

Why the Crimes?

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I was 23 years old in August 1969, when I committed crimes that shocked the nation and sent shock waves around the world.

I'm often asked to explain "why" these senseless crimes happened; the difficulty being to answer without appearing to excuse them, while always respecting the families and friends of the victims.

In an effort to be accountable, that is, "making things right," I offer the following explanation. By no means do these exhaust the reasons, but possibly this will offer a few contributing factors that caused my actions. I'm still working on it.

"If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness" (1 John 1:8,9).

My Disobedience to Parents...

"Honor your father and mother" (Ex. 20:12a).

I'll never forget standing with my parents in their living room begging me not to move to California. I said, "I am 21, and I'm going!" I had never stood up to them in outright rebellion.

For several years, I had been lying to them, which began my downward spiral without any significant goals of my own. Growing up a passive person not communicating my desires, I entered college to please my parents. I looked up to older college men as father figures, while fearing failure and angry. I ended up blaming my parents for my problems, not trusting their love was greater than all my fears.

The crimes ended up bringing my parents to their knees, causing devastation, hurt, humiliation and much embarrassment. My siblings were left to hold them up from all the emotional pain, which I so deeply regret.

My Seven Deadly Sins...

"For the wages of sin is death..." (Rom 6:23).

It was my pride exalting me above the Godly wisdom of my parents. I thought I knew it all! My greed was based on the fear of not having or being enough, or of missing out on something important; a void that only God's love can fill.

I was a very lustful person seeking to fulfill my flesh and eyes; drawn away and enticed by my own desire. Envy was present, that I would not measure up when compared to others.

My fear of rejection caused pent-up anger within my heart, even wrath. The spirit of fear controlled my life for years, driving my behavior. I became lazy, avoiding my responsibilities to God, family and others. Slowly, the words of Ezekiel "*The soul who sins shall die*", became a self-fulfilling prophecy.

My Separation from God...

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way..." (Isa. 53:6a).

These sins were the root and effect of my separation from God. I turned from my parents' core beliefs and values, shucking off their accountability, thus breaking their hearts.

I was powerless over the effects of my sin, while trying to fill the void in my heart. Unable to control my thoughts and feelings, my life was without restraint, making bad choices, which resulted in compulsive behavior. It was difficult to deal with normal failures, frustrations and rejections without God in my life.

In hindsight, I was never connected to God, only religious in my younger days, going through the motions. With the power of God's love and grace missing in my life, those deadly sins were free to rule, affecting not only myself, but everyone around me, due in part to my feelings of rejection.

My Compulsive Choices...

"Choose this day whom you will serve..." (Jos. 24:15a).

I made one compulsive choice after the other beginning in adolescence, drinking my first beer at 14, and having sex at 16, which led to a party life in college. Though I worked to save for college, I made foolish choices instead of studying, making the grade and being responsible. I chose to run with the wrong crowd, join a fraternity, have sex, move out west, drop out of college in California, get addicted to drugs and join the Manson family, while looking for acceptance.

The crimes were simply a series of wrong choices, while self-medicating. I was bouncing off the walls of my mind, totally disregarding the destruction I was causing my family, myself and others in society -- blatant selfishness. These rebellious choices drove me into a state of turmoil, death and depression, stuck in a self-destructive cycle, lost in confusion.

I had a choice to choose life or death. I chose death, which brought a curse on a multitude of innocent people. My choices caused all these effects. As a result, the pain of the crime and a seed of rebellion spread to new generations in society.

My Lack of Knowledge...

"My people are destroyed because of lack of knowledge..." (Hos. 4:6a).

The crimes were a result of my lack of knowledge, though I knew right from wrong. Today, I have the knowledge of the Truth that sets one free from the deception, the manipulation of others and my own flesh. I believed a lie, instead of knowing my belonging, worth and competence in Christ.

I allowed ungodliness to rule my life because of passivity -- submissiveness. In my laziness, I became a wimp, choosing the easiest course of action, not standing up for the values I was taught as a Boy Scout. Being trustworthy, loyal and helpful were no longer a part of my code of conduct within social norms, nor common sense.

I was ignorant of so many core things. For instance, the sanctity of life, the real meaning of love, family, righteousness, peace and joy; the concept of how thoughts affect emotions, choices and behavior; the wholistic view and who I am as a person and the power of right believing, were all things foreign to me. I lacked the power of the Holy Spirit.

My Emotional Insecurity...

"A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways" (Jm. 1:8).

I became an emotionally insecure person, not accountable to anyone. I was overcome with hurt, frustration and insecurity. I felt that my significance was based upon my performance. It seemed impossible to achieve what was being asked of me. The fear of failure possessed me, and I resented those who loved me, causing anger and the eventual murders.

Though my family was emotionally reserved when it came to showing affection, I was raised a gentleman. For example, I'd open the car door for my date. But under the surface, I was hurting and fearful, and repressing my feelings, which was the reason for my drinking to medicate my pain.

See, I was inhibited, and getting drunk and having sex were things that seemed to allow me to experience freedom, but it was short-lived and only a drug-induced affection, not the love, acceptance and emotional security that God and family offers.

MY GRADUAL RADICALIZATION...

