Dark Side Of The 60s

[...] as it has been observed by probability theorists, the largest proportion of the truth arrives as a faculty of coincidence. [...] 

[...]. To fully appreciate the law of synchronity -- the meaning that can be revealed by an inadvertent encounter, or a chance event -- it is necessary to put aside all rational logic of reasoning to concentrate instead on the accidents and chances that provide new ways of understanding. The hazards and casualties that happen to us are intelligible only within a system of meaning, and meaning is the products not of individual minds, but of relationships. It is this pattern of relationships that both defines the individual and is defined by him, and it is this complex of affinities that perishes with death. The law of synchronity is grounded in this dark arrangement of contingencies. As Confucian scholar Wang Fu-Chih puts it, "only a man of highest integrity can understand this law; basing itself on its revelation he can grasp the symbols, and observing its small expressions, he can understand the auguries".

In other words, the devil is in the details.

- Brottman, pp. 33-34

1969 is remembered, not only for being the year of the first Moon flight, but also for the gruesome murders committed in California by Charles Manson and his bunch of crazed disciples, called the Manson Family. For many observers this marked the end of the 60s 'Flower Power' and the hippie culture of peace and love, and also the entering into the grimmer era of the 70s, 80s and 90s. The Manson murders also whetted the morbid public appetite, indicating the dark side of the 60s, which remained there under the decade's sunny and carefree outlook. It is also a story of strange coincidences and synchronities; with occult connections and rumours of conspiracy abounding.

'The Age of Aquarius' was the utopian project prevailing in the minds of the youth of the 1960s. No more society's 'games', no more 'hang-ups', no more 'Man', no more repression, no more war. Mind-altering substances, occultism, free love and rock music would pave the way for the new Aquarian society, out of the grimness and darkness of the Age of Pisces, the sinister Kali Yuga period of the Hindus, Philip K. Dick's 'Black Iron Prison'. The hippies would embrace both J.R.R. Tolkien's Luddite pastoralism (where magic was ever-present, and not yet suffocated by the 'satanic mills' as described by William Blake and the crude machinery of Industrial era), and Marshall McLuhan's techno-utopian 'Global Village' with its trans-continental electronic neuro-circuitry. The time was right for the sages, visionaries, revolutionaries, idealists and dreamers but also for the snake-oil merchants, sideshow hucksters, rip-off merchants, opportunists and false prophets.

Charlie Don't Surf

Born in 1934, Charles Manson spent his first term in reformatory school at the age of nine. By the time he drifted to San Francisco in 1967, Manson had spent most of his adult life in jail, mostly for such offences as car theft and credit-card fraud. He also worked some time as a pimp. He found himself in the midst of the new 'psychedelic' culture. The hippies of the Haight-Ashbury district took LSD, smoked pot, and called themselves 'flower children'. No one cared that Manson had been a jailbird; on the contrary, it was regarded as being greatly to his credit. Manson was older than most of the 'drop-outs', and girls seemed inclined to regard him as a father-substitute figure. Runaways began to gather round him, and soon the Manson menage in the Haight district seemed to be full of emotionally deprived girls and admiring youths (Manson seems to have been
By 1968, Manson was trying hard to move into the pop music business; Manson's 'Family' even moved for a time into the luxury home of a member, Dennis Wilson, of a successful group called The Beach Boys, best known for their odes to California beach life and surfing (later on, Wilson claimed that he had inadvertently "founded" the Family with Manson). Manson lived with Dennis before the murders for about six months. He saw himself as a would-be singer-songwriter. He recorded several songs in Brian's home studio, and one of them, 'Never Learn Not To Love' (originally titled: 'Cease To Exist') was even released as the B-side of a Beach Boys single and on their album 20/20. Manson's lack of success, though, seems to have made him increasingly embittered. The 'family', now numbering about thirty (and including children) moved out to a ranch owned by an old man named George Spahn, and lived there in exchange for cleaning out the stables.

