

MURPHY MICHAEL S  
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SUBJECT: TRANSCRIPT OF THE NOON PRESS BRIEFING ON THE  
GUYANA SITUATION, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 1978

Q: HOODING, ON THE GUYANA COSTS SITUATION, AS OF LAST  
FRIDAY, I THINK WE WERE TOLD IT WAS ABOUT TWO TO THREE  
MILLION DOLLARS, NOT COUNTING MILITARY SALARIES. HAVE  
YOU GOT ANY UPDATED FIGURE?

A: NO, I DON'T. I THINK THE DECISION IS GOING TO BE AT  
THIS POINT, FOR SOME OF THE REASONS THAT THE DEPUTY ASSIST-  
ANT SECRETARY MENTIONED, WHICH WAS METHODOLOGICAL, BUT ALSO  
BECAUSE IT IS A CUMULATIVE BUSINESS. WE'RE NOT GOING TO  
HAVE ANY PRELIMINARY FIGURES. WE WILL TRY TO GIVE YOU THE  
FINAL FIGURE WHEN THE FIGURE IS AVAILABLE, THAT IS ACCUMU-  
LATED.

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Q: DO YOU KNOW WHEN THE SURVIVORS ARE COMING BACK?

A: NO, I DON'T.

Q: DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO JONES' BODY AT  
DOVER?

A: I DON'T THINK I DO. LET ME SAY SOMETHING GEN-  
ERALLY ON THE QUESTION OF DISPOSITION OF REMAINS. HOWEVER,  
WHICH MAY GO TO THAT AND OTHER QUESTIONS. WE ARE NOT  
GOING TO BE GIVING OUT INFORMATION, OUT OF THIS BUILDING,  
ON THAT QUESTION. IF RELATIVES OR OTHER MEMBERS WHO ARE  
RESPONSIBLE WISE TO DO SO, THEY CAN AND OBVIOUSLY WILL;  
BUT WE WILL NOT BE IN THAT POSITION.

Q: WHAT ABOUT THE UNIDENTIFIED OR UNCLAIMED ONES THAT  
HAVE NO RELATIVES OR OTHERS?

A: THE QUESTION OF WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN WITH THE UN-  
IDENTIFIED, THE DISPOSITION, IS ONE WHICH IS BEING CON-  
SIDERED. OBVIOUSLY WE ARE GOING TO TRY TO TREAT THEM WITH  
DIGNITY, AND THE QUESTION OF THEIR DISPOSITION IN THE  
DOVER AREA WILL BE DECIDED IN CONSULTATION, OBVIOUSLY, WITH  
FOLK INTENT AREA AS WELL.

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NOW, ON THE UNCLAIMED BUT IDENTIFIED?

Q: YES.

A: I THINK, AGAIN, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, THE PROBABLE RESULT WILL BE THAT THEY WILL BE INTERRED, DISPOSED OF, IN THE DOVER AREA ALSO.

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Q: AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE? BUSENELL WAS ASKED ABOUT THIS THE OTHER DAY; AND AS I UNDERSTOOD HE SAID AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE, THEY WOULD BURY THE UNIDENTIFIED IN THE DOVER AREA.

A: I DON'T SEE ANY REASON TO CHANGE THAT ANSWER.

Q: WHEN I ASKED YOU HOW THE SURVIVORS WERE COMING BACK, YOU SAY YOU DON'T KNOW. DO YOU KNOW WHEN THEY WILL BE COMING BACK?

A: LET ME TRY TO FOCUS THIS ONE: ON THE INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY CHOOSE TO GO HOME THEIR OWN WAY, NO, THE ANSWER IS I DON'T KNOW. ON THE QUESTION THAT I BELIEVE MARVIN ASKED ME YESTERDAY — THAT IS, A PLANLOAD POSSIBILITY COMING TO CHARLESTON — I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO ADD TO THAT. THAT IS TO SAY, THERE ISN'T ANY PLANE TODAY; AT THIS POINT, PROBABLY NOT TOMORROW; AND TO REPEAT, WE DO PLAN TO BRING SURVIVORS TO CHARLESTON IN A GROUP, IF A GROUP SO WISHES, ASSUMING THAT SUCH A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER HAVE THE PERMISSION OF THE GUYANESE GOVERNMENT TO LEAVE AND WISH TO GO TO THE UNITED STATES BY THAT MEANS. BUT AS OF NOW, THERE ISN'T A PLANNED TRIP TO CHARLESTON.

