

Foreword by Giselle Fernandez, a five-time Emmy award winner



Love Them to Death

At War with the Devil at Jonestown

by Tim Stoen

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AT WAR WITH THE DEVIL
AT JONESTOWN



Timothy Oliver Stoen

Foreword by Giselle Fernandez

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For John Victor



This is a photo of my son, John Victor Stoen. He was six years old the day this photo was taken in Jonestown, Guyana. It was November 18, 1978, the day he was murdered by Jim Jones. The photographer was Greg Robinson of the *San Francisco Examiner*. He was shot and killed that day at the nearby airstrip by Jim Jones's agents. Courtesy of the *San Francisco Examiner*.

To Grace

How much I have loved you. How much I have tried to give you a good life.

—James Warren Jones, November 18, 1978

We are not content with negative obedience, nor even with the most abject submission. When finally you surrender to us, it must be of your own free will. We do not destroy the heretic because he resists us: so long as he resists us we never destroy him. We convert him, we capture his inner mind, we reshape him... We make him one of ourselves before we kill him.

—George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*¹

I have Tim Stoen...in my psyche tonight... I'm a man filled with rage... I could kill him. I could *really* kill him. Literally kill him... I got the man that'll *get* him. All I got to do is say the word, "Go."... Tim Stoen...hasn't made a *move* in the United States, there hasn't been somebody on his bottom side. (Shouts) Just waiting.

—James Warren Jones, April 1, 1978

Evil is in opposition to life. It is that which opposes the life force. It has, in short, to do with killing. Specifically, it has to do with murder—namely, unnecessary killing, killing that is not required for biological survival.

The issue of evil inevitably raises the question of the devil...

Evil is revolting because it is dangerous. It will contaminate or otherwise destroy a person who remains too long in its presence. Unless you know very well what you are doing, the best thing you can do when faced with evil is to run the other way.

I have learned nothing in twenty years that would suggest that evil people can be rapidly influenced by any means other than raw power.

—M. Scott Peck, MD, *People of the Lie*²

We're in a *war*... [W]e have an absolute—absolute—informer who stepped forward, told us of the plans of—of Stoen.

—James Warren Jones, April 2, 1978

I believe he is willing to murder all 1,100 people now living under his dictatorial control in Jonestown, Guyana.

—Timothy Oliver Stoen, San Francisco Superior Court, October 3, 1978

[D]o you think I'd put John's [John Victor Stoen's] life above others?... [H]e's no different to me than any of these children here.

Red Brigade showed them justice. The congressman's dead.

Bring the vat with the Green C on it. Please bring it here so the adults can begin.

—James Warren Jones, November 18, 1978

Jonestown Story Riveted the Public... The mass suicides and murders in Jonestown, Guyana, was the most widely followed event of 1978, with a remarkable 98 percent of Americans saying that had heard or read about it.

--George Gallup, December 29, 1978³

The CIA would have to acknowledge that Jones succeeded where their MK-Ultra program failed in the ultimate control of the human mind.

—Dr. Philip Zimbardo, Stanford University⁴

Somebody—can they talk to—and I've talked to San Francisco—see that Stoen does not get by with this infamy—with this infamy. He has done the thing he wanted to do: have us destroyed.

We will win. We win when we go down. Tim Stoen has nobody else to hate. He has nobody else to hate. Then he'll destroy himself. I'm speaking here not as, uh, the administrator. I'm speaking as a prophet today.

—James Warren Jones, November 18, 1978

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Foreword



I MET TIM STOEN IN my early twenties more than two decades ago, standing in line at the Broadmoor Hotel's famous singing tavern, the Golden Bee. I didn't know who he was. I didn't know of his heart-wrenching story, his intimate connection to Peoples Temple and the maniacal cult leader Jim Jones, or the crushing loss of his son, John Victor, during the mass murders and suicides in Guyana that Tim tried so hard to avert.

In fact, when I learned about his history and his journey to reconcile and heal such a painful past, I marveled even more at the man I met that night at the Golden Bee and the gentle spirit I would come again to know all these many years later, a man whose inextinguishable, incandescent spirit, despite all, was not only able to survive such assault but somehow transcend it.