With so much drug-taking, violence was inevitable. In July 1969, Manson shot a black dope-dealer named Bernard Crowe in the chest; in fact, Crowe recovered and decided not to go to the police. Later that month, Manson and his friend Bobby Beausoleil tried to persuade another drug-dealer, Gary Hinman, to finance a move to Death Valley; when Hinman refused, he was tortured, then stabbed to chest and left to die. On the wall above his body, Beausoleil wrote 'Political piggy' in blood -- intended to lead the police to the belief that the Black Panther movement was responsible. Manson's plan was to cause a revolution by setting whites against blacks (whom he detested).

On 9 August 1969, four Manson followers -- three girls and a man -- drove out to a house in Benedict Canyon which had been earlier rented by Terry Melcher, the son of Doris Day and a man in the pop music business (he had produced among all bands like The Byrds) against whom Manson had a grudge. Melcher was an independent producer working with the Beatles' Apple Records label, and the Beatle-obsessed Manson thought he would get a recording contract through him. When Melcher didn't sign Manson, he became an object of Manson's wrath and probably Melcher was supposed to be one of the victims, but Manson didn't know that Terry had split from that house three months before. Anyway, that Hollywood mansion at 10050 Cielo Drive, Los Angeles, was assaulted by Manson's disciples, who brutally butchered a group of people, who were spending some time there; among them the current resident Sharon Tate, a film actress and the wife of Polish film director Roman Polanski; Tate being at the time pregnant with Polanski's child.

At the time Polanski was in London, but Sharon Tate had three guests to supper, two men and a woman. Afterwards they took MDA, a psychedelic drug, and went into various states of dissociation (Tate was not under influence because of her pregnancy). As the Manson Family members entered the drive, they encountered a youth who had been visiting the houseboy; he was shot in the head. Then they went into the house and killed Sharon Tate and her three guests. The men were shot, the women stabbed to death. The next morning, a maid ran screaming into the street after finding the actress and four others slaughtered in a grotesque scene. The word 'Pig', written with Tate's blood, was found from the murder scene.

Bodies were scattered about the lush green estate. Sharon Tate, who was 8 1/2 months pregnant, had been stabbed to death, then hung from a rafter in the living room. Also slain were Abigail Folger, heiress to the Folger coffee fortune; Wojciech (Voytek) Frykowski, a Polish friend of Polanski's; Jay Sebring, hairdresser to the stars; and Steven Parent, a young man shot while leaving the cottage of his friend, the caretaker.

The murders created the sensation Manson had hoped for; the following day, the 'family' watched the television news-casts with satisfaction. By that evening, every gun and guard dog in the Los Angeles area had been bought by frantic householders. Manson decided to strike again while the iron was hot. That evening, after taking LSD, he led six followers to a house in the affluent Los Feliz district of Los Angeles, the home of a supermarket owner, Leno LaBianca and his wife Rosemary. Manson walked into their bedroom with a gun and tied them up, then sent in three followers, who stabbed the LaBiancas to death. They wrote 'Death to pigs' in blood on a door, and 'Helter Skelter', Manson's code word for the revolt that would occur when the alarmed whites rose up against the blacks.

But the rising failed to occur; Los Angeles was too accustomed to mass murder to over-react. In the following month, the 'family' moved out to the remote Death Valley. When Manson set on fire a bulldozer belonging to the State rangers, the police raided the ranch and arrested all the hippies. And after more than a month in jail, a family member named Susan Atkins, who had taken part in both sets of murders, told her cell-mate about the killings, and word leaked back to the police.

Charlie Guenther was the man who really broke the Manson case. He worked the Gary Hinman job for Los Angeles Sheriff's Homicide and busted Manson acolytes Mary Brunner and Bobby Beausoleil, who had written 'Pig' and 'Political Piggy' on Hinman's walls after they killed him; similar slogans were scrawled at the Tate-LaBianca crime scenes. Guenther went to LAPD and laid out the Hinman murder. Brunner and Beausoleil were in custody during the Tate-LaBianca time frame. Guenther told the LAPD to check out their friends at the Spahn Movie Ranch. The LAPD ignored Guenther's advice. They solved Tate-LaBianca by fluke luck several months later.
The trial that followed was one of the longest and most expensive in Los Angeles history. Vincent Bugliosi, the prosecutor -- who later wrote the book Helter Skelter -- called the killings "probably the most bizarre mass murder case we've ever had in America." Charles Manson did his best to turn it into an indictment of society and his judges, explaining that the murders had been committed out of love. Asked if she thought the killing of eight people was unimportant, Susan Atkins retorted by asking whether the killing of thousands with napalm was important. In her memoir, "Headline Justice," reporter Theo Wilson recalled a 10-month trial with "testimony that went from horrifying to ludicrous ... witnesses with names like 'Lotsapoppa, Snake and Ouisch' ... threats of self-immolation and other destruction ... a defense attorney disappearing, his drowned undiscovered until many months later on the very day that the defendants received death sentences from the jury."