"For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he..." (Pro. 23:7).

When I met up with Manson, I was on a quest for personal significance that I never gained while trying to achieve the goals set for me by my parents. As a young man, I was experiencing an identity crisis -- self-deception. I wanted to matter to someone, to be respected in the eyes of others, to achieve, to earn a sense of value or esteem. ¹

I chose to be loyal to Manson's ideology as a means to attain this goal. I looked to him to bestow on me feelings of significance, instead of returning to my parents' dreams in humiliation and failure. Being desensitized through drugs and role playing, I justified violence, never finding my own individual path, nor fulfilling my own goals in life.

I shared a collective belief system with the Manson family, as rejects of society. ² This ideology seemed feasible since everyone believed it. Simply, I chose to believe a lie -- Manson's philosophy. I experienced a growing commitment to achieve due to in-group social status. We felt emotionally disconnected, with no place in society. As my values changed, I committed my life to the family, instead of turning to God for my beliefs, significance and identity in the Body of Christ.

My Codependency...

"There is a way that seems right to man, but its end is the way of death" (Pro. 14:12).

I was suffering from the debilitating effects of "codependency." I looked for other peoples' approval for a sense of worth and happiness, something that other people could not truly give me. ³ Through peer pressure, I became willing to do anything, act after act for the approval of the family.

I gave myself to Manson's delusional beliefs, becoming a true believer. Finally, I became willing to die for him, yielding my life as a sacrifice. I succumbed to his natural charisma, having no identity left of my own. I chose martyrdom behavior, giving my life for foolish beliefs.

The knowledge of God's love and acceptance was lacking in the core of my heart, causing this weakness. ⁴ My codependency coupled with Manson's own rejection issues were the catalyst to the murders, but my reckless choices brought them to pass. Manson simply manipulated my weaknesses.

My Willful Drug Use...

"Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit..." (Eph. 5:18).

It was only 30 days before the murders when I took my first snort of speed, which was the other catalyst. I chose to ingest drugs knowing that I would need them to commit the crimes. Previously for two years, I had medicated my emotional pain with marijuana and hallucinogens.⁵

This allowed my conscience to be overridden so the crimes could be carried out. Still, the girls and I argued whether to go through with it for an hour while driving in the car to the crime scene, but we lost the battle of our minds, being driven by the spirit of fear; a "drug-induced, shared psychosis."⁶

On the speed, I became past feeling while committing the crimes. But when we returned to the ranch, I felt my soul had died with the lives I had taken. Life was not only over for them, but would never be the same for countless others, because of me.

My Bondage To Fear...

"God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7).

My illicit drug use was driven by the spirit of fear. I self-medicated the fear of failure, humiliation and rejection, instead of turning to God for healing my hurts, frustrations and insecurities from my youth. There was a pent-up anger that gradually increased in my heart over the years, causing a hostility from feelings of rejection to be released during the murders, due to a lack of experiential love.

The spirit of fear controlled my life for years until I received the power of God's love, thus beginning my healing journey through renewing the mind. Fear of uncertainties about the future, the need for perfection, feelings of inadequacy, and self-doubt slowly faded. For the first time, I experienced true freedom from the bondage of personal condemnation, guilt and shame, fear and anxiety, plus addictive behavior.

At last, I overcame the spirit of fear by faith in God's love and grace, but it can still torment my soul, having committed such a heinous crime.⁷ Therefore, I've learned to rest in God's redemption, "...building [myself] up on [my] most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keeping [myself] in the love of God, and looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 20,21).

Last Words...

There is truly no explanation for these senseless crimes. I understand people who say, "I don't want to hear it." I sincerely apologize for the deaths and pain I have caused due to my foolish choices for which I take complete responsibility. I am not expecting forgiveness from anyone, nor do I deserve it. I thank God for His tender mercy.

I'm angry myself that something like these crimes could happen. Today, we hear of mass killings on a weekly basis. My heart is deeply saddened each time, seeing the wake of destruction left behind.

What can we do? I have no answers other than God's Word, that says, *"...if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land"* (2 Chr. 7:14).

For the past decades, I've tried to make living amends for the lives I took and the futures that I destroyed in the 60s. I've humbled myself to God, surrendering my life to His will and purpose. I've taken authority over my life, allowing God's power, love and grace to heal, rule and reign in all that I do. I know I can't undo the past, but I do know that God's grace is sufficient for me, and His strength is made perfect in our weakness. So let the weak say, "I am strong!" (2 Cor. 12:9,10). God bless you all!

For more, go to [Manson's Right-Hand Man Speaks Out!](#)

Footnotes:

- 1 The Psychology of Radicalization by Prof. Dr. Arie W Kruglanski, Mr. David Webber, College Park, www.zis-online.com
- 2 Radicalization from [Wikipedia](#)
- 3 Escape from Codependent Christianity by Dr. James Richards, Impact Ministries, Huntsville, AL, www.impactministries.com
- 4 Codependent No More by Melody Beattie, hazelden.org/bookstore.
- 5 [Manson's Right-Hand Man Speaks Out!](#)
- 6 [Psychiatric Panel Evaluation by Dr. A. Owre, 6/13/77.](#)
- 7 [Will You Die For Me?](#)