

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE LAST TO DIE

If there are angels, you can  
be sure many have been added  
to the list.

-- Letter of condolence  
from Peoples Temple  
member

Jim Jones planned the death of Congressman Ryan as carefully as he planned his own. He knew of the ambush on the Congressman and his party in advance. He sent Larry Layton on a suicide mission to destroy Ryan's plane in the air. When he learned there would be two planes, he sent the crew on the trailer to make sure Ryan would be killed.

The Congressman's visit enraged him. After he learned that Ryan's plane was en route to Jonestown on November 17, 1978, Jim announced over the loudspeaker: "Alert, alert. We're being invaded." Tim Carter said it was the first time he heard Jim use the word "alert", and it scared him.

Jim ordered the Jonestown basketball team back to the community. The team had gone to Georgetown to play the Guyana National Team. But the young men refused to return. "We just laughed at the order and said it was dumb," said Stephan Jones.

It didn't seem dumb to Jim. Leo Ryan had brought just about every known enemy of Peoples Temple to Guyana. Tim and Grace Stoen, Mickey Touchette, Nadyne Houston, Sherwin Harris, Steven Katsaris, as well as hostile reporters made up Ryan's entourage. Several who made the trip had sued Peoples Temple. Others had threatened, publicly or privately, to retrieve their relatives by force.

But as people gathered in the pavilion on the afternoon of the 17th, Marceline Jones argued that the Congressman and relatives should be allowed to come into the community. The group was relaxed, she told Jim, ready for Ryan's visit. After an hour, Jim relented.

Ryan met with Mark Lane and Charles Garry that morning, hoping to get Jim's okay. With no assurance of anything, he announced he would go to Jonestown "with or without permission and that he would take along the news contingent and some of the Concerned Relatives," wrote Washington Post reporter Charles Krause. If the Congressman were turned back at the gate, the NBC news team would be there to record the event. The Concerned Relatives talked among themselves, and sent four to accompany Ryan:

Jim Cobb, Beverly Oliver, Carol Boyd, and Anthony Katsaris, Maria's brother.

The relatives were disappointed when the pilot of the Guyana Airways Twin Otter told them he didn't think he could land on the muddy airstrip at Port Kaituma. He flew over Jonestown, and everyone gasped at the size of the project. It looked like a real town, not a jungle camp. The pilot flew over the landing strip a second time and decided he might be able to make it.

A Guyana police corporal greeted the group leaving the plane. He told them he was instructed not to let anyone go to Jonestown without Jim's permission. Lane and Garry met with some Jonestown residents waiting in a truck on the edge of the airstrip. The two lawyers then told Ryan to wait for a couple of hours while they went to the settlement to persuade Jim to let the group in. But five minutes after they left, the truck returned. Ryan, his aide Jackie Speier, Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy Richard Dwyer, and a Guyanese official from the Information Ministry, Neville Annibourne, were told they could go in. The others had to wait.

Ryan arrived in Jonestown, and after taking a brief tour of the place with Marceline, told Jim that journalists and relatives were waiting at Port Kaituma. Although Jim remained reluctant to let them in, Charles Garry convinced him it would be good publicity to grant access.

Once the reporters reached the pavilion, they began to question Jim. Marceline had told Ryan, Dwyer and Annibourne that Jim was sick. The reporters, however, did not know anything was wrong, although Jim struck them as odd.



The road into Jonestown, 1979.

While Jim fulfilled the journalists' expectations, the community surprised them. It didn't look anything like the concentration camp they'd anticipated. Charles Krause later wrote:

I noted immediately that, contrary to what the 'Concerned Relatives' had told us, nobody seemed to be starving. Indeed, everyone seemed quite healthy. I began to walk, alone, up toward the main building at the center of Jonestown, thinking that, considering everything, this little place was rather pleasant. I could see how someone might want to live here.

After dinner, the Jonestown entertainment committee put on a show of song, dance and comedy for the Congressman and his party. Unlike other visitors, however, who enjoyed the performance, Ryan and several reporters thought it was "unnatural" for old people to keep time to the music. Ryan pointed out Tom Kice, Sr., to Krause and observed that Kice's eyes looked glazed. Tim Reiterman, a reporter for The San Francisco Examiner who'd written critical articles about the Temple, added:

As I looked around at the benches of people, old and young, clapping and bouncing to rock and jazz, one thing was fresh in my mind: the stories of former members who recounted that performances and tours were elaborately staged when politicians and other dignitaries visited the Temple in San Francisco.

It didn't seem that these people were clapping and smiling on command, nor that little children would be pulling dogs' tails and ears and nudging each other on command, nor that those smiling, foot-thumping entertainers with beautiful strong voices backed by horns and guitars were under command.

Yet there was a slight undercurrent of control.

Someone announced that the Jonestown basketball team had just won its game in Georgetown by ten points. Jim jumped to his feet and shook hands with Annibourne. "That's a coup," he said through the applause.

