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HOLD HANDS AND DIE!

The Incredibly True Story of the People's Temple, Reverend Jim Jones and the Tragedy in Guyana.

—illustrated—

by John Maguire and Mary Lee Dunn
authors of The Patty Hearst Story

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PROLOGUE: HOW COULD THEY HAVE DONE IT?

There was a moment when an ordinary Saturday afternoon began to turn into the worst nightmare in the history of senseless violence. It was that moment, there between the metal prefab buildings of Jonestown, when the Congressman decided he had better leave on the first plane out after all.

The man was Leo Ryan, a crusading congressman who had flown into one of the most backward countries in the Western Hemisphere to check out complaints from his constituents.

He had planned to stay behind, in the religious commune-farm run by the Rev. Jim Jones, until all those who wanted to leave the settlement could get out. But as his party was near to leaving, Leo Ryan was suddenly attacked by a knife-wielding man shouting, "I'm going to kill you, you motherf——r." Companions wrestled the attacker off the congressman, whose hair was barely mussed in the attack that seemed unreal, almost make-believe.

There was blood on the congressman's shirt, not his own; perhaps from Don Sly, the attacker. Leo Ryan, the nervous, hard-pushing kind of man who is always on the go and always losing his memo

pads and his keys, was shaken by the attack.

It was decided that the situation was not good, that he *should* leave on the first plane out.

Ryan's traveling party numbered more than 20 persons. They climbed onto an open truck and, after getting stuck in the mud at Jonestown, were slowly carried off into the dense rain-forest for a six-mile ride to the tiny airstrip of Kaituma. On the truck were the congressman and his staff, plus a number of newsman, plus some members and residents of Jonestown who wanted to leave. Also on the truck was Larry Layton, who had told the Congressman he wanted to leave, but was there for a different purpose.

When that truck pulled slowly into the dense shadow under the canopy of greenheart and bullet-wood trees, which comprise the rain forests in the most backwards corner of the most backwards country in South America, with the disappearance of the national news cameras came the disappearance of all hope for the many hundreds of residents of Jonestown. Doom could not have fallen more gently than with the silent disappearance of a truck into a forest, but fall it did when the jungle commune was once again alone, alone amidst the wild animals and the wildly exuberant jungle growth, alone before the throne of a grim-lipped man in dark glasses, alone and helpless against the soft-voiced madness of Jim Jones.

What was about to happen would stun a world that thought nothing could stun it. What was about to happen would be an unbelievable circus of death, a mad suicide of many hundreds of men, women and children.

What was about to happen would be so bizarre

that historians would have to reach back into Biblical times to find a calamity big enough for comparison. What was about to happen would nauseate and terrify millions of people in the rich U.S.A. who would be forced to read the unthinkable carnage over their breakfast coffee and view it on TV with their pre-dinner cocktails.

The most cynical of reporters, the most hardened of soldiers, the most indifferent mortuary workers would be stunned. The average man or woman might find himself saying, "How could they have done it?" and might find himself thinking "Would I have done the same thing?"

Of all the disasters we brace ourselves to expect, the horror at Jonestown could not have been foreseen. Not even the most irresponsible pulp novelist could have thought up such a plot.

Only those who knew the terrible changes in The Rev. Jim Jones had any chance of knowing what could happen. And only a few of those who knew Jim Jones still had enough of their own minds left to fight him. Events were to prove that, in the grip of a political genius who is insane, those who had submitted to him were not going to escape his grasp.

In the clearing, as the truck pulled away, was Odell Rhodes. Nearby was a man named Stanley Clayton, 25, a camp cook who had come there from Berkeley, California. In one of the buildings was an old, feeble black woman named Hyacinth Thrush, who was getting tired as she often did that time of afternoon, and who was lying down to take a nap.

These and a few others would survive the most bizarre death-camp in history; they would bear scars from the experience, and so would many

Americans whose faith in the goodness of men and the value of religion had never before been so tested.

For days the count varied. When the word finally was ended, there were more than 900 bodies. Throughout this book we'll use the figure 910, though media accounts gave slightly different death tolls.

THE GATHERING FOR DEATH

They walked slowly toward the Main Pavilion at Jonestown, hundreds of them. They were not forced. Talking among themselves, holding the hands of their children. They came slowly from all corners of the compound, from the living quarters, the medical unit, the school. From the tin-roofed buildings that housed the repair shop and the wood mill and the heavy farm equipment.

Dressed in the bright colors they'd worn for the congressman's visit, they walked along the muddy rutted roads, past the swings on the playground, thronging around the tall poles that held the public address horns. Men walking past a guest house saw that two of the congressman's party were still there; they called out in good humor, cracked jokes, and walked on, toward the pavilion at the center of Jonestown.

It had been raining all afternoon and then it stopped. They walked on the board sidewalks to keep their feet dry. They went up, and into the open air shed where the Rev. Jim Jones had his chair, where he held his gatherings and spoke to them.

Among those heading to the pavilion was Odell Rhodes, 36, a former drug addict from Detroit. He'd joined Jones to get away from "city influ-

ences." He'd been impressed with what Jones had done for alcoholics. Now, the thin, handsome man with a scar over his eye from a rough earlier life, headed with the rest of the disciples to Jim Jones' pavilion.

It was about 5 p.m. They filed in, and sat down. No one was in Jim Jones' chair. No one started the meeting. They sat there and waited. More kept arriving. A crowd gathers without a dramatic moment. It just gathers. And when it is gathered, it enjoys being together.

Dr. Larry Schacht, a young man who'd gone through medical school on the generosity of the Rev. Jones, was not in that crowd. Schacht was in the medical building, across an open field from the pavilion. He took plastic containers of drugs down from shelves. He consulted carefully the charts he'd drawn up about dosages. He opened bottles, poured crystals and powders into a zinc tub. He poured in thorazine, halioparael, largatil. They are sedatives that instantly quiet violent people. Dr. Schacht, whose teachers in medical school remember his zeal about leaving California and going to help the poor in South America, added bottles of the painkiller demerol. He checked his charts, and added a chemical that makes the bloodstream absorb substances quickly.

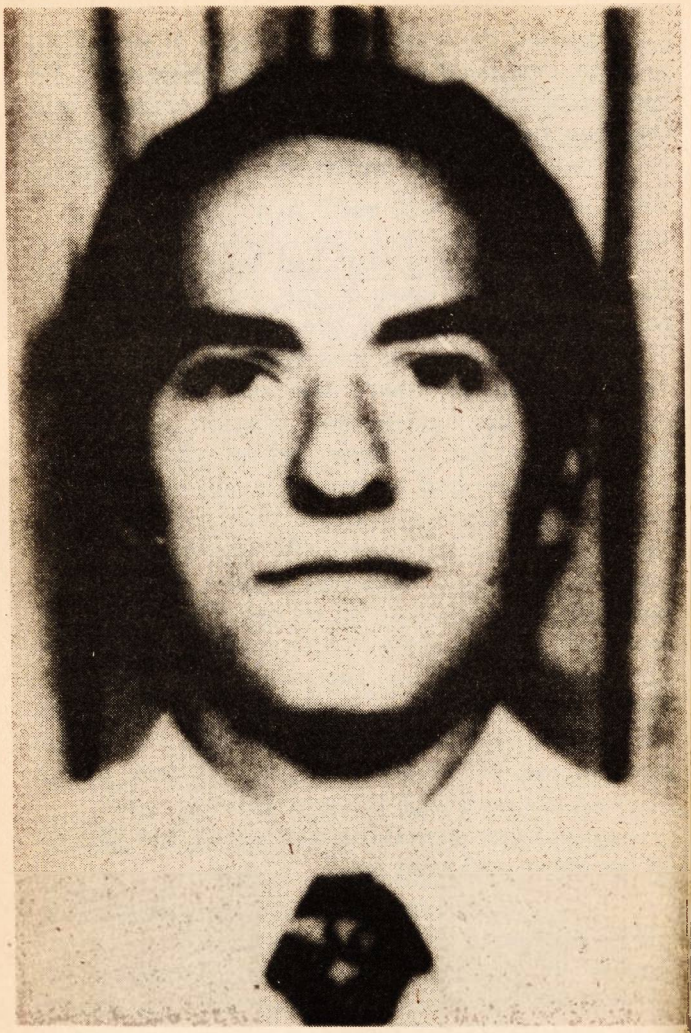
In past months, he might have prescribed some of those drugs for his maternity patients. Dr. Schacht felt he did well by those patients—he boasted in a letter home of success in a difficult Caesarean delivery. He was proud, also, of such feats of jungle medicine as saving a boy from snakebite.

Now, though, he was doing Dad's work. Dad trusted him with the most important duty.

He opened the white plastic bottles of potassium cyanide. The label said "laboratory chemicals." He twisted off the caps and poured the crystals into the zinc tub. He added Flavour-aid or a similar drink mix, and then water. He stirred the lethal fluid.

The congressman's visit had been a nice break from routine for most of the Jonestowners, but Stanley Clayton, one of the cooks, had to work. The young black man was walking in the camp kitchen when he heard the call "Alert, Alert, Alert" over the loudspeaker. Clayton, 25, figured this was another of those "white night" things, where everyone had to drink Flavour-aid and pretend it was poison and prove their loyalty to the cause. He didn't pay much attention to the movement of families, friends and couples to the pavilion. Dinner still had to be served. That's why the cooks got excused from "white nights." Black-eyed peas tonight, now that the media visit was over. They kept on working. Suddenly a security man with a gun was there, ordering them out to the pavilion too. What about supper? A cook asked. No, said the man with the gun. Outside, now.

Clayton knew something was wrong, but he took off his apron and went out.



Dr. Laurence E. Schacht, shown here in a photo from the San Francisco General Hospital, where he once sought a job as an intern, mixed the lethal potion of Kool-Aid and cyanide.

U.S. Congressman Leo J. Ryan rests in his hotel room before leaving Georgetown, Guyana for Jonestown. With him is aide Jackie Speir. Ryan was fatally shot in the airport ambush.

THE CONGRESSMAN'S LAST MISSION

Leo Ryan logged many miles in his job. His friends saw it as a bonafide expression of his hard-driving concern for people. They said he wanted to be on the spot where the problems were, finding answers for himself. His enemies called him a junket-taker, and in the 1976 campaign, his opponent tried to make an issue out of his many investigative trips. The voters apparently thought Leo Ryan's travels were what his district needed because they returned him to office.

His trip to the Jonestown settlement in Guyana was a bit out of the way. Ryan had heard shocking news from an old friend of his in early 1977. The friend, an AP photographer named Sam Houston, told him murder might be part of the Peoples Temple operation. Houston told how his son, Bob Houston, had been found dead in a railroad yard where he worked the day after he announced his intention to leave the temple. Sam Houston thought his son might have been murdered.

Leo Ryan was shocked. His response was the usual for him: he began a serious investigation. He hired a special staff investigator and over the next several months pieced together information about the temple which only increased his concern. Ryan learned that many ex-temple members feared not

just violence, but murder. Ryan's young assistant, Jackie Speiers, had drawn up her first will before the trip. She'd carefully left her will, and Ryan's will as well, where they would be found in the Congressman's office.

When Ryan's party landed in Georgetown, on Tuesday, Nov. 14, there were some difficulties involving visas and other official redtape. One photographer was detained by Customs for several hours for reasons not made clear. All in all, such delays were not surprising, considering that Guyana remains a very primitive country.

The newsmen and the Jonestown relatives who came down with Congressman Ryan had two days to explore in Georgetown, the country's capital of 200,000 inhabitants, while the trip to Jonestown was being set up.

Ryan was still not particularly welcome, even when he got to Georgetown. He'd been stalled by Jones for months, and the intermediaries, Mark Lane and Charles Garry, were supposed to have cleared everything with Jones for the visit. That's what Ryan thought. But when they got to Georgetown and contacted Jones in the north country, Jones still balked. He wouldn't let the full entourage of roughly 40 Americans visit. Negotiations continued over the short wave radio.

It was to be another pleasant junket, or so it seemed then. Cold weather was sweeping the United States in earnest, and the newsmen and relatives took the happy chance to get out and walk the sunny streets of Georgetown in their shirt-sleeves. Georgetown, a tree-lined city, seemed like a garden in comparison to wintry US. In the older areas, where the wooden Dutch-style houses

are located, Georgetown possesses great charm. One afternoon Greg Robinson, Bob Brown and Steve Sung strolled down the street, thinking of the cold weather up north and feeling lucky. Small black Guyanese kids scrambled up and asked them about the bulky TV cameras and tape-recorders. Bob Brown let a small barefoot child look through the viewfinder on his minicam, while Steve Sung looked on smiling and Greg Robinson took a souvenir photo. It was a beautiful, fleeting moment of relaxation for these grown men, when there is no work to be done and the curiosity of little boys is again a delight.

Ryan had come uninvited. Jim Jones' lawyer, Mark Lane, had written Congressman Ryan a vaguely threatening letter intended to discourage the Congressman from coming to Guyana, but Leo Ryan did not take no for an answer easily. He had touched down with a crew of press—the assumption being that the presence of media representatives would protect him, that no harm would come if network newsmen were recording every moment on camera and sound. Ryan never reckoned on a madness as deep as the madness that gripped Jim Jones.

Ryan spent two days negotiating to get into Jonestown. He dealt at first with Sharon Amos, the "public relations" woman for the commune. She lived in Georgetown and only served to frustrate the Congressman. She brought Ryan a petition, long scrolls dense with signatures, which claimed that all the signers "have been visited by friends and relatives. However, we have not invited, nor do we care to see, Congressman Ryan." Word also came that Jones was ill and could not

talk. Ryan decided he was going to Jonestown with or without permission and made arrangements to do so.

When Mark Lane and Charles Garry—both Peoples Temple lawyers—flew in to intermediate. Both believed in the value of what Jones was doing and reassured the Reverend—as is the duty of lawyers and public relations representatives in that kind of situation—that more damage would be done by hiding from the press than by opening up. They talked to Jones by radio, trying to smooth matters over.

"You have two alternatives," Garry told Jones. "You can tell the Congress of the United States to go f--k themselves. . . . . The other alternative is to let them in—and prove to the world that these people criticizing you are crazy."

Jones relented, under the constant assurance of Lane and Garry that they would escort the visitors and the results would be satisfactory. The two lawyers made a dash for the airport, where the Congressman's party was about to board planes no matter what Jim Jones decided. They caught up with Ryan and took off in the twin-engine Otter with the 19 members of Ryan's party. Destination: Port Kaituma, 100 miles northwest.

The Jungle Canopy Is a Green Sea

Jonestown was built in the northern section of Guyana, about six miles from Port Kaituma, near the border with Venezuela. Until the Rev. Jim Jones brought in his congregation, the area was nothing but tropical forest, a place teeming with

life, but inhospitable to human civilization.

When you fly over the rain forest, it seems like a green sea, rolling on endlessly, broken only by the savannahs and the coastal plains. The forests contain a large variety of tropical woods, the most valuable being "Greenheart", a durable hardwood. The bullet-wood tree also grows here, producing a kind of latex which is used for electrical insulation, the manufacture of golf balls, etc. The greenheart trees are the ones that rise to a height of one hundred and fifty feet. Their wood is prized for manufacture of ships, pilings, and other items which must withstand rot. Getting greenheart out of the jungle, however, is a problem for the woodcutters. The wood is so dense it will not float, and must be floated down on pontoons or other devices.

The wildlife in Guyana is varied and abundant. The national animal—the one on the national coat of arms—is the jaguar. It is the largest and fiercest cat in the Americas, and is found throughout much of the country. The entire back-country is the range for monkeys and deer. The cayman, a reptile similar to alligators and crocodiles, is the most common of the large fresh-water creatures and grows up to 20 feet long in the back regions. The anaconda snake, though not found in the immediate area around Jonestown, is an enormous snake found in the back area of the country. It has been known to eat small cattle and children.

Unusual land animals also abound in Guyana. The giant ant-eater, or "ant-bear", as well as sloths, live in the interior. An odd pig-like rodent called the capybara, which can weigh as much as 100 pounds and attain four feet in length, is sometimes domesticated by the native Indians. Opossums, coatimundis and a guinea-pig-like rodent

called the *labbas* are also common. The labbas is considered a tasty delicacy by the native Indians.

The northwest area of Guyana, where Jones had his followers attempt to farm, is really a wilderness. Population maps show the whole region has a population density of less than one person per square mile. The only native inhabitants are the native Indians, scattered few and far between under the forest canopy.

These Indians represent what anthropologists call the Tropical Forest Culture. Their way of life includes the cultivation of manioc, a starchy root, extensive use of canoes, hammocks used as beds, and pottery making. They live in small settlements of 30 to 40 related individuals, and the settlements are not permanent because the Indians must move on when their cultivation exhausts the soil. The economy of the tropical forest dwellers is a combination of "burn-and-slash" farming, hunting, gathering, and fishing. Burn-and-slash farming involves cutting down an acre or two of forest and burning the slash in place. The ashes fertilize the soil for the first crops but after that the soil is quickly depleted. The basic crop is manioc, both the bitter and sweet kinds. This is peeled, grated, squeezed in a tube, and baked.

Fishing is a major activity of the Indians who live in the jungle near Jonestown. They use hooks and lines, as well as traps, nets, and shooting with arrows and spears. The traditional hunting techniques included use of blowguns, bows and arrows, traps and dogs. It's an important activity in such a wilderness country so full of game. More modern methods than blowguns are now in use, however.

When they landed, they were greeted by an angry group of Jonestown people, one of whom brandished a gun. After some on-the-spot negotiations, Ryan's group boarded a dump truck and rattled over the dirt-road drive into the settlement of Jonestown. As they jumped down from the truck, Marceline Jones, the Rev. Jones' wife, met them warmly.

The camp seemed unnaturally neat. The wooden structures so far from civilization, the community of blacks and whites, young and old—all this impressed the visitors deeply. Children were swinging on swings in a small playground. Dressed in bright, cheerful colors, commune members trotted alongside the guests, smiling and asking playful questions.

They told the visitors how glad they were to see them; they asked how the flight in had been. They said they were glad the news media would have a chance to see that Jonestown was not a concentration camp. If any of the visitors thought about the contradiction between being forced to languish for two days in Georgetown, and then being welcomed warmly at the commune, it must have been a fleeting thought. Who wants to look closely or suspiciously at a warm welcome?

"You must be hungry," Marceline said. "The food is waiting at the pavilion." She led the visitors to a dinner of hot pork sandwiches, greens, fruit tarts and coffee. The guests were informed that everything they were eating had been raised at Jonestown. The meal was pleasant. There was musical entertainment provided—a small band broke into the Guyanese national anthem—and a number by the Jonestown chorus. Then, the vis-

itors met the head honcho himself—Jim Jones. He installed himself at the head of the table and complained about a 103 degree fever he claimed to have suffered most of the day. Leo Ryan sat on one side of the pavilion and interviewed people he had requested to see. Some of the "concerned relatives" who had flown in with Ryan were reunited with their sisters, sons, nieces, or parents. The conversations appeared normal enough, some a trifle strained, but others were animated and warm.

To Charles Krause, the South American specialist from the Washington Post, life at Jonestown appeared untroubled and normal. After dinner, however, there was dance music. An odd thing happened. The music was soul, played especially loud—almost so loud questions were left unanswered. The music was loud enough to drown all conversation, but Charles Krause heard Leo Ryan point out how strange it was that middle-aged men and women—and even people old enough to be grandparents—were dancing and clapping their hands to what was basically teen-agers' rock and roll.

Krause was startled by what the Congressman had said. He was right. What was this, old people dancing to rock music?

Ryan's observation, Krause wrote later, "was an observation I would not forget. It was the first real sign that maybe these people had been either programmed or somehow forced to act in a way that conformed to the image Jones wanted to project."

In particular, Krause noticed a white, middle-aged man, with a crew cut, dancing furiously. The man's name was Tom Kice, Sr. and he was a member of Jones' inner circle. No one—certainly

not the Congressman or the newsman—had an idea how crazy the inner circle of the People's Temple could be. But the next afternoon, when the same disco dancer with the crewcut was shooting to kill, those who lived through the massacre, like Charles Krause, finally knew the horror that had been bubbling beneath the placid surface all along.

That night the reporters had to find make-shift quarters in Port Kaituma. They left after 10 p.m., when the last songs had been sung, the last dances danced. They'd wanted to stay longer, but Jones wouldn't allow it. "I will not have them staying here over night," Jones whispered to his wife. The newsman and relatives persuaded the owners of a tiny rumshop called the Weekend Bar to let them sleep on the living room floor.

The next day things went well at first. Jones appeared in a good mood. Ryan and the other guests devoured a hearty breakfast. But when the newsman again arrived in the dump truck from Port Kaituma, the day turned less pleasant. The newsmen wanted to get in to see parts of the compound Jones wanted closed and out of sight. They also asked questions about the guns at Jonestown. They'd learned from a Port Kaituma constable the night before that there was an automatic weapon at the camp, and that it was registered with the Guyanese government.

"A bold-faced lie" Jones thundered. "It seems we are defeated by lies." Jones rambled on about the conspiracy he believed was working against him and the Peoples Temple. He blamed the conspiracy for the host of law suits that prevented him from returning to the United States.

'A Very Bright Child'

That fatal weekend in mid-November in Jonestown, Jim Jones told a reporter that he could not return to the United States because of his custody battle with the Stoens.

With the child idling nearby, Jones told the reporter that John Victor Stoen had said he'd kill himself if he were sent back to his mother.

Jim Jones turned and beckoned to the child. "My son John here, we have the same teeth and face." He framed the child's jaw with his hands and exposed his teeth.

And then he displayed his own teeth, so the visitor could verify his statement.

"He's a very bright child." Jones patted him on the cheek. "John, you want to go back and live with Grace?"

"No," the child answered.

"See? It's not right to play with children's lives."

In a matter of hours, the handsome, dark-haired boy—who in a more conventional life might have been a first-grader in a neighborhood school, a Little Leaguer on a sandlot—lay dead near the throne of Jim Jones. The man who claimed to be his father had taken both their lives.

The TV newsmen finally managed to examine the buildings they'd wanted to see, but only after the lawyers prevailed on Jones to permit it. The newsmen found about five dozen elderly people crammed into a room just big enough to hold their bunk beds. "It was like a slave ship," said Lane.

NBC's Don Harris, in a lengthy interview with Jones, bore down on the commune leader. He prod-

ded him about the reports of guns, about drugs, about physical punishment. He hit Jones with questions the "concerned realtives" had been pursuing for years, asking him all over again many of the tough questions posed by the original investigators into the cult, Tracy and Kilduff of "New West" magazine.

Jones took all these questions in stride, but when Harris passed him a note from a commune member who had asked Harris for help in escaping, Jones' guard briefly sagged.

"People play *games,* friend," he said, and his voice trembled beneath the surface of its icy control. "They *lie.* What can I do with liars? Are you people going to leave us? I just beg you, please leave us . . . ." His voice, in its intonations the voice of a deeply troubled man, went onto the videotape. When the American public heard it, 48 hours later, Rev. Jim Jones, the reporter Don Harris, and Bob Brown the cameraman were all dead. Yet, the chill came through each of the words spoken then.

After the interview, Congressman Ryan told Jones, "Jim, there's a family of six here who wants to leave."

"I feel betrayed," Jones shouted. "It never stops."

Though the reporters got an impression of Jones as a marginal, fringe character, a kind of spooky guy, their impressions of the commune itself remained positive. Despite the crowded conditions in the dorm, and a few other contradictions that differed, from what the sect had advertised, the overall impression stood of a clean, orderly agricultural project. The bright colors and the cheerful faces of most inhabitants put the newsmen at ease. So did the sight of children playing happily, and the mu-

sic, and the schoolrooms. Even the most rigorous inspector would have given the commune clean bill of health, but only if he judged Jonestown by appearances.

THE DEPARTURE

Charles Garry saw that Jim Jones was "freaking out" when the fifteen defectors announced they were leaving with the congressman.

"How can these people, these liars, these traitors do this?" Jones said.

Garry decided he wanted to get out of there as fast as possible—not that he was scared at that time, but just that he was sick of dealing with Jones. He'd tried to convince Jones that the visit by newsmen would result in positive publicity for the commune, and that even if 15 people left, it would show the world that the members were free to come and go. Garry was elated over the positive press the place would receive—but angry that Jones couldn't see it.

The congressman planned to stay at Jonestown overnight. There would not be enough room on the planes for everyone, since about fifteen commune members were going out on the plane. Ryan said he'd rather stay in the guesthouse at Jonestown than at some unknown place at Port Kaituma. The decision seemed to be that the lawyers, Charles Garry and Mark Lane, would leave that night.

In a common winding-down ritual, Congressman Ryan thanked Lane and Garry for getting him down to see the place. All was going to end nicely,

it seemed. "This is really a beautiful place," Ryan said.

Ryan and Lane and Garry were patting each other on the back and smiling and saying goodbye.

Suddenly someone had Ryan by the neck from behind. There was a knife in his hand and he said, "Congressman Ryan, you motherf----r.

Garry jumped on the attacker's neck and held on tight. The struggle continued. The man's face turned blue, but he still held on and fought. Mark Lane tried to grab the knife. Temple people tried, too. Then Tim Carter, a temple member, grabbed the knife away from the attacker.

The congressman was shaken up. Jones had been right there, within a step or two of the battle, and he had done nothing. Jones was perfectly calm as if nothing had happened. To Charles Garry, that seemed very odd, but he knew Jim Jones was taking a lot of drugs, and he laid it to that.

Congressman Leo Ryan, though shaken, composed himself and kept his temper. "This is not going to change anything," he said to the still impassive Jim Jones, "Provided you take steps to arrest this man."

There was still no reaction from Jones.

Dick Dwyer, the U.S. embassy man who was liaison for Congressman Ryan's trip, told Ryan it would be best if he changed plans and left that afternoon. Ryan had some blood on his clothes. Temple members brought some fresh clothes from a sort of warehouse for Ryan, who said he'd change into them when he got to Port Kaituma, where the airstrip was.

Then Ryan gathered together his retinue and those who had told him they wanted to leave Jonestown. He ushered them aboard the open truck that would take them to the airport.

Among the defectors from Jonestown was the entire family of Gerry Parks, including his wife, Patricia, and their children. But as the Parks boarded the truck, they sensed something was wrong. Larry Layton was also climbing up there as a "defector".

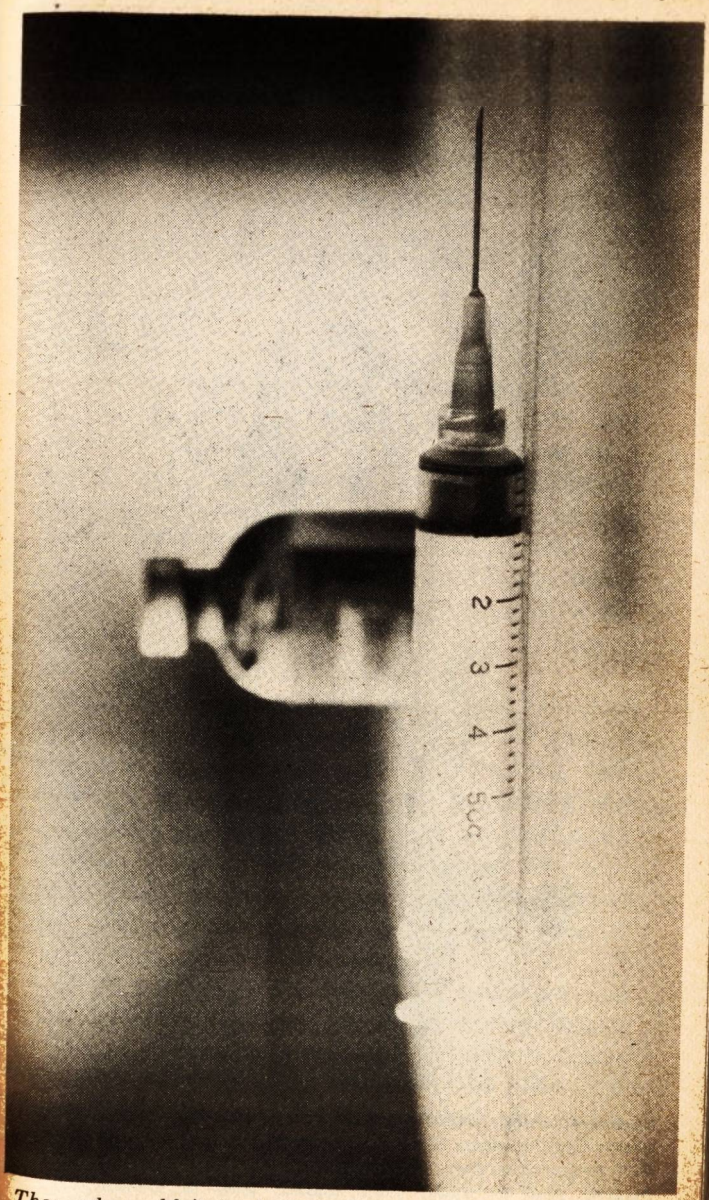
He Was 'Jim's Boy'

All the time from San Francisco to Jonestown, Larry Layton was known as "Jim's boy."

The man who'd been trained as an X-ray technician and worked for the past year at the Jonestown medical facility was the same one who, during San Francisco church meetings, would call out from the sidelines, "Kill 'em, kill 'em."

"When I saw Larry Layton, I knew there would be trouble. He looked crazed," said Jim Cobb.

He and others told Ryan not to let him on the plane at Port Kaituma.



Those who couldn't drink the poison were injected with it.

Guyanese troops stand guard over the runway near Jonestown where Congressman Ryan and four others were gunned down as they prepared to leave the settlement. The slaying seemed to be a bizarre plot to make their deaths look accidental. But it backfired, apparently, and kicked off the suicides.

AMBUSH AT THE AIRSTRIP

The truck, laden with Leo Ryan's staff and the media people and those Jonestowners who had risked their luck and asked to depart that day, pulled onto the small airstrip at Port Kaituma. They hopped out, and milled around the truck and the two planes, waiting for someone to make the decision about who would leave in the larger plane and who in the smaller. The larger plane, a 24-seat Guyana Airways machine, was just coming in for a landing when the truck arrived.

Tim Reiterman, a reporter for the San Francisco Examiner, was among those who noticed that a dump truck and tractor from the commune suddenly appeared out of the jungle at the side of the airstrip. The trucks seemed to be too far away from the Guyana Airways plane—which was now parked with its engines revving, ready to load passengers and baggage—for any serious kind of trouble.

Congressman Ryan, though, was more nervous than the rest. The newsmen hadn't seen the attack on him—but he'd been frightened. A few minutes before, he'd told a friend, "I wouldn't be alive if it was not for Mark Lane." Lane had helped wrench the knife from his assailant.

Ryan motioned to Jackie Speiers, and the two of

them tried to hurry the boarding process.

Greg Robinson, the cheerful photographer from the Examiner, kept snapping pictures as the group waited for the plane. It was a way to kill time.

"Spread out," Don Harris of NBC told his sound man and cameraman, in a grim voice. "Get ready, there's trouble coming." Harris had seen through plenty of violence before—he'd covered Vietnam and the 1968 Washington riots.

Charles Krause, the Washington Post reporter, felt much more at ease—but his ease was in error.

Then several men left the temple tractor and began walking across the paved airstrip toward the departing party. One was white, others were black.

Krause later reported he became worried, but because none of the men seemed armed, he expected not much worse than perhaps a fist fight. Questions were tossed at the party:

"Who's leaving here? Who's going on the big plane? What about that one over there?"

The NBC crew pointed the camera at the men and filmed the questioners. None of the party talked with them.

The men turned and walked back toward the tractor.

In a minute, the tractor-trailer had moved around to the opposite side of the plane and stopped with a clear view of the loading hatch. The three men pushed a group of Guyanese back from the aircraft.

The NBC sound man, Steve Sung, saw people in the tractor-truck start waving, as if waving goodbye. Then they disappeared, then they were standing up again in the truck, with weapons in

their arms and the shooting started.

Heading for Cover

There was terrible confusion. Some fell to the ground, others dove behind the airplane's wheels, and still others ran across the open ground to the protection of the jungle brush.

Steve Sung just hit the ground hard and covered his head with his arm and stayed put. He could hear the shooting increasing, the gunshots getting louder. He knew his partner, cameraman Bob Brown, was still standing—amazingly without fear—running the camera as his killers approached. Brown was hit in the leg, said "ouch" and fell. A few seconds later, a gunman shot him in the head point-blank.

Sung thought of his little girl and waited for the death bullet, but instead he heard a tremendous explosion next to his head. His arm was hit. He didn't move a muscle. He stayed put and listened to the shooting. They seemed to be driving all around the plane, shooting like crazy. He heard the engine of the plane still running, and people screaming. He knew if he moved his head, the motion would be seen and he'd be a dead man. Sung just lay there, the blood oozing from his shattered right arm, and remembered not to move.

Ron Javers, the trim-bearded reporter from the San Francisco Chronicle, was one of the first hit. The slug hit his shoulder and knocked him to the ground. He crawled behind the right wing of the whirring plane. He was trying to decide whether

to stay put or run; he saw Bob Brown go down. He saw the man stick a shotgun into Brown's face and fire and saw the brains splatter on the blue minicam Brown had kept running to the last minute.

Charles Krause, who'd come on this junket thinking it was just a visit to a zany religious commune—and what's so unusual about that, except this one was in a South American jungle—was at the door of the plane when he heard gunfire from the side, near where he was standing. He didn't bother to look. He ran from the door of the plane around to the other side, and dove behind the plane's wheel for cover. He landed on someone who was already there. The shooting got louder and the shots more frequent. Other bodies rolled on top of him as the shooting intensified. He felt dirt spraying on him, and heard the pop-pop-pop of rifles getting louder, but no moans.

He took a shot in the hip, and somehow one of his teeth threw a chip. He knew he'd been hit. He could hear the firing from behind him now, and knew it was only a matter of a few seconds before he was dead, and he thought of his family at Thanksgiving dinner and thought this was crazy *this is it in Guyana*? and then he gave in to resignation and thought, *okay I'm ready, let's just have it,* and kept on thinking it longer and longer and then it seemed the shots were getting less loud, moving farther away. He looked underneath his arm, and down the runway he saw the Peoples Temple truck leaving. He heard the planes' engines revving and got up and ran around to try to get on and get out of there.

An Order to De-plane

He met Jackie Speier at the luggage door. She was shot in the thigh, hip and forearm. He helped her in. They waited for the plane to take off, but nothing happened. A tire had been punctured and one of the engines had been damaged. Someone ordered them out.

Krause and Speier got out. Six others—defectors that day from Jonestown—got out too, and ran for the woods. Krause saw several men from the U.S. and Guyanese governments standing by the plane, and he walked over to them. Then he saw what had happened: there were bodies scattered all around the plane.

Congressman Leo Ryan's body, blood splashed up into his gray hair, lay two feet from where Krause had lain.

Two feet on the other side of the wheel were the blasted remains of Don Harris of NBC.

Under the plane was Greg Robinson, the newspaper photographer.

By the back door was the body of Patricia Parks, who'd followed Jim Jones from Ohio to California to Guyana, and had just gained her freedom less than an hour before. She was dead of a shotgun wound.

Near the tail of the plane was Bob Brown, as inert as his blue metal minicam.

HOLD HANDS AND DIE

The visit from Congressman Ryan, the TV and newspaper reporters, and the relatives of various Jonestowners, had ended in mid-afternoon. The questioning of Jim Jones had been tough for a while, but it seemed to Charles Garry that the visit to his client and the Peoples Temple, would look good when the news film went out on the air. And then—some crazy guy had blown it. He'd attacked Ryan with a knife. This guy had attacked Ryan with a knife—and had to be pulled off.

"Jim, this was an act of a provocateur," Charles Garry complained. Jim Jones, sitting next to him on a fence rail in the center of the settlement, said little. "I don't know anything *worse* than what this guy did."

Jones, his eyes shaded as usual by sunglasses, was perfectly calm. Garry's agitation and anger seemed to have no effect on him.

"It destroys everything," Garry went on, "practically everything that's been done in the past two days. We've won a tremendous victory. This kind of action will destroy it."

Jim Jones took a few steps away from Garry. He bent down and picked up a cigarette wrapper from the ground. He walked about five or six steps and put it in a garbage can.

God, Garry thought, *this is strange.*

"Jim, who was that?" he asked, still trying to get Jones to respond to the facts of this attack on a congressman.

"That was Don Sly," Jones said in his velvet-soft voice.

"Oh, for Christ's sake." Garry had known the man before.

"Don is not an agent," Jones said, his face still an expressionless mask. "He's just upset about this thing. He's angry. Everybody's angry."

Again Garry thought, *this is strange.* The congressman's visit had been a sort of holiday for them; nobody was angry. *What was Jones talking about?*

A little later, lawyers Charles Garry and Mark Lane were some distance from the pavilion. They were walking and Lane told Garry what he'd heard from Gerry Parks, a Jonestowner who'd left with the congressman. "You don't know the things we put up with," Parks had said. He'd talked about long hours of work, about not getting meat unless visitors were coming. He said that if people were really free to leave, 200 or 300 would go.

