

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

1.

Date of transcription 12/7/78

VERNON DEAN GOSNEY was interviewed at the United States Naval Hospital, Roosevelt Roads Navy Base, where he was recuperating from severe gunshot wounds he received during the assassination of Congressman LEO RYAN and others near Jonestown, Guyana. He was interviewed in the Intensive Care Unit of the Naval Hospital. (u)

GOSNEY advised that prior to his leaving Guyana, he was there for approximately eight months. He went to Jonestown, Guyana, in March of 1978. He has been affiliated off and on with the People's Temple (PT) since 1972. GOSNEY became interested in the PT through a friend in Seattle, Washington, who told him about the healings and good deeds that the PT did. GOSNEY became a full-time member of the PT in the latter part of 1973 and he has been active in the church since that time. GOSNEY indicated that during this period he held no official capacity within the church. At this point he indicated that he would like to mention a little bit about the structure of the church. (u)

He advised that JIM JONES was the head of the church and his immediate subordinate was his wife, MARCELINE. Immediately under JONES and his wife were several committees, for example the Board of Trustees and the Planning Commission, which made the overall decisions and policies of the entire church. JONES also had several assistant ministers which were within another category. (u)

GOSNEY was not sure of the exact number of members that were within the Planning Commission because some of the members would "defect" or in other words leave the church or the members would swap places with other members, and therefore, changes took place frequently and the number of members of the Planning Commission would vary from time to time. Two members of the Planning Commission whose names he did recall were DEBORAH BLAKEY and CAROL LAYTON. (u)

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GOSNEY at this point clarified two terms. He stated that in fact the word "traitor" was used instead of the term "defector." A traitor was a PT member that left the temple. This was the term that JONES labeled those persons that did in fact leave. GOSNEY said that so many people were afraid to leave the temple for fear of their lives. JONES said that if anyone were to leave the organization, the "traitors" would be killed. (u)

GOSNEY did not have a large amount of information regarding the San Francisco based PT. He advised this because he really did not know much about the workings of the San Francisco Church. He never was involved much in San Francisco to the extent of his involvement in the Jonestown, Guyana camp. GOSNEY did provide the following names of people that he knew to be currently in charge of the San Francisco PT: TOM ADAMS, JEAN BROWN, PHILLIS HOUSTON and JIM RANDOLPH. (u)

To his knowledge, GOSNEY advised that there are a few hundred people still remaining in the San Francisco PT. (u)

GOSNEY advised that he was accompanied to Guyana by his five-year old son MARK and MARK's so-called grandmother, EDITH CORDEL. Mrs. CORDEL is referred to by GOSNEY and MARK as the grandmother because she raised MARK since he was a baby. (u)

GOSNEY stated that the Jonestown Camp of the PT was established in approximately December of 1973. JIM JONES was not permanently living in Jonestown at this time, but he would frequently visit to see how it was being maintained and structured. The purpose for the establishment of the PT in Jonestown was because all PT members were to eventually go and live there. The reason behind the establishment was with the idea that JONES wanted to build the "perfect society." That was JONES' main goal according to GOSNEY. JONES' interpretation of a perfect society was that there would be no hunger, no poor people, no rich people, no one would be looked down upon, there would be little work, and a lot of play, and everyone would be treated equally. In terms of punishment if someone did something wrong, they would be punished by beatings which were inflicted by other members of the PT who volunteered. Anyone JONES chose to inflict the beatings would either use their hands, fist, or rubber hoses. (u)

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GOSNEY said that JONES moved to Guyana permanently in July of 1977, which would be approximately one and one-half years ago. Before that time he made frequent trips. At that time GOSNEY did not know the exact number of members living in Guyana, but when GOSNEY arrived there in March the number was supposedly around one thousand, although he does not believe this to be true. GOSNEY believes this figure to be exaggerated. (u)

