

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

(At top, in the darkness we hear women singing.)

WOMEN (recording)

(singing)

*Always is always forever
As long as one is one
Inside yourself for your father
All is none all is none all is one.*

(Lights begin to rise slowly on PATRICIA; she is seated behind a table, her hands folded neatly on the table in front of her.)

*It's time we put our love behind you
The illusion has been just a dream
The valley of death and I'll find you
Now is when on a sunshine beam*

(PATRICIA speaks to the audience; women hum the melody softly underneath.)

PATRICIA

No morning comes that I do not awaken and remember death. A day does not pass that I do not hear the screams, feel the knife in my hand, taste the blood.

(Short beat. Singing stops and a woman's voice reverberates.)

EMILY/WOMAN 2 (off)

What are you doing to my husband?

(PATRICIA's hands cover her ears. Rap of a gavel, lights up on another table, opposing PATRICIA's. HERNANDEZ [MAN 2] is seated behind it.)

HERNANDEZ (MAN 2)

This will be a subsequent parole consideration hearing for Patricia Krenwinkel. Today's date is July seven, 2009, location is the California Institution for Women, Corona, California. Time is approximately three p.m. Inmate Krenwinkel incarcerated on April 28th, 1971 charged with murder in the first degree. Counts one through seven, 187 of the Penal Code, single term of life. Original sentence was death but that was overturned by the state supreme court, February, 1972. This hearing is to be tape recorded. For the purpose of the Board's identification, each of us give our first and our last name, spelling our last name. I am presiding commissioner Steven Hernandez, H-E-R-N-A-N-D-E-Z.

PATRICIA

Patricia Krenwinkel, K-R-E-N-W-I-N-K-E-L, CDC number W-08314.

(Except for PATRICIA and HERNANDEZ, for now, all voices come from off.)

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MACKIE/MAN 1 (off)

Steven Kay, K-A-Y, Deputy District Attorney

MEGAN/WOMAN 1 (off)

Martha Keenan, K-E-E-N-A-N, deputy commissioner.

EMILY/WOMAN 2 (off)

Debra Tate. T-A-T-E. Sister to Sharon Tate.

(In another area of the stage, lights rise on CHARLIE.)

CHARLIE (MAN 1)

From the world of darkness I did loose demons and devils in the power of scorpions to torment.

(Lights out on CHARLIE.)

HERNANDEZ

(reading from a transcript)

Summary of the crime, committed on or about August nine and August ten of 1969. Defendant, Patricia Krenwinkel, was arrested on a fugitive warrant on or about February 20th, 1970 on suspicion of murder.

(Music begins, a sustained minor chord that grows in volume under HERNANDEZ.)
Counts one through five refer to the murders which occurred at the Polanski residence located at one-double-O-five-O Cielo, C-I-E-L-O Drive, Los Angeles. Counts six and seven committed at three-three-O-one Waverly Drive, Los Angeles. As to count one, Abigail Folger, cause of death, multiple stab wounds to her body. Count two, Sharon Tate—

(Lights up on CHARLIE, HERNANDEZ continues silently as CHARLIE speaks.)

CHARLIE

These children that come at you with knives...they are your children. You taught them. I didn't teach them. I just tried to help them stand up.

(CHARLIE'S light out quickly, music fades during next line.)

TY/HERNANDEZ

Count seven, Rosemary LaBianca; cause of death, multiple stab wounds to the neck and trunk.

(Beat, HERNANDEZ puts the transcript aside.)

Miss Krenwinkel, I'd like to talk with you about why you participated in these crimes. From what I can gather, you were raised in a home that sounds fairly normal to me.

PATRICIA

I came from a middle class home. Normal...in that sense, I suppose. My sister was...troubled, I guess you'd say and that was a source of tension in the family. The marriage. My parents divorced when I was fifteen. So while it was...normal, my childhood also had its fair share of...sorry, I can't think of the right word.

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(Lights out quickly on HERNANDEZ. PATRICIA moves from behind the table, addresses the audience directly. Music under following dialogue: "Theme from A Summer Place".)

PATRICIA (cont'd)

I had a stepsister: Charlene, seven years older. Piece of work. Drugs, booze, got knocked up, trouble by the book. But my mother and father...

(Lights up on FATHER and MOTHER, in separate lights on opposite sides of the stage.)
Nothing was talked about in that house. Nothing.

(FATHER and MOTHER address the audience.)

MACKIE/FATHER (MAN 2)

Our daughter Patricia was a normal child.

EMILY/MOTHER

An exceedingly normal child.

PATRICIA

Your sister's a heroin addict, you don't talk about it.

MOTHER

All of her activities as a child, her father and I both went along with her. Didn't we, dear?

PATRICIA

Not a word.

MOTHER

(faint hostility)
Didn't we, dear?

FATHER

(the same)
Yes.

PATRICIA

Your parents' marriage is falling apart, you don't talk about it.

FATHER

Patricia presented no disciplinary problems at any time to her mother or me.

MOTHER

None whatsoever. She seemed perfectly happy.

PATRICIA

You can't look in the mirror without hating yourself. You don't talk about it!

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FATHER

The teachers said they enjoyed having Pat in their classes.

PATRICIA

There I was, in Los Angeles, fucking L.A., Hollywood, Tinsel Town with all the beautiful people and I...I was not beautiful.

MOTHER

Pat dated boys but at that time she was still quite...studious. She read a great deal.

PATRICIA

And even if I was allowed to talk about it, who would I talk to?

FATHER

She was a very normal child.

MOTHER

Exceedingly normal.

(Lights fade on FATHER and MOTHER. Music out.)

PATRICIA

So, when I was fifteen, maybe fourteen, I started with the drugs. Charlene, as it turned out, was good for something after all. Grass at first, Charlene turned me on to LSD. My drug of choice...amphetamine sulphate—straight-up speed. Suddenly I had this fierce energy, this insane kind of...confidence!

(A young girl appears, speaking the lines along with PATRICIA. This is KATIE [WOMAN 1], PATRICIA's younger self. As the line continues, PATRICIA'S voice fades and KATIE'S takes over.)

PATRICIA (cont'd)

(simultaneously with KATIE, fading as she speaks.)

Chubby, pathetic little Patty Krenwinkel—kids at school going out of their way to call me fat, to call me ugly...

MEGAN/KATIE (WOMAN 1)

(simultaneously with PATRICIA, growing in volume as she speaks.)

Chubby, pathetic little Patty Krenwinkel—kids at school going out of their way to call me fat, to call me ugly—confidence! Me! Shit, man, who the fuck knew?

PATRICIA

Now, looking back I know I was barely functioning but at the time—

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KATIE

I wake up in the morning, take it, want to go out and change the world, feed the hungry, heal the sick, end the fucking war! Been fat all my life, not now. Speed, it saved me!

PATRICIA

I was looking for salvation. What I found was the Family. What I found was...Charles Manson.

(As before, a woman's voice reverberates.)

WOMAN 2 (off)

What are you doing to my husband?

(PATRICIA's hands cover her ears. Lights shift, KATIE exits, PATRICIA returns to the table. Light up on HERNANDEZ.)

HERNANDEZ

Let's jump ahead to September, 1967. You were...how old?

PATRICIA

Nineteen.

HERNANDEZ

And you were living with your sister, is that correct?

PATRICIA

In Manhattan Beach. Yes, sir. And I had a job at the Insurance Company of North America. See, living with Charlene, I...well, of course, I met a lot of her friends and one of her friends was named Billy. And this one night, we went to his home for a party.

(Guitar music. Lights out on HERNANDEZ. Lights shift as PATRICIA moves away from the table)

And there, sitting on the couch in front of a bay window, was a little man with a guitar.

(Music—a recording of Manson singing "Look at Your Game, Girl.")

Women, beautiful women, were seated on each side of him, another sat on the floor in front of him. Mary was one of them, that's where I first saw Lynnette.

(KATIE appears, swaying to the music.)

I knew that I wanted to talk to him, to somehow get him to...notice me. I sat behind the others listening to him play for such a long time until I was the only one left. He was singing straight at me...

(KATIE freezes, staring ahead as CHARLIE appears in the shadows.)

