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## Member Of The Family: A Tragic Story Of Charles Manson's Family

How does a young fourteen year old girl from a conservative family from Minnesota end up as a part of Charles Manson's family? This is what Dianne Lake seeks to answer in her autobiography *Member Of The Family*. Dianne Lake was the youngest girl in Manson's family. The book is a truly unique take as the true story is told from Dianne's perspective. You get to see Charles Manson and the rest of the members through a young girl's eyes. *Member Of The Family* is a tragic story about family, not only the demented version of Manson's family, but also the downward spiral of Dianne Lake's biological family which ultimately lead Dianne to meet and follow Charles Manson.

When first looking at Dianne's upbringing one can see cracks in her family. On the surface they looked like a normal family. They went to church, and appeared to have it all together. Yet, there was a restlessness stirring in Diane's father. Dianne recalls that after her father served in the Korean war, he wasn't the same, and was always restless. He was a good artist, and always dreamed of making a living off his art. Eventually, he was able to sell his art, and gained some attention in Minnesota. Yet, even after some success, Dianne's father was still restless. His restlessness lead him to meet another woman, and he left his wife and family for this other woman. Eventually, he came back to his wife and children. After coming back Dianne's father began to experiment with Marijuana and LSD. He began to read books by Timothy Leary, and started to get behind the philosophy of the hippie movement. Dianne says several times in the book that one of the reasons her mother was so in love with her father was because he was a free thinker. She practically worshipped him because of his intelligence. She thought he could do no wrong. Soon, Dianne's mother began to smoke pot and do LSD along with her husband. Dianne remembers smoking her first joint with her father around the age of eleven or twelve. You can see a lot of dysfunction occurring in this conservative Minnesota family. Eventually, after several years of drug use Dianne's father made the decision for the family to move out to California. Not long after moving out there, her father made another decision for the family to tune in and drop out. This was another way of saying that the family was going to drop out of society and live in a hippie commune. This was the era of free love, and since Dianne was only fourteen, a lot of the hippies living in the commune, didn't know what to do with Dianne. They didn't want her to end up having sex, so the leaders of the commune kicked her out. One of the saddest moments in the book is when Dianne is forced to leave, but her parents don't leave with her. Her parents simply write a note on paper saying that they are Dianne's parents, and Dianne has their permission to go wherever she wants to go. Can one imagine being fourteen years old, and you are on your own. Her parents bought into the hippie philosophy, that parents

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shouldn't tell their kids what to do. So they just told Dianne at fourteen years old to go do whatever she wanted, and live wherever she wanted. You can see where this downward spiral of Dianne's family will eventually lead her.

When Dianne first met Charles Manson she describes him as this short guy who looked like some kind of spiritual guru. She says that he seemed to look into her soul, and somehow already knew who she was, and what she needed. The first day she met him, he took her to his bedroom and had sex with a fourteen year old girl. Dianne recalls that in the beginning Charles Manson was so loving, kind, and compassionate. They would have LSD parties, where all involved would take LSD and have group sex. Later it is revealed that in these LSD sessions, Manson would take less LSD than the others. He was always in control. Sometimes during these parties, after everyone was tripping, this would be when he would start teaching them new age philosophy. He would teach them that they needed to kill their ego, if they truly wanted to be free. Eventually, he progressed into claiming to be God. Manson would play act the crucifixion. Dianne says that they would use LSD at least 2-3 times a week. One can easily see what Manson was doing to the group. He got rid of their free will by telling them to kill their ego, and he kept them under LSD to influence them into truly believing that Manson was Jesus Christ. It's hard to grasp how Manson could brainwash an entire group of people to no longer have freewill, and to believe that he is Jesus Christ.

One has to understand that what Manson was doing was nothing new. In the 1960's during the hippie movement, it was quite normal for young people to seek out spiritual guru's. There were numerous cult leaders popping up everywhere during this time. But none nearly as dark as Manson and his family would become. Manson's vision for his family began to take a dark turn, when he became friends with Beach Boys drummer Dennis Wilson. Dennis heard some of Manson's songs that he wrote, and liked what he heard. Wilson tried to get Manson to record an album, but no record labels wanted to sign him. Dianne says that she believes this is what led Manson to end up ordering his family to kill for him. Manson was angry with the establishment, and sought out his revenge for being rejected. His family were nothing more than pawns in his twisted quest for revenge. Luckily, Dianne was often getting in trouble, and getting on Manson's nerves, so he didn't trust her to go with members of the family when they went on their two-night murdering rampage. Dianne says that she had no idea they had even killed anyone until she read about the murder of Sharon Tate in the newspaper. She says that this was when she no longer wanted anything to do with Manson or his family. Eventually, Manson and his loyal soldiers were caught and sent to prison. Dianne agreed to help the prosecution during their trials, and helped Manson and members of the family get sent permanently to prison. Dianne went through quite an ordeal after the trials. She had to be sent to a psychiatric ward, as she had elements of Schizophrenia due to the long persistent use of LSD. She was later adopted by the police officer that found Manson's family at Spahn Ranch where they were living. She later got married in her early twenties, and has lived a happy life ever since then. She even

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reconnected with her parents, but their relationship was strained. It's hard to imagine how someone like Dianne could ever make peace with how her parents, knowing how they treated her.

Member Of The Family shows the negative results of the hippie counter culture, and how it destroyed a family from Minnesota. Quentin Tarantino's new movie about the Manson family Once Upon A Time In Hollywood has revived interest in Charles Manson's unspeakable crimes. If one wants a closer look at how it all transpired, Dianne Lake's Member Of The Family is an excellent resource to learn the true story behind the Hollywood movie.

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