Marceline took the microphone at one point during the evening and introduced Congressman Ryan to the group



Older thatch-covered houses in Jonestown, 1979.

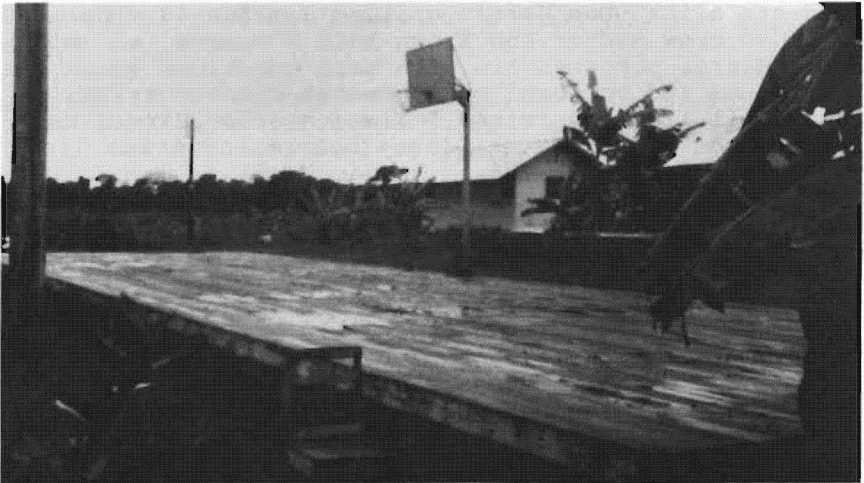
of residents assembled in the pavilion. Ryan explained that he'd come to talk with a few people whose relatives in the U.S. had asked how they were being treated. He'd already spent time that evening interviewing several Temple members. But, he added, Jonestown seemed to be the best thing that had happened to many of the people there. The group gave him a standing ovation.

When the show ended, sometime between 10 and 11 that evening, reporters once again questioned Jim, while Ryan met with people he wanted to see. The newsmen asked Jim about beatings, drugs, guns, and the doubts that Peoples Temple was really a church. Jim answered the hostile queries angrily, defensively. He then sent the reporters back to Port Kaituma, denying their request to spend the night in Jonestown.

It was late, and the reporters didn't know where they could stay. They ended up at the Weekend Bar, where local Guyanese told them horror stories. The stories, combined with a note someone handed NBC news reporter Don Harris before he left Jonestown, aroused the journalists' suspicions.

Signed by two people, the note said, "Please help me get out of Jonestown."

Jim was cheerful the next morning as he talked with Congressman Ryan. But when the reporters returned, and demanded to be let into Jane Pittman Place -- one of the dorms for seniors -- Jim grew angry. He wouldn't let them in. Charles Garry urged him to reconsider, and he finally consented.



The Jonestown basketball court, 1979.

Inside the large, thatched building, one of the first to be constructed at the community, were row after row of bunkbeds. Mark Lane called it a "slave ship". A more correct comparison would be an army barracks. The building, which we saw, was big enough to accommodate sixty people in two rows of fifteen bunks. There was room for sleeping, but little else.

When the group got back to the pavilion after the tour, word went around that several Jonestown residents wanted to leave. Ryan informed Jim that a family of six -- the Bogues -- wanted to go with him. Jim replied, "I feel betrayed."

Certainly Tommy Bogue had reason to leave. He'd tried to escape at least once already. And he'd spent a lot of time on the learning crew. He stole aluminum roofing sheets and had to dig a latrine through one night, according to an article in The San Francisco Chronicle. His medical staff supervisor gave him a poor evaluation, and recommended "that he spend some time in the Nurse's office doing orthopedic treatments, such as hot packs, foot soaks, etc." When Ryan offered him the chance to go, he took it.

Eleven residents had already left Jonestown that day. The group, which included a family of five, said they were going on a picnic. Instead, they walked along the railroad tracks where a train picked them up and took them to Matthews Ridge.

Everyone could feel the tension, visitors and

residents alike. Don Harris grilled Jim for 45 minutes, while NBC crew member Bob Brown held a camera in Jim's face. "Harris peppered him with hard questions about weapons, drugs and corporal punishment," Charles Krause wrote. "All lies, my friend," Jim answered. Harris had interviewed Debbie Layton Blakey before the trip. His questions came directly from her accusation.

The number of people who wanted to leave grew from six to 12 to 14, to as high as 20, according to one report. Ryan's aide made arrangements to have another plane sent to Port Kaituma, since the Twin Otter they'd come on would not hold all the defectors.

Ryan assured Jim that he would not call for a Congressional investigation of Peoples Temple upon his return. This was little consolation for Jim, as he said farewell to the people departing. In fact, according to Charles Garry:

When 14 of his people decided to go out with Ryan, Jones went mad. He thought it was a repudiation of his work. I tried to tell him that 14 out of 1200 was damn good. But Jones was desolate.