GOSNEY indicated that the first time he knew anything about Congressman RYAN's visit to Jonestown, Guyana was the day before the Congressman arrived. At that time JONES told everyone that RYAN and a group of people were to visit the camp and JONES described this group of visitors as fascists. JONES told everyone they were coming down to investigate the Jonestown camp and he ordered everyone not to say anything to any member of RYAN's group unless they were instructed to. JONES made a list of those people who were to do all the talking. JONES, prior to the arrival of the Congressman and the others, briefed those people on the list on what to say and what not to say. This briefing took place prior to the Congressman's arrival. GOSNEY noted at this point that after the Congressman arrived, he (GOSNEY) slipped a note to one of the reporters stating that he wanted to get out of Jonestown. GOSNEY indicated that the note said, "Help us get out of Jonestown." On the bottom of the note was his name and the names of other persons interested in leaving Jonestown. RYAN arrived at Jonestown during the afternoon or early evening of November 17, 1978. (u)

GOSNEY further advised that he wanted to leave Jonestown because it was a dictatorship. There was no freedom, no freedom of choice, your life was planned, and also your death was planned. At 6 AM every morning JONES would get on the public address system and wake everyone up. Over the public address system would be the worldwide news and JONES would tell everyone the news was to show them how bad the rest of the world was, and what a mess the world had found itself. After the news everyone would be tested on what they heard over the public address system regarding the news. Everyone worked each day from 7 AM until 6 PM for six days a week. GOSNEY himself stated that he worked in the fields raising agricultural products. He reiterated at this point that there was absolutely no freedom. JONES even took each members individual passports and would not return the (u)

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passports to them, therefore, they could not leave Guyana. To reflect what a dictatorship JONES had set up, GOSNEY stated that if someone wanted to have a "relationship" with another person, it would have to be taken to the "Relationship Committee" who would decide if the relationship should be carried out. This would usually take approximately three months. (u)

When GOSNEY was getting ready to leave on Saturday, November 18, 1978, with the others, he was briefed by JONES who told him not to speak with any Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) personnel or any members of the news media. Before they all left the camp, JONES apparently had talked to the remaining members of the "traitors" who were leaving that they were all welcome to come back at any time. JONES said that he was not mad at anyone for leaving. (u)

GOSNEY indicated that he had been planning to leave Jonestown two to three weeks prior to Congressman RYAN's visit, but in fact he was afraid to leave. GOSNEY indicated he wanted to leave Jonestown since the first day he arrived there, but knew if he did try to leave he would be stopped by members of the PT. He noted that one day officials from the United States Embassy came to Jonestown and he and his friend MONICA (last name unknown) (LNU) wanted to tell them they wanted to leave, but he and MONICA just did not have the nerves to do it. GOSNEY stated he felt like it was not hard to do, but he knew that if they did something would happen to him and MONICA. He noted that there were literally hundreds of people who wanted to leave, but many knew what would or could happen to them if they did leave. No one ever talked about leaving because if they were overheard they would be punished. Punishment many times was by beatings, however, JONES eventually stopped the beatings because of public criticism. However, one to be punished would be put in a center surrounded by other members of the PT and everyone would ridicule, criticize, and humiliate that person being punished. JONES always stated that he would kill all of the traitors who left even if he had to hire the mafia to do this. (u)

At this point GOSNEY remembered those PT members who rode on the truck from Jonestown to the air strip with Congressman RYAN and the others. Those members were; JOE WILSON, the Head Security man for JONES, BOB and TOM KIZE, and LARRY LAYTON was (u)

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put in the group at the last minute. GOSNEY's opinion was that LAYTON was a plant in the group, as LAYTON wanted to do something significant for the PT. He noted at this point to his knowledge LAYTON has no mental problems. LAYTON is extremely loyal to JIM JONES. (11)

GOSNEY stated that there were many guns in the camp. The guns were kept in STEVE JONES' room. STEVE JONES is the son of JIM JONES. There were rifles and handguns of some sort. He was not sure how many guns the PT had, but heard other people in the camp talking about the guns and he figured there were no more than two cases of rifles with about fifty in each case. GOSNEY believed that the guns which were in Jonestown were brought in piece by piece in luggage and then assembled at the camp. Different people brought in the weapons and some of the weapons may have been brought in by boat; however, he does not have any direct knowledge of this. (12)

The Security Staff of PT had training with the guns. There had also been training in California. JONES' sons were part of the Security Staff. They were the top security men. The following are names furnished by GOSNEY on some of the Security Staff: STEVE JONES, TIM JONES, (white male), TIM JONES (black male), LOU JONES, JIMMY JONES, JR., CALVIN DOUGLAS, JOHNNY COBB JONES, JOHNNY JONES, JR., and DOUG SANDERS. There were approximately thirty to thirty-five members of the Security Staff. (13)