Manson's three women co-defendants, Susan Atkins, Leslie Van Houten and Patricia Krenwinkel, were convicted with him after the stand and attempting to absolve him by admitting their own deadly deeds. Another defendant, Charles "Tex" Watson, was found guilty in a separate trial. Their death sentences were commuted to life when the death penalty was briefly outlawed in America in 1972.

President Nixon had denounced Manson even before he and his five co-defendants had been found guilty, and predictably, Manson became a hero of the West Coast 'underground' network. But the trial had the effect of convincing the rest of the world that the whole movement of social revolt was a form of mindless emotionalism whose arguments defied logic; it produced, in fact, precisely the kind of revulsion against the left that the McCarthy witch hunts had created against the right in the 50s. A suitable scapegoat is always needed, and in America, at least, the Manson family had discredited 'revolution', as the writer Colin Wilson concludes.

Web of Coincidences

One aspect of Manson's philosophy especially puzzled me: his strange attitude toward fear. He not only preached that fear was beautiful, he often told the Family that they should live in a constant state of fear. What did he mean by that? [...] To Charlie fear was the same thing as awareness [...] The more fear you have, the more awareness, hence the more love. When you're really afraid, you come to "Now". And when you are at Now, you are totally conscious.

Manson claimed that children were more aware than adults, because they were naturally afraid. But animals were even more aware than people, he said, because they always live at Now. The coyote was the most aware creature there was, Manson maintained, because he really was afraid, you come to "Now". And when you are at Now, you are totally conscious.

As most people know, the star of Roman Polanski's 1968 horror classic Rosemary's Baby, Mia Farrow, is the ex-Mrs. Woody Allen (and the ex-Mrs. Frank Sinatra). There's a connection to her and the 1967 film Valley of the Dolls, starring Sharon Tate (who had also been in Polanski's vampire spoof Dance of the Vampires the same year) -- one of Tate's co-stars in the film, Barbara Parkins, was best known from TV's soap opera Peyton Place, which had made Mia Farrow famous. (At some point, Farrow allegedly feared she would be the next victim of the murder spree.)

So, if we look closely, we'll find a connection between Peyton Place, Valley of the Dolls, Rosemary's Baby and Charles Manson!

Then to The Beatles: 'Helter Skelter' and 'Piggies' were some songs off The Beatles' White Album (1968), which inspired the murder spree of the Manson Family, who slaughtered Sharon Tate, who was the wife of Roman Polanski, who directed Rosemary's Baby. (Manson and his followers believed the songs held in them some hidden messages, specifically meant for the Family.) Furthermore, as peculiar coincidences go, The Beatles had Mia Farrow as one of their companions on their famous 1968 excursion to India, and John Lennon of The Beatles wrote 'Dear Prudence' (also a song on White Album) for Mia Farrow's younger sister Prudence Farrow (on a lighter note, "Prudence" was also the name of puppy Polanski gave to Sharon Tate). Sadie Mae Glutz was the alias given to the Family member Susan Atkins by Manson even before the appearance of the White Album song 'Sexy Sadie' -- which was directed toward The Beatles' one-time guru Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, with whom they felt disappointed. Ironically, also Sadie/Susan would let Manson down by carelessly talking about the murders to her cellmates, which was eventually used as a proof in the trial.

It is claimed that at a party in California in 1973, Lennon went berserk, hurling a chair out the window, smashing mirrors, heaving a TV against the wall, and screaming nonsense about Roman Polanski being to blame. And to give a sinister end to the story filled with synchronotites (allegedly Lennon and Ono had their own interest in the occult), John Lennon was shot in 1980 in front of the Dakota Building (picture on the right) in New York -- which was used when filming Rosemary's Baby. Also, Rosemary LaBianca was another victim of Manson's murder spree, which in press would later be called the Tate-LaBianca murders. Mark Chapman was the name of Lennon's killer --Winifred Chapman was the maid who had first found the bodies at 10050 Cielo Drive.