No one had ever looked at me quite that way before.

KATIE

It's like he can see through me—

PATRICIA

Like he was a part of me—

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KATIE

Like he wants me.

PATRICIA

Charlene came over and said we had to leave. It was time.

(Lights shift and CHARLIE steps into the light, addressing KATIE.)

CHARLIE

There is no such thing as time. Man invented time. Just what's here and now is what counts. I go there and I'm not here anymore. I come back and I'm not there anymore. It's infinite and it's nothing. Here and now. It's all perfect and the way it's supposed to be. There is no such thing as time.

PATRICIA

I turned to my sister and said...

KATIE

I'm staying.

PATRICIA

And my sister left. If I'd gone with her, I...if only...

(Music starts to play, "White Rabbit" by Jefferson Airplane. CHARLIE moves behind KATIE, moving gently to the music.)

I'd always been so uncomfortable in my skin, so...awkward in my body...

(CHARLIE holds KATIE around the waist from behind and starts to dance with her.)

But somehow, with this man...

(KATIE starts to move with him, tentatively at first but gradually relaxing into it.)

CHARLIE

That's right. That's good. No two moves, no two actions are the same.

(KATIE's dancing becomes freer as CHARLIE steps back and watches her.)

In your God-self there is no repetition. Everything is new. Let it be new.

PATRICIA

And that's how I met Charlie Manson.

(CHARLIE grabs KATIE's hand and they run to another area of the stage, laughing happily.)

We found another room in the house. Just the two of us.

(CHARLIE and KATIE embrace)

There was a full length mirror on the wall.

(CHARLIE turns KATIE to face the audience, stands behind her looking at her reflection in the mirror. Gentle strumming of a guitar plays under.)

Charlie undressed me and I let him...but suddenly I'm that fat, ugly girl again.

(KATIE stands still, her arms crossed in front of her, her head down.)

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CHARLIE

Look at yourself. You're beautiful.

(KATIE shakes her head.)

You are. You're perfect. You've got to see yourself as perfect—beautiful. You've got to love yourself. You've got to be free of all your inhibitions and your fears. They're weighing you down. They're choking you. You've got to break free. Look at yourself.

(KATIE lifts her head and looks as the music morphs into a recording of Manson singing. KATIE slowly unfolds her arms, looking at her reflection as she does so.)

MANSON (recording)

Pretty girl, pretty, pretty girl

Cease to exist

Just, come an' say you love me

Give up, your world

Come on you can be

(By the end of this verse, KATIE stands straight, open, arms at her sides “looking” at herself in the mirror. Music continues softly underneath.)

KATIE

Beautiful.

PATRICIA

And from that moment on, Charlie Manson was in my head. It started with love.

KATIE

Charlie is love.

PATRICIA

Not just physical love or romantic love, just...

KATIE

Pure love. Charlie shows us the way. He turns us around so we can look at ourselves, so we can see the love within.

PATRICIA

It started with love, before everything else, before all the...

(She makes a vague, dismissive gesture)

I just wanted him to love me.

(Lights shift. KATIE'S light fades. The Beatles' "Within You, Without You" plays.)

At first I thought it was gonna be just me and Charlie. I thought it was an affair, a...relationship. I thought he was my boyfriend, you know?

(During the above, the other 4 actors come onstage, dancing to the music.)

Of course, Lynnette—Squeaky, we called her—she was there from the beginning. Susan Atkins joined us in San Francisco. Topless-dancer hippie chick, lived on the Haight. Charlie called her

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PATRICIA (cont'd)

Sadie. You know, like Sexy Sadie from the White Album. See, Charlie wanted us...He *said* he wanted us to be free and that the only way to be free was to completely forget the past. The easiest way to do this, to change identity, was to change your name. So Leslie...beautiful homecoming queen Leslie Van Houten. She became Lulu. And me...Charlie called me Katie. We traded in Charlie's VW for an old school bus, painted it black so cops would stop pulling us over thinking we'd kidnapped a busload of fifth graders. We got into that school bus and we just...went. Driving up and down the coast, my father's credit card paying for the gas, the food, pretty much everything. To Oregon, to Washington, down to Mexico, back up to San Francisco, smoking grass, taking LSD every day. Listening to Charlie...

(CHARLIE steps forward, the others sitting at his feet.)

CHARLIE

Yesterday is dead. Tomorrow never gets here. We live in the eternal now. You are freed from your families and all their old hang-ups. You are cut loose into the now. You are free and because we are free, we can become one. The Bible says we must die to self and that's exactly true. We must die to self so we can be at one with all people. That is love.

(Rap of the gavel and the music cuts out suddenly. At the same instant, a light shift as all except PATRICIA exit. PATRICIA sits obediently at her table, hands folded.)

PATRICIA (addressing the panel)

I humbly thank you for allowing me to appear here today in front of this distinguished parole board. I believe I have proven myself a model prisoner. I believe I have demonstrated that I am no longer a threat and am ready to become a productive member of society. Should I be granted parole, I have made arrangements for my...um, there is a letter in my file from Sister Terry Dodge indicating that there is a place of residence available for me at the Crossroads Halfway House in Claremont, California.

(Lights up on a table where MAN 1, HERNANDEZ [MAN 2] and WOMAN 1 are seated, facing PATRICIA. TATE [WOMAN 2] sits in a chair off to the side of them.)

A copy of the letter should be there in my file.

(HERNANDEZ produces a piece of paper, passes it to the others, who perfunctorily review it.)

Sister Dodge has generously promised to—

HERNANDEZ

Spell the name, please, Miss Krenwinkel. Let's remember this proceeding is being recorded.

PATRICIA

D-O-D-G-E...Anyway, Sister Dodge has promised to support me in the transition. Financial help, transportation, that sort of thing. A letter from my cousin, Sandra Reeves, also offers me support once I—

HERNANDEZ

Spelling, please.

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PATRICIA

Reeves. R-E-E-V-E-S...Um, there is also a letter from Kurt Rowlett indica—

HERNANDEZ

Spelling.

PATRICIA

That's R-O-W-L-E-T-T...and his letter—

HERNANDEZ

Two T's?

PATRICIA

Two T's, yes sir...Um, Mr. Rowlett states that I've been a model prisoner for more than 35 years and that...well...There are a number of letters attesting to the fact that I have been a model prisoner.

(WOMAN 1 pulls another letter from the file on the table and reads it aloud.)

EMILY/WOMAN 1

Miss Krenwinkel's institutional adjustment could be considered exceptional.

(She scans the letter.)

Um...displayed a mature attitude in dealing with the crime.

(Another quick scan.)

...continues to be a role model at the California Institution for Women.

(She reads it a bit longer silently, then passes it off to another member. PATRICIA waits.)

HERNANDEZ

Go on, Miss Krenwinkel.

PATRICIA

Thank you...um...I've had numerous jobs over the years, um...I was a painter, hobby craft clerk, teacher's aide, inmate assignment yard worker, um... In 1981 I completed a bachelor of science from LaVerne University. I'm a member of both AA and NA, Narcotics Anonymous. I was a co-facilitator for the Co-Dependents Anonymous Twelve-Step study group. Oh, and, um, the 'prison pups' program. I've been actively involved with the prison pups program—

(MAN 2 starts to speak but PATRICIA anticipates him, impatiently.)

P-U-P-S. Pups.

(She takes a deep breath to calm herself, then with enthusiasm.)

I've been with the program since the very beginning. We train puppies for people, service dogs for the handicapped. My last dog, Ginger, she's now taking care of a young boy in New Jersey. The boy has, um...he's in a wheelchair and he...cerebral palsy, that's it...and my Ginger, she can—

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EMILY/WOMAN 1

These are opportunities provided you by the state, Miss Krenwinkel.

PATRICIA

Yes, sir, I'm aware of that. And I'm...very grateful. My point, however, is that—

MACKIE/MAN 1

Your college degree was paid for by the taxpayers, in spite of the fact that you played a role in taking the lives of seven people.

EMILY/WOMAN 1

Abigail Folger, due to your actions, did not receive such opportunities.