Then an announcement came over the loudspeaker for a meeting. The two lawyers stopped their walk and headed back toward the pavilion. Everyone was headed that way.

When all the seating was filled inside the pavilion, the Peoples Temple members who came later crowded around the outside of the open-walled structure. Lane and Garry got inside under the tin roof. The mood was happy, not tense. The people still coming in laughed and kidded with the

lawyers, calling them by their first names, waving "hi."

Jones left the pavilion and went to a smaller pavilion fifty feet away. He watched his noisy crowd of disciples coming together under the tin roof.

The lawyers stepped over to talk with him.

"Don't you want to have music or something so they don't get bored?" Garry asked. "Those people are all sitting there. They've been sitting there some time."

"Let them sit there and think," Jones replied.

A woman came in and whispered into Jones' ear. Garry knew she was Jones' mistress. When she was finished and she'd left, Jones told the two lawyers to leave the area and go to the East Guesthouse, some distance away. They were puzzled.

"The reason I want you to leave," Jim Jones said, as if a decision had been made, "is because the tension is so high against you two, that something might happen to you if you're here."

Jones moved into the pavilion and sat down on his chair, under the sign that said THOSE WHO DO NOT REMEMBER THE PAST ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT. His people watched him closely.

He began speaking. The holiday mood vanished.

It was his familiar speech on enemies from the outside. On loyalty. On traitors from within. On suicide as the only way out.

He told them the congressman and the news reporters were dead, but that survivors had contacted the Army.

"The GDF (Guyanese Defense Force) will be here in 45 minutes," he said. "Everyone has to die. If you love me as much as I love you, we must all die or be destroyed from the outside."

Was it true? He'd said things like this so many times before. Usually, after he talked like this he made them drink his "potion" and then he calmed down and then they could leave the pavilion and get some food and rest.

His smooth, soft voice that felt like it was coming from inside of you, went on talking ceaselessly, the way it always did.

He spoke of the traitors who had abandoned him. If some left Jonestown, then others would leave. Other relatives would fly down and take away more members of the commune. It would be an attack from the conspiracy, it could not be allowed.

"The congressman is dead. The GDF will be here in 45 minutes. We must proceed with what we have to do. We must die with dignity."

"Who," he asked, "who is against taking their own life?"

"I have a right to do with my own life what I want," shouted a woman named Christine Miller, "and you have no right to take it away from me."

"I can't leave you behind," Jones retorted. "The GDF will torture you. They will castrate you. They will shoot you after they question you. I can't leave any member of my family behind."

Two elderly sisters met for the last time that afternoon in a cottage on the outskirts of Jonestown.

Hyacinth Thrush, 76, is afflicted with arthritis to the point of being crippled. Most afternoons, she stayed near her cottage. She was unable to move very far from it without help.

That Saturday afternoon, her sister, Emma, came to visit her. Emma was very quiet. She kissed Hyacinth on the cheek, as if she were saying goodbye, and then left.

Miss Thrush, who usually took a nap that time of day, hobbled into her bed and went to sleep.

The dissidents like Christine Miller—and there weren't many—were shouted down by the crowd.

Jones stopped pretending it was a debate and simply gave the order he'd given many times before, "Bring the potion." He watched calmly as Dr. Larry Schacht, with helpers, lugged the battered zinc tub out and onto a table at the front of the pavilion.

"This is the time to die with dignity," Jones' voice said, floating over the crowd.

Armed guards appeared at the back of the group just as the potion arrived. There was to be no backing away from the evil-looking Flavour-aid.

They had been armed and sent forth from a garrison tent over on the east, near the guesthouse where lawyers Lane and Garry were being watched.

"Nurses" arranged syringes on the table next to the purple liquid. Usually at "white nights" everyone drank from the paper cups. Then they brought out the paper cups, too.

"I'll see you in the next life," Jim Jones' voice rang out over the jungle. "I'm going to my rest. We'll finally be at peace."

Stanley Clayton, as far back in the crowd as he could be, watched the preparations with a sickening knowledge that many around him did not share: he knew this was not the usual run-

through. He looked around—at the jungle, so far away—at the glazed eyes of the guards with the automatic weapons—and wondered, what the hell can I do?

Odell Rhodes also stayed back near a fence. He wasn't sure, but something seemed to be wrong. Those syringes. They weren't usual. And Jones' words about the death of the congressman, it sounded . . . awfully . . . calm . . . final . . . real. He watched.

"Let the children be brought first," Jones' voice boomed.

There was a struggle right up front. Odell Rhodes saw it. A young woman, maybe 27, with an 18-month-old baby. She wouldn't bring the baby forward. She screamed. A "nurse" grabbed the infant, and held it up, forcing his jaws open. A jet of the purple liquid flashed into the toddler's mouth.

Babies first. This was unusual. Odell Rhodes was edgy. There was a nervous, mechanical, efficient quality about these security guards today.

The child's scream sounded, thin but terrifying, audible over the field as a death cry.

The baby was in convulsions now. Rhodes could see it. The mother was moaning. The nurse handed her the paper cup, held it to her lips. She drank.

A few minutes earlier, Lane and Garry had seen a dozen guards with weapons emerge from a nearby building. A guard named Pancho, Lane said later, told them he was going to die a revolutionary suicide. "We all will die."

"Not all," Lane interjected. "We'll stay behind and write up the story of what you did."

"How do we get out of here," Lane asked.

"Take a plane," Pancho said.

"We don't have a plane," Lane said.

He gave them directions through the bush to the main road to Kaituma. . .and he and the other guards, eager to be at the pavilion, ran off in that direction.

The "drinking of the potion", a ritual rehearsed over and over again at Jonestown in the preceding months, went forward. For the first few minutes, the crowd did not realize that this was really the fatal poison. Even the falling on the ground and convulsing had staged in previous practice runs.

This time, "nurses" led those who had drunk the purple drink away from the pavilion, so they would not fall down in front of the tubs and prevent others from drinking.

"Tell your children this is not painful," the calm, fatherly voice of Jim Jones advised over the loudspeakers. "Tell them we will all meet in a better place."

The poison was drunk in family groups. The children fell first, thrashing on the ground as the cyanide robbed all the oxygen from their blood and their brains were murdered, sending the small bodies into convulsions.

The mothers and fathers had these last sights on earth: their children falling unconscious, vomiting, bleeding at the mouth, then jerky thrashings in the mud, then stillness. And then each parent tumbled down the same stairs toward death: dizziness, nausea, staggering, unconsciousness. And

then convulsions. And then death.

Odell Rhodes, still back by the fence, saw a woman with a baby in her arms. The baby was shaking uncontrollably. The mother's face was all tears. "Take my baby!" she screamed. She held the baby out to him. "Take my baby!" And then she, too, fell to the ground and thrashed and thrashed and thrashed until she died next to the body of her baby.

Fewer were standing now. Many of the older people sat calmly . . . and stared at what was going on around them.

Some, of all ages, fought. Guards had to pin down a thirteen year-old girl named Judy Reynolds and pour the poison down her throat. Some we injected by force.

No one, so far as is known, was shot to death by the guards while trying to escape.

The death squads of "nurses" and "guards" moved through the slaughtering ground efficiently, kicking bodies to make sure they were dead and not feigning it.

Odell Rhodes could see families hugging each other, lying down together with their arms about each other, trying to stay together as death moved into their souls. Holding hands and dying.

Old friends hugged each other farewell for a minute or two and then fell unconscious side by side.

Charles Garry and Mark Lane, running straight into the bush, could hear screams behind them. More clearly, they could hear the voice of Jim

Jones, still booming into the less and less sentient wilderness his directions for death:

"Hurry. Hurry. Hurry."

Stanley Clayton saw many hundreds dead around him. He was one of the few standing, and many of them were guards or "nurses" checking bodies.

He imitated them. He went along poking the bodies of the dead, pretending he was checking.

He got behind the pavilion, near the camp's small library tent. There was a guard there. He went up and said to the guard "Now, I'm going to go." The guard hugged him, and turned away so he wouldn't have to see Clayton drink the fatal juice. As he turned, Clayton dived under the tent . . . and stayed there.

Dr. Schacht wanted a stethoscope. What for, in the middle of such insane carnage, no one would have been able to figure out. Perhaps some decent part of him remembered that doctors save lives; perhaps that part called "I want a stethoscope." He could not really have planned to go around listening for the heartbeats on 900 corpses.

A nurse walked through the crowd, back toward the medical building for the instrument. Odell Rhodes saw his chance. He followed her to help find it. The guards let them through. At the medical building, they separated. She searched the doctors office for the stethoscope—she said. Rhodes ducked behind a tent, and then slipped under a building and hid there.

No one saw what happened next, but they heard it happen.

In the jungle, running as quickly as a man of 50 and a man of 70 can do in a tropical rain forest, Lane and Garry heard the voice of the Rev. Jim Jones still booming through the loudspeakers over the fields of his dead followers, "Mother, Mother, Mother, Mother . . ."

Then there were three shots. There was no more voice.

The same shots were heard near the airstrip over in Port Kaituma. Those of Congressman Ryan's party who had survived the ambush were probably scared by the shots. They did not know that those three shots signaled the end of Jim Jones and his followers alike.

In the silence and the darkness that followed those gunshots, the few who had escaped moved deeper into the forest.

Stanley Clayton stayed hidden under a log.

Odell Rhodes kept walking toward the railroad tracks to Port Kaituma.

Jim Jones lay where he had fallen, his arms up beside his head, blood flowing down onto a pillow through the night.

Little John Victor Stoen, the six-year-old boy Jim Jones was so fond of, whom he said had his teeth and his bones—lay nearby, his features frozen in death.

The next morning, Hyacinth Thrush, 76, woke up alone in Jonestown.

She stayed in her cottage but no one came. She thought maybe they'd had another night meeting at the pavilion and were sleeping late. She waited, but by 11 o'clock she was too hungry to wait

longer. She pulled herself out of her cottage and managed to get across to the sun deck where the "seniors" at Jonestown gathered.

Her friends were lying on the deck. Her sister Emma was there. She tried to wake Emma up, but she couldn't. She kept trying to wake up Emma until the soldiers reached Jonestown, two days later.

WHEN NIGHTFALL CAME

Night comes suddenly in countries near the equator. Almost with a snap, the daylight gives way to blackness.

When nightfall came on Saturday, November 18, it brought a nightmarish peace to Jonestown and an ancient terror to the surrounding jungle.

In the center, around the crazy throne of Jim Jones, the cult members had fallen down, hand in hand. The terror there had swept the encampment clean of all human emotion.

Out in the bush, though, scores of American men and women hid in the darkness like hunted animals. They huddled under logs and crouched in waist-deep water among rushes and perched high in trees, fighting the urge to scream and call for help. Just waiting and breathing.

Tim Bogue, a seventeen-year-old youth who'd spent the last three years of his life in Jonestown, had been in one of the planes on the landing strip when the shooting began. He went to shut the plane's door, and a bullet smashed into his leg.

He hobbled back from the line of fire. He and the four girls in the plane with him stayed low until the shooting ended. The girls included Tim's older sister, Tina; a young man named Chris

O'Neal; and two of the Parks girls, Brenda and the little blonde girl, Tracy.

When it was quiet, they checked the wounds. Tim Bogue had been hit in the left leg. Tina had been hit also. Both were able to walk, though.

There was shouting outside. Someone was shouting the temple assassins were going to return with more guns and finish them all off.

Tim, who was only a boy of 15 when he left California for Guyana, took charge now. He helped the others out of the plane. They could see the bodies sprawled about. They headed straight for the woods, away from the dangerous open field of fire.

Into the Swamps

Tim Bogue led his group far into the swamps that night. They kept on going, suspecting as the night fell that they'd hear more shots, but not stopping.

Several months before, Tim Bogue had made another escape attempt from Jonestown. He'd decided that Jim Jones was going crazy, and he took off into the woods. He went twenty miles, but made the mistake of returning to a public road. Jones' security guards out in tractors, seized him. He was brought back to Jonestown with the barrel of a shotgun held against his back the entire way.

His punishment was severe. He and a friend who'd escaped were shackled in chains for three weeks and forced to work in the shackles 18 hours a day chopping wood. Others who had escaped had caught worse punishments, including a week's tor-

tured confinement in a box the size of a refrigerator crate.

Tim had made his escape plans firmer. He'd talked to the friendly Indians around Jonestown, who came into the settlement to trade. They showed him which plants were safe to eat. They taught him how to make his way through the jungle without going back onto the dangerous public roads. He learned what water was safe to drink and what wasn't.

Now, he led four others deeper into the jungle. They depended on him, and he didn't stop. Brenda Parks and her little sister, Tracy, had no one else to trust. Their mother, Pat Parks, lay dead on the runway they'd left in the daylight.

The five young people kept walking in the dark. They heard noises around them, noises that sounded like they were being followed. Tim remembered the tricks the local Indians had taught him about shaking a pursuer. He led the others in large circles and cross-backs through the forest. Despite increasingly painful wounds, they kept walking in circles through most of the night.

Jim Cobb sensed something was going wrong at the airstrip before the newsmen did, even before the firing started. He ducked behind a plane and ran for the jungle as the firing started. He could hear bullets whizzing by his head, he remembered later. As he got to the edge of the jungle, he looked back and could see gunmen firing shotguns at the heads of people on the ground.

He went 50 yards into the jungle and climbed a tree. He spent the night in the tree. He heard shots from Jonestown during the night, but didn't know what it was.

Robert Paul, 33, from New Orleans, had escaped from Jonestown during the Congressman's visit. Until he escaped, he'd worked as a woodcutter for the commune. He'd cut a secret path through the jungle during his wood-cutting chores, and that Saturday, he led ten others out of Jonestown while Ryan and the newsmen were being given the cook's tour. He knew that would be the only time when guns would be out of sight and escapees would have a head start on the "security patrols."

Bob Paul and the others walked 22 miles that day through the jungle. The usual afternoon downpour didn't stop them. They walked along the railroad tracks, and after some time were picked up by a train. On board, he learned the news of Ryan's ambush and death.

Bob Paul, who had left his wife and three children at the Peoples Temple that morning, knew or guessed what would happen. But when they reached a Guyanese army outpost and told the soldiers, it was already too late. All in Jonestown were dead.

The Cook under the Log

Stanley Clayton, the camp cook who was one of the last 100 alive in Jonestown, had rolled under the edge of a tent and made his way to the forest. As night fell, Clayton was hiding under a log. He heard some shots and guessed the guards were finishing off those who would not voluntarily take the poison.

When there was no more noise of any sort, Clayton came out from under the log and made his

way to the railroad tracks that lead to Port Kaituma. The girlfriend with whom he had emigrated to Jonestown was by then dead in the compound with all the rest. Clayton walked through the dark along the rail ties.

Those still on the airstrip who were still alive and who had not fled into the jungle began to get themselves organized. Dick Dwyer of the U.S. embassy, got a flashlight out of a pack and, just as night fell, went over his list of passengers. He marked the list:

- Five dead
- Five seriously injured
- Five less seriously injured
- Six missing
- Nine uninjured.

Dwyer, a husky man in khaki, took charge right away, despite the gunshot wound in his thigh. He told the ragged bunch of survivors that the pilot had radioed to Georgetown for help.

"You should all know there is a strong possibility we will be spending the night here," he said.

The news was discouraging. Would the temple fanatics return with more firepower and finish them all off?

But there was no time to waste worrying. Dwyer got the able-bodied organized into teams to carry the badly wounded into the brush at the side of the runway. A little later, after talking with the Guyanan army personnel guarding a grounded military plane near the end of the runway, Dwyer had the four most severely wounded carried to the army tent, where they would have armed protection. The soldiers had agreed to guard *them*, but anybody who could run away, the soldiers said,

would do best to do that.

There was some discussion about hiding in the tall grass, and about possibly dispersing the Americans to hide with different families in the village. The final decision was to have the slightly wounded spend the night in Sam's Disco, a primitive rum shop, while the able-bodied would take turns standing watch outside the army tent that held the wounded.

"We were repeatedly told that the Guyanese army was coming soon to help us," one newsman wrote later. "We waited for a plane to land. We waited for help, all the while fearing another attack from Jonestown."

Inside the Army tent went:

- Jackie Speier, the aide to Congressman Ryan who had made out her first will before the trip. She'd been found on her back, with an eight-inch chunk of her right thigh blown away, one arm shattered, and a bullet in her pelvis.
- Steve Sung, whose right arm had its muscles blown away by the shotgun blast that was aimed at his head. The gore had spattered so widely over his head the gunman must have thought he was dead.
- Anthony Katsiris, who was carried to the side of the runway with blood running down his face and a chest wound. (He is the brother of Maria Katsiris, a temple official who was Jim Jones' latest mistress.)

Numerous Guyanese townspeople had come out onto the airstrip after the shooting was over, to commiserate with the unfortunate Americans.

"Why," implored a small man in a wide-brimmed straw hat. "Why did they do this to you?"

"We don't know," said reporter Tim Reiterman.

Some Guyanese brought over water and rum for the injured. The less injured bandaged themselves up with shirts and belts, and the uninjured tried to stop the bleeding of the worse off.

Tim Reiterman recalled the Guyanese who helped them as "wonderful human beings, these compassionate men with shoeless children."

"We still were wounded and terrified in the middle of the South American jungle, but we had allies," Reiterman recalled in a San Francisco Examiner article.

When Dick Dwyer had gotten the message through to the Guyana government that military help was needed, and when the seriously injured were under military guard in the army tent, the less injured walked up the muddy main road, dragging their bags behind them to Sam's Disco.

Sam's Disco is a tin-roofed rum shop with black walls, a juke box, black lights and fluorescent hand-painted slogans and graffiti on the walls. A bench runs along one wall to a bar with shelves of Guyanese rum and whiskey. Bottles were set up, and villagers arrived to protect them from the Jonestown murderers.

The weapons these poor villagers brought were pitiful—a single shotgun, a machete, and a big knife. The newsmen, between them, had one long-bladed hunting knife that Steve Sung had brought for the trip. If the Americans attacked again, these Guyanese wouldn't be much use . . . but to the stunned American newsmen whose buddies lay dead on the airstrip, the bond with others and the offer of protection—that meant a lot.

In the tent, toward midnight, the four seriously injured moaned occasionally. Reiterman and Bob Flick (an NBC field producer, most of whose team had been murdered before his eyes) squatted outside the tent, hoping that Guyanese troops would arrive before daybreak.

"Periodically, a couple of times in response to moaning, we went into the tent," Reiterman said later. "But all that could be done was to make our patients more comfortable with aspirin, rum and water, or a re-arranging of bedclothes. We had no antibiotics."

Late that night, Jackie Speier moaned, and the newsman-guards got up off the damp ground and stuck their heads into the tent.

"Do you have anything for pain," she said.

"There is one pill wrapped in a paper by your head."

"I'd better save it," she said. "I'll take rum instead."

All the wounded lay on damp clothes on a dirty canvas floor. As Reiterman and Flick poured her the rum and prayed for morning, gas gangrene was developing in her right arm.

Back in Sam's Disco, the ambush survivors were either sleeping in a back room on floors and beds or else sitting around a kitchen table drinking strong coffee. There were reporters, former temple members, and relatives of temple members.

The discussion centered about their safety, of course. No one knew if the assassins would come back before the Guyanese soldiers made it there.

But the concensus among the former temple members was that Jones had ordered or at least approved the airport ambush, and Congressman Leo Ryan's murder.

Every truck that came by made them jump. But, Elaine, the wife of the rumhouse owner, told them each time the truck was owned by someone in the village. She knew all the trucks by sound.

The reporters heard about Jones' maniac idea of mass suicide for the first time then, in that 3 a.m. kitchen.

"You're going to see the worst carnage of your life," Harold Cordell told the newsmen, who were still in shock from what seemed like a massacre at the airstrip. "It's called revolutionary suicide."

"The theory," broke in Dale Parks, 27, who'd escaped from Jonestown with Congressman Ryan just 12 hours before, "is that you can go down in history saying you chose your way to go. It is your commitment to die rather than accept capitalism."

It must have seemed incredible to the newsmen who had flown down to South America on what seemed a junket to a zany religious commune. But then, Dale Park's sister-in-law Pat, was lying dead on the runway nearby.

Dale Parks, who'd had a hospital job once, changed the bandages on the newsmen and other survivors, pouring gin on the wounds as a disinfectant. Elaine, the owner's wife, tore up some of her curtains for bandages.

Gerry Parks, Dale's brother, spoke of the death of his wife that afternoon in the ambush.

"Her brain was all over me," he said. "A high-powered rifle caught her. She was down to 111 pounds. When she came over here, she was 137. She wasn't getting enough to eat."

Earlier that day, Patty Parks had balked at her husband's plan to leave with Ryan. Not that she didn't want to go, but she was afraid. Then she saw Jones' men pulling out their guns and she quickly changed her mind. "She finally knew it was coming down on us," said Parks.

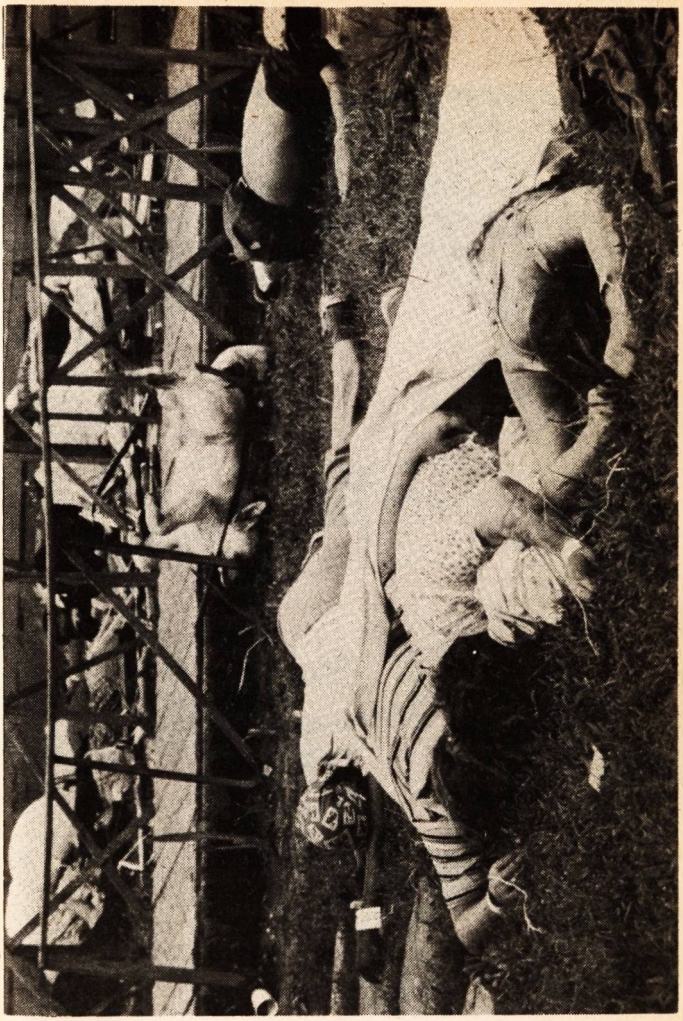
Unknown to Patty Parks, however, her decision to leave or to stay made little difference. Either way, for her, lay death. But that was not apparent Saturday afternoon and she had rushed off with her family and Ryan to what she thought was freedom.

A loud boom startled everyone at Sam's Disco. Some peeked out the windows, others cursed their lack of weapons. But then it was plain it was only a tree branch falling on the tin roof of the building. It was a long, long night.

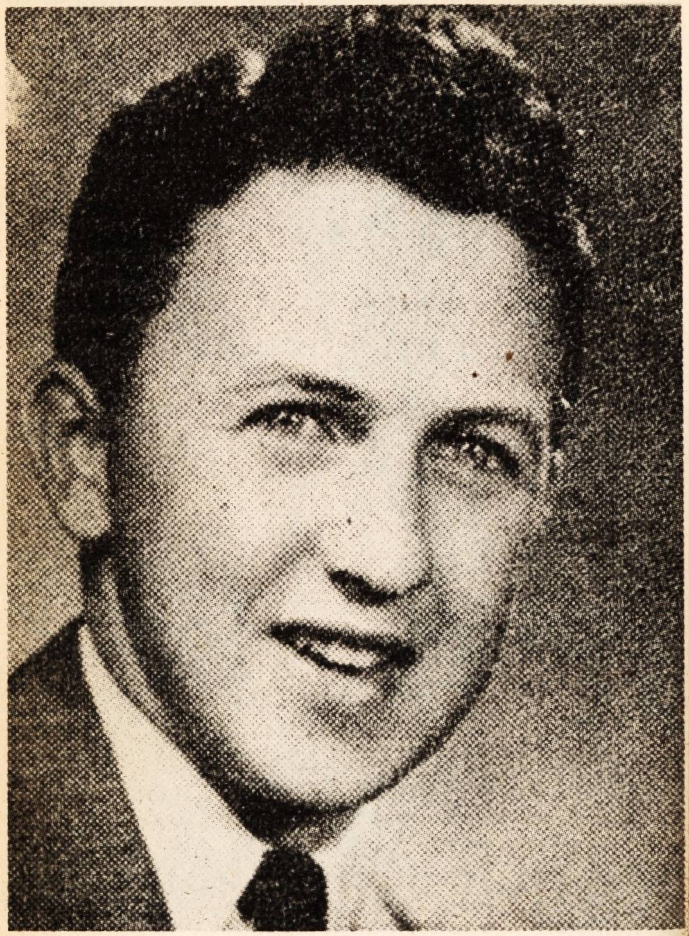
When the newsmen and the survivors greeted the dawn, they thought they had seen and been through the worst. Of course, that tragedy that they called the massacre at the airstrip was only a prelude to the biggest mass suicide since Biblical times.

About 8:30 a.m. Sunday, after numerous false alarms, Guyanan soldiers arrived to protect the survivors and to take them to arriving airplanes.

The further horror, six miles away in Jonestown, was yet undiscovered.



A Jonestown family hugs each other in a death embrace. On their wrists they tied I.D. tags before they drank poison.



Jim Jones in his high school yearbook. A quiet, studious lad, his six-syllable medical vocabulary awed his fellows, according to the yearbook. But he would drop plans for a medical career and lean to religion. He would begin his preaching within two years, and would marry within a year.

THE FOUL-MOUTHED "SAINT FRANCIS"

Jim Jones' magnetism, which would lead 900 persons to mass suicide in 1978, can be seen in his behavior 40 years earlier. In 1938, he was a boy who led odd processions of animals along the dreary streets of Lynn, Indiana. His way with animals reminded some neighbors of Saint Francis of Assisi.

The boy was born in 1931. His father was a partially disabled worker who met weekly with a fanatical local chapter of the Ku Klux Klan. Like so many hapless humans would, later in life, stray and injured animals fell prey to the boy's charms.

A cousin recalled seeing the boy wandering down a road in the backwater town of 1,300 persons or so. Trailing mutely behind would be a dog, a goat, a cat and perhaps a pig—oblivious to the oddness of their flock, mesmerized by the pudgy, foul-mouthed boy.

As he would remove society's thorns from the paws of drug addicts and criminals later, Jimmie Jones learned to cultivate this loyalty in the same manner. The animals rewarded his kindness with loyalty—a lesson Jones would not forget.

The feelings of power over other creatures soon yielded fantasies of more power. When one of his

animals died, the boy became the minister of their deaths. He would bury them and conduct eerie funeral services. He would bless their graves.

The power he learned to expect from animals he began to seek from humans. Ignored by a father intent upon bigotry, he became known as "the foul-mouthed Jones boy." He shouted obscenities at the homes of neighbors, and greeted his acquaintances and friends with greetings laced with obscenities. At the age of about 6, he greeted one chum, "Good morning, you son of a bitch." He was chased good-naturedly down the street, because most of the youths in town regarded his precocious vocabulary as a source of amusement.

His obscene language apparently never resulted in punishment.

At 16, he learned of a knew kind of magnetism he possessed—a sexual one. While attending high school in nearby Richmond and took a job at a hospital there. He took on a nurse as a sweetheart. She was Marceline Baldwin, at least four and perhaps six years his senior. Later, she became his wife.

And after finishing high school, he acquired perhaps the last of the major skills he would parlay into his empire—he learned how to lie.

In 1951, two years after he graduated from high school, he enrolled in Butler University in Indianapolis. He contended later that he graduated with an 'A' average in four years. Actually, poverty and other factors made college a parttime affair until he received his degree—in 1961.

From Jim Jones' childhood and adolescence one can now see ominous signs of what was to come. He had learned to channel his hypnotic magnetism

toward animals and, later, toward humans. He had learned that rescuing animals from danger and even death could earn their friendship. Later on, when he gathered a religious flock that included many misfits and underdogs and dreamers, they seemed to follow him with the same loyalty that the animals of his childhood did.

He put his fantasies of ministry into action at the age of 19. He first entered the pulpit a quiet youth. Soon, he cultivated the hypnotic oratical style which would mesmerize his followers for hours.

He had picked up his knowledge of religion from the Bible, as transferred to him on the lap of a neighbor. While his mother supported the family, little Jimmie was put in the care of a woman who lived across the street. Mrs. Myrtle Kennedy sat Jimmy Jones in her lap and recounted the fascinating Bible stories of David and Goliath and Noah's ark. This was born-again religion, based on forgiveness of sins.

On Sundays, young Jimmie Jones accompanied the family to the regular Sunday preaching. He attended Sunday school and a special evening service. He attended Bible courses Wednesdays. And when he left Lynn, Indiana, for good, he told his teacher he had been called to be a minister.

He would visit his religious instructor once before she died—in 1976. He stopped in Lynn while en route to Washington, D.C., with busloads of his followers. Myrtle Kennedy's daughter later said her mother "died happy that she had seen that day."

In high school, Jones was a quiet student. One former classmate later pooh-poohed a yearbook headlines which referred to his "six-syllable medi-

cal vocabulary" on the ground Jones said little as a high school student. In fact, the former companion said he had seemed serious enough to be a missionary, in hindsight.

Other accounts of Jones' high school days depict a quiet and serious youth bent on acquiring good grades and, ultimately, fulfill his mother's goal that he attend college. He once did intend to pursue a medical career.

Jim and Marceline became man and wife—at least that's what the minister called the youth and his girlfriend—in 1949, a few days after he graduated from high school.

The next year, he enrolled in Indiana University. And his ability to corrupt the truth with appearances became evident, according to his old roommate. The roommate during Jones' freshman year was Kenneth E. Lemons. He remembers Jones as a "maladjusted" youth who frequently consulted with his wife before making decisions. After the Guyana mass suicide was discovered, Lemons said the then Jim Jones he knew in college, "reflected the same terribly unbalanced tendencies that he did this week." At the age of 16, the youth who had delivered sermons while playing minister in Lynn, believed himself a messiah. He perused the Bible and frequently issued rambling monologues about religions. Even then, he had a superiority complex, Lemons said.

During one winter semester, Jones missed many classes because of illness. The illnesses, Lemons believes, were feigned. And Jones' ethics became evident during exams. One time, Jones did nothing but doddle in the test booklet. After handing it in without signing it, he denied to the teacher ever

having taken the test. He swore he skipped the class because of illness, Lemons recalled. The doodlings in the test booklet gave him away.

According to Indiana University records, Jones spent five semesters there. He eventually acquired a degree from Butler University.

Jones about this time abandoned his goal of a medical career in favor of one in "faith-healing. He did so not out of any religious fervor, his wife later said, but because he came to understand the possibility of effecting social change through the ministry. And his acquisition of political convictions perhaps represents the last significant intellectual development of his adolescence..

At the age of 18, Jones told his wife that his hero was Mao Tse-Tung, who had recently overthrown the government of Nationalist China. Within three years, according to his wife, he had become convinced that such dramatic social changes could be effected only by unifying people through religion.

He eventually developed into a minister of social reform, whose liberal views earned many catcalls, but also much publicity. He preached brotherhood and socialism, and adopted eight children of various racial backgrounds.

POWER TO THE PASTOR

Jim Jones entered public life in Indianapolis as a shy nineteen year old. He would leave it 15 years later, the overseer of a budding empire which had increased his pastoral power and given him new political and financial power.

His first public sermons were delivered in a fundamentalist congregation where he'd become a member and occasional preacher. He later became an associate pastor at the Lauren Street Tabernacle in Indianapolis. He left there, according to his wife, after a dispute with the church's all-white board over admitting blacks to the services. His sermons up to that point had frequently centered on the then-unusual topics of the plight of the poor and minorities. They frequently drew jeers and catcalls.

Jones opened his first Peoples Temple in 1956, and established its first permanent home a year later when he bought an old synagogue. He sold monkeys to help raise money for the temple.

After establishing the temple, Jones immediately cultivated and maintained a large inter-racial congregation—something previously unheard of in a city known for racism.

His steadily increasing congregation led to greater activity in clerical and civic affairs. He

opened soup kitchens for the poor—he called them "free restaurants." He also established facilities for the elderly, including nursing homes, and a job placement staff.

As his church developed, his wife worked closely with him on many of the projects. The couple bore a son and named him Stephen Ghandi Jones. Later, they adopted several children of different nationalities.

As his popularity with the masses increased, so did his political influence. Local politicians realized what Jones himself would come to realize too—that Jimmie Jones controlled such a large sector of the population voting bloc. When the post of Human Rights Commissioner came open, Jones solicited and received the job. But the decision to take the job in 1960 may have been responsible in part for his decision five years later to leave town. Segregationists chanting "nigger-lover get out of town" harassed him by throwing explosives and rocks into his yard.

When he finally left Indianapolis, he branded the city "racist." He had served only 18 months as Human Rights Commissioner.

In that job, Jones handled only minor incidents with small businesses. These cases entailed little risk of serious entanglements with city powers, but did provide Jones with public relations boosts among blacks in the city.

In his years in the public spotlight in Indianapolis, Jones experienced a dramatic rise in power and popularity. But there also surfaced several disturbing hints of abuses—similar to the charges that would surface in Guyana in the aftermath of the mass death there.

It was during this period, for instance, that Jim

Jones first began to feel delusions of power. He began performing "miracles" for his congregations. He would "cure" cancer victims, and "bring back" the dead.

The Big Lie

"Jim believed in the big lie, that if you tell the lie long enough and loud enough, everyone will believe it," said Mike Cartmell, a former associate minister of Jones'. "And the big lie worked so well that ultimately Jones believed it and lost control. . . . The bigger it gets, the thinner it gets."

It also became clear in this period that Jones' solicitation of the black public may not have indicated a lack of bigotry. Frequently he would address predominantly black audiences as "You niggers." Then, as if realizing a mistake, he would say, "Of course, I'm a nigger too." Then he'd continue.

However, relatives have discounted all reports—possibly fostered intentionally by Jones himself—that he had any black or American Indian blood in him. Jones had contended on occasion that he was half Cherokee.

Jones probably contributed to the notion he had some black ancestry by referring to "we blacks" in many of his speeches to black audiences.

And Jones created a stir when he allowed himself to be treated for exhaustion by a black physician, E.P. Thomas. He was assigned to a black ward at a local Methodist hospital because his doctor was black. However, when hospital officials told Jones he would be moved to a white ward,

Jones objected and said he would call newsmen to raise a fuss about the integration policies of the hospital.

The hospital was integrated immediately, the story concludes.

"The Temple Impressed Me"

As he headed into Indiana for a religious "retreat" Ross Case had no way of knowing he was about to meet one of the most controversial figures of his life.

It was 1959 and he was 31, minister to the congregation of First Christian Church in Mason City, Illinois. He was taking time out from his usual routine for this "retreat" near Indianapolis.

Jim Jones was a few years younger, 28, and he was a figure in the clerical life of Indianapolis by that time. With his wife, Jones was helping the poor, black and white, in very practical ways. They ran soup kitchens, helped find jobs for the poor and set up services for the elderly.

It was the retreat that brought the Revs. Jim Jones and Ross Case together. A black lay preacher, Beatrice Stafford, introduced them.

"The Peoples Temple that Jim had established there impressed me, first because of its integrated fellowship and second, because of what it did for the poor, with its free restaurant, free grocery center and free clothing center," Case said.

Jones impressed him enough that they talked about working together: "We agreed I would come with him after I felt free of my pastoral responsibilities. So, two years later, I returned and began working with him in Indianapolis.

"He had a magnetic personality. Charisma, yes. I would say he has charisma. Jim has a way of seeming so very concerned about you."

Ross Case was an ordained minister of the Disciples of Christ Church. The Peoples Temple was affiliated with that church.

The Disciples Church was born in the early 1800s, making it the oldest such indigenous movement in the country. Church administrators allow complete autonomy to the member congregations and one of its primary tenets is freedom of individual opinion. Each member can interpret Scripture as he sees fit. There is no formal catechism and no formal ritual.