As the group of defectors and journalists made their way to the truck that would take them to the airstrip, a woman ran up and began screaming at her husband. He'd taken their children without telling her. Other families were split, too. If Jim were desolate, other community members were frantic. "It was devastating," Tim Carter said at the inquest into Ryan's death.

Families were broken up on the spot. One man went off and left his wife working in the kitchen and didn't even tell her he was going. Children were split up from their parents. It was horrible. In a matter of hours, everything had disintegrated. People were stunned. They didn't know what to do.

Another reason the defections were so devastating was that most of the people leaving had been Temple leaders. The Parks family virtually ran the medical center. The Bogues had been longtime Jonestown residents. Harold Cordell and Vern Gosney had been Temple members for many years, and Cordell had been an officer of the church. No one expected these people to leave.

The journalists took the defections lightly. They were surprised there weren't more. Charles Krause thought

it was a sign of the community's strength that only 14 wanted to leave.

It seemed to me that the Peoples Temple had a legitimate purpose, a noble purpose, and was more or less succeeding. The fact that 16 [sic] people, most of them members of two families, were homesick and leaving with Ryan didn't change that view.

As the group of church members and newsmen waited on the truck for Ryan, they heard a commotion. They saw the Congressman, Mark Lane and Charles Garry walk quickly towards them. Lane, they learned, had saved the Congressman's life by thwarting an attacker with a knife. "I wouldn't be alive if it was not for Mark Lane," Ryan later told reporters.

Temple member Don Sly had grabbed Ryan from behind, shouting that he was going to kill him. Lane wrestled the knife away while Jim looked on. Garry noticed that the attack didn't upset Jim. Instead, it seemed to amuse him. "It was just to scare off Ryan," Garry said.

Several believe someone manipulated, or ordered, Sly to attack Ryan. Guyana's Assistant Police Commissioner Skip Roberts showed us that if you really wanted to kill someone, you wouldn't do it by grabbing the victim around the neck and screaming. Instead, he demonstrated, you simply thrust forward with the knife, and the person is dead.

After the attack, Jim asked Ryan, "Does this change everything?" "It doesn't change everything," Ryan responded, "but it changes things."

The truck carrying Ryan and the others began to pull out of Jonestown at 3:15 on November 18. Larry Layton ran up after Ryan boarded the truck, and said he wanted to leave too. The other defectors questioned him, as did his wife Karen. All Larry said was, "It's just personal."

After the group had gone, Jim got on the loud-speaker. He calmly told people to go to their cottages. The community was shocked and silent. "The thing that was most noticeable was the quiet," Mike Prokes said at the inquest.

Usually Jonestown was a busy, noisy place. You walked around and you heard people doing things. Music playing. People laughing or talking, kids playing. Now there



was nothing. People were walking around whispering to each other. There was a hush everywhere.

A violent and unusual storm subdued the community further. Said Prokes:

I've seen a lot of storms here before, but never one like this one. It came out of nowhere. Congressman Ryan and his party had left a little while before. Suddenly it got very, very dark. And the wind came up like I've never seen it here. It blew so hard that dust and stuff blew up in the pavilion so thick you couldn't see. It rained very hard. And then it was just over.

While the people of Jonestown waited, not knowing what would happen, the tractor-drawn truck took Ryan's group over muddy roads to the airstrip. Journalists talked with the defectors, but Charles Krause noted:

None of the other defectors on the truck and none of the people at the commune had confirmed any of the horror stories we had gotten from the 'Concerned Relatives' back at Georgetown.

The knife attack on the Congressman concerned U.S. Embassy officer Dwyer. He asked Neville Annibourne to go with him to the Port Kaituma Administrator to report the incident. They rode the short distance in the Peoples Temple truck. As they talked with the Administrator, a trailer with about seven Temple members drove by them on its way to the airstrip. The men who'd driven Dwyer and Annibourne to the Administrator's turned their rig around and followed.

By the time the two walked back to the airstrip, two planes had arrived. The Guyana Airways Twin Otter -- the plane that had brought them all to Jonestown -- was there, as well as a small Cessna. They found a few Guyanese policemen frisking defectors for weapons.

According to NBC News Field Producer Robert Flick, a scuffle broke out between the defectors and the men who'd arrived on the truck. We believe he referred to Larry resisting the search. Several diagrams and reports show that initially the attackers were not near their victims.

The men in the truck ordered the Guyanese out of

the way. Then they opened fire. Fifty to 75 blasts from shotguns, rifles and pistols sprayed the area.

Inside the Twin Otter, which he'd boarded to stow his baggage, Annibourne heard a sound "as if the cultists were stoning the plane." People in the plane told him to duck down, and he lay on the floor beside the pilot.

Inside the Cessna, Larry Layton allegedly fired three shots at defectors before his gun jammed and ex-member Dale Parks took it away. Monica Bagby, the only black who'd decided to leave with Ryan, was seriously wounded with two bullets in her back. Another defector, Vern Gosney, was also shot.