MACKIE/MAN 1

Sharon Tate did not, Jay Sebring did not. Steven Parent, only eighteen years old and surely deserving of at least a chance—

PATRICIA

I cannot change the past. I cannot change what I... All I can do and what I have tried to do and I have tried very hard, is to find some way to...better myself. And, see, the pups program, it allows me to do that but also, to give something back. To help people like the boy in New Jersey, people who are even less fortunate than me. Also in the file, there is a letter from Doctor Kathleen Faith stating that—

HERNANDEZ

Spelling, plea—

PATRICIA

(Testily, her frustration and impatience clearly showing)

F-A-I-T-H!

(Beat. They all glare at her. Realizing her mistake, she adjusts her tone.)

Dr. Faith, um...states that I have been fully rebili—

(stumbling over the word, she slowly articulates it)

Re-hab-il-i-ta-ted... and am not at risk for harming—

MACKIE/MAN 1

No longer at—

PATRICIA

No longer at risk, yessir. Thank you. No longer at risk for harming...

(Beat. PATRICIA looks down at her hands, dejected. A sudden light shift, the panel is cast into darkness. PATRICIA bangs a fist on the table and stands suddenly, addressing the audience.)

FUCK! Why didn't they just kill me when they had the chance? I was sentenced to die in the gas chamber, for chrissake, never asked to be spared, never asked the state Supreme Court to stick their fat heads into it. I was ready to die. Never thought I'd be spending the next forty years of

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PATRICIA (cont'd)

my wasted life in this shithole. Still, I...I...play every game, jump through every hoop and try, really fucking try to...be somebody...decent. To be someone I can stand to look at in the mirror in the morning. They don't care, I'm one of Charlie Manson's girls, I'm in here 'til I rot.

(She crosses behind the panel's now empty table and sorts through the files. Finds a letter, holds it up.)

Here, here. My psychological profile. Listen to what they're doing to me. Listen.

(A light rises on WOMAN 1.)

EMILY/WOMAN 1

"Throughout the description of the crimes that lead to her incarceration, the inmate demonstrated no emotion."

(Light out on WOMAN 1)

PATRICIA

No emotion?! I spend an hour with a fucking psychiatrist once every four years and they think they know me? I mean, listen to this bullshit.

(A light rises on MAN 1)

MACKIE/MAN 1

"Although she accepted responsibility for endangering the victims' lives and that she was in part responsible for the numerous injuries that the victims incurred, I am unable to detect any remorse or regret expressed by this inmate regarding the crime."

PATRICIA

Fuck them!

(Light out on MAN 1)

Seduced and brainwashed by Charles Manson. That's what it said in Dr. Faith's letter.

(grabs another piece of paper from the table, reads.)

Here..."Diminished capacity...um, excessive drug use and the crippling fear systematically instilled in her by Mr. Manson rendered patient Krenwinkel, who had suffered from issues of identity and a...and a poor self-image...incapable of making rational decisions. She knew the difference between right and wrong...however, she felt overwhelmed and mortified by Mr. Charles Manson." Overwhelmed and mortified. Look, it's not that I don't know that I...but you have to understand that Charlie...Charlie was powerful and I never, ever would have thought to hurt anyone.

(Light rises on MOTHER and FATHER [WOMAN 2 & MAN 2]. They speak quickly, their lines overlapping.)

EMILY/MOTHER

My daughter would rather hurt herself than harm any living thing.

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MACKIE/FATHER

We never saw her hostile or angry.

MOTHER

Pat was a very gentle person.

FATHER

Never saw her be cruel to other children.

MOTHER

Never disrespectful.

FATHER

Not a person with a violent temper.

MOTHER

She was a model child.

FATHER

Pat was very enthusiastic about reading the Bible.

PATRICIA

Stop!

(She clasps her hands to her ears on "Stop" and at the same instant the lights dim on MOTHER and FATHER. Pause. Removes her hands from her ears and looks at us.)

I want to be free. I want deliverance from this...world of shadows. Thirty-eight years. That's how long I've been here. Thirty-eight years. A lifetime.

(Beat)

Rosemary La Bianca's lifetime. She was thirty-eight years old when we...when she was...when she died.

(The offstage voice again.)

EMILY/WOMAN 2 (off)

What are you doing to my husband?

(PATRICIA covers her eyes. Lights shift. Music—"Surfin' USA" by the Beach Boys.)

PATRICIA

By '68, Charlie had gathered maybe twenty-five people and we'd settled in L.A.

(KATIE comes running on, sticks her thumb out, hitchhiking.)

Me and another girl...

KATIE

(Calling offstage to another girl)

Yeller!

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(WOMAN 2 as Yeller runs on, rushing to catch up with KATIE)

PATRICIA

We were hitchhiking on the Strip one night and this guy picks us up.

(KATIE points off, speaks to Yeller.)

KATIE

Got a ride. Let's go.

(KATIE and WOMAN 2 run off.)

PATRICIA

Guy invites us back to his pad in Beverly Hills. Turns out he's Dennis Wilson, the drummer for the Beach Boys.

(As PATRICIA moves downstage to address the audience, behind her in silhouette, the other four actors are dancing and partying.)

We have sex with him...of course, and then he gives us the run of the place, takes off for a recording session. We get a hold of Charlie and by the time Wilson comes home around three a.m., an orgy's going on in the living room.

(KATIE runs forward, addressing the audience.)

KATIE

(Laughing happily)

Charlie, fuck, man, shoulda seen it. Charlie meets Wilson at the door and Wilson's like, what the fuck, man? You gonna hurt me? But Charlie, no, man, he's got a lot of peace so he gets down on his knees and bows to Wilson, kisses his feet, like he's, I don't know...a king or a pope or...a Beatle. And then Wilson comes in the house and uh...

(She laughs, remembering)

A couple of teenagers are fucking on his coffee table, naked girls swimming in his pool and Wilson's like...OK, you can stay. And we're thinking, this is it. People are gonna hear Charlie's music, man. People are gonna know. The whole world's gonna know and it's gonna fuckin' change everything. Everything!

PATRICIA

Ever since '64 when the Beatles hit, Charlie'd been telling anybody who'd listen that he was gonna be bigger than the Beatles.

KATIE

And now it was happening, man. Just like he said it would. It was beautiful. So we all moved in with Dennis Wilson.

PATRICIA

Of course, once Wilson realized that we'd stolen most of his furniture, hocked his gold records to buy dope and used his Rolls Royce to go dumpster diving, he kicked us outta there.

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KATIE

But we were there, man. Hollywood! “Swimmin’ pools, movie stars.” Jim Morrison shows up one night. Mama Cass. Terry Melcher—big deal rock and roll guy. Lived with Candice Bergen. Worked with the Byrds, Beach Boys, fuckin’ Paul Revere and the Raiders. Dennis took Charlie out to Terry’s house for the audition. On Cielo Drive. And Terry dug Charlie’s music, really did and it...it was gonna happen. Had to happen. The world needs to hear Charlie's music, they need his message, man, his...peace, his goodness. The world needs—

(The music stops suddenly. KATIE moves out of the light.)

PATRICIA

It never happened. I guess you know that. Sure, Charlie got into the studio, recorded a few songs, but Melcher wasn't impressed. A friend of Melcher’s did get the idea that maybe he could make a movie about Manson, about what we now called 'the Family'. So once we moved out to the ranch—the Spahn ranch, old movie studio out in the valley—this guy, Gregg something, he came to visit. But Charlie scared him away. Charlie was ranting, in the way that he did—

(CHARLIE appears in a pool of light. On the opposite side of the stage, also in light is MAN 2 as 'Gregg')

CHARLIE

A baby is born into this world in a state of fear. Total paranoia and awareness. He sees the world with eyes not used yet. As he grows up, his parents lay all this stuff on him. They tell him, when they should be letting him tell them. Let the children lead you.

(WOMAN 1 & WOMAN 2 appear in a dimmer light, behind CHARLIE.)

WOMAN 1 & WOMAN 2

(a choral response)

Let the children lead you.

CHARLIE

So the first thing that happens, man, is they start giving you their thoughts and making things out of you that they want to make out of you, man. You're a free soul standing in a cage who has to die because he was taught that he must die.

EMILY & MEGAN/WOMAN 1 & WOMAN 2

(a choral response)

Taught that he must die.

