

NEW EPISODE IN MANSON MURDERS

Caught between the covers

By USA DEGNEN

New book may end Polanski bid to return to U.S.



FUGITIVE film director Roman Polanski wants to make peace with prosecutors and lay a 23-year-old rape charge to rest — but new revelations about him and his murdered wife, Sharon Tate, may destroy his hopes.

The legendary director — who's lived in France since 1979, ducking charges he had sex with a 13-year-old girl — says he'd like to close out the case, even though he could never live in the United States again.

"I would like things to clear up, as you say — rather for my peace of mind than for going to live in the United States," he said recently.

But, as the 66-year-old director contemplates dealing with controversial Los Angeles prosecutor Gil Garcetti, his case could be hurt by new revelations about him in a just-released book about the Manson murders.

In "Sharon Tate and the Manson Murders," author Greg King claims that days before Tate was butchered by the Manson gang in 1969, she learned a lurid secret about Polanski.

The stunning actress discovered her hubby had dived headfirst into a steamy affair with one of her best friends. That best buddy was Michelle Phillips, of "The Mamas and the Papas."

INCREDIBLY, while Phillips felt terrible about her sex rumpo with Polanski, the director of the horror classic "Rosemary's Baby" felt the opposite — that his wife was being a nag for bringing it up.

In the new book, Phillips admits: "It was a stupid



GIL GARCETTI
L.A. prosecutor.

thing to do. We were both drunk, it just happened, and I regretted it."

Polanski took the opposite tack when Tate said she was seriously considering directing him for the film "Rosemary" and to have admitted to a friend: "This pregnancy has made her such an insecure, nagging bitch."

The book also claims Polanski never wanted the child and had started to treat Sharon as though she was excess baggage.

"He was pointedly cruel to her in front of others at times, calling her a dumb hag and criticizing her whenever she expressed an opinion," King writes.

ON AUG. 9, 1969, Tate — who starred in "Valley of the Dolls" — was hanged with a rope and stabbed 16 times by Manson followers in her home on Cleo Drive in the hills

above Los Angeles.

A traumatized Polanski wept before TV cameras and told of his great love for the 26-year-old Tate, who was 8½ months pregnant when she died.

But the author says the Polish-born director was such a dyed-in-the-wool skirt chaser, he was wandering in London the night Tate was murdered.

Sharon had been in London with Roman and returned to L.A. to find her hubby's pal Wyatt Frykowski and his lover, coffee heiress Abigail Folger, hosting parties in her home for what appeared to be drug dealers or members of the porn industry.

In his book, King says Sharon asked the couple's drugged-out friends to leave.

But there would be no time for goodbyes.

Frykowski, Folger and Sharon's former lover, Jay Sebring, would also be killed on that fateful night.

Tex Watson, accompanied by Susan Atkins and Patricia Krenwinkel, cut the phone lines and climbed through the window, hell-bent on carrying out Charles Manson's "helter-skelter" orders. Linda Kasabian kept watch outside.

"I'm the devil," Watson declared. "I'm here to do the devil's business."

Sharon's last moments on earth were spent begging for the life of her full-term, unborn baby boy. The unborn child died just moments after she did.

The next evening, Manson's followers killed wealthy supermarket owners Leo and Rosemary LaBianca.

TODAY, Polanski lives in exile in Paris with his wife, actress Emmanuelle Seigner and their two kids.

His most recent flick, a hokey potboiler called "The Ninth Gate" with Johnny Depp was ravaged by the critics and did a quick death in theaters.

By returning to Hollywood, critics say he could probably reclaim his name, what mattered there as one of the world's greatest living film directors.

Burners have been rampant that he has been working out a deal with Garcetti that would allow him to return to the States without being locked up. But the director denies this. "Nothing has been done," he said. "I didn't do any steps in this direction."

PLOT TWIST: Roman Polanski, pictured with current wife Emmanuelle Seigner, would like to return to the United States without being locked up on a 1977 rape charge. But a new book alleging he had a sexual affair with Michelle Phillips (inset) while he was still married to Sharon Tate may dash his hopes.

Albert Polachner



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



Charles Manson — 66 years-old and still locked up in protective housing at high security Corcoran State Prison in California.

Susan Atkins — Atkins, 52, was convicted of wielding the knife that killed Tate and six others. A born-again Christian, she is jail at the California Institution for Women in Fosters.

Leslie Van Houten — Van Houten, 51, married and divorced at the California Institution for Women in Fosters, and earned a college degree. Sources says she's likely to be released soon.

Patricia Krenwinkel — Krenwinkel, 52, is in jail with

Houten and Atkins. She decided not to show up at her last parole hearing in 1997 and isn't scheduled for another one until 2002.

Charles "Tex" Watson — Watson, 55, renounced Manson and preaches the Gospel at Mule Creek State Prison in Northern California. While in prison, he has married to marry and father four children.

Lynette "Squeaky" Frazier — A loyal Manson follower, Squeaky, 51, was not tried for the Tate/LaBianca murders, but got a life sentence when she pointed a gun at former President Ford in 1975. In 1987, she escaped from jail in Alderson, W. Va. to go see

Here's what happened to the players in the Roman Polanski drama:



Manson. She's now at a more secure facility in Texas.

Linda Kasabian — Kasabian, 51, avoided a jail term by becoming the state's star witness at Manson's trial. She changed her name to Linda Christian, moved to New Hampshire and became a part of the witness protection program. She now lives in Tacoma, Washington.

Sandra Good — Good, 56, remains Manson's most loyal follower. After her release from a West Virginia prison, she moved to Hanford, Calif., to be near Manson but is forbidden to visit him. She still lobbies for his release on the Web.