It was the loose kind of framework within which Jim Jones could work. At his side as the decade of the '60s broke were Archie Ijames, a black man who'd been with Jones since 1954, and Ross Case.

Some suspected that Jones had appealed to masses of people in an effort to build a broad political base. After leaving Indianapolis for California, his temple would comprise an amazing 15 percent of the voting bloc in Mendocino County. Politicians there would recognize Jones and his temple as a major political factor.

It was also during the Indianapolis period that Jones' promiscuity became a matter of public discussion. According to widespread reports, his wife became disenchanted over Jones' reportedly frequent sexual encounters with younger females in his congregation. Jones would later say he felt "dirty" after intercourse with his wife, and that he preferred younger women because they were easier to dominate than his wife.

Jones, after moving his cult to California and then to Guyana, would reportedly forbid his con-

gregation members sexual relations, even with their spouses, while demanding that both men and women in his congregation submit to his often violent sexual whims.

The propriety of Jones' many financial ventures also came under critical scrutiny during his public life in Indianapolis. His nursing homes in particular offered inadequate care and, in many cases, reportedly abused elderly patients.

Dortha Hindeman said in 1960 she placed her then 80-year-old grandmother in one of two Indianapolis Peoples Temple nursing homes after hearing reports of the loving care they offered patients.

She later learned, however, that "it was terrible. Jones was mistreating them. He made patients go to his services." In some cases, he loaded them on to buses to attend the services, regardless of their physical conditions, she added.

Her mother was kept in a room with seven other elderly women, Ms. Hindeman said. It smelled of urine.

However, the nursing homes always took the weekly Social Security checks of the patients, she added. Officials were aghast to learn that thousands of dollars in Social Security and welfare checks were flowing into the Peoples Temple in Guyana each month before it wiped itself out.

So Jones' reputation showed signs of tarnish even before he left Indianapolis. His motives and financial practices had been called into question, and his voracious sexual appetite was becoming a matter of public record.

Edward Mueller, whose mother began following Jones in 1952, said his mother sold her house, furniture and property and gave the profits to Jones.

He estimated his mother's total donation at $26,000. Again, this incident early in the history of the Peoples Temple hinted at more dramatic events in the future. Officials investigating the Guyana mass suicide learned that members of the temple had, in many cases, sold their life's belongings and donated the proceeds to the temple.

"When I first met Jimmie Jones, he was raising monkeys and had a beat-up Ford," Mueller recalled. "Two years later, he had his own church, nursing home, a Cadillac and several pieces of property. The only difference between him and a gangster is he used a Bible instead of a gun," he said.

"Other than being a con man, he seemed like a decent sort of fellow," Mueller added.

A SOJOURN IN "HEAVEN" WITH FATHER DIVINE

Jones in Indianapolis, was an increasingly powerful minister who wanted to help the poor. He built up a modest congregation.

Then he heard of Father Divine—a pudgy black man who commanded the worship of tens of thousands; an elderly black messiah who came from inconceivable poverty to unspeakable power.

A man they called God.

Jones was fascinated. He piled many of his young followers into a bus and went to a Father Divine service in Philadelphia. He would see for himself.

What he saw was power. And, slowly, Jones grew to like what he saw.

When Jones scouted Father Divine in Philadelphia in the 1950s, Father Divine had been preaching for more than half a century. He was born George Baker near Savannah, Georgia, probably in 1877. He began preaching around the turn of the century, in the wild and frenzied style of the best southern-black-messiah tradition.

He established his first "heaven" in Sayville on Long Island, New York, in 1919. A "heaven" was a communal settlement in which Father Divine's followers would live under a strict moral code estab-

lished by the leader. The code called for abstinence from sex, drugs, liquor and cosmetics. It also called for utter racial equality.

Eventually more than 170 of these "heavens" were established, mostly in the Philadelphia and New York City areas. During his most popular and powerful years, Father Divine had more than half a million followers.

To those 500,000 people, Father Divine was God, Dean of the Universe and Harnesser of Atomic Energy.

The thundering orator worked his huge followings into frenzies which, in turn, stimulated their generosity. His predominantly black and poor following made available to him a fortune of more than $1.5 million, although he himself owned nothing.

Many of these aspects of Father Divine's ministry were immediately clear to Jones when he saw the preacher in action at the peak of his popularity.

And the effect of this deified ministry on Jones was staggering.

After his return to Indianapolis, Jones would expand and revel in the power he was beginning to feel as a result of his increasingly big and prosperous ministry. The young liberal minister with socialist and Marxist leanings—as a direct result of his introduction to power religion—evolved into a wheeling and dealing capitalist.

He adopted many customs similar to Father Divine's. He told his followers to call him "Father." He would demand that title until the day he died.

He learned to harness his powers—the magnetism he had first used on animals in Lynn was consciously directed at his followers. He adopted

some of Father Divine's frenzied preaching style. Taking Father Divine's use of gospel music in his services as a cue, he later included brash and brassy rock music in his services.

One of Jones' former associates, Ross Case, recalled that Jones was obsessed with the loyalty Father Divine commanded from his followers. "He was always talking about sex, or Father Divine or Daddy Grace, and he was envious of how they were adored by their people and the absolute loyalty they got. Jim wanted all that affection and loyalty for himself."

One former cult member, who was 14 years old at the time, remembered accompanying Jim Jones on the trip to Philadelphia. "I know this is when he got the idea to play God," said Judy Naughton of Franklin, Indiana. "Not too long after that, I got out."

Indeed, Jim Jones' divine opinion of himself was the most significant result of his trip to Philadelphia. He saw there that Father Divine—a man with many of the same natural ministerial gifts as Jim Jones—had taken those gifts and taken them one step beyond Jones.

He had become God.

Why not Jim Jones?

The changes became noticeable almost immediately. In addition to requesting the title of "Father," his leadership leaned more and more toward autocratic rule. He began to value power for its own merits, not as a tool for his ministry.

It was shortly after this period that Jones began performing his "miracles." Confederates at services would pretend to vomit or defecate "cancer," and would announce to delirious Jones followers that

they had been cured. Only the few with front row seats and skeptical minds could recognize the "cancers" as blood-soaked tissues and congealed chicken innards.

But more important than his "miracles" was Jones attitude toward them. He began to believe them himself. His lifelong tendency toward mendacity again played a prominent role in his development; his own accounts of these "miracles" became even less credible than the miracles themselves.

And as his inflated self-image took stronger and deeper roots, he became increasingly paranoid. Even the most petty criticisms of Jones or his church triggered violent outbursts and brisk interrogations in response. And, in what may be regarded as one of the earliest hints of repressive measures to come in his California and Guyana temples, Jones instituted an "interrogation committee" to investigate challenges to his authority.

Thomas Dickson of Tampa, Fla., served on one "interrogation committee." Dickson was an associate minister in the temple during the late '50s. "He always said everybody ought to love him and if they didn't, he'd get awfully violent—not physically, but verbally, sometimes cursing," Dickson recalled. Later, according to accounts from California and Guyana, he would heap physical violence onto the host of punishments he had devised for all who disputed his authority.

Those who questioned his authority would be subject to extensive questioning up to several hours, Dickson added. Frequently, the sessions would attempt to unearth imagined plots against the church.

Jones' increasing paranoia was also evident in

his most morbid fascination: the possibility of a nuclear war. He would pore over magazine articles on the subject—which were popular and common in the days during and immediately after the "Cold War." He would visit and establish communes in areas one article claimed were comparatively safe in case of nuclear attacks—first, Ukiah, California, and then Guyana.

His elevation of himself to God affected his subject matter for sermons. His style in delivering his message grew equally grandiose. His rejections of the Bible became more frequent and more telling. "He'd take the Bible—he called it the black book—and throw it on the floor and say, 'Too many people are looking at this instead of looking at me,' " said Thomas Dickson. His sermons became longer—they would eventually consume up to eight hours in Guyana—and they became more self-indulgent.

His financial dealings also reflected his opinion of himself as God. During his Indiana ministry, several questionable exchanges of property took place which, it has been suggested, reflect Jones equation of himself with the church.

"There was evidence that he did have properties transferred from himself rather than the church, but from his point of view, he was the church," said Barton Hunter, a church official when many of the dubious transactions took place.

"As he saw it, he was better able to handle the funds rather then the church. He saw himself as the official embodiment of the church. His contention was, 'I am the church,' " Hunter concluded.

The savior of the poor and underprivileged had dramatically transformed into a financial wizard in the best tradition of capitalistic razzle dazzle.

He established several corporations and became influential in the real estate market. His profitable Jim-Lu-Mar Corp. made its money without the benefit of accurate or scrupulous bookkeeping—prompting one accountant to say an Internal Revenue Service inspection of the books might well prove harrowing.

Once, after acquiring more property, he shrewdly instructed his associate Ross Case to "put this one under Christian Assemblies, because Wings of Deliverance won't stand investigation." The dizzying financial entanglements of Jim Jones spawned religiously named but profitable corporations.

After his epiphany at Father Divine's service confiscation of wealth became commonplace in the Peoples Temple. Jones' adherents were expected to turn over all their possessions and money to the church, which had since become Jones. Jones began confiscating the Social Security checks of his nursing home patients. Both of these practices continued until the extinction of the cult. Officials probing the Guyana death scene found stacks of uncashed checks. It was also learned that an amazing $65,000 a month was flowing into the Guyana settlement. Presumably, few checks reached the intended recipients who probably slaved in the fields of Jonestown.

Local officials received reports of Jones's questionable dealings, but they wouldn't or couldn't prevent further violations. Indianapolis officials initiated an investigation into real estate transfers from temple members to Jones, but criminal action never resulted.

As was later the case in California, it is proba-

ble that Jones' tremendous political clout, the large and malleable bloc of voters he controlled, enabled him to escape without punishment. But it is also likely that Jones' increasingly hypnotic powers also helped him survive the financial shenanigans by which the Peoples Temple prospered. His congregation increased dramatically after his adoption of Father Divine's manner and self-image. His oratorical powers were also heightened. And, because he was rapidly coming to believe in himself as God, his self-confidence knew no limits.

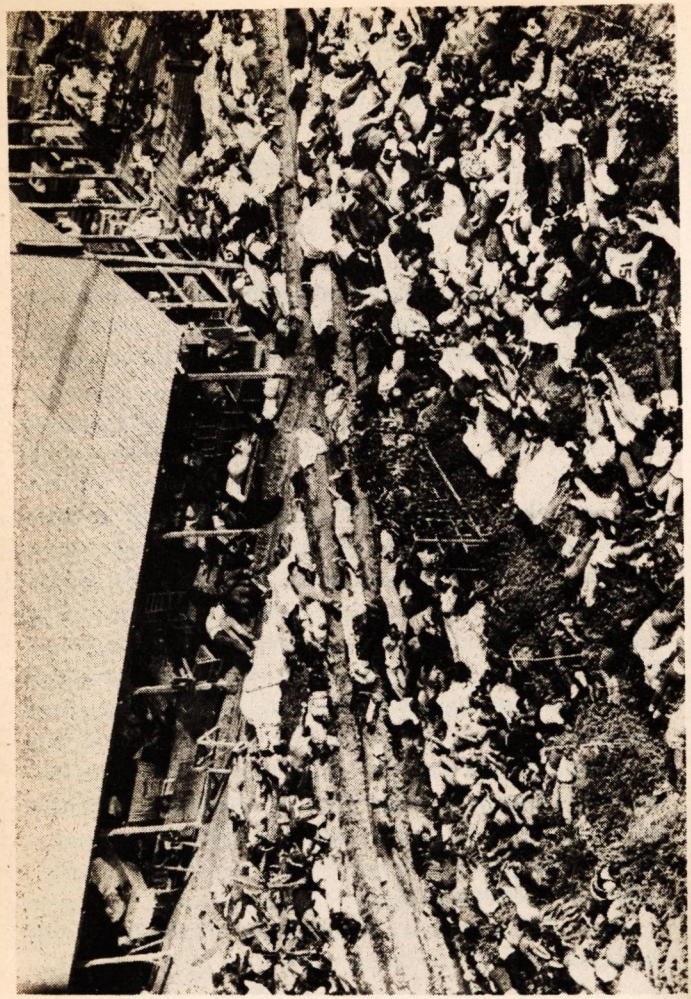
So he assimilated the style of Father Divine and carried it off successfully. After Father Divine died in 1965, Jones would proclaim that Father Divine—like Jesus Christ and Lenin—had entered his soul. In fact, many of Father Divine adherents would join Jones' temple after their leader's death.

The impact of Jones' strange emulation of Father Divine can not be overestimated. Based on Father Divine's example, Jim Jones learned that the power he already held over his followers could be increased dramatically if they worshipped him as God. He learned that this power could be parlayed into even greater wealth—simply by having his followers give their money to God.

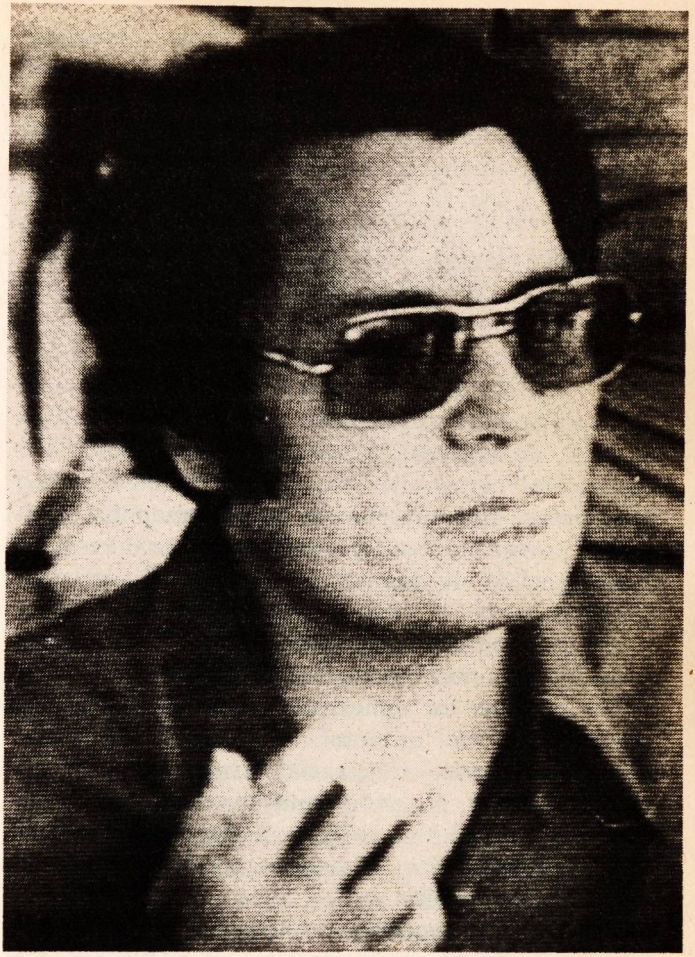
God was Jim Jones.

Jim Jones was God.

This, Jim Jones realized, was an idea to ride until the end of his life.



This aerial view of the Jonestown settlement shows the dead bodies sprawled virtually all around the camp's pavilion.



Peoples Temple leader Jim Jones gestures while speaking to reporters just a few hours before the reporters were slain in an ambush. Jones, questioned about a cult member's note asking to leave, bristled, saying, "All I want is peace."

"GO OUT AND PREACH *ME*," JIM JONES SAID, "AND I'LL BACK IT UP WITH MIRACLES."

Jones profited financially, and his ego profited as well, during his 15 years in Indianapolis. His ministerial personality was firmly molded during this period. But the climate in Indianapolis eventually proved unbearable and, for several reasons, Jones packed up his temple and sought greener pastures.

He selected the tiny community of Ukiah in rural Mendocino County, California.

The reasons for Jones' departure from Indiana are involved and numerous. For one thing, Jones grew bitter over the racist atmosphere in Indianapolis. He, his wife and his adopted family continued to be the subject of racist abuse from city bigots; and they also were laughing stocks in some black quarters.

His financial dealings produced some additional pressures which surely contributed to his decision to leave the town he would brand as "racist."

But the direct cause of his departure was a "vision" he experienced in September of 1961. Indianapolis would be destroyed in a holocaust in 1967. Later, perhaps spurred by his own fascination with nuclear weapons, he would say, that the

holocaust would be the explosion of a nuclear bomb.

Jones' colleague, Rev. Ross Case remembers that, after that vision, "I began pushing the idea of moving the church to safety. I had no question in my mind that if Jim Jones said he had a vision, he did have a vision."

Jones had read a magazine article listing the nine safest places in the world in case of a nuclear attack. One was in Brazil—a relatively short distance from his eventual settlement in Guyana. The other was in California, no far from Ukiah.

Exodus to California

In 1965, the same year Father Divine died in Pennsylvania, Jim Jones loaded 145 of his followers onto buses and transplanted his temple to California. Among them was a devoted family named Parks who would later follow Jones to a new continent and an agricultural experiment in socialism named Jonestown.

In Ukiah, Jones found a town with a population of 12,000 persons, the seat of rural Mendocino County. It is largely agricultural, with a $2 million annual yield of pears its economic staple.

It took some time to set down roots. While Jones negotiated to no avail to buy a Baptist church, the congregation met in a local fairgrounds. They were about half black and a subject of some initial racially motivated dismay in the community. Later they purchased land in the nearby Redwood Valley, and met in a garage.

But financial rebirth was inevitable for Jones, who had lost none of his organizational wizardry. The congregation, including the blacks, came to be

accepted and respected members of the community. The congregation built itself an impressive redwood church with stained glass windows, and even added a swimming pool. Value: an estimated 3½ million dollars!

By this time, the group's political potential was becoming apparent. In the sparsely populated county, the sudden influx of new voters represented a startling percentage of the vote there. Jones parlayed his power into an appointment to the county grand jury a year after his arrival.

Using fund-raising techniques imported from Indianapolis, the congregation soon raised needed money. Welfare checks were confiscated by the church until Jones got caught and was forced to stop the practice. Members of the congregation turned their possessions and paychecks over to the church, and their land would be sold for the church. Eventually, the temple acquired 25 deeds in Mendocino County, according to county records.

And Jones also continued his drive for new members. Each weekend, he would cram his followers onto buses and criss-cross first California and then the country to conduct services. The temple members would attend all the services to create an inflated impression of Jones' popularity. And Jones would always try to captivate and capture new temple members.

Ukiah eventually accepted the temple, but it didn't earn complete credibility until one of the most respected men in the community joined its ranks.

Timothy Stoen, a liberal deputy district attorney, began to attend temple services in October, 1968, because he admired their emphasis on the plight of the poor. Within a year, he had sold all his possessions and donated the proceeds to the

temple.

Stoen's conversion was a clear breakthrough for Jones in Ukiah. "He (Stoen) was highly respected in the community," recalled Thomas E. Martin, a county probation officer, "and this gave the church instant credence."

So the complexion of the temple membership underwent a gradual change. The crew of paupers and down-and-outers Jones had imported from Indiana was supplemented by businessmen and community figures. The Peoples Temple had effected a subtle change in its image. By the early 1970s, the temple included 5,000 members, and that figure would be quadrupled when the church moved to San Francisco, it would claim.

But while the church continued operating as it had in Indianapolis with only superficial alterations, Jones changed dramatically. The thoughts Father Divine had instilled in him grew stronger; the madness which had festered within him for years erupted.

Jones proclaimed he was God.

"I found out that he had some pretty grandiose ideas about himself," said Ross Case. "That he was the reincarnation of Jesus. Jim . . . had turned completely against the Bible. He was denouncing it."

Jones' wife one time told how he'd slammed a Bible down on a table yelling, "I've got to destroy this paper idol."

One day, Jones visited Case at home.

"Ross, do you think they have any Buddhist or Hindu teaching in Ukiah?" Case said he doubted it.

"Well, that's all right. We'll have to have our own church, anyhow."

Soon after, Case received a letter from a temple member who repeated Jim Jones' latest mandate: "Go out and preach me, and I'll back it up with miracles."

Case discussed the direction of the temple with Archie James, Jones' assistant, who said, "In the past we had allowed wide latitude of beliefs in our group. We can't do that anymore. For my part, I feel I must submit my mind completely to James Jones."

"Archie, are you still a Christian?" Case inquired.

"No, I'm not," James replied. "I'm a universalist."

All of this disturbed Ross Case.

"I had become part of the Peoples Temple because I felt I could follow Jesus more perfectly because of its integrated fellowship and concern for human welfare. But then I realized I had to withdraw myself from them."

The same year that Jim Jones moved his congregation to Ukiah, Ross Case split from him.

Meanwhile, Jones' paranoia accelerated to the point where the interrogations of members in Indiana became violent beatings of members in California.

His sexual aberrations became even more evident, as he commanded sexual services from both men and women, and denied others those privileges.

The demands made of temple members became even more severe than they had been in Indiana.

Temple members were required to devote their time and loyalty solely to Jones. His 100 closest aides were organized into a planning commission

which met at least once a week in marathon sessions. Sometimes, commission members had to go to work after all-night sessions with Jones.

A typical commission meeting. "We'd sit squeezed into the room and couldn't even go to the bathroom," recalled Al Mills, former membership chairman of the Peoples Temple, "While Jones sat in an overstuffed chair, eating fruits and bits of steak at will because he said he had low blood sugar and had to have proteins to keep his strength."

Temple members submitted schedules that detailed their activities for 24 hours a day. Some were given only $2 a week to live on. Jones had begun providing shelter for some of his followers, a hint of the communal living arrangement that lay in the future.

Jones' paranoia increased steadily. Members of the temple attended "catharsis sessions" at which they were ridiculed and beaten. "He said the CIA was out to get us," added former member Fannie Mobley, and new members were searched for weapons.

A girl who telephoned her parents was whipped. So was a four year old who didn't finish his food.

But the most noticeable and most significant change in Jones was in his proclamations on God.

"I've Raised 43 People from the Dead"

Jones' "miracles" became more extravagant. He told one religion writer he had raised 43 persons from the dead. He contended openly that Father Divine had entered his soul. He even appeared

once in a blood-stained shirt with a bullet hole in it, saying he had been shot in the chest but not injured. He couldn't be killed, he said.

A temple pamphlet said no temple member had ever died.

More and more, Jones began to command the sexual services of his followers. He once said that each temple member had to admit being a homosexual or a lesbian, and made temple members sign phony confessions to crimes such as rape, child molestation and murder.

These were apparently efforts to create ammunition for later blackmail.

"Jones realized the power of sex in destroying stable family relationships," former aide Mike Cartmell said. "In some cults, you have communal living. In Peoples Temple, Jones, like Father Divine, made himself the only legitimate object of sexual desire."

Jones also admitted the sexual encounters he forced upon his adherents were intended to focus their interest on him, Cartmell added.

But Jones' increasingly erratic behavior and autocratic treatment of his disciples remained hidden from the public eye. The public saw, instead, the same liberal benefactor who had graced Indianapolis.

Jones readily greased the palms of local politicians, according to some rumors, and would later try to curry the favor of the press by massive donations to freedom of the press crusades. Both ploys worked.

The services conducted throughout California and the country—they sometimes went to Seattle—continued to depict only the charismatic leader who seemed genuinely concerned with the

people. Newcomers were dazzled with rock music and encouraging sermons. Jones would have members sing a song of Father Divine:

"Minds and attention
Love and devotion
All directed to you
It's true
I never thought I'd be living in
Heaven
today
Living with God in the body
Who is ruling and reigning
And having his way.

That described it, according to temple member Mike Cartmell, "with Jones ruling and reigning and having his way." It brought new members.

So Jones found the good life in California. He soon realized his traveling religion would make more money and attract more members if it was based in a larger city—say, San Francisco. He bought a church there and moved in 1971 after six successful years in Ukiah.

The preacher had refined his political skills in Ukiah, succeeding with the locals more than he had in Indianapolis. He continued to hone his oratorical powers. And the charm he had always exuded to generate a following continued to attract troubled people already ripe for a change. Jones offered them a balm for their souls, a calm they had sought but not found on their own.

But signs of strain continued to appear. He ranted about his sexual prowess; his lust increased; he became less rational. His miracles became less credible, yet he began to believe in them more. The demands he placed on his congregation became more taxing.

And his paranoia grew. He was moving inexorably toward his final collapse.

But because his skills grew in stride with his personal difficulties, the temple's public image remained clean. The Peoples' Temple would not be rocked at its foundations until August, 1977, six years after the move to San Francisco, when the press would get wind of its techniques and its leader.

FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS GIVEN: JOHN VICTOR STOEN

One month after Christmas—on January 25, 1972—a healthy and squalling baby boy was born to Grace and Tim Stoen.

He arrived in a hospital maternity section in Santa Rosa, during a time when his parents lives were on the upswing. Tim was already on in the inner circle of an increasingly powerful "church" and Grace had begun moving up rapidly there. It was the year after Jim Jones had bought his new church in San Francisco and moved his religion there. Jones was building political power as well as larger congregations.

It was a delightful time. Grace and Tim named their baby John Victor Stoen. Whether or not they envisioned great things for their baby, they must have hoped for a happy childhood and a long life. What a beauty he was! The way his tiny fingers had a life of their own, grasping Tim's pinkie so firmly . . . . And when Grace held the baby, the way his face turned instinctively and his lips found the nipple and his eyes closed in peace. . . .

Maybe it was a blessing for Grace and Tim Stoen that they could foresee the future no better than little John Victor. Circumstances in the Peoples Temple were going to change. The power

of Jim Jones was going to be turned against them. They could not have foreseen that the very beauty of this boy named John Victor might bring on his death—and the downfall of the Peoples Temple—and the death by gunshot and cyanide of Jim Jones and 900 followers.

John Victor Stoen was to grow up in the middle of the church, raised by his parents, Jones and other members of the congregation. With them, he'd take his first steps, say his first words. Probably, like other followers, he learned to call Jim Jones "Dad."

Apparently, his parents didn't mind that. Several times over the next few years, his mother gave custody of him away, on paper, to the temple. She surrendered custody as a test of loyalty. And once, Tim Stoen signed another strange document having to do with the boy. Jim Jones presented it to him in 1972:

"I entreated my beloved pastor, James W. Jones, to sire a child by my wife Grace Lucy (Gretch) Stoen, who has previously at my insistence, reluctantly but graciously consented thereto . . . my reason for requesting James W. Jones to do this is that I wanted my child to be fathered, if not by me, by the most compassionate, honest and courageous human being."

A few years later, Tim Stoen would be in agony over those words.

Tim Stoen had a lot to do with the making—and the breaking—of Jim Jones. In the end, it was a costly relationship for both of them.

In the late '60s, shortly after Jones had moved his temple to Redwood Valley, Tim Stoen was ear-

nest, politically liberal and a graduate of Stanford University Law School. He also was a deputy district attorney for Mendocino County.

And, in 1966, Jones was named chairman of the county grand jury.

Stoen took an interest in the smooth-talking reverend's work in behalf of the poor. The handsome, well-thought-of minister had drawn respect, if not much of a flock, from local circles.

Stoen, just past 30, said he began to go to the services because Jones was doing so much for the poor. "Somebody's got to be building a community based on trust in the world, and I was struck by him."

It was the late 1960s. The Vietnam war raged nightly into the homes of Americans. Students tore up the campuses. Politicians tore up the public trust. It was the decade that killed John Kennedy. Soon, it would claim his brother Bobby. And Martin Luther King Jr. It was the decade that put Richard Nixon in the presidency.

Given the events of the public arena, Jones' appeal resided in his self-effacing gospel and in his espousal of social equality for all races. His let-us-work-this-out-together stance. At first, that's what drew his followers, disenfranchised blacks of all ages and alienated young whites of the upper middle class.

Some observers say Tim Stoen's enrollment in the Peoples Temple gave it heightened stature in Redwood Valley. Until then, while they may have respected Jones and his church, the locals stayed away. To some, membership by Stoen helped bridge the credibility gap in the Peoples Temple.

Young, talented, smart and white, Stoen rose quickly within the temple's power structure. He

became Jones' lawyer. Eventually, he became a "banker" moving millions of dollars into foreign accounts. He joined the elite, privileged inner circle. As such, he committed himself to the enhancement of Jim Jones' powers, and achieved great power himself within the group.

In one letter to a reporter, he called himself "assistant to the prophet" and set about glorifying his leader:

"Jim has been the means by which more than 40 persons have literally been brought back from the dead this year. When I first came into the church, I was the conventional skeptic. But I must be honest. I have seen Jim revive people stiff as a board... Jim will go up to such a person and say something like 'I love you' or 'I need you' and immediately the vital signs reappear. He feels such a person can feel love in his subconscious, even after dying."

When Grace Lucy took Tim Stoen for better or worse as her husband in 1970, she also took the Peoples Temple for better or worse. Like her husband, she rose in its ranks. Over the next few years, they were on hand as the group grew in numbers, expanded its locations, and amassed political power and wealth.

The slim young woman with the dark hair and sharp features gradually took on the jobs of keeping business records; paying out money for temple bills and allowances to members; witnessing all sorts of legal actions—many of them the records by which members of the temple surrendered their property, their money, custody of their children. Later, that would prove a bitter irony.

She also became the head counselor. By the

power vested in her, she pointed out to Jones every Wednesday night at family meetings the offending members who needed discipline.

In 1972, her own family expanded with the birth of John Victor.

As his church evolved in the '70s, Jim Jones would test the loyalty and obedience of the faithful. He wanted complete allegiance, selflessness. He demanded you put yourself in jeopardy, surrender. And sometimes his demands took strange twists.

He tested the loyalty of Grace and Tim through their child. He made Grace sign her name to papers giving up custody of John Victor; he had Tim sign away his fatherhood on a paper that named Jim Jones as John Victor's parent.

Tim Stoen met the test and signed his name to it.

That was about the same time he told a visiting reporter that he had absolute faith in his minister who preached "love your neighbor". He cited a Jones welfare program that fed the hungry and provided shelter to all who knocked on its door.

In 1972, the Peoples Temple claimed to have 5,000 members. It was moving to San Francisco and Los Angeles. Indeed, to the faithful and committed, it must have seemed like it was always moving. Jim Jones had bought a fleet of buses and, often enough on a weekend, he loaded up his people, like so many recruits in an army, and carted them to San Francisco for exhausting services that lasted for hours. Another long bus ride to Los Angeles took his people to services that lasted the rest of the weekend. The return bus trip took nearly all night Sunday. Perhaps it too was a test—of stamina as well as loyalty.

Tim and Grace Stoen, with the rest of the inner circle, were always seated in Jim Jones's bus, No. 7.

After Jones moved to San Francisco, Tim Stoen became assistant district attorney there. When Jim Jones was arrested in an adult theater in December 1973 for allegedly making a lewd advance to an undercover agent, Tim Stoen tried to intercede. In the end, the case was dismissed for lack of evidence.

Later, at odds with Jones, Stoen would report that "he was always talking about sex."

It was in 1973 that Stoen detected increasing paranoia in his leader. Jones became less tolerant of criticism, for one thing. The ragged edges were becoming visible to Tim Stoen.

The Stoens maintained their connections with Peoples Temple for another few years. The disengagement was messy.

For Grace Stoen, it came in July 1976. She packed up and took off for Lake Tahoe—leaving Jim Jones and her husband and son behind.

Her departure seemed to cut Jones to the quick. According to another member, Debbi Blakey, Grace Stoen had held a position of high responsibility as chief counselor. "Her personal qualities of generosity and compassion made her very popular with the membership. Her departure posed a threat to Rev. Jones' absolute control.

"Rev. Jones delivered a number of public tirades against her. He said that her kindness was faked and that she was a CIA agent."

Some while later, Tim, too, defected. But one of his actions as a temple member would later come back to haunt him.

SAN FRANCISCO: 'WORK FOR NOW'

To Jim Jones, San Francisco was the big time. At least, that's how he billed it to Grace Stoen. He said one time that San Francisco would be worth more than $15,000 a weekend. He wanted to break in there in a big way.

Most likely it wasn't the money that attracted him. Tim Stoen said money wasn't a big motivation for Jones. He was on a "power trip," according to Stoen. San Francisco meant a larger base, a bigger audience. He'd already tested the waters with his weekend caravans of bus-riding faithful and found them inviting. So he eyed San Francisco and found it good.

From rural small-town Ukiah, Jones was going to the nearest big city. Perhaps there he hoped to find a greater field of possible recruits; perhaps he'd outgrown Ukiah. Certainly, he'd been gradually leaving orthodox religion behind, trading it in for something more tailored, something more personalized. A bigger city offered more elbow room for a person who liked to wheel and deal. San Francisco was a better mirror for Jim Jones and his talents: more blacks; more poor; more politics; more hustling; more people living close to uncertainty and to the frayed edges of society; more

money and more people willing to lose themselves in a cause. He was willing to capitalize on trust and people's need to feel part of something big.

He bought a home for his church in the black Fillmore district of San Francisco in 1971. It was the neighborhood of Muslims, who didn't get along with Jim Jones too well, especially at the beginning.

Jones sent his people out selling trinkets with his image on them. He sold his followers slick pictures of himself, charging high prices too. He set up free clinics; for those in trouble, a legal aid office; for the hungry, a dining hall that dished out free meals; for addicts, a drug rehabilitation program.

At Jones' side as he moved into San Francisco were Grace and Tim Stoen, two of his closest aides who helped run the affairs of the temple; Debbi Layton Blakey also was growing in power and influence and her brother, Larry, and mother and sister had joined up. The social action projects had a lot of appeal for the affluent Laytons. Debbi wanted "to help others." She became a financial secretary for Jones. Maria Katsaris, whose father worried over the emotional confusion that troubled her during the socially volatile 1960s, found an appealing answer in Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple. He "convinced her there would be no more problems with him. There were clear-cut goals. It was all very idealist," according to Maria's father.

Jim Jones drew the disillusioned, searching for a better social order and a society of less conflict. He drew the disenchanted and inspired them. He drew drifters and offered them what seemed a large-family framework they could accept. He drew blacks by identifying with them ("we niggers") and

adopting the ways of Father Divine. He took in ex-convicts and those who'd been rejected elsewhere. And he wanted the needy for his social action programs because it made him look good. These were his constituents.

It took about four months to become a full-fledged Jones follower. One former member of the inner circle—the top members who were closest to Jones—was Al Mills, who explained that newcomers were only gradually inducted. First, they'd be invited to a lively service on Sunday morning. After maybe three or four such meetings, if they still yearned to join, they'd be allowed to attend Sunday afternoon and Friday evening sessions. Slowly, more was asked of them.

The Rev. Jones tried to bring in Dr. Raymond Adelman as his physician at one point. He also had Grace and Tim Stoen try to recruit the pediatrics professor, and Adelman went to about 10 temple meetings in San Francisco.

The first time, he was searched at the gate and kept waiting for seven hours. The second time, he was allowed in to the service.

Jones appeared suddenly on a balcony, throwing open some red velvet curtains.

"His sermons," Adelman said, "are a mixture of ribaldry and political exhortation, dealing with health and healing, predictions of future events and repressions anticipated in society. He warned his following that people always have to be on guard, expressing a need for his community to become involved politically."

"He told them to throw away the Bible and get rid of their 'pie-in-the-sky' religion and work for now."

He said Jones claimed he'd visited the Muslim Temple next door once and been shot and that Tim Stoen had put his fingers into the "deep" bullet hole. Stoen told him the hole had disappeared afterwards.

Jim Jones and Dr. Adelman talked from early afternoon to early next morning. Jones promised he'd provide the doctor with a well-stocked clinic if he joined up.

Jones "said he could heal the people himself but he did not have time," Adelman recalled.

Adelman didn't join. His visits to the temple aroused mixed emotions; he felt he'd witnessed demagoguery.

When he really wanted a new member, according to Marshall Kilduff who wrote about the temple for "New West" magazine, "he would send aides out to interview neighbors, check out their garbage or their car registration, so that he would know significant details about them." In casual conversation, he'd pull his details out of the bag as if he were a psychic. Such tactics unnerved some; won others. They were the ones who tossed their valuables into the chrome-plated buckets that were passed at services.

A while later, they'd be inveigled into turning over their homes or substantial portions of their salaries—sometimes as much as 25 to 40 percent.

One young man, Robert Houston, whose family eventually called in Congressman Ryan, worked two jobs to pay Jones what he demanded. Houston was a probation officer and a railroad employe, and he contributed $2,000 a month to the temple, his mother said. He also stood on streetcorners and begged for Jim Jones.

"He must have contributed quite a bit," his mother figured.

"I remember once he asked me, 'Mother, could you buy us a coffee pot?"

Al Mills gave the temple a car, $4,000 cash and property valued at $50,000. Wanda Johnson gave up a parcel of land, a house, a truck and car and all her savings, $2,000, the first year she was a member. Ruby Lee Johnson gave Jones a house which later sold for $42,000. The house that Vernell Henderson contributed brought in $127,500 for the church.

Some people signed blank deeds and power-of-attorney papers. It all added up. Jones took over parcels of property worth hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The tactics didn't always work but they did often enough that Jones became a landholder on a large scale.