CHARLIE

They dig a hole in the ground and they build up a city and they start a war and they call that progress? There's no such thing as progress. Only change and as long as there's hate in your heart, there'll be hate in the world. You cannot fight for peace and you cannot capture freedom.

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MACKIE/MAN 2

You are so full of shit!

(CHARLIE pulls a pistol from his belt and levels it at MAN 2, who freezes in fear.)

CHARLIE

What would you do if I pulled the trigger?

(Beat.)

MACKIE/MAN 2

I guess I'd be dead.

(CHARLIE holds the gun on him for a beat, then lowers it. MAN 2 glares at him for a moment and then leaves his pool of light.)

PATRICIA

And that was the end of that.

(All lights out except PATRICIA's.)

There was to be no more talk about Charlie being bigger than the Beatles.

(Lights shift and there is a rap of the gavel. PATRICIA takes her place at the table. As she speaks, lights rise slowly on the others, as before, seated at a table opposite, with TATE [WOMAN 2] seated off to the side.)

PATRICIA (addressing the panel)

I wanted Charlie Manson's love. As things began to...change over those years, I began to...I mean, if I saw something that I normally would be against...my values, you know...I began to justify it or rationalize it. I said to myself...oh, I can accept this. And little by little, I allowed myself to commit to him and I told myself...tried to convince myself that...things would change.

HERNANDEZ

Change in what way?

PATRICIA

From the beginning there had always been a...cruelty in the way that Charlie...

(Short beat)

I laughed at him once, I don't remember why, but he jerked me by the hair and said, "You won't ever laugh at me again." And there were times when he would in some way...humiliate, degrade me.

HERNANDEZ

How so?

PATRICIA

He at times gave me to other people to use for sex.

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(MAN 2 makes a note as the other three regard PATRICIA. She looks away.)

HERNANDEZ

Did he beat you?

PATRICIA

Not me so much. I was a good soldier, so...

(Clears her throat)

Others, yes. And after everything fell through with Terry Melcher...it got worse.

HERNANDEZ

Why didn't you leave?

(PATRICIA sighs deeply, looks down for a beat, then back at the panel.)

PATRICIA

I get asked that a lot. Diane Sawyer asked me that. She was nice.

(A short beat as the panel members exchange glances.)

HERNANDEZ

You weren't being held against your will, were you, Miss Krenwinkel?

PATRICIA

Not exactly but—

HERNANDEZ

Then why didn't you leave?

PATRICIA

I did. Once.

HERNANDEZ

Talk about that, please.

PATRICIA

It was early on. I left with a biker, he took me to Redondo Beach but...Charlie found me and he made it real clear to this biker and to me that there would be problems...you know, if I...and so I went back. And I did everything he told me to do because no matter how bad things became, no matter what he asked me to do, I thought if I...I hoped that...that he would finally love me the way I wanted him to love me. I had no self-worth. That's why I kept giving up parts of myself in order to be what I considered acceptable to him and once that happened, I believed this would bring about a...a change. Please believe me...when it started, it was about love. That's how it—

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

EMILY/TATE (WOMAN 2)

(suddenly standing)

I don't understand this woman. I don't understand—

HERNANDEZ

Miss Tate, you will be given a chance to speak. This is not—

TATE

I don't understand why we even put this woman up for parole. She sits here and talks about love but I've seen the photos of the aftermath.

HERNANDEZ

Miss Tate, please, /this is not the appropri—

TATE

/I've seen the pictures of what this woman and her friends did to my sister, Sharon! Of what they did to Jay and Voytek and that poor boy in the car and Abigail—Gibby. Her friends called her Gibby and I was her friend. Did you even know her name? Do you even remember what she looked like?!

HERNANDEZ

Miss Tate, that is enough. Please take your seat.

(TATE stands for a long beat glaring at PATRICIA, who cannot meet her gaze. Music begins—guitar strumming. TATE finally sits.)

Miss Krenwinkel, you were discussing your relationship with Mr. Manson. Please continue.

(Lights out on the panel as we hear the recording of Manson singing "Cease to Exist".)

MANSON (recording)

Submission is a gift.

Go on—give it to your brother.

Love and understandin'

Is for one another.

PATRICIA

(stepping away from the table, addressing the audience)

It was all about submission. It was all about...erasing who you were. That whole “Man invented time” thing was part of that and we thought it was so...profound. “Let time disappear, there is no time, we are all living in the now.” And we bought it. We fucking bought it.

(Lights up on CHARLIE, the others at his feet.)

CHARLIE

We are ageless. We will never die. But nothing else is secure because the end of the world is coming. Society is killing the planet. We've got to get out into the desert, to live off the land.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

PATRICIA

We sat at his feet and we listened, we swooned, we closed our eyes, we chanted and whatever dribbled out of his mouth we absorbed it like he was the fucking Messiah.

CHARLIE

It happened to me one day in prison. The infinite one just walked into my cell and opened up my head. He showed me the truth. The truth that God is everywhere and everyone is God.

PATRICIA

OK, the Jesus Christ thing, everybody wants to know about the Jesus thing. Was Charlie really Jesus Christ? Geraldo Rivera asked me that. He was an asshole. I didn't tell him a fucking thing but I'll tell you. You want to know if Charlie Manson was really the second coming? If you wake up in the morning—every morning—and you take speed, you drop acid.

(CHARLIE grabs KATIE out of the group and pulls her downstage of PATRICIA.)

If he tells you to forget your past, to erase you name, to cease to exist, to submit, submit, submit!

CHARLIE

Do you trust me? Do you love me enough?

KATIE

I love you, Charlie. I do.

CHARLIE

Do you believe in me?

KATIE

I do.

CHARLIE

Prove it.

(Confused for a second, KATIE starts to embrace CHARLIE sexually but he takes her shoulders and holds her away from him.)

Prove it.

KATIE

How can I—

CHARLIE

Stand up against that tree.

(CHARLIE pushes KATIE and she crosses the stage, turns and faces CHARLIE, smiles warily.)

PATRICIA

So I did, I stood up against the tree...

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

(MAN 2 steps forward and hands CHARLIE a knife. Facing KATIE, CHARLIE pulls his arm back to throw the knife at her. As his arm swings forward, KATIE lets out a scream and the light goes out on CHARLIE and KATIE.)

PATRICIA (cont'd)

...and he threw knives over my head. He threw hatchets over my head into a tree.

(Lights up on CHARLIE and KATIE. She is kneeling on the ground, sobbing. CHARLIE walks over to her and lifts her to face him.)

CHARLIE

Do you trust me?

(KATIE nods.)

Will you die for me?

(KATIE nods.)

Will you be my finger on my hand? Will you be me?

(KATIE nods again, burrows into his chest.)

PATRICIA

I had given up everything—every earthly thing—to be with this man and little by little, I gave up myself.

(“Revolution #9” by the Beatles begins to play as KATIE collapses into CHARLIE, slowly sliding down his chest and eventually collapsing at his feet. Simultaneously, we hear the following dialogue, which comes rapidly, overlapping.)

EMILY/WOMAN 2

Charlie loves you.

MACKIE/MAN 2

He has chosen you. Can't you see that?

WOMAN 2

Can't you feel his love in your heart?

MAN 2

Submit yourself to him completely.

WOMAN 2

Accept his love into your soul.

MAN 2

Embrace his power.

WOMAN 2

He isn't just Charlie, he is Manson.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

MAN 2

Man's son, the son of man.

WOMAN 2

There is no greater love.

(KATIE wraps her arms around his feet, CHARLIE remains upright. "Revolution #9" continues to play.)

PATRICIA

When you've submitted yourself completely, erased yourself so that all that is left is...him. And once he became that, once he became a god it all became about serving him, honouring him, submitting to him. Living only to do his will. Was Charlie Manson Jesus Christ? Yes.

CHARLIE

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

("Revolution #9" stops suddenly)

CHARLIE/PATRICIA

And in those days men shall seek death.

(A light shift and a gavel rap and suddenly appearing at the panel table is HERNANDEZ. This time, however, and until specified, PATRICIA does not return to her table but stays engaged with the audience. She answers his questions but speaks to us.)