At this point GOSNEY stated that the Security guards did receive training in Guyana and also in California, but he had no direct knowledge of it. GOSNEY described himself as not one of JONES' trusted people. (14)

At this point GOSNEY was asked if he had information regarding TIM CARTER and he indicated that CARTER was JONES' top aid and advisor. CARTER was at the camp at the time Congressman RYAN and his party were there, but GOSNEY did not know why CARTER went to San Francisco prior to the Congressman's arrival in Jonestown. (15)

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He advised that the Congressman and members of the party arrived at the camp on Friday, November 17, 1978. The general feeling at the camp during RYAN's visit was that of excitement because of RYAN's notoriety, but the atmosphere was very tense because if one person approached the Congressman or his party and told them how they truly felt against JONES, everything would be "messed up". GOSNEY recalled that when JONES talked with RYAN he told RYAN anyone could leave at any time. However, GOSNEY reiterated that in fact they could not because JONES had seized everyone's passport. GOSNEY had no direct knowledge of any plan by JONES or his followers to cause any trouble if anyone wanted to leave. However, GOSNEY noted at this point that many people of the temple were very suspicious, specially when JONES appeared to be letting those people who wanted to leave go. What aroused GOSNEY's suspicions was the fact that on the group's way to the air strip on the day that they were all leaving, the truck appeared to be deliberately stalled and then it appeared to be deliberately stuck in the mud. Following that, Congressman RYAN was attacked by someone back at the camp. His suspicions were also aroused by the fact that STANLEY GIEG, the driver of the truck that was transporting everyone from the camp to the air strip, was driving very slowly and when the truck arrived at the front entrance of the camp the security guards made everyone in the back of the truck shift around so as to count everyone and note who was on the truck. One of the security guards used the story that he was looking for his sons. GOSNEY stated that this always happened when visitors came to the camp. The visitors would always have to wait until JONES wanted them to come to the camp and they would be also delayed after they came and wanted to leave the camp. It was very easy to delay visitors because there was only one way in and one way out. (u)

GOSNEY, who was on the truck and planning to leave with RYAN, knew that the group was definitely being stalled. Also, when the group left for the air strip the day of the shooting an assembly was called by JONES at the temple. This assembly, as in the past, was called so a decision could be made as to what could be done about the traitors and RYAN's group. GOSNEY stated it always happened this way. If someone was to leave, there was always an assembly called and a decision would

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be made what to do with that person. Usually, if the person left, a group of JONES' security men would search for that particular person until he was found and bring him back to the camp. When they were returned to the camp, they would be severely punished. (u)

GOSNEY as he was leaving knew that an assembly was being called because everyone was gathering at the pavillion. (u)

As they were leaving the Jonestown camp that Saturday afternoon, November 18, GOSNEY recalled the following persons being on the truck en route to the air strip: VERNON DEAN GOSNEY, MONICA BAGBY, TOMMY BOGUE, JIMMY BOGUE, EDITH BOGUE, JUANITA BOGUE, TIMMY BOGUE, HAROLD BOGUE, CHRIS O'NEIL, and LARRY LAYTON. Everyone knew LARRY LAYTON was a plant as LAYTON was stuck on the truck at the very last minute. GOSNEY said, "There was no possible way Layton would be defecting as he was extremely loyal to Jones." Also on the truck were: EDITH PARKS, PATTY PARKS, DAYLE PARKS, TERRY PARKS, BRENDA PARKS. (u)

At this point GOSNEY was asked why his son was not accompanying him out of the camp, and GOSNEY stated his son MARK was staying with EDITH CORDEL back at the camp. He was afraid to bring MARK out with him as EDITH CORDEL was a top person in the PT and would have had VERNON GOSNEY killed immediately. GOSNEY stated he planned on getting his son out later. He noted that EDITH CORDEL was the oldest member of the PT. If his son MARK was to leave with him, it would have broken EDITH' heart and no one wanted to see her hurt. She is the so-called grandmother of MARK GOSNEY because she raised the child since he was a baby. EDITH CORDEL is 76 years old according to GOSNEY. (u)