Q: HOODING, HOW MANY WOULD HAVE TO EXPRESS INTEREST TO FLY ON A U.S. AIR FORCE PLANE?

A: I DON'T KNOW.

Q: AND WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO THEM WHEN THEY GET TO CHARLESTON? WILL THEY BE QUESTIONED BY THE FBI OR —?

A: I DON'T KNOW. I THINK ALL OF THOSE QUESTIONS ALSO BEAR, FOR INSTANCE, ON WHAT'S HAPPENING IN GUYANA; THAT IS, ANSWERS TO THEM WOULD BEAR ON WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM.

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IN GUYANA, AND IT WOULD ALSO HAVE TO DO WITH WHO THEY ARE. I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER, AND I'M NOT SURE IT'S THAT CLEAR, BECAUSE AT LEAST ONE SURVIVOR, I KNOW, HAS COME BACK AND PROCEEDED ON.

Q: JUST ONE MORE QUESTION: SINCE THEY FOUND ABOUT 870 PASSPORTS, THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE OFFER, HOW ARE THEY FLYING BACK TO THE U.S. IF THEY ARE? ARE THEY GETTING NEW PASSPORTS FROM THE EMBASSY OR —?

A: THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY HAVING TO BE CLEARED OUT SOMEHOW. I'LL HAVE TO TAKE THAT QUESTION AS TO WHETHER THEY ARE GETTING THEIR OLD PASSPORTS BACK OR WHETHER THEY ARE GETTING SOMETHING NEW ISSUED. I'LL TAKE THAT QUESTION.

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Q: HODDING, WHAT WAS THE REASON YOU GAVE FOR NOT GIVING OUT ANY PRELIMINARY FIGURES?

A: SIMPLY BECAUSE IT IS A MATTER OF PERSONAL PRIVACY WHICH WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE GOVERNMENT OUGHT TO INTRUDE ON.

Q: NO. I MEANT ON THE COSTS.

A: OH, ON THE COST.

Q: YOU GAVE SOME REASON FOR NOT GIVING OUT ANY PRELIMINARY --

A: SIMPLY BECAUSE, ONE IS THAT IT HAS NOT BEEN ACCUMULATED; TWO, I AM NOT SURE THAT THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED SINCE LAST WEEK WHEN MR. BUSHNELL INDICATED THAT THE QUESTION OF SORTING OUT HOW YOU DO THE ACTUARIAL WORK. I'M

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NOT SURE THAT HAS BEEN DECIDED, THAT IS, DO YOU CHARGE AGAINST THIS MISSION THE EXPENSE OF PEOPLE WHO WERE OTHERWISE ON THE PAYROLL, WHETHER THIS MISSION WENT FORWARD OR NOT? DO YOU CHARGE AGAINST VARIOUS ASPECTS OF IT?

Q: HODDING, HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO CHARGING SOME OF THESE COSTS AGAINST THE ASSETS OF THE CULT, AND IF NOT THAT, AGAINST THESE BAGS OF MONEY THAT KEEP TURNING UP AS PEOPLE WERE APPARENTLY EXTORTED BY THEIR LEADERS?

A: I HAD A VARIATION ON THAT, BARRY YESTERDAY. I THOUGHT I TOOK IT, BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE THE ANSWER THEN. I CERTAINLY DON'T, UNFORTUNATELY, HAVE THAT ANSWER NOW. THE BASIC QUESTION YOU WANT IS --

Q: THE BASIC QUESTION IS: TO WHAT EXTENT DOES THE UNITED STATES' HUMANITARIAN CONCERNS MEAN THAT THE TAXPAYER HAS TO PAY THE COST OF THIS ENORMOUS EXPENSE, AND I SUPPOSE IT IS GETTING TO BE MUCH GREATER THAN YOU ANTICIPATED?

A: I'M SURE IT IS. IT'S SUBSTANTIAL.

Q: NOW, THE GUYANA GOVERNMENT HAS RECOVERED ALL SORTS OF FUNDS THAT HAVE BEEN TURNED OVER TO THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA, AND I WONDERED IF THERE HAS BEEN ANY CONSIDERATION OF MAYBE DIVERTING SOME OF THOSE FUNDS TO PAY FOR SOME OF THESE EXPENSES.