That night at the Bee, I knew nothing of any of this. I simply encountered a vibrant spirit incapable of being a stranger. I was with a young man that evening that happened to be my brother, but Tim did not know that, nor did the possibility of his being a suitor deter Tim's enthusiasm to connect. He was just pure intent, purity, bright light, and innocence. There was nothing contrived or premeditated about him. He simply wanted to know me, and his laser focus and high-voltage energy were not possible to turn away. He was too real, too kind, too present. So much light.

There was a certain naiveté about Tim, as if he operated in a different world where there was only goodness, only life to enjoy and live

in the moment. I remember thinking I'd never met someone so open, so vulnerable, so loving as this gentle being. I've always used the word *purity* to best describe him. The dictionary definition calls it the quality of being pure, a freedom from anything that debases, contaminates, pollutes.

And that, more than anything, captures the essence of who this man is, and why I so marvel at his resilience and capacity to transcend darkness. Despite the nightmare Tim lived, Jim Jones did not debase, contaminate, or pollute his spirit, and that alone is remarkable and so worthy of examination and understanding. Tim is a testament to man's capacity to transcend darkness and hold on to light no matter what.

It was this purity about him that cut to the core of me and that would later define the story he would come to disclose.

I was a young cub reporter just starting out on the air in Colorado Springs. I had read all about Peoples Temple and the assassination of Congressman Leo Ryan and four others on the Jonestown airstrip in November 1978. I of course read all about the unfathomable murders and suicides in Jonestown itself of 907 people, 304 of them children, who followed the edicts of a diabolical cult leader named Jim Jones and drank the cyanide-laced grape Flavor Aid that caused their deaths.

When Tim shared with me his connection to this nightmare, it was then that I witnessed his pain—the crushed spirit, deeply hurt by such loss and betrayal. I remember having so many questions and yearnings to know every detail of every event. I wanted to understand this maniacal Jones and how my beautiful friend, an assistant district attorney in San Francisco, who was so highly educated and successful—Wheaton College, Stanford Law School—could be lured into this twisted lair.

The stories were riveting, real, crushing, and so very human. Listening so closely to Tim, I innately understood how Jim Jones's socialist vision could captivate a young, ideal-driven Tim in the late sixties, whose passion for justice and deep sense of equality cut deep to his core and his hope for humanity. I remember feeling no judgment of Tim,

only deep compassion. It was so clear to me that the man before me wanted nothing more than to make the world a better place, and his dream was so painfully corrupted by tragedy.

Tim had given up so much for his belief in this mission. When he realized how twisted and deranged Jones had become, that his utopia was in the hands of a madman, that his own son was in danger and the need for action urgent, Tim turned on the Temple as its most fervent high-level defector. He had become Jim Jones's right-hand man—and now his biggest enemy.

Tim's story delves deep into the inner workings and psyches of both men—Jones and himself—as their utopia unraveled.

He writes about his personal awakening to a benevolent leader turned tyrant, paranoid, and out of control. He recounts his desperate leap from devotee to defector with a mission to tear down the lie and rescue his son and the innocent.

This intimate telling of Tim's story is an act of courage and also conviction—to share how the most intelligent and idealistic spirit can be lured into a dream and then survive the nightmare to live again with the same light that has defined that person always. It is a feat of survival, transcendence, and unbreakable spirit to inspire all who have been betrayed in life and who long to live again, unjaded, with purpose and peace.

Ironically, Jim Jones's last words about Tim, found on tapes left behind the day of the murders and suicides, couldn't be more revealing—inversely—about Tim and the life he has led.

Jones last words recorded on tape said, "Tim Stoen has nobody else to hate. He has nobody else to hate. Then he'll destroy himself."

He couldn't have been more wrong. Despite all, Tim retains only love in his heart, forgiveness, and a conviction to champion the rights of the underserved and unjustly treated in this country. To this day, he fights against corruption in his law practice to protect the common man and revels when he wins and snuffs out abuse—in the very county where he first encountered Jim Jones long ago.