That Saturday, November 18, 1978, they left the Jonestown camp at approximately 5:30 PM according to GOSNEY. However, GOSNEY stated that he is not sure and believes he could be way off on the time. (u)

Before everyone got on the truck at the camp for the trip to the air strip, JONES talked to all of them. JONES told them that America was what they thought it was and that they (u)

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should not speak to anyone from the FBI or news media. During the talk with JONES, GOSNEY felt that JONES was planning to do something to stop them. His feelings were tensed when he recalled JOE WILSON getting on the truck. JOE WILSON, according to GOSNEY, is JONES' top security guard. GOSNEY knew something was wrong and that something was going to happen since WILSON was the Acting Head of Security at that time and he got on the truck to accompany everyone to the air strip. GOSNEY described WILSON as a negro male, dark complexion, 25 years old, six feet, 170 pounds, short black afro, and very muscular. GOSNEY did not notice any weapon on WILSON at that time. He also suspected along with WILSON that LARRY LAYTON was up to something (u)

As they departed the Jonestown camp, the truck driver was STANLEY GIEG. GIEG is described as a white male, about 18 years old, 5'8" tall, 160 pounds, blond hair, very muscular and very hairy. (u)

When GOSNEY and the rest of the group along with RYAN and the others arrived at the air strip, it was approximately 5:30 PM, as best as he could recall. They unloaded their belongings from the truck and put them in the aluminum shed located near the air strip. The airplanes were not there at the time of their arrival on the truck. After everyone got off of the truck, WILSON and GIEG departed for a short while. (u)

By this time the aircraft had arrived and Congressman RYAN's assistant, JACKIE SPEIR, was making a list of people who were to go on either the large or small airplane. She obtained the list but LAYTON insisted that he wanted to go on the small airplane. GOSNEY thought that LAYTON wanted to go on the plane because he felt like WILSON's job was to shoot up the big one. At this point GOSNEY recalled that on the trip to the air strip JOE WILSON asked the departing members of the PT why they wanted to leave. GOSNEY told WILSON that the people did not have any freedom or free will to decide if they wanted to stay or go. WILSON told GOSNEY that the people could have left at a better time or done it in another way. He said the group of PT members that were leaving would make the PT look bad. (u)

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Several people were put on the small plane, including GOSNEY and his friend MONICA, who were the first to get on. The engines started, at which time GOSNEY noticed the tractor and truck return to the area of the two airplanes. GOSNEY at this point believed that JOE WILSON initially left to go back to get the guns. He stated that WILSON and the others were gone approximately thirty minutes. At this time during the interview VERNON GOSNEY advised that he was extremely tired and that he would like to rest and continue the interview on Tuesday, November 28, 1978. (u)

The interview resumed on Tuesday, November 28, 1978, and reflected the following information: (u)

GOSNEY indicated that initially there were three people besides himself that were to get on the small plane for its return to Georgetown, Guyana. The people who initially got on the small plane besides himself were his friend MONICA, [redacted]. There was a conflict at this time as to whether or not LARRY LAYTON should be getting into the small plane, but since he insisted he did board the aircraft. Once he (GOSNEY) and the others were on the small plane, then he noticed the larger plane arrive. By this time the tractor and truck came back to the air strip and passed by the small plane and went directly to the vicinity of the large plane, circling it once. On the tractor GOSNEY noticed JOE WILSON, who was holding a rifle. WILSON began shooting and "kept shooting at the people, the airplane, the tires of the airplane, and everthing." At that point LARRY LAYTON shot GOSNEY twice. LAYTON was sitting in the smaller aircraft directly beside GOSNEY and to GOSNEY's left. GOSNEY stated that he was shot with some type of small handgun and immediately following his being shot he (GOSNEY) and [redacted] struggled with LAYTON and took the gun away from LAYTON. The pilot told everyone to immediately get out of the airplane, but they could not get the doors of the plane open so they crawled out the front of the aircraft. (u)

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At this point GOSNEY stated that he recalled that there were approximately ten individuals on the tractor. Some of those on the tractor are as follows: (u)