A woman in Ukiah objected when her husband turned over his paycheck: "Jones wanted my mind and I wouldn't give it. He wanted my kids for someone else to raise and I wouldn't give them up. He said we should be willing to die for him and I'm not dying for anyone." Her marriage ended over it.

What drew the crowds?

The Peoples Temple offered a curious blend of old-time revivalism, social action, faith-healing and the voice of Jim Jones. Jim Jones was the main actor, he got center stage.

Nowhere was it more apparent than in his "miracles." Members claimed they saw him stop the rain with a wave of his hand. They said temple

members never died. They said Jones raised the dead, survived massive bullet wounds and cured cancer.

"He said that he could cure cancer," wrote Earl Caldwell of the New York Daily News, "and in neighborhoods such as the Fillmore, the death rate from cancer is high. And you grab onto anything when there is nothing else. And Jones understood this. And he used it."

His inner circle helped him contrive the cures.

Jones would seat a "plant" in his audience, then single him out and declare he had cancer. The person would stuff a tissue far down his throat then, seemingly, vomit blood. He'd hold the tissue up and Jones would pronounce him cured. Or he'd be sent to the bathroom where, Jones said, he'd pass the cancer from his bowels. His aides would come back holding a piece of meat aloft in acknowledgement of the "miracle."

"Don't get too close, that's cancer," Jones yelled. In his youth, Jones had wanted to become a doctor.

"He faked miracles," said one-time colleague Rev. Ross Case. "At first he just would use a beefsteak and call it a cancer. But then once Jim came into a council meeting and said that the church had to come up with something that looked more like a tumor. They used chicken livers, brains and gizzards. They would mix these up. One woman would wrap it in a napkin. Then in church, he would call out for anyone with cancer to come forward. That person would open up his mouth and someone would pass the napkin close to his mouth and tell the congregation this was the cancer he had just spit up."

His medical magic supposedly cured arthritis and other diseases as well. To the old people who

flocked to his meetings, that was impressive. Not everyone was fooled of course; the skeptics caught on to the fakery quickly. Said one: "I'm an old country boy and I know a chicken liver when I see one."

But a lot of people didn't look too closely and Jim Jones built a reputation as a miracle man who turned water into wine and stopped the rain.

What was it like on the inside? How did the Peoples Temple work? What was it like to belong?

Jones "was an extremely persuasive man who had a different faith and a different message for everyone he dealt with," said one newsman. "He was able to hook in with each one in an individual way."

Mike Cartmell, former follower who'd married one of Jones' daughters, put it differently: "Everything was perfectly compartmentalized" so that if you helped stage Jones' miracles, you didn't know anything about temple finances. You convinced yourself that the miracles were faked but you also talked yourself into believing that "Dad" did it that way as a tool to helping the church. You fast-talked yourself. And, of course, you didn't know about a lot of other strange goings-on. Nobody had the whole picture. Maybe not even Jones.

The Peoples Temple was organized in layers, each obscured from the other. The right hand often didn't know what the left hand was doing and Jim Jones kept it that way.

Jim Jones was the super-salesman whose greatest commodity was himself. There always seemed to be enough of him to go around.

"I loved him," said Fannie Mobley. She was a black woman who belonged during the San Fran-

cisco years. "The way he sang, in such a beautiful voice, 'It Ain't Necessarily So' was lovely. But he changed; he turned from a beautiful Christian man to a Jekyll and Hyde, a monster."

"He started searching everybody who came in and he had people standing around with clubs."

The Peoples Temple on Geary Street was surrounded with a chain-link fence and often in the mid-'70s, there were guards as well. Jones had a security force of blacks for that task.

He had an inner circle of whites who were his closest aides. He had a Planning Commission that met weekly, sometimes for hours on end. He had services and sermons that sometimes droned on through the night. He had an administrative department to handle defectors and catharsis sessions to deal with the members who'd broken his rules. Members had to submit schedules for the week that covered 24 hours a day, according to Cartmell. He had a relationships committee to approve all couples. Jones told one man not to have sexual relations with his wife and gave him a new partner. He reportedly told some to refrain from sex completely. But Fannie Mobley said that "when women told him they had no way to raise money for him, he told them to go out on the streets. 'You're good looking.' "

On Thursday nights, there were movies about the Nazi atrocities of World War II.

Jones ordered public humiliations, verbal and physical. Some members were ordered to strip before the group. Some were beaten with a "board of education," including one young girl who had merely hugged a woman she hadn't seen in some time. She got 75 whacks. A youngster was forced to eat until he vomited.

Four temple members reportedly took weapons training at the San Francisco Police Academy, which sometimes opened its classes to non-police students. One of them was Mike Cartmell. It was a sign of the trends within Jones' organization, of his steps toward fear and of the increasing control by violence.

Some of it was recorded in the temple's little newspaper which, in the last years, ran protracted stories about the conspiracies under way against Jones.

Not everyone could accept the turn to violence, the "hit" squads they were told would kill defectors, the harangues about death from within and without. Some members left out of fear and founded the Human Freedom Center in Berkeley to help their fellows "regain their identities" once they got up the nerve to leave Jones. Jim Cobb and his sister Teresa were among the founders. The former members would gather to talk about "why people let Jim Jones rape them of their identity," said Al Mills, who had let Jones do it to him for six years.

But most of the moves against Jones through the mid-'70s were the private efforts of temple members to reclaim themselves and their former lives. Sometimes they worked together, as at the Halfway House. Sometimes families united to save a relative who remained a follower. But it was a kind of underground network, hidden from the public eye.

To the outside world, Jim Jones was a figure of power, prominence and personality who could deliver services to the poor and underprivileged and votes to the politicians.

"Jones got to the black community by appearing to be in favor of everything we are concerned about: good education, equality, social justice, good housing, fairness for the elderly," said Lena Pietila, a temple defector. "He really worked hard in the community and appeared dedicated. That's what drew many people in."

Jones' persuasive personality and the nature of the times likely combined to draw blacks, in the view of Dr. Howard L. Harris, a dean at a California college. "Black people are very likely to find something like the egalitarian program offered by Jones very attractive, especially if it comes in a package marked 'Religion,' " he said. "The age we live in provides fertile ground for a charismatic white leader to foster ideas that the last vestige of long-standing racial barriers is being broken down. That's because the most segregated hours of the week are still on Sunday morning."

Though Jones preached about wiping out racism and about a society without racial barriers, he structured some barriers into his own organization. His closest associates were whites, the members of his inner circle. Earl Caldwell of the New York Daily News reported about a visit to the temple by some of his friends: "They searched everybody. They had blacks doing all the searching. All of the security was provided by blacks, but then they had this group of young men . . . young men who were white, and you could see that they were in charge . . . You could see that the blacks were not in charge." Jones' personal bodyguard also was black.

"Jones knew that black people were more threatening than whites," explained Jim Cobb, one-time member. "He knew that a group of black men, any group, was more threatening to people, white or black, than others, so he used that."

And he used the people to swell the ranks of his congregation; to build a political reputation; to increase his fortune. In return they got his attention, the satisfaction of belonging within his organization, and at least the illusion of a well-integrated social group.

Jones' warnings about the coming American racial war probably made his black members more willing to escape from the concentration camps that Jones said were coming in the U.S. to a faraway settlement in a place they'd never heard of where they hoped to make their home in their own fashion.

After a while, when Jones told of new mercenaries that could reach them even in their jungle outpost, they awaited his next deliverance.

Ten days after the human catastrophe in Guyana, the Rev. Jesse Jackson blamed the U.S. government for the tragedy there. "Through rejection of people who are old and black and poor," he said, the government had subjected the Jonestown victims to a "search for affirmation and acceptance from any source."

American blacks, he said, are taught to believe in whites. "We are trained to believe in their beauty, their brains and their power."

The Peoples Temple in San Francisco, where Jim Jones built up his empire, has become a prime attraction for tourists.

POWER PLAYS IN SAN FRANCISCO

Jim Jones took the microphone on the Golden Gate Bridge on Memorial Day 1977 and searched the faces of the hundreds who'd turned out for his demonstration. He told them the bridge needed an anti-suicide fence, that 600 people had jumped off to their deaths.

The people who'd jumped "were not casualties of war, but casualties of society," he said. Then he marched his people across the bridge. Each wore the name of a suicide victim on a black armband. (Paradoxically, it was only a matter of months before he was routinely leading his followers in suicide drills for his own causes.)

Using the Media

The rally at the bridge was a sign of Jones' ability to stage a "media event." Throughout his six years in San Francisco, his pulpit became, increasingly a political platform. He threw himself into local politics and became a real power. Jones learned to manipulate the media in such a way that he gained publicity, forestalled unfavorable stories, and became connected with influential people.

Jim Jones devised a strategy for ingratiating himself with the media soon after moving to San Francisco, according to Tim Stoen. When one paper ran stories on his claims to raise people from the dead, he sent his followers to picket the paper. He asked advice of some editors about dealing with others, more hostile. (Later, one editor admitted, "I felt he compromised me.") He drafted a plan of cash prizes for excellence in journalism. Winners included the New York Times, the San Francisco papers and others. Freedom of the press was important to editors, Jones perceived, so he donated money to support free press issues.

A church spokesman explained, "As a church, we feel a responsibility to defend the free speech of the First Amendment, for without it, America woudl have lost freedom of conscience and the climate will become ripe for totalitarianism."

Another time, a letter-writing campaign was mounted against a story that the San Francisco Chronicle was preparing. The letters claimed that temple followers were simple people who didn't like the limelight and that the church was worried the story would spur hatemongers' attacks on the temple's social programs.

A local city editor who called Jones "the most incredibly exciting person I ever met" was impressed with his church and skeptical of early reports of violence there. He said he was "wary of being manipulated by them and conscious of the possibility."

Jones' fascination with public words led him to found a twice-a-month temple newspaper that went to 50,000 homes around San Francisco. It was called the People's Forum.

He also supported the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Persons (NAACP) and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

"He displayed the most brilliant organizational genius I have ever encountered," said Tim Stoen. In San Francisco, much of that effort went toward political action.

In the public mind, Jones was identified with free social action programs and blacks. Liberal politicians liked to be connected with him, believing perhaps that they shared in the glory of his programs. Jones was willing to send platoons of workers to campaign for the politicians he liked.

"Jones could deliver 2,000 bodies on six hours' notice, and the politicians knew that," said Tim Stoen.

"There was a time when, if you were running for office in San Francisco and you counted in your votes the poor, the blacks or young people," said one local political aide, "you'd better have Jones' support."

So the politicians knocked on the door under the arch at Geary Street.

Village Voice writers Alexander Cockburn and James Ridgeway traced the parallels between the Peoples Temple and the Black Panthers: "Both organizations boasted of progressive social programs; both had strong leaders; both worked with the material of the urban black poor. Both relied on gangster techniques, of intimidation of dissident members or intrusive outsiders. Both attracted the enthusiasm of white liberals and the Left. The list

of Panther supporters is familiar enough. For the Peoples Temple, the catalogue of flanking support was equally impressive—from the mayor of San Francisco to the mayor of Los Angeles, the governor, Tom Hayden, and San Francisco gay leader Harvey Milk."

Using Power

George Moscone was running for mayor in 1975 when he first met Jones. "I was told he was a person to whom I ought to speak," he said. Eventually, Moscone was familiar enough that Jones allowed him to address followers at the temple.

Others who sidled up to Jones included Assemblymen Willie Brown and Art Agnos; the city district attorney, Joseph Freitas (Tim Stoen had become one of his assistants); and Lt. Gov. Mervyn Dymally.

Jones' people helped get out the voters in the mayoral campaign that George Moscone won by a slight 4,000-vote margin. Jones had backed him not only with workers but with money.

"He's got power because of the numbers of people he controls," said one Democrat, "and he takes his payoff in patronage jobs for his followers. Jim Jones is almost a machine boss."

His followers weren't the only ones who get jobs. George Moscone, after he was installed as mayor, offered Jones the Human Rights Commission post, but Jones said no. In 1976, Jones did accept the directorship of the San Francisco Housing Authority.

He also was considered for a job on the state's

Board of Corrections by Gov. Jerry Brown's staff. But the matter was dropped, a spokesman said, because Jones "did not make himself available to be interviewed and the process went no further."

* * *

When Rosalynn Carter stumped San Francisco on her husband's behalf in the 1976 presidential campaign, Jones turned out hundreds of people so she'd get a good showing.

But some Democrats conceded the maneuver backfired in a sense because Jim Jones, who also spoke, drew thundering applause that overshadowed the polite handclap given to the candidate's wife. One aide termed it "embarrassing."

And the politicians didn't like the appearance of guards standing, arms crossed, at the exits.

Mrs. Carter did, however, dispatch a courteous thank you note the next April: "I enjoyed being with you during the campaign—and do hope you can meet Ruth (Carter Stapleton, Jimmy Carter's sister) soon."

Inside the temple, Jim Jones would preach to his followers in front of a picture of Martin Luther King Jr., telling the congregation, "This politician is with us, this one isn't."

A man who left the temple in 1977 bitterly described Jones' political tactics: "The guy was the consummate Jekyll and Hyde. He played his help-the-poor role during the day, and all the politicians loved him because he stood for the popular causes and he could get all of their doorbells rung."

"Things on the surface looked good," a press aide later admitted. "The fact that he may have been

cultish was overlooked because every day poor people were lining up outside the temple, waiting to be fed."

Jim Jones had schooled himself in political realities. And he became a real force because he learned his lessons well. Tim Stoen had said it earlier: Jones was on a "power trip."

In its story, "Cult Politics Comes of Age," the Village Voice pointed out that "Evangelism and the promise of salvation—the idiom popularized by the president himself—always carries a correspondingly violent fear of holocaust and conquest by evil. The cult substitutes for salvation from the Divine Father or his Son the charismatic authority of an earthly leader. It is this leader who defines evil for his followers."

When things started to sour, months later, some of the politicians Jones had befriended and boosted tried to protect him from public inquiry.

But in 1976, Jones was ebullient: "We have come a long way," he said to a journalist. "And the future looks very bright."

THE UGLY STORY OF THE PEOPLES TEMPLE BREAKS WIDE OPEN IN "NEW WEST" MAGAZINE

Jim Jones, the man who staged fake miracles to awe his followers, almost pulled off a real one trying to squelch the story that would crush his cult.

Reporter Marshall Kilduff was a reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle who was intrigued by tales of the temple. He proposed a story about it to the Chronicle. But an editor who was aware of Jones' reputation as a defender of a free press rejected the story idea.

So Marshall Kilduff convinced the editors of "New West" magazine that there was a story there. He and Phil Tracy got to work on it. Soon after, word of the project got out, touching off a furious campaign to kill the story that involved temple members, Lieutenant Governor Mervyn Dymally, prominent businessmen, advertisers in the magazine and even the American Civil Liberties Union.

The magazine reported that word of its intention to print the story got out about two months before it appeared. "New West" editorial offices in Los Angeles and San Francisco received as many as 50 phone calls and 70 letters daily in a day, urging cancellation of the project. Editors and magazine

advertisers were deluged with objections to the investigation.

The San Francisco Examiner ran a story about the objections, which prompted former temple members to call in offering their help on the story. Timidly, at first. They wanted anonymity. When New West refused this concession, many of them called back anyway, and offered to make on-the-record statements about their experiences with the Peoples Temple.

The result: two stories in successive issues in August, 1977, in which life within the temple was depicted in detail. The beatings, the confiscation of checks and possessions, the bizarre services in which Jim Jones led his adherents in chants of "Shit, shit, shit"—intended to teach the temple members not to be hypocritical.

The stories were devastating.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors called for an investigation of the temple. Mayor George Moscone said the allegations "carry with them no proof that any law has been broken." The district attorney's office ordered an investigation.

Other media joined in, and more former members surfaced. Each seemed to give new details in an ugly picture.

Jones had expected the worst. The articles appeared in August, 1977. He went to Guyana that summer on what was then believed to be a temporary visit. He never returned.

In addition to revealing for the first time in a mass medium the details of life in the temple, the second article that month also reported two cases of suspicious "suicides" involving people associated with the temple. In both cases, there were reasons to believe the reported causes of death might have

been inaccurate and possibly falsified.

There was the case of 22-year-old John William Head of Ukiah, who died Oct. 19, 1975. Head was an emotionally troubled man who had once spent two weeks in a Mendocino County hospital for mental treatment.

A month before he died, two temple members visited the Head home. They took him to the bank where he withdrew $10,000 that he'd received from an insurance settlement after a motorcycle accident. He gave it to the temple.

The next day, Head told his mother he was going to live in a temple home in Los Angeles. The next month she was told he had killed himself.

The coroner's report aroused Mrs. Head's suspicion about her son's death.

The place of death was listed once in the report as the address of a warehouse. Elsewhere, however, the report says he jumped from a bridge. The report also says Head's body showed no signs of surgery and no scars. He had received 300 stitches in his leg after a motorcycle accident, his mother said, and "no one could miss that scar."

"New West" also reported that a neighbor of the Heads in Ukiah spoke with John Head the night before he died. "He said he was in a corner of the church, and nobody would bring him back (home), and he had no money," the magazine quoted the neighbor as saying.

The second "suicide" mentioned in the article happened in 1972 and was first reported after a joint investigation by the Indianapolis Star and the San Francisco Examiner. Their story said that the Rev. Richard Taylor of Oakland had asked state Attorney General Evelle Younger to investigate Jones and the temple because of suspicious

circumstances surrounding the suicide of Maxine Harpe of Ukiah.

The story quoted Ms. Harpe's sister as saying the woman gave the temple a check for $1,000 the week before she died. The house of the victim had been ransacked just before her death, it also was reported.

So Jones had become linked, however remotely, with events that raised questions in the public mind and some action in the public legal arena.

He resigned the city Housing Authority post within a month after the stories appeared. He did not return to San Francisco to do so; he delivered his resignation by short-wave radio from South America.

The Probes That Followed the Suspicious Deaths

When Jones left San Francisco for his Utopia in the jungle, he knew the stories in "New West" were to appear, and he expected their revelations to be damaging. Perhaps he also anticipated trouble for his cult from other critics.

For once, his suspicions of impending danger proved accurate. For, by the time Jones moved to Guyana, the net was already enclosing his cult and its activities.

As early as 1972, shortly after the cult moved from Ukiah to San Francisco, Jones feared that the lurid accounts of his cult attested to by escaped members might prove damaging. He decided upon a brilliant campaign to placate the press. He suc-

ceeded where countless, more powerful figures failed.

The most popular issue among members of the media was freedom of the press, Jones reasoned. What better way to win media support than by actively and loudly supporting their point of view?

So Jones became an outspoken advocate of freedom of the press. He donated thousands of dollars from the cult cache to journalism organizations. He even supported journalists whose legal problems related to the Free Press issue. Newspapers throughout the region were deluged with letters to the editor on freedom of the press, always offering opinions editors could only approve.

The campaign was so successful it almost quashed the most significant articles that contributed to the downfall of the cult, the exposé which detailed Jones' abuses in "New West" magazine.

The story was written in part by San Francisco Chronicle reporter Marshall Kilduff—who, according to one report, first suggested the story to his city editor on the Chronicle before lending his assistance on it for "New West." The Chronicle city editor turned down his request because of Jones' reputation for defending freedom of the press, the report continued.

And when word of "New West's" intentions to publish the story leaked out, several advertisers, and even the American Civil Liberties Union, tried to convince the magazine's editors to kill the story.

At the same time Jones worked to negate the effects of escapees' testimony in the press. In light of the success his "Freedom of the Press" tactic had enjoyed, he carried on a similar, equally effective,

campaign with local politicians. "Jones could deliver 2,000 bodies in six hours' notice, and the politicians knew that," said Timothy Stoen, a former Jones aide. The cult leader's apparently liberal views also helped keep him in politicians' favor, especially that of Mayor George Moscone, who may not have won election without Jones's support and the hard work of Peoples Temple devotees.

"You'd Better Have Jones' Support"

"There was a time when, if you were running for office in San Francisco, and you counted as your voters the poor, the blacks, or young people, you'd better have Jones' support," said Corey Buschere, former press secretary to the late Mayor Moscone.

Jones also showed foresight when he had temple members sign incriminating documents. The members admitted committing various crimes, from adultery to child abuse to muder, even though such crimes were never committed. Jones calculated that such admissions of "guilt" would tend to discredit later testimony—who would believe the statements of a self-confessed murderer even if there were no bodies or murder weapons to be found?

Jones succeeded with the local politicians and, apart from the "New West" magazine articles, he had hoodwinked the press. However, in the long run, he was unable to stem the rising tide of damaging reports. Even before newsmen descended on the Guyana complex in November, 1978, and prompted a whole-sale slaughter, additional inves-

tigations in the United States were underway. They threatened to undermine the Peoples Temple, Jim Jones knew all too well.

The first serious, full-scale investigation of Jones and the Peoples Temple took place in 1972 and involved newspapers in Indiana. Jones had left his home state seven years earlier. In San Francisco, where the temple had recently moved; a local newspaper co-ordinated its probe with a newspaper in Indiana.

The basis for the investigation by The Indianapolis Star and the San Francisco Examiner was a notarized affadavit signed by Georgia A. Johnson of Indianapolis. In the affadavit, she alleged that her daughters, ages 17 and 21 at the time, had been "programmed and (were) too frightened to say anything much about Jones and his operation."

(This charge, made public for the first time in 1972, would become an unsettling echo to the first reports from the Jonestown survivors filtering out to the world.)

One of the Johnson daughters told a reporter how her experience in the temple had nearly wrecked her life; it took her five years to muster the courage to speak of her experience. She also told the reporter of beatings and terror tactics when temple members tried to discuss the cult with outsiders.

Also in 1972, the Rev. Richard Taylor of Oakland, Calif., a bishop in the South Coastal Baptist Church Associations, said requests for investigations of the temple had been turned down by the county sherrif and district attorney where the temple as then located. Only the "Star" in In-

dianapolis and the "Examiner" in San Francisco pressed forward with their investigations.

There were also investigations into Jones businesses. Allegations that the sect failed to provide services for a "child care center" financed by the government proved inconclusive. No action was taken.

Most of the early investigations focused on charges which were lodged more or less routinely against groups such as the Peoples Temple. But on four different occasions, the stuff of more substantial investigations did at last surface: suspicious deaths.

The body of 33-year-old Robert Houston was found in a San Francisco railyard, Oct. 5, 1976, horribly mangled; it looked suspicious, but authorities refused to attribute the death to foul play.

The second suspicious death occurred in July of 1973, according to Ross Case, a former associate minister for the Peoples Temple.

An old black woman named Truth Hart was staying at one of the temple's nursing homes in San Francisco, Case said. Once she objected to Jim Jones' disturbing messages from the pulpit, sermons that included violent rejections of the Bible and a liberal dose of obscene language. Case, a teacher and minister, maintains that Truth Hart died shortly afterwards under suspicious circumstances.

Case said he took his information to the police, the sheriff's department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The agencies chose not to get involved.

The woman's death was attributed to congestive

heart failure and respiratory heart disease. Her death was never investigated.

There were other incidents. People who tried to leave were found dead, Case said. Jones had often threatened escapees with death, Case noted. "He never explained how they would die—just that they would," he said.

Accounts of two more suspicious deaths appeared in the second of two "New West" articles published in successive issues August, 1977. Both involved alleged suicides. Yet circumstances raised questions about how the victim died.

In all cases, investigations were requested. In no instance was a verdict ever changed. In no way was a case even reopened.

A fifth case of a suspicious death surfaced later. Former cult member Christopher Lewis was found murdered in December, 1977, after the cult moved to Guyana. Lewis had left the cult, but the cult never left Lewis, not until he died.

Authorities could never link the murder to Jones or the temple. But cult members knew they were threatened with death if they left. And Jones later held the Lewis incident up to others who might consider escape attempts, and most cult members began to have second thoughts about ever leaving Jonestown.

OPPOSITION FROM WITHIN

A lot of movements sow the seeds of their own destruction. The Peoples Temple was one of them. But it took years for the balloon to burst.

And when it did, it seemed that the ones who had put the most into Peoples Temple were doing the most to make it come apart at its seams. Perhaps they also felt they had lost the most.

They had learned the uses and misuses of power by wielding and watching power as members of the temple. Now they turned their knowledge to new ends. In public and in private they bent their efforts toward exposing Jim Jones and toward arousing public sentiment and government and legal action against him. They didn't do it without fear because they knew the violence that Jim Jones sometimes ordered; they knew of his "hit squads;" they knew about his guns; and some of them still had family who remained faithful to the temple. But they braved the violence anyway.

James Cobb, Jr., 28, was one of them. He has been an articulate critic of the people's temple since he left the cult in 1973. He filed a civil suit against it in the spring of 1978. His sister, Teresa Cobb, runs the halfway house in Berkeley, California, for ex-members of the temple. Because

he was dedicated to bringing the truth about the Peoples Temple to the public, he was a natural companion for Leo Ryan's fact-finding trip. He survived the airstrip ambush.

Like many of the anti-temple crusaders, he was an ex-member whose anguish over what he had been through was compounded by the fact that other members of his family were still in the temple. In Cobb's case, three sisters, a brother and his mother were in Guyana. At the time of the trip, Jim Cobb had not seen his sisters for two years, or his mother since March.

"When I joined I was an impressionable 17-year-old and Jones was talking about racial justice and a classless society. It sounded like he really had the best interests of black people at heart. I believed him; we all did."

Jim Jones one time talked over with a guard the assassination of Jim Cobb. The guard, Wayne Pietila, also became a defector and told the story:

"Myself and one other was pulled aside and asked to make a hit on Jim Cobb. It was during a bus trip, at a rest stop between Los Angeles and San Francisco. He took us aside and asked us, 'Could you walk up to Jim Cobb on the street in San Francisco and shoot him? If you just walk up to him with a smile on your face, shoot and keep smiling and just walk away—you'd very likely get away with it.' "

So there were real reasons to be concerned if you'd made an enemy of Jim Jones.

Stoens Fight Back

Two who'd become his worst enemies—because

they'd been his closest advisers in the past—were Grace and Tim Stoen. Jim Jones once declared that he "did nothing either with respect to the church or with respect to my own personal legal affairs without first consulting (Stoen). I am sure over the years he . . . gained more confidential information about Peoples Temple and its members than any other living person."

So when Tim Stoen left his organization, it surely left Jones with a tremendous sense of loss and betrayal. Clues to his true feelings came out of the mass meeting in Jonestown that fateful Saturday when lawyer Charles Garry, fleeing into the jungle, heard the voice of Jones coming across the loudspeaker from the pavilion area: "Let's not be divisive, Tim Stoen is not the only enemy amongst us."

Jim Jones had a highly developed sense of friends and enemies. After all, he'd set up his temple with an "inner circle." Both of the Stoens had been part of it. Tim had been privy to the temple's legal affairs; Grace to its business operations as a kind of church "bookkeeper."

Grace Stoen was the first to go, leaving her husband and son behind when she took off in July 1976. A few months later, Jim Jones hustled the boy off to Guyana; so he was inaccessible when Tim defected the following year.

Though their marriage had split up, Grace and Tim Stoen remained partners in their custody battle for their son. They began proceedings in American and Guyanese courts for return of the youngster; and they won—in court. But Jim Jones wouldn't go along with it. In his mind, the boy had come to represent his fight to hold his little world together, his battle against all the defectors from

Peoples Temple. And so he fought with everything he had, including the threat of mass suicide which he'd been rehearsing with his people for months. He used it as a bargaining tool to keep the Guyanese authorities from taking the child away in fall, 1977. Lawyer Charles Garry was able to avert the threatened disaster but it sent the Stoens' custody fight into limbo.

After those developments, Grace Stoen went to Congressman Leo Ryan to beg for help. For their cause and others, Ryan went to Guyana.

Stoen's custody suit was not his only legal action against Jim Jones. Once he turned his back on the Peoples Temple and its "Father," he did so furiously. He started taking cases of other old members against Jim Jones.

He filed suit on behalf of an elderly couple, the Wade Medlocks, one-time members of Peoples Temple who charged that Jones made them sell their house for $60,000 under the market value and then made them turn the money over to the sect. They filed an $18 million civil suit in June 1978.

And, in April 1978, Stoen drafted an affidavit for another defector, Yolanda D.A. Crawford, in which she quoted Jones as saying "that he had guns and that if anyone tries to leave, they will be killed and their bodies will be left in the jungle and we can say that we don't know what happened to you." A group of relatives of sect members united in April to charge Jones with "human rights violations."

When Tim Stoen turned against Jim Jones, he also turned his professional ability into a fight against Jones. And, by then, he knew many of the soft spots, where the temple was vulnerable.

Weeks before it happened, he told the world in an interview about the mass suicide rehearsals at Jonestown and declared that he had letters from Jones in his files plotting them.

Jim Jones probably saw the turnabout of Tim Stoen as utter betrayal. He must have seen Tim Stoen as the Judas in his midst.

Debbi Tells Tales

Debbi Layton Blakey couldn't keep quiet after she got away from Jonestown in May 1978. She still had family there: a brother, a mother. . .

She'd been temple financial secretary and she knew a lot.

She saw a lawyer in June and gave him a lengthy affidavit about the horrors of life on Jones' commune. She told the same story to people at the Department of State. She was one of the first to describe the ritual of the "white nights."

"The entire population of Jonestown would be awakened by blaring sirens. Designated persons, approximately 50 in number, would arm themselves with rifles, move from cabin to cabin, and make certain that all members were responding. A mass meeting would ensue. . .

"We were informed that our situation had become hopeless and that the only course of action open to us was a mass suicide for the glory of socialism.

"We were told we would be tortured by mercenaries if we were taken alive. Everyone, including the children, was told to line up. As we passed through the line, we were given a small glass of

red liquid to drink.

"We were told that the liquid contained poison and that we would die within 45 minutes. We all did as we were told.

"When the time came when we should have dropped dead, Rev. Jones explained that the poison was not real and that we had just been through a loyalty test. He warned us that the time was not far off when it would become necessary to die by our own hands."

Debbi Blakey worried about those drills for death. She, too, went to Congressman Ryan with a tale so lurid and fantastic that he figured he couldn't ignore it.

Debbi Blakey told the tale to try to save the lives of the people who couldn't—or wouldn't—save their own.

IT WAS TIME TO MOVE

When the pressures from the inside and the pressures from the outside reached a certain point, Jim Jones had to move.

That point came in summer and fall 1977. And Jim Jones took off for South America, to the jungle commune his people had been tilling and outfitting for him for four years. From there, he picked up the microphone of his ham radio operation and told San Franciscans he was quitting his job as Housing Authority director.

Jones' sense of paranoia must have found conspiracy in the legal actions and news stories that were mounting against him. Instead of the imaginary attacks he envisioned coming from Sen. John Stennis, he had some very real opposition in San Francisco.

Defectors and families of temple members made a concerted effort to call attention to Jones and the Peoples Temple through the federal government. Starting in August, 1977, they visited the State Department three times to tell what they knew and what they feared.

The stories in "New West" came out the same month. A strong campaign by influential people in San Francisco hadn't stopped the "New West" revelations. Among the partisans who spoke up for

Jones was gay politician Harvey Milk who wrote to the magazine saying Jim Jones "possesses as much integrity as anyone I've ever met." Jones had backed gay rights issues.

A stream of mail from establishment people and temple followers tried to prevent publication of the story that talked publicly of violence and the inside workings of Jones' church.

The Tug over John Victor Stoen

The defection of Tim Stoen in 1977 cut him to the quick, as had Grace Stoen's leavetaking a year earlier. Tim Stoen knew more about temple workings than anyone else, by Jones' own admission. What a humiliating shock it was for Jim Jones when he left.

But John Victor Stoen remained with Jones, and a furious battle developed around him. The child claimed by Jones as his son also went to Guyana.

For the five-year-old boy with the dark eyes and silky dark hair, it might as well have been a prison.

Though the Stoens' marriage was over, they united against Jones in their fight for John Victor. The long legal process began.

When Jones maintained to courts that he was the father of the child and produced Tim's signed statement saying so, the Stoens said that Tim had signed the paper in a test of loyalty and that Tim was, in fact, the boy's father. Jones, they said, had made up his claim to fatherhood.

As the actions wound through the courts, Jones took desperate measure. Debbi Blakey, temple financial secretary and a member of the inner circle,

was told to find Tim Stoen and offer him $5,000—or as much as $10,000—for his silence. But Debbi Blakey couldn't find Tim Stoen until early October when the temple learned he was joining Grace in a custody action in San Francisco Superior Court. Six weeks later, the couple won custody.

But Jones did not comply.

The case went to a court in Guyana and Jones took new measures. He sent temple members to seduce and blackmail Guyanese officials, Debbi Blakey said later. Eventually, that judge also sided with the Stoens, and ordered Jones to return the boy.

Jones "freaked out," lawyer Garry said later.

Garry said he got a call from a panicky Jones, who told him 300 Jonestown residents were ready to commit suicide if anyone came for the boy.

"Over one child he was going to destroy a whole movement."

"I had Huey Newton and Angela Davis and some others call him that I knew would impress him, and got him to stall." Working through Jones' wife, Marcie, he said he reached authorities in Guyana and inveigled them into halting the custody action.

He'd forestalled Jones' threat that time. Days later though, Jones was still talking about it: "We are so solid," Jones proclaimed, "that if something happens to one of us, it is happening to all of us. This child cannot go back because it would be ruined."

IT would be ruined? What was IT? The boy, John Victor, or the absoluteness of his control over his following? Or were they one and the same to him?

The effort to wrest custody of John Victor from Jim Jones was blocked.

After they'd won their court battles in two countries and were no closer to their child, Grace and Tim Stoen turned to California Congressman Leo Ryan for help. Ryan, a member of a House group that had been studying cults, queried the State Department for information on how to proceed. He got a letter back saying, "Neither the Department of State nor the Superior Court has the authority to enforce the order of Nov. 18, 1977, regarding the custody of John Victor Stoen in the country of Guyana."

John Victor stayed in Guyana.

But the congressman was no quitter.

The Questioning Congressman

When Congressman Leo Ryan wanted to know more about a mostly black high school in Los Angeles, he posed as a substitute teacher and worked there for two weeks.

And when he wanted to know about prison life, he checked into Folsom State Prison as an inmate for nine days in 1970.

So his trip to Jonestown, Guyana, wasn't unusual.

It was "characteristic of the way he worked on a problem—he wanted to inform himself about the situation firsthand," said the congressman's mother to a reporter.

His aides said he was a "crusader who had a hard head, but a soft heart."

On Fridays, Ryan often invited staff members

into his office to relax and chat over coffee, soda and wine. He'd sit in a big antique barber chair.

Holsinger, his friend for 15 years, said he was a warm, generous and compassionate man. And "he was very independent on the Hill. Nobody could depend on him for a vote. He didn't commit early and wasn't intimidated by the fact that everybody was on the other side." He'd rather be respected than liked.

Sometimes Ryan's views brought him trouble. But he took it in stride.

The man who one time played Bozo the Clown at a Washington circus was determined to get to the root of the problems that attracted him. He was impatient with red tape and hard-driving. And he absent-mindedly lost things: "We never could keep Leo in keys."

Others called him a workaholic who personally read all his mail.

Holsinger elaborated: "He instructed his staff never to turn anyone away. He said that this is the people's office. They're paying for it."

Ryan was wealthy, 53, divorced and the father of five children. He loved sailing, symphonies and fine wines. He collected works done by unknown artists and he made rubbings of historic gravestones.

He was "one of a whole new breed of investigative congressmen . . . who go out and see things for themselves," said one colleague.

Another described Ryan as "outspoken, tough on witnesses, acerbic, cynical, hard-boiled, almost like a journalist."

In fact, he was the son of a journalist.

Leo Ryan Sr. was a political reporter for an

Omaha, Neb., newspaper and his son was born in Lincoln May 5, 1925. But the future congressman grew up mostly in Massachusetts: his father joined the Boston Traveler in the early 1930s and soon after bought a 100-acre farm in North Andover. Leo Ryan Sr. was killed in a car accident in Boston in 1937.

After attending a Navy program at Bates College, Maine, and graduating from Creighton University in 1949, Leo Ryan earned a master's degree in Elizabethan literature in 1951. He taught school in Omaha for two years, then went into school administration in Iowa. Soon after, he moved to the Bay area and another job teaching high school English.

Ryan moved into public service in 1955 when he was appointed to the South San Francisco Recreation Commission. Eventually, he put in 10 years in the California Legislature and was first elected to Congress in 1972. He represented a fairly conservative district in San Mateo County. Throughout his legislative career, education remained one of Ryan's main concerns.

As a congressman, Leo Ryan built a reputation for taking on the nuclear establishment over the issue of storage for radioactive wastes. He charged that the public needed to know more about it and that government and industry weren't accurately judging the costs of storing atomic material. He was chairman of the House environment, energy and natural resources subcommittee.

Some said he was a publicity hound, and he did seem to have a knack for choosing interests that would grab headlines. He once made a trip to Newfoundland to check on the hunting of harp seal pups. And in his first state political campaign,

he gave away 150,000 bars of soap to change "the complexion of Sacramento." (He lost by 830 votes but won on his second try.)