When I think of Tim, I think of that beautiful song, “Starry Night,” by Don McClean, about painter Vincent Van Gogh. There’s that one line at the end that speaks of such purity it breaks your heart. McClean sings, “I could have told you, Vincent, this world was never meant for one as beautiful as you.”

—Giselle Fernandez*

* Giselle Fernandez is a five-time Emmy award-winning journalist.



Map of Guyana. Courtesy of Erin Dertner.

Preface



LOVE THEM TO DEATH IS a memoir of my experiences as the attorney, enemy, and postmortem target of James Warren Jones who, on November 18, 1978 in Jonestown, Guyana, unleashed—in the name of “love”—terror and death.*

It tells how this ordinary man, Jim Jones, having an extraordinary rhetorical talent for capturing the souls of kind and decent people, got them to assassinate a US congressman and, incredibly, got them—by the hundreds—to kill themselves and their children.

“The CIA would have had to acknowledge,” said Stanford psychology professor Philip Zimbardo, “that Jones succeeded where their MK-Ultra program failed in the ultimate control of the human mind.”⁵

Preparation for my treacherous journey began in the Fillmore District of San Francisco, around 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 17, 1969, when I let anger over systemic racism in American society become a ruling passion. It happened the exact moment I emerged from Black Panther headquarters and got ready to drive away in my Porsche. Within days I became a social-justice radical. I now had an ideology—Equality.

The actual journey began in Redwood Valley, California, in the early-morning hours of New Year’s Day, 1970, when, for pragmatic reasons, I self-recruited into a utopian movement called Peoples Temple, in

* The title of this book, *Love Them to Death*, was suggested by my architect friend, Paul Tay. It is the same book as *Marked for Death*, published in 2015, but with this new title, a new cover, some amplifications, and three new photographs.

order to pursue, based on human will alone, what I then regarded as the highest Biblical ethic: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need."^{*}

As leader of a utopian movement. Jim Jones spoke, in equivalent terms, of humanity as the one thing to follow at all costs. In reality, I should have had the wit to see its natural result, as had been made tellingly clear by C. S. Lewis:

"The most dangerous thing you can do is to take any one impulse of your own nature and set it up as the thing you ought to follow at all costs. There is not one of them which will not make us into devils if we set it up as an absolute guide. You might think that love of humanity in general was safe, but it is not. If you leave out justice you will find yourself breaking agreements and faking evidence in trials 'for the sake of humanity,' and become in the end a cruel and treacherous man."⁶

In sum, three fundamental errors led me into Peoples Temple: anger, ideology, and pragmatism. Holding onto anger for its impelling power reduced my appreciation for all the goodness in the world. Committing myself ideologically to Equality caused me to forsake the balancing truths of Freedom and Efficiency. Pragmatically accepting authoritarianism to avoid the disintegration fate of other communes in Northern California desensitized me to the emerging flaws in the authoritarian leader. I truly hope these errors of mine may be a warning to future superidealists.

My journey took a dramatic turn in Denver, Colorado, on November 6, 1977, when I made the fateful decision to take on Jim Jones. That decision consummated in San Francisco, California, on November 18, 1977, when I testified in court and went to war against him.

By then, Jim Jones had moved to Guyana, South America, and was engaged in the rather astonishing effort of getting many hundreds of US citizens, most of them black and wedded to their own families and communities, to leave the land of their birth to go live on another

* The Acts of The Apostles 2:44-45 (King James Version)

continent, in a tropical rainforest. Soon there would be one thousand US citizens living in that rainforest. They would be living in a place called Jonestown.

I turned on Jim Jones that November 6th because I'd learned, the day before, that he was jeopardizing the welfare of a five-year-old child, John Victor Stoen, then also in Jonestown, by denigrating to the child his mother, Grace. Even though I believed at that moment that Jones was the biological father, and even though I had made a solemn promise to protect his paternal access to the child, his dishonoring of Grace to John was an egregious violation of the moral law to "honor thy mother," and thus superseded my promise. In December 1977, one month later, I came to realize that I, in fact, was the biological father, as well as the spiritual father, of the precious John Victor.

