity the murders generated, the first judge, David Keene, placed a gag order on the attorneys. During the trial, DA Evelle Younger felt that Stovitz violated that order. Stovitz was therefore removed from the proceedings.¹⁹ Bugliosi, assisted by Steve Kay and Don Musich, now became the lead prosecutor in the case.

Susan Atkins, one of the perpetrators at Cielo Drive, was already in jail due to suspicion in another homicide, the death of guitar instructor Gary Hinman.²⁰ While at Sybil Brand Institute, Atkins told inmates about being present inside the Tate home and being driven to the LaBianca home on the nights the killings occurred. She allegedly admitted this not once, but twice, to two different detainees: Ronnie Howard and Virginia Graham. In November, through Howard, news of her confession eventually got back to the authorities.²¹ A few days later, on November 26th, Graham got in contact with the Los Angeles Police Department. The police then taped Graham's testimony about her conversation with Atkins.²² A couple of hours

later, LAPD began to question other people who had been involved with Charles Manson, a name Atkins had revealed to Howard and Graham. Leslie Van Houten, who had been inside the LaBianca home—which Atkins had not been—revealed much more to the investigators.²³

Atkins' lawyer, Richard Caballero, understood that the testimony of both Howard and Graham could be used against his client. And there was another Manson follower, Kitty Lutesinger, who had implicated Atkins in the Hinman case. Caballero therefore arranged to have his client tape her confession for him. On December 3rd, he then presented this to Stovitz, Bugliosi and the police.²⁴ Names of the others involved, or at the scene, in both murders were on this tape: Charles "Tex" Watson, Patricia Krenwinkel, Linda Kasabian, Van Houten, Steve Grogan, and Manson. Caballero allowed this evidence to be entered to the grand jury. In return, Atkins' testimony could not be used against her in court. Yet Atkins would not testify at trial.²⁵ Based on this grand jury testimony, Manson and the others were charged with the murders. Manson was not that difficult to find since he had just been charged with arson and auto theft in Inyo County, a desolate place about 175 miles northeast of Los Angeles. But, as Stovitz later said, if Manson had not set fire to a bulldozer, they might never have found him up in the deserted Death Valley.²⁶

After many weeks of pre-trial motions, attorney juggling, and jury selection, the trial began on July 24, 1970. The prosecution did not need Atkins to testify since they could call on Howard or Graham to incriminate her. But they also granted an accessory at both scenes, Linda Kasabian, full immunity from prosecution for her testimony. Including its penalty phase, the joint trial went on for nearly nine months. Judge Charles Older sentenced the convicted defendants to death on the murder and conspiracy charges on April 19, 1971. For over nine months, Watson had fought extradition to California from Texas. Therefore, at a separate trial in October of 1971, he was tried and convicted by Bugliosi. In 1972, in the case of *People v. Anderson*, the California Supreme Court voted to eliminate the death penalty. Therefore, the death sentences were commuted to life in prison.

Already in the limelight because of the deluge of publicity about the trials, Bugliosi decided to write a book about his experiences on the case. A major publisher, W.W. Norton—the same publisher that released *Reclaiming History*—teamed the first-time author with an experienced writer, Curt Gentry. The book was published in 1974. Entitled *Helter Skelter*, it quickly became a best seller. And it stayed on the best-seller list a long time. Because a much watched two-night television film, broadcast in April of 1976, kept it there when the book was released

as a mass-market paperback. *Helter Skelter* eventually sold over seven million copies, becoming the number one best-selling true crime book ever.

Looking Back at “Helter Skelter”

This author had never read *Helter Skelter* prior to preparing this book. But, after reading that book, the author decided to do some supplementary research on that case. The resultant effect of all this was rather surprising. The spectacular success of the book and TV film seems to have blinded many people to some central issues about both that book and the case itself. In this discussion of Bugliosi as author/prosecutor, it seems appropriate to, however belatedly, review those issues in this setting.

In light of the attitude taken in *Reclaiming History* it seems important to note that Bugliosi and the DA’s office achieved the convictions of Manson, Krenwinkel, Atkins, and Van Houten at the first trial—with Watson absent—on the vicarious liability clause of the criminal conspiracy statute. What that means is that in a conspiracy trial, any member of the conspiracy can be held liable for the crimes committed by his co-conspirators in furtherance of the plot. Even if the final act did not actually include certain members of the plot.²⁷ It was on this legal ground that Manson was convicted of the murders in Tate/LaBianca. This was necessary since Manson was not present at the scene during either set of murders. (On the second night, he had been on the scene but left before the murders took place.) Therefore, as shown at this trial, Bugliosi thoroughly understands this concept in law. For he himself used it quite pointedly in this case. For instance, during his summation to the jury, the prosecutor said, “Manson thought he would get off by not killing anyone. Well, it’s not that easy. . . The law of conspiracy has trapped these murderers even as the killers trapped their victims.”²⁷ Therefore, for Bugliosi to demean the generic idea of conspiracy as a “theory”—as he does throughout *Reclaiming History*—reveals a rather short memory on his part.

Another interesting aspect of *Helter Skelter* to note in comparison to *Reclaiming History* is this: Bugliosi spends page after page criticizing the police work in the Tate/LaBianca cases. At times, he actually names the people he thinks are responsible for the errors or delays in the investigation. For instance, in mentioning the delay in interviewing a potentially valuable witness in the case, Kitty Lutesinger, Bugliosi complains about the time it took for the detectives in the Tate case to interview her, even though her previous contact with the authorities was on file.²⁸ Yet, in *Reclaiming History*, he does not even note, let alone complain, about the delay that the Warren Commission had in deposing Sylvia Odio after her first contact with

the FBI.²⁹ And Odio is an important witness to a pre-assassination plot to kill President Kennedy. One who Bugliosi himself tends to believe. And that Warren Commission delay was much longer than the 11 days it took to interview Lutesinger.

In *Helter Skelter*, Bugliosi complains throughout the first hundred or so pages about the failure of the police to link the two cases—Tate and LaBianca--even though there were signs they were related. In *Reclaiming History*, he cavalierly refuses to see any relationship between the failed attempt to kill President Kennedy in Chicago in early November, with the successful attempt three weeks later to kill him in Dallas. Even though, as we shall see, there was more than one resemblance between the two scenes.

In *Helter Skelter*, the prosecutor looks with skepticism on what he considers a questionable judgment of accidental death in the case of Manson follower John Philip Haught. Yet, in *Reclaiming History*, he displays no such skepticism over the questionable death scenes of any number of important witnesses e.g. Gary Underhill, George DeMohresnchildt, FBI domestic intelligence chief William Sullivan etc.

In *Helter Skelter*, the prosecutor notes that although the firearms weapon used by Tex Watson was actually discovered by a bystander and sent to a San Fernando Valley police station, it took awhile for the weapon to get downtown.³⁰ Yet, in *Reclaiming History*, he makes no complaint about how long it took the Dallas police to send three bullets recovered from patrolman J. D. Tippit's shooting scene to the FBI to be tested. Or that, on the original police report, there was no mention at all of recovered cartridges. Yet six days later, four were entered.³¹

Although we could go on much longer in this vein, let us note one last comparison example. In *Helter Skelter*, Bugliosi is at pains to show how difficult it was for Ronnie Howard to relay information about the Atkins confession to the authorities. Even though she was in jail at the time.³² Yet, in *Reclaiming History*, he is nonplussed by the failure of the Dallas Police to accept an offer to speak to Rose Cherie, a witness who had potentially explosive evidence about two Cubans planning to assassinate President Kennedy in Dallas.³³

To anyone familiar with the two cases, it would appear that the prosecutor had a healthy sense of disdain for professional incompetence and negligence back in 1969. To be charitable, it appears that, as he aged, the quality left him when he was writing *Reclaiming History*. To be uncharitable, some would say the later lack of tolerance exhibits a double standard.

There are other aspects about *Helter Skelter* that appear odd today. For instance, throughout the first half of the book, Bugliosi opines that the case is an uphill climb. In other words, they really don't have a heck of a lot of evidence to present in court. As far into the book as page 252, he categorizes his case as being essentially a circumstantial one. Even after he attains his sought after indictments, he still states that an indictment is *all* they had.³⁴ Yet by this time, the prosecutor already had an on the scene witness who was willing to confess (Susan Atkins), with another waiting in the wings (Linda Kasabian). Very soon, the police will have the firearms weapon in custody, the bloody clothes that were tossed by the raiding band that night, and an eyewitness who saw them changing those clothes in front of his house and wrote down the license number of the car. Soon after that, they will link the license number to a car at Spahn Ranch in Chatsworth, which was the band's living quarters. At Spahn Ranch, they will also recover handgun projectiles that will link to the murder weapon and will match a projectile recovered from one of the victims. That weapon will also have a shattered gun grip, which will match the blows delivered by Watson to one of the victims. Should I add, they will also recover two fingerprints at the scene from two of the perpetrators.

As the reader can see, in reality, this is what former New York homicide prosecutor Robert Tanenbaum termed a "motion picture case". That is, one in which you have an eyewitness (in this case, two of them) plus you have the forensic exhibits to corroborate what that eyewitness says. It is hard for the defense to surmount this kind of case. And, in fact, as author George Bishop notes in his book on the trial, the defense attorneys felt the case was a "lost cause" from the start.³⁵ As Bishop stated it, "under the present circumstances, the scales of justice seemed heavily tipped in favor of the people."³⁶ So it would seem that in this regard, Bugliosi and Gentry were indulging themselves in a bit of literary license for the purpose of building drama. Once Atkins started talking to Ronnie Howard, the case, as Bugliosi himself said, was broken.³⁷ From there, it was not uphill, but downhill.