The Beatles members had frequented London's Indica Books and Gallery (this is where Lennon met Yoko Ono), which
The Beatles and "The Aquarian Conspiracy"

The first United States-grown rock group of that [psychedelic] type, the Grateful Dead, was generated as a British intelligence operation by the Occult Bureau of [Aldous] Huxley and [Gregory] Bateson out of the Palo Alto Veteran’s Hospital where they were doing LSD and related experiments.

- Why would British intelligence want to put out a rock group?

This is part of the Satanism business. Call it the counterculture. Call it the Dionysus model of the counterculture. Rock [music] is essentially a revival of the ancient Dionysic, Bacchic rituals. Lots of people for long periods of time in that kind of particular rhythmic ritual which was probably struck upon empirically many thousands of years ago for this type of cult. It does have a relationship to the Alpha rhythms of the brain. It does produce these sorts of states. If combined with a little alcohol and more, shall we say, mood shaping substances, with youth, with funny sex, this does produce a profound change of a countercultural type.

Another word for it: New Age. The longer term: Age of Aquarius. People were experimenting with various utopian models, constructing small groups experimentally which were considered New Age types.

- Lyndon LaRouche on the 60’s counter-culture, rock music, LSD and the occult (see also this…)

It's understandable that the whole 1960s cultural upheaval was to cause worry among the more conservative commentators, who didn't understand the new sounds, styles and ideas, and greeted them as the heralds of something more sinister than merely as some passing fashions or fads. Such conspiracy buffs as John Coleman (in his Conspirator's Hierarchy - The Committee of 300) and Lyndon LaRouche, quoted above, go as far as to claim that "Beatlemania" and the subsequent rise...
of countercultural rock movement were in fact meticulously constructed by Tavistock Institute, a cover organisation of British intelligence service MI6, as to subvert American culture and institutions. This whole affair would be a part of the larger countercultural "Aquarian Conspiracy" instilled in Britain against America...

Coleman goes as far as to confuse music of The Beatles with the "atonal" 12-tone music of 1920s German composers like Arnold Schönberg, and claims that the acclaimed cultural critic Theodor Adorno actually wrote the lyrics for The Beatles! The next quote is probably the most telling of Coleman's attitudes towards the whole rock music culture:

Following the Beatles, who incidentally were put together by the Tavistock Institute, came another "Made in England" rock groups, who, like the Beatles, had Theo Adorno write their cult lyrics and compose all the "music." I hate to use these beautiful words in the context of "Beatlemania"; it reminds me of how wrongly the word "lover" is used when referring to the filthy interaction between two homosexuals writhing in pigswill. To call "rock" music, is an insult, likewise the language used in "rock lyrics."

- Dr. John Coleman: Conspirator's Hierarchy - The Committee of 300

If you hate The Beatles, popular music and youth culture, fair enough, but at least get your facts right.

To have some counter-balance here, the writer Alex Constantine claims in his Covert War Against Rock that rock artists with connections to counterculture, such as Lennon, were systematically harassed and persecuted by US authorities and covert operations like COINTELPRO and Operation CHAOS. So, both right-wing and left-wing conspiracy fans would indeed have a field day with this case.

Manson's Influences?

Manson is known to have dabbled with Scientology, but it seems his involvement has been brief. Vincent Bugliosi claims also that his teachings had some surprising similarities to those of The Process Church of the Final Judgment, the notorious occult sect of Robert de Grimston.