One of his latest campaigns was in support of the Free Patty Hearst Movement. He spent hours interviewing the jailed heiress then asked the Carter administration to release her. Forty-eight other congressmen signed along with him. Ryan's congressional district includes Hillsborough, the Hearsts' family home.

Civil liberties were important enough to him that, Holsinger recalled, he originally went into politics because he detested the attacks of Sen. Joseph McCarthy (R.-Wis.).

So the accusations against the Peoples Temple cried out for investigation, in Ryan's view.

"Leo told me that he had received at least 100 letters from people warning him not to go," his mother, Autumn Mead Ryan, recalled. "I had a gut feeling that this was a dangerous, emotional, undisciplined cult. I cautioned him to be very careful. I expressed my worries, but that's all I could do.

"I asked him if it wasn't dangerous. His reply was that lots of things in life are a risk . . .

"Leo said he could not do his job if he gave in to fear. So he put fear aside."

Families Complain

During fall '77 and into '78, a procession of ex-members and members' families consulted Congressman Ryan, who already had a personal interest in the case.

Sam Houston was an AP photographer and a

friend from Ryan's early years in California. Ryan had taught Houston's two children, Bob and Judy, in high school.

Houston told Ryan the story of his son's life with the Peoples Temple. Bob Houston had turned over thousands of dollars to Jones' church. The day after he decided to leave the temple, his mangled body was found on a railroad track. Months later, his wife and children went to Jonestown. Houston told Ryan he was concerned for his teen-aged granddaughters.

Ryan told his friend he'd "look into it."

Stephen Katsaris was worried about his daughter. Maria Katsaris, now in her mid-20s, joined up with Jim Jones in 1974 in San Francisco. She went to Jonestown in 1976. Stephen Katsaris made several trips to Guyana to try to talk his daughter into coming home. The first time, it took days just to get to see her, he said. Jones' people, he said, accused him of being a sex deviate, a CIA agent and a child molester. In answer, Katsaris filed a lawsuit.

But he got nowhere with Maria. Even her brother Anthony, who was two years younger, couldn't get her to come home. "They were always very close," said Katsaris.

Katsaris said his daughter had become a top person in Jones' church. Some said she was his mistress. He said she handled a lot of church money, sometimes carrying huge amounts in cash to and from Guyana.

Mary Lou Clancy's family had spent two years trying to bring her home to California. They started about the time Jim Jones ordered Mary

Lou and her husband Tim to separate, sending her to Jonestown. As believers, they did what he said.

Her family said that Tim and Mary Lou had been rootless for some time, traveling up and down the West coast, using drugs and selling candles.

At first Mary Lou's family was happy she'd found the Peoples Temple: "They were on the borderline, and this seemed to be an organization that was helping them."

Just before she left the United States, Mary Lou called home to say, " 'Mom, I want to say goodbye. I'm going to Guyana."

What Debbi Saw

Deborah Layton Blakey hoped to save lives by going to Leo Ryan with her unbelievable tale about life at Jonestown.

Larry and Deborah Layton were children of a well-to-do family and grew up in Berkeley, California. They grew up in a tradition similar to that of the Quakers: American Friends Service. Larry became a conscientious objector during the era of Vietnam; he never had to go to war. And they seemed to fit one stereotype of members—the idealistic youth of an alienated upper middle class.

When she joined the Peoples Temple in 1971, Debbi had just come out of a British boarding school. Her fiance, Philip Blakey, introduced her to the congregation. She was 18 and reared in a permissive atmosphere. Her reasons for following Jones were to "help others and in the process to bring structure and self-discipline to my own life."

Other family members also joined, even making

the move to Jonestown. One of them was their mother, Lisa. In 1976 she and her husband Laurence J. Layton, a biochemist, were divorced. Lisa Layton won $100,000 as part of a divorce settlement. It went to Peoples Temple, along with about another $150,000 over the years, according to Laurence J. Layont. "They (the family members) wanted to do good. I couldn't condemn them," the biochemist said. His family was into it passionately.

During her long years of belonging, Debbi Layton Blakey "watched the temple organization depart with increasing frequency from its professed dedication to social change and participatory democracy. The Rev. Jim Jones gradually assumed a tyrannical hold over the lives of temple members."

At first, she said, Jones "seemed to make clear distinctions between fantasy and reality. I believed that most of the time when he said irrational things he was aware that they were irrational, but that they served as a tool of his leadership. His theory was that the end justifies the means."

Within the temple hierarchy, Debbi worked her way up to financial secretary. She learned about the $65,000 a month that the temple received in Social Security funds and it angered her to see that so little of it was spent to benefit the senior citizens for whom it was intended.

In December 1977, Debbi was ordered to Guyana.

She'd been told of a utopia with a lake for the children to play in and a life of ease and simplicity.

"When I got over there, I asked someone where

that lake was where all the kids were supposed to be swimming. Of course I found out there wasn't one."

In fact, she found conditions terrible, Jones worse, and his control over his membership tighter.

Jones' "obsession with his place in history was maniacal." His paranoia "reached an all-time high."

Jones, she said, destroyed the peoples' relationships with one another. And marriage relationships were no exception. Her own marriage grew "empty."

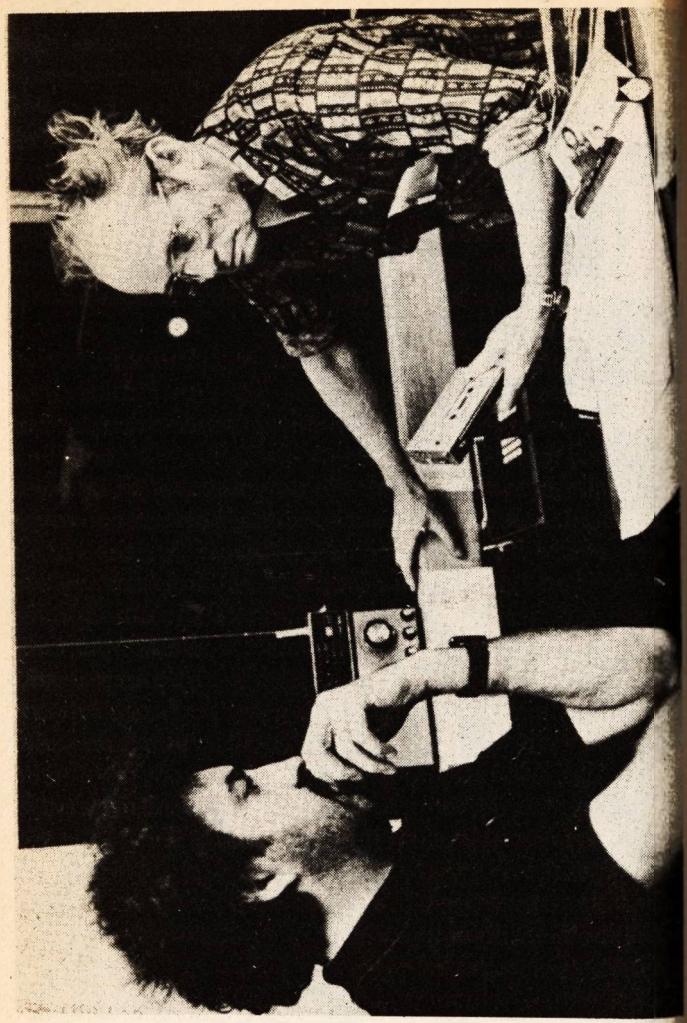
Debbi Blakey couldn't take it. "Death seemed so much sweeter than life."

She decided she had nothing to lose and, when she was sent back to Georgetown to work in April 1978, she plotted her escape.

"I surreptitiously contacted my sister who wired me a plane ticket. After I received the ticket, I sought the assistance of the United States embassy in arranging to leave Guyana. Rev. Jones had instructed us that he had a spy working (there) . . . and that he would know if anyone went to the embassy for help. For this reason, I was very fearful."

When she deserted, she left her husband—and other family—behind.

Wearing a gas mask to protect him from the smell of rotten corpses, a Guyanese man surveys the Jonestown suicide scene.



Sam Houston, a photographer with the Associated Press, awaits word on the fate of his family in Guyana. With him is his son-in-law, Alex Boyd. Their wives went to Guyana with the Leo Ryan party to investigate the cult. Only Sam Houston's wife was immediately reported safe. His son had been found dead under mysterious circumstances after the son tried to quit the Peoples Temple. Some suspect murder.

THE NET CLOSES IN

In the months after the New West reports, the net started closing in earnest.

A group of relatives of temple members on April 10, 1978, issued a statement alleging "human rights violations" at Jonestown. The group said Jones had told a member of the cult, "I can say without hesitation that we are devoted to a decision that it is better even to die than to be constantly harassed from one continent to the next." The first public hint of possible mass suicide had been dropped.

Two months later, a former member filed a lawsuit in San Francisco, charging that Jones planned mass murder. James Cobb contended in the suit that Jones could cause "the death of minor children not old enough to have voluntary and informed decision about serious matters of any nature, much less insane proposals of collective suicide."

Former members of the group went to the U.S. State Department for help. The charges against the temple had been investigated, the State Department responded. No cause for action was found.

For a while, other investigations also led nowhere. San Francisco Mayor Moscone continued

to insist that there was no evidence of any illegalities. District Attorney Joseph Freitas reached the same conclusion following his investigation, which began immediately after the "New West" stories at the height of the furor over the temple.

And for all the agencies that undertook investigations of Jones and his temple, the cult leader had as many and more letters of endorsement from such prominent figures as Rosalyn Carter and Vice President Walter Mondale.

The letters are fluffy and insubstantial, the type politicians routinely crank out for just about anybody who seeks them. They would later prove embarrassing. "Knowing of your congregation's deep involvement in the major social and constitutional issues of our country is a great inspiration to me," Mondale wrote.

After heartbroken relatives of temple members pleaded with U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance to help, he relayed the plea to Guyana Prime Minister Forbes Burnham.

U.S. Embassy officials in Guyana had been visiting the settlement at Jonestown since 1973, a spokesman said. They wanted to check on births and deaths, and also to determine if people were being held against their will.

They found many pension checks, but the people they spoke to offered no complaints.

The embassy also was aware of the suicidal tendencies of community leaders, the spokesman added. One officer from the embassy was told that cult members were non-violent and "would immolate themselves before doing violence to others."

John A. Bushnell, an official from the U.S. State Department who was assigned in November, 1978, to a special department task force investigat-

ing the mass death, said the interviews with temple members in Guyana were conducted after it was alleged the settlement was "a concentration camp."

The State Department had received "a substantial volume of mail" before instituting its first investigation into the camp, which seemed to be regarded then mostly as a religious haven for harmless eccentrics.

The letters leveled a variety of charges. Passports were confiscated, and no Jonestown resident was allowed enough money for air fare, the letters alleged.

No one could leave the camp, except on Jones' business. They would be accompanied by acknowledged spies.

Telephone calls to the United States were forbidden, as was all free communication.

All mail going in or out was censored.

Anyone who left the settlement did so under the threat of death.

The charges were lodged frequently and by more than one party. But discussions with 75 residents of the settlement produced "not one confirmed allegation of mistreatment," according to a State Department spokesman. Officials even went to the trouble of conducting their interviews in open fields to encourage members to speak their minds freely.

Apparently the relatives had failed. Officials did not suspect the truth: Jonestown residents were too intimidated by Jones to voice any objections.

Jones probably viewed a Social Security investigation as still another part of the massive conspiracy against him. The investigation was newly begun in October 1977, a month before Con-

gressman Ryan's visit, and was to have been completed in January, 1979. The cult leader perhaps saw it as a threat to his source of income.

An estimated $65,000 a month in Social Security checks was pouring into the settlement. The number of Social Security recipients there had increased dramatically. Were recipients being forced to turn over their money? Were checks still being sent to people who had already died at Jonestown? How much coercion was involved? Surely these questions occurred to federal administrators.

While Jones worried over the impending visit of Congressman Ryan, the Social Security probe must have been a burr at the back of his mind.

As might be expected, the already paranoid Jim Jones became rabid with fear.

When he moved his cult from San Francisco to the jungles of South America, 800 of his followers jammed onto buses for a cross-country ride to Miami. From Florida, they flew to Guyana. Jones had convinced the blacks that they could wind up in American concentration camps, while whites were warned of oppression by the CIA if they stayed in America.

Jones believed more than ever that he was the victim of a vast conspiracy. The editions of "Peoples Forum," the monthly publication of the cult, alleged throughout the editions in the year before the Guyana massacre that unnamed United States officials were choreographing efforts to obliterate the temple.

The press, he charged, wanted to deny him his "rightful place in history."

The news media, rich bigots, police agencies and others were among those out to get him, he said.

Even those close to Jones used words like

"schizophrenia," "madman" and "maniacal" to describe his paranoia during the last months of his life.

In 1977, the final investigation began. An activist congressman who once spent eight days in jail to study conditions there, learned of the cult. A friend—Associated Press photographer, Sam Houston—had lost a son in the cult under mysterious and suspicious circumstances. The young man had been found dead the day after he decided to leave the cult. Other reports of wrongdoing impelled the congressman to check the facts himself.

Leo J. Ryan, the wandering Congressman from California, conducted the final investigation that became fatal for both him and the cult.

SCOUTING FOR THE PROMISED LAND

Some sources state that during his two year stint in Brazil in the early sixties, Jim Jones took a side trip to the dark, dense country then called British Guyana. But it was not until 1973 that a delegation of twenty Peoples Temple members visited the new Marxist nation of Guyana to scout out a possible site for an agricultural commune.

Guyana, once called British Guiana, is one of the most remote and undeveloped countries in the Western world. The country is about the size of Kansas, and situated on the northeastern shoulder of the South American continent. Though part of South America, the country has a Caribbean feel. It borders the Caribbean, for one thing. The language is English, not Spanish or Portuguese. The country, some say, feels like a Caribbean island that hasn't separated from the continent.

Most of the 800,000 population lives in a thin, reasonably comfortable strip of land along the Caribbean coast. The interior jungle, which stretches back many hundreds of miles, is dense and hot, one of the world's wildest zones. It is part of the Amazon basin, the world's largest tropical wilderness area. The Amazon basin also covers areas of neighboring Venezuela, Surinam and Brazil.

Most Guyanan's ancestors arrived as African slaves before 1800 or as East Indian sugar plantation workers in the 19th century. Today about half are of East Indian origin, 31 percent African, and the rest European or of mixed blood. Christianity is the dominant religion, but the runners-up show how unusual Guyana is among South American countries. After Christianity, Hinduism and Islam are the major religions.

The population is 35 per cent black and 51 per cent Asian Indian. Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, a black, heads the leftist-socialist government. The Indian majority, not surprisingly, complains that his government discriminates against it.

The economic life of this country is mainly agricultural and concentrated in the narrow strip of coast that is arable. The section which Jim Jones leased from the Guyana government is a lush equatorial forest area, accessible only by airplane or boat. The largest town in the area is Port Kaituma. The ground contains most of the gold and manganese which are Guyana's main mineral wealth. Most of this wealth is still in the ground, however, because neither the capital nor the electrical power required to mine it is available.

A Temple "Progress Report" stated that the agricultural project "was initiated by Rev. Jim Jones in December of 1973. He conceived of the project, he said, to assist the Guyanese government in a small measure to feed, clothe and house its people, and at the same time to further the human service goals that have characterized Peoples Temple for many years."

Temple attorney Charles Garry says that Jones leased 4,999 acres from the government with an option for up to 27,000 more. The Temple public

relations brochures described the people who founded the colony in 1974 as "pioneers."

The fateful place that they carved out of the jungle was christened Jonestown.

In 1977 they predicted that they would "become self-sufficient in three to five years."

They achieved their goal; the dead need nothing.

But before the disaster that wiped out a place called Jonestown, the "pioneers" built houses, a sawmill, schools, residential cottages, a medical infirmary, workshops, and a pavilion with a throne. According to the temple releases most time was spent cultivating crops, mainly cassava, a South-American staple. Temple publications indicated they grew "170 crops."

The commune was located 159 miles northwest of Georgetown and could only be reached by river-boat or plane. Jones' ideology, which he called "Marxist Social Philosophy," was in accordance with that of Guyanese leaders Burnham and Cheddi Jagan. And the Rev. Jim Jones had the highest credentials, letters and character references from Joseph A. Califano Jr., Secretary of HEW, Sen. Hubert Humphrey, Rosalyn Carter, Walter Mondale, and a string of other senators, congressmen, and California state officials.

The plans forwarded to Guyanese government officials sounded perfect. The commune was to be interracial—an important point in a nation that wanted a public image of racial harmony. Jonestown eventually became 30% white, 70% black. They all died in each others arms, holding hands.

The Early Years in Eden

Charles Garry, Peoples Temple attorney, visited Jonestown and called it "a jewel the world should see." Before Jones' arrival in 1977, indeed it was.

But life wasn't easy. The Guyanese jungle, one of the densest on earth, had to be hacked back. The pioneers struggled together and created, through sweat, planning, and comradeship, a place they called the promised land. In those days, Jones was still in California, and the colony was fairly autonomous.

A sign at the entrance of the commune said, "Welcome to Jonestown Agricultural Project," leading to a manicured vista of lawns and gardens, cottages and open pavilions.

In 1976, a visitor would have seen happy people, going about their work in the soap factories, mechanics shops, dairy, pig pens. In many ways, the camp epitomized the fantasies of millions of Americans who dreamed of going back to nature, living off the land, working towards harmony and peace with their brothers and sisters.

A small school, much like the one-room houses that graced many rural American towns, stood just off Cussy Lane, a short walk from Sojourner Truth Apartment. Surrounded by baby plantain trees, it was just a tin roof supported by wooden posts, but inside there was no doubt what children learned here. Signs read "Don't Be a Litter bug, Help Keep Our Classroom Clean," "Look, Listen, Learn"; and "Your Attitude is So Loud I Can't Hear What You're Saying". The messages were written in a mature hand and tacked to posts.

Children's signs hung next to them, crayoned drawings with captions such as "Music and Dance"

under a picture of a woman trilling "La, La, La."; a fishtank signed by Nicky; Sonya's portrait of a small dog titled "Puppy Love"; a landscape by Jennifer that showed a huge warm sun rising over a mountain; phrases such as "Jonestown is a place of peace" and "Be good to those around you."

The children studied books such as "Success in Spelling", "New Mathematics for the Caribbean", along with lessons in Russian language and history, handwriting, reading, and social studies. Notebooks had Snoopy covers.

On a table under the blackboard records were kept. A Wondell record from Barbados had the tunes, "Time Will Tell On You" and "How Long Will I Live?"

Color snapshots of people sitting, smiling, mugging, and eating dotted the posts of the "schoolhouse."

In those idyllic days, the children seemed especially contented.

"I just picked up a hurt monkey out of the jungle and he's going to be all mine," Maury Janaro, 16, wrote home to San Francisco. "I love it here."

And the adults did too.

The family cottages stood in various locations, different neighborhoods throughout the compound. They were sturdy, and comfortably furnished. Homey drapes hung from the windows, and carpeting covered the floors. The families lived together then, and felt protected. They ate meat twice a day; if they became ill, they could go to the infirmary staffed by two physicians—including the man who would one day poison them, Lawrence Schacht. The six nurses, according to a camp report, were well-trained.

"Preventive Medical care is emphasized," the re-

port stated. "Physical examinations are given each six months to everyone in Jonestown with special attention to bimonthly "well-baby" check-ups, pre-natal care, and follow up for those with chronic diseases such as diabetes, mellitus and epilepsy."

The kitchen, supervised by a dietician and aided by a registered nurse, prepared camp foodstuffs: pork, and chickens raised in Jonestown, as well as tomatoes, onions, carrots, cucumbers, cabbage, lettuce, and assorted vegetables raised in the town gardens.

Jonestown's harvest would reap pineapples, citrus fruits, bananas, and potatoes weighing 12 pounds, the report said. From the pages of the brochure, healthy faces smiled at the reader. Proclamations of idyllic freedom stated, "There is a beautiful little waterfall located 1½ miles past some of our crops. It is a breathtaking hike down a jungle path, and when you get there it is a long, smooth, sloping series of rocks and two pools of water (after a rain you can swim) and even a vine to swing over the water . . .

"A large felled tree lays over the water so you can sit on it in the comfortable shade. It is one of my favorite places here . . ." The writer's name was Barbara Harris, presumed dead.

Other passages in the brochure read: "The laughter of children rings through the air. Our children are our greatest treasure."

Tim Bogue, 17, said that when his family migrated to Jonestown from California two years ago, it was a good place to live, "everyone had lots of freedom."

Perhaps the promotion that the people saw in the United States was true—then.

Gerald Parks, 45, another survivor said, "They used to send movies back telling you lies about how you would live, how you could have rest and relaxation, trees with fruit you could just pick off." But when the Parks family arrived with Jones in 1977, they had only ". . . rice to eat. The only time we got good food was when guests came down."

Jonestown had changed.

A Paranoid Angel Comes To Eden

According to most accounts, the changes occurred shortly after Jim Jones arrived there in summer, 1977.

With the "New West" article due on the newsstands soon and the Stoens brewing troubles in the courts, Jones knew that his days as a respected community leader in Ukiah and San Francisco were coming to an end. He brought many disciples to Guyana, and he carried in his heart an agonizing paranoia and a lust for control.

Jonestown was isolated. It was the perfect place for him to exercise absolute power that could have never existed without exposure in the United States.

Just as with the infamous French Penal Colony called Devil's Island down the coast, Jonestown was surrounded by dense jungle alive with snakes and jaguars, infested with piranha and electric eel in fetid pools. The very jungle from which the original Jonestown settlers had carved a place of freedom Jim Jones now used as green prison walls.

It was just about a year ago, shortly after he'd arrived, that Jim Jones "started acting crazy," Tim Bogue said.

THE AMERICAN NIGHTMARE

It's not clear who ruled Jonestown before Jones moved down there. Constant radio contact crackled between San Francisco and Guyana, so Jones conceiveably ran a long-distance dictatorship. However, subtle changes crept over at Jonestown. But it was not just the arrival of Jones—Jones, himself, slowly changed.

Paula Adams, 29, says that her life in Jonestown, until February of 1978, had been "delightful." Jones had arrived a few months earlier; the changes that he thought necessary gradually developed into something intolerable, what survivors now equate with concentration camps.

Guyana didn't agree with Jones's health. The dank, humid, tropical climate made the known hypochondriac even more paranoid about his health.

Jeannie Mills, who defected from Peoples Temple in 1975 after belonging to the cult for six years, says that Jones, in his saner moments in California, admitted that he had trouble holding his emotions in check. The cause, he claimed, was a sugar imbalance. Whether true or not, Jones developed lung fungus, ran temperatures from 101 to 105 degrees, until, according to Charles Garry, a doctor said Jones was, literally, "burning up his

brain." As his temperature soared, so did his paranoia. He feared dying alone. He dreaded the day Jonestown would be invaded by outside forces.

Soon, workdays at Jonestown were stretched from eight to eleven hours. Security forces no longer guarded the commune, but instead kept a constant eye on cultists to make them perform as expected. Rumors circulated through Jonestown that Jones was hooked on hard drugs and seriously ill. But whether confined to bed or mobile, Jones made his presence known over the loudspeaker system that no one could escape.

From approximately November of 1977 until the mass suicides, conditions steadily degenerated. Instead of meat twice a day, the majority hardly saw meat at all. Deborah Blakely escaped from Jonestown in February. She swore in an affadavit given to her lawyer in San Francisco that, "The food was woefully inadequate. There was rice for breakfast, rice water soup for lunch, and rice and beans for dinner. On Sunday, we each received an egg and cookie. Two or three times a week we had vegetables. Some very weak and elderly members received one egg per day. However, the food did improve markedly on the few occasions when there were outside visitors."

Which explains Garry's glowing accounts of Jonestown under Jones's leadership.

As the work piled up and the quality of food thinned out many of the Jonestown settlers, once so healthy, grew ill. Blakey said, "In February 1978, conditions had become so bad that half of Jonestown was ill with severe diarrhea and high fevers. I was seriously ill for two weeks. Like most of the other sick people, I was not given any

nourishing foods to help recover. I as given water and a tea drink until I was well enough to return to the basic rice and beans diet."

Was it Jones' health that precipitated the change? About the same time that Jones got to Guyana, so did Haas, the Stoen's attorney, to pursue the custody case over John Stoen in the Guyanese courts. The Stoen boy was Jones' obsession.

"The September 1977 crisis concerning John Stoen," wrote Blakey, "reached major proportions. The radio messages from Guyana were frenzied and hysterical. One morning, Terry J. Buford, public relations adviser to Rev. Jones, and myself were instructed to place a telephone call to a high-ranking Guyanese official who was visiting the United States and deliver the following threat: unless the government of Guyana took immediate steps to stall the Guyanese court action regarding John Stoen's custody, the entire population of Jonestown would extinguish itself in a mass suicide by 5:30 p.m. that day. I was later informed that temple members in Guyana placed similar calls to other Guyanese officials.

"We later received radio communication to the effect that the court case had been stalled and that the suicide threat was called off."

For the time being.

The colony, meanwhile, gave up more and more of its autonomy to Jones. Besides being exhausted and undernourished, Jones, an insomniac because of his ill-health would chant and scream throughout the night over the loudspeaker system.

"He would talk on and on while we worked in the fields or tried to sleep," said Blakey. "In addi-

tion to the daily broadcasts, there were marathon meetings six nights per week."

No one dared dissent. Punishments, once doled out with a paddle, became more and more severe. Petty offenders who had stolen a glass of wine, would be whipped, beaten, or put in a "hot box"—a wooden cell about 4 by 6 feet.

The children that once laughed so freely, still smiled, but out of fear instead of delight. If they misbehaved, a variety of ingenious punishments awaited them. Some were bound and left in the jungle for the night, or dropped into the well until they screamed for forgiveness from "Father."

If they didn't scream loud enough, they went back under. But the cheerful front was important. Children were herded into a room and administered painful electrical shocks to remind them that they must always smile when they saw "Dad."

The once cozy family quarters were no longer so cozy. Jones regulated every aspect of communal life—even his followers' sex lives. Couples who wished to cohabitate had to apply to the camp's Relationships Committee for permission, and then go through a three month trial period before they could have sex. And then they got to live together—but along with members of the commune, single or in couples, huddled on narrow mattresses in crowded cottages.

"There was no privacy," said Harald Cordell, a survivor. "People could hear your every noise, cough and whisper. We were packed in like cattle."

What had once been called weekly "business meetings" became nightly marathons that lasted into the early hours of the morning. Jones would rave and rave while security guards made sure everyone stayed awake and listened. Cultists were

quizzed on the content of Jones' speeches. If they did badly, they were punished.

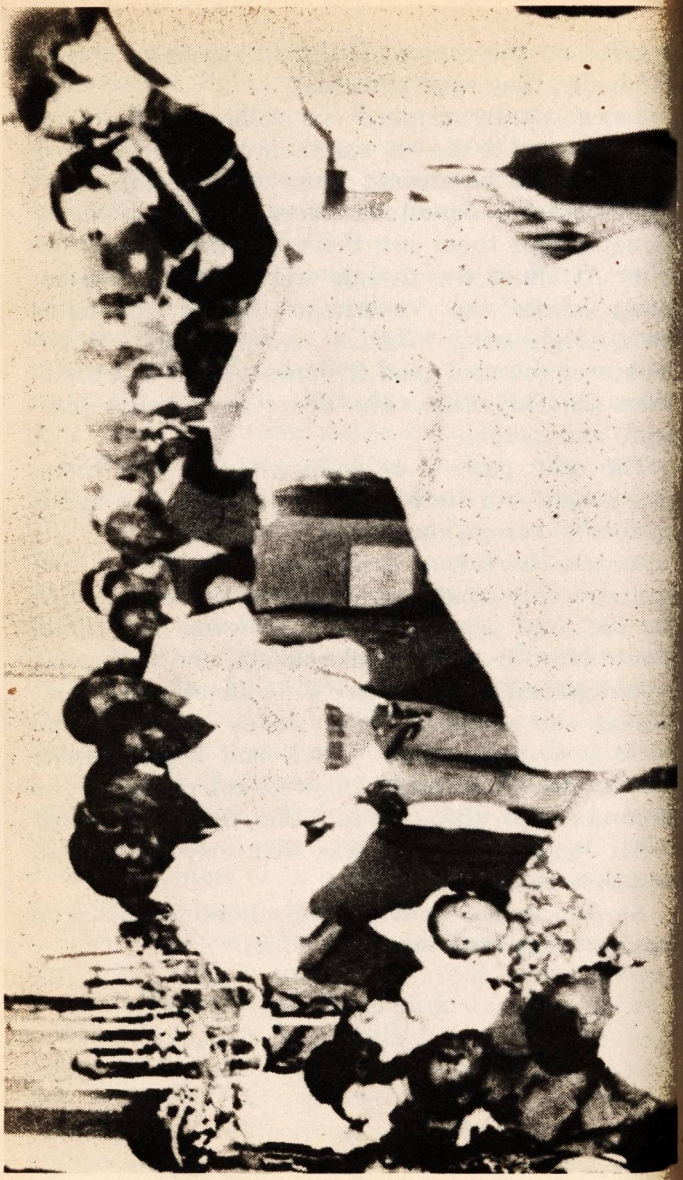
Jones' totally drained his followers. Many of them wanted to die—it was their only escape. Over and over he hammered home the message that forces outside Jonestown were making preparations to wipe them out; their only hope resided in him. At times the threats were of forces assembling across the Venezuelan border six miles away—right-wing fascist troops, the CIA—whatever sounded good to Jones. And if not them, then the Guyanese, who Jones said would "castrate and torture."

The only path of resistance, Jones told them, was suicide—to die with honor by their own hands instead of being slaughtered by outsiders.

And so the suicide drill that, in California, had included only small groups, became weekly rituals for the total population of Jonestown. The signal would blare from the loudspeakers, and the people would assemble. They were so in Jones' power that during one rehearsal, when Jones had instructed certain disciples to fall down and feign cyanide death, the whole camp followed, collapsing to the ground and writhing, certain that they were dying.

All Jones had to say was that they were dead, and they believed him.

As Jim Jones went insane, almost a thousand human beings went mad with him.



Jim Jones, right, leads a Jonestown faith-healing ceremony.

This family lies huddled together in a grisly death pose. Victims lay down side by side, awaiting the brew's effect.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE END

Jones didn't suffer along with his flock. While they wasted away, Jones, according to Gerald Parks and others, ". . . lived like a King. We lived packed in cottages, no running water, no nothing. He lived in a nice, well-built dwelling with closed circuit T.V., king-sized beds, running water, sinks, refrigerators. We could have none of this."

Everything of value was taken away. "You had no money, no passport. You had no way to communicate," said Parks. "If you dissented, you were watched, constantly watched. If I had shown dissent, I would not have been able to get to my family. When we communicated our plans (to escape) we would act like we were making notes to study, but all the time talking about our plans. Any dissent, and atrocious things happened to you. Like putting chains on you, beating you with a gun, having 15 or 20 people beat you up."

The Parks were not the only ones who longed to escape from the terror that was called Jonestown. Tim Bogues begged the rain forest Indians who came to Jonestown to teach him how to survive in the forest. They taught him what to eat and drink and how to hide from pursuers without getting lost.

Bogues was sure there were other young people

who were dreaming of escape also, but he never approached them because, in Jonestown, you never knew who to trust.

Months before the suicide, Bogues and a friend tried to escape. They slipped off into the forest, but made the mistake of returning to a public road, where Jonestown searchers captured them. With a shotgun barrel at his back, he was marched back to Jonestown.

As punishment, he and his friend were shackled in chains and forced to chop wood 18 hours a day for three weeks.

And he was luckier than most.

Other teenagers who dissented were forced to dig 200 foot long ditches. Bogues said, "Those who didn't work, didn't eat." The most troublesome teenagers were committed to an "extended care unit" which consisted of isolation cells where offenders were shot full of tranquilizers and other drugs. They were "checked" once a day by doctors. When they were released, Harold Cordell said, "They couldn't talk to you, and they walked around with empty faces."

The serious crimes at Jonestown—attempting to escape, resisting the sacrifice of all material possessions to Jones, or criticizing "Dad" were certain to be punished in ingenious and vicious ways. The security forces usually administered the beatings, but one time, survivors recall that Jones commanded a group of the commune's senior citizens to beat a woman with their canes. "It will be good for your hypertension," he told them.

Husbands turned in wives for punishment—Jonestown had reached 1984. One wife had been caught drinking wine; her accuser was her hus-

band. He watched her be whipped 100 lashes with a belt.

Other transgressors had to box burly security guards while wearing weighted gloves. When Tim Bogues was initially brought back to camp after his escape attempt, the seventeen-year-old was brutally beaten by Jones' henchman while the assembled communards were ordered to chant. "Kill the little bastard."

Others learned from the examples made of offenders. They tried as hard as possible to follow Jones's almost impossible demands. Robert Paul, a 33-year-old black man from New Orleans, was one such example. His yearning for freedom led him to hack a secret path through the jungle while working his job as a tree-cutter. He took ten others to freedom the Saturday that Ryan came. It had been planned that way because he knew security was lax when outsiders came into Jonestown.

The elaborate shows that Jones staged for visitors explain, in part, why the atrocities rumored in Jonestown were not believed. Gerald Parks said, "Everything the Guyanese government saw was legitimate. It was just that we were not allowed to communicate with them, to show them otherwise, for fear we would be dealt with. When they visited the community it looked beautiful to them. I believe the congressman (Ryan) would have gone back and said the majority of people were happy. You see there were big shows put on. A lot of things were staged. A lot of things looked beautiful. A lot of things were beautiful."

A lot of things were about to end.

The Final Weeks

Jones realized he was losing control, that the Stoens boy was an obsession, that there were people in camp that thought him mad. But he also knew that no one dared to stand up to him.

He talked of moving the commune to the Soviet Union or Cuba, perhaps to give the people hope, but still the White Night rehearsals went on until they were rote. The millions of dollars that Jones had accumulated in Jonestown weren't used to help his followers—Jones said he was holding the money in reserve. For what, no one was sure.

Jones continued to sit on his throne or rant over the broadcasting system, demanding sex, money, and insane devotion from his followers. According to his son Steven, Jones' wife, Marceline, knew he was going insane. The only reason she didn't leave, Steven said, was because of the children.

But by that time, there was nothing anyone could do.

Some have said they just couldn't believe what was happening. The sign that swung in the jungle breezes, "Emperor Jones" throne said it all. It quoted the philosopher, Santayana, and it caught their cursed condition perfectly: "Those Who Do Not Remember The Past Are Condemned to Repeat It."

But soon the people in Jonestown wouldn't repeat anything—they were just condemned.

The Beginning Of The End

Meanwhile in California, Congressman Ryan de-

cided to see for himself what, exactly, was going on in this distant place they called Jonestown. On Nov. 1, 1978, he sent a telegram to Jones. It read, "I am most interested in a visit to Jonestown and would appreciate whatever courtesies you can extend."

Jones panicked. He was sure Ryan's visit would initiate a move for the United States Government to officially investigate Jonestown. He placed a call via radio to his attorney, Charles Garry. He thought Garry, a leading radical lawyer, could deter Ryan.

Garry couldn't comprehend Jones' paranoia; by then, Garry had been taken in by the same hype as every other outsider who'd come to Jonestown since Jones had brought the community under his total control. It would soon become all too apparent, all too clear, that it was not the critics who were crazy, but a man called "Dad" and the village of almost one thousand children that blindly obeyed him, just like the monkeys he'd pedaled in Indiana during another, much calmer life.

If the plane that carried Leo Ryan's party had circled over Jonestown, they would have marveled at the sight of the village that, almost magically, materialized in the heart of the Guyanese jungle. In the center stood the main pavilion, and, in front of that, the infirmary. To the left of Jim Jones' throne spread a playground.

It was the same playground that the Jonestown publicity brochures had extolled. "Central to the use of all equipment is the emphasis on cooperation rather than competitive values on the playground."

Beyond it were living quarters, neat, and freshly swept for Ryan's visit. Spread out behind the pavilion were still more quarters, the home-made

radio antennae, the repair shops and wood mill, and the large building that stored arms and ammunition. Lush fields rolled to the edge of the dark waiting jungle.

Perhaps that day people still had hope. They knew that the visitors would assure them a good meal and clean clothes—and, maybe, the chance for some to escape. But Jonestown residents no longer greeted each day as the brochures described it. Perhaps there had never been mornings like that.

According to the brochure, "Every morning at 8 someone knocks at the cottage door and says, 'Did anybody have any difficulties last night?' Imagine the feeling of security these folks must have to feel that somebody cares for them, is interested in them, and will do things for them."

Yes, someone was getting ready to do things for them, but not in the way the Public Relations writer wanted people to think. And it wasn't the gentle knock that woke them out of a comfortable slumber. Instead, they heard Jones on his voice-of-god loudspeaker system, raving one of his pet phrases over and over and over.