HERNANDEZ

Miss Krenwinkel, what can you tell us about the murder of Gary Hinman?

PATRICIA

I can't tell you anything because I wasn't involved.

HERNANDEZ

Who was involved?

PATRICIA

Bobby Beausoleil.

HERNANDEZ

And he was a member of the family?

PATRICIA

Not exactly.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

HERNANDEZ

What then?

PATRICIA

Bobby came and went. We called him Cupid.

HERNANDEZ

And why was that?

PATRICIA

He was pretty. Charlie'd send him out to find new girls, bring 'em back to the family.

HERNANDEZ

He also introduced Charles Manson to Gary Hinman, is that correct?

PATRICIA

I don't know.

HERNANDEZ

Because they were both musicians, is that correct?

PATRICIA

I don't know. I wasn't part of—

HERNANDEZ

Susan Atkins, AKA Sadie Mae Glutz—also involved in the Hinman murder, is that correct?

PATRICIA

So I understand.

HERNANDEZ

And Mary Brunner and—

PATRICIA

And Charles Manson!

HERNANDEZ

So you know more than you're willing to admit?

PATRICIA

I know what you know.

HERNANDEZ

You never asked the others about it?

(Lights up on KATIE and CHARLIE.)

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

KATIE

What is everybody so freaked out about?

CHARLIE

Cops have Bobby. He's been arrested.

KATIE

Is this about the thing with Gary?

CHARLIE

What do you know about Gary?

~~KATIE~~

~~Everybody's been talking about it. Sadie told me—~~

~~(CHARLIE grabs her by the hair and she sinks to her knees.)~~

~~Charlie, no—~~

HERNANDEZ

This is two weeks prior to the Tate-LaBianca murders. Gary Hinman was an associate of the family, a musician and known drug dealer who the family believed was about to come into a large amount of money. Mr. Hinman was held captive in his home, made to sign over the pink slips to his cars, all of his possessions stolen. Mr. Manson arrived—

CHARLIE

(to KATIE, still on her knees)

I begged the little fucker, "Gary, give us the money, man" but he lied and said he didn't have it. When he tried to run on me, I took out my sword and cut his ear off and I took my gun and I give it to Bobby. I said, "Here. Now we gotta kill this fool." And Gary was "oh don't kill me don't kill me." So I said "Are you gonna tell anybody I cut your ear off?" and he said no. Then Bobby stabbed him in the heart...and he died. There's your heart, girl. There's your wine, Beausoleil!

(KATIE looks at him imploringly, not fully comprehending. LIGHTS out on CHARLIE and KATIE)

HERNANDEZ

In the aftermath, Susan Atkins wrote the words 'political piggy' in blood on the walls of Hinman's residence, a pattern to be repeated at both the Tate and LaBianca murders. Also in blood they left a paw print, the symbol for the Black Panther party. Why did they do that, Miss Krenwinkel?

PATRICIA

I wasn't there. I don't—

HERNANDEZ

Why?!

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

(Short beat)

PATRICIA

Charlie wanted people to think that the murder had been committed by the Black Panthers.

HERNANDEZ

And why did he want people to think that?

(The opening guitar riff of the Beatles' "Helter Skelter" fills the air. Lights shift, with only PATRICIA in light. She speaks along with the lyrics.)

PATRICIA

When I get to the bottom I go back to the top of the slide where I stop and I turn and I go for a ride then I get to the bottom and I see you again.

(Lights rise on the other four actors, dancing in a circle to the music. The effect should be of a campfire stage center, with the actors dancing around it. The song plays until the end of the first verse, with the actors, minus PATRICIA, chanting "Helter Skelter" along with the recording. The song plays to the :55 second mark then cuts out suddenly, CHARLIE immediately emerging from the group, the others falling at his feet, continuing to chant "Helter Skelter".)

CHARLIE

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

OTHERS

(a chant)
Helter Skelter!

CHARLIE

And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit and the sun and the air were cast into darkness.

OTHERS

Helter Skelter!

CHARLIE

And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth and their faces were as the faces of men.

OTHERS

Comin' down fast!

CHARLIE

And they had hair as the hair of women, and they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

OTHERS

Helter Skelter!

CHARLIE

And the four angels were loosed for to slay the third part of men.

OTHERS

Comin' down fast!

(CHARLIE falls to his knees, his arms reaching toward the sky. The others bow before him, continuing to maintain a rhythm. PATRICIA steps forward to address the audience.)

PATRICIA

Helter Skelter. The last war on the face of the earth.

OTHERS

(hushed, in rhythm)

Helter Skelter.

PATRICIA

Charlie's delusional interpretation of the Book of Revelations smashed together with the lyrics from the White Album.

CHARLIE

Blackbird singing in the dead of the night.

OTHERS

(hushed, in rhythm)

Helter Skelter.

CHARLIE

Take these broken wings and learn to fly.

OTHERS

Riiiiiiiiise!

PATRICIA

According to Charlie, the four angels from the Book of Revelation were the Beatles.

CHARLIE

And they had hair as the hair of women, and they had breastplates—

PATRICIA

Electric guitars.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

—as it were breastplates of iron. CHARLIE

Riiiiiiiiise! OTHERS

And Charlie was the fifth angel. PATRICIA

And to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. CHARLIE

(hushed, in rhythm) OTHERS
Helter Skelter.

PATRICIA
And so in the summer of 1969 the Family went into the desert; we went into fucking Death Valley and looked for that bottomless fucking pit for weeks!

(KATIE steps out of the group and speaks to the audience. The others exit.)

KATIE
Helter Skelter is comin' down fast.

PATRICIA
Or so we believed.

KATIE
The oppressed of the world shall rise up. Blackie—

PATRICIA
The African race.

KATIE
—shall rise—

PATRICIA
Take these broken wings and learn to fly.

KATIE
—killing and enslaving the white race—

PATRICIA
Except for us, of course.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

KATIE

—and Man's Son shall lead his family into the bottomless pit—

PATRICIA

If we could only find the fuckin' thing.

KATIE

—as the world above descends into chaos. And we shall wait—

PATRICIA

Hundreds of years, if necessary, according to Charlie—

KATIE

For Blackie to fail—

PATRICIA

Because—also according to Charlie—the black man will soon realize that he is not smart enough or brave enough or...or white enough to run the world after all and he will call upon Charlie the great to rise up from the bottomless pit—

KATIE

And we shall become leaders of men—

PATRICIA

—and rule the world, with all of us—his fucked up, brainwashed, drug addled family—sitting at the right hand of Charlie Manson—

KATIE

—the father almighty!

(KATIE's light out, she exits.)

PATRICIA

And that is why he wanted people to think the Black Panthers had killed Gary Hinman. To put Helter Skelter into motion.

(short beat)

Yes, I know it doesn't make any sense. None of it makes sense in the clear light of day but in the hot sun of Death Valley in the summer of 1969...we believed him. Thing is, nobody in the real world got the clue. I mean, it's not like the cops looked at the paw print and went, "Oh, Black Panthers. Case closed." No. They arrested Bobby, the skinny white kid who actually committed the crime.

(short beat)

Oops.

(Lights shift. Music—"The End" by the Doors—plays under the following.)

All that summer we started to have a lot more guns at the ranch. Knives. People were assigned lookout duty. We were pretty much all running on fear.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

(MAN 2 and KATIE enter, each carrying a knife. They charge forward and, in unison, thrust their knives in a stabbing motion at the audience.)

PATRICIA (cont'd)

Tex Watson, big dumb Texas boy, high school football star who came to L.A. for the chicks and the weed. Soon became Charlie's right-hand man and that summer Tex started giving us murder lessons. How to kill with a knife.

MACKIE/TEX (MAN 2.)

(Texas accent)

No, no, no, you don't just stick the knife in and out.

(He makes a quick in and out stabbing motion with his knife hand.)

Here. What you wanna do...

(He grabs KATIE to demonstrate, stands behind her.)

You wanna stick it in...

(He brings his knife quickly toward her, stopping just as it reaches her torso. She tenses, gasps.)

...and then you bring it up, like this.

(He slowly brings his hand up, tracing an arc on her torso from her navel to her heart.)

