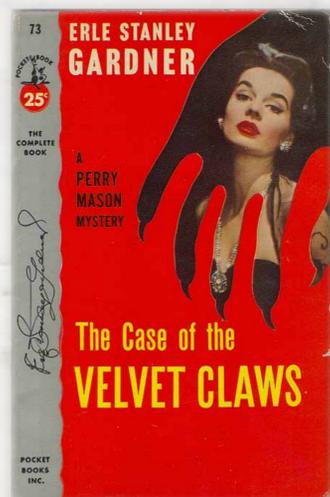


# Crime and Punishment

## Pulp Fiction King

Self-taught lawyer  
**Erle Stanley Gardner**  
(1889-1970)  
practiced law at  
the Ventura County  
Courthouse from  
1921 until 1933.  
The landmark First  
National Bank  
Building, located a  
block below City



*The Case Of The Velvet Claws*,  
set at the historic Pierpont Inn, was  
Perry Mason's debut in 1933.

Hall and now named after  
him, still preserves his third  
floor office. Gardner stood  
out early for taking cases of  
Chinese and Mexican clients  
against the establishment  
and, later in life, of wrongly  
accused or unjustly  
convicted defendants  
through his Court of Last  
Resort. The attorney-turned-  
author wrote countless  
whodunits for low-cost pulp magazines before  
devoting 82 of his 150 novels to the fictional  
detective and defense attorney Perry Mason which  
became the basis of a popular television series.

Hall and now named after  
him, still preserves his third  
floor office. Gardner stood  
out early for taking cases of  
Chinese and Mexican clients  
against the establishment  
and, later in life, of wrongly  
accused or unjustly  
convicted defendants  
through his Court of Last  
Resort. The attorney-turned-  
author wrote countless  
whodunits for low-cost pulp magazines before  
devoting 82 of his 150 novels to the fictional  
detective and defense attorney Perry Mason which  
became the basis of a popular television series.



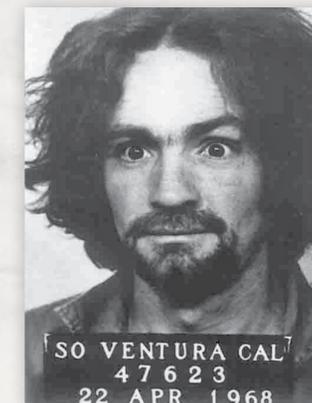
Elizabeth Ann Duncan with her attorney S. Ward Sullivan and her  
Sheriff's Department Matron Mary Forgey.

## Trial of the Century

In March 1959 the notorious **Elizabeth Ann Duncan** and her two co-conspirators, Luis Moya and Augustine Baldonado, were tried and convicted of the murder-for-hire of Duncan's pregnant daughter-in-law (Olga Duncan). The trial garnered worldwide headlines and captivated the nation. Duncan died in the gas chamber in August 1962, the last female executed by the state of California. Moya and Baldonado were executed the same day – making this trio the last triple execution performed as well.

## Helter Skelter

In 1968 convicted serial killer  
**Charles Manson** (b. 1934) and  
a busload of his followers were  
arrested in Deer Creek Canyon  
– off Pacific Coast Highway  
12 miles south of Oxnard – for  
grand theft, driver's license  
infractions and disorderly  
conduct, then booked and held  
overnight in the jail adjoining the courthouse. A year  
later he masterminded the heinous Tate-LaBianca  
murders and this booking photo from the Ventura  
County Sheriff's Office was shown worldwide.



Ventura County Sheriff's Office

## Levels of Law

The Old Ventura Courthouse  
through its separate courtrooms  
for the Superior Court,  
Municipal Court and Justice  
of the Peace handled differing  
levels of civil, family law  
(marriage, divorce, legal separation,  
and child custody matters), inquests, probate, small  
claims, criminal (both felony and misdemeanors)  
and traffic matters as well as confidential categories  
such as juvenile, paternity, adoption and mental  
health. In 1998 California absorbed all superior and  
lower courts into one unified court system.



Scales, Sword and Law Book of Justice  
found at the center of the domes in  
the Council Chambers  
Photo by Donna Granata