"I am the alpha and the omega," he'd shout.

This time, the Rev. Jim Jones would finally practice what he preached.

THE PREACHER'S PERVERSIONS

In sermon after sermon, Jim Jones constantly talked about the "curse" of his enormous penis, which, he claimed piously, drove women to beg him for sexual favors. And he self-fulfilled those particular prophesies by demanding any woman he chose to have sex with him.

Jones even had a secretary, according to the L.A. Times, to arrange sexual encounters with both men and women.

"She would call up and say, 'Father hates to do this, but he has this tremendous urge and could you please . . ." said Al Mills, a former Peoples Temple membership chairman.

In the Peoples Temple, the only legitimate object of love and lust was Jim Jones. "Father" knew that a person with such a perverse emotional attachment would not defect and reveal the secrets of the Peoples Temple.

On organizational charts, Jones was referred to as the "main body." The title was meant to be taken literally, and the idea was hammered in early through church training. Sandy Rozynko Mills, a nineteen year old who defected three years ago, said, "Once Jim handed out a questionnaire that asked, 'Do you fantasize about 'Father' sexually? Here I was 14 years old and I was thinking,

'What . . . ?' But we all knew we were supposed to say yes, so I said yes."

A Rasputin with a razor-haircut and Foster Grants, Jones used sex to totally dominate his followers. He ordered many of them to indulge in homosexuality and adultery, forced them to sign statements that admitted incest and child molesting, and made a twisted sacrament out of members' public confessions that they were lesbians or homosexuals. Mike Cartmell, once an associate minister with the temple, told the L.A. Times that, "Jones realized the power of sex in destroying stable family relationships."

Jones once attempted to seduce him, Cartmell said, but "The phone rang and I ran out of the room." When Cartmell asked Jones why he exploited sex, Jones replied, "You have to. It focuses their interest on you."

According to the grisly tragedy in Jonestown, it went much farther than that.

As with his other talents and attributes, Jones megalomaniacally took advantage of his dark good looks. The man who claimed to be Jesus, Buddha, and a host of other saviors, also revealed his physical vanity by blacking in his sideburns with eyebrow pencil. But whether Jones forced the women—and men—of his congregation to have sex with him, is as confused and mysterious as whether he forced them to die with him. Certainly bedding with "Dad" dragged them even deeper into his miasma of control.

When Jones couldn't get followers into the sack himself, he often compromised them with young girls. The man who self-pityingly complained of his "curse" also raved in sermons about his sexual prowess. His lovers would be forced to back his

testimony with their own words, proclaiming before the congregation that Jones fulfilled them like no one else ever had.

"The women would get up and say he had the biggest penis in the world," Charles Garry, the attorney, said.

While other messiahs have demonstrated enormous capacities for love, Jones bragged to Garry about his enormous capacities for sex. "He told me this himself while I was in Jonestown one night when we were shooting the breeze about different things. And he told me this in front of 20 or 30 people who were sitting around the big table in the big pavilion. And he said he had sex with 16 people one day, two of them were men. And some of the women that he had been carrying on relations with were sitting right around me, including his wife."

Marceline, who Garry called, "one of the most wonderful women I have met," was often distraught about Jones's promiscuity, but could never do anything about it.

The People's Sex God

When young women of the congregation were found to have posters of their favorite movie stars on their walls, Jones replaced the posters with his own glossies. Not only did he demand that he be revered, but he also totally determined the sex-lives of his followers. When a young woman carried on an unapproved romance in Jonestown, Jones ordered her to have sexual intercourse with a man she despised in front of the whole commun-

ity. When common beatings with a paddle no longer satisfied his sadistic tastes, Jones often ordered sinful followers to strip in front of the congregation—in one case, to prove that a man had poor hygiene. There was no disobeying Jones's orders. Somehow, fathers calmly watched their daughters beaten and molested until their buttocks were "like raw hamburger." Husbands left their wives without a second thought when Jones requested it; parents signed statements that attested that Jones was their children's natural father when he wanted "proof of loyalty."

It didn't start in Jonestown—it didn't start in Ukiah. When Jones returned from his missionary trip to Brazil, he brought back stories of his sexual exploits as souvenirs instead of the usual ponchos or straw hats. A genuine countess, he claimed, had offered him five thousand dollars to sleep with her.

There was no doubt in his mind that he was worth it.

A God of Contradictions

"Jones used to say that the only perfect heterosexual around was him. All of us had to admit that we were homosexuals," said Gerald Parks, 45, survivor of Jonestown, in a copyrighted article in the San Jose Mercury. "Then we found out it was him. He was having sex with guys. The guys, they'd brag about it right up front."

But Jones didn't brag about it because he still remembered an incident that had almost given him the publicity that he didn't need at the time.

On December 12, 1973, the Ukiah Christ was

arrested for making lewd advances to an undercover cop in a sleazy adult theater in San Francisco. Tim Stoen, then assistant D.A. and member of the Peoples Temple, got the charges dropped for lack of evidence. The record was erased from police files, but not from Jones's memory.

Former temple members told the San Jose Mercury that once Jones commanded his followers to take over a beating of a homosexual that Jones had started. "Kick him where he deserves it," Jones told them.

They did.

And the contradictions didn't end there.

Fannie Mobley, a black woman who belonged to the Peoples Temple from 1972-1976 said, "He told everybody not to have sex until they got to the promised land, but when women told him they had no way to raise money for him, he told them to go out on the streets. He said, 'You're good-looking, you ought to be able to get some money.' He was a good-looking man, and he knew all the women liked his looks, and he'd use it, come up to you and say, 'Hello love, hello pet.' "

The man who preached—and often demonstrated—love, compassion, and gentleness, was also the man whose lovers would return from his house or office with bites on their arms, shoulders, and legs.

"He'd explain," Sandy Mills said, "that the only reason he went to bed with anyone was to help the cause."

But what was the cause? Love?

Sex, for Jones, was not the physical culmination of love—it was a tactic to control and manipulate followers.

He was always tender and slow the first time

with a new lover, he told a disciple; but the second time the sadism—or, perhaps, the Jonesism—replaced kisses with bites. Jones bragged that he could engage in intercourse for six hours because it totally obliterated the personality of the unfortunate lover who believed that sleeping with Jim Jones—no matter how humiliating and painful—was like sleeping with a god.

A GENIUS OF CULT CONTROL

Besides theological distinctions, what separates the Peoples Temple from other cults is how Jim Jones wove such a complete web of control around his followers, and what it led to.

Jones was characterized by many as an "organizational genius." And Jones used this genius to bombard his followers with contradictions and fear until, amazingly, the only thing that seemed certain in their lives was the man they called "Dad."

During most of his life, the public saw Jim Jones as a positive organizer of people and projects. But it is now apparent that the same manipulations that he used to help his political favorites get into office were part of a total control that led to almost a thousand deaths.

The Charisma

Before he was born, Jones' mother had a vision that her child would be a man "who'd right the wrongs of the world." She was sure that the son she named James would be a messiah.

Certainly, her feelings and hopes became clear to Jones at an early age. While still a child, he

displayed the self-confidence that made others listen to him and follow. By age seven, neighbors recall that he already doled out discipline; while playing preacher to a congregation of young friends, Jones would beat them with a stick to assure them that he was to be obeyed. Even then, he encountered little resistance.

Jim Jones' charisma can be defined as an intensity of purpose and an unwavering mask of self-confidence. When Jim Jones spoke, the people who listened to him believed that he knew exactly what he was talking about, and so fell under his spell.

"He had a soft, beautiful voice," an ex-disciple remembered. He kept his tone soft, sincere, and certain. It was as if he was talking privately to everyone in his audience; it was as if he had each individual's answers.

But words don't go too far. While Jones preached his brand of Christian Marxism, he also had the courage to practice it. Whether by adopting a racial mix of children, standing up for other's rights, or finally taking part in a mass suicide, Jones gave his followers an example to follow.

And he always made sure that they *knew* what he'd done. Jim Jones could boast about his successes and still impress those who listened. Like many people, they wanted a hero—and Jones in the early years, though egotistical, was a man who helped them.

His manipulations of people had a curious Catch-22 quality. The Rev. Ross Case, a Disciple of Christ minister who worked for a time with Jones in Indiana, said, "He would build them up, convince them that anyone as intelligent and sensi-

tive as they were ought to do whatever it was that he wanted them to do."

Jones, while making people's choices for them, convinced them that they were acting on their own. His tactics during the Indiana days were not any more devious or evil than those used by any good salesman. But the product was Jones himself, and he convinced people that they could not live without *him*.

The Image and the Man

It was after Jones took a busload of his congregation down to see Father Divine in Philadelphia that he demanded the same personal loyalty as he'd seen the black messiah command. It was then that Jones set up a church interrogation committee to deal with parishioners who disagreed with him. While it lost him some followers, the ones who stayed could not at first voice their dissent, and then, with time, could not even think in dissenting terms. Judy McNaulty, who left the Peoples Temple at that time, observed, "I knew that was when he got his idea to play god. Not too long after that, I got out."

But others didn't. While many were probably unnerved by the megalomania that they saw developing, they had many reasons to tolerate it. At that time, Jones was becoming a respected public figure in Indianapolis. In 1961 he was appointed Director of the Human Rights Commission. On his own turf, the temple provided food for the hungry, care for the sick, and jobs for the unemployed. Un-

like a common braggart, Jim Jones had evidence that he was worth believing. And while such a position as Human Rights Commissioner brought him under fire from bigots, it also polarized his following into a "with him or against him" mentality. His ends seemed to justify his means. And his ends were—seemed to be—helping people.

Perhaps Jones perceived that he was his own worst enemy. His paranoia increased, and in the early sixties, by externalizing his fears, Jones had a vision of a nuclear holocaust. Creating his own Utopia was rapidly becoming a prime concern, and now, more than ever, he felt he had to work fast. He'd have to step on some toes.

Whether it was his fear of the bomb or his own instinct that he needed time to reflect on, Jones made the decision in the early sixties to go to Brazil. There the people that he worked with saw a humanitarian, and not an egotistical leader. He opened a house to the needy, and doled out the necessities of life to thousands of underprivileged. People who knew him there said that he didn't have a following, and the only similarities to the machiavellian Jim Jones of Indiana were his apocalyptic fears of holocaust and of his own mortality.

A neighbor remembers, "There were times when just the sound of a plane flying overhead would start him crying." Also: "He . . . talked a lot about having been operated on some warts and moles on his neck. His big fear was cancer."

While Jones helped the unfortunates, he also studied the faith healer David Martin de Miranda. It is almost as if he had a master plan that he was patiently developing.

It was during his time in Brazil that he visited

Guyana, and, perhaps, picked the site where he'd move his temple thirteen years later.

A New Flock

When Jones returned to Indiana, his followers sensed more changes; and Jones made harsher demands on them, too. He had become cynical about religion, and religious about money. Anyone who had the bucks would earn Jones' devastatingly charming praise and flattery. It was also then that he told his black assistant minister Arhcie James, "You go out and preach me and I'll back it up with miracles."

Jones said that he left Indiana because it was too racist, but it's possible that he knew the approach he'd formulated to attain financial and political power would be better received—and better financed—in the promised land of California. Only one hundred of his Indianapolis followers followed him to the war-safe region in Redwood valley called Ukiah. Jones had lost some support, but he knew that P.T. Barnum was right when he said, "There's a sucker born every minute."

And the core of faithful that followed Jones had to stay loyal. They'd given up their lives in Indiana, and despite what was to follow, could not emotionally affored to admit that they'd been taken by a velvet-voiced huckster. They'd do anything to rationalize their mistakes.

By now Jones' philosophy was built around "Dad" as God, and under this belief, he built up a new following which probably numbered in the thousands. These new followers had no idea of the

old Jim Jones, only of the dynamic, egotistical man of action that still made them feel smarter than the rest of the world because they listened to him.

Giving Them What They Wanted to Hear

Jones started staging a variety of miracles, always keeping in mind the people they were to impress. For the elderly blacks, he staged tent-revival-show types of miracles—making the lame walk, removing cancers, and other laying-on of hands. For followers that had come to him because they recognized Jim Jones as a man who was doing something about the social injustices of America, Jones staged seances where spirits—like Joe Hill, the labor organizer—talked to him. They wanted to believe so much that they did believe.

Unlike the theory advanced by many other American cults that the intellect is the devil, Jones craftily encouraged the use of the intellect—or at least the illusion of it. He presented his followers with a set of choices, but the choices left them so confused and so frightened that they agreed with the conclusions that he wanted them to.

A Hashshashin Devotion

Toward the end of the eleventh century a Persian leader came up with an ingenious way to get his Mohammedan troops to fanatically die for his

cause. He'd drug them into a stupor with wine and hashish and take them out into the desert, where in sumptuous tents they'd awake to an orgy of food and sex.

It was a vision of heaven, he'd tell them. If they died in the course of duty, they could expect to spend eternity there. The Hashshashin—from which the word assassin is derived—became the most feared group of killers during the Crusades. Their fanatical courage spurred them to suicidal missions.

Though Jim Jones didn't take his followers to heaven for inspiration, he was able to convince them that no matter how painful or twisted their lives seemed with him, it was much kinder than what the outside world had waiting.

Jones so successfully cut off his followers from the outside world that soon, in their minds, the world outside of the Peoples Temple was full of liars, murderers, and fascists. He did it well.

Getting them to give him their property and savings had more than financial returns for Jim Jones. Once they took the major step of turning over their material goods to Jones, they became dependent on him. And once they were dependent on him, they'd believe anything that seemed to rationalize their choices—even accepting his perverse sadism and hypocrisy. Jones knew that people would do anything to reassure themselves of their intelligence.

To get them to cut off material ties with the outside world, he first had to convince them that the outside world was far more evil than his world. Once again, Jones' genius was manifest in the way he played to specific audiences. For his black followers—the majority of his congregation—he'd

stage horrid shows of Klan lynchings and castrations. Since the Klan was not an object of his imagination, he could also use news items and films to exaggerate their power. For his middle-class members, he could also exaggerate other media reports—in this case, the CIA wire-tappings and infiltration of radical groups. So Jones wasn't creating an imaginary enemy, he was taking one which was real to people who wanted social change, and exaggerating its evils. What was implicit in the exaggeration of the enemy was the exaggeration of the Peoples Temples mission. So, once again, he was feeding his followers' egos. They came to believe that they were involved in a project to change the world—"to right the wrongs" as Mama Jones had predicted—and to believe that because they were so special to their visionary leader, no one else could do it.

They accepted that their cause was very special and that its success depended on solidarity above all else. Thus, Jones had little trouble getting their property.

The next step was to induce an Orwellian "1984" mistrust between members. "The CIA has infiltrated us," Jones told them. "The reactionary forces of the world know that internal dissent will destroy us. As we are such a threat to fascism, we must make sure that we bond ourselves together with unquestionable loyalty." Jones asked the whole group for loyalty tests. Sign statements that say I fathered your children, he said. Sign these papers that say you are a homosexual, a lesbian, a child molester. Since you are loyal, it doesn't matter.

They signed. And soon they were in so deep that for the sake of their own illusions of self-worth,

they had to go along with all his other demands. After all, he told them, I don't like doing these things—his sexual indulgences, his sadism—but it's for the good of the Temple: for your own good.

Through these series of blackmails, those who really loved the real Jim Jones—the cruel, dominating Daddy—had more reason to love him. And those who doubted him couldn't say or do anything.

The humilations—the beatings, public confessions, and sexual enslavements—only heightened the masochists' love of their leader, and made the doubters more and more frightened of his power, as well as putting them in a position where, for their own self-respect, many of them deluded themselves into believing that he was a god they couldn't understand or criticize, a god which made the devil incomprehensibly evil.

The Outside World

In Ukiah and San Francisco, Jones' devotees did, of course, have contact with the mainstream of society. Where a Moonie would constantly be barraged with public criticism of their leader, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, the folks from the Peoples Temple would be barraged with public praise for their leader.

Politicians courted him. He had dinner with Rosalynn Carter. The media praised his efforts on behalf of freedom of the press. Mayor George Moscone offered Jones a position on the Human Rights Commission of San Francisco and when their leader thought that was beneath him, Moscone ap-

parently agreed by then giving him the Chair of the Housing Authority.

Meanwhile, in an obscure South American country, pioneers from the Peoples Temple were carving out a settlement where they believed they would finally be free.

Jones, in San Francisco, was telling his followers that their enemies were taking definite steps to wipe them out.

A Man For All Reasons

For those who wanted a messiah, then, Jim Jones had performed miracles. For those who wanted social change, Jim Jones had created soup kitchens, employment centers, housing projects, nursing homes, and drug rehabilitation centers, and apparent racial equality within his family and ranks. For those who wanted a stern father, Jones wielded the whip. For those who wanted a Hollywood lover, Jim Jones put on his shades. For those who wanted an outlet for their disturbing guilt, Jim Jones had a podium and an audience. For those who wanted votes, Jim Jones had 20,000 ready. For those who had no other reason to follow him, Jim Jones had threats that, apparently, he could back up without fear of the law.

Jim Jones had power.

When it became apparent in the summer of 1977 that not even his network of connections could stop the "New West" article, Jim Jones had an escape ready, and, in June, went to Jonestown. Even after the exposé was published, 800 people followed him.

For those who were afraid of the old world, Jim Jones had a new one.

From Blinders to Blindfolds to Death

The devotees of the Peoples Temple who went to Jonestown seemingly had nothing left to give up—but Jones knew of something that they still had: a society that would condemn him.

But in Jonestown, the cut-off from the outside world was complete. The only outside world they could see was a hostile natural environment where a man's only chance for survival depended on group cooperation. Jones gave them a group.

It is still impossible for the majority of Americans to fathom why 910 people would kill themselves—especially when the reasons for their suicides were obviously illusions. But what are seen as illusions to Americans had become realities to the people of Jonestown.

To say that Jim Jones was solely responsible for what happened is too easy. The people who followed him had to delude themselves to some extent, and though evidence shows that not all of them died willingly, there were no bodies with bullets in their backs.

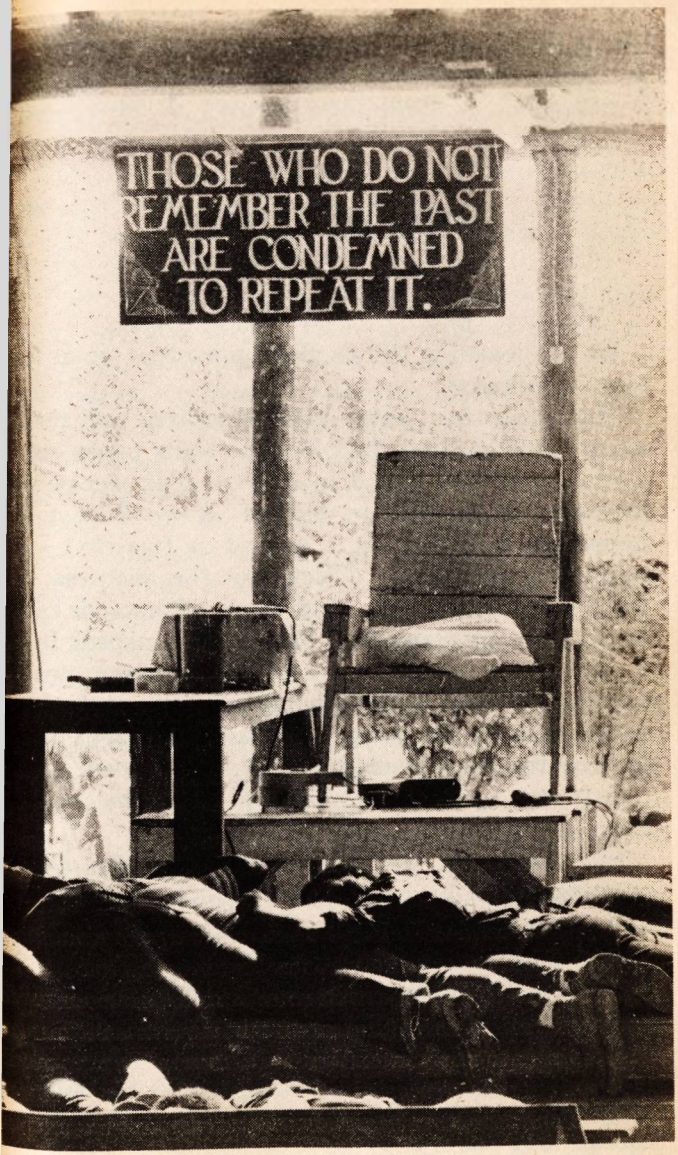
Undernourished, isolated by the jungle, fatigued, lost in a nightmare, listening to a man, who, by that time, was deranged by fever and insanity, they grasped at anything they could. And when Ryan died and all Jones' threats of retaliation by outside forces seemed to be about to come true, the people in Jonestown were so conditioned that they

responded to the White Night call just as they had rehearsed over and over. Still, perhaps Jones, or whoever was in power those final weeks, knew that a person's will to survive was the very essence of life.

Still the genius, but now insane, he called the children forward first. As with most people, the followers of Jim Jones probably believed until the last minute that it couldn't be them who were going to die. Jones had cried "Wolf" so often, and the rehearsals had been only rehearsals.

But then the children started screaming in pain. Those screams were real. Parents knew then that their children—their promise for the future—were gone, and that in itself broke down the last vestiges of will in all but the strongest to resist a god turned devil.

Jim Jones' 19-year-old son discusses the mass suicide with reporters in Georgetown, with cult member Paula Adams at his side. His father ruined everything the settlement represented with his bizarre mass suicide rite, Jones said.



At the foot of Jim Jones' throne lie his disciples' bodies. The sign over them quotes the philosopher George Santayana.

WHY? WHY? WHY?

We are learning things about ourselves we never wanted to know.

The sickening news that hundreds of men, women and children had held up their paper cups while death was ladled in . . . it is still, weeks afterwards, impossible to believe. If we believe it happened, it is just for a second or two that our reasoning minds say, "You see the pictures; it must have been so." And then afterwards, we forget. How to grasp this? Must it be grasped? It is a fact: of 910 men, women and children dead, many if not most of them held their cups up to Jim Jones' pals for the poison, and held the paper cups to their lips, and drank the Kool-Aid of death.

It is still, you say to yourself, impossible to believe.

But there are the photos again, in the news magazines and on book covers. There are the men and women and children who wore bright colors that Saturday, the men and women who played music for the NBC news team, and smiled and swung on the swings. There are the men and women and children, holding hands in death, cuddled up to each other, as if caught in a blizzard and frozen in their last movement toward human contact and warmth.

But there was no blizzard. This man here, in the picture, face down with his feet extended over the boardwalk by the pavilion, there is no bullet in him.

This is not laundry spread out in the warmth of the sun to dry, so that it can be put on again by living people who sometimes smile. This is death welcomed as if it were a loving mother.

This photograph of colorful clothes has the hues of an Oriental carpet. There is no blood visible, no violence. This photograph cannot be grasped or understood or kept in mind for more than a second. This is evidence that 900 people welcomed the nightmare. This plump woman in the orange suit and pink pants and white socks and dark low-cut sneakers. Did she lie down, or did she fall? Did she have a thought, any thought at all, as the potassium cyanide coursed through her blood vessels and devoured the oxygen that fed her brain? As the door snapped down, in that instant, when the last door through which light might come clanged shut without an echo, did she *see* anything? Did she understand, in that moment—did she see that flash of white light the Rev. talked about?—did she understand death? Was there a part of her, deep in the brain or soul, that laughed and chose death willingly?

In that second or two when we can believe it happened, we have to ask *why*.

Why did hundreds of men and women willingly take the paper cups of cyanide, and drink? Why did they spoon or squirt the purple liquid into the mouths of their own babies?

We try to imagine the event that so few survivors lived to tell about, and even if we can imagine the men and women lining up for the "po-

tion," we cannot imagine what they were thinking. What could have passed through their minds as they lifted the paper cups to their lips? No one survived *that* event. There is no one to report, no one to come back and tell us how it felt. Nine hundred and ten went that way, and there is no one to come back.

Still, we discover some answers. We discover, for one thing that the experience of the Peoples Temple communards was—especially in the last few months—very close to brain-washing. Almost all the techniques of brain-washing, as described by the best psychologists in the 1950s, are evident in Jim Jones' last mad months.

There are a few differences between Jones' methods and those of the Chinese Communists—the inventors of brain-washing—but they are insignificant. In fact, Jim Jones' incredible feat of simply persuading nearly 1,000 to commit suicide with him amounts to a new definition of brain-washing. The psychologists will be studying Jones for decades ahead.

"Brain-washing" was a term unknown by Americans during the years of World War II and the outburst of prosperity after the war. Those were simpler years. Not until the early 1950s, when some of our soldiers captured in Korea appeared in public after their release and repudiated America, did the American public get a glimpse of the complexities of loyalty. American boys were making traitorous statements in public and in uniform. They were confessing to taking part in bacteriological warfare, or to elaborate and unlikely plots. "Brain-washing" was the literal interpretation of a Chinese phrase, which might better have

been termed "thought reform." In any case, to Western minds schooled in the freedom and autonomy of individual men.

Brain-washing has usually seemed, in this country, a strange type of cruelty, found in Communist countries, especially in the Oriental ones. Now we know, after witnessing the corpses of 900 men and women, the horror of mind control is fresh again. We could see them—more or less ordinary citizens—who had not had enough will to resist Jim Jones' orders, backed up by a few armed guards.

Granted, Jim Jones was an organizational genius gone mad. Granted, many of his followers were our society's underdogs: poor people, former drug addicts, ghetto blacks. Still, that doesn't explain a whole town full of people falling to the ground in a single suicide.

Confession and Reeducation

There is this: the human mind can crumple like so much tinfoil under certain specific kinds of pressure. And the pressure that kills the human mind and will is not as simple as torture. Dr. R.J. Lifton pointed that out years ago in a famous book called "Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism." As Dr. Lifton saw it—and his views are now considered classic—all thought reform (or "brain-washing") consists of two basic elements: Confession, and reeducation.

Confession, Dr. Lifton declared, means the exposure and renunciation of past and present "evil."

Reeducation is the remaking of the man in the image chosen by the thought reformers.

Those two steps are not a simple one-two experience. Thought reform takes a long period of time, and there is a distinct sequence of psychological experiences which culminates in the most amazing changes of personality known outside of surgical or accidental assault on the brain stem. Another way of looking at the confession-reeducation sequence, says Dr. Lifton, is as a death and rebirth sequence. In talking about two patients of his in the 1950s who had just been released from "brain-washing" stays in prison by the Chinese Communists, Dr. Lifton wrote:

> Both Dr. Vincent and Dather Luca took part in an agonizing drama of death and rebirth. In each case, it was made clear that the "reactionary spy" who entered the prison must perish, and that in his place must arise a "new man," resurrected in the Communist mode. Indeed, Dr. Vincent still used the phrase "To die and be reborn"—words which he had heard more than once during his imprisonment.
>
> Neither of these men had himself initiated the drama; indeed, at first both had resisted it, and tried to remain quite outside of it. But their environment did not permit any sidestepping: they were forced to participate, drawn into the forces around them until they themselves began to feel the need to confess and to reform. *This penetration by the psychological forces of the environment into the inner emotions of the individual person is*

perhaps the outstanding psychiatric fact of thought reform.

Dr. Lifton was writing in 1961 of experience suffered by grown men, tortured in Chinese prisons between 1951 and 1954, but the words have a spooky fitness for the world of Jonestown, Guyana, in 1978.

Brain-washing unfolds with a time-rhythm. It takes time, and it takes the collaboration of its victim. Brain-washing is a complex emotional relationship between the manipulator and the victim. It is not simply sadistic torture. It attacks the human spirit along the line of least strength—the boundary between self and other.

The "death and re-birth" process which Dr. Lifton talks about took place inside prisons, but there are striking examples of the same process in Jonestown. These were the symbolic suicides, carried out *en masse*. They were called "white nights," and they were terrifying. Debbi Blakey, an escapee from Jonestown, described them in an affidavit five months before the horrible practice suicides became real:

> At least once a week, Rev. Jones would declare a "white night," or state of emergency. The entire population of Jonestown would be awakened by blaring sirens. Designated persons, approximately 50 in number, would arm themselves with rifles, move from cabin to cabin, and make certain that all members were responding. A mass meeting would ensue. Frequently during these crises we would be told that the jungle was swarming

with mercenaries and that death could be expected at any minute.

During one "white night" we were informed that our situation had become hopeless and that the only course of action open to us was a mass suicide for the glory of socialism. We were told that we would be tortured by mercenaries if we were taken alive. Everyone, including the children, was told to line up. As we passed through the line, we were given a small glass of red liquid to drink. We were told that the liquid contained poison and that we would die within 45 minutes. We all did as we were told. When the time came when we should have dropped dead, Rev. Jones explained that the poison was not real and that we had just been through a loyalty test. He warned us that the time was not far off when it would become necessary for us to die by our own hands.

What can those 45 minutes have been like? Surely, there can be no mental torture to equal one in which you are told—and you believe—that you are about to die, that these are your last minutes. Even condemned murderers on Death Row know—most of them—that their sentence is delayable. It is as if every one of Jim Jones' believers went through that last walk to the death chamber with him—he tricked them into it—and as if he then intervened, after they had suffered incredible agony, and told them they had been pardoned—by him.

Going through a "white night" in Jonestown was a submission to the destruction of part of your

mind. The part that was *you,* that part that wanted to *live,* and stay you. That part was killed, piece by piece, by the "Dad" of Jonestown.

"Life at Jonestown was so miserable," Debbi Blakey said in her affidavit in mid-1978, "and the physical pain of exhaustion was so great that this event (the 'white night') was not traumatic for me. I had become indifferent as to whether I lived or died."

Dr. Lifton, toward the end of his study on brain-washing, listed several features which are common to environments in which brain-washing is taking place. He says he made the list "as a basis for answering the ever-recurring questions: "Isn't this just like brain-washing?"

Milieu Control

This is the most basic feature of a brain-washing environment. Through control of the "milieu" or "situation" the manipulator seeks to control not only individual communication with the outside, but also, "over what we may speak of as his communication with himself."

This milieu control can be fostered through a real prison, or through the total isolation of Jonestown, where phone calls were impossible, where all mail was censored, where communards couldn't leave the camp.

Jim Jones, in the last months, talked and raved over the camp loudspeakers sometimes as much as six hours a day, and often at night. It must have been next to impossible for long periods of time for

Jonestown people to even have a thought of their own.

Those who keep the milieu tightly in control, such as Jones and his lieutenants, have a conviction that reality is their exclusive possession. They think they have seen the ultimate—the last—truth. Perhaps Jim Jones controlled the environment of his followers so tightly to banish his inner suspicion that his personal "total picture" was not everything.

The Need for Manipulation, the Demand for Purity

The next step after milieu control is manipulation.

The controller seeks to control the very mind and spirit of the victim, and so he resorts to the wildest kind of manipulation of events. In Communist prisons, the manipulation included planned "spontaneous" confessions, changes in attitude from harshness to leniency by the interrogators, and so on. In the Peoples Temple, the manipulation of events so they appeared spontaneous was routine. Jim Jones' manipulation of events in a social setting (such as a Church service) was extensive. The examples already mentioned in this book are many. There were the fake cancer cures, the "recovery" from a "bullet-wound", the "raising of the dead" of Temple members, and so on.

This manipulation of events in a closed society (or even a partially closed one, such as an eight-hour-long Temple meeting) as an odd effect on those witnessing the staged spontaneous events. It

suspends, seemingly and for the group members only, the laws of cause and effect. The individual is asked to respond to these faked events with total trust—as if he were a child in the arms of its mother. Dr. Lifton's insights into this manipulation now read like footnotes to the grizzly mess of Jonestown:

> This manipulation assumed a no-holds-barred character, and used every possible device at the milieu's command, no matter how bizarre or painful. Initiated from above, it seeks to provoke specific patterns of behavior and emotion in such a way that these will appear to have arisen spontaneously from the environment.... The individual then responds to the manipulations through developing what I shall call the *psychology of the pawn*. Feeling himself unable to escape from forces more powerful than himself, he subordinates everything to adapting himself to them. He becomes sensitive to all kinds of cues, expert at anticipating ... pressures .... (Lifton, p 422)

The thought controller also demands absolute purity from his pawns. He upholds the idea of an absolute good, such as a "good Communist" or a "good temple member" and everything that is not "Good" is condemned. And condemned comes out in the confession rites that are part of every real brain-washing situation.

The confession of personal guilt is key to all kinds of brainwashing.

Confession, in the brain-washing situation, goes beyond all, far beyond the normal religious or therapy purposes. The victim is encouraged to confess constantly. His guilt is enlarged on. Confessions made in public become more and more elaborate.

The controller soon demands that one confess to crimes one has not committed, to arbitrary crimes, to things one could never have committed. The victim, pressured into confessions, eventually begins to feel real guilt even for the things crimes or sins he has not done.

Jim Jones, remember, had his followers sign statements that they had abused their children. He had them confess to sexual perversions they had never taken part in. He had teen-age boys confessing to the "crime" of spending money on candy instead of giving it to the Rev. Jones. Some of the confessions were given in public. Others were delivered to Jones, personally, in the form of hand-written notes. After the mass death, investigators found at least one of these guilt-notes in Jones shirt pocket. Other such notes, confessing guilt to "crimes" that the normal mind would not call crimes, have been found signed by everyone from illiterate teen-agers to aged grandmothers, who'd written them with painfully rheumatic fingers.

When the Jonestown folks confessed to sins they had not committed, it must have warped their sense of reality, and increased their dependence on

Jones. But it fostered Jones' control in another way. It allowed Jim Jones to act as if he knew his followers *from the inside out.* It allowed him to know their inner-most guilty feelings. It allowed Jim Jones to say to his congregation "I know how evil each one of you is in his heart," and for every heart in the congregation to tremble.

With Jim Jones so deep in his heart, the average Jonestowner had that much less room left for himself, his own ideas and feelings, his own desire to survive.

"The assumption underlying total exposure [in such fake confessions] is the environment's claim to total ownership of each individual self within it," wrote Dr. Lifton. "Private ownership of the mind and its products—of imagination or of memory—become highly immoral." (Lifton, p 426.)

Examples of the pitiful letters of self-accusation are elsewhere in this book. Read them with the understanding of how much power the letter-writer conferred on Jim Jones by such self-abasement. What the letter-writers got in return: Jim Jones' approval, in an environment of great stress, where Jim Jones' approval was the only good.

DEATHLIFT

They lay for almost a week in the steaming jungle.

Their faces and bodies already contorted by the cyanide, they swelled, bloated, decayed in the steamy tropical climate. They turned purple and orange.

They had to go somewhere.

So the U.S. Army undertook a massive deathlift, the likes of which it hadn't seen since Vietnam's final fatalities.

So 200 troops were flown in to do the dirty work. They wore green pants and white tee shirts and whatever they could find to try to mask the stench. Surgical masks. Gas masks. Caps. Anything.

The troops belonged to specially trained graves teams and body identification teams. They knew what they were doing, although many had not done it before.

To many, the corpse transport reminded them of Vietnam. America had not seen body bags being crammed onto huge helicopters since the war ended. And photos of four or five soldiers carrying aluminum "body transport" boxes and body bags enhanced the vivid picture given the public by the media.

Remarkably, the soldiers removed the bodies to the Dover Air Force Base in Delaware—the site of the largest morgue in the United States—without major incidents. Only a few soldiers got sick, and then with only minor illnesses.

There evolved in the grim project a kind of gruesome cameraderie among the troops assigned to Guyana. Several soldiers assigned to other tasks volunteered to help with the bodies.

At Dover, the task of identifying the badly decomposed bodies began, and officials from the start expressed doubt that many would ever be identified.

The final 183 bodies arrived at the airport early Sunday, eight days after the slaughter. They arrived in 82 caskets.

The identification process met the expected difficulties. An FBI team of crack fingerprint experts fingerprinted 441 of the dead cultists. But they could only identify 17, one of them Jim Jones. Many of the others would never be identified by fingerprints because they had never been taken.

Officials also began cleaning and embalming some bodies. Bodies awaiting the procedure were slapped into piles in hangars and a storage shed. Those bodies covered only by plastic bags were refrigerated.

In addition to the FBI team, 35 other experts—pathologists, dentists, radiologists and others—were sent to help out. They would try to use dental records, scars, signs of surgery and other clues to try to identify the deceased.

Still, little success was expected.

Some of the loading and unloading was done by volunteers. One of them, 19-year-old Airman Pat-

ricia Goad of Aiken, South Carolina, said the rows of corpses were shocking—"Why would people want to kill themselves off like that?" she asked. She was assigned the "not very pleasant" task of hosing down and disinfecting aluminum cases for possible re-use.

The soul-chilling nature of the Dover corpse machine was captured in a conversation between two Air Force officers helping. The conversation was reported by Michael Daly of the New York Daily News.