In 1963, Grimston, then known as Robert Moore and Mary Ann Lean had met at the Hubbard Institute of Scientology, on Fitzroy Street, London. Both were training to be "auditors". They married soon after, and in 1964 left Scientology to set up their own system, Compulsions Analysis. They also adopted the name de Grimston. In 1966 (the same year LaVey also inaugurated his Church of Satan in San Francisco), the cult decamped to X tul, Mexico, on the north coast of Yucatan. There they apparently discovered Satan. Returning to London in 1967 and funded by a member's inheritance, they turned their Mayfair mansion into a Satanic palace, with all-night coffee bar, movie house and book store, where they sold issues of their magazine, The Process, devoted to Hitler, Satan and gore. Processians went around in black capes, turtlenecks and silver crosses. They held telepathy classes and preached the coming apocalypse. They approached pop musicians as possible converts. Mick Jagger's then-girlfriend Marianne Faithfull posed in the infamous 'Fear' issue of The Process magazine in 1967. The legendary bandleader Graham Bond got also involved with The Process and died in mysterious circumstances under a tube at Finsbury Park station. Late '67 The Process hit the States, in LA sidling up to members of the West Coast rock establishment -- and Charlie Manson.

"Learn to love fear" was one Process teaching. "Soror H" wrote in a Process newsletter from London: "Manson was clever in his choice of beliefs: the whole Beatles Helter Skelter thing was, of course, a model to instill the PROCESS into his followers, who were more likely to respond to such 'turned-on' symbols than the more traditional ones. The whole thing was a scam; a guru trick, but Manson's intention was to open up the occult centres of perception by a unique pop-based outlook influenced primarily by the PROCESS."

Later on, it was denied, though, that Manson would ever have been an actual Process member, but it's possible the Church's teachings may have influenced him. It has to be remembered, though, that the late 1960s spawned various occult and "satanic" cults of which The Process and LaVey's Church of Satan were just some examples. Something was obviously in the air...

The CIA Connection?

Operation CHAOS, launched in 1968, was the Central Intelligence Agency's response to civil unrest and cultural upheaval. The targets of CHAOS -- as was also the case with FBI's COINTELPRO -- were the political dissidents such as the Black Panthers, politically active hippies and public figures such as rock musicians, and the "restless" youth in general.

The use of informants and provocateurs was part of a massive sub rosa campaign to subvert the forces of dissent in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Joining in the CIA and and the FBI in this effort was an alphabet soup of federal agencies: the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs (BNDD), the National Security Agency (NSA), the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HWW), the intelligence divisions of all the military services, and numerous local police forces. Over a quarter of a million Americans were under "active surveillance" during this period, and dossiers were kept on the lawful political activities and personal lives of millions more. Those affiliated with black militant, antiwar, and New Left...
Manson had had contacts with his victims beforehand. He had met Abigail "Gibby" Folger, the wealthy coffee heiress found dead at Cielo Drive, at the home of the Mamas and Papas member Cass Elliot (who had also been approached by The Process). Folger doled out cash to Manson on occasion, then stopped; the result of which was that Manson turned against her. When Manson lived in San Francisco, Folger loaned $10,000 to the Straight Theater at Haight and Cole Streets. Manson then lived on Cole Street, on the same block as the Process Church. Folger also funded Timothy Leary, the underground film-maker Kenneth Anger, and the Process Church in the establishment of the "Himalayan Academy", not far from the Esalen Institute; Manson being a hanger-on at the Himalayan Foundation (a covert CIA lab?), where he in fact first time may have encountered The Process.

Earlier in the summer of 1969, Abigail Folger had retreated to Big Sur, on the California coast, at The Esalen Institute, a place for intense psychotherapy for the wealthy. She had registered as a volunteer social worker for the Los Angeles County Welfare Department. In 1968, Folger attended fundraisers set up by her mother to aid the Haight-Ashbury Medical Clinic around the same time many of the Manson family women were being treated there. Despite all her good-doing (or probably because of their burden) Abigail Folger had somehow fallen into the darker side of the jetset life. She was, more involved in the drug culture that was becoming more prevalent, undoubtedly from her association with Wojciech Frykowski, who was heavily into drugs at the time of murders. The weekend she was in residence, Charles Manson was an invited guest.

Lucifer Rising

The underground film director Kenneth Anger was Anton Szandor LaVey's one-time associate and a devotee of the infamous early 20th-century occultist Aleister Crowley (whose portrait had appeared on the cover of The Beatles 1967 album, among the celebrities appearing with Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. Anger himself makes another interesting late-60's occult connection -- also with his close dealings with The Beatles' biggest "rivals", The Rolling Stones -- and would later write in his notorious Hollywood Babylon:

The '69 Tate massacre was not Old Hollywood. What befell the red house on Cielo Drive resembled the devastation caused by a jet plane crash: the Bad Ship Lollipop piloted by Uncle Sugar. Charlie Manson -- deus ex-garbage can. Wasted lives makes waste, not tragedy. This was the Benedict Canyon where [the "Golden Age" Hollywood film actor] Paul Bern shot himself; his noble shade now has mixed company.