1. STANLEY GIEG, who was doing some of the shooting and who has been previously identified. (u)

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2. WESLEY BRYDENBACK (phonetic), who GOSNEY described as a white male, 20 years of age, 6'1" tall, 150 to 160 pounds, dirty blonde hair which was long and curly and was not wearing a shirt. GOSNEY could not recall seeing BRYDENBACK with a weapon. (u)
3. TOM KICE, who GOSNEY described as a white male, approximately 45 years old, 6'2" tall, 170 pounds, brown hair with gray, and very slender. Both TOM KICE and his brother BOB KICE were also seen by GOSNEY as being some of the shooters. (u)

At this point GOSNEY advised that only certain people within the camp were authorized to have guns. Those authorized were JOE WILSON, BOB KICE and his brother TOM KICE, STANLEY GIEG, and WESLEY BRYDENBACK (phonetic). He noted that the above individuals who were doing the shooting stayed on the tractor while the shooting was going on. At least he saw them stay on the tractor and there might have been others who got off of it. (u)

After GOSNEY got out of the small plane he ran into the bushes and stayed there until a Guyanese person found him and took him into a tent, where he saw [redacted] and [redacted] both of whom had been wounded. (u)

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At this point in the interview, began a series of questions and answers which are as follows: (u)

Question: Were you aware of an assassination list?

Answer: "I am sure there was one, but I never saw it."

Question: Who was on the list and where is the list?

Answer: "I don't know"

Question: Are you familiar with the "angels"?

Answer: "Well, sort of. There are approximately eighty angels. The angels are there because if anything messes up, meaning harm to Jones or the temple, the angels are to kill all people who have hindered the working of the temple or who have caused any problem or written anything such as newspaper stories."

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Question: Were there "angels" in the camp?

Answer: "I'm sure there were."

Question: In San Francisco?

Answer: "Yes."

Question: Were you ever beaten up?

Answer: "Yes, before I left to come back to the States"

Question: Why?

Answer: "I did not obey the rules."

Question: Who beat you up?

Answer: "About twenty people at once."

Question: Where were you beaten up?

Answer: "At times in the temple in San Francisco in the middle of the night."

Question: Who enforces order in San Francisco?

Answer: "There are no heavies there."

Question: Can you speculate who the "angels" are?

Answer: "No."

Question: In the camp

Answer: "Joe Wilson and some of the other guys previously mentioned, I'm sure they are angels. They are going to the United States and they are going to do more. They have a plan when they get there. They will eliminate a lot of people who are traitors. This was always big talk all of the time. If someone wants to be a hero they request to go back to the United States and kill someone."

Question: Are TIM CARTER, MICHAEL PROKES, and MICHAEL CARTER, "angels"?

Answer: "Yes."

Question: Do you know anything regarding any bank accounts?

Answer: "JONES said that he had four million dollars in the Guyana banks, that he had a surplus of gold stacked away in some place, a very large surplus. He had money in the United States over one million dollars. He could have money in other places too."

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Question: Who handled the money?

Answer: "MARIA KATSARIS handled the money. Also TISH LAROY (phonetic).

Question: Do you know anything regarding the storage of weapons?

Answer: "The only place where I know they kept the weapons was in STEVE JONES' room. Oh, the other members of the angels are DON BECK and KLINGMAN. I do not know KLINGMAN's first name. DON BECK is described as a white male, thirty to thirty-five years of age, 5'10" to 5'11", short and stocky, 180 to 190 pounds, short blonde hair and from Ukiah, California, where he is a school teacher. KLINGMAN is described as a white male, thirty-five years of age, 5'11" tall, heavy set, 200 pounds, blonde hair, curly and of medium length, and he is from the San Francisco area. These are the two people I am concerned with most because when in Jonestown there were always attacks going on. When the concerned relatives group came, JONES told everyone that the concerned relatives would kill them (PT members) and drink their blood."

Question: While in Guyana, the Congressman's party met a group of boys who stated they were playing basketball. They were MICHAEL TOUCHETTE, COBB INGRAM, and others. Were they actually playing basketball?

Answer: "Yes, but after they went back to Jonestown and found the Congressman was in Guyana, they were sent back to the hotel to scare them away. Also, any guns that came into the camp had to pass through 41 Lamaha. (GOSNEY put this information in about the guns at this point because he happened to think of it and it should be noted that 41 Lamaha was the address of the PT in Georgetown, Guyana).

Question: Was there an assembly before the group came to Jonestown?