Although several people have said Larry fired first, signaling the other gunmen to commence, the pilot of the Cessna claims Larry began after the ambush started. We think Larry did not shoot until he heard the gunfire outside. Jim had sent Larry to destroy the plane when it was airborne, not while it was still on the ground. The decision to send gunmen after the Congressman was spontaneous, added when Jim learned of the second plane. The ambush confused Larry, and he reportedly started shooting.

The gunfire outside stopped, and Annibourne, in the Twin Otter, looked up. He saw Temple members, "both black and white," aiming guns at the group. The shooting began again.

During the second barrage, the attackers took "special pains to put coup de grace shots into Ryan and Brown, the TV cameraman, and [Greg] Robinson, the newspaper photographer," The Washington Post reported November 20. NBC soundman Steve Sung said the men also deliberately finished off Don Harris. "The assassins carefully selected their victims," he said. "They sought to slay Ryan, but not the State Department official standing beside him." They also avoided killing Annibourne, who leaped from the Twin Otter and ran to a shed fifty feet down the runway.

It was Ryan, not the defectors, who enraged Jim. Although the Congressman had praised the project, and hadn't been disturbed when a few people wanted to leave, Jim decided Ryan could not return to the U.S. He tested Ryan with a phony assassination attempt. The Congressman still refused to give him a reason to panic. The only explanation for the attack we can propose is that, in the logic of madness, Jim needed a legitimate excuse for initiating the suicide he longed for.

The press, and the lies it would tell, also angered Jim. It was a cameraman, a photographer and a per-

sistent reporter whom he wanted dead. They were the most obvious enemies. Bob Brown, the NBC cameraman, lay next to Steve Sung. Both were wounded. The gunmen came up and shot Brown dead. They left Sung, perhaps because he was Asian-American. It wasn't what the cameras recorded that bothered Jim, since the gunmen made no attempt to recover them. It was the people, and what they'd done to him, that maddened Jim.

The Concerned Relatives, defectors and other reporters got caught in the gunfire, but none were singled out for death. A couple of Guyanese soldiers stood at one end of the airstrip, watching the ambush. They did nothing, they later explained, because it was a fight between two groups of Americans.

It was over in less than twenty minutes. The Cessna took off, carrying the pilots of the disabled Twin Otter, and Monica Bagby. The pilots reported the attack when they returned to Georgetown, and at six o'clock, Prime Minister Burnham telephoned U.S. Ambassador Burke and asked him to come to his home. By six-fifteen, Jim Schollaert, one of Ryan's aides who'd remained in Georgetown, learned of the shooting from the U.S. Embassy.



The Jonestown tractor at Kaituma airstrip. May 1978.

Richard Dwyer, himself shot in the hip, took charge of the wounded. Some had fled into the brush and would remain there overnight. Dwyer and Annibourne placed four seriously injured people in a Guyana Defense Force tent at the eastern end of the airstrip. Three members of the Concerned Relatives -- Anthony Katsaris, Carol Boyd and Beverly Oliver -- were wounded, as were three members of the press corps -- Steve Sung, Ron Javers, a reporter for The San Francisco Chronicle, and Tim Reiterman, a San Francisco Examiner reporter. Jackie Speier, Ryan's assistant, was badly hurt.

Dead were Congressman Leo Ryan, NBC cameraman Bob Brown, NBC newsman Don Harris, San Francisco Examiner photographer Greg Robinson, and Patricia Parks, a Temple defector.

Dwyer got out a radio message a little later. Guyanese officials assured him that soldiers would be sent

that night. Guyana Defense Force troops were flown to Matthews Ridge and, traveling part way by jeep, part way by foot, reached the Port Kaituma airstrip at dawn.

About 5 P.M. on November 18, around the time the gunmen attacked Ryan's party, Jim calmly ordered everyone to come to the pavilion. Tim Carter waited while his wife went to get diapers for their child. "You don't stop to pick up diapers if you think you're going to die," he observed. Although kitchen workers were usually exempt from community meetings, Lew Jones ordered them to the pavilion. He had a gun in his belt, according to Stanley Clayton, a survivor of the suicides, but it wasn't drawn. On his way to the pavilion, Tim Carter saw a girl named Shirley Smith, dancing. She had flipped out.

Maria Katsaris stopped Tim and Mike Carter by the cage of Mr. Muggs, the chimpanzee. She told them Mike Prokes needed help with a suitcase. They had to go to Georgetown with him. According to the Carters, they went back to their houses to pack and later returned to the pavilion.

Mark Lane and Charles Garry had taken a walk after Ryan left. When they showed up at the pavilion, Jim warned them off. He told them that some people who left with Ryan were "going to do terrible things which will reflect on us." Put under guard in the guest house, Lane and Garry listened to their captors tell them everyone was going to die.

Jim explained to the assembly that someone was going to shoot the pilot on Ryan's plane. They had better prepare to die, he said, because the Guyana Defense Force would arrive in 45 minutes. Any survivors they found would be tortured or castrated. "We better not have any of our children left when it's over," he cautioned them.