"The worst (part) is going back and forth, going out in the fresh air to pick up a bodybag, then carting it inside the room, back into the smell," said Sgt. Johnny Dawson of his chore.

Was it harder to carry an adult's or child's remains?

"It's tough carrying an adult," Dawson responded. "It couldn't get any harder. It's a tough job. You don't have time to do much thinking."

An airman standing nearby joined the conversation. "I picked up a bag (with) a body that couldn't have been more than a 2-year-old baby in it. Half of you is so disgusted, you want to throw it away from you. The other half wants to hold it in your arms because it's so small," he said.

"In some ways, though," he went on, "Dawson's right. You see them unzip the bag and fish out a hand the size of a walnut for fingerprinting and it just isn't real. I saw the body of the Jones man, the guy who killed all these people, murdered all these children. We just stacked him in a refrigeration trailer with 100 othe bodies. Maybe after he's buried this will all seem real to me."

The youngest of the bodies on one flight which

brought 408 dead to Dover had belonged to an 18-month-old. Another was that of 108-year-old Papa Jackson.

"This is light," one pall-bearer was heard saying as he hoisted a casket. "It must be a kid."

"I slept in the back with them (the corpses)," said Sgt. David Stewart. "I started thinking, then I pulled my sleeping bag over my head and went to sleep," he added.

Throughout the deathlift, officials remained concerned about the health of those cleaning up the carnage. Guyanese officials tried to limit the number of people who visited the settlement. And troops who loaded the bodies were ordered to burn their clothes.

Next of kin were not allowed to view the bodies, officials ruled. A few showed up at Dover to learn the fates of their folks. One of them, a man who feared six relatives might be dead, learned nothing.

Most of the corpses weren't recognizable by then anyhow. Some bodies were so badly rotted that fingerprint experts had to peel off fingertips, place them on their own gloved hands, and then put ink on them and get a fingerprint.

A controversy arose over whether or not the bodies had been autopsied. Lawrence K. Altman, a physician who is also science reporter for the New York Times, wrote a series of articles on the question, reporting first that authorities did not intend to autopsy Jones' body, and later that they had changed their mind.

Cause of death, including the distinction between suicide and homicide, often can be determined in an autopsy. But chemicals used in the embalming process destroy drugs in the corpse like

cyanide. Not determining causes of death can also affect legal proceedings in cases like the Guyana massacre.

To add to the confusion, American officials said they didn't know if any autopsies had been performed in Guyana.

The problem with not performing autopsies, Altman reported, is that whether the cyanide potion was taken voluntarily or forcibly may never be known.

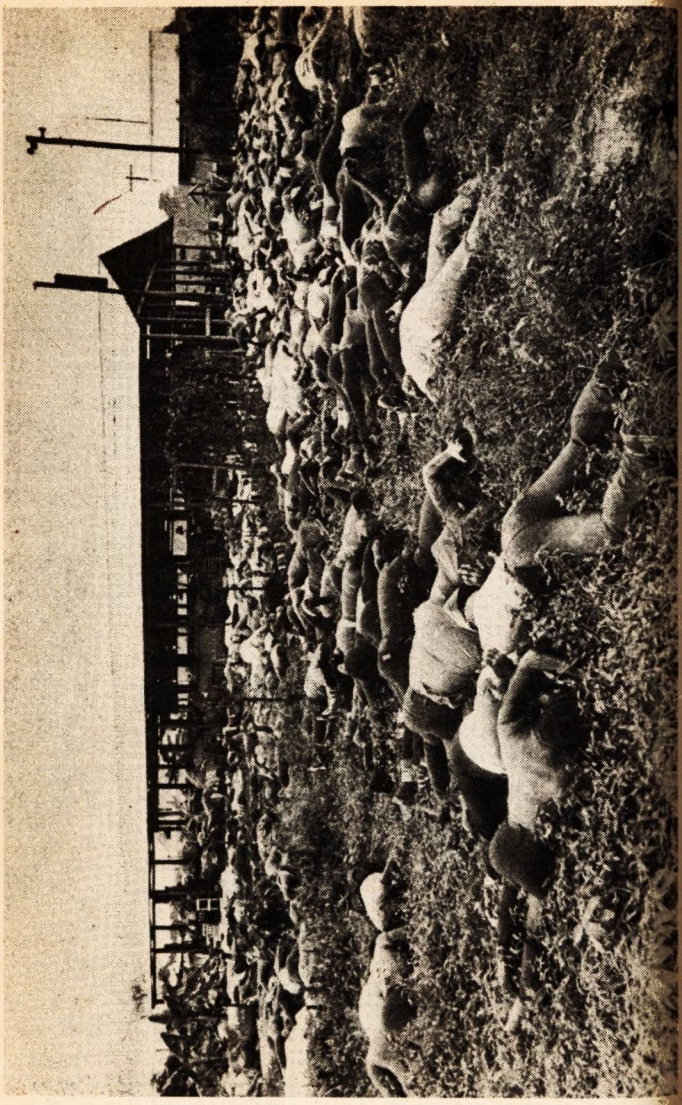
After a clamorous debate on the question, it was announced that the body of Jones would be autopsied. His family had originally intended to bury Jones in a family plot in Indiana, but later decided instead to cremate him and scatter his ashes over the Atlantic Ocean. And federal officials also decided to autopsy Jones' mistress, Maria Katsaris, the camp doctor, Dr. Lawrence Schact, and three bodies selected at random from the death scene.

How the unclaimed bodies would be disposed was not immediately clear, and became a subject of some controversy among the townsfolk of Dover. Residents objected bitterly to the possibility of a mass burial there.

"I don't want the State Department to conduct a mass burial anywhere near Dover," Delaware State Representative Michael Harrington said. "You could expect martyrdom, a shrine, hordes of people making an annual pilgrimage on the anniversary of Jonestown."

Another irate resident summed up the town's feelings toward its peculiar role in the Guyana story: "I don't want a bunch of kooks coming in from out of state to worship these people that killed themselves."

Mark Lane, Peoples Temple lawyer, discusses his experience in the final days at Jonestown. Later, Lane disclosed that he was aware of druggings and suicide drills in Jonestown, but did not inform the other members of the Ryan entourage.



The rotting bodies of 900 members of the Peoples Temple lay in the fields of the settlement after the members committed mass suicide. The corpses would rot and bloat before they could be flown to Delaware for identification and disposal.

THE EXPERTS AND THE EDITORS TRIED TO MAKE SENSE OF IT

In the beginning, there was bewilderment.

Guyana?

Wasn't that in Africa? And wasn't it G-u-i-a-n-a? 400?

But the reality of Guyana and what had happened there soon became apparent. The world recoiled. Media reactions ranged from blanket indictments of cults to condemnations of everything American to calls for beefing up the FBI.

But in all quarters reactions had one thing in common: horror.

Columnist Charles Whited of the Miami Herald captured the newsroom reaction which was later shared by readers around the world:

> At 9:14 p.m., an Associated Press bulletin flashed onto the display terminal of the Miami Herald's national desk.
>
> Slotman Don Podesta called over his shoulder to Bob Gilbert, night news editor. "We got a congressman shot in Guyana. He might be dead."
>
> The date was Nov. 18, the Saturday before Thanksgiving.
>
> The first fragment had broken loose in

what would burgeon into one of the horror stories of the age.

The first reports reflected the horror, the disbelief. Headlines around the country hedged. Lines like "Congressman Reported Dead" reflected editors' reluctance to report as fact this incredible tale from the jungle. And early wire service reports were equally tentative—they emphasized unconfirmed reports based on a radio transmission from a pilot.

It was all true, the newsmen learned.

Then the deluge of editorials hit print. "His (Jones) crazy zeal has come to a horror that, if not predictable, at least followed its own grisly logic."

Then hundreds of reporters hastened to Guyana and even more legmen hustled for history of Jones and the cult. Facts from their pasts filtered onto news desks, and editors began drawing more daring conclusions on this inconceivable slaughter. Fingers were pointed at parties believed culpable. The sociology of the Peoples Temple and cults in particular were scrutinized.

The New York Post, from the beginning, discussed the financial dealings of the temple and other cults. After warning that the lesson in this tragic affair is that there are "no answers in false gods," the paper added:

> The lesson for parents and the rest of us is, that it is time for a federal investigation of the many sects now promising so much, but providing so little, and many with large tax exemptions.

Later that week, the paper's editors would continue on the same theme:

The US government should launch an exhaustive investigation to establish speedily and precisely where the money is and how it can be made available for a program of compensation. . . .

All funds held by the Temple should be impounded immediately, along with its financial records. The established officers of the Temple and Jones's son, who has denounced his father's fanaticism, should be called on to testify about the full extent of the financial holdings of Jones and the Temple.

The columnists took over. So Jones himself was a paranoid, a sex fiend, a huckster. How could society tolerate him? How could 900 persons give him millions of dollars for poverty? Why would they die for him?

From many quarters at home and abroad, indictments of the American way emerged. The Straits Times of Singapore wrote:

"The Peoples Temple tragedy serves to demonstrate that the communes, sects and other fringe groups which have opted out of mainstream America not only continue to exist but apparently acquire new converts daily."

The paper added the cultists might not have been able to accept the freedom offered individuals in America:

They do not want, are confused by, the near total freedom of choice in countries like America. They opt for leadership by a strongly charismatic personality in an atmo-

sphere of emotional excitement.

The Soviet Press Reaction

The propaganda machine churned in Russia. Pravda, the Communist Party newspaper in Russia, issued a long blast:

> What has happened in Guyana is one more page illustrating the tragic fate of American dissidents, who could not find a place for themselves in America, just as they could not find it in any other country.

Tass, the official news agency of the Soviet Union, took it one step further. It said that Western reporting of Guyana

> avoids the fundamental question of why the Peoples Temple and many similar religion sects exist in the United States.... Only a few individual observers admit that what they are talking about is one of the products of the notorious 'American way of life.'

France Soir, a daily paper in Paris, carried a headline more than three inches deep. It read "La Folie," which means "madness."

Other editorials and columns contended the horrors of Guyana could have been avoided. Columnist Max Lerner said California officials looked the other way when the abuses of the politically important Jones were first documented there:

> These horrors could have been avoided—if

local and state authorities in California had not been so complacent about the repeated accusations, so fearful of alienating the voters Jones seemed to control, so paralyzed by the need for church-state separation.

Kingsbury Smith, a conservative columnist for the Hearst Newspapers, wrote that the Guyana deaths "is the price American society has paid for restrictions placed on the Federal Bureau of Investigation." The FBI, he explained, would have infiltrated the group if "crippling restrictions" on its covert activities had not been imposed by then Attorney General Edward H. Levi in 1976.

A former FBI official told The Hearst Newspapers that if the bureau had been operating as it normally would have functioned prior to the imposition of crippling restrictions, it would have infiltrated the Jones cult in California, especially after reports that a young defector had been murdered. It would undoubtedly have had an informer in the Guyana settlement.

It would have discovered that Jones was a madman who maintained Rasputin-like control over his followers, terrorizing those who disobeyed him, threatening with death those who wished to leave him, coercing others to turn over their property to him.

And unless the feds regain their former power, Smith warned, it would happen again.

An FBI source said there are several weirdo and potentially dangerous organiza-

tions operating in the country at the present time, but the bureau cannot infiltrate them because of the restrictions on its operations.

Others took to task those parties which, it was learned in the days after the massacre, knew more than they had let on about the cult and its leader. Controversial Mark Lane knew a great deal about Jones' terrorist practices—the perversion, the beatings, the extortion. He knew of the suicide drills. He knew Jones was serious, according to reports after the massacre.

So why didn't he tell anyone? columnists asked.

Before the massacre, according to Anthony Lewis, writing on the Op-Ed page of the New York Times,

> *Before,* Mr. Lane described the Jonestown commune as *a noble experiment in socialism, targeted for destruction by a conspiracy among "American intelligence organizations" and other Government agencies.* A month before the end, a People's Temple press release quoted him as saying:
>
> *"It makes me almost weep to see such an incredible experiment with such vast potential for the human spirit and the soul of this country, to be cruelly assaulted by the intelligence operations."*

After the deaths, his tune changed:

> Mr. Lane told some of the same reporters that *he had known drugs were used to keep commune members there against their will.* He said he had known also *about suicide*

drills in Jonestown and believed that Jim Jones seriously contemplated mass death. *He called Jones a "murderer" and said his death was the "first stage" in a "master plan" of murder.*

That stank, Lewis charged.

In any event, it is time for the decent people of the United States to tune out Mark Lane. It is time for some soul-searching on the part of talk-show hosts and editors and politicians who have allowed themselves to be *vehicles in his promotion of conspiracy theories—and of himself.*

And the politicians who had given Jones apparent letters of commendation—a revelation which startled the press and the public, and humiliated the authors of the letters—were sharply criticized. "If ever there were an indictment of the tendency in high places to distribute indiscriminate testimonials," wrote the editors of the New York Post, "these letters surely prove it."

The Post continued that such letters, which had come from sources as high as Rosalyn Carter and Vice President Walter Mondale, should be banned.

It should be a permanent rule of every office holder, in and out of business and politics, to beware of becoming the innocent accomplice of the con-men and charlatans who infest our society and would use their good names to bewitch the uninformed.

Eventually, observers began probing deeper and

began looking behind the details of this madman and this cult. The obligatory call for a Congressional investigation was made by, among others, the New York Post:

> Congress should begin public hearings into the origins and practices of the Peoples Temple and the many other pseudo-religious cults now flourishing with impunity (and often with tax exemption) in this country, many of them threatening violence to those who dissent from their teachings or even merely seek to expose their dubious activities.
>
> A major effort is required in adult education, and the best possible forum would be such Congressional hearings. We owe at least that much to those who lost their lives in seeking to pursue the truth—as well as to those who were duped, to those still duped, and those who may yet be duped.

Others examined the implications of the cults and eventually the constitutional question of freedom of religion was raised again. In the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Joel A. MacCollam said many cults like the Peoples Temple "are little more than fronts for a leader's ego trip, financial success or political power."

> We cherish "freedom of religion" but it has become a constitutional guarantee misused by a few for their personal gain, at both the personal expense and the constitutional expense of their followers.

People may believe that "a turkey is worthy of

worship and the source of meaning for his life. . . . But if a person or group deems murder necessary for the ends of their religion to be met, can we protect that?"

Some critics even singled out the state of California, which had spurned Peoples Temple, Charles Manson and others of varying degrees of infamy, for blame in the cult phenomenon. The New York Times reported that

> newspapers in all parts of the world have referred to California as the home of an exotic fringe and a spawning ground for violence. The view was summed up by an editorial in The Statesman of India, which referred to the state as the "home of a hundred strange cults from the merely dotty to the disgusting."

And on the OP-Ed page of the same paper, Marvin Harris, a professor of anthropology at Columbia University, wrote,

> It is no accident because California has led the way in the creation of a natural and human wasteland peopled by bewildered souls roaming the freeways in search of clean air, the American dream, and some explanation—any kind of explanation—for what went wrong.

In many circles, including the Vatican and other religious headquarters, the decline of organized religion in the 1960s was thought to have precipitated the tragedy. The Rev. Gino Concetti, the theologian with the Vatican newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, rejected "the uselessness of a

pseudo-mysticism that betrays the cause of man because it betrays the cause of Christ."

"Christianity is a religion of life," he concluded, "not of death."

In other written opinions, it was suggested the general turbulence of the 60s may have sired the disillusionment of the 70s. To New York Daily News Columnist Pete Hamill, the "diseased little scenario" of Jim Jones' temple

> was played against the fall of Nixon, the loss of the war in Vietnam, and the general collapse of authority in America. Everywhere, people seemed to be floundering. The black movement was in ruins. Politics provided no answers. But among many Americans there was this terrible aching need to believe. And soon you found people on both coasts grasping for belief: in EST, in Scientology, in the Rev. Moon's Reunification Church in yoga, zen, hot tubs, the Divine Light Mission, Transcendental Meditation, the Way, Synanon, the human potential movement, Born Again Christianity, the Swami Muktunanda, Hasidism. And yes, in the dangerous little con game led by Jim Jones.

"All the loose change of the '60s," Pete Hamill added, "was brought together at Jonestown."

"Many People Can't Think"

Harold J. Morowitz, writing on the New York Times Op-Ed page, said the decline of true educa-

tion should be blamed. The Guyana tragedy led to "a desperate effort" to comprehend cults, he wrote. But the effort "has ignored a fundamental flaw in our educational system that renders young people so vulnerable to these irrational movements."

Many people can't think, he said. Children are taught what their parents think, not a method for examining the validity of an idea.

The result?

> If a cult leader comes along and states with great charisma "I am god" or "I am the voice of god" many do not know how to evaluate the validity of the statement.
>
> Since education has largely been an appeal to authority (teacher, encyclopedia, textbook), cultists simply replace one authority with another.

And syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman agreed that many cult members had joined, rather than solve for themselves life's difficulities.

> In a society where many are encouraged to explore the sensitive crevices of their private psyches, they find safety and belonging as part of a mass. While others search for themselves, they find meaning by losing themselves.

And Ms. Goodman quoted cult psychologist Dr. Stanley Cath: "They don't have to become, they can follow."

So the experts spoke out, as they do on other issues smaller and larger. They asked questions, laid blame, analyzed background and philos-

ophized. Some suggestions for cures were specific. So were some causes.

But many columnists shied away from stark conclusions. "What finally can be said?" asked Pete Hamill at the end of a long column on the subject. "Not much," he concluded. And Charles Whited, ending his column on how the Miami Herald reported the massacre, quoted reactions of his editors: " 'You'd write this stuff, look back at what you'd written, shake your head and say, "Can any of this be true?' " Whited quoted Herald writer William Montalbano as saying. " 'If you'd have invented this story, nobody would believe it."

And Herald Managing Editor summed up the newsmen's feelings: "And after you've read all this, you say to yourself, 'Yeah. But why did they do it?' "

TWO LAWYERS WITH CRUCIAL ROLES

When Congressman Ryan came to Georgetown, the capital of Guyana, and sought permission from the Rev. Jim Jones to visit Jonestown, at first Jones refused.

Into the fray came two of the best-known left-wing lawyers in the country: Mark Lane and Charles Garry. These men are as unlike as night and day—yet they had to work together as go-betweens. Eventually, they arranged for the Congressman to visit Jonestown, inadvertently moving events forward in one of the greatest tragedies or follies of this century. Here are sketches of these key actors.

Charles Garry

Charles Garry, a reserved 69-year-old attorney from San Francisco, was attorney for the Peoples Temple for 18 months. His association terminated with the massacre. Like Mark Lane, he has known the glare of national publicity.

Like Lane, he had leaned to the left. "I am more than a liberal," he once said. "I am a radical."

He has defended radicals on many occasions. The deceptively strong, white-haired man, who recalled fighting his way home against anti-Armenian children in his neighborhood, has defended Bobby Seale, Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver, leaders of the Black Panthers of the 1960s.

He once appeared before the House Un-American Activities Committee to answer questions about the Communist Party. He took the Fifth Amendment and refused to answer the question, although years later he said he never belonged to the party.

Garry met Jim Jones about five years before the Guyana massacre. Jones captivated the attorney as he had thousands of others.

At the time Garry was helping defend the San Quentin Six at their murder trial, one of many radical causes. Jones had invited Garry to discuss the problems of the defense trial.

"You know, the guy had all the attributes of being a good guy," Garry recalled.

Garry became involved with the temple a few weeks after New West published some incriminating articles. A group of people came to Garry with a check for $10,000 and asked him to handle the group's legal problems.

Jones played an integral role in the violent and bizarre custody battle over John Victor Stoen. Stoen's father had taken the boy to Jonestown, but left without him. He and his wife separated, but worked to try to get the child out of Jonestown.

It was Garry who announced that Jim Jones was claiming paternity for John Victor Stoen. He produced a document signed by Mrs. Stoen in which she admitted Jones fathered the child.

The document was false, the Stoens countered. It was one of many such false documents Jones had routinely ordered temple members to sign for future blackmail possibilities.

An American court ruled in favor of the Stoens, and Jones "freaked out," Garry said. Garry was told 300 persons would commit suicide if authorities came for the boy.

That was in autumn of 1977. Garry later said the Stoen custody battle was the incident which pushed Jones over the brink of sanity. The boy was found dead next to Jones in Jonestown.

Garry said after the massacre that he had believed Jonestown was a socialist Shangri-la, with a leader devoted to pacifism and equality.

"It's apparent Jim Jones lied to me," Garry later said after the massacre. "I think he just lost his reason and went completely mad. He had become very paranoid this past year."

Mark Lane

Attorney Mark Lane is no stranger to controversy. In fact, he thrives on it. Some say he profits from it.

The tall, olive-skinned Lane was a former state legislator from New York. He has since become the champion of many outspoken and unpopular causes. His introduction to widespread controversy came when he claimed the assassination of President John F. Kennedy had been the result of a conspiracy. These accusations have taken root in the national consciousness; since 1963, Lane has lectured, appeared on television talk shows, and

written books defending his thesis. He has convinced some Americans that conspiracies reside at the heart of our national malaise.

In addition, Lane shifted the blame for the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, famed civil rights leader, onto the FBI. Such charges, still unsubstantiated, have made Lane's name synonymous with conspiracy theories and theorists. Lane has become a cause himself, to the detriment of his own credibility, some critics maintain.

Before Guyana, Lane remained in the limelight through his efforts to win a new trial for James Earl Ray, convicted slayer of Martin Luther King. He also attracted attention as founder of the Wounded Knee Legal Defense-Offense Committee, which supported a group of American Indians in a fight to control Indian lands in the midwest.

He found his biggest dose of publicity in Guyana, however. As in all his previous endeavors, the 51-year-old attorney found himself in a storm-center of criticism.

The flak began when Lane admitted that he knew far more about life in the temple, and about Jones himself, than he had admitted before the mass suicide and murder.

In an interview conducted on a plane flying to the Guyana mission with Congressman Leo Ryan and his party, Lane told a reporter, "Maybe 10 percent of the people at Jonestown want to leave."

However, fellow attorney Charles Garry, who spent 14 hours in the jungle with Lane and said they discussed the settlement, said Lane knew more. "It was utter madness to go in there," Newsweek magazine quoted Garry as saying. "Mark Lane knew about everything; the guns, the drugs, the suicide—and he never told anyone."

In the same interview, Lane said the Peoples

Temple had been the victim of unfair publicity and a possible conspiracy by various American agencies. Jim Jones agreed.

During the week in Guyana before the massacre, Jones attempted to give Ryan and his party a portrayal of the settlement as an interracial socialist community where 800 souls lived in comfort and in liberty. For the benefit of Ryan, Lane served as liaison and intermediary to a sanitized version of Jonestown.

However, Lane's story changed dramatically after the massacre.

After the deaths, the lawyer said he knew strong depressants and tranquilizers were used to keep people in the settlement against their will. Lane also knew of the suicide rituals which Jones had conducted. And Lane claimed that he knew Jones was very serious about suicide.

Lane was warned before a meal at the settlement that the grilled cheese sandwiches being served had been drugged. But instead of warning the others in the party, he simply didn't eat his own meal.

"I brought along some cough drops, which have a lot of sugar in them," he said. "I sure as hell wasn't going to eat the cheese sandwiches."

In the week after the massacre, as its story continued to baffle the world, Lane eventually contended he had warned Ryan his Guyana visit could have explosive results. Ryan, who apparently thought Lane was trying to stall or undermine the mission, seemed to dismiss the warning.

Lane said he believed the FBI and CIA had infiltrated the settlement with agents, and that the government knew a good deal about the situation there.

"I don't have proof, but I have strong beliefs," he

said when asked for proof. Mark Lane continues to make a name on the basis of his beliefs, and the world still listens, though more and more critics now ask for *proof*.

FOR NEWSMEN, IT WAS THE STORY OF A LIFETIME

The news trickled out slowly at first. Editors were careful because far-fetched reports from distant jungles have a tendency to prove unreliable.

But a murdered congressman is big stuff. So the report, carefully worded in almost every account, found its way to page 1 of late editions of Sunday newspapers on November 19, the day after the massacre.

Headlines were tentative. "Rep. Ryan, Others Feared Slain in Guyana," The Washington Star wrote across the top of page 1. Also on page 1, the Washington Post wrote:

U.S. Congressman
Is Reported Slain
In South America.

Words like "feared," "reported," and "believed" were used around the country. Newsmen use such words to prevent them from being blamed for inaccuracy in a report.

The first day stories that Sunday gave some details of the initial ambush, and recounted any

available history of the Peoples Temple. The Washington Post described Jim Jones as "a former San Francisco city official," but offered few other details on his background. The Washington Star provided some details on his San Francisco background, mentioning allegations of beatings and phony miracles.

People noticed the story, but probably gave it little thought because most of the country knew little about Jones, Ryan and a remote jungle called Guyana. And on a pleasant autumn afternoon with important games on television, there were other things to worry about.

More Than Murder

Monday the world bolted to attention: The reports of the murders were confirmed, and the first sign of mass suicide erupted. Some headlines were still careful about the bizarre reports:

Jim Jones Is
Reported Dead,

the San Francisco Examiner shouted with headlines more than an inch deep. A slightly smaller sub-headline added: "Suicide-murders: 383 die." The scope of the story was becoming apparent.

5 die in Guyana,
killers hunted,

The Boston Globe carefully reported in its Monday evening edition. In the fifth paragraph the Globe referred to one disturbing, but hardly credible report:

> The State Department said it had unconfirmed "alarming indications" that at least 200 of the outpost's estimated 1,100 American settlers committed suicide after the Saturday evening ambush."

The Washington Post wrote, "300-400 Found Dead at Guyana Camp," in headlines about an inch deep—unusually large for that paper. The Washington Star headlined the suicide and mentioned the poison:

Bodies of 400 Cultists Are Found

printed in one-inch type across the top of page 1, followed by a smaller subheadline:

> Mass Suicide by Poison Reported After Congressman's Slaying; Some Members Shot.

And the paper added a page 1 picture of the bodies of the ambushed congressman and newsmen, still lying by the Guyana Airways plane. In huge black type, the New York Post wrote on page 1:

400 Die
In Mass
Suicide.

By the time the scope of the story became apparent Monday, editors were already scrambling for related stories, known in the business as "side-bars." The San Francisco Examiner, whose photographer Greg Robinson had been slain in the initial ambush, devoted its entire front page to the story Monday. Both stories were written by the paper's Executive City Editor, Jim Willse, and both carried the dateline of Georgetown, Guyana.

The side-bars dealt with Jones and the Peoples Temple in the states, and also with the goings-on in Jonestown just before the suicides. "Last Minutes in Jonestown" was the label affixed to a front-page Examiner story.

But of all the side-bars, those filed by the reporters who had survived the slaying carried the most impact. The Washington Post carried a front-page, first-person account of the ambush by Charles Krause, a Post reporter who was injured in the ambush. The headline read, " 'I Lay There . . . Hoping They'd Think I Was Dead.' " The San Francisco Examiner's Tim Reiterman, who like Krause was injured in the ambush, wrote a page 3 account of the ambush. Both stories were picked up by wire services and circulated through the country, with some running in other papers the same day.

The Boston Globe ran Krause's account on page 1 of its Monday evening edition. The result was that America's interest in the affair increased dramatically, partly by these eyewitness reports.

That night, television news viewers saw the last film taken by NBC cameraman Robert Brown, who was slain in the ambush. His last footage actually shows the ambushers firing guns.

So by Tuesday, all of America knew that Guyana was a jungle country in South America, and that a bizarre mass death had occurred there. They wanted to know more.

Newsmen had already begun obliging them. More than 300 reporters flocked to Guyana, with some news agencies sharing costs of renting Lear jets to get there. In the states, other reporters and writers sought out people who knew Jones and his cult, or pored over clippings on the cult from past newspapers.

Tuesday more amazing details were unearthed. With headlines almost two inches deep, the Examiner, which again devoted all of page 1 to the story, explained

HOW
THEY
DIED.

A sub-headline, itself almost an inch big, added that "Corpses covered ground in Jonestown." And a second page 1 story revealed that millions of dollars had been found at the settlement.

Tuesday's papers noted that as many as 900 suspected settlers had not been accounted for.

Officials thought at first they might have fled into the depths of the jungle to escape Jones' madness.

500-900 are sought in jungle of Guyana.

Tuesday's newspapers also revealed the fate of the suicides' infamous leader:

Cult founder, family died with followers.

There were other side-bars unearthed. A son of the dead slain cult leader was interviewed, and hinted his father was mad. "Jones' Son Accuses Father of 'Destroying Everything,'" the Washington Star said in a front-page headline.

The stodgy New York Times devoted an unusual portion of page 1 to the story. In a three-line headline unusually big for the paper, the Times wrote:

LEADER REPORTED AMONG 300 DEAD IN AN APPARENT MASS SUICIDE RITE AT SECT'S GUYANA JUNGLE COMMUNE.

In subheadlines to the same front-page story, the Times also noted that "Most were poisoned," and that "About 800 others missing."

Charles Krause, in a second first-person account,

made the top of page 1 in the Washington Post with a gruesome story headlined:

Survivor: "They Started With the Babies."

For the third day in a row, the San Francisco Examiner devoted virtually all of page 1 to the story. Across the very top of the page ran this banner headline:

7 AMBUSH SUSPECTS,

with the slightly smaller subhead directly beneath it:

At Jonestown: drugged to die.

Stories on the page related the identification by an eyewitness of the slayers of Congressman Ryan and the newsmen. The Examiner also related that those who committed suicide may have been drugged before the suicide. Lawyer Charles Garry related his involvement with the cult in a story headlined: "Lawyer Charles Garry: 'I guess I'm responsible.'" And the final story on the paper's front page was another first-person account from reporter Tim Reiterman—this one detailing "The long night of fear at the Guyana airstrip."

News media on Wednesday also offered accounts of the grisly business of taking the bodies home and identifying them, and gave accounts of the funerals of the slain congressman and newsmen.

The inside pages were swamped with background stories. Former cult members appeared from nowhere, having been located and convinced to speak out by reporters. They provided grim details of life with Jones, showing that the horrors of Jonestown had existed a long time.

Thursday, there was a startling new report:

Is Rev. Jim Jones Alive?

asked the San Francisco Chronicle in a copyrighted story reprinted around the country. The Chronicle had learned that Jones was in the habit of substituting look-alikes for him whenever he feared danger. Had he done this during the suicide?

Other reports Thursday continued along the now routine lines of reporting. The Examiner wrote

U.S. flying
cult bodies
from jungle.

The Examiner and other papers around the country began to satisfy America's growing morbid

curiosity about bloated and sickening bodies in the South American jungle.

The New York Times told the story of a Brooklyn surgeon searching Jonestown for his mother, who he believed had belonged to the temple.

Throughout the coverage of the event, photographers continued to tell the story with pictures. Servicemen carrying body bags evoked memories of Vietnam, and a photo of a man at the suicide scene wearing a gas mask succinctly captured the story of the rotting bodies.

By Thursday, there was growing concern about the fates of the missing cult members. The jungle search had proved fruitless. Early Friday, American officials said they now doubted the existence of the other cult members.

Later Friday, the question was answered.

JONESTOWN TOLL
NOW UP TO 775,

the Examiner screamed with two-inch headlines on page 1. "Adult corpses covered children," a smaller headline explained. And the sickening development in an already morbid story focused even more attention on it.

Guyana would be remembered as the scene of one of the biggest mass suicides in history.

Guyana death toll nears 800,

The Boston Globe said on the top of page 1.

Other papers continued to wonder about Jones'

true fate. The New York Daily News tantalized its readers with this headline:

NEW MYSTERY:
IS JONES DEAD?

The News, like many other papers, had begun a series on cults, to accompany the continuing reports on Guyana.

Saturday and thereafter, coverage continued with the same themes the media established during the week. More and more background on Jones and the Peoples Temple, both before and after the move to Guyana, and more and more related issues were discussed. "Guyana Death Toll Now 800," the Miami Herald reported Saturday, a week after the massacre. And by Nov. 26, it would write that "Guyana Body Count Hits 910."

That same Sunday, Nov. 26, the New York Times would run this headline across the top of page 1:

GUYANA TOLL IS RAISED TO AT LEAST 900 BY U.S. WITH 260 CHILDREN AMONG VICTIMS AT COLONY.

The coverage had developed in just one week. The first Sunday, papers published tentative and cautious reports about "feared" and "reported" deaths. A week later, they had published incredible quantities of information. The nation read first-person accounts of the massacre of Congressman

Ryan's party, the suicides, and life in the temple since Ukiah. They knew minuscule details of Jones and his temple. They knew about how it was run, the embarrassing letters of recommendation from American officials, the apparent omission of autopsies.

They knew a great deal. They knew enough to decide, as the newspaper editors had, that "Jonestown," with its irresistible combination of murdered officials, mass suicides, religion, sex, children, and Kool-Aid, ranks as one of the major stories of the century.

THE CONFUSING QUESTION OF CULTS

A couple called Him and Her dressed alike, preached about their planet, and convinced dozens of Oregon residents to relinquish their material possessions and await the landing of space ship that would ferry them away from the chaotic planet called Earth to a utopian world.

Once a tribal sect in the highlands of Jamaica, the Rastafarians, who believe the late Haile Selassie was Jesus and advocate the sacramental use of marijuana, now claim U.S. members.

Then, of course, there's the cult that plagued the Romans. Its Messiah was a young Jew who healed the sick and raised the dead. But what was then a "cult"—Christianity"—gained such an enormous following that the Roman Empire became the Holy Roman Empire.

There have always been cults. The organized religions that often condemn more recent cults started as revolutionary groups of true believers who proclaimed radical change.

It's estimated that there are 3,000 religious and non-religious cults in the United States today that can claim a combined membership of 3 million. While their religious or philosophical beliefs may vary, their recruiting methods are remarkably

similar. Like the Rev. Jim Jones' disciples, they claim to have the answers to the world's problems.

As a black man outside the Peoples Temple told a San Francisco Examiner reporter: "If you lived around here and never had anything, and somebody said they'd heal you and take care of you and give you everything, don't you think you'd join too?"

Though many American cultists don't come from deprived economic backgrounds, they all have a terrible need, and they feel only their cults can fulfill them.

Unlike the majority of cult groups that attracted primarily older devotees in the past, the large percentage of American cultists today are under thirty. Authorities on the subject believe that these people are searching for a meaning to life in an increasingly complex, technocratic, alienating world. And often the cults are led by a charismatic person, who, the followers claim, has the divine insight or intelligence that demands their unquestioning devotion.

"They have been blossoming over the last decade. Wherever there have been breakdowns in social structure, there has been a burgeoning of cults," says Dr. Margaret Singer, a University of California psychologist. "After the French revolution, there was a tremendous upsurge of cults in Europe. When the Industrial Revolution came in England, there was a growth in cults. During the 1960's, all of the unrest and problems of the Vietnam War made it, in terms of historical precedent, a time out of which cults grow."

And grow they did—in membership, financial holdings, and influence.

Though there is a distinct lack of research into

the phenomena, Dr. Singer says that most cults share a common characteristic: a "self-appointed messianic leader who claims he or she has been given a mission by a superhuman source."

Dr. Stephen Hersh, a National Institute of Mental Health researcher, offers a more comprehensive set of characteristics that confirms Dr. Singer's statements.

"A cult has a living leader, whose revelations supply the basic doctrine of the cult. The cult leader is the final authority for his followers. He alone may judge a member's faith. Frequently, though not invariably, a cult is strongly authoritarian in structure and philosophy.

"Cults emphasize a way of life distinct from that of the larger society. They often insist that a member cut himself off from family, former friends, job and education in order to devote himself to the group.

"A cult polarizes the world for its followers, drawing a sharp distinction between the 'in-group'—those who believe as the group believes—and the 'out.' "

And all cults, he adds, use basically the same recruitment techniques, called by many 'love-bombing," to make its new members feel loved, secure, part of a larger scheme. They appeal to the idealist's discontent; they attract followers with promises of answers to their problems. They make them prove their devotion by assigning them a variety of demeaning or humbling tasks—often to raise money for the cult leader.

In short, there is nothing unique, save the tragic end, about Jim Jones and his Peoples Church. Experts on the subject warn against making generalizations without adequate study. Yet some

cult leaders demand the selfless obedience that leads followers to break the law, or even kill, as with the Peoples Temple or Charles Manson's Family.

In the aftermath of the mass suicide-murders at Jonestown, cult leaders such as the Reverend Sun Myung Moon claim that their cults are radically different than the Peoples Temple. Yet one ex-Moonie Erica Heftmann, though shocked by the Jonestown tragedy, was not surprised.

"As a Moonie," she said, "I would have done exactly what they did. I was drilled and instructed to kill."