Answer: "Yes, the night the reporters came in. Everyone was against Jones. The People's Temple members would have practice alerts where everyone would pick up machetes and wouldn't let anyone up to the temple. This time the alert was held around noon on Friday. They had alerts quite often. There were 85 alerts since the time I came in March. Well, 85 since September and when people tried coming in before. They would guard the entranceway to the temple."

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At this point GOSNEY reflected the following information about JOE MAZOR:

JOE MAZOR, according to GOSNEY, was a private investigator from the San Francisco area. He actually was a double agent in the sense that he was hired by JONES to spy on the concerned relatives group. In contacts with the concerned relatives, MAZOR would tell them that he was actually there to help the concerned relatives get their family members out of Jonestown, when in fact he was actually working for JONES in an attempt to get information about the concerned relatives group. He was being paid by PT to tell everything he knew about the concerned relatives group. At one time in Jonestown, he talked to the assembly and told everyone that he did not know if they were guilty or what they were doing, but said that the concerned relatives group had bazookas to blow everything up. This was a fictitious story according to GOSNEY. Also, at one time when MARK LANE came to Jonestown he told everyone during an assembly that there was a plot to destroy the Jonestown camp. MARK LANE told everyone that there was a planned conspiracy against Jonestown and that the group coming from the United States were members of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Also at this point GOSNEY mentioned that JONES despised Senator JOHN STENNIS, as he had told this many times to the assembly and GOSNEY stated that "I would not be surprised if they killed Senator Stennis."

At this point the interview reverted back to the question and answer-type interview.

Question: Did MARIA KATSARIS know there was going to be a shooting?

Answer: "I think so."

Question: When was the decision made (referring to the shooting)?

Answer: "Obviously, everything was set up. Layton had a gun."

Question: Was there any talk in the assembly at the camp regarding the killings:

Answer: "No."

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Question: Was there talk among the people of what was to happen?

Answer: "No, more or less considered, it was one of those things."

Question: Was JIM JONES crazy?

Answer: "Yes"

Question: Who was keeping him in line (referring to JONES)

Answer: "Actually, he was so very ill for a long time. He would hardly ever come out of his house. He had a public address system set up from his house telling the people what to do. He would talk all day long. He sounded drugged. He was not responsive to anyone. CAROLYNE and MARIA would use as much influence on JONES as possible.

Question: Who would conduct rallies?

Answer: "He would from his house, or Johnny Jones or Marceline Jones."

Question: How late would you stay up?

Answer: "Until two or five in the morning, but then we got two hours or more of sleep."

Question: Who was responsible for the guns?

Answer: "Steve Jones is responsible for the guns. He is crazy. He is a maniac. Very, very violent. He would beat people up in the camp. He would make an ass out of people. He was an enforcer. Lee Ingram is the head guard and an angel. Claire Janaro she was high up. She was one of the heads. Janaro's husband was also high up. His name is Richard. Helen Swinney and Cleve Swinney are angels. Debbie Touchette spent most of her time in Georgetown, but when Deborah Blakey left, she moved back to Jonestown. She knows of some of the money. Paula Adams spent most of her time in Jonestown. She had a thing going on with an Ambassador.

Tim Clancy was an angel and is described as a white male, six feet tall, 25 years of age, 155 to 160 pounds, brown scraggly hair, from the San Francisco temple."

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Question: Who are you scare of?

Answer: "Joe Wilson and Tom Adams if he has a gun, Sandy Bradshaw, Gene Brown, and June Crim"(phonetic):

Question: Are you afraid of anyone else at the temple?

Answer: "Leona Collier. Leona Collier is a black female, 45 to 50 years old, approximately 5'6" tall, and heavy set, with black hair and brown eyes. (u)

Question: Did you know they were being monitored through the radio?

Answer: "Yes."

Question: What did they do?

Answer: "They told use the lines between the United States and People's Temple were cut off."

Question: Did a lot of people want to get out?

Answer: "Yes, hundreds."

The following is a description of VERNON GOSNEY:

Race	Caucasian
Sex	Male
Date of Birth	March 19, 1953
Place of Birth	Albany, California
Height	Six feet tall
Weight	145 pounds
Hair	Brown
Eyes	Brown
Tattoo	Flower on upper right arm

(u)