

Section 5

5. Letters from prosecution witnesses
 - 5.1. Thom Bogue
 - 5.2. Harold Cordell
 - 5.3. Michael J. Carter

These three people, who were witnesses for the prosecution, also pleaded for leniency for Larry. They recount personal knowledge and experience regarding Larry's character and the pressure that all the Jonestown residents, and especially Larry, lived through.

Chief Judge Peckham also referred to letters from the two people that Larry shot indicating that they did not hold him responsible for what happened. (We did not have copies of these letters to include.)

RECEIVED

JAN 12 1987

U. S. PROBATION OFFICE
NORTHERN DIST. CALIF.
SAN FRANCISCO

To the honorable Judge Peckham

Dear Sir, my name is Thomas J. Bogue I was a witness at the U.S -VS- Lawrence Layton trial and a survivor of Jones Town.

At the time of my defecting from Jones Town I was seriously injured on my left leg nearly to the point of losing it.

I have known Larry since my joining the Peoples Temple as a child in Redwood Valley Calif.

At the time of the trial I wish I could have conveyed to the jury the emotions, turmoil and loyalty people were expected to live with and put through a living hell if they didn't.

Do to my knowledge and experience, I hope my statement is taken into sincere consideration.

First I would like to explain how something of this magnitude could happen, this could be quit lengthy but please bear with me.

Let's say, somebody walked up to you today and offered you a drink and at the same time told you that by drinking it you would die your response would probably be to throw the drink away and tell the person to get the hell away from you, the reason behind the response is because of your instinct to survive, but take away that instinct and all the suddenly the situation changes and you no longer care if you live or die, because you no longer have the will to survive.

Obviously this attitude doesn't occur overnight and let me explain how Jim Jones destroyed peoples will and at the same time converted people into the

At first Jim Jones was an activist for people and animal rights, a provider for the unfortunate and spoke directly from the bible, this brought in the humanist, the unfortunate, the God fearing, the activist and the good hearted, this phase occurred during the 1960's.

Slowly over the years this changed. Jim Jones started speaking less from the Bible and more against the Bible, pointing out discrepancies within it. But at the same time had people doing more for the community - Bought bullet proof vests for the police dept, opening care homes for foster children and senior citizens, providing a local laundromat, Providing a drug rehab program etc etc... So people saw the Peoples Temple as being good and Jim Jones as being incredible because he organized all this.

Then came the healings and the conversion process for people to become more radical.

In the early 1970's the time for discipline had come. Discipline started out being mild, five to ten swats on the butt with a belt in front of the congregation, at all discipline must done publicly, then came the more bizarre punishments going for a swim in an ice cold swimming pool with only your underwear on men and women alike, spanking with the Bible, picking crumbs from the carpet through out the night. Then the cruel punishment some Boxing matches between the accused and a much bigger opponant, paddlings with a four foot long paddle up to a hundred swats and electricution to even five year olds.

Now it may be strange how people would

somebody would say something, not only was the punishment made worse for the accused but the person speaking out was also punished and those who were so fed up they left the organization some times end up terribly harassed or dead, such was the case with Bob Houston and a person known as Teddy Bear. Of course Jim Jones proficed their ending.

This was all done to condition followers minds to believe Jim Jones was god and could only give of himself, everybody should worship him and be willing and be able to accept any pain given them for the sake of him and any cause he felt was right.

All this mess was designed to break the spirit of individuals, and that is the point, by this time people had been brain washed into believing this was all for the good, and remember this did not occur overnight, it took many years to get to this point a very slow process of meeting four times a week.

This was all being done for Jones to achieve total controll over his followers and Jones Town would be his final accomplishment and a place to maintain his controll.

After Jim Jones arrived in Jones Town approximately one year after myself, the meetings started there and after a short period of time became a nightly thing lasting until the early hours of the morning, more while we had to get up 6am in the morning Jones would sleep in and prepare for the next meeting. I won't get into the conditions that occurred in Jones Town.

When people would arrive at Jonestown their personal belongings were stripped from them, many couples were broken up and placed into separate housing, with up to seventeen people being housed in a single room unit. Basically we were stripped of our dignity, pride, individualism, endurance and finally our will to survive. Very few people were able to maintain any spirit to resist, this includes two of my sisters and three brother inlaws for they remained in Jonestown.

The conditions at Jonestown had gotten so desolate and the threats that Jones kept making had become so much of a mental torture you began to wish just one of life threatening situations would come true just so it would all end and there would be no more pain mentally or physically.