Jim had instilled in them a vague respect as well as a fear for the GDF. The group could fight against the fascists, but it couldn't fight against its black brothers. On one occasion Jim asked, "Do you want to fight the soldiers that are just following orders?" If they were truly nonviolent, they could not resist in a violent way.

When the men returned from the airstrip, they whispered to Jim. He entreated people to remain calm and told them not to excite the children. "Jones was clever," Skip Roberts said six months later. "He had parents kill their children first. Who would want to live after that?" he asked rhetorically.

"The first person who went up was a young mother,"

according to Odell Rhodes. Rhodes survived by offering to get a stethoscope for Larry Schacht. When the nurse he accompanied went into the medical center, Rhodes hid. That first volunteer

had a small baby, about one-and-a-half. She administered [the poison] to her own baby, then she took her own. She walked over to a field and sat down. It was hard to believe.

Yet Odell Rhodes came to believe, as the children he'd taught in the Jonestown school died in his arms. Skip Roberts says he always told the media that 270 had been murdered in Jonestown. That was the number of children who died.

Others who resisted the poison were murdered as well. Rhodes said a girl named Julie Reynolds "kept spitting it out and the nurses kept forcing her to take it." Journalists reported seeing syringes with needles bent into the arms of victims. Guyana's chief pathologist, Leslie Mootoo, says he found at least 70 people who had been injected. Clayton said Jim pulled reluctant ones forward. Armed guards and men with crossbows circled the pavilion area.

Clayton fled the suicides by pretending to search for survivors, and then running away. Like Tommy Bogue, he felt little love for Jonestown by the final day. Jim humiliated him publicly, and at great length, at a community meeting. He called Clayton a "class enemy", a "retard", and a drug pusher. Jim berated him for his relationship with a woman in whom Larry Schacht was interested. It's possible Clayton was beaten, because Jim talked about his torn clothes. But the harsh verbal ex-coriation may have been sufficient punishment for Stanley.

One woman is heard questioning suicide on a tape of the final hour. "Is it too late for Russia?" Christine Miller asked.

JONES: It's too late. I can't control these people. They've gone with the guns. And it's too late.

MILLER: Well, I say let's make an airlift to Russia. I don't think nothing is impossible, if you believe it.

JONES: How are we going to do that?...

MILLER: Well, I thought they said if we got in an emergency, they gave you a code to let them know.

JONES: No, they didn't.

Although many, like Christine Miller, thought the Soviet Union was an alternative, and that life would be better there than it had been in the United States, Jim didn't. For him, life was hopeless. Nothing but death would relieve his pain. So he continued talking with Miller:

JONES: To me, death is not a fearful thing. It's living that's cursed. It's not worth living like this.

MILLER: I think that there were too few who left for 1200 people to give their lives for those people that left.

JONES: Do you know how many left?

MILLER: Oh, 20-odd. That's small compared to what's here... I feel like that as long as there's life, there's hope.

JONES: Well, everybody dies. I haven't seen anybody yet didn't die. And I like to choose my own kind of death for a change. I'm tired of being tormented to hell. Tired of it.

MILLER: But I look at all the babies and think they deserve to live.

JONES: But don't they deserve much more? They deserve peace.

MILLER: I think we all have a right to our own destiny as individuals. And I have a right to choose mine, and everyone else has a right to choose theirs.

JONES: The best testimony we can make is to leave this goddamn world.

And the crowd shouted Christine Miller down.

In fact, most people died "more or less willingly," said Rhodes. "Basically a lot of the people were sitting, especially the senior people -- just waiting and watching." Another survivor, 79-year-old Grover Davis, watched the suicides until he decided to hide himself in a ditch. "He [Jim] didn't force nobody as far as my knowing," he observed.

I didn't see him shooting nobody with no needles and I didn't hear nobody say they wasn't willing to take suicide shots... They were willing to do it.

"Many of them had a peaceful look, as if they were sleeping," a reporter for the Guyana Chronicle wrote.

The impression was reinforced by the fact that for the most part they were lying down in family groups, in many cases mothers with children, couples with their arms around each other, and several with bed-sheets pulled over them as in slumber. Most were lying face down.

Time Magazine's New York Bureau Chief Donald Neff described it this way:

Grotesque in their swollenness but looking relaxed as though comforted in their family togetherness. Nearly all of them were on their faces, eerie figures of slumber... There were no marks of violence, no blood.

And a U.S. Army spokesman surveying the scene announced that, "There was no evidence that force was used on the ... victims."

If people had resisted, there should have been evidence of violence. "I figured if I was going to die, I would die with a bullet in the back of my head," Stanley Clayton said. "I was not going to commit suicide." Only two people were shot, however -- Jim Jones and Annie -- and both were apparent suicides.

It's hard to believe that people wanted to die. But for the residents of Jonestown, it was all over. The defections had stunned them. Whole families had left. They learned Ryan was dead, and knew trouble was coming. There might be more separations. Those who had religious convictions believed Jim when he said, "It's just stepping over into another plane... If you knew what was ahead of you, you'd be glad of stepping over tonight."

