What Happened To Tex Watson

During the late 1960's California witnessed some of the most gruesome murders in its history, much of it was under the instruction and direction of Charles Manson and his infamous Manson family. Tex Watson happened to be one of the young people who fell victim to Manson's manipulations. We take you through the story of Tex Watson's life, how he got himself in Mason's web and what ensued thereafter.

Tex Watson's Life Before He Encountered The Manson Family

Tex was born into a Methodist family with strong conservative beliefs in Dallas, Texas. He was born on December 2, 1945. In school, Tex was the ideal student, straight A's, editor of the student's magazine and top athlete.

After graduating from high school, Tex moved to Denton where he attended the North Texas State University. That sojourn outside his birthplace was his first experience outside the comfort of his Dallas, the impact was telling on his social life as he began exploring lifestyles that were hitherto at odds with his upbringing.

In Denton he took up a job with Braniff International as a baggage handler, the job came with occasional free flight tickets which he used once to LA.

Meeting with Charles Manson

Watson's life took a downward spiral in 1969 when he met Dennis Wilson who in turn introduced him to Charles Manson.

He was hooked, After his first encounter with Charles, Tex informed his parents that he was leaving Denton for Los Angeles permanently and as a consequence was also dropping out of school.

Los Angeles was a far cry from everything Tex had grown up accustomed to, there were fast cars, women, drugs, night parties and a general laissez-faire attitude that fascinated the boy from Texas. As if that wasn't bad enough, his new association with Charles Manson and his crew opened him up to a fraternity-like association with a whole new social dynamic.

Charles Manson, Leader of the Manson family image source

He got into hallucinogenic drugs, booze and soon enough Charles Mason was feeding them all sorts of queer teachings alluding to a soon coming apocalyptic race war. Among other things Charles had them believe he was a sort of messiah in the mold of Jesus and that they(his followers) were modern-day incarnations of the ancient Christians. This was brain-washing, mixed with the hippie culture of the 1960s on steroids!

What Happened To Tex Watson?

By November 1968, Tex Watson had moved in with other members of the Manson family. The Spahn Ranch - an abandoned former movie set was now home to Tex Watson and his other fellow Mason family colleagues. As time progressed, he would rise to become one of Charles's most trusted confidants.

On the night of August 8, 1969, Charles Manson instructed Tex Watson, Susan Atkins, Linda Kasabian, and Patricia Krenwinkel to visit 10050 Cielo Drive, Benedict Canyon in Los Angeles and execute those living there 'as gruesomely as possible'. Manson held grudges against the previous occupants of the house and strangely felt the need to take revenge on the new occupants.

Tex alongside his co-conspirators broke into the house which was at the time occupied by Hollywood director Roman Polanski and his wife, the actress Sharon Tate. On that fateful night, Roman Polanski was in London working on a project, his wife Sharon who was 8 months pregnant was home with hairdresser Jay Sebring, his friend Wojciech Frykowski and his girlfriend, Abigail, heir to the Folger coffee empire.

Tex and his gang first shot a visiting 18-year-old Steven Parent then proceeded inside where they tied up Tate and Sebring and hung them over a beam. They went on to murder all five of them with multiple stabs, using their blood to scribble “PIG” on the front door.

Also Read: Life and Crimes of Johnny Ringo: How and When Did He Die?

On return from the assignment, Charles Manson was unimpressed with the job they did and insisted on accompanying them the next day to 'teach them how it's done'. Their target this time was grocery store owner Leno LaBianca and his wife, Rosemary. Manson drove Tex Watson and other Manson Family members into their property were they tied them up and repeatedly stabbed their victims and in one case leaving a fork sticking out from the stomach of one corpse. They used the blood from their victims to make inscriptions on the walls before leaving.

Months after the crime, Tex Watson fled L.A but was eventually arrested in Texas for the murders. After fighting extradition to California, he was finally extradited and charged to court and found guilty on seven counts of first-degree murder. He was sentenced to life in imprisonment in 1971.

Where is He Now?

Tex Watson is still in prison. In 1975, Watson became a born again Christian and subsequently an ordained Pastor. He founded Abounding Love Ministries - an outreach for inmates. He has apologized for his previous actions, saying he regrets his previous lifestyle and the consequent pain and anguish it caused many families. Watson married Kristin Joan Svege in 1979 and with conjugal visits they had four children before their divorce after a 24-year marriage.

He published his autobiography - Will You Die For Me in 1978. Watson has been denied parole an astonishing 17 times and remains an inmate of Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility in San Diego, California.