In the course of that one-year war for John Victor, I made two trips to the then "wired" country of Guyana, and in California I braced, every time the doorbell rang, for a pistol or shotgun blast to the chest. I had no doubt I was marked for extinction. Despite that anticipation, which was based on repeated threats of physical harm, I felt no fear. The best explanation I can think of is a Scripture verse that says, "perfect love casts out fear."⁷ If my love for John Victor was not perfect, it was as close to that as I will ever know. The only reason I can think of as to why I was not killed is that I had chosen to become so public in my fight, despite all its humiliations, that Jim Jones was afraid my death would result in a US investigation, forcing the government of Guyana to invade his Jonestown fortress.

In the meantime, Jim Jones was developing his talent at what George Orwell, in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, had called "capture of the inner mind":

"We are not content with negative obedience, nor even with the most abject submission. When finally you surrender to us, it must be of your own free will. We do not destroy the heretic because he resists us: so long as he resists us we never destroy him. We convert him, we capture his inner mind, we reshape him... We make him one of ourselves before we kill him."⁸

Finally, that journey took on a petrifying turn. On November 18, 1978, in the name of “love,” Jim Jones, in Jonestown, became the Orwellian devil and went for the kill. In a matter of hours, he killed 907 of his people by cyanide. Within a matter of minutes, he orchestrated the deaths, by gunfire at the nearby airstrip, of five other innocents including, as an act of FBI-defined international terrorism,⁹ United States Congressman Leo Joseph Ryan. Among those he took out by the poison was six-year-old John Victor Stoen.

The circumstance of these deaths took the world by storm. Pollster George Gallup published a supporting headline on December 29, 1978:

“Jonestown Story Riveted the Public... The mass suicides and murders in Jonestown, Guyana, was the most widely followed event of 1978, with a remarkable 98 percent of Americans saying that had heard or read about it.”¹⁰

There was good reason for the riveting. These suicides and murders were based on the orders of a single person—a fact, as suggested by the Stanford psychology professor, with unsettling implications.

Structurally, this book traces the “development” of Jim Jones, as I experienced it from 1967 through 1979, through fourteen stages. It narrates the encounters between Jones and me that had significance for me at the time. Based thereon, it includes a letter I wrote to the FBI to try and stop the 1993 Koresh bloodbath and mass suicide in Waco, Texas.

There are three possible explanations as to the character of Jim Jones on November 18, 1978. The first is that he was a good man who snapped. The second is that he was a sociopath—someone without a conscience, someone *willing* to do anything at all.¹¹ The third, which I have come to accept, is that Jim Jones fell into an even more foreboding psychological category: malignant narcissist¹²—someone who *seeks* to kill for non-biological reasons. Someone who is evil. Someone who is, in fact, a devil. Such persons, typically having remarkable charm and deceptiveness, find it easy to advance politically.

On November 18, 1978, the day he died, Jim Jones exhorted vengeance on me, and prophesied, in the alternative, that I would destroy myself. As for vengeance, I had to simply “grin and bear it” when Jones’s agents,

taking advantage of media hysteria and inciting a California attorney general's investigation, accused me—falsely, I might add—of manipulating, on behalf of Peoples Temple, San Francisco's 1975 mayoral election, narrowly won by George Moscone over John Barbargelata, and then, in an act of chutzpah, arranging to become special voter-fraud prosecutor for the San Francisco District Attorney's office to cover up my crime.

As for self-destruction, the deep grief I felt over the death of John Victor did, at times, seem overwhelming. The profound guilt I felt over my role in protecting Jim Jones in his rise to influence did, at times, also seem overwhelming. Its most overwhelming, most biting, aspect was the guilt I felt over my ideological blindness—my idiocy—in not recognizing what was really happening when Jim Jones, in September 1975, turned himself over to Satan.

