



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 13, 2023

## Why We Need the Death Penalty: Manson Murderess Released From Prison

If you want to know why the California Supreme Court's ruling in 1972 that temporarily stopped the death penalty was such a disaster not only for crime victims but also for justice itself, the state's Second District Court of Appeal has provided some insight. The court has freed Leslie Van Houten, who murdered Leno and Rosemary LaBianca on August 9, 1969.

Those gruesome murders followed those of Sharon Tate and her friends the night before, an orgy of violence orchestrated and directed by sociopath Charles Manson.

To no avail, all had been sentenced to death. So now, another of the murderers is free — rehabilitated, the appeals court assures us — after 50 years in prison.

True perhaps, but rehabilitation isn't, or shouldn't be, the object of punishing criminals. Justice is, which is why Van Houten and the rest of Manson's deranged gang should have had a seat in the gas chamber five minutes after they were convicted on July 25, 1971.

### The Murders

Van Houten richly deserved to die not just because she murdered two people, but because of the calculated savagery she inflicted on the LaBiancas.

Again, that was the night after Manson disciples Tex Watson, Susan Atkins, and Patricia Krenwinkel, with Linda Kasabian at the wheel, drove to [10050 Cielo Drive](#), Los Angeles, the home of actress Sharon Tate and her husband, movie director and [sex pervert Roman Polanski](#).

Manson's instructions: "Totally destroy" everyone there "as gruesome as you can."

[They did](#). Along with pregnant Tate, the murderers butchered five others, including Tate's unborn child. [They stabbed](#) Tate 16 times, coffee heiress Abigail Folger 28 times, Folger's boyfriend Wojciech Frykowski 51 times, and celebrity hairstylist Jay Sebring seven times. They also murdered Steven Parent, the property's caretaker's friend.

Van Houten did not ride on that first murder raid. She reserved her bloodlust for the LaBiancas. Upset about the victims' fight for their lives the night before, Manson supervised the murders at the couple's home at [3301 Waverly Drive](#).

Watson stabbed Leno in the throat, then slashed and stabbed Rosemary to stop her from defending herself against Manson's crazed women. Watson went back to Leno and stabbed him 11 more times,



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Leslie Van Houten



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then carved “War” in the grocery owner’s abdomen. Krenwinkel was particularly savage. She stabbed Leno 14 times with a two-tined fork she left impaled in his abdomen. In his blood she wrote “Rise” and “Death to Pigs” on the walls, and “Helter Skelter” on the refrigerator door.

Van Houten stabbed Rosemary 16 times. Total stab wounds: 41.

They have repeatedly appeared before parole boards, and were always denied, except for fellow Manson family member and LaBianca murderer Steve “Clem” Grogan, [who was released](#) in 1985. Manson and Atkins died in prison.

Leftist California Governor Gavin Newsom denied Van Houten’s latest parole request, but the appeals court overruled him in May. He will not appeal.

## No Justice

Kasabian, who drove the car both nights and was a lookout, received immunity in exchange for testifying against the murderers. The rest received the sentences they deserved. Then California’s high court decided that executions were “unconstitutional.”

That is why Van Houten is alive 50 years later, and now out on parole.

“Van Houten has shown extraordinary rehabilitative efforts, insight, remorse, realistic parole plans, support from family and friends, favorable institutional reports, and, at the time of the Governor’s decision, had received four successive grants of parole,” [said the appeals court](#) that overruled Newsom. And she had “many years” of drug and psychological counseling.

True, perhaps, and like communist terrorists [Bill Ayers](#), [Bernardine Dohrn](#), and [Susan Rosenberg](#), she might become a university professor. Perhaps even a law professor. Dohrn, by the way, thought the Manson killings were a good thing. “Dig it,” [she said](#). “First they killed those pigs, then they ate dinner in the same room with them, they even shoved a fork into a victim’s stomach! Wild!”

That repulsive utterance about Leno LaBianca, she said, was an “ironic joke,” but in any event, if ever a murder or murders deserved capital punishment, certainly the orgies of blood and violence at the Tate and LaBianca homes were among them.

A normal person with a moral compass that points true north intuitively understands the premise of the death penalty, which is expressed not only in Sacred Scripture but also in the natural law. An eye for an eye; the punishment must fit the crime.

If the state [is obliged](#) to punish crimes, and some crimes are so outrageous that death is the only proper punishment, then the state is obliged to execute the criminals who commit those crimes, *the possibility of rehabilitation regardless*. Indeed, Van Houten, who earned a master’s degree, is not likely to kill again, not least because she is 73 years old. She could be anyone’s grandmother. Except that she isn’t. *She stabbed Rosemary LaBianca 16 times.*

Her remorse and rehabilitation mean nothing. Meting out justice is the court system’s job, and, indeed, its *only* job.

Understandably, relatives of Manson’s victims [are angry](#), as are, again, normal Americans who are weary of leftist courts that frustrate justice by doing what the appeals court did. Then again, neither Van Houten nor the rest of the murderers should have landed in prison and had the chance to seek parole. The murder gang deserved a lungful of hydrogen cyanide the day they were convicted.

The California Supreme Court thought otherwise, and now Van Houten walks free, as her victims howl



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from the beyond for the justice they will never receive.



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