As in what I am trying to achieve is for you and others to understand, Larry is not a conspirator or murderer, he is a victim just like the rest of us at that point and time he had his own will very systematically broken down to where it no longer existed, his actions were not of his own choice.

I wish I could express in words for you to understand he had no choice. We were like zombies, no longer caring if we lived or died just so long as it would end.

To be quit honest with you sir, if I was in his shoes (Thank and I wasn't) I don't know that I would have done the same.

Sir in conclusion I wish if at all possible
drop the charges, for we have all suffered through
this ordeal especially Larry. And if you
cant please be as lenient as humanly possible.

Thank you sir!

Respectively,

Thom Bogus

11/9/87

January 10, 1986

The Honorable Robert F. Peckham
Chief U.S. District Court Judge
450 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco CA, 94102

Dear Judge Peckham,

As a victim of Jonestown, a witness for the prosecution in the Layton trial and an acquaintance of Larry Layton during his association with Peoples Temple I would appreciate it if you would consider my thoughts regarding his sentencing.

At the time of the Jonestown massacre and for a year or so after I was very angry and bitter that my 5 children, relatives and hundreds of good friends were senselessly and brutally put to death. I was angry to think that Larry Layton might possibly have been remotely connected to aiding or abetting the accomplishment of the massacre. But as time has helped to remove my pain somewhat I have been able to think more rationally and look at the facts as they might have been rather than as I at first chose to think them to be.

Larry Layton, for the ten + years I knew him was not a person who would suggest or condone physical violence as a solution to any instance or conflict.

Jim Jones did his best to bring out the more base nature of aggression and violence in people. He insisted that it was and would be necessary in order to bring about change in people. Larry Layton was one of the people who would not succumb to that pressure nor was he tricked into acting violently to others when that came to be a common occurrence for some.

With due respect for the prosecution and the final verdict I am still convinced that Larry Layton was not a co-conspirator in the murder of Congressman Ryan or anyone else. At least two persons left Jonestown alive who were without doubt party to the conspiracy but were not charged. They were Mike Prokes and Tim Carter. It doesn't seem right to make Layton pay for crimes he would not have willingly participated in. I still remember that Layton made a point of not being assigned to the large plane on which Ryan would have been.

There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the massacre of Jonestown and murder of the Congressman would have taken place no matter what Layton had done at the airstrip. No one had the power to stop Jones. The tractor and trailer with

The gunman was dispatched by Jones to do the dirty work.

For his presence and actions at the airstrip Hayton spent some horrible time in the prison in Guyana. I feel this man has suffered enough. The trials and inability to plan for a future until this matter was resolved have been punishment enough for his limited role.

It would not impress me that justice was done to know that Hayton was sentenced to prison.

It should not stop another Jones-type from conspiring to kill another Congressman or any other person thought to be a threat to their paranoid schemes. I plead, your honor, for leniency for Larry Hayton so that he can begin to mend his life which was like mine torn to shreds by Jim Jones.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Harold Cordeel

P.O. Box 246

Windsor, CA, 95482

January 2, 1987

Honorable Robert F. Peckham
Federal Bldg. - 19th Flr.
450 Golden Gate Ave.
San Francisco, Calif. 94102


Dear Judge Peckham,

I am a survivor from Jonestown. I testified for the prosecution in the trial of Larry Layton. I suffered a huge personal loss from the tragic events that took place on November 18, 1978. My wife and child, my sister and eight other relatives of mine were killed. I can empathize with those who knew and loved congressman Ryan. But I do not feel that it is right that Larry Layton has become the scapegoat for the events that took place.

I was a member of the Peoples Temple for six years. I was a teenager at that time. I looked up to the people in leadership in the group. Although I knew Larry, he wasn't in a position of leadership in the organization. As I testified, Larry was just another person an not part of any leadership or managing group. It is inconceivable to me that he conspired with anyone to do anything against the congressman or the consul. He was not one to be taken into confidence by those people who were the leaders and manipulators. He was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. He has already suffered tremendously and is not a person who deserves to have any more of his life taken away from him simply because he was deceived by a man who enjoyed manipulating and using people.

I'm not able to go into all of the psychological manipulations that were used on those of us in the Peoples Temple when we were in Guyana. But all of us were influenced by these manipulations. Our concept of reality was distorted. If I were to have another child, I would trust Larry enough to care for my child. He is a good human being. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,


Michael J. Carter

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