I have three reasons for writing this book. The first is to encourage healthy suspicion of authoritarian power. Above all, this story of Jim Jones exemplifies the truth in an age-old story: "Power tends to corrupt," said Lord Acton, "and absolute power corrupts absolutely."¹³

I want to present Jim Jones as a case study as to how leaders become corrupted by absolute power, how they use charisma and demagogic oratory to acquire that power, how people lose critical resistance to that charisma and oratory, and how people can avoid losing that resistance. My hope is that people will be alert to the warning signs when future leaders, particularly those surfacing in the political world, become seduced by the temptations of power—especially when incorrigibly fueled, as was the case with Jim Jones, by malignant narcissism.

The second reason for writing is to encourage realistic approaches to fighting evil. I want to give supporting evidence for Peck's position that evil people can be dealt with only by "raw power." Knowing of his declared philosophy of "the greatest good for the greatest number," I made it known to Jim Jones during the battle that I would "get off his back," which would save his properties, if he gave me my son. Jones, however, had no desire to negotiate, much less seek therapy. He already was determined to kill. In a matter of months he would do, as we have seen,

the unspeakable: mass murder by weapons, and mass murder by poison via the conjoining factors of physical intimidation and mind control.

Jim Jones's actions in 1978 seem relevant to the modern scene. We are now living in a world unleashing increasing acts of terrorism. Jones's use of systematic mind control to get otherwise decent people to be *willing* to kill innocents, and his follow-up orchestration of terror to impel them to *do* it at the airstrip, may be a template. It is my deep hope that governments will become adroit in a double-hit counterterrorism approach: how to wisely use raw power against terrorist leaders, and how to wisely use psychological power with their followers. It will require doing crisis management in more inventive ways—taking into particular account history, social psychology, religion, and propaganda—to save priceless Civilization.

My third, and most personally important, reason for writing is to give hope to people who, like me, have made huge mistakes in their lives. Recovery, believe it or not, is possible. After all of my unbelievable mistakes, it is a miracle that I should now find myself alive, sane, and vital. It is unquestionably due to something outside my control.

In telling this story, I rely as much as possible on documents rather than on memory. All of the cited journal entries and other cited documents can be verified at the California Historical Society.

I would not have had the emotional strength to write this book without the encouragement of two people. One has been my loyal brother, Tom Stoen, of Colorado Springs. The other has been my beloved wife, Kersti ("Shesti"), who came from Sweden.

This book is dedicated to my former wife, Grace—magnificent woman that she is—who saved my life.

Mendocino, California, February 2017

T. O. S.

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CHAPTER 1

Philistine



March 3, 1977

Jonestown, Guyana, South America

“SOME IN OUR GROUP,” SAID James Warren Jones to someone who had tried to keep him inside the legal rails for seven years, “think you might be a CIA agent.”

Only three weeks before, I had been happily ensconced in the lacquered city of San Francisco as Head of Special Prosecutions. Now, I found myself in a rainforest on the northeast shoulder of another continent, in a country most people in the United States had never heard of, in order to honor a solemn paternity promise to the person who had just made so terrible an insinuation. I, a member of the US Central Intelligence Agency, an agency that went around assassinating people for seeking freedom from colonial oppression!

“You mean, after all I’ve done for this group, you are going to accuse *me* of being a CIA agent?”

Despite Jones’s quickly responding that he did not feel that way himself, he would not have said it at all unless he thought it himself. What rankled him, I suspected, was more than his discovery of a violation of the rules against private bank accounts. Mainly, it was his unjustified but gnawing suspicion that I had come to Guyana to kidnap five-year-old John Victor Stoen, the subject of my solemn paternity promise. Jones claimed that John Victor was his biological son, and I had always believed that claim—a belief both he and his insiders were well aware of.

Even so, his chief mistress had accusingly asked me only a few minutes before if I had come to “steal John.”

Jones’s more long-standing fear, I surmised, was my desire for culture. Aside from his being indifferent to culture—of being a philistine—I sensed that Jones saw my desire for it as competing with a full-scale loyalty to Peoples Temple, which was his personification.

On February 16, 1977, I had suddenly found myself, at age thirty-nine, leaving San Francisco, California, to make Jonestown, Guyana, my future home. That was seven swift weeks after a Christmas 1976 vacation visit with Jim Jones and Guyana Prime Minister Forbes Burnham. It had been my first trip in three years to Guyana. Jones had gotten California’s Lieutenant Governor Mervyn Dymally to agree to visit Jonestown. Having gone ahead, Jones asked Michael Prokes and me to meet Dymally in Trinidad and then proceed to Georgetown, the capital of Guyana.