Haunted by the prospect of torture and suffering Jim described, they spared their children by killing them. Death was an experience they shared together, as they had shared life. We can't begin to comprehend the feeling that prompted a woman to shout, "This is nothing to cry about. This is something we could all rejoice about."

People lined up, waiting patiently to take the poison. Once they drank it, others led them away from the pavilion to make room for more bodies. The poison took between five and twenty minutes to work. Mixed

with painkillers and sedatives, the potion was designed to minimize pain. When the crowd grew panicky, Jim spoke through the microphone. "You must die with dignity," he said. "It was mass confusion," according to Rhodes. "People were standing in groups, saying goodbye to each other, walking around hugging old friends."

Once the deaths began, they couldn't be stopped. No one halted the process by overturning the tub of poison. "Why didn't anyone rush the vat?" Roberts asked us. "Because they wanted to die. The guards weren't even necessary at the end." They were found with their crossbows and guns, beneath other bodies, according to Roberts. The men suspected of killing Ryan and members of his party also died of poison.

Some have said the participants believed it was a suicide drill. They'd practiced taking cups of Kool-aid and heard before that they would all die. Jim had taught them how to die. "How many of you are afraid of death?" he asked them once, "'cause we'll help you." A young person testified to the group that

Life is shit. What Dad says is true,  
life outside this collective is shit... I  
want to die a revolutionary death.

In his October 16 directive, Jim made clear what he expected of suicide.

I have no desire to lay my body down and  
let it rot when I could make an impact  
against the fascists in the USA if nothing  
else. And that's our whole motivation. People  
want to have rest and not live so badly.  
So that's why I'm sure the religionists are  
right -- not in the way they think it, but  
we do survive the grave.

And on November 18, he reassured them that "we're going to meet in another place."

We don't think the people of Jonestown ever thought it was a drill that day. If Christine Miller had thought it was phony, would she have argued with Jim? Stephan Jones immediately felt a disaster was unfolding in Jonestown when they found Sharon Amos and her children dead in Georgetown. "We'd had the suicide drills," he told Penthouse Magazine, "and I knew something was happening." Odell Rhodes added, "It was evident that this was not a drill... People started going into convulsions, foam came from their lips, and many were crying."



Meanwhile, Mark Lane persuaded the guards to free Garry and himself on the assurance that he would tell the story of Jonestown. After asking directions, Lane and Garry bolted into the jungle. As they ran, Lane heard Jim cry, "Mother, mother." He didn't hear Jim's complete statement, however, or he would have understood that Jim was chiding people for upsetting their children.

Mother, mother, please. Don't do this. Lay down your life with your child. Free at last. Keep your emotions down. Children, it will not hurt. If you be quiet... I call on you to quit exciting your children. Stop this nonsense.

The charisma Jim must have had to persuade people they should kill their children is inconceivable. Yet he had such power. People trusted and obeyed him, even unto death. And not just the simple folk.

As people were dying, Tim Carter returned to the pavilion. There, he says, he saw his son dead and his wife dying. He fled to Jim's cabin. Annie was there, watching Kimo and John Victor Stoen. "Where does Jim want the children?" Annie asked Maria Katsaris. We don't think she left the cabin after that, although some theorize that she did. The two children died there. We assume she remained with them the whole time, although Odell Rhodes said she helped distribute the poison.

Maria brought out a suitcase and two handguns. She gave them to Mike Prokes and the Carter brothers, telling them to deliver the bag to the Soviet Embassy in Georgetown. The suitcase, stuffed with a quarter million dollars in cash, was too heavy to lug to Port Kaituma. They buried it at the chicken coop, and reportedly pocketed some of the cash themselves.

Maria chose Tim Carter and Mike Prokes for the errand because they were church leaders. Carter handled customs and shipping, and Prokes coordinated the Temple's public relations. Prokes had also been to the Soviet Embassy before. Mike Carter, who was the radio operator in Jonestown, accompanied his brother and Prokes.

Jonestown transmitted its decision to die before it shut down its radio communication. Someone in Jonestown ordered members of the basketball team to kill the Concerned Relatives staying at the Pegasus Hotel in Georgetown. Sharon Amos and her daughter, Liane Harris, took the call. Sharon apparently instructed the team to go to the Pegasus. At 7:30 P.M., the team met with the Concerned Relatives. Stephan Jones asked Tim Stoen: "Why are you causing all the deaths?"

Then, without saying anything to anyone, Sharon took her birth daughter Liane and her two adopted children, Martin and Christa, into the bathroom. She allegedly asked Charles Beikman to assist her as she cut her children's throats and then her own. Guyana police arrested Beikman and accused him of the murders.

In San Francisco, Sandy Bradshaw waited for Carolyn to talk on the radio. The last message she got before the line went dead was: "Hold on a minute. Carolyn wants to tell you something."