And that downhill slalom run was greatly aided by the negative publicity surrounding the events. To give just one example. Well in advance of the trial, on December 14, 1969, with the help of journalist Lawrence Schiller, the *Los Angeles Times* published the Atkins confession. Then, just five days later, *Life Magazine* featured Manson on its cover with a maniacal glare in his eyes, the caption reading: The Love and Terror Cult. This was months before jury selection took place. Therefore, it was well nigh impossible to find anyone who had not been exposed to the deluge of advance publicity. But then, after the jury was chosen in the summer of 1970, the judge decided that they should be sequestered. As Paul Fitzgerald, one of the defense attorneys said, this move always favors a more middle-class, older,

establishment type jury. Because sequestration implies a financial sacrifice on the part of the juror. Mainly because an employer will not pay for a long period of absence for his employee. In fact, the prosecution was so satisfied with the results of jury selection that Stovitz and Bugliosi only used 11 of their forty peremptory challenges. While the defense had so many objections, they had to settle for jurors they felt did not fit their profile.³⁸ But yet, the judge would not allow a change of venue. The grounds being that the publicity was so omnipresent that it was unlikely that any city in the USA was unaffected by it.

Now, because of all these disadvantages, the case was a Sisyphean assignment for even the best defense lawyer. But in this instance, the defendants did not even have *the semblance* of competent counsel. And this is another problem one has in reading *Helter Skelter* today. Because the book tries to maintain the illusion that somehow the accused were represented more than adequately. If one knows the true circumstances, then one is startled by a statement made in this regard in *Helter Skelter*. The defense attorneys were as follows: Daye Shinn for Atkins; Irving Kanarek for Manson; Ronald Hughes for Van Houten; Paul Fitzgerald for Krenwinkel. In assessing these four, Bugliosi says that Fitzgerald looked good but was not that effective, Shinn was likable, Hughes “was doing damn well”, but it was Kanarek who was really doing the damage by “scoring nearly all the points.”³⁹

To say that this is an exaggeration does not even begin to describe what really happened at the trial. To get across the true quality of the defense, let us consult a more objective observer. In his book describing the trial, author George Bishop begins Chapter 30 with the following:

A strange thing happened in Department 104 at ten o'clock on the morning of January 11, 1971: a defense attorney began making sense.⁴⁰

The true impact of that statement can only be brought home when one understands this fact: Bishop's observation occurred during the *summation* stage of the trial. In other words, the actual trial was finished. Secondly, the attorney who was finally “making sense” had not been part of that process. Bishop was writing about Maxwell Keith. Keith was replacing Ronald Hughes.⁴¹ The man who, in his book, Bugliosi said was doing “damn well.” Yet, to trial chronicler Bishop, Bugliosi had previously said that “Max Keith did a good job. . . he was *by far* the most effective of the four defense attorneys.”⁴² (Emphasis added) In other words, the other attorneys were not nearly as competent as Bugliosi tries to portray them. And prior to co- writing his best selling book, the prosecutor seems to have been more candid about how poor they were.

In fact, unfortunately for client Leslie Van Houten, this had been Ronald Hughes' first criminal trial. He was not admitted to the bar until age 35. His previous job was managing a rock band.⁴³ And unlike what the prosecutor writes, in his first year of practice, he wasn't doing "damn well". In fact, he was actually a pauper who slept on a mattress in a friend's garage. He wore the same suit every day the first month and a half of the trial. Finally, the suit began to separate along its seams. It finally split. The court was then treated to the unseemly sight of defense counsel turning to the gallery and begging for a sport coat from a spectator so he could attend a meeting in chambers with the judge.⁴⁴

On his first day of cross-examination, Hughes was soon asking Linda Kasabian questions about her smoking habits. Bugliosi objected on a novel legal ground: The line of questioning was ridiculous. Even though 'being ridiculous' is not a valid legal objection, the judge agreed.⁴⁵ At one point, the prosecution objected to 23 of Hughes' questions in a row. In what has to be some kind of a record, only one of these was overruled.⁴⁶ But then Hughes' questions got even more bizarre. While in isolation, Kasabian had begun practicing yoga in jail. Hughes now questioned her about her yoga exercises. Bugliosi objected on the legal ground of relevancy. The judge again agreed. Judge Older then said that Hughes's questioning had been exhausted since, with yoga, it was now reaching the point of absurdity. Nothing if not tireless, Hughes then questioned her about ESP. Judge Older finally lost his patience and terminated his cross-examination.⁴⁷

But Hughes actually went even beyond this show of incompetence. More than once, he would open up lines of questioning which would *benefit the prosecution*, but which Bugliosi had overlooked on direct examination. The prosecutor would then use this incriminating material on his redirect questioning.⁴⁸

This author can assure the reader that the performance of the other original attorneys were all either at or around the level of Hughes. Which is why Maxwell Keith stood out as he did. It would be appropriate here to use a baseball metaphor: for sheer incompetence, the defense team resembled the 1962 Mets. In characterizing them as anything more than that, Bugliosi and Gentry were, again, indulging themselves in literary license. And, in fact, prior to writing his book, Bugliosi was more candid about, for example, Mr. Shinn. He actually called his performance an *amicus curiae* for the prosecution.⁴⁹ That is, it was so bad it helped the prosecution. The judge would not let Manson represent himself. One has to wonder about the wisdom of that decision. Because it is hard to believe Manson could have done any worse. And, in fact, when the prosecution case was finished, and the time came for the defense to make a case, they made none. They rested their

case when the prosecution was finished with theirs. This shocked everyone. Including the judge.

Far from being an uphill battle for the DA's office, when all the above factors are properly analyzed—the strong and plentiful evidence, the overwhelming negative publicity, the make up of the jury, the utter incompetence of the defense team—one can see that, fairly soon in the process, it was obvious this was an easy case for the DA to win. But contrary to what Bugliosi and Gentry present, and contrary to what the media accepted, there was more to this case than what was presented to the jury. Considering the almost Marx Brothers performance of the defense, there had to have been.

Bugliosi's Motive for Murder: The Beatles

Today, one of the most controversial aspects of the Tate/LaBianca trial is the motive put forth for the crimes. And the motive was pure Bugliosi. Because Aaron Stovitz, who was technically the lead lawyer, never bought the idea of 'Helter-Skelter'. In fact, he stayed skeptical about it until his death.⁵⁰ Let us detail that motive here so the reader can examine it in the full and vivid scope of its grandiosity.

As author Ed Sanders notes, in prison, Manson had been taught guitar by Alvin Karpis of the Barker Gang.⁵¹ These lessons went on for a year. Manson proved an adept student with a pleasant voice. When he was released from Terminal Island in March of 1967, Manson was interested in developing a musical career. In fact, he had developed some leads in prison to help him in this pursuit. In 1968, the Beatles recorded Paul McCartney's song "Helter Skelter". The title came from a London amusement park ride.⁵² That song, which would be a strong influence on the heavy metal movement, was released on the White Album. Let us try and follow Bugliosi's attempt to fit that song into a motive for the murders.

In addition to music, Manson had done some Bible study in prison. According to Manson follower Paul Watkins, for Manson, one of the most important parts of the Bible was Chapter 9 of the Book of Revelation, the last book of the New Testament. For he intermingled its imagery with The Beatles. That apocalyptic book talks about a star falling to earth and a key falling to a fifth angel. The key opened a bottomless pit and smoke and locusts arose from it. According to Watkins, Manson thought the locusts were The Beatles and the fifth angel was himself. Why? Because the scripture says that although the locusts had faces of men, like The Beatles, they had hair like women. But further, they had breastplates, and according to Watkins and Manson acquaintance Gregg Jakobson, the breastplates were the

Beatles' guitars. The four angels mentioned were also references to The Beatles. The fire and brimstone was their music; and shapes "like unto horses prepared for battle" was supposed to represent the dune buggies Manson was building at Spahn Ranch—where they all stayed-- with stolen cars. The horsemen who numbered two hundred thousand were the cyclists that Manson knew and who he dealt drugs to.

In Verse 15, the book refers to the four angels being let loose for an indeterminate amount of time to "slay the third part of men." According to Bugliosi's translation, this meant that one third of mankind, the white race, would die during this apocalypse. Which he said Manson somehow related to the amusement park song "Helter Skelter".

According to Bugliosi's interpretation, this slaughter of the white race was also signaled on the White Album. Through songs like "Blackbird" and "Revolution Number 9" Manson thought The Beatles were predicting a revolution by black Americans over white Americans. And he related the song "Revolution Number 9" with the Book of Revelation, Chapter 9. After an apocalyptic race war, the Black Muslims would finally be the only faction standing. But they would not be able to make order out of chaos. Therefore, they would turn to Manson and his followers, who would now come out of the bottomless pit mentioned in the first verse. Except they had now multiplied into the tens of thousands. And now Manson and his followers would retire the Black Muslims and rule the world.⁵³ Bugliosi was apparently convinced of this theory by the fact that, at the scene of the LaBianca murder, one of the attackers (probably Patricia Krenwinkel) had spelled the words 'Helter Skelter' in blood on the refrigerator. Even though it was spelled wrong, and even though what happened there was not Paul McCartney's amusement ride, and therefore could not have connoted these wild images of a race war—let alone the Book of Revelation--Bugliosi now had his overall paradigm.

As the reader contemplates this mind-numbing Bible/Beatles concoction he should recall this fact: Bugliosi is the man who cannot find one credible conspiracy theory in the JFK case.

Bugliosi's partner looked at it all with a cocked eyebrow. To his credit, Aaron Stovitz *never* bought into this, not at the time, not afterwards, not until he died. But Stovitz looked at the case differently than Bugliosi. To Stovitz, it was another murder case, and it was to be treated as such. Bugliosi did not see it that way. In fact, when he heard Stovitz interviewed on the radio saying just that, he came into work the next day in a state of bewilderment. He explained to his colleague that Tate/LaBianca was not just any other case. In fact, it was unlike any other crime ever committed in "the whole history of mankind." When Stovitz resisted this,

Bugliosi would not let up: “This has got to be the biggest murder case that ever happened.”⁵⁴ His brow furrowed in a state of agitation, he then walked out.