With unsurprising chutzpah, Jones had monopolized the conversation with Burnham. Mervyn Dymally, who was present, had journeyed the five thousand miles at Jones’s importuning and now sat as silent as if he were an acolyte superintending the hierarchy’s nearby stash of expensive Guyanese rum.

Upon our December 31, 1976, evening arrival at San Francisco International, an entourage greeting him with the usual ardor, a solemn Jim Jones turned to me, his personal attorney, and dispensed, like a pope *ex cathedra*, his personal evaluation of the past twelve months.

“This has been,” he said, “our year of ascendancy.”

Despite the word “our,” James Warren Jones would have said “amen” to an axiom by Ralph Waldo Emerson: “An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man.”¹⁴

The meteoric rise, therefore, was not Peoples Temple’s. It was Jim Jones’s alone—this nobody born in the hinterland of Indiana, in the midst of the Great Depression. He would have attributed to himself six high-octane roles in that ascendancy:

Radical. He was erecting an “outcast”-welcoming empire in a materialistic, conformist society where like congregates with like. He was

building a non-Establishment social order based on the principles of “total equality” and “the greatest good for the greatest number.” He was building what was probably the largest utopian socialist organization in the entire United States.

Orator. His soaring altruistic rhetoric induced large-scale, sacrificial commitment to that alternative social order. Out of the thousands who had flocked to him for healing, he was filtering out a nucleus of three thousand loyalists willing to die for the values he preached.

Politico. He had acquired, by trial and error, a cagey if utopian—a Huey Long “Every Man a King”—feel for power. Within months of his December 1975 entry into urban politics, he found himself chairman of the San Francisco Housing Authority. Within months of that entry, his reputation would be so solidified that the *Washington Post*, looking back, would characterize him as a “West Coast Power.”¹⁵ His ability to get interest groups, including seasoned ones like the American Civil Liberties Union, to act against their interests would someday incite disbelief.^{*16}

Propagandist. He had learned how to propagandize his very self, so as to personify a striking range of ideological appeal. He accepted as his due the honor accorded him in September at his San Francisco testimonial dinner. Converging upon the scene had been Northern California’s political glitterati—surrealistically framed at competing ends of the doctrinal spectrum by both an outspoken Communist and an outspoken John Bircher. He had shown zero embarrassment when introduced—by someone** as sophisticated as any in that progressive state—as a combination of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Albert Einstein.¹⁷

Psychoanalyst. He was a natural in the art of psychological transference but would have admitted to refining that gift. He took for granted

* “As publication neared, *New West* editors learned even more about Jones’s influence: they received protest letters from advertisers, politicians, and even the American Civil Liberties Union. ‘Can you believe it?’ says [Marshall] Kilduff. ‘He had the ACLU trying to kill a news story.’”

** This person was Assemblyman Willie Lewis Brown, Jr., who in 1980 would become the fifteen-year speaker of the California State Assembly and thereafter eight-year mayor of San Francisco.

his ability to penetrate people's psyches—to get people to identify with him, to project their attitudes, wishes, and desires onto him.

Personality. He would have claimed “destiny” if questioned as to his charismatic hold on people. He had spent one-on-one time with Rosalynn Carter, wife of the about-to-be-elected president. He would get an Academy Award-winning actress to write, “I also recommit myself to your congregation as an active and full participant, not only for myself but because I want my two children to have the experience.”¹⁸ And he would have smiled to learn that even after his demise—and the manifestation of his dark, dark side—the worldly-wise former city editor of Northern California's leading newspaper would eulogize him as “a fascinating man, absolutely fascinating, possibly the most fascinating person I've ever met.”¹⁹

Finally, come late 1978, he would have acknowledged a seventh role—*Rainforest Entrepreneur*—for having forged, from scratch, a thousand-member community of US citizens in a rainforest eight degrees north of the equator.