Actually, Kenneth Anger plays a part in this story. Anger's one-time lover, musician, hippie, bisexual rogue and the future-devotee of Manson, Bobby "Cupid" Beausoleil had been a guitarist in an early line-up of Arthur Lee's Love. 1967, Anger lived with Beausoleil in San Francisco in an old house where Russian Embassy had previously resided. There they devoted themselves to some hands-on experience of Crowley's so-called "magick" -- a practice Beausoleil may have put to unsavoury use as a henchman for Manson, when he murdered Gary Hinman at the start of the Family's spree.

Beausoleil was supposed to perform at San Francisco's Straight as lead guitarist in the September 21, 1967 celebration of "The Equinox of the Gods" with his band, the Magick Powerhouse of Oz. The 11-piece rock ensemble (11 is a powerful number in Crowley's cabalistic system, symbolising the double phallus of homoerotic sex magic) was formed by Kenneth Anger to create the soundtrack for his forthcoming occult film: Anger planned to film the event as the focal set piece of his Lucifer Rising, where Beausoleil was going to play the lead. Lucifer Rising was supposed to depict the downfall, in Crowleyan terms, of the oppressive Aeon of Osiris (or Christian era), and the movement into the Aeon of Horus (or Lucifer) -- the Crowley-Anger version of the Age of Aquarius, supposedly.

However, Bobby Beausoleil vanished before the evening was through, stealing Anger's van and several cans of film containing practically the entire master rushes of the film, 1600 feet of footage. Furious, the occultist Anger was promptly hating Beausoleil with the deadly "curse of the toad". Oblivious, Beausoleil sped off towards LA, but his car broke down just outside an isolated ranch in the middle of the Californian desert. There, Bobby was met by a bevy of spaced-out hippie...
Sharon Tate Meets the Ghost of Paul Bern

The supernatural trappings of this story certainly don't stop here.

Kenneth Anger tells in his Hollywood Babylon about the 1932 suicide of movie agent Paul Bern, Hollywood's "Father Confessor". Bern's compassionate nature had earned him this title, and may have well been one of era's famous film star Jean Harlow's reasons for marrying this physically unprepossessing intellectual, twenty-two years her senior. Bern was studio boss Irving Thalberg's assistant at MGM and had been instrumental in bringing Harlow to the Culver City factory.

The odd couple was married on July 2, 1932. Two months later, on September 5, 1932, the butler found Bern's body in his wife's all-white bedroom in their benedict Canyon Mansion. He had shot himself. He was nude, sprawled in front of a full-length mirror, drenched in Jean's favourite perfume, Mitsuoko, shot through the head by a .38 pistol which lay by his side. Jean Harlow was visiting her mother at a time.

The butler did not notify the police but phoned MGM instead. Soon Louis B. Mayer and Thalberg were on the scene. Mayer found a suicide note on top of Harlow's vanity table. It seems Bern had a sexual problem and that he had tried to effect
funny always happens when we start that number”.

Hunter was defending himself from the Angels.

with the Greek letter Omega (the last letter in Greek alphabet, meaning also “the end”) adorned over it; others claimed

Thumb, audience member

security from the rampaging Angels, who kept assaulting crowd members.

the era of peace and love. The Hell’s Angels were hired to act as “security”, but finally it was the audience who needed

of Altamont in 6 December 1969, which, with the death toll of three and over a hundred injured, marked for many the end of

Also the arrest of Family members in late took place about the same time with the disastrous Rolling Stones outdoor concert

coincided with Manson murders that LaVey claimed this magical working had triggered.

villains no longer! Our steeds await and their eyes are ablaze with the fires of Hell!” Woodstock in August 1969 had almost

with its thin disguise of tolerance will serve you no longer! We know your mark and recognise it well. We walk the night as the

ceremony entitled ‘The Rising Forth’, which took place on that same fateful night of 8 August 1969. A black-clad group