That way you cut up more stuff.

(Lights shift. TEX and KATIE exit. Music stops suddenly. The offstage voice again.)

EMILY/WOMAN 2 (off)

What are you doing to my husband?

(Upon hearing the voice, PATRICIA covers her ears. Gavel raps, longer than usual. HERNANDEZ moves into position, seated behind the table. PATRICIA lowers her hands, sits in her spot behind the table.)

HERNANDEZ

Miss Krenwinkel, as you are aware, we do have relatives of your victims in the room today and they will be speaking later. What do you think you've put them through?

PATRICIA

I think...I know that, by my actions, I have truly created such grief for them; there is no way to say how much hurt I have caused.

HERNANDEZ

What do you think the impact to society was of these crimes?

PATRICIA

To society? I think...it must've made people scared in their own homes.

HERNANDEZ

And how do you think the public feels about this crime today, forty years later?

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

PATRICIA

I can't say how the public...I mean, not personally being free to...still, I understand that...any form of violence at all rips us apart. It takes...it rips apart our...heart. It diminishes us. That's what I wanted to say. It diminishes us. And I am so deeply sorry for my...part...my role that I played in...I'm deeply sorry.

(Short beat)

HERNANDEZ

Now, Miss Krenwinkel, we need you to take us through the events of August nine and ten, 1969. Are you prepared to do so?

(Short beat)

Miss Krenwinkel, are you prep—

PATRICIA

Yes.

HERNANDEZ

In your own words then.

(Beat)

PATRICIA

August the eighth, 1969. It was a Friday night. I was asleep, coming down off yet another acid trip. Charlie woke me up, a little after eleven, I think, and...um...he told me to put on dark clothing, to get my knife, a change of clothes and to come out to the front of the ranch.

HERNANDEZ

Who else was there?

PATRICIA

Tex was there. Sadie...um, Susan Atkins and a new girl, Linda.

HERNANDEZ

(Checking his notes)

And this would be Linda Kasabian, is that correct?

PATRICIA

Yes, sir.

HERNANDEZ

And Miss Kasabian would later receive immunity for testifying against you and the others, is that correct?

PATRICIA

I think everyone is aware of that, sir.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

HERNANDEZ

Very well, go on.

PATRICIA

Um...Charlie pulled us all together.

(CHARLIE appears in light.)

CHARLIE

Now is the time for Helter Skelter.

PATRICIA

He told me and Sadie and Linda to go with Tex...and to do whatever Tex said.

HERNANDEZ

Did he have any further instructions?

PATRICIA

After we'd all gotten in the car, just before we left, Charlie stuck his head in the window and said...

CHARLIE

Leave a sign. You girls know what I mean. Something witchy.

(Lights out on CHARLIE.)

HERNANDEZ

So, upon leaving the ranch, did you know you were embarking upon a mission to commit murder?

PATRICIA

No. See, we'd been going out on these...at night, we called them creepy crawlies. We would sneak into people's homes and—

HERNANDEZ

Burglaries?

PATRICIA

Sometimes. But sometimes we just...rearranged the furniture or...raided the refrigerator or...I thought this might just be another creepy crawly, so I—

HERNANDEZ

Was it customary to take a knife and a change of clothes along so you could rearrange furniture?

(Short beat)

Miss Krenwinkel, was it custom—

PATRICIA

No.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

HERNANDEZ

Had you been abusing any sort of a controlled substance?

PATRICIA

I had been using drugs for many years so—

HERNANDEZ

On the day of the murders had you been under the influence of any sort of controlled substance?

PATRICIA

Sadie had a private stash of meth. We snorted some of that.

HERNANDEZ

Methamphetamine?

(PATRICIA nods)

You chose this moment to ingest a drug known to increase paranoia and aggression?

(PATRICIA nods again)

Why was the house at Cielo Drive chosen?

PATRICIA

Charlie chose it. Terry Melcher used to live there, that's all I know.

(PATRICIA closes her eyes. Lights out on HERNANDEZ. Music under—a slow, steady minor chord that plays throughout the sequence. During the following sequence, the only people we see are PATRICIA and KATIE [WOMAN 1] as they take us through the crime. MAN 1, MAN 2 and WOMAN 2 remain in the shadows, voicing the other characters who move in and out of the story. At present, only PATRICIA can be seen. She opens her eyes, speaks to the audience)

PATRICIA (cont'd)

We didn't know who any of these people were until we heard their names on the news the next day. And even if we had...I mean, it's not like I'd ever heard of Sharon Tate. The most beautiful woman in Hollywood—next day the TV said that over and over again—“the beautiful, the exquisite, the voluptuous star of “Valley of the Dolls”, wife to Roman Polanski, the genius behind “Rosemary’s Baby”. Abigail Folger, heiress to the coffee fortune. Jay Sebring, hair stylist to...Steve McQueen. The beautiful people. I grew up in their shadow. I looked in the mirror every morning at a fat, unhappy girl and cursed her for not being one of them.

(The loud sound of a car squealing to a halt. Car doors open and close. KATIE steps forward out of the darkness. She holds a knife in her hand.)

It was after midnight by the time we got to the house. Tex climbed up a pole and cut some wires. Power and phone, I guess. There was an electric gate but Charlie had told him not to use it so Tex climbed over the fence and we all followed. This is when he told us the plan. To go in the house and kill everyone inside. I wish I could tell you that I resisted, that I wanted to run and hide and never see Charlie Manson again.

(Short beat)

I wish I could tell you that.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

(Sound of another car approaching, lights spill across KATIE's face.)

PATRICIA (cont'd)

We were about to walk up to the house when these headlights came out of nowhere. Tex told us to get back so we hid in the bushes and he pulled out his gun, stood in the driveway. Car stopped and I heard this voice, this...kid's voice really.

TY/MAN 1 as "Steven Parent" (voice over)

Please don't hurt me, I won't say anything. Please—

(We hear four fast gun shots, KATIE watches fascinated.)

PATRICIA

I could see the flash of the gun reflected in the boy's glasses.

KATIE

Beautiful.

PATRICIA

His name was Steven Parent. He just happened to be there, visiting the caretaker in the guesthouse. Wrong place, wrong time. Eighteen years old. The first to die.

(In shadow, WOMAN 2 as "Linda" starts to cry softly.)

Tex turned the ignition off, pushed the car back a few feet and then we all walked up to the house. Linda was freaking out already and it was pretty clear she wasn't gonna be much help.

MACKIE/MAN 2 as "Tex" (vo)

Shhh, Linda!

EMILY/WOMAN 2 as "Linda" (vo)

Please don't make me do this, please don't make me—

KATIE

Shhhh! It's OK. Charlie loves us and wouldn't let us come here if he thought something bad would happen to us.

WOMAN 2 as "Linda" (vo)

Please don't make me—

MAN 2 as "Tex" (vo)

(brusquely)

Go 'round back. Find a way in.

WOMAN 2 as "Linda" (vo)

Please—

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

MAN 2 as "Tex" (vo)

Go!

PATRICIA

Linda went but came back...minute later, maybe, said she couldn't find anything open. A lie, I found out later, but by this time, Tex had found an open window. Took out his bayonet and cut through the screen, told Linda to go back by the car and stand lookout. Off she went. Tex climbed in the window, came around to the front door and let me and Sadie in the house.

(A spike in the music, combined with the sound of footsteps.)

In the living room, there was a sofa facing a fireplace. American flag draped over the back. A man was sleeping there. Tex stood over him... and the man woke up.

ALEX/MAN 1 as "Voytek" (vo)

What time is it?

PATRICIA

His name was Voytek Frykowski.

MAN 2 as "Tex" (vo)

Don't move or you're dead.

PATRICIA

Tex grabbed a towel from...somewhere, I don't remember, told Sadie to tie his hands with it and she did.

MAN 2 as "Tex" (vo)

Sadie, go find the others.

PATRICIA

And Sadie left. Frykowski looked back at me...

(KATIE smiles sweetly.)

...I smiled at him.

ALEX/MAN 1 as "Voytek" (vo)

Who are you? What do you want?

MAN 2 as "Tex" (vo)

I'm the devil and I'm here to do the devil's business.