After this confrontation, J. Miller Leavy, who was Stovitz’ superior, walked into the room. Having overheard some of the conversation, he had a revealing colloquy with Stovitz. He asked knowingly, “Vince getting excited?” Stovitz pointed up to a discolored acoustic tile in the ceiling. He then said, “He was just up there.” To which Leavy replied, “Sticking to the ceiling?” Stovitz capped it with, “Like a pizza.”⁵⁵ This is an important anecdote for the reader to remember. Although both men appreciated Bugliosi’s skills as a prosecutor, they understood his innate excitability and flair for hyperbole.

Which would later come in handy. For as trial chronicler George Bishop wrote, Bugliosi appeared to believe in the Helter Skelter theory more than Manson did.⁵⁶ To Bishop, Manson was essentially a con man who sold bits and pieces of his half-baked ideas to different people who he thought could help him, or who he needed to strike fear into to control. As Bishop noted, the idea that the wily ex-con actually could or meant to put it all together into a cohesive philosophy, this was something beyond Manson.⁵⁷ For instance, why on earth would the Muslims ever turn to Manson? And why were there never any further home invasions? Shouldn’t Manson have ordered attacks on at least one African-American home? But, as Bishop also points out, selling this wild phantasmagoria was not beyond Bugliosi. For the prosecutor had a fine sense of theater and was very much at home, stage center in a court room.⁵⁸ Therefore, the seasoned lawyer could make this fantastic scenario saleable to a jury. And as the prosecutor pointed out to that jury, motive may be considered evidence of guilt.⁵⁹ What worse motive could there be than the creed he was reciting? For as Nikolas Schreck writes in his book *The Manson File*, Manson did not even like the Beatles. Being from the hill country of West Virginia and Kentucky, he was much more into musicians like Lefty Frizzell, Hank Williams, and Woody Guthrie. If properly promoted by the likes of record producer Terry Melcher and Beach Boys drummer Dennis Wilson, who were actually backing him, Manson’s sound could have evolved into something like Credence Clearwater Revival. But in regards to the Beatles, Schreck notes that Manson thought they were, “Yeah Yeah Yeahs! Teenybopper stuff for little girls.” And that’s just the beginning of the problems *Helter Skelter* poses today.

Was “Helter Skelter” an Urban Legend?

As noted above, it’s an open question whether the prosecutor himself ever really bought the warlock’s alchemy that he garnered from Watkins and Terry

Melcher's friend Gregg Jakobson. Because when confronted with Stovitz' skepticism over it, Bugliosi said that he would abandon it instantly if someone could come up with something better.⁶⁰ But he told Stovitz that there was so little money stolen that robbery was an unrealistic motive. As if that were the only alternative.

In *Helter Skelter*, there is an interesting, almost throwaway line to the effect that drugs had nothing to do with the crimes.⁶¹ Although, at that point in the book, it is couched in terms of the perpetrators using drugs that night, as we shall see, it appears that the prosecutor does not want the reader to contemplate that angle in any manner. But when one examines the evidence chronicled outside of *Helter Skelter*, one has to question why the statement exists as it does. Because as it turns out, at least two of the perpetrators *were* on speed the night of the Tate murders: Tex Watson and Susan Atkins.⁶² Which vitiates the point the prosecutor is trying to make about Manson's control over the killers and his design of the murder scene.

But even more curious, in author George Bishop's description of the trial, there is very interesting testimony from an LAPD narcotics officer.⁶³ This is what he discovered at the scene of the Tate murders:

77 grams of marijuana in the cabinet of the Tate living room

30 grams of hashish in the Frykowski/Folger bedroom

1 vial of cocaine on Sebring's person

10 capsules of MDA (street name Sass) in the Frykowski/Folger bedroom

6 grams of marijuana in Sebring's car

1 roach, two inches in length, in the living room

In addition to this, the officer found that Frykowski and Folger had detectable traces of MDA in their bodies at autopsy.⁶⁴ Bugliosi and Gentry mention this, but only in passing. Its almost like they mention it to dispose of it.

If you don't dispose of it, it gets even more interesting. Recall, this was years before the illegal war against Nicaragua, and the CIA's concomitant attempt to fund that war by importing large amounts of cocaine into the USA. So how did Sebring get the cocaine? He got it from a man named Joel Rostau. Joel Rostau was found dead on the eve of the Tate/LaBianca trial. His body was discovered at JFK airport. He was stripped to his underwear, clubbed to death, and his corpse stuffed into the trunk of a rented car. In addition to being a dealer, he was due to go on trial in California for the transport of stolen securities.⁶⁴ As one can decipher from his mode of execution,

Rostau worked for the Mob. His LA place of business was a storefront on Sunset Boulevard. He was sophisticated in his dealing and had all kinds of cutting compounds and encasing equipment. Sebring was a regular customer of Rostau's. Others would give money to Jay and he would then distribute the coke himself.⁶⁵ According to books by both Marc Eliot and Neile McQueen one of the stars Jay did this for was Steve McQueen. In fact, Charlene McCaffrey, Rostau's girlfriend, worked for Sebring. According to her, Joel had delivered both cocaine and mescaline to the Tate home on the day of the murders. Sebring and Frykowski requested more, but Rostau did not return.⁶⁶ For some inexplicable reason, Rostau's name does not appear in the index to *Helter Skelter*.

But in addition to Sebring, why did Frykoski have the MDA at the Tate home? In *Helter Skelter* there is a mention of three men from Canada who were at Roman Polanski's house-warming party in March of 1969. They were suspected dope peddlers who got into an altercation with Polanski's business manager. They were asked to leave.⁶⁷ But at this party, Nancy Sinatra also left early. But for a different reason. She was quite upset at the open dope-smoking. As she left, she encountered a group of long-haired hippies who asked her where the party was.⁶⁸ Bugliosi and Gentry disguise the names of the Canadian dealers. But later writers have revealed them as Pic Dawson, Billy Doyle, and Tommy Harrigan. Dawson and his dealing chums were often seen at the Tate home while Polanski was off in London working on a film. A friend of Frykowski's had moved into his regular home across the street from Cass Elliot while Frykowski house sat for Polanski. This man told the police that Frykowski had been offered the exclusive franchise for selling MDA in Los Angeles. This offer was made by a *Canadian* group of dealers.⁶⁹ This detail about the proximity of these dealers to both Frykowski and Cass Elliot is important. Both in the sense of the music scene at Elliot's, and the drug scene across the street. It was common knowledge that John Phillips, Elliot's partner in their group *The Mommas and the Poppas*, was a prolific drug abuser. In a police interview of Doyle, dated August 30, 1969, Lt. Earl Deemer revealed that he knew that Cass Elliot was also a drug user. In the first Tate-LaBianca Homicide Progress Report, it is noted that Doyle actually *lived* with Elliot in January, 1969; in his interview he said he attended a gathering at Polanski's home with Cass. In that interview of Doyle, he said he was in Jamaica when he found out about the murders on Saturday, August 9, the day after they occurred. Amazingly, when he called Cass Elliot that night, she told him that the police had been to her home already! And within three days, Doyle was a suspect. Contrary to what Bugliosi and Gentry write, this is how strong the drug angle was in the case.

But, besides Doyle and Frykowski, there is something else important about the association with Cass Elliot's home. In Michael Caine's 1992 autobiography, *What's It all About?*, he relates a story about his being at Cass Elliot's for a party. At this party was Jay Sebring, who cut Caine's hair in LA; and Jay was with Sharon Tate. Caine then writes that he also noticed a scruffy little man there with some girls. They looked out of place, and he couldn't believe Cass had invited them. But shortly after the little man entered, Cass acknowledged him and introduced him to Caine. She said to the actor, "This is Charles Manson." Manson turned to the tall Brit and said, "Hi!". So the idea that Bugliosi and Gentry try to get across, that the victims and the killers did not know each other and traveled in separate universes, this simply does not ring true today. Since there was clearly a drug and music nexus they very well could have met in. Yet, Cass Elliot's name is mentioned exactly one time in the 630 pages of *Helter Skelter*; it is then instantly dropped.

In retrospect, there actually seems to have been an attempt by Bugliosi and Gentry to limit this drug and music milieu. A good example would be their treatment of Terry Melcher. As noted, Melcher was a record producer who knew Dennis Wilson of The Beach Boys. Wilson was impressed with Manson's musical abilities. As was Neil Young. Manson had an improvisory style that was both unique and original. Reportedly, he could improvise as many as three or four tunes on the spot, with none of them resembling each other. The Beach Boys ended up recording two songs either written or co-written by Manson, "Never Learn Not to Love" and "Be With Me". At one time, in 1968, Wilson was so close to Manson that Manson was actually living at his estate on Sunset Boulevard with some of his commune. It was through Wilson that Manson met Gregg Jakobson and Melcher. Jakobson was a songwriter friend of Wilson and also served as a talent scout for Melcher. Jakobson and Melcher planned on producing both a Manson album and a documentary about Manson and his Spahn Ranch commune.

Quite naturally, after the murders, Melcher, Wilson, and Jakobson wanted to do all they could to conceal their associations with Manson. For instance, at the trial of Tex Watson, Melcher testified that he met Manson a total of three times. Melcher swore under oath that the visits were once at Dennis Wilson's and twice at Spahn Ranch, the movie ranch where Manson and his commune were staying at in 1969. (The reader can read Melcher's testimony online at CieloDrive.com)

Now, in *Helter Skelter*, there is a scene which Bugliosi plays up to great effect. He writes that there was something that did not sit right with him about his interviews with Melcher. So he goes to visit him. Melcher now says that Manson went to visit his home on Cielo Drive after he had moved out. Manson had gone to

the main house. But Shahrokh Hatami, a photographer friend of Sharon's, said the people he was looking for were not there. He referred Manson to the landlord, Rudi Altobelli, who was living in the guest house at the time. After finding out that Melcher was not there, Manson left. Bugliosi plays this to the hilt by saying that to reach the guest house, one has to go by the main house. Therefore, Manson was familiar with the house and grounds. The implication by our intrepid prosecutor is that is how Manson planned it all.