A: I WOULD SAY GENERALLY THAT THAT WOULD BE EASIER SAID THAN DONE, SINCE THE FUNDS ARE BEING HELD IN ANOTHER COUNTRY AND THE DISPOSITION OF THEM AND THE OWNERSHIP OF THEM AND ALL THE REST HAS NOT, I THINK, BEEN TOTALLY DETERMINED. FIRST. SECOND, INsofar AS FINDING SOME WAY TO ASSESS COSTS, I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THAT ONE HAS BEEN ADDRESSED DIRECTLY.

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I THINK THAT THE FEELING WAS THAT THE NECESSITY, FOR VARIOUS REASONS, FROM IDENTIFICATION, INVESTIGATION, AND OTHERS, WAS THAT WE HAD TO GET THE BODIES OUT OF THE PLACE. I WILL TAKE, AGAIN, THAT QUESTION.

Q: HODDING, THIS MAY BE A QUESTION THAT YOU WILL HAVE TO

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WANT, TOO, BUT I WONDER IF YOU COULD CLARIFY FOR US THE WHOLE SUBJECT OF THE AUTOPSY ON JONES. APPARENTLY, THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SAYS THE UNITED STATES HAS NO PLANS TO CALL FOR AN AUTOPSY. ON THE OTHER HAND, OFFICIALS IN DELAWARE HAVE INDICATED THAT BEFORE HE COULD BE CREMATED, THEY WOULD HAVE TO HAVE ONE. IN VIEW OF THE INTENSE INTEREST IN THIS, DOESN'T IT SEEM LOGICAL THAT THEY WOULD WANT TO KNOW WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF DEATH, ESPECIALLY SINCE HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO HAD BEEN SHOT?

A: HARRY, ON THAT ONE I THINK YOU'LL GET A FASTER ANSWER FROM JUSTICE THAN ME.

Q: WE HAVE AN ANSWER FROM JUSTICE WHICH SAYS THERE ARE NO PLANS FOR AUTOPSY.

A: YES, BUT THAT, FRANKLY SPEAKING, IS A LEGAL QUESTION. I MEAN THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY DOESN'T RUN TO THAT END.

Q: FODDING, IT'S CLEAR NOW THAT THE PEOPLES TEMPLE WAS A COMMUNIST GROUP. THEY WERE NEGOTIATING OR CONSIDERING MOVING TO THE USSR OR CUBA, AND I HAVE TWO QUESTIONS ON THIS: ONE, DID THE DEPARTMENT HAVE IN ITS FILES ANY INFORMATION ON THE POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF THIS GROUP BEFORE THIS TRAGEDY? AND WERE ANY STEPS TAKEN TO ALERT MRS. CARTER, VICE-PRESIDENT MONDALE, MEMBERS OF CONGRESS.

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AND OTHER HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS WHO HAD ENDORSED JONES AND HIS GROUP, ABOUT THIS ORIENTATION?

A: WELL, I THINK THAT WHILE THE RECORD WILL NECESSARILY SHOW YOUR DESIGNATION, I CAN'T MAKE THAT CHARACTERIZATION MYSELF AS TO WHAT IT WAS.

Q: YOU CAN'T?

A: I CANNOT.

Q: YOU DON'T HAVE ANY INFORMATION YET THAT WOULD IDENTIFY THEM AS SUCH?

A: NO. I CANNOT ON EVIDENCE THAT I HAVE, AND CERTAINLY NOT ON SOME LETTERS AND WHAT OTHER STUFF THAT I'VE SEEN IN THE PRESS MAKE SUCH A DESIGNATION ON THE CHARACTERIZATION.

Q: EXCUSE ME. ON THAT POINT —

A: ON THE CHARACTERIZATION.

Q: DO YOU DISPUTE —

A: NO, AS A MATTER OF FACT, I DON'T HAVE TO DISPUTE IT, REED.

Q: ON THAT POINT —

A: I DON'T HAVE TO DISPUTE IT, REED.

Q: ON THAT POINT —

A: I'M JUST TELLING YOU I AM NOT ABLE TO ADDRESS THAT CHARACTERIZATION.