MAN 1 as "Voytek" (vo)

My money's in my wallet over there on the—

MAN 2 as "Tex" (vo)

Another word and you're dead.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

PATRICIA

Wasn't long before Sadie returned with...Abigail Folger.

EMILY/WOMAN 2 as "Abigail" (vo)

Voytek, who are these—

(KATIE moves quickly and angrily across the stage, holding her knife to "Abigail's" throat.)

No, please, please, don't—

PATRICIA

Stop!

(Music stops suddenly and lights dim quickly on all but PATRICIA, who brings a hand to her forehead. She is breathing deeply, clearly upset. HERNANDEZ steps forward into the edge of her light.)

HERNANDEZ

Miss Krenwinkel?

(beat)

Miss Krenwinkel, would you like a glass of water?

PATRICIA

Don't we already know this story? Is it necessary that I—

HERNANDEZ

(Turning his head, speaking to someone off)

Let's get her some water and then—

PATRICIA

I don't want any water, I just want...

HERNANDEZ

What do you want, Miss Krenwinkel?

(PATRICIA chokes back a sob.)

PATRICIA

I've tried so hard to be...a good person. To redeem—

HERNANDEZ

Miss Krenwinkel, we need you to contin—

PATRICIA

Please, let me—

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

HERNANDEZ

We can take a short break if you'd like but we still need you to continue.

(Short beat)

Miss Kren—

PATRICIA

I know. I'm sorry. I'll...continue.

(MAN 2 steps back into the darkness. Music starts again. PATRICIA wipes her eyes, takes a deep breath and begins speaking quickly.)

At some point, Tex...kicked the man, Frykowski, he kicked him in the...the head. I don't remember exactly if it was before or after Sadie returned with the others...with Sharon Tate and...and Jay Sebring. They were very frightened, of course, and...

(She chokes back another sob.)

She was...so pretty. Beautiful. Her hands on her big, round belly, protecting her...

(She shakes off the emotion, continues.)

Tex had brought some rope from the car. He tied Sebring's hands and then looped the rope around his neck, threw the other end of it over a beam in the ceiling and put the rope around Sharon's neck but Sebring, he was protesting...

TY/MAN 1 as "Sebring" (vo)

Let her sit down for Christ's sake. Can't you see she's pregnant?

PATRICIA

And I remember thinking...

KATIE

Let her sit down.

PATRICIA

But I didn't say anything, I just...And then he...Sebring, he jumped at Tex. He tried to get his gun, but Tex was too fast and he—

(We hear the sound of a gunshot. At the same time, WOMAN 2 as Abigail screams, MAN 1 cries out in pain, MAN 2 in anger. PATRICIA's next line overpowers all of this and, at the same instant, there is an abrupt light shift and the music cuts out.)

PATRICIA

(an extended scream)

Stop!!!

(PATRICIA steps in to directly confront KATIE.)

Please, please, stop! Put your knife down and run out of here as fast as you can. You don't know these people. You don't have to—

KATIE

I'm scared.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

PATRICIA

I know, I know, I know—

KATIE

Charlie knows I'm scared. He can see me, he can—

PATRICIA

He cannot see you. Go. Run. Get out now. Please!

KATIE

I can't move. Charlie will—

PATRICIA

No, Charlie cannot—

KATIE

Now is the time for Helter Skelter!

PATRICIA

Stop it! Can't you see that it's all a ridiculous lie? Charlie is not—

KATIE

Charlie is love.

PATRICIA

Charlie is the exact opposite of love! Please listen to—

KATIE

Now is the time for Helter—

PATRICIA

Stop it! Please, I'm begging you, drop your knife and run!

KATIE

But these are the pigs! The piggies. In their eyes there's something lacking, what they need's a /damn good whacking!

PATRICIA

/You don't know these people! They mean nothing to you! Their deaths will bring you nothing but shame and misery forever and ever and—

KATIE

Charlie says—

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

PATRICIA

(continuous from above)
—ever and ever and—

KATIE

(continuous from above)
—I have to die to self—

PATRICIA

No, no, no—

KATIE

—I have to die to self and if I am willing to die I have to be willing to kill!

PATRICIA

Noooo!!!

(PATRICIA's scream meshes with WOMAN 2's scream. KATIE runs quickly out of the light, knife in hand. Music starts up again and PATRICIA speaks to the audience.)
Sadie and Tex went after Frykowski, he fought back...I don't remember it all...Sadie stabbing, more gunshots and the women... crying and screaming and I was trying to maintain...with my knife but I...and Abigail Folger ran. She just ran...out the back and I chased her with my knife... outside, past the swimming pool and I caught her but she was bigger than me and...and...and stronger and she fought so hard but I finally...

(KATIE runs on with her knife, goes to her knees as if trapping someone beneath her, holds her knife above her head and freezes there for a moment.)
...got her down onto the lawn, got on top of her and just started...
(KATIE brings her knife down, all sound, music included, stopping instantly. And in complete silence, as PATRICIA watches, KATIE stabs repeatedly, almost mechanically into the ground. One more thrust of KATIE's knife. PATRICIA covers her eyes with her hand and KATIE's light goes out instantly. Silence.)
Tex came over, took me inside. The two men were dead. And I watched as Sadie held Sharon Tate...while Tex, he...

EMILY/WOMAN 2 as "Sharon" (vo)

(a terrified scream)
Nooo—

(PATRICIA'S hands cover her ears and the scream cuts off instantly. Pause.)

PATRICIA

We got back in the car and left. I don't remember much after that.

(Light up on KATIE, who cradles her knife hand with the other.)

KATIE

My hand is sore from stabbing that lady all those times. I kept hitting her bones. Really hurts.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

(KATIE's light goes out. PATRICIA sighs deeply. ~~After a beat, light rises on HERNANDEZ behind the table.~~)

~~HERNANDEZ~~

~~Would you like to take a break, Miss Krenwinkel?~~

(Beat, she steels herself, then speaks quickly and matter-of-factly)

PATRICIA

Next day back at the ranch, Charlie said we were going out again. Said last night was too messy and he was gonna show us how to do it right. So we got to the house, the LaBianca house.

(HERNANDEZ starts to ask a question.)

I don't know why they were chosen. Linda and Sadie came with us again. Tex, of course, and Leslie. Pretty homecoming queen Leslie. Charlie went inside, tied up the LaBiancas, told 'em both they wouldn't be hurt. Came back out and told us he was gonna take the car and split. He told us to kill them both and then hitchhike back to the ranch. Sadie and Linda left with Charlie—

(Lights out on HERNANDEZ, same music as before begins. PATRICIA addresses the audience.)

And Leslie, me and Tex went inside. Tex went after Mr. LaBianca in the living room, me and Leslie went in the bedroom with his wife. Before we did anything to her, Tex started killing Mr. LaBianca and she, Mrs. LaBianca... Rosemary. She had such a sweet face. And when she heard her husband cry out in pain and terror in the other room, she said...

(breaking down)

Here is this woman, terrified, tied up, these two crazed hippie bitches with knives about to kill her and she knows it, Christ, she's about to die and what does she say?

EMILY/WOMAN 2 as "Rosemary" (vo)

What are you doing to my husband?

PATRICIA

Pure love. I had never known such love. Whatever I thought I had with Charlie, with the Family...No. Was I even capable of it? Had I for any moment in my life been so...unselfish? What kind of human being am I that I would...am I even human?

EMILY/WOMAN 2 as "Rosemary" (vo)

What are you doing to my husband?

PATRICIA

I was so ashamed.

(Pulls herself together, looks at us)

I took out my knife and stabbed her as hard as I could. Knife hit her collarbone and snapped. We had to get Tex to...finish. Then Tex told Leslie she had to get her hands dirty, handed her the knife and she stabbed Mrs. LaBianca in the lower back. Sixteen times.

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

(Music fades out. Slowly, PATRICIA makes her way back to her table. The others file in, take their positions behind the other table, with WOMAN 2, as before, seated off to the side. PATRICIA folds her hands in front of her and speaks to the panel.)

