

***Helter Skelter* Book Report**

The book *Helter Skelter* was written by Vincent Bugliosi in collaboration with Curt Gentry. Vincent Bugliosi, inspired by his own law practice, decided to write the book about his experience. As an attorney working as a prosecutor, Bugliosi was previously privy to the intrigues and related crime stories that took place in the departments of justice. As such, many people liked the book with the expectation that they would get to learn something from the happenings at the chambers of justice and at the hands of a prosecuting attorney. This paper aims to present a report on the book *Helter Skelter* by Vincent Bugliosi and Curt Gentry.

To begin with, there is need to delve in the themes that run through the entire book. Its main theme is the theme of crime, which is evident through the various murders described in it. The murders were coordinated by Charles Manson and they involved the termination of lives through crude means (Bugliosi and Gentry 40). The murderers stabbed and shot their victims, thus making them die very painful and gruesome deaths. The first two murders described in the book are the Tate murders and the LaBianca murders. Judging by the manner of their execution, these murders were well planned. The victims were caught off-guard by those who had attacked them. Two families had been killed cruelly and gruesomely. However, during the investigation of the murders, it turned out that there had been no witnesses who could have seen how those murders had happened exactly.

The events of the book take place in the United State of America. The story is written from a factual view, with the author sharing his personal experiences as a prosecutor who had worked on those cases. Vincent Bugliosi aims to share his knowledge about these murders with his readers, as the justice system is known to be blind to the fate of the victims of murders and to the knowledge that the population needs to have about the murder cases. The most interesting

and intriguing cases of the book tick are those that tie the murders of an actress and a pop singer. In the United States of America, actresses and pop singers are known to be serious social influencers, thus attracting attention from the public. When a celebrity dies, this fact is known to attract a huge following, with many people having the feeling that they ought to know the exact things that have led to the death of the person that they admire.

What I like about the book is the use of the real case examples in the presentation of the premises in the novel. The novel mainly centers on the death of Sharon Tate. Tate was an actress with a huge following, and she was hacked to death and shot. As such, many people developed the belief that Sharon Tate's death was directly linked to a security mishap and an intrusion in her personal space. The killer in all the murders was Charles Manson. Moreover, Manson was also an artist.

The other interesting thing that can be noticed about the book is the method used in the execution of the murders. It was clear that there was no physical evidence linking Manson to the murders of his victims. However, his link to the murders was the role that he had played in coordination of the killings. He was accused of having a ring of hit men, mainly women, to kill those he desired to be killed. The forensic audits that had been carried out by the author of the book and the evidence that he presented to affirm that Manson had been responsible for the murder was quite interesting and fascinating, making the book a real page-turner. The book has slightly more than forty pages for the readers to see the photographic evidences of the murders.

Photographic evidence presented in a book confirms that adequate research has been done on the given topic and that the ideas presented by the author are true as well. Whenever the photographic evidence is presented, a reader becomes more interested in exploring the contents of the book. The photos in *Helter Skelter* enable the readers to have a glimpse of the systematic

process that is used to collect the evidence needed for presentation in the court of law. The black and white photographs also lay emphasis on the context of the events presented in the book. In the 1960s, the color photographs were not in use as is the case in the present times. Therefore, the black and white photographs take the reader down the memory lane of the time, in which the events of the book take place. Furthermore, the large quantity of photographs presented in the book is the evidence of the intricacy of the justice system in the United States of America. The American judicial system requires one to prove anything beyond any reasonable doubt. As such, there is need to make a presentation of any case that enables the judge to affirm that the culprit who is accused of some crime is placed at the center of the crime scene. If the accused individual was at the scene of crime, it was necessary to present the evidence, including the photographic evidence, just like in the book.

The characters in the book include Patricia Krenwinkel, Punchy, DeCarlo, Stovitz, Charles Manson, and Vincent Bugliosi; moreover, the latter two are the main ones. Evidently, the protagonist of the book is Vincent Bugliosi, owing to his ability to amass the evidence that is needed to pin down Manson in his case. Charles Manson is also a main character in the book, owing to the defense that he presents that seeks to exonerate him from the crimes that have been committed.

The segmentation of the book is also a plausible artistic device that enables a reader to flow through the contents of the book. The main parts for the book are the murders, the killers, the investigation, the motive, the crucifixion, the trial, murder in the wind, and finally, fire in your cities. The book is, therefore a step-by-step analysis of the development of the crime and the course of its investigation. When reading the book, one gets the feeling of being in the shoes of the prosecutor. From the angle, at which the prosecutor observes the case, one becomes

emotionally attached to the case. The description of how four members of one family are wiped away by a murderer is gut wrenching and it makes one develop hatred towards the killers. As such, the book makes the reader have a given perspective on the motive that the different killers had in their quest to take the lives of innocent people. However, working up the emotions of a reader by the presentation of how the murders are conducted is the predictive of what is set to happen during the trial. A reader gets the feeling that the suspected killers will be properly punished by being sentenced to death according to the penal code.

The arrangement of the book in parts is also informative. Therefore, a reader is able to understand the systematic process that one uses to collect evidence related to various murder cases. Anyone, even without a background in law, understands that before a trial, there has to be an eventuality that happens. In the context of the book, the eventuality is the murder of the eight people that has caused a public rage. Second, a case needs to identify the culprits who in this case are the murderers under the leadership of Charles Manson. After identifying the crime that has been committed and the perpetrators of the crime, there is a need to gather the evidence. The first three sections of the book have the matching dates that depict the duration of the events mentioned in the given segment of the book.

In conclusion, the book *Helter Skelter* by Vincent Bugliosi and Curt Gentry is a novel that is written from a first person perspective on the theme of several murders. The book is an interesting read for those who love forensics. The book can also be used as a text for the students who pursue law and the paralegal studies. The book is an evident text that depicts the role of a prosecutor attorney and the background work that he has to do in bringing the culprits of crime to justice. Whereas the main suspect did not play a primary role in any of the killings that had been described in the book, there was still the need to conduct forensic investigation, as is the

case of Bugliosi affirming that Manson was the key culprit in the case. The killings of the popular actress and a rising pop star were the magnet that drew one to reading the contents of the books to the logical conclusion of the cases.