

Name _____
Vocabulary for Family Album by Mikal Gilmore

Mormon: An American religion that began in the early 19th century and now is centered in Utah. It believes that Jesus appeared to Native Americans after he was crucified and gave them an additional book of the Bible, the Book of Mormon. Mormons tend to have fairly strict religious and social beliefs.

vendetta: a plan of revenge, a hatred based on past events

atonement: the act of making up for a sin

commute (a sentence): to erase or drop a sentence

medium (profession): someone who helps people communicate with the dead

John Dillinger: famous gangster killed by the F.B.I.

Bonnie and Clyde: famous gangsters during the Depression killed by police.

Leopold and Loeb: famous child murderers who killed to see if they could get away with it; they didn't.

Barbara Graham: woman executed for murder despite claiming innocence

Bruno Hauptmann: man executed for the Lindburgh baby kidnapping though he may not have done it

Sacco and Vanzetti: immigrant anarchists executed for murder in the 1920s

Clarence Darrow: defense lawyer for Leopold and Loeb, Scopes and others.

fathom (verb): understand, comprehend

litany: in this case, a long list

anomalous: different, abnormal, unique

pretensions: attitude of being stuck, thinking one's self better than others

empathy: feeling, especially of pity or sympathy

evocative: bringing forth a feeling

Andrew Wyeth, Edward Hopper: famous American painters

Rilke: German poet

Nietzsche: late 19th century philosopher admired by Hitler (and many others). He came up with the idea of the philosophical ubermensch (superman).

Kant: German philosopher of the Romantic period

vocation: job

sanctioned: allowed, permitted legally

redemption: the act of being saved (especially one's soul)

foment: feed, encourage, stir up

disenfranchised: powerless, without the right to vote

ethos: the underlying sentiment or idea of a culture

bishopric: area over which a bishop presides

disdain: scorn, contempt

encumbered: hindered, burdened

reprieve: pardon

genuflection: the act of bowing down before someone or thing.

perfunctory: quick, without thought

belligerent: warlike, battling

stay (of execution): postponement

epithet: name, representation

pending: about to happen

malice: spite, ill will, hatred

labyrinthine: maze-like, tangled

notoriety: fame

irredeemable: can't be saved or made better, unimproveable

sordid: dirty, shameful

negation: denial of, getting rid of something, erasure

pinion: arm or wing or to hold someone down by the arm

Name _____ Trials III: Family Album by Mikal Gilmore

Use specific examples and complete sentences and note page numbers.

1. What will the point of this story be, and why is the author writing it?

2. Describe the author's mom and her important formative experiences:

3. Describe the author's father and his marriage:

4. What were Frank Gilmore's relationships with his children like? How did this affect them?

5. What other important influences were there on Mikal's brothers?

6. What philosophy of life did Gary try to teach to his young brother Mikal? Why do you think he told this to him?

7. How did Mikal get along with his older brothers? Why? What affect do you think this had on his life?

8. What happened to the brothers when the family's environment improved? Did the older brothers have any choices? Why or why not?

9. How did being part of his family affect Mikal in his day-to-day life?

10. How did Frank Gilmore's death affect the other members of the family? Why?

11. What factors does the author think made him turn out differently than his brothers? Why?

12. What hopeful factors were at work in Gary's life in 1976? Why didn't they end up helping him?

13. What crimes did Gary commit that got him the death penalty? Why did he commit them?

14. What was Gary's attitude toward his sentence? Why? What factors that you've read about in this article might have influenced him to feel this way?

15. Overall, what do you think the author thinks of Gary? What's your evidence?

16. The author is now a senior writer at Rolling Stone, and he has no connection with anyone in his immediate family, most of whom are dead. How does he feel his family has influenced him and continues to influence him? How strong an influence does **he** think family has on people, and what's your evidence?