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Q: ARE YOU DISPUTING --  
A: I'M NOT ABLE TO COMMENT ON THAT CHARACTERIZATION.  
Q: ARE YOU AWARE OF THE FACT THEY WERE NEGOTIATING WITH  
THE SOVIET UNION FOR A MOVE TO THE SOVIET UNION?  
A: I'VE SEEN REPORTS THAT END.  
Q: YOU DON'T DISPUTE THAT.  
A: I'VE SEEN REPORTS TO THAT END.  
Q: YOU DON'T DISPUTE THAT.  
A: I'VE SEEN REPORTS TO THAT END. I AM NOT --  
Q: YOU ARE NEITHER CONFIRMING NOR DENYING IT?  
A: I CANNOT. ON THE QUESTION OF THE CARTER THING, THAT  
DOES GO BACK TO '75, AND THE MRS. CARTER LETTER, THE  
CAMPAIGN OF '76. THE OTHERS, THERE IS SOME DISPUTE AS TO  
WHETHER THEY EXIST OR NOT, THAT IS WHETHER SUCH LETTERS OR  
ENDORSEMENTS WERE WRITTEN.  
Q: DO I TAKE IT YOUR ANSWER IS THAT YOU HAD NO INFORMAT-  
TION ABOUT THE POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF THIS GROUP AND  
THEREFORE, YOU MADE NO EFFORT TO ALERT ANYBODY OF IT?  
A: I EXPECT THAT THERE WERE A NUMBER OF ALLEGATIONS MADE,  
AS ALLEGATIONS ARE OFTEN MADE, BY QUESTIONERS AS WELL AS  
BY LETTER-WRITERS ABOUT VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THAT PARTICULAR

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ORGANIZATION, SO I CAN'T SAY. I'M SIMPLY NOT ABLE TO COM-  
MENT ON THAT QUESTION AS TO WHETHER OR NOT THERE WAS IN-  
FORMATION ALLEGEDING THAT PARTICULAR ASPECT OF THEIR BE-  
HAVIOR, I.E. THAT THEY WERE SOMEHOW COMMUNIST.

Q: BUT MR. MCCOY WHO MADE NUMEROUS VISITS THERE NEVER GOT  
ANY INCLINATION OR INDICATION THAT THEY WERE A COMMUNIST  
GROUP.

A: NO. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I DON'T THINK THAT WAS EVER  
ONE OF THE QUESTIONS THAT WAS RAISED TO US ABOUT THAT GROUP.

Q: INDEPENDENTLY, IT WOULDN'T HAVE OCCURRED TO HIM TO  
LOOK INTO THAT?

A: NO. AS A MATTER OF FACT, INDEPENDENTLY, THAT PROBABLY  
WOULD HAVE BEEN A QUESTION THAT IF IT WERE RAISED BY A GOV-  
ERNMENT OFFICIAL, ORDINARILY ABOUT AMERICANS INDIVIDUALLY  
OR ABROAD, WERE IT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED TO BE ONE THAT  
YOU DON'T RAISE.

Q: I SEE. YOU WOULDN'T RAISE IT?

A: I DIDN'T SAY YOU WOULDN'T.

Q: YOU'D AVOID THAT ISSUE.

A: I SAID IT MIGHT ORDINARILY BE ONE THAT YOU WOULD THINK  
TWICE ABOUT, PARTICULARLY IN THE ABSENCE OF ANY ALLEGATION.

Q: I SEE. NOW, A SECOND QUESTION ON THAT SAME POINT:  
SECOND QUESTION, HAVE ANY OF THE SURVIVORS, SINCE THEY HAD  
INDICATED AN INTEREST IN GOING TO THE SOVIET UNION OR CUBA  
BEFORE THE TRAGEDY, HAVE ANY OF THE SURVIVORS REQUESTED  
THAT THEY GO TO ONE OF THOSE COUNTRIES OR ANOTHER COM-  
MUNIST COUNTRY RATHER THAN RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES?

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A: I'M NOT AWARE OF SUCH A REQUEST. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I THINK THEY ARE STILL TRYING TO SORT OUT MOST OF THEM. WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO DO AND HOW THEY ARE GOING TO DO IT.

Q: DID YOU TAKE THE QUESTION YET ABOUT WHO WOULD BE PAYING FOR THE SURVIVORS, IF THEY DO COME BACK SINGLY OR AS A GROUP?

A: YES, I DID. DID I GET AN ANSWER?

