



Associated Press

Lynette Alice Fromme being handcuffed by security agents in Sacramento, Calif., after Larry M. Buendorf, right, had grabbed a gun that was pointed at President Ford.

Suspect Was Defender Of the Manson 'Family'

By ROBERT D. McFADDEN

Lynette Alice Fromme, the 26-year-old woman charged yesterday with the attempted murder of President Ford, was one of the earliest and most devoted followers of Charles M. Manson, who became a national symbol of senseless violence after a series of ritualistic murders in 1969 by members of his cult.

Miss Fromme was not one of those convicted with Mr. Manson in 1971 for the murders of Sharon Tate, the actress, and

six other persons. But she was one of his most vociferous defenders throughout the seven-month-long trial in Los Angeles, and she has since become the leader of the remnants of the Manson hippie "family."

Law enforcement authorities said yesterday that Miss Fromme had been arrested more than a dozen times on various charges ranging from drug possession and petty theft to robbery and murder. But, they said, she had been convicted only of some minor charges and had spent only a few months in jail.

The murder charge was filed in Stockton, Calif., in 1972 in the death of a 19-year-old woman whose body was found buried under a house where

Miss Fromme had been living. This charge was subsequently reduced, then dismissed for insufficient evidence, the authorities said.

Since February, she and another member of the former communal band, Sandra Good, have been living in Sacramento—where yesterday she confronted the President with a pistol—and have reportedly been seeking help from California State officials to get permission to visit Mr. Manson in prison.

Earlier this year, Mr. Manson, who is serving a life sentence, was transferred from Folsom Prison, near Sacramento, to San Quentin, near San Francisco. Efforts by Miss Fromme and Miss Good to visit him at both prisons have been unsuccessful.

Miss Fromme made news two months ago when she issued a statement saying that she had received letters from Mr. Manson in which he blamed former President Richard M. Nixon for his fate and criticized President Ford for what he called a continuation of Nixon policies.

During Mr. Manson's murder trial, Mr. Nixon, in a casual

Continued on Page 26, Column 6

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

reference to the case during a news conference, said that Mr. Manson was guilty.

Miss Fromme's statement said in part: "If Nixon's reality wearing a new Ford face continues to run the country against the law, our homes will be bloodier than the Tate-La-Bianca houses and My Lai put together."

Leno and Rosemary La-Bianca, a Los Angeles couple, were slain in their home on Aug. 10, 1969, the night after Miss Tate and four of her friends were killed in Miss Tate's Hollywood home by members of the Manson gang.

Mr. Manson and three of his followers — Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel and Leslie Van Houten — all were convicted of the murders in a trial that brought out details of a bizarre sex-and-drugs communal life of the Manson followers, and Mr. Manson's obsessive belief in the imminence of a race war in the United States—a war he called "helter skelter."

The scenario of Mr. Manson's belief concluded with blacks winning the war, then finding themselves incapable of running society and turning to him, a white man, for national leadership. Witnesses, including some former members of his "family," testified that Mr. Manson

planned the Tate-LaBianca murders in the hope that blacks would be blamed and that this would trigger the race war.

While the defense called no witnesses in the trial, Miss Fromme was one of several persons who testified in Mr. Manson's behalf during a preliminary phase.

She testified of her devotion to him, described life in his commune, explained how she had joined the group and insisted that he was innocent. During the trial, she was one of a handful of Manson followers who camped outside the courthouse, haranguing passersby and participants in the trial.

Several months after Mr. Manson and his co-defendants were convicted, the trial judge, Stephen Strothers, sentenced Miss Fromme and three others to 90 days in jail after they pleaded no contest to a charge of conspiring to dissuade a witness from testifying at the trial.

She and the others were said to have spirited the witness, Barbara Hoyt, off to Honolulu and to have fed her a hamburger laced with the hallucinogenic drug LSD to keep her off the witness stand.

The following October, Miss Fromme and four other "family"

members were charged with aiding and abetting the escape of another Manson follower who had been put on trial for robbery in a bizarre plot that allegedly involved an airliner hijacking to win Mr. Manson's release. This charge was later dropped for lack of proof.

In 1972, Miss Fromme and four others were charged with the murder of 19-year-old Lauren Willett, who allegedly was slain because she was going to tell the authorities about the killing of her husband, James, 26. He had allegedly been slain earlier because he was going to tell the authorities about a series of robberies by Manson followers with whom he and his wife had been living.

The charge against Miss Fromme was later reduced to one of being an accessory to murder, and it was dropped for lack of evidence in January, 1973.

Later in 1973, Miss Fromme was arrested in Englewood, Calif., along with some other Manson followers on charges of attempting to steal weapons in an alleged plot to help Mr. Manson break out of prison. The charges against her were dropped, however.

Acquaintances describe Miss Fromme as a red-haired, freckle-faced woman with a pixie-like sense of humor and the appearance of a teen-aged flower child. But Vincent Bugliosi, the prosecutor in the Manson trial who wrote a book about the case called "Helter Skelter," said yesterday that Miss Fromme was no flower child.

"If I've said it once, I've said it a hundred times—she is and has always been potentially a very dangerous person," said Mr. Bugliosi, a candidate for District Attorney in Los Angeles.

Miss Fromme, whose nick-

name "Squeaky" was given to her by Mr. Manson for her tiny piping voice, was born on Oct. 22, 1948. Her father, an aeronautical engineer, had kicked her out of the family's Redondo Beach, Calif., home when she was 17, according to pretrial testimony in the Manson case.

By then, she related, she had already dropped out of El Camino Junior College in Torrance, Calif. There are conflicting accounts of where she

met Mr. Manson in 1967—either in San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury district, or in Ventura, Calif.

Mr. Manson, who had spent more than half his life in jails and reform schools for stealing cars, committing burglaries and various other crimes, was 35 years old and had emerged from prison only a few months before he met Miss Fromme. At the time, the authorities said, he was rounding up the group that was to become his "family."

The group of 20 to 30 young people, most of them teen-aged girls, first settled into communal life at a place called the Spahn Movie Ranch, a one-time silent-movie location a few miles northwest of Burbank, Calif. Later, the group lived at the so-called Barker Ranch, a huddle of abandoned shacks in the Mojave hills on the edge of Death Valley.

It was at this remote ranch that Mr. Manson and 25 of his followers were taken into custody by the state police and Death Valley National Monument rangers in October, 1969, two months after the Tate-La Bianca murders. The arrests were not for murder, however, but rather for the theft a possession of cars stolen in the area.

Most of the young women seized with Mr. Manson were released, and it was not until a month later that the authorities connected him with the murders.

Aside from indications provided by her arrest record, Miss Fromme's whereabouts and activities in recent years are not known. Since moving into an attic apartment in downtown Sacramento last February, Miss Fromme and Miss Good have visited Lieut. Gov. Mervyn Dymally and other state officials, seeking permission to visit Mr. Manson in jail.

In her statement last July, Miss Fromme said: "We're nuns. Wenow and we wear red robes. we're waiting for our Lord and there's only one thing to do before he comes off the cross, and that's clean up the earth."

When seized yesterday, Miss Fromme wore a long red dress and red turban.

Manson Surprised

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Sept. 5 (AP)—Officials at San Quentin said that Mr. Manson appeared surprised when he heard of Miss Fromme's arrest "on the prison grapevine." "Oh My God!" one official quoted him as saying.