This presentation is nonsense. The nonsense includes the ideas that Melcher only met Manson on three occasions, that they were limited to Spahn Ranch and Wilson's mansion, that somehow Manson learned the layout of Cielo Drive from going there when Melcher was not there; and lastly, the buried implication that somehow the murders were about revenging Manson for Melcher not signing him to a record deal or completing the documentary.

As author Ed Sanders documents in his book, *The Family*, Tex Watson visited his friend Dean Morehouse, who was living at Cielo Drive, after Melcher moved out. Watson was there several times. So how could Watson and Manson not know Melcher was gone by the time of the murders? Sanders also writes that Melcher was at a recording session Manson had in Santa Monica arranged by Wilson. But beyond that, in her 2004 book *Memories are Made of This*, Deanna Martin further demolishes Melcher's story. On page 163 of that book, Dean Martin's daughter writes that Melcher was once her boyfriend. When they were going together, he would invite her over to his rented house at 10050 Cielo Drive. Which, of course, would be the scene of the crime after Melcher moved out and the Polanskis moved in. She relates that she met Manson at Melcher's house! More than once. The first time Manson was with Tex Watson. The second time he was with a couple of girls. It was unforgettable to her because he was wearing a striking looking ring. He noticed her looking at it. So he took it off and gave it to her. He then asked, "You're Dean Martin's daughter aren't you?" After the murders, Deanna was interviewed by the LAPD. They knew about Manson giving her the ring. Now, Bugliosi and Gentry mention Manson giving Deanna the ring in their book. But they don't say where the gift-giving occurred. Why? Simple. Deanna writes that Melcher *cut a deal with Bugliosi so that Deanna would not testify at Manson's trial*. Apparently, this is how Melcher distanced himself from Manson. And if one does that, then one distances Manson from both the music and the drug scene. Which limits the alternative motives for the crimes.

With all this in mind—most of which is not in *Helter Skelter*--the hippie types Nancy Sinatra encountered now become rather interesting. Because there was

evidence entered into the record that one of Manson's followers had been burned on a purchase of a thousand dollars worth of MDA by people living at the Polanski residence.⁷⁰ If this is accurate, then the bad batch likely came in from the Canadian group of dealers that Bugliosi seems eager to dismiss. Is there any wonder then that in the October 20th police review of the case, submitted four days after Manson was arrested, the most likely motive for the Tate murders was a drug burn or drug related crime?⁷¹ Lt. Robert J. Helder wrote, "The killers went to the Polanski house sometime after midnight...to either deliver or collect for various types and amounts of narcotics; that an argument ensued either over the money or the possibility of bad drugs...." Sharon Tate's father, Colonel Paul Tate, was a former military intelligence officer. He was so convinced that this was the real motive that he grew a beard and began infiltrating drug lairs.⁷²

Before leaving this possible motive for the crimes, let us drop another important fact. The LaBianca phone line was tapped by the FBI.⁷³ This had to have been done under a court order. And in 1969, these were usually issued over criminal matters, not national security matters. There seem to be two possible reasons for this tap. Leno LaBianca had run up a large six-figure debt at the race track.⁷⁴ The tap may have been to find out who his bookie was. Or it may have been to find out how he was going to pay it off. In an accounting, it was discovered that Gateway markets, a company that Leno sat on the board of, was missing around \$200,000.⁷⁵

A second possible reason for the FBI tap is that Rosemary LaBianca was, by far and away, the wealthiest of all the victims. Rosemary had worked as a waitress before marrying Leno. She then opened up a dress shop. According to Bugliosi and Gentry, she made some absolutely sensational stock and commodity investments. Because she left an estate worth 2.6 million dollars.⁷⁶ One has to wonder: With the equivalent of about ten million dollars today, why did she continue to sell apparel and not enter into stock speculation full time?

Or, we may not have to wonder about it. In 1979, Paul Watkins published a slim volume called *My Life with Charles Manson*. As noted, Watkins supplied Bugliosi with some information for his book. But the author does not recall the following story in *Helter Skelter*. In Chapter 24 of Watkins' tome, he discusses going into Los Angeles to testify. After which, he was approached by a man with a goatee who was dressed in a double-breasted suit. His name was Jake Freidberg. He said he was a lawyer and wanted to ask Paul some questions. They got in his limousine and Jake put Watkins up at a classy hotel in a penthouse suite. He questioned him for two days. When Watkins left, he was phoned by Paul Crockett, a friend of his from

Manson's days in Inyo County. Crockett asked Paul where he had been. Paul told him what had happened. Crockett said he had been trying to call him because the DA's office had notified him and warned that, "Friedberg is a Mafia man...something about LaBianca's connection with the syndicate." In other words, the District Attorney's office knew that Friedberg was in town to question trial witnesses. And they knew Friedberg was there because of the LaBianca connection to the Mob. One would think that Bugliosi knew about this. And somehow he didn't think it was important?

Suzan Rae was Rosemary LaBianca's daughter from a previous relationship. As we noted earlier, the night of the LaBianca murders her brother called her to the scene of the crime. Her boyfriend, who was with her at the time, was Joe Dorgan. Dorgan was a member of the motorcycle gang the Straight Satans. This gang often frequented Spahn Ranch, and both Watson and Manson were familiar with many of the members. In fact, one of the witnesses that Bugliosi used against Manson, Danny DeCarlo, was a member of this gang. But further, Suzan lived a few hundred feet away from Tex Watson's apartment in Hollywood. As reported on April 15, 2012 in *The New York Post*, Suzan LaBerge (Rae's married name) began writing Watson in 1986. A year later she visited him in jail for three hours. They then exchanged more letters and more visits. At a parole hearing, she argued for Watson to be set free, even though he killed her parents. After all this, writer Alisa Statman noted that no one believes that Suzan just woke up one day and decided to write letters to her parents' murderer. The article concludes with an insight that is rather late on arrival, "Maybe the "random" targeting of the LaBianca house wasn't so random."

The fact that both Sebring and Frykowski were in the drug trade does much to negate the Helter Skelter concept. There were and are any amount of homes in the Bel Air, Beverly Hills area which belonged to well off, celebrity type people. There are literally thousands of them. But this one just happened to have two men involved in cocaine and MDA trading. What are the odds of that happening?

And there is one other point to be made in this regard. Sharon Tate was not supposed to be at Cielo Drive that night. As her mother told author Ed Sanders in a 1988 interview, she was supposed to spend the night with a friend, Sheila Wells. Sanders replied that, through his research, he had learned that Watson and Manson had understood that to be the case. She said that she found that out also. If this information is accurate, then it appears that the target was not the celebrity. It was the two dealers.

The Copycat Murders?

Let us address another possible motive, or one that could have been used in combination with the drug angle. When Aaron Stovitz did an interview for *Rolling Stone* magazine in March of 1970, he described one possible reason for the crimes as copycat type murders. To fully understand this concept one must do something that *Helter Skelter* does not: place a series of crimes in both their proper context and chronological order. To do that, we begin with another drug burn.

In 1969, Bernard Crowe was a black dope peddler living in the Hollywood Hills. The police elicited much information that Manson and his followers were seen around his home that summer.⁷⁷ But what makes this even more interesting is that some of these sources say they also saw these same people at Cass Elliott's house, which was across the street from Frykowski's.⁷⁸

In late June of 1969, Tex Watson met a girl who lived near Crowe's house. One night, Crowe, Watson and the girl drove to a residence in El Monte. Crowe forked over \$2,400 to purchase some pot. Watson took the money, walked into the house, walked out the back door and hitch-hiked back to Spahn Ranch cackling about his swindle. Crowe was not amused. He went with the girl back to her home and had her call Spahn Ranch. They contacted Manson. The girl was hysterical. Crowe had threatened to kill her. Crowe also threatened to drive up to Spahn Ranch and shoot the place up unless he got his money back. Manson told him he would come down to Hollywood instead. Once there, Manson shot Crowe.⁷⁹

Although Crowe survived, the important thing to remember is that Manson thought he was dead. But further, Manson thought he was associated with the Black Panthers. Because the next day, he heard a bulletin on the radio saying that the body of a Panther had been dumped near UCLA the night before.⁸⁰ Manson now ordered all the infants at Spahn Ranch to be separated from the main quarters so as to be hidden from an impending Panther retaliatory attack. He also ordered a 24 hour armed guard detail around Spahn to warn when the Panthers were coming.⁸¹ Manson told a ranch hand at Spahn about a Black Panther he had shot.⁸² Danny DeCarlo, a biker who spent a lot of time at Spahn Ranch, also thought Manson had killed a Panther.⁸³

How closely was the music and drug milieu aligned in this affair? The day that Crowe was shot, one of the men near the scene was an associate of Dennis Wilson. Gregg Jakobson overheard the conversation when Wilson got the news. He told Melcher. According to Ed Sanders, this marked the end of the Melcher/Manson film and album.