PATRICIA (cont'd)

Each day, the more that I understand myself, the more I know the damage I've done. The more that I hold precious...I know that those precious things have been taken from others. So I try each day to help others. To give back. I mentor those who need it, tutor where I can. I try to be honest and truthful and open with my relationships, and I try to be respectful. I attempt to live as a good, honest person...because it is very difficult to live with what I have done.

(Short beat)

But...please understand that...I was acting at the behest of another. I violated the innermost law of my own being: to do no harm. But I did so because I had...had erased who I was and what I believed, I submitted to the will of Charles Manson so that I could...so that he would...All I wanted was to be...

(She looks at the panel, all of whom are regarding her with hostility. She folds her hands again and speaks simply.)

I don't know what else I can say except that I am so terribly sorry.

(Beat)

HERNANDEZ

Thank you, Miss Krenwinkel.

(HERNANDEZ shuffles a few papers around, looks at his watch.)

We have with us a representative of the Tate family. California law allows the victim's family to have the last word in these hearings so...Miss Tate, if you're ready.

(TATE stands. She is holding a sheaf of papers, looks them over, then sets them down on her chair. She clears her throat and begins.)

TATE

Thank you, Mr. Hernandez. My name is Debra Tate. Sharon Tate was my sister. I also knew Jay Sebring. I knew Gibby and Voytek and over the years have had the opportunity to get to know members of the LaBianca and Parent families, whom I cherish.

(Beat, she looks directly at PATRICIA.)

These people you murdered, Patricia, they were people who had lives ahead of them, who wanted to make a difference. Gibby Folger was a social worker, striving to help her friends and communities in places like south central L.A. And Jay Sebring...

(She smiles warmly at his memory.)

...was very handsome and charming...and very kind to a young girl who adored him, as I did. Jay was also a dreamer who revolutionized his industry and would've certainly done much more had he lived. Steven Parent, after graduating from high school, took on two jobs to fund his college education. The only reason he was even there that night was because he was trying to sell the caretaker his clock radio, hoping to make a few extra dollars for school. Leno LaBianca served in World War II, and together with Rosemary, nurtured and supported their family. And Sharon...

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

(She chokes back a sob, continues.)

TATE (contd')

I was eleven years old that summer of 1969 and I spent many hours visiting Sharon in that house, watching her belly grow full with that child. Today, when you read about Sharon in these books, these...

(She shakes her head, makes a dismissive gesture with her hand.)

They always write Sharon's life as this cautionary Hollywood tale. Poor Sharon Tate; never quite achieved the stardom she so desired, would receive top-billing only in death. No! What Sharon wanted more than anything...was to be a mommy. If you had seen her that summer, if you had loved her as I did, you would know this. And she never quite achieved that either, did she?

(Beat)

I urge the Parole Board to consider that Patricia Krenwinkel has, indeed, displayed great discipline and achieved much within the confines of these walls...but *only* within the confines of these walls. I am not willing to trust that her sociopathic nature would not return, given the nature of the world we live in—

PATRICIA

I am paying for my crimes as best as I can.

HERNANDEZ

Miss Krenwinkel, this is not your time to—

PATRICIA

There is nothing more I can do outside of being dead. And I know that's what you wish but—

TATE

I have never wished you dead, Patricia. Nor has my mother, nor has my—

PATRICIA

I don't know what else you want from me.

TATE

I want nothing from you—

HERNANDEZ

All right, let's take a moment—

TATE

(continuous from above)
—but to stay in prison for the rest of your natural—

PATRICIA

Do we not believe that people can change? Do we not believe in forgiveness? In mercy, even for someone like—

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

TATE

Mercy?! You dare to speak to me of mercy?

PATRICIA

I only mean that—

TATE

Society has been most merciful in allowing you to live here with all you needs cared for, where you can go to college, train puppies, chat with Diane Sawyer and—

HERNANDEZ

Miss Tate, let's keep our comments—

TATE

(continuous from above)
—live a peaceful and unpressured—

PATRICIA

I cannot change the past! I cannot undo what I did!

TATE

You can say you're sorry and—

PATRICIA

I have said it over and over and—

TATE

—and you can mean it!!!

PATRICIA

(an explosion)

I am sorrrrrrry!!! You can never know how hard it is to live with the fact that something so unspeakable lives insi...*lived* inside me. All I wanted to find was tenderness and love but it all became so ugly and I can't bear to...

(Taking a deep breath to steady herself.)

So I try every day to at least pretend to myself that I have a little bit of self worth. Because I know who I was and what I did but I cannot change it. No matter what I do I cannot change one minute of my life!

(Beat)

I don't expect the board to say that I can go home. But I will not leave this room until you understand that I would never have gone to those homes and hurt those people if Charlie Manson hadn't ordered me to. I had sacrificed my whole self to him and when he said, "Do what Tex tells you to do," I believed to the depths of my soul that I had no choice.

TATE

Did Charlie order you to chase after Gibby when she ran from the house?

CEASE TO EXIST by William Cameron

PATRICIA

Do what Tex tells you to—

TATE

So it's Tex now. He's the one who told you to stab Gibby twenty-eight times—*twenty-eight times!* Past the point of death. Whose 'choice' was that? And she begged you to stop. "I'm already dead." Isn't that what Gibby said to you? I'm already—

HERNANDEZ

Miss Tate—

TATE

Isn't it?!

PATRICIA

Yes.

TATE

And at the LaBianca house, after they were dead, was it Charlie or Tex who ordered you to stab a fork into Mr. LaBianca's stomach and leave it there for his children to find the next day?

(Short beat)

I know that Susan Atkins was the one who dipped a towel in my sister's blood and wrote the word 'Pig' on the front door. I suppose Charlie Manson told her to do that.

PATRICIA

Leave something witchy, that's what Charlie—

TATE

I see. And so that's why you covered your hands with Mr. LaBianca's blood and scribbled the words Helter Skelter on the refrigerator door.

(PATRICIA emits a pained sigh, bows her head.)

Was that before or after you raided the fridge for watermelon and chocolate milk?

HERNANDEZ

Miss Tate, please confine your comments to—

TATE

My apologies to the members of the board if I am out of order. I respectfully ask in the name of my family and that of a decent and honorable society that you deny parole to Miss Patricia Krenwinkel. Thank you for your consideration.

(TATE sits. A pause.)

HERNANDEZ

Thank you for your comments, Miss Tate. We will recess for deliberations. The time is approximately three-forty-three p.m.

(All but PATRICIA rise and exit. TATE is the last to leave, taking one last moment to look at PATRICIA, who meets but cannot hold her gaze. TATE exits, leaving PATRICIA alone. Lights shift. She addresses the audience.)

PATRICIA

No morning comes that I do not awaken and remember death. A day does not pass that I do not hear the screams, feel the knife in my hand, taste the blood. A day does not pass that I do not wish for my own death. I think often of taking my own life. But there is no killing left in me.

(A beat and then a light rises on HERNANDEZ.)

HERNANDEZ

In the matter of Patricia Krenwinkel, the panel has reviewed all the information and testimony. We find once again, Miss Krenwinkel, that you are not suitable for parole and would pose an unreasonable risk of danger to society if released from prison.

(Lights up on KATIE sitting cross-legged facing PATRICIA. She is softly humming)
The offense occurred in an exceptionally cruel, callous, violent and brutal manner.

(KATIE begins to sing, HERNANDEZ' voice and light fading as she does so.)

KATIE

*Always is always forever
As long as one is one
Inside yourself for your father
All is none all is none all is one.*

HERNANDEZ

There were multiple victims, the events
carried out in heinous fashion,
demonstrating an exceptionally callous
disregard for human suffering...

(Lights out on HERNANDEZ. KATIE speaks to PATRICIA.)

KATIE

Isn't that beautiful? Charlie wrote it. You should meet him. Whatever is making you sad, he can look into your heart and take it anyway. He has that power. He has that peace within him. Sing with me and you'll see what I mean. It's OK, don't be afraid.

(sings)

*So bring only your perfection
For there love will surely be
No cold, pain, fear, or hunger
You can see, you can see...you can see.*

(KATIE holds out the last note, reaching her hand out to PATRICIA and smiling beatifically. PATRICIA's head sinks into her hands. Blackout.)

END OF PLAY