VOICE: THE SURVIVORS WILL REFUND THE MONEY TO THE GOVERNMENT. THEY HAVE SIGNED PAPERS SAYING THAT.

MR. CARTER: THEY HAVE SIGNED A PAPER WHICH IS A FAIRLY STANDARD FORM FOR INDIGENTS AND OTHERS IN THAT CATEGORY WHO ARE ABROAD, THAT THEY ARE TASKED WITH IT.

Q: WHAT?

A: THAT THEY ARE TASKED WITH PAYING BACK THE MONEY AND WRITING A PLEDGE THAT THEY WILL.

Q: MAYBE YOU RESPONDED TO THIS EARLIER, BUT DO YOU KNOW WHETHER THE STATE DEPARTMENT IN ANY WAY OR ANY AID IN ANY WAY WENT TO THIS GROUP DOWN THERE, STATE DEPARTMENT AID? THERE WAS SOME REPORT IN THE NEW YORK TIMES OR SOMEWHERE WHICH SUGGESTED THAT U.S. AID IN SOME WAY HAD BEEN FUNNELED?

A: TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, ALLEN, THERE HAS BEEN

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NO U.S. AID FUNNELED TO THAT GROUP, BUT SOCIAL SECURITY CHECKS TO FOLKS AND THAT SORT OF THING.

Q: BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN, NO.

A: NO. I EVEN SAW IT SUGGESTED SOMEWHERE -- I DON'T KNOW WHERE -- THAT WE BOUGHT THE LAND OR SOMETHING.

Q: I JUST WANTED TO KNOW WHETHER THAT HAD BEEN CHECKED OUT. HAS THAT BEEN LOOKED INTO AT ALL?

A: YES. I MEAN, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF THAT.

Q: HODDING, IS IT AN ORDINARY SITUATION WHEN AN AMERICAN CITIZEN DIES IN ANOTHER COUNTRY, FOR THAT COUNTRY TO KEEP THE MONEY?

A: I THINK THEY WOULD ORDINARILY INVESTIGATE EXACTLY TO WHOM IT BELONGS AND MAKE A DISPOSITION ACCORDINGLY. I DON'T THINK, HOWEVER, THIS IS NOT --

Q: THE FOREIGN GOVERNMENT WOULD KEEP THE MONEY, NORMALLY, IN THAT TYPE OF SITUATION?

A: NO. I DON'T THINK I KNOW WHAT "NORMAL" IS. THIS IS A FAIRLY ABNORMAL SITUATION.

Q: HODDING, IS THERE ANYTHING FURTHER ON THE ALLEGATION THAT A HALF A MILLION DOLLARS WAS TO BE DELIVERED TO THE SOVIET EMBASSY, TOGETHER WITH A LETTER, AND THAT THAT LETTER IS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE GUYANA GOVERNMENT?

A: I THINK ALMOST ALL OF THESE THINGS, GOING BACK TO WHAT I SAID YESTERDAY, ALLEGATIONS OF VARIOUS SORTS WHICH

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HAVE SURFACED. LETTERS, REPORTS, VARIOUS OFFICIALS SAYING  
THINGS, THEY ARE ALL IN THE STATUS OF A MATTER WHICH IS

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BEING INVESTIGATED, AND THAT I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO  
COMMENT ON IT UNTIL THE INVESTIGATION IS THROUGH. AND IN  
ANY CASE, INsofar AS ANY ASPECTS WHICH HAVE TO DO WITH  
LEGAL QUESTIONS, THAT IS, ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES OR THE LIKE,  
ARE GOING TO HAVE TO BE ANSWERED BY THE APPROPRIATE LEGAL  
AUTHORITIES AND NOT STATE.

Q: BUT YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND OUT WHETHER THE  
GUYANA AUTHORITIES HAVE THAT LETTER OR --?

A: NO. WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT AT THIS POINT, I'M NOT  
GOING TO BE ABLE TO COMMENT ON MOST ASPECTS OF THE IN-  
VESTIGATION OF THIS MATTER. I CAN COMMENT A GREAT DEAL  
ABOUT WHAT IT IS THAT WE ARE TRYING TO DO WITH THE VICTIMS  
AND THAT SORT OF THING; BUT IN TERMS OF WHAT IS BEING  
INVESTIGATED, I'M NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO COMMENT. VANCE

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