The shooting of Crowe is related to the next crime, in two ways. In July, Bobby Beausoleil, a close friend and follower of Manson, killed Gary Hinman. Hinman lived nearby in scenic Topanga Canyon. He was a guitar instructor who had been acquainted with some of Manson's gang. He was also an efficient mescaline manufacturer. Beausoleil had been pushing Hinman's mescaline onto some biker friends of his. But the bikers said that Bobby had sold them a bad batch. They wanted their money back, about \$2,000. Bobby and Manson felt that either Hinman owed them the money or Hinman should give them free mescaline worth that much. Bobby, Susan Atkins, and Mary Brunner went over to Hinman's house. The drug negotiation ended with Hinman signing over his cars and Beausoleil. But Manson came over and made things worse by slicing Hinman's ear. Beausoleil now thought that Hinman would go to the police. He ended up stabbing Hinman to death.⁸⁴

After Hinman had died, Beausoleil and the two girls used his blood to write on the wall, "Political PIGGY". To the left of those words, one of them "fingerprinted in blood the paw of a cat, intended to be a panther." They then added with a narrow brush the claws of a paw.⁸⁵ The intention was to blame Hinman's death on the Black Panthers, a group Hinman backed. But also, the group Manson felt was about to attack him. Manson did not want Beausoleil to leave town because he said Bobby knew too much about him killing a Panther.⁸⁶ But he did leave in a car owned by Hinman. The car broke down on August 5th near San Luis Obispo. A California Highway Patrol officer approached the car, ran the license, and traced the vehicle to the dead man. Since the two county sheriffs investigating the Hinman murder had already found Beausoleil's name in Hinman's papers, and lifted his fingerprints off the inside of the house, this was the beginning of the end for Spahn Ranch.⁸⁷ Manson now began to plan in earnest to leave the Chatsworth area for Inyo County and Death Valley.

When Beausoleil was brought back to Los Angeles on August 7th, he called the Spahn Ranch. More than one witness has stated that what followed was a discussion of performing a copycat murder. Someone had seen a movie in which copycat murders were committed over a period of time and it caused a killer to be released.⁸⁸ Susan Atkins stated fairly early that Manson had planned the Tate/LaBianca murders to get Bobby out of jail. And she maintained that until her death.⁸⁹

Manson had blamed Tex Watson for his shooting of Crowe. Evidently, he figured Watson owed him one. So he and Watson conferred about what to do about Bobby being in jail.⁹⁰ Before Watson left Spahn Ranch for the Tate house on Cielo Drive that night, Manson told the girls to write something witchy on the walls.⁹¹

Atkins wrote the word “pig” on the front door in Tate’s blood. Years later, in an inadvertent but crucial revelation, Manson revealed that he went to the scene that night after Watson, Kasabian, Krenwinkel, and Atkins had returned. According to Manson:

My only concern was whether it resembled the Hinman killing. Would the police now have reason to believe that Bobby was not the slayer of Hinman.⁹²

He dropped a pair of glasses there in order to confuse the police. Bobby Beausoleil’s girlfriend, Kitty Lutesinger, who floated in and out of the Manson following, told the police she had been programmed to think the Panthers were responsible for the Tate murders.⁹³ The next night, at the LaBianca home, the same methodology as with Hinman was used: stabbings, accompanied by writing on the walls. This time the words were “Death to pigs”, “Rise” and the misspelled phrase “Healter Skelter”. It was all so obvious that the two veteran detectives on the Hinman case understood the resemblance right off.⁹⁴

During the Tate/LaBianca trial, Manson even told attorney Paul Fitzgerald that the motive was to get Beausoleil out of jail.⁹⁵ Early in the investigation, the police actually considered whether the Tate and LaBianca murders were copycat murders.⁹⁶ And in fact, during the trial Manson told the judge that Bugliosi and Stovitz had no idea of what was going on and were “still in the dark about the whole situation....”⁹⁷

According to one county homicide investigator there was actually a resistance to this copycat concept inside the DA’s office. Which is one reason why the county detectives who cracked the Hinman case--Charles Guenther and Paul Whiteley--never got the credit they deserved. When actually, they were the investigators who traced the first murder to Spahn Ranch and Manson. According to one inside source, Bugliosi did not want the Hinman case filed with the Tate/LaBianca case. He wanted the latter to be the big case. He did not want them all put together. And, in fact, even though they were all directly related, Bugliosi did not prosecute the Hinman case: Burton Katz did. According to author Ed Sanders, “At issue was the possible draining away of media attention from the Tate/LaBianca spectacle.”⁹⁸

The problem is that if one leaves out, or takes Crowe and Hinman out of order, it detracts from the chronological and rather compelling progression of the crimes. And that cumulative effect vitiates the Beatles-Bible thesis. The idea of drug burns and copycat killings are not as sensational, or filled with apocalyptic images, as Manson emerging from a hole after a race war and becoming, like film director James Cameron, king of the world.

But, with the Helter Skelter mythos maintained, it allows Bugliosi and Gentry to make their recurrent and ridiculous comparisons of Manson with Adolf Hitler. The problem being that, taken in their proper context, these comparisons are as goofy as the Beatles/Bible concept. The idea that a band of social misfits who had to freeload off of an elderly, near-blind owner of an obsolete movie ranch—George Spahn—who now made his money renting horseback rides, that this can be compared to what Hitler, Goebbels, Roehm, Goering and Himmler did in Germany is so nutty as to be risible. To take one example, in slightly less than two years after joining the German Workers Party, Hitler had grown its membership from 60 members to 3,000.⁹⁹ And this was all done in public, by numerous appearances and public speeches during which he galvanized his listeners with his brilliant cadences and powerful perorations. Charles Manson never had more than 60 or so lost youths who he could barely control, since many of them were coming and going. And after a bit more than two and a half years, when he switched locations to Death Valley to escape an imaginary Black Panther attack, Manson was down to about thirty followers. He was losing, not gaining believers.

But further, Manson could never do what Hitler did since, due to his appearance and poor speaking skills, he could never go public as the face of a mass movement. And therefore, he could never attract the type of people with the formidable abilities of say a Joseph Goebbels, Heinrich Himmler or Reinhard Heydrich. Within five years of taking control of the Nazi Party, Hitler was ready to stage a coup in Bavaria, the largest state in Germany. At the end, Manson could not even stay in control of a deserted ranch in Inyo County. Which is a place so remote and empty, that, as a policeman said, “You could hide the Empire State Building out there and no one could find it.”¹⁰⁰ From there, where was Manson going to strike? At the local Gila monsters and cactus plants? The comparison is simply preposterous. At the same time that it aggrandizes a pimp, drug dealer and con artist, it softens the true horror of the German national tragedy of Nazism, let alone the millions who perished through its industrialized engines of destruction. And it points out a problem with *Reclaiming History* that will be discussed later: Bugliosi’s shortcomings as a historian.

The author has taken this long to discuss this book and this case because first, Bugliosi made his name on it. It belongs to him and is supposed to show the prosecutor at his absolute best. Second, much of the public considers it his finest literary effort, and they know him through this book. Third, it is a case in which the forensics evidence was not questionable. There was really no arguing about the gun used that night or the fingerprints discovered at the scene. As we will see, this is not at all the case with the Kennedy assassination. In fact, it’s the opposite. Both the

genuineness of the evidence in the JFK case, and chain of possession of that evidence, is extremely questionable. Finally, although few can fault Bugliosi's performance in Tate/LaBianca purely as a prosecutor, as shown above, one *can* fault his performance as an investigator. The two roles do not serve the same function or purpose. As we shall see, the FBI investigation upon which the Warren Commission, and Bugliosi, rely upon in the Kennedy case was compromised from the start. Yet, Bugliosi the investigator accepted it.

Bugliosi on Trial for Perjury

After the prosecution of Tex Watson, Bugliosi had completed the Tate/LaBianca case. Except for one issue.

During the trial, someone had leaked the transcript of discussions Virginia Graham had with Susan Atkins while they were in jail. They ended up with *Los Angeles Herald Examiner* reporter William Farr. Judge Older had placed a gag order over the case since all the pre-trial publicity had affected the defendants' right to a fair trial. The transcript in question included things that Graham had not revealed initially to the DA's office.¹⁰¹ Graham had a new lawyer, one Robert Steinberg. She now said that Atkins had also talked to her about a celebrity killing spree that the Manson followers had planned. This included murdering Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Tom Jones, Steve McQueen, and Frank Sinatra. As shown above, it's likely that Watson and Manson did not even think the one celebrity at Cielo Drive, Sharon Tate, would be at the house that evening. So this testimony was very odd on its face. When Bugliosi sent his assistant Steve Kay to interview her, he taped the conversation. When Bugliosi heard what Graham was saying, he knew he could never introduce it into evidence. First, because its relevance to Tate/LaBianca was negligible, and second, whatever value it had, it was outweighed by its extremely prejudicial effect. But a transcript was made and given to each defense attorney under the law of discovery.¹⁰² Subsequently, and during the trial, Farr had used the leaked material to write a story for the *Examiner*.¹⁰³

Since California had a strong reporter shield law at the time, Judge Older waited until Farr took a job as a press secretary for the DA's office to call him into court to find out who gave him the transcript. When he refused, he cited him for contempt and jailed him for 46 days. Farr was freed pending appeal.¹⁰⁴ But Older now called all six of the attorneys to court and asked each one if they had given the transcript to Farr. They all denied it, including Bugliosi. This is how Bugliosi handles the matter in his book:

All six denied under oath giving the statement to Farr. At least two of the six were apparently lying. All I know is that I didn't give Farr the statement."¹⁰⁵

From that précis, the reader would never guess that Bugliosi was one of the two lawyers who was indicted for perjury for violating the judge's order.¹⁰⁶

In fairness to him, the indictment may have occurred after *Helter Skelter* first went to press. Nevertheless, in June of 1974 both he and defense attorney Daye Shinn were indicted after an eight day inquiry into the episode.¹⁰⁷ Both men were charged by a special prosecutor on three counts of perjury. A special prosecutor had to be appointed since the DA's office was perceived as having a conflict of interest in the case. The trial was set to begin on September 25, 1974 in the court of Judge Earl Broady. When it began, Bugliosi's assistant Stephen Kay took the stand and said that Farr asked him to hand a manila envelope to Bugliosi on October 8, 1970. This was several days after the DA was in receipt of the Graham statement. Kay said Farr had been in Bugliosi's office the afternoon the prosecutor had accepted copies of the statement for storage. In a previous appearance, before a grand jury, Kay had testified that Bugliosi became irate when he asked him if the envelope from Farr included Graham's transcript. Kay said that Bugliosi's reaction was like a tiger jumping out of a tree. Further, Kay had previously testified that Bugliosi threatened to have both him and fellow assistant Don Musich removed from the Tate/LaBianca case if either one of them asked for a hearing into the back and forth passing of the envelope between Farr and Bugliosi.¹⁰⁸