The hardcore loyalists were the last to die in Jonestown. Thirteen people, including Carolyn, Annie, Maria, and Jim McElvane committed suicide in Jim's cabin, a quarter mile from the pavilion.

Before they died, however, they attended to a few last details. They sent Prokes and the Carters on their way, with a note to the Soviet Embassy and letters instructing banks to release Peoples Temple assets to the Embassy. They shot Mr. Muggs twice, although the two slugs did not kill the large chimpanzee immediately. Skip Roberts found him alive two days later. They killed two dogs with another two shots.

Then Jim shot himself, or had someone else do it for him. The New York Times reported that Carolyn "had been assigned by Jones to shoot him if the anticipated suicides were ever carried out." Either way, it must have been the "orgasm of the grave" he'd desired. More than 900 people had died at his bidding.

The people remaining then gathered in Jim's cabin. Someone had brought a thermos of the cyanide. Another, a panful. The children, found in their bunks, were probably sleeping, or put to sleep, before being injected. A few adults drank the poison, while others chose injection. A few elected "double death": drinking and injection. They lay on their bunks, on Jim's bed, or on the floor, and went to sleep.

Except for Annie. Stanley Clayton said he heard a shot, well after the five earlier ones. Annie lay dead next to the door, the first one inside the cabin as you entered. The last one to die.

Guyana's chief pathologist, Dr. Leslie Mootoo originally believed Ann was murdered. He thought the mutilation of the left side of her head was the entrance wound. Dr. Mootoo testified at an inquest in Guyana that he felt someone fired a high-powered rifle at Annie as she looked up to see who had entered the cabin.

An autopsy performed in the U.S. revealed that the entrance wound was located on the right side of Ann's head. It was an injury consistent with the .357 Magnum

lying beside her, and consistent with suicide. The autopsy also showed, however, that she had been injected.

We wanted to believe it was murder. Annie couldn't have been a willing participant, we told ourselves, she didn't know what was going on. We hoped that she resisted, fought, rebelled at the last moment. But it's impossible to believe that, at the end of it all, she did not want to die. "If she'd lived," said Skip Roberts, "she'd have gone crazy after seeing everyone else dead."

Next to the gun lay her notebook. "I am 24 years of age right now and don't expect to live through the end of this book," she wrote. Roberts thought that she began the diary after the group learned of Congressman Ryan's plan to visit. It's more likely, however, that she wrote it that day, November 18 -- perhaps as the suicides were going on at the pavilion -- since she used the past tense to describe Jonestown:

I thought I should at least make some attempt to let the world know what Jim Jones is -- OR WAS -- all about.

It seems that some people and perhaps the majority of people would like to destroy the best thing that ever happened to the 1,200 or so of us who have followed Jim.

I am at a point right now so embittered against the world that I don't know why I am writing this. Someone who finds it will believe I am crazy or believe in the barbed wire that does NOT exist in Jonestown.

It seems that everything good that happens to the world is under constant attack. When I write this, I can expect some mentally fascist person to find it and decide it should be thrown in the trash before anyone gets a chance to hear the truth -- which is what I am now writing about.

Where can I begin -- JONESTOWN -- the most peaceful, loving community that ever existed, JIM JONES -- the one who made this paradise possible -- much to the contrary of the lies stated about Jim Jones being a power-hungry sadistic, mean person who thought he was God -- of all things.

I want you who read this to know that Jim was the most honest, loving, caring concerned person whom I ever met and knew. His love for animals -- each creature, poisonous snakes, tarantulas. None of them ever bit him

because he was such a gentle person. He knew how mean the world was and he took any and every stray animal and took care of each one.

His love for humans was unsurmountable and it was many of those whom he put his love and trust in that left him and spit in his face. Teresa Buford, Debbie Blakey -- they both wanted sex from him which he was too ill to give. Why should he have to give them sex -- and Tim and Grace Stoen -- also include them. I should know.

I have spent these last few months taking care of Jim's health. However, it was difficult to take care of anything for him. He always would do it for himself.

His hatred of racism, sexism, elitism, and mainly classism, is what prompted him to make a new world for the people -- a paradise in the jungle. The children loved it. So [did] everyone else.

There were no ugly, mean policemen wanting to beat our heads in, no more racist tears from whites and others who thought they were better. No one was made fun of for their appearance -- something no one had control over.

Meanness and making fun was not allowed. Maybe this is why all the lies were started. Besides this fact, no one was allowed to live higher than anyone else. The United States allowed criticism. The problem being this and not all the side tracks of black power, woman power, Indian power, gay power.

Jim Jones showed us all this -- that we could live together with our differences, that we are all the same human beings. Luckily, we are more fortunate than the starving babies of Ethiopia, than the starving babies in the United States.

What a beautiful place this was. The children loved the jungle, learned about animals and plants. There were no cars to run over them; no child-molesters to molest them; nobody to hurt them. They were the freest, most intelligent children I have ever known.

Seniors had dignity. They had whatever they wanted -- a plot of land for a garden. Seniors were treated with respect -- something they never had in the United States.

