



HISTORY &
CULTURE
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Leslie Van Houten

Murderer (1949–)

Leslie Van Houten was a member of Charles Manson's "Family," and was convicted of the 1969 murders of Leno and Rosemary LaBianca, orchestrated by Manson.

Synopsis

Leslie Van Houten was born into a middle-class family in Southern California in 1949. In late 1968, she met Charles Manson and his "Family," moved onto their ranch and became infatuated with Manson. Less than a year later, Van Houten stalked into the house of Leno and Rosemary LaBianca and participated in Rosemary's murder, stabbing her approximately 16 times. Van Houten was found guilty of murder and sentenced to death. However, her sentence was automatically commuted to life in prison when California banned the death penalty.

NAME
Leslie Van Houten

OCCUPATION
Murderer

BIRTH DATE
August 23, 1949 (age 67)

PLACE OF BIRTH
Altadena, California

FULL NAME
Leslie Louise Van
Houten

ZODIAC SIGN
Virgo

A Normal Life

Leslie Van Houten was born in Altadena, California, on August 23, 1949. The second child in a middle-class family, she was outgoing and athletic in her youth and in high school she became homecoming

princess.

However, during that time she began experimenting with drugs such as marijuana, hashish and LSD, which she took on a progressively more regular basis. At one point during her teens, she also ran away briefly with her boyfriend to the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood of San Francisco, a hub of the counterculture at that time.

Joining the Family

In the summer of 1968, Van Houten met [Bobby Beausoleil](#) and [Catherine "Gypsy" Share](#), and began traveling with them. Soon after they met, Share began telling Van Houten about a man named [Charles Manson](#), whom she described as being Christlike and having the answers to all of their questions.

By fall of that year, Van Houten and the others were living with Manson at the Spahn Ranch on the outskirts of Los Angeles County, but in 1969, Manson's message would change from peace to one of revolution and violence.

Murder

Soon, Van Houten said, "All we did was listen to the Beatles' *White Album* and read [the biblical book of] Revelations." Manson had visions of a race war, and he had a bizarre plan intended to instigate it, beginning with the murders of [Sharon Tate](#) and others on August 8, 1969.

While Van Houten was not directly involved in those murders, the following night she participated with [Charles "Tex" Watson](#) and [Patricia Krenwinkel](#) in the murders of Leno and Rosemary LaBianca, during which she was responsible for inflicting a reported 16 of the more than 40 stab wounds LaBianca received.

Imprisoned

By the end of 1969, the entire Manson Family was arrested and charged for their involvement in the murders. The ensuing trials quickly developed a circus-like atmosphere, with both the defendants' bizarre behavior and the media frenzy surrounding them contributing to it.

On March 29, 1971, Van Houten was found guilty and sentenced to death. However, California's subsequent ban on the death penalty automatically commuted her sentence to life in prison. In a 1977 retrial, she once more found guilty of first degree murder, but her life sentence included the possibility for parole. In April 2016, after 19 unsuccessful previous hearings, a parole board recommended that Van Houten be released. If the ruling passes review, it will be sent to California Governor [Jerry Brown](#), who has the authority to either uphold or veto the decision. In previous years, Brown has refused to give his approval for the parole of other Manson family members.

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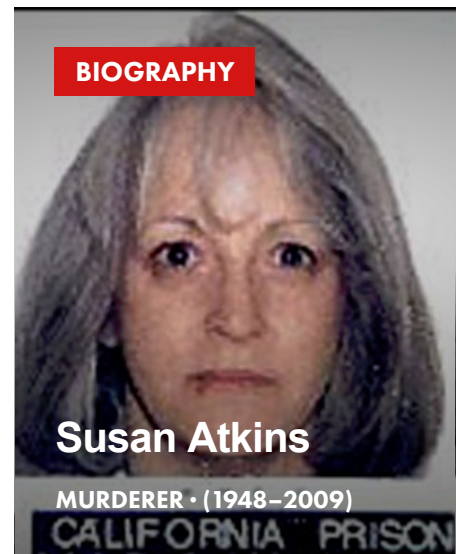
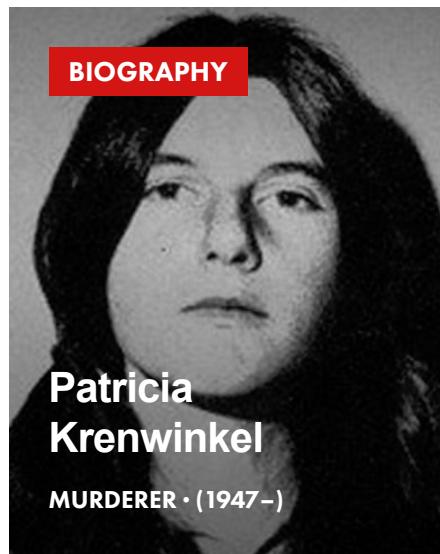
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