At this point in the proceeding, Bugliosi's attorney, Harland Braun, made a clever tactical maneuver. After such damaging testimony to his client, he asked the judge to call Farr to the stand. He wanted Farr to repeat his previous testimony about being passed the information by two lawyers. The defense lawyer said that without that testimony, there was no evidence a crime had been committed. Surprisingly, Broady went along with that motion. Even though the fact of the leak had already been established by Judge Older and Farr had already admitted to it. But Broady also said that Farr, since he now worked for the *LA Times*, could not be held in contempt for refusing to answer. Broady then went even further. He also said that Farr's previous testimony, when he had said two attorneys passed him the info, could not be used at trial now. The special prosecutor, Theodore P. Shield, was shocked by the judge's ruling. It had effectively taken the scaffolding from his case.¹⁰⁹

If Bugliosi did leak the transcript—and Kay's testimony surely makes a circumstantial case for that assumption—one can speculate as to why he did it. After all, according to Kay, Bugliosi was well aware of the risk he was running. But

as we have seen, the prosecutor—unlike Aaron Stovitz-- saw this case as being so unique as to be unprecedented in the history of American jurisprudence. Graham's new and revised testimony expanded the scope and celebrity profile of the case. So it certainly played into Bugliosi's conception of what the case should be.

Bugliosi Runs for Office

Bugliosi used to teach a law class once a week at Beverly School of Law. As he tells it, one of his students talked him into running for the DA's office.¹¹⁰

Evelle Younger had won a race for state Attorney General. So Bugliosi's opponent would now be his former boss, District Attorney Joseph Busch. Because when Younger had won the state Attorney General position, the Board of Supervisors had appointed Deputy DA Busch to replace him. Busch had been with the office for nearly 20 years when he became DA in 1971. Bugliosi said that Busch, who died in 1975, had a "pretty serious drinking problem and was not running the office well."¹¹¹

During his April, 1997 *Playboy* interview, Bugliosi did something he almost never does. When asked to comment on his political races, of which there were three, he begged off. The prosecutor said, "Why do you want to get into all this stuff? I don't want to get into all this political mess." Now, why is this unusual? Because, as Bugliosi will tell you, he is so loquacious that it takes him five minutes to say hello in the morning. So for him to say he would have little or no comment on running for both District Attorney of Los Angeles and Attorney General of California, that is contrary to who he is. Quite naturally, it made the author wonder what had happened to make the prosecutor clam up.

Bugliosi ran for DA of Los Angeles in 1972 and 1976. He ran for Attorney General of California in 1974. He lost all three races. The 1972 race against Busch was extremely close. In 1974, for Attorney General, he lost by double digits in the Democratic primary to William Norris. In 1976, he was soundly beaten for DA by John Van de Kamp. But in studying these races, the thing that strikes the reader is how personal and rabid they were. Bill Boyarsky is a retired *LA Times* reporter and editor. He covered local and national political races for over three decades. He said that the 1972 DA's race between Busch and Bugliosi was the most vicious he ever witnessed.¹¹² And unlike what Bugliosi tries to depict in his *Playboy* interview, the attacks were not all by Busch and his backers.

For instance, Bugliosi accused Busch of granting special favors to attorney Paul Caruso. Caruso was representing car dealer Ralph Williams on charges of false

advertising. But Caruso was also a contributor to Busch's campaign. Bugliosi accused Busch of granting Caruso unwarranted delays and other favors because of his financial contributions.¹¹³ As noted in his *Playboy* interview, Bugliosi also attacked Busch for being too lenient with polluters. Busch countered that this was the responsibility of the county Air Pollution Control District, not his office.¹¹⁴

But probably the most bizarre accusation made in that bruising and controversial race was made by Busch. The DA accused his opponent of offering to pull out of the race if he would help him get the appointment of special prosecutor in the Angela Davis case, and later get him a judgeship. Busch had a corroborating witness for this charge. Ironically, it was the man who was involved in the leaking case he was indicted for: William Farr. Bugliosi countered by saying that Busch's chief deputy, John Howard, had offered him the Davis prosecution if he would drop out of the race. Unlike Farr, Howard denied making the offer. After listening to each side call the other a bunch of liars, a local newscaster invited each man to take a polygraph test. According to Boyarksy's story, Busch agreed instantly. Bugliosi was hesitant.¹¹⁵ His side said that he did not have much faith in polygraphs. Which, curiously, is at odds with what Bugliosi wrote in *Reclaiming History*. There he wrote that the polygraph "has achieved a considerable degree of respectability in the law enforcement community...."¹¹⁶

The bitter residue of the 1972 race carried over into the 1974 race for Attorney General. Now Bugliosi ran in the Democratic primary against William Norris. In this particular race, pitting Democrat against Democrat, the organization against Bugliosi seemed methodical. There were people in places who simply did not want Bugliosi as Attorney General. And they were willing to play political hardball in order to stop him.

At the tail end of the race against Busch--in fact in the last two days--Bugliosi was sued by a former milkman and his wife.¹¹⁷ Herbert H. Weisel said that Bugliosi had slandered and defamed him when he said he suspected him of theft. He said this was a smokescreen. In truth, Bugliosi had misused the power of his office to harass him over a personal matter. Bugliosi's campaign manager said that Weisel's charge was false and so unethical he would not even honor it with a response.

The day before, Busch had called a press conference with Weisel in attendance. Weisel said that back in 1969, a man had called him trying to get written authorization to search his work records. Weisel changed his phone number to avoid having to answer any more odd and anonymous calls. He then got an anonymous note saying that, "...you shouldn't have changed your phone number. That wasn't nice."¹¹⁸ Then the man's wife came to his house to talk to his own wife

about giving him permission to access his work records. Weisel had his lawyer trace a car which had been cruising by his house. The car was traced to Bugliosi. The reason the lawsuit was filed was because Weisel insisted that he had stolen no money from Bugliosi as the prosecutor had charged in return.

This Weisel episode, which surfaced in the papers again in 1974, and once more in 1976, ended up being called The Milkman Issue. The late George Denny was one of the attorneys who was bitterly opposed to Bugliosi gaining public office. To make a long story short, it appears that Bugliosi thought that Mr. Weisel had had an affair with his wife and he wanted to check out if his house was on Weisel's route when her pregnancy happened.¹¹⁹ The Weisels both signed long, detailed and sworn affidavits which made them liable for perjury if they could be impeached. And further, as Denny notes, there are serious problems with Bugliosi's counter accusation of theft. For example, Bugliosi stated that the theft occurred back in 1966-67. Yet Weisel's last day of work for the milk company was June 16, 1965. Also, if such a theft occurred in 1965, why did Bugliosi wait until 1969 to first call Weisel?¹²⁰

Bugliosi offered to settle the Weisel lawsuit in early 1973. But he wanted all the stenographic notes of the depositions *not to be* transcribed, and turned over to him. Which they were.¹²¹ Further, Bugliosi settled the damages in cash and everyone had to sign a secrecy agreement.¹²²

In the 1974 race, not only did the Weisel lawsuit come into play again, but the perjury trial over the violation of the Tate/LaBianca gag order was ongoing during the campaign. And, as if things could not get worse, these were now joined by a third incident. In May of 1974 there were new headlines in the papers about Bugliosi settling an assault case out of court.¹²³ A woman named Virginia Cardwell stated that she had been having an affair with Bugliosi in 1973. She had become pregnant by him. He had given her money to have an abortion. When she did not have the procedure she said he entered her apartment through the back door and assaulted her.¹²⁴ She filed a police report over the assault since she feared he would attack her again. Realizing this could really hurt any future political ambitions, Bugliosi returned to her apartment and convinced her to fabricate a cover story.¹²⁵ The story being that the reason for filing the police report was a dispute over a legal fee he charged her, and the bruise on her face was caused by her child accidentally swinging a baseball bat at her. Bugliosi even wanted her to tell the police she had filed a false report, which is a misdemeanor. She actually did do that.¹²⁶

But then she told her brother about the whole mess. He eventually talked her into hiring a lawyer, John Wolf. After Bugliosi's lawyers initially denied everything,

again the incident was settled out of court.¹²⁷ Again, there was another secrecy agreement signed between the parties. This time it included the opposing parties, the lawyers, and Bugliosi's secretary Barbara Silver. Apparently, Silver had manufactured a phony receipt so Cardwell could masquerade as Bugliosi's client. Which she had never been.¹²⁸

Attorney George Denny, who was involved in the Weisel case, had also tangentially been involved in the Cardwell case. He had temporarily served as her lawyer before Wolf. Denny called a press conference at the Los Angeles Press Club on May 7, 1974. The local media, quite naturally, showed up e.g. the *LA Times*. And they carried his presentation. For he now fully aired the Weisel affair for the first time in public and then added in the Cardwell episode. His very detailed press release went on for nine pages. And he asked Bugliosi to sue him right then and there if it contained any false statements.

Bugliosi did not sue. Instead his campaign representative called Denny a "political hatchetman" and a "liar".¹²⁹ So Denny now sued Bugliosi.¹³⁰ On the day before the election, June 3, 1974, Bugliosi filed his answer to the Denny complaint, along with his own cross-complaint.