The Recruit

Most cult recruiters know exactly what kind of people they will attract. Jones appealed to the downtrodden—poor blacks, criminals, and other outcasts. Such disenfranchised citizens would welcome his proclamations of universal economic and racial equality as well as his offer of a communal home. The leader of Synanon, Charles Dederich, seeks out drug addicts to be rehabilitated and incorporated into his community. Religious groups like the Children of God, the Hare Krishnas, the Unification Church, the Divine Light Mission, the Bahai, and Eckankar, penetrate the ranks of college students, attracting many with average intelligence and idealism. When Dr. Singer interviewed more than 300 ex-cultists, she discovered that approximately one third were suffering from psychological stress when they were recruited.

During exam time, recruiters often hit the campuses to comb the libraries and befriend students exhausted by the demands of studying. On the streets, hitchhikers, backpackers, and other youths on the search to "get their heads together" are good targets. Hare Krishnas invite people in for free meals. Moonies, not admitting their affiliation, suggest sojourns at communal farms. And once in, the potential member is bombarded with praise, compliments about looks and intelligence, and, in some cases, sexual advances. Anyone can be a target; anyone can be recruited.

Sex, indeed, plays an important role in all cults, whether they preach promiscuity or puritanism. Moonies, who rigidly refrain from sex except with church-approved mates, always pair up a likely recruit with a member of the opposite sex. Flirting is permitted, anything short of sexual contact, to get the recruit to stick with the cult long enough.

David "Moses" Berg, leader of the Children of God, was more preoccupied with the sexual role. He advocated promiscuity, and in the letters from "Mo" his followers distribute on streetcorners, he instructed his female disciples to use anything and everything to get attention: "You roll those big eyes at them and peck them with that pretty little mouth and you flirt all around with them," he once advised.

In any case, the approach is not to rationalize the importance of the cult's particular beliefs, but to emotionalize them, stressing the comfort and sense of community that will be the recruit's if only he or she surrenders.

In an age of complex decisions, the cultist's thinking is done for him.

The most conspicuous cults in the United States are:

Hare Krishna:

The Krishna movement has roots that reach back to sixteenth century India where, one of many sects, they were devotees of a reincarnation of the Hindu god of creation. It was never very popular in India, but when A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada imported his versions to California in 1965, he saw his flock increase at a monumental rate. Krishnas were easily identified on many U.S. street corners by the end of the sixties: they were the ones with shaved heads, saffron robes, bells, and incense who danced and chanted. By studying ancient vedic texts, Krishnas hope to achieve an inner peace.

Many airline travelers are familiar with the Krishnas' aggressive requests for money. They've made fortunes selling incense and other wares. Some members of the cult have had troubles with the law. In the last few years, though, the Krishnas have become less conspicuous; the majority have now assumed less public lives, residing quietly on large communal farms or in metropolitan houses. Unlike other cults, the Krishnas no longer have a charismatic leader—Prabhupada died early this year. A lot of the street-corner chanting has died too; many members no longer distinguish themselves from the public by their unusual robes. The uniform now is business suit and tie; and some say that they are becoming more a sect than a cult. A Krishna scholar from the

Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, Stillson Juday, says the "new look" Krishnas are seeking a "way of accommodating with society."

Eckankar

Their guru is Sri Darwin Gross, and the faithful study a literature based on Buddhist writings allegedly "revealed" to Sri Paul Twichell, who died, leaving the leadership and his wife to Gross. Based in Melo Park, California, the church is financed through written doctrines that followers must buy.

"Eck" claims to have a national membership of seven million—possibly an exaggeration. At their Miami convention last year, three thousand convened. Eckankar has followed the same leadership for thirteen years—which is how long "Eck" has been around. Recently the church spent a million dollars on a large tract of land in New Mexico.

Like many other California-based cults, the "Ecks" also have a sizeable chapter in Florida—cultists seem to like the sea and sun.

The Ecks are inconspicuous. A South Dade, Florida member "Mahdis" Joy Winanas says, "We are not bothered by the community. We look like Baptists and Catholics. Who cares? We look just like everyone else . . . we don't walk around with sandals and beads."

The Unification Church

Rev. Sun Myung Moon has been under Congres-

sional scrutiny recently for his ties to the South Korean Government. Moon, 57, obviously believes (to rephrase the Bible) a camel *can* squeeze through the eye of a needle: he lives on a $625,000 estate in New York. His followers live in communal centers and give all their belongings to the church.

Some 37,000 Americans subscribe to Moon's evangelical Christianity—breaking all ties with families and working up to eighteen hours a day panhandling money for Moon. Many of his critics say that Moon's rather suspect religiosity is secondary to his political and financial ambitions. Moon, whose church sponsored a well-attended scientific symposium in Boston the week of the Jonestown tragedy, becomes defensive about comparisons between his church and Jones.' He calls them "outrageous accusations." More than one ex-Moonie, though, has said that they would have done anything their leader commanded.

The Unification Church has also gained notoriety because of their correct recruitment means. Their "love-bombing" is well-rehearsed and overwhelming as many Moonies emotionally assault one recruit while never admitting any ties to the Unification Church. As many of their converts have been targets of "deprogramming"—efforts usually by families to get their zombie-like children back—the Moonies know their public image is not a positive one.

Moon's financial empire is worth 75 million dollars, and includes everything from a Wyoming deli to a New York City hotel. Says the Reverend, whom his followers call "Father"—"God has been very good to me."

David "Moses" Berg's female followers really take their love-bombing seriously—they often took potential recruits to bed. Since New York State Attorney General Louis Lefkowitz released a report which, according to newspaper reports, accused the cult of sexually abusing, raping, kidnaping, brainwashing, and enslaving young members, Berg has fled the country and now resides at a luxurious European estate.

The Children of God are also California based, though now the cult's claimed 10,000 members reside in communes around the world, from England to India to Australia. Berg communicates with his followers in rambling epistles or "Mo letters," that often reveal Berg's preoccupation with sex. Unlike most "Jesus-Freak" cults, Berg espouses promiscuity, a breakdown of the traditional family, as well as the usual surrender of possessions to the church. Ex-COG members say that they had to memorize Bible verses before they were allowed to sleep or eat. Often they had to find food and clothes in garbage cans.

Berg claims to have a hot-line to heaven. The apocalyptic guru says he is God's messenger for the final days on earth. To some his claims are frightening. On the island of Tenerife, when local prostitutes complained that Berg's female disciples were stealing their trade, Berg cast a curse on the Island. Shortly after, 583 lives were lost as two Jumbo Jets collided on the Tenerife runway in the worst accident in airline history. A coincidence?

Scientology

Founder and leader L. Ron Hubbard created science-fiction before writing the book "Dianetics" that spawned his "non-religion" religion. He now lives on an ocean-cruising yacht.

Scientologists spend thousands of dollars apiece to go "clear"—a process whereby they are attached to an electrical apparatus and monitored for "engrams," or incidents from their past that have, supposedly, stifled their development as free, confident individuals.

Thousands of members flock to Scientology centers in every major American city. Recently, evidence has come to light that suggests Hubbard commands the type of unswerving loyalty that frightens many people in the wake of Jonestown. Last summer, eleven Scientologists were arrested for breaking into a government office, and indicted on 28 counts of stealing government property, conspiracy, obstruction of justice, and perjury.

As with other cults, ex-members are the harshest critics—perhaps exaggerating their real—or imagined—fear of retaliation.

Synanon

Thousands of rehabilitated drug-addicts, alcoholics, and down-and-outers make up the membership of Charles Dederich's cult. Presently non-religious, Dederich is trying to incorporate Synanon as a church.

It started as a rehabilitation center in Califor-

nia, where the addicts with a "monkey on their backs" emerged from a rigorous self-help program as useful citizens. But as times changed, and the numbers of devotees and financial supporters swelled, Dederich, a charismatic leader, changed Synanon to an alternative community. Healthy and happy after being cured, Dederich's followers were commanded to prove their loyalty by swapping mates and shaving their heads. When promiscuity resulted in a surplus of Synanon kids, Dederich ordered vasectomies for the men and abortions for women. He excluded himself from this decree.

Dederich allegedly intimidates all those who criticize him. The most vivid example of this is the lawyer who won a $300,000 case against Synanon. When reaching into his mailbox for his daily mail, he was bitten by a rattlesnake that was allegedly put there by two Synanon devotees.

On Oct. 13, the story was published in newspapers throughout the United States. On November 22, two days after the Jonestown story broke, all those papers printed a retraction which included a Synanon statement which, in part, said: "The truth is that Synanon has not established a paramilitary organization. Synanon does not advocate the use of violence or condone unlawful activities against residents, former residents, or any other peaceful, law-abiding citizen. In fact, a number of former residents still maintain friendly relations with Synanon, and this opportunity is open to anyone who leaves Synanon in a responsible manner."

The statement did not define what "a responsible manner" was.

Along with these most conspicuous cults,

America breeds others that appeal to a dazzling spectrum of religious and non-religious beliefs. Cults of Satanists, Sufis, Rastafarians, Bahais, the Family, Vodooists, Jewish mystical groups, and Zion Coptics are only a few. Even those who subscribe to astrology fit definitions of the cult mentality many authorities have set forth. Cults are nothing new. But in the United States, more than any other nation, cults seem to flourish.

The Cult Paranoia

The public digested the horror of Jonestown, shuddered at the survivors' accounts, and listened to their reasons for joining Jones. Yet the public's greatest fear stemmed from the realization that many people—suicides and survivors—were ordinary Americans who'd been indoctrinated. It followed that nearly anyone—even their children,—were susceptible to being manipulated in similar ways. Cult scholar Richard Delgado, a UCLA law professor, observes, "Everybody is vulnerable. You and I could be Hare Krishnas if they approached us at the right time."

But what is the solution? In the week after the Jonestown suicides, the State Department, the Congress and Senate, and the White House were all deluged with letters demanding government investigation into cults. Many parents, who'd been involved in long battles to wrest their children from the tenacious grip of a cult, saw that their worst nightmares were not dreams, but real.

The national debate that will surely follow must be tempered by rationality experts warn. Theolo-

gians are quick to point out that the major organized religions—Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism—all began as cults. Also, by encouraging constant government investigation, advocates are over-stepping one of the building blocks of the American Dream—the First Amendment. The only legal reason for investigating cults would be if there was proof that their recruitment and indoctrination techniques are, in fact, forms of coercive mind control that leave victims unable to make rational choices between right and wrong.

Dr. Hersh, of the National Institute of Mental Health, warns that what is called "brainwashing" is often "high pressure salesmanship. Just because converts adopt beliefs that seem bizarre to their families, it does not follow that their choices are dictated by cult leaders."

What must also be remembered is that many cults—including Peoples Temples—can work for social good. Many recruits have been saved from drugs, isolation, and despair, and through the positive reenforcement that their cults have provided, have become more positive members of society.

However, the tragedy at Jonestown still inspires a healthy skepticism of charismatic leaders who claim to have all the answers for the world's problems. It is far too easy to see Jim Jones as an arch-demon, some super-human incarnation of evil. It is more alarming to learn that cult leaders are men who start with no power, but are given it by people who want to surrender the burden of their freedom. Such irrational hero worship tends to make the leaders think that they can do no wrong, and also bestows on them a torturous responsibility for their followers. Paranoia, psychiatrists say, can easily follow. And paranoia was a

key factor in the suicides at Jonestown.

If we persecute cults, then, we might declare that Americans are "free" to do everything but give up their freedom. The paradox is evident.

Perhaps one of the most confusing things that followed statements from the air-lift crews in Jonestown was the realization that only three people out of 910 were gunned down. Though it seems that force was used to make Jones' followers swallow their poison, the evidence shows that their resistance was weak at best. The threat of the Jonestown security guards' bullets and arrows was never tested. But many men have gone to certain death in defense of such concepts as "God and country" many times before. The lines that distinguish one type of sheep from another, a saint from a devil, a hero from a bum is tenuous at best.

Americans have always loved their heroes, and though many would like to think that they elect officials through a rational process of choosing merits, certainly the charisma that in Jim Jones led to such destruction, has provided many others with a key to power in the past. John F. Kennedy's handsome charm, Jimmy Carter's toothy smile, and Richard Nixon's nervous sweat are just a few examples of how charisma, or a lack of it, can make or break a leader.

As Attorney Delgado observed, we all want father figures to help us through the complex life of the twentieth century. But rational evaluation and discriminating critical faculties are essential in honoring a leader with faith and trust.

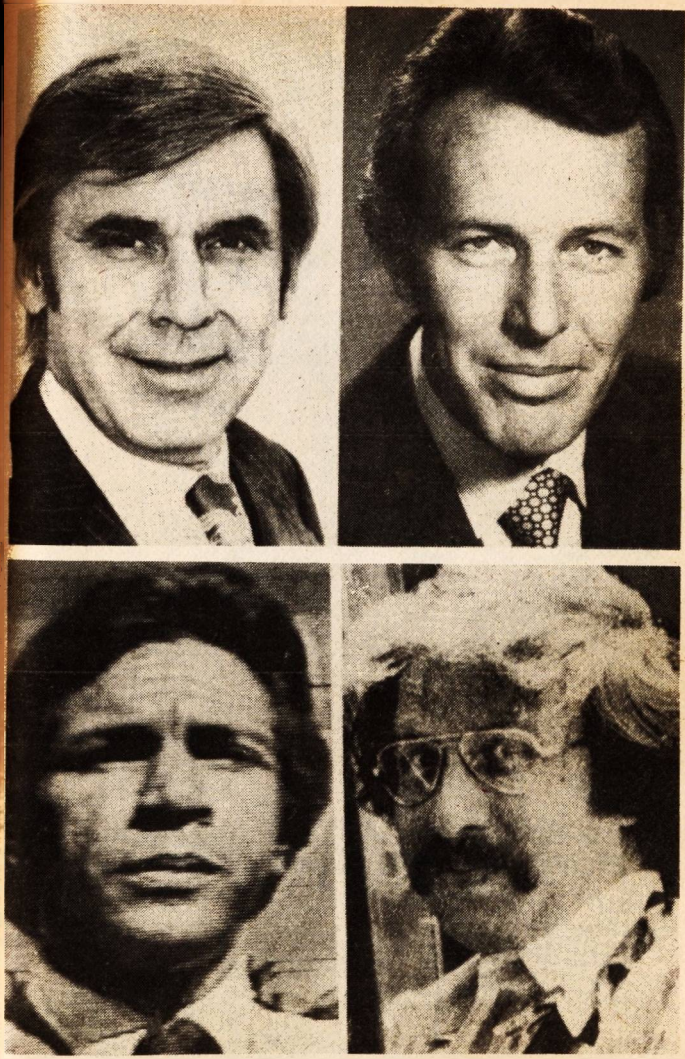
In response to the cults that thrive in America, skepticism is our best weapon. Occurences such as Manson's murders, the SLA terrorism, or the Jonestown holocaust cannot be condoned. They can

even be prevented. Men who claim to be more than men should be immediately suspect.

The government, like the people, should remain vigilant. Perhaps if some of the former Peoples Temple members' warnings had been taken seriously, Leo Ryan would still be alive, and so would be 910 Jonestown pioneers.

As Vincent Bugliosi, Manson's prosecutor and the author of "Helter Skelter," warns in his criticism against Rev. Moon, "Of course, Moon isn't telling people to go out and kill. But the question is, and it is a very serious question: what would happen if he did? A New York police captain told me he interviewed a seventeen-year-old Moonie, a girl, and asked her what she would do if Moon told her to kill her parents. She said, 'I Guess I'd have to do it.' "

Which is probably what Abraham said when God ordered him to sacrifice Isaac.



The investigators killed in the airstrip ambush in Guyana are, left to right, Congressman Leo Ryan of California, Don Harris and Robert Brown of NBC News, and Gregory Robinson, a photographer for the San Francisco Examiner. Some think their questions during the visit triggered Jones' paranoia, which in turn led the temple leader to order their ambush.

A Guyanese soldier examines a cache of weapons discovered at the Peoples Temple settlement in Jonestown. The weapons included rifles and modern crossbows, according to reports.

AFTERMATH

The dust settled slowly in the aftermath of Jonestown's self-destruction.

The event continued to attract attention long after that deathly Saturday. Media reports studied the Jonestown settlement, the Peoples Temple, and Jones himself.

One report, for instance, indicated the Peoples Temple might not have seen the last of bloodshed. Attorney Mark Lane said in published reports that the Jonestown mass suicide was part of a bizarre master plan of murder and destruction.

The plan called first for the mass suicide, Lane said. The second part required the surviving members of the cult to denounce Jones as a madman and excuse the carnage as the product of a fascist paranoid mind. Third, the survivors, according to this plan, would kill defectors from the cult and then murder some political officials to "politicize" the killings, Lane said.

The cult, he said, had more than $10 million in assets, and an additional $3 million at the camp.

Lane said he couldn't reveal his sources for the theory because of legal ethics.

Meanwhile, the ragged remnants of the church congregation huddled in the building at Geary Street in San Francisco, awaiting word on the

fates of friends and relatives. Defectors banded together in a halfway house in Berkeley and talked of "hit squads" and violence they feared lay ahead. Some called out for positive proof that the body that had been identified as that of Jim Jones was in fact that of the minister. Experts confirmed it through fingerprints. And San Francisco police were called in to guard the fearful little bands of followers.

A cruel irony came within days of the tragedy at Jonestown when San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and City Supervisor Harvey Milk were gunned down in their offices. Both had supported Jones when he was a political power in San Francisco. A possible connection between Jonestown and the Moscone-Milk slayings was examined, but no significant connection immediately was established. A former city official, angry with the mayor for the latter's refusal to reappoint him to a city post, was accused of the slayings.

And troubled San Francisco was submitted to a tortured scrutiny, both by itself and the rest of the world. "Why Are There Such a Lot of Freaks in 'Frisco?" one headline asked.

There was talk about freedom of religion, and its application to "pseudo-religious cults." There was discussion of other cults, and Americans began to cast a wary eye on cults in general.

There was soul-searching on the meaning of "the American Way."

And Jim Jones' body was cremated. His ashes were scattered over the Atlantic Ocean.

The Newsmen Who Died

The three newsmen shot dead on the Guyana airstrip were considered good at their jobs. They died trying to do them.

Cameraman Robert Brown of NBC News died with his camera rolling. Even after being shot in the leg, he continued filming—the final few feet of footage come from a cock-eyed angle. He had apparently fallen to one knee.

Brown, 36, had been a freelance news cameraman in the San Francisco area most of his career. He had covered many assignments abroad for the three major networks, including assignments in Vietnam. In 1969, he suffered a leg injury after falling from a helicopter there.

He once served as a television reporter in Los Angeles, but gave that up in favor of a career in photography.

After his death, a Robert Brown Memorial Scholarship Fund was established to provide funds for minority members who wish to get college training to become photojournalists.

Don Harris, 42, had to talk his superiors at NBC into letting him go to Guyana. "We all knew it was fraught with danger, and he knew better than any of us," an NBC spokesman said after Harris was shot to death.

Harris flew to New York City with his boss to convince NBC executives to give the Guyana investigation the go-ahead. "There were those at NBC who tried to discourage him, fearful of the dangers he faced," a spokesman for the network said. "But Don's reaction was characteristic."

Harris had handled a wide range of assignments in television journalism around the country. Twice, he'd won awards for his reporting, including an Emmy for his coverage of rioting after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King. His real name was Darwin Humphrey; Harris was adopted for professional reasons.

Gregory Alan Robinson, 27, was a daredevil photographer for the San Francisco Examiner. Known as a perfectionist, he would dangle from a cable to get the right shot. An exhibition of his finest photographs was on display in San Francisco while he was on assignment in Guyana.

A member of a musically talented family, Robinson passed over a career in music for work in photography.

President Jimmy Carter praised the three newsmen who died in Guyana, saying "these three men were all hard-driving, talented journalists who lost their lives while pursuing the highest traditions of journalism."

Larry Layton Goes to Court

In Guyana, a man can hang for first degree murder.

As a fan spun around over head in the shabby Georgetown courtroom, slim young Larry Layton quietly heard Magistrate William Alexander repeat five times in a monotone: "18 November 1978 in Port Kaituma of the northwest magisterial district, you murdered . . ." A different victim's name was mentioned each time: Leo Ryan . . . Gregory Robinson . . . Patricia Parks . . . Bob Brown . . . Don Harris.

The press read nervousness in the way Layton's eyes darted from place to place in the red and yellow room. It was four days after the murder of Ryan and four other members of his party—including one of the edgy defectors who'd worried that fateful Saturday as they saw Larry Layton join their party and saw the dumb stare on his face.

His blue eyes always seemed to give Layton away.

No plea was entered in court. Bail was refused, and Larry Layton, barefoot, was led off to jail. His next hearing was set for January 1979. It's then that he learns the degree of the charges against him.

The prominent Guyana lawyer, Sir Lionel Luckhoo, was to defend Layton. Cult attorney Charles Garry has announced that Luckhoo—who successfully defended in 220 consecutive murder cases—would handle the case and any other murder cases begun in Guyana.

But Luckhoo said, "There's not enough money in the world to get me to handle this case . . . . I have to live with my conscience."

Sir Lionel, a former Mayor of Georgetown and a London-educated attorney, handled some legal affairs for the cult in Guyana. Among those was the vicious custody battle involving John Victor Stoen, who died in Guyana.

Meanwhile, Larry Layton's sister, Debbi Layton Blakey, was telling reporters in the United States, "I felt sick when I heard about Larry. I tried to tell people to doubt (the temple), so I think Jones assigned my brother to do it. He tried to do that to hurt me and my family."

UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

The more people learn about Jonestown and Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple, the more questions about them arise. Many have not yet been answered. And because so many who knew the answers are dead, many questions may never be answered.

For instance. . .

Did Jim Jones have a legitimate cause? Or did he lead 900 people to their deaths simply to prove his own power?

Regardless of Jim Jones' "cause," didn't he get exactly what he wanted—attention? Will others like Jim Jones consider mass suicide an effective 'revolutionary" tool?

And questions of legal ethics arise which will torture legal minds for years. Mark Lane said he knew before the massacre of the atrocities at Jonestown. Should he have told anyone? Would it have helped? Would it have compromised his "responsibilities" to his client?'

The role of government officials in the affair will be scrutinized. How much did the State Department know about the settlement? How much did they tell Ryan? Why didn't they act on the reports of atrocities given them as early as April of 1977 by escapees from the Peoples Temple? Should such

reports of alleged cult misdeeds be investigated in the future? Should the FBI be given back power to infiltrate such groups?—a power that was taken away in 1976?

What if Jones had packed up his Utopia and moved it to the Soviet Union? Did the Soviets, in fact, want them? How would America have reacted to that? Would the cult have gotten more attention? Would it have saved the cult members from more atrocities? Would it have saved the people who died at Jonestown?

In how many American cults are the members sufficiently brainwashed to kill themselves on the basis of one man's whim? Would they kill others?

Marceline Jones, known to the members of the Peoples Church as "Mother," was with Jones longer than anyone—for three decades. In the aftermath of Jonestown, nothing specific has been said against her, while many have stated that she was one of the kindest persons they had ever known—a saint. Why did she stay with Jones? Was it, as her son Steven claims, because of her children? How much power did she have? Was she just another one of Jim Jones' victims? Or was she an accomplice?

Was Ryan's visit and the subsequent ambush just an excuse for the mass suicides at Jonestown? Did Jones want it as final proof to his people that they must die for the "cause?" Did Larry Layton really panic—or were things supposed to go wrong from the start?

Did Jones order Don Sly to attack Ryan? If not, why did he watch the incident calmly? Did Jones want a reason to ambush Ryan's party? If Sly and Layton weren't acting under Jones' orders, were they acting under someone else's?

Did Jim Jones shoot himself? Why was the gun found so far from his body? Were his cries of "Mother" directed to his dead mother, or to his wife? Was Marceline the one who shot Jones and his mistress? Did Jones ask her to do it—or did he intend to survive?

Was Jim Jones dying of a terminal disease? If so, was this his reason for finally commanding 900 people to die with him?

Is money missing from the fortune reported to have been at Jonestown? Are there unaccounted for survivors?

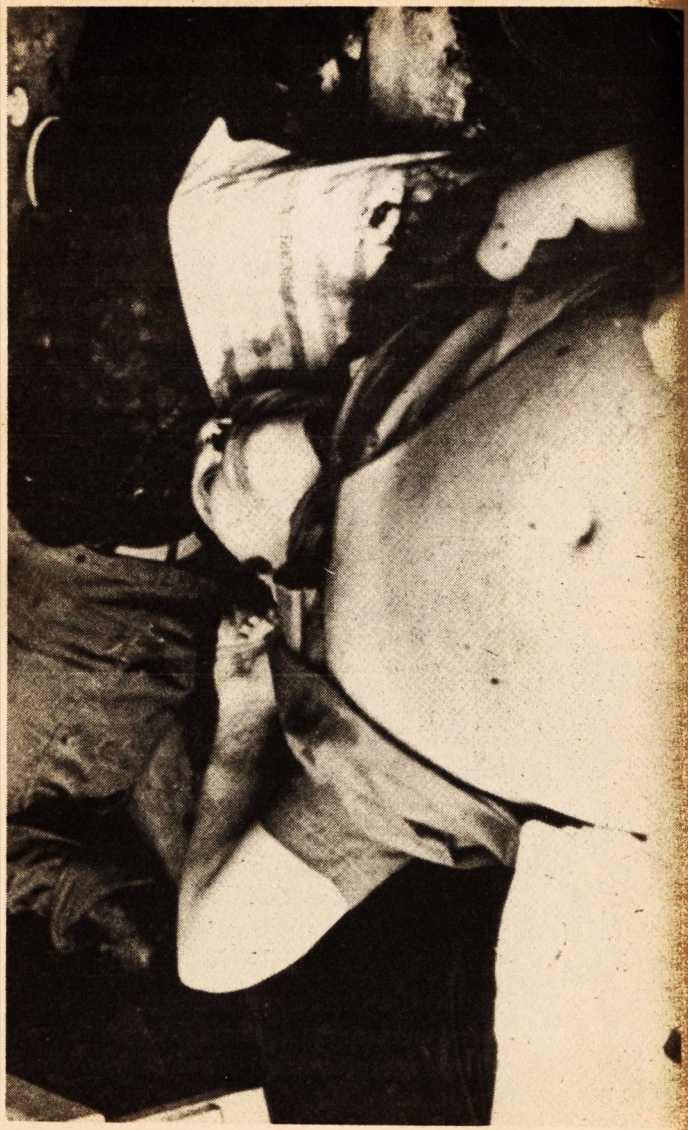
What was the relationship between the Jonestown settlement and the Guyana government? There were alarming reports that Jones sent women to seduce—and compromise—Guyanese officials, and that Jones tried, perhaps successfully, to use this leverage with those officials.

And what was the relationship between the governments of the United States and Guyana in the removal of bodies and the start of investigations? At one point, the government of Guyana refused to allow more agents of the FBI into the country.

Could it have happened in America? Could it happen *again*?

What would one of *us* do if we'd been at Jonestown on November 18, 1978?

A large metal tub still contains the deadly grape drink which wiped out the Peoples Temple. In the background are vials which had contained pain-killers and deadly cyanide.



The bloated corpse of Jim Jones lies near his throne in the central Jonestown pavilion. Jones chose a bullet instead of the cyanide-laced punch he ordered his followers to drink.

DEAR DAD

Jonestown is silent. The rains have washed away the stench of the dead. The few who survived the tragedy tell of their dissent. It's easy to understand. But of the 910 people who died there, the only testimony that is left are letters that were found scattered on the floor of the Rev. Jones' house in Jonestown. (They are all quoted here exactly as they were written.)

They seem to be a response to a request Jones made to his congregation for how they felt on a variety of subjects. A letter signed Lena B. lists those, followed by her views.

"(1) Hostility—yes I will get better.

"(2) Commitment—I am determined to stick with.

"(3) Elitism—no we all the same.

"(4) Intelectualism—I reather work than to sit.

"(5) Reaction of Authority—I rather obay.

"(6) How do you feel about DAD and this cause—I think he is the greatest.

"(7) How do you see yourself—I am getting batter.

"(8) How do you act to dieing or death—it okay if it my time you only die once.

"(10) Your inner feelings—their are sevel people I did like.

"(11) How do you see others some have came in and some is still standing on the doorway—people outside the hell with them."

The letters focus on at least one of the subjects but the underlying idea is the explosive relationship with Jones himself. And now, looking back at what happened, some are haunting or even prophetic.

"For Dad's eyes only,

"If you were to die tonight of a natural death and your wishes were to follow the leader who you appoint, I would give my life as I would for you at any moment for the cause. If you were to die tonight by assassination, I would still follow organizations heads unless there was total anarchy, and I would proceed on my own to subdue as many enemies I could get a hold of and also killing myself, but I would first seek any organizational leadership before I would dare take it upon myself because my action might cause the destruction of the organization and at this time I feel that we are too far along to go back.

Cliff G."

While some letters are almost incoherent, some reflect solid educational backgrounds. Dated 7-11-78, Dea G.'s typewritten letter began, "This about my third report within the last few days. The first one was submitted to you the very day after you asked for it and I am sure it must have been among the first if not the first. Several days later, I gave you some additions regarding my elitism. . . However, since you still have not called my name as having submitted a report, I will give you another, this time with more depth. (Karen L. told me not to worry about your not calling my

name, that you probably had a reason but *just in case,* I feel better submitting this one.)"

Bea admits, "treasonous talk many times since I have been in the church which amounts to 8 years. . . I saw elitism [in San Francisco] cliques nourished by Debbi B. I am not just saying this because she has become a traitor . . . in allowing myself to get bogged down in my own self pity, I nearly lost sight of the real enemy, U.S. Capitalism. . . I would have either left or committed suicide leaving you with the responsibility to change the world. . . I felt treasonous after I had been in Jonestown for about a month. I had difficulty in adjusting and found out fast that I was much more of a capitalist than I had realized. I missed this and that. I thought I just had to get out of here. I publicly volunteered for front gate security so I could check out the possibilities of leaving. . . When I went to Georgetown several months later, I watched people carefully as to ways they could leave, having the thoughts in my own mind as *possibilities.*

"Generally, I found people in leadership too lax and trusting of those who might become traitors, too many loopholes, many ways for people to get out. . . I think a great deal about being tortured. It is one thing to get up and say, 'I will endure torture' but it is another to actually face having your leg slowly sawed off or your nails pulled out. I wonder if I will be able to hold out until I am unconscious.

But later she changed her mind and said: "I will endure and not let you down, nor shall I let Chego Bare [Che Guevara] or Patric Lumumbo or Allende or the defendants in the Haymarket affair or Malcolm X or Martin Luther King or Harriet Tubman.

I shall not let this movement down. I shall not beg for mercy either in that last moment. I shall proudly die for proud reason. You can count on me even if all desert you. I shall be by your side whether it be tangible or in spirit. If, suddenly, a U.S. vessel or plane will come to get us all to take us back with promises of all the luxury and benefits, if we would sell you out, I would not get on board because I am attracted to your goodness as magnets attract one another. Nothing will ever break the pull."

'I Know You Are the Truth and the Way'

Edith C. wrote, "Dear Dad and Saviour, I hardly know how to start this, but I feel like I have wasted most of my life. Also I have wasted hundreds of dollars evry since I held my first job. I have regreted it many times and if I had saved the money I wasted it sure would come in handy now when we need money so bad to bring our people over here. . . Every since I was a young girl I had a desire to live right and wanted to be perfect but is seems like I was so weak and I was up and down all the time. . . I have many times been so disgusted with myself and all my life if anyone hurt me I held a grudge towards them and couldn't forget what they did to me. I know you forgive and forget. . . I hate being old I hate it. If I ever get the the place and I can't doing anything and people have to wait on me I want someone to kill me and get me out of the way. There is too much to be done here for someone to take their time to wait on me. . . I have no desire for anything in the

states and I hate everything and every Body that is against this wonderful cause.

"I know you are the Truth and the way. I am so grateful for the day I met you and Mother. I feel so guilty for the time I let you down in Brazil. I just had no sense. I hope I die before I ever betray you: You are the only Friend I have, True friend. . . I am hoping to become a True Communist since I know what it means. I used to hear people say what Communists believe in and I couldn't understand what was so wrong with it. I never did hear anyone say what was wrong with it only said they didn't believe in God. . . Well I don't believe in a God up above either."

'How I Feel About Dying'

Mark F., age 11, wrote: "If the capitalists came over the hill I just drink the potion as fast as I can do it. I wouldn't let the capitalists get me but if they did I would not say a word. I'd take the pain and when I couldn't stand it anymore I'd pass out."

'I Have Not Been Aferid Cience"

Osislee H. told Dad, "I am so glad to be in Jonestown. This is the happy time of my life. Started August 18, 1977 when I got here. . . Dad, you no the first white night we had here before then I was afried to die. I stood in the rain that night. I saw divided time between life and death. I have not ben aferidx cience. I have something to

die for now and something to live for. I love the little childrens, see them grow here, them crying, see them smiling. Watching the elders, hoping they are glad as I am because they are here. . . I brought four blankets here. Have not got one now, someone els have them. I love to have one nice blanket. Thank you. . ."

Osislee was 84 years old.

'Why Do I Pick Whites?'

A female schoolteacher confesses racism as her sin: "I have also noticed that of my closest friends, 2 out of 3 are white. . . Why do I pick whites? . . . I notice there are no black sisters that I go to w/?, (I justify this by thinking they see me as a white intellectual who is generally unapproachable—is that again a matter of my projecting how I see myself?)

"What is the solution to 18 yrs of racist/fascist indoctrination and not enough willingness to change. . . I would find a black companion except that I don't want any companion unless he is really exceptional.

"I might get over my racism if I had a black child but I think this is a very drastic step to take. I cannot see bringing a child into the world so its mother could finally overcome racism. Later, maybe I could adopt a black child that's only an infant.

"What I need to do is consciously work on consulting black authority figures when I have problems & becoming close friends with younger black sisters (my age). I need to make sure when I walk around the community that I consciously choose

black people to talk to, to joke with and help their news."

'I'm Like a Banana'

Don F. wrote about how difficult communal life was to adapt to. "Well after starting off on the wrong foot I was fortunate enough to get an education in getting along with others who also like myself were not perfect. Now I know I'm like a banana, just one of the bunch. I've felt strongly toward the little guy and communal structure but it was all talk and theorie. . . I feel I've come a long way. . . I'm trying to become a hero personality—somedays I son't do so well I wish I was an 'old timer' in the group. I guess only time and the cause will make me knowledge full of all that you and they went through and feel. I feel I was (am) an outsider because I chose so, just stood back (in my usual intellectual way) and said 'here I am' well it's not the way to become part of the group (its finally sinking in) I've always had lots of feelings but was taught to keep them hidden, or you will show your weakness. That's a bunch of shit. I've always insisted on communication and logic—I've got to think more about love and caring I'll do better in a year two of freedom, signed Don F., (A Jewish, athiest and freedom fighter hopefully when I deserve it)."

'U Have Poured out Ur Hear Too Often'

Jann D. seemed to think that, perhaps, Jones

was dying or leaving the commune. "A series of events have caused me to think that U are preparing to leave us—not next mo. but sooner than I thought. I had thought about how long U would be with us & I guessed U would leave about the time Lenin left the Russia—in his mid-50's. Now I am not so certain. U have poured out ur heart too often & called for leadership to replace the apathy we reward U with, U have stressed the news pointing out that knowledge leads to sensitivity and True Communism, too frequently now that Debbie has left U have said that U dispair of anyone ever really seeing & relating to your goodeness. This I believe has brought U to such a state of mind that a part of U has given up—and we can't see ur goodeness, then we can not progress and without progression there is nothing but capitalist beastiality and therefore nothing at all. . . Please don't dispair Dad."

"I Would Be Mad If I Had To Die For Some Stupid Thing'

Don S. finally predicts the tragic irony in the end.

"Dying doesn't interest me yet. I know it's coming any day. I would really like to see this cause gow, and see our little babies grow up. I would be made if I had to die for some stupid thing somebody did. . . I would gladly die to protect this cause, but not gladly for a mistake. . . I'm afraid that something could happen to Dad, and the ones who take over won't be as wise. . . I have seen too many know-it-alls get the trust and consent of the

people. . . I have seen too much expensive confusion that has been caused by people. I fear the failure of this farm for this reason. Even though everyone is making good reports and making good fronts we could be sliding downhill to sink."

TRAGEDY IN GUYANA

WHY?

- Over 900 dead.
- Ambush and Murder.
- Suicide.

The question is 'how could it happen?'

How could one man induce over a thousand Americans to give up their worldly possessions and move to South America?

Why was Congressman Leo J. Ryan ambushed and murdered?

How could so many respected Americans such as Rosalynn Carter, Vice President Walter Mondale, the mayor of San Francisco, Joseph Califano, Secretary of HEW, write complimentary letters to Reverend Jim Jones?

Was the People's Temple planning to move to Russia?

Why did Rev. Jones' son think his father was a fanatic and a paranoid?

John Maguire won several journalistic awards for his coverage of the Attica State Prision riots. Mary Lee Dunn is the feature editor for the Springfield Union. Together they wrote one previous book, The Patty Hearst Story.

A Dale Original

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