Anton Szandor LaVey claimed to have cast a venomous curse on the hippie culture he loathed. This happened in a

The Age Of Aquarius Turns Into The Age Of Antichrist

As for Roman Polanski, Mikita Brottman’s Hollywood Hex accounts how less than a year after his eight-months pregnant

wife was knifed to death by the Manson Family, Polanski commenced filming William Shakespeare’s bloodiest play,

Macbeth (1971). Notoriously, there’s been talk of the “Macbeth’s curse”, misfortunes that have reportedly happened during the
theatrical productions of this play. (The theory goes that Shakespeare included actual black magic spells in the
incantations of the play’s weird sisters. Those who appear in the play or those who mention the play’s name within the
confines of a theater, other than on the stage, risk having these evils brought down on them.) While the filming proceeded
smoothly for the most part, eerie parallels between the screenplay and the Manson murders first raised eyebrows among the
crew and, later, among critics. We are reminded how Sharon Tate, was hanged before being stabbed to death, and how that
image (a body thrashing at the end of a rope) became a dominant visual motif in the movie. The famous “out damn’d spots”
scene in which Lady Macbeth tries to expunge the blood on her hands also takes on double-meaning when we read that
Manson’s followers tried to wash their own blood-stained hands at a near-by garden hose minutes after murdering Polanski’s
wife. There are countless other parallels: the notion of a fetus being “untimely ripped from his mother’s womb”; the
description of small children being massacred (which Polanski visualizes with copious blood); and ultimately, Shakespeare’s
description of Scotland as a lacerated woman and “each day a gash / Is added to her wounds.”

Brottman claims that Polanski’s macabre vision of Macbeth owes its existence to Charlie Manson. One is the product of the
other. Or perhaps, and this is the heart of the argument, they are both products of each other. They both come from some
strange well of supernaturalism. And, as Brottman suggests, their ultra-violent images intertwine until we can’t tell them apart.

When actor Terence Baylor as MacDuff was supposed describe the death of his wife and child, Polanski instructed him,
“You’ll do it this way. I know.”

The Stones stopped playing, Jagger -- unaware of what had just happened -- remarking: “Something very funny always happens when we start that number”.

By 1966, Bern and Harlow’s Benedict Canyon mansion at Easton Drive had ended up to Jay Sebring, the “hairstylist to
tars”, who was an ex-boyfriend of Sharon Tate’s and one of Cielo Drive’s 1969 fellow murder victims. Tate was house-sitting
this same residence one night while Sebring was away for business. She was awakened by an intruder in the bedroom.

Tate later told columnist Dick Kleiner, “I saw this creepy little man. He looked like all the descriptions I have ever read of
Paul Bern.” The ghost began to run around the room haphazardly, clumsily bumping into furniture and cursing loudly, while
blood spurted from the hole in his head. Frightened, Tate hurried downstairs only to be confronted by the horrifying apparition
of someone bound to the newel post, with his throat slashed. Tate later said that she somehow knew that the mutilated figure
was Sebring. Then, the apparition vanished.

In 1969, when they were found, Tate and Sebring’s bodies were bound by a nylon rope hanging from a roof beam. Sharon
Tate had unknowingly seen a vision of her fate in 1966.
David Dalton wrote on Manson:

When you need a monster one will appear. The one thing that most determines the way we think about Manson was his timing. He is a
demon of the Zeitgeist, immaculate in his terror and confusion. Appearing with almost supernatural precision in the last months of the '60s,
he seemed to call into question everything about the counterculture. His malign arrival synchronised so perfectly with America's nervous
breakdown that is hard not to bestow occult meanings on him.

The idea was that he was merely a projection of our darkest thoughts is a card he played ruthlessly. He endlessly toyed with the idea that he
was just a mirror, a materialisation. Manson's cobbled together of hippy philosophy -- apocalyptic prophecy, Zen paradox, radical politics,
pop occultism, acid logic, hipster jargon -- was seamless and so mesmerising that any challenge would ricochet back on you.