The negative publicity was lethal to Bugliosi's campaign. Even though he had much higher name recognition than Norris, he lost by a margin well into the double digits. Shortly after the loss, his law partner, Robert Steinberg, contacted Denny and said they would withdraw their lawsuit if Denny would withdraw his. This was accomplished with alacrity. And in the resulting agreement, Bugliosi's campaign treasurer agreed to retract his comments accusing Denny of being a political hatchetman and a liar.¹³¹

It may be hard for the reader to believe, but even after all this, Bugliosi decided to run for DA of Los Angeles in 1976. Evidently, he felt the colossal success of the book and film of *Helter Skelter* would be enough to carry him through the campaign. Joseph Busch had died in office in 1975. Therefore, it was up to the Board of Supervisors to appoint a replacement. As journalist Thomas Elias noted, Bugliosi was a non-starter with the board. Because by now, quite naturally, he was seen as someone who "...tends to polarize political feelings in Los Angeles more than almost any other individual."¹³² In fact, suspecting that the success of his book would probably tempt him to run again, they actually wanted to find someone who would be a safe bet to beat him.¹³³ In John Van de Kamp, they had their man. In fact, he was the perfect foil for Bugliosi.

Van de Kamp comes from a wealthy Los Angeles family. The Van de Kamps controlled both the bakeries that hold their name, and Lawry's Restaurants. John was born and bred in California, and went to high school at John Muir in Pasadena. He was then educated at an Ivy League college, Dartmouth, and attended law school at Stanford. He first worked in the U. S. Attorney's office and then became the first federal public defender in Los Angeles. But beyond that--or perhaps because of it--his personality was that of a reserved, thoughtful, low-key, self-assured country squire. He was a man who was not controversial, had little or no baggage, and did not get into trouble or pick fights. And Van de Kamp also looked the part: tall, handsome, soft-spoken; a man who was, in public at least, always in control of himself. These traits served him well throughout his 16 year career as first, DA, and then California Attorney General.

The writing was on the wall when, early in the race, Bugliosi's old boss Evelle Younger--now Attorney General--endorsed Van de Kamp.¹³⁴ Four of five members of the Board of Supervisors—2 Democrats and 2 Republicans—also endorsed him. Van De Kamp was also backed by U.S. Senator Alan Cranston, state Treasurer Jesse Unruh, and the mayor of Los Angeles, Tom Bradley.¹³⁵

In the face of all this, the feisty prosecutor came out swinging. Apparently thinking he would have won a race against the formidable Van de Kamp, he criticized the supervisors for not calling a special election to fill Busch's term.¹³⁶ Even though, since the founding of LA county, no vacancy for the DA's office had ever been filled by calling an election.¹³⁷

Bugliosi then attacked Van de Kamp for being a public defender. He said that, "While I was a prosecutor convicting criminals, he was defending them."¹³⁸ Bugliosi then did something reckless. At a candidates' forum on May 20th, he attacked DA Van de Kamp for having a low prosecution rate. He said that 7 of 10 persons arrested in the county on felony charges were not prosecuted as such. He compared this with the rest of the state, where he said only 3 of 10 perpetrators were not prosecuted.¹³⁹ Although Van de Kamp did not address this directly during the forum, he did so afterwards in response to a reporter's question. It turns out that Van de Kamp had an even higher rate of prosecution than the rest of the state: 80 per cent. He therefore called the charge misleading and demagogic. What Bugliosi had done was not factor in 1.) The number of cases later assigned to the City Attorney's office, and 2.) The number of cases plea bargained to misdemeanors.¹⁴⁰ Bugliosi had to have known this since he had served in the office for several years.

But Bugliosi now went even further. He used the misleading statistic in his scare tactic radio ads. He warned citizens to put bars on their windows, and to buy

attack dogs and guns since Van de Kamp was letting off 70% of his felony suspects.¹⁴¹ It got so bad that City Attorney Burt Pines issued a press release characterizing the radio ads as false and misleading, and going “beyond the bounds of acceptable campaign rhetoric.”¹⁴²

Bugliosi now attacked the incumbent by saying that Van de Kamp had been given his job by a handful of friends, and he had never prosecuted a murderer or rapist. Yet, as Van de Kamp proved, none of the supervisors could be categorized as a friend of his. He did not even know three of the five members. And he would have had to in order to be appointed. And he *had* successfully prosecuted two murder cases as an assistant U.S. attorney.¹⁴³

The major newspapers in Los Angeles all backed Van de Kamp: the *Times*, *Herald Examiner*, and the *Long Beach Press-Telegram*. Mr. Denny was around again this time. Because in the settlement of the slander suits, Bugliosi was in such a weak position that there was no secrecy agreement.¹⁴⁴ And the *Press-Telegram* editorial endorsing Van de Kamp mentioned both the Cardwell and Weisel cases.

Bugliosi again lost by a double digit margin, 51.8 % to 36%. The after action reports were not kind to the loser. On June 10th, the *Press-Telegram* wrote that they were glad to see that Van de Kamp had triumphed over Bugliosi’s smear campaign, one that relied on character assassination and misrepresentation of facts. As pointed out earlier, the Board of Supervisors had chosen the perfect foil to the pugnacious prosecutor. And Mike Kaye, Van de Kamp’s media director, acknowledged this afterwards. He said that, as opposed to Bugliosi, his candidate was a “...straight shooter, low key. He isn’t the type to pound the table. He was a tremendous contrast to Bugliosi....”¹⁴⁵ And since Bugliosi’s main charge was unsound, it appeared he was fanatical about misleading people.

After the blistering, and unrelenting attacks by Bugliosi, even the gentlemanly Van de Kamp could not hold back from criticizing the tactics his opponent used. To his local paper he candidly said that Bugliosi had waged a dangerous and reckless campaign. One which tried to intimidate voters with false and misleading statistics. He added that the voters had seen through these tactics and Bugliosi was now finished politically.¹⁴⁶

And so he was. Wisely, Bugliosi did not run for office again.

Life After Politics

Bugliosi now settled into a career of private law practice combined with writing books. Because of the smashing success of *Helter Skelter* he was now in

demand as a legal and political commentator. He also became very well off since some of his books were sold as TV films and mini-series. For example, in an interview in his Beverly Hills law office, he proudly told author Ed Sanders that an upcoming book of his, *And the Sea Will Tell*, had just sold for the highest amount ever for a TV mini-series.¹⁴⁷

Generally speaking, Bugliosi comes off as a law and order liberal in both his books and his public comments. Most of his commentary is sound and some of it is provocative. But, as in his political campaigns, every once in awhile, he speaks before he thinks.

For example, in a short interview he did for *Playboy* in 1994 focusing on the OJ Simpson case, he said that Jeffrey MacDonald had once asked for his help in his defense. MacDonald, of course, was the Green Beret physician who was accused of killing his wife and two daughters in 1970. MacDonald was first acquitted in a military tribunal. But then, nine years later, after a long and convoluted and unusual process, he was convicted in a civilian court. In that interview, Bugliosi said he did not take the case since it was clear to him MacDonald was guilty. There have been two books published on that case that make MacDonald's guilt not so clear: *Fatal Justice* by Fred Bost and Jerry Allen Potter, and *A Wilderness of Error* by Errol Morris. There appears to have been some prosecutorial misconduct in the case and a conscious effort to nail MacDonald either by ethical, or unethical, means. In fairness to Bugliosi, both of these interesting books were published after that 1994 interview.

Concerning the OJ Simpson case, in that 1994 interview, which occurred before the trial, Bugliosi seemed to like the prosecution team. He then switched gears after watching the long trial and hearing the 'not guilty' verdict. After this, he became probably their most vociferous critic. One of the grounds which he used to pillory DA Gil Garcetti was his alleged choice to try the case in the downtown Los Angeles court instead of in Santa Monica. As legal expert and author Roger Grace noted, this was not actually Garcetti's decision. It was actually made by Cecil Mills, the supervising judge of the criminal courts in 1994. His superior, presiding judge Robert Mallano, ratified it.¹⁴⁸ Mallano told Grace that if Bugliosi had called him he would have said that it was the court, not Garcetti, who made that call.¹⁴⁹ Mallano told Grace that even if the complaint had been filed in Santa Monica, the trial would have been moved downtown because at the time, Santa Monica was only a municipal court.¹⁵⁰

In his all out attack on the Simpson prosecution team, Bugliosi made a rather reckless and ill-timed charge. One that, as we will see, was as ill-timed as his praise

for the decorum and probity of the Dallas Police and DA's office in 1963. He said that police frame ups of black Americans for felonies are virtually unheard of.¹⁵¹

Two weeks before this interview was on the newstands, the staggering, horrific LAPD Rampart Division scandal began to unfold. It started off with the killing of black police officer Kevin Gaines on March 18, 1997. It greatly expanded about a year later when Police Chief Bernard Parks had to appoint a task force to investigate the almost unspeakable malfeasance and corruption at Rampart Division. In August of 1998, the case broke wide open when former Ramparts policeman Rafael Perez contemplated cutting a deal with prosecutors over a drug charge. In return, Perez agreed to give information about two "bad shootings" and three other officers involved in illegal activity. Perez eventually implicated over 70 officers in a frightening array of illegal activity. Which included frame-ups of African Americans.¹⁵²

It is beyond the subject area of this book to even begin to try and summarize the depth and scope of this LAPD scandal. But suffice it to say, it was influential in the fall of both Police Chief Parks and Mayor Jim Hahn. It was so bad and pervasive that the city could not adequately investigate it. The LA City Council had to accept a consent decree for the US Department of Justice to oversee and monitor the LAPD for a period of five years. There were a series of criminal trials, internal affairs investigations, and civil suits that went on for over four years. And, to this day, many observers claim the magnitude of the criminality was concealed for the "good" of the city. And contrary to what Bugliosi says in his interview, Mark Fuhrman's name surfaced in that aborted inquiry.

But further, two months after Bugliosi's proclamation in the national media about the "unheard" of practice of police frame ups of black Americans, Geronimo Pratt's 1972 murder conviction was overturned in a Los Angeles court. Pratt, an African-American, had been framed by the LAPD with help from the FBI in a campaign against the Black Panthers. He later sued and won a 4.5 million dollar false imprisonment case against LAPD.¹⁵³

In Bugliosi's defense, these two cases were not completely aired until after the interview. But there had always been questions about the Pratt case. And further, the Rodney King case occurred six years before the interview.