A rare few were sick, and when they were,  
they were given the best medical care.

Although the rest of the diary was written in blue ink, the last line appears in black: "We died because you would not let us live in peace. [Signed] Annie Moore."

"The Central Intelligence Agency relayed the first word to Washington that there had been mass deaths at Jonestown," New York Times reporter Nicholas M. Horrock wrote on December 1, 1978.

In the pre-dawn hours of Sunday, November 19, survivors reached the Guyanese army post at Matthews Ridge, a few miles [sic] from the Jonestown camp with the story of the deaths. A police officer relayed this immediately to his superiors in Georgetown, the capital... A Guyanese police official who acts as an agent for the CIA in turn reported it to agency personnel.

The Defense Department After Action Report confirms that the CIA first informed Defense of the suicides.

Neville Annibourne said he first heard of the suicides on the evening of the 18th, when survivors told police in Port Kaituma about the deaths. Mike Prokes and the Carters could have done so, since they went to the Kaituma docks to meet the Temple boat. The Cudjoe was gone, but the police were there. Skip Roberts said Odell Rhodes was the first to report the suicides to the authorities. Rhodes and Clayton also reached Port Kaituma that evening.

By early Sunday morning, a few government officials in Washington knew of the suicides. Ambassador Burke had already notified the State Department of Congressman Ryan's death at 8:30 Saturday night. At 8:40, the Ambassador learned of Sharon Amos' death.

The Guyana government sent troops to the Northwest District the night of the 18th. Darkness, bad weather and muddy roads slowed the soldiers as they traveled from Matthews Ridge to Port Kaituma.

Mark Lane surfaced after the Guyana Defense Force arrived at the airstrip the next day. He told them he'd heard 80 to 85 bursts of automatic weapon fire. "Lane said he and Garry dived into the bush as terror-stricken sect members fled into the jungle to the accompaniment of heavy gunfire," according to The San Francisco Chron-

icle. Charles Garry told John, however, that he was three feet from Lane and "heard three or four shots."

Although some news stories say Lane and Garry didn't reappear for 26 hours, they must have emerged from the jungle before the Guyanese soldiers went into Jonestown, because Skip Roberts claimed:

Mark Lane created a lot of trouble with his story about the burst of gunfire and automatic weapons... So the GDF went in expecting to be attacked... They took each house like it was a war, and destroyed evidence... I don't blame them, since they expected to be machine-gunned.

While the troops were en route, carefully circling the project before going in, 76-year-old Hyacinth Thrush woke up. She got out of bed and left the dormitory. "Not a living soul was in view," she told reporters.

I struggled along the path to the pavilion and was surprised no one was around. I was looking for the senior citizens center and I managed to pull myself up the stairs. It was then that I saw all my people.

Thrush tried to revive her sister, who'd been injected along with the other seniors in the cabin. Hyacinth had escaped scrutiny by the medical team, because she'd been asleep.

Sunday afternoon, Grover Davis joined her. The two were cautious. Guyanese troops didn't find them until that evening.

The Guyana Defense Force reached Jonestown late Sunday afternoon and counted three to four hundred bodies. The rest of the settlers, they assumed, had scrambled into the bush.

A Guyana Airways Twin Otter and a GDF aircraft arrived in Port Kaituma Sunday morning to pick up those wounded in the attack on Ryan's party. The dead and injured were transferred to a U.S. Air Force C-141 transport in Georgetown, and the most seriously wounded stayed at the Roosevelt Roads Naval Hospital in Puerto Rico. The transport then flew to Andrews Air Force Base near Washington, D.C.

The night of November 19, television network news aired a film of the attack on Ryan that was made by Bob Brown. NBC Field Producer Bob Flick had grabbed Brown's camera at the airstrip and carried it all the way to Puerto Rico.

We base our theory of what happened November 17, 18 and 19, 1978, on many different accounts from many different people. We took the pieces we found most credible, rejected what didn't fit, and guessed at the rest. Some reports -- Mark Lane's, for example -- weren't consistent with evidence found afterwards. Other stories are mysterious, but probably not relevant, and certainly not verified. We can't explain how Hyacinth Thrush saw a nurse Sunday afternoon who gave her a sandwich and ran into the jungle, saying many others escaped as well. We don't know what to make of Stanley Clayton's conviction that he heard a lot of people cheer 45 minutes after the suicides.

We hypothesize without having all the facts, knowing that information may come out later to contradict us. Perhaps some of the wilder theories may prove correct: that it was a neutron bomb that killed everyone; that the CIA marked Leo Ryan for a "hit" because he leaked the story about the agency's involvement in Angola; that Jim Jones worked for the CIA.

Perhaps there was more coercion than the tape of the final hour in Jonestown reveals. Since fewer than a dozen autopsies were performed, done in the U.S. a month after the suicides, we really don't know how people died that day. More people may have been shot. Perhaps most were injected. At this point, no one knows. Or no one is telling.