The canonization of Manson by certain segments of the counterculture was a measure of how desperate and bitter people
had become in the final days of the 1960s. *Tuesday's Child*, an underground paper in Los Angeles, named him Man of the
Year and ran his picture with the word "hippie" as the caption. The Weathermen went a step further by lauding Manson as a
heroic, acid-ripped street fighter who offed some "rich honky pigs"; the Weatherpeople proclaimed 1970 "The Year of the
Fork", after the instrument of LaBiancas' slaughter.

Vincent Bugliosi goes as far as to compare Charlie Manson to Adolf Hitler (known also for his occult interests); it is known
that Manson himself was fascinated with Hitler and the Third Reich. What made both Hitler and Manson (morbidly) intriguing
was the inexplicable and hypnotic -- if not downright demonic -- charisma, and the influence they exerted over their followers.
In a typical twist, Manson compared his position to that of the US President, who sent young Americans to be killed in
Vietnam. Unlike in other known cases of serial killers, who mostly were loners acting individually, Manson knew how
to delegate.

**Family Legacy**

There are also some bizarre afterwords to this story, as the popular culture's infatuation with Manson still goes on.

Trent Reznor, the main man of the industrial dance act Nine Inch Nails, claimed that he had -- totally without his knowing, he
insisted -- rented the same Cielo Drive mansion (which address had now, for understandable reasons, been changed) to
record NIN's 1994 album *Downward Spiral*, whose many songs, such as Piggies and March of the Pigs, were closely
entangled around Manson mythology.

Furthermore, Reznor claimed, many freak occurrences happened during the recording of album, such as various electric
devices turning on and off without any visible reason; strange dark figures seen on the surveillance monitors, and other
classic haunted house phenomena detected. Was this just a sick publicity stunt from Reznor, trying to milk on Manson's
popular counter-culture status, or was there actually some truth behind these claims; this probably can't be said for sure.

Later, Reznor produced in the very same Hollywood Hills house another shock-horror rock band, which called themselves
Marilyn Manson -- that was also the artist name of their flamboyant leader, one Brian Warner, who, suitably, had once been
Anton Szandor LaVey's pupil...

Nowadays the ex-Cielo Drive 10050 mansion has been totally demolished, with a new construction all over the site. The
address is now 10066.

As for Charles Manson, now in California's Corcoran State Prison, he is still said to get four fan letters a day; more mail than
any prisoner in the United States.

**Recommended reading**

"Democracy's Baby", an essay by Jason Wynd (sadly offline now) tells one version of what might have happened: was the
Manson case just an intricate Manchurian Candidate or even a Kennedy assassination-type of plot to put an end to the 60's
counter-culture by demonising hippy? Or was even more involved there?

Conspiracy theories abound: it was just too convenient for the Nixon regime -- let's get a gang of crazed hippies on LSD to
murder a bunch of Hollywood celebrities, add some Beatles quotes in the whole messy soup (remember Lennon's anti-
establishment stance), and voilá: you have successfully discredited the whole 1960s counterculture.

And to think of all supernatural and occult connections of this story -- is there really some of kind of curse or just bad karma?
There are just too many strange coincidences around. One thing that is sure is that the investigations will go on at the
pHinnWeb Bunker...
Bibliography:

- David Dalton: *Pleased To Meet You… Mojo*, September 1999, p. 76.

related links
We here at Dark Side of the Con HQ couldn't be more excited to announce an amazing new feature coming to you this year! VampireFreaks wants your BLOOD! For the first time ever, we are hosting a Dark Side Blood Drive! The BLOODMOBILE from Vitalant will be paying us a visit! Parked right outside the registration desk for easy access! Secure your spot at our personalized link: https://donor.cbsblood.org/dan/schedules/drive_schedule/51268 where you can choose the time ...slot you desire. Two options are available, Whole Blood (one bag) or Double Red (two bags) all of which you can select and... Going beyond Black Sabbath to discover other groups of the period, such as Coven (Jinx Dawson, the singer, is still around doing music), Pentagram, and more. 8 tracks. 3 comments on The Dark side of the '60s. reininblood May 29, 2015. Love all of the Coven tracks! ™ felipoortiz September 18, 2014. GOOD TASTE ! ™ morger.macnevin July 28, 2014. This is the sickest playlist dood. ™ Playlists by micol.c 3. The great beauty.