That Bugliosi could be so oblivious to these matters, while being so adamant in his denial of them, does not speak well for his objectivity about everyday life in low level law enforcement circles. To this author, it shows a naivete about how bad some police departments can get in big cities when they are not well managed or

reviewed. It also shows an eagerness to score cheap rhetorical points without all the facts of the matter being duly accounted.

But to give the lawyer/author his due, he has written at least two well argued political polemics: *No Island of Sanity* and *The Betrayal of America*. He deserves kudos for those books. And this author personally congratulated him about the latter for his work in the Bush v. Gore case. Bugliosi then forwarded his earlier book on the Paula Jones case. Which is also a good book. The evidence would seem to indicate that when Bugliosi works with relatively simple and tangible cases—cases in which the investigation has already been concluded , or there is little investigation to do--he does good enough work. Therefore he is well worth reading in that regard. But it would seem, as both author and lawyer, he does not handle scope and complexity well.

Which is why he should have never taken on the JFK case.

⁸ The details about Bugliosi's early life are taken from his *Playboy* interview of April, 1997 conducted by Lawrence Grobel, (hereafter referred to as Grobel interview); and from the book, *The Assassination of Robert F. Kennedy* by William Turner and Jonn Christian, p. 243.

⁹ Ibid, Grobel interview; Contemporary Authors, 2009 Edition.

¹⁰ Ibid, Contemporary Authors.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Turner and Christian, p. 244. Although Bugliosi's admirers like to bandy this winning record about, as a matter of perspective, it should be noted that most big city DA's have a high winning percentage. Mainly because, due to finite resources, they usually take cases they think they can win, and most defendants cannot afford an expensive criminal defense attorney. In his 1976 race against John Van de Kamp, these numbers were questioned as being undocumented and non-specific.

¹³ *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, May 2, 1968; *Lodi News Sentinel*, November 19, 1968,

¹⁴ In 1978 Bugliosi, with co-author Ken Hurwitz, wrote the book *Till Death Us Do Part*, based upon this case. The book was made into a TV film in 1992 of the same title. For legal reasons, the names of the main characters were changed.

¹⁵ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 26.

¹⁶ Ibid, pgs. 26-27.

¹⁷ Ibid, pgs. 68-70.

¹⁸ Bishop, p. 8.

¹⁹ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 452.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 117.

²¹ Ibid, p. 143.

²² Ibid, p. 207.

²³ Ibid, pgs. 209-14.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 229.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 232.

²⁶ Bishop, p. 11. The entire county, over ten thousand square miles, has less than twenty thousand people in it today.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 398.

²⁸ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 116.

²⁹ Bugliosi, pgs. 1295-1335.

³⁰ Bugliosi and Gentry, pgs. 104, 108.

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- ³¹ Garrison, pgs. 199-200.
- ³² Bugliosi and Gentry, pgs. 140-41.
- ³³ DiEugenio and Pease, p. 228.
- ³⁴ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 255.
- ³⁵ Bishop, p. 79.
- ³⁶ Ibid, p. 90.
- ³⁷ Bishop, p. 345.
- ³⁸ Ibid, p. 80.
- ³⁹ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 494.
- ⁴⁰ Bishop, p. 408.
- ⁴¹ Hughes did not show up one day in court after taking a trip to a hot springs in Ventura County. Although Bugliosi and Gentry try to attribute his death somehow to Manson, most commentators, and the investigating officer, think that Hughes' death was due to drowning. (See Sanders, p. 438)
- ⁴² Bishop, pgs. 411-12.
- ⁴³ Ibid, p. 228.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 236.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 283.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 304.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, pgs. 292-94.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid, pgs. 355, 375-76.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 233.
- ⁵⁰ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 294. See also Tate-LaBianca Murders Blog etnry for 1/13/2006.
- ⁵¹ Sanders, p. 9.
- ⁵² Sanders, p. 64.
- ⁵³ Bugliosi and Gentry, pgs. 320-30.
- ⁵⁴ Bishop, p. 326.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid.
- ⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 351.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid.
- ⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 397.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid.
- ⁶⁰ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 294.
- ⁶¹ Ibid, p. 251.
- ⁶² Sanders, p. 201.
- ⁶³ Bishop, p. 306; Sanders, p. 229.

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- ⁶⁴ Ibid, Bishop; Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 44.
- ⁶⁴ Sanders, p. 347.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid, p. 198.
- ⁶⁷ Bugliosi and Gentry, pgs. 79-80.
- ⁶⁸ Sanders, p. 117-18.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid, p. 246.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid, p. 258; Schreck, p. 576.
- ⁷¹ Ibid, p. 303.
- ⁷² Ibid, p. 249.
- ⁷³ Ibid, p. 234.
- ⁷⁴ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 75.
- ⁷⁵ Sanders, p. 248.
- ⁷⁶ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 76.
- ⁷⁷ Sanders, p. 147.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 149.
- ⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 150.
- ⁸¹ Bishop, pgs. 141-42.
- ⁸² Sanders, p. 259.
- ⁸³ Bugliosi and Gentry, pgs. 149-50.
- ⁸⁴ Sanders, p. 181.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 184.
- ⁸⁶ Bishop, p. 96
- ⁸⁷ Sanders, p. 188.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 192.
- ⁸⁹ Sanders, p. 257. See also the Atkins book entitled *The Myth of Helter Skelter* which was published after her death in 2012. A rough draft of the book is at susanatkins.org
- ⁹⁰ Sanders, pgs. 200-01.
- ⁹¹ Ibid, p. 201.
- ⁹² Ibid, p. 221.
- ⁹³ Ibid, p. 259.
- ⁹⁴ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 62.
- ⁹⁵ Sanders, p. 421.
- ⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 247.
- ⁹⁷ Bishop, p. 198.
- ⁹⁸ Sanders, p. 405. In fairness to Bugliosi, there is evidence that his partner Aaron Stovitz felt the same way about the possible publicity drain.

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- ⁹⁹ Fest, Joachim, *The Face of the Third Reich*, (DaCapo Press: New York) 1999, see Chapter 2, "The Drummer".
- ¹⁰⁰ Sanders, p. 283. For the comparisons to Hitler, see Bugliosi and Gentry, pgs. 407, 651. The opinion registered here about *Helter Skelter* today is not unusual among those who have followed that case assiduously over the decades. The reader can discern this by visiting web sites and forums on that case.
- ¹⁰¹ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 489.
- ¹⁰² Ibid.
- ¹⁰³ Bishop, p. 350.
- ¹⁰⁴ Bugliosi and Gentry, p. 632.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, June 29, 1974. Available at the web site bewareof bugliosi.com
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 1974.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Los Angeles Times*, October 3, 1974.
- ¹¹⁰ Vincent Bugliosi, interview in *Playboy*, April, 1997.
- ¹¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹¹² Ibid.
- ¹¹³ *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 2001.
- ¹¹⁴ *Lodi News-Sentinel*, September 9, 1975.
- ¹¹⁵ *Washington Post*, October 29, 1972.
- ¹¹⁶ See the End Notes section, p. 464.
- ¹¹⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, November 7, 1972. The author had a difficult time presenting the information about the Cardwell and Weisel cases in this book. Everyone has flaws and no one likes having their dirty laundry exposed in public. It is presented here for several reasons. First, it has been out there in the media for decades and Bugliosi has already been confronted with it. Second, others, knowing the author was writing this book, sent this information. Therefore, the accusation of a whitewash could be made if it were not included. Third, it is all well documented with police reports and sworn affidavits. Fourth, there is no doubt that these impacted the political races Bugliosi was involved in. One cannot honestly tell the story of those campaigns without including the information.
- ¹¹⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, November 4, 1972.
- ¹¹⁹ See Denny's well documented pamphlet entitled *The Vince Bugliosi Story*, especially pgs 16-17.
- ¹²⁰ Denny, p. 39.
- ¹²¹ Affidavit of stenographer Barbara Crocker, May 6, 1974.
- ¹²² These were dated March 21 and 22, 1973.
- ¹²³ *Santa Monica Evening Outlook*, May 9, 1974.
- ¹²⁴ Police report filed with Santa Monica Police dated June 25, 1973.
- ¹²⁵ Op cit. *Evening Outlook*.
- ¹²⁶ Police report filed with Santa Monica Police dated June 26, 1973.
- ¹²⁷ Op cit. *Evening Outlook*.
- ¹²⁸ Ibid; Release agreement of December 11, 1973.

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- 129 Op cit. *Evening Outlook*; Denny, p. 117.
- 130 Complaint filed in LA Superior Court, May 10, 1974.
- 131 Retraction and release statement filed on June 14, 1974.
- 132 Op cit. *Lodi News-Sentinel*.
- 133 Ibid.
- 134 UPI news story, dated January 16, 1976.
- 135 *Metropolitan News-Enterprise*, March 9, 2009, column entitled "Perspectives" by Roger M. Grace.
- 136 *Long Beach Press-Telegram*, February 22, 1976.
- 137 Op. cit. Grace.
- 138 *Metropolitan News-Enterprise*, March 10, 2009, Grace column.
- 139 *Los Angeles Times*, May 21, 1976.
- 140 Ibid.
- 141 Grace, March 10, 2009.
- 142 Ibid.
- 143 *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, May 25, 1976.
- 144 Denny, p. 131.
- 145 *Los Angeles Times*, June 12, 1976.
- 146 *Pasadena Star News*, June 10, 1976.
- 147 Sanders, p. 525.
- 148 *Metropolitan News-Enterprise*, June 7, 2010, Grace column.
- 149 *Metropolitan News-Enterprise*, June 8, 2010, Grace column.
- 150 Ibid.
- 151 *Playboy* interview, April of 1997.
- 152 There are many resources on this infamous scandal. One good one is the PBS *Frontline* web site on the subject.
- 153 *Los Angeles Times*, December 23, 2008.