Following my February 17, 1977, arrival, I stayed in the capital city of Georgetown for a week and reflected upon Guyana as a country²⁰ and particularly upon my advance-team visit three years earlier.

Guyana, a country of seven hundred thousand people, was equal in size to the state of Idaho. It was regarded as a Caribbean “sugar island,” despite being two hundred miles from the Caribbean. At that time, the population of Guyana was 55 percent East Indian. Their ancestors had come over as indentured servants from India after William Wilberforce got the English Parliament to outlaw the slave trade in 1807. The East Indians were very family oriented and clung to the land as rice farmers.

The Afro-Guyanese, who were descendants of slaves brought over from Africa prior to 1807, made up 35 percent of the population and were primarily urban. They included men trained in the civil service traditions of England, many of whom had gone there to become solicitors and barristers.

Guyana had obtained independence from Great Britain on May 26, 1966. Four years later, Forbes Burnham, head of the People's National

Congress (PNC) political party, established the socialist Co-operative Republic of Guyana, with himself as president.

In 1971, Burnham's government nationalized two foreign-owned bauxite-mining companies, one being a subsidiary of the major American bauxite company, ALCOA. As a result, the United States reduced its financial aid by 50 percent. The regime went into default on its international debts to the International Monetary Fund.²¹

To deal with this serious balance-of-payments problem, Burnham promoted, in May 1973, a "Feed, Clothe, and House the Nation by 1976" (FCH) austerity policy. He banned importation of basic food items like flour, salted fish, pickled meats, preserved fruits, most canned items, cooking oil, and butter.

This seriously contributed to an ongoing "brain drain" of educated Afro-Guyanese. Many of them were lining up at the US consul office in Georgetown, seeking visas to immigrate to the United States.

On December 9, 1973, I had left California for Guyana as part of a five-member advance team to scout out an agricultural mission for Peoples Temple. During that first week, I visited the Guyana Parliament in a colonial building of British architecture. The minister of economic development was presenting a budget response to the exacerbated balance-of-payments problem. It had been greatly aggravated by the October 1973 Arab oil embargo, which astronomically increased the costs of petroleum-based products, including fertilizers. I felt sorry for these governmental ministers having to deal with forces totally outside their control.

On December 16, 1973, Jim Jones arrived in Georgetown to join us. Ten Temple members came with him, and they proceeded to take Georgetown by storm. Nurses Joyce Parks and Marceline Jones contacted the minister of health and visited the hospitals to ascertain the most competent doctors. High school teacher Jean Brown and college instructor Richard Tropp contacted the ministry of education and visited schools.

Don Beck, Johnny Brown, and Carolyn Layton had their assignments too. Idealistic and clean-cut, all the Temple members made a

terrific first impression on Guyanese officials, bureaucrats, and ordinary folk. The conclusion seemed to be that any group that could produce Americans like this must be all right.

Two days later, Jones, Archie Ijames, and I went to visit the number-two man in Guyana—one who would become Jones's best friend through thick and thin. This was Dr. Ptolemy Reid, who was deputy prime minister and minister of national development and agriculture.

We had already decided that the food element of the FCH program would be our conceptual key to approaching the government. Jones, using his masterful personal technique, was the emotional key to winning over the government. He did this by claiming that the Temple, as a black organization, identified completely with the racial discrimination encountered by Dr. Reid when studying veterinary medicine at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama.

On December 21, 1973, at 7:00 a.m., all sixteen of us left by chartered plane for Matthews Ridge in the North West District of Guyana. As we touched down, we could see red-earth roads surrounded by dense tropical forest, including huge trees called greenheart and purpleheart.

Our main host was Claude St. Romain, the senior governmental officer of the region. He had been sent two years before to develop this hinterland and had not had much success. He brought some youth corps settlers to build roads and houses, but they soon left for urban pleasures. He then brought in some US jazz musicians whose only crop became marijuana, so they were kicked out.

St. Romain saw something different about our group. We were enthusiastic about developing the land. We had education and money, with Jones promising \$2 million US (\$5 million Guyanese) to invest at the start. We fraternized with the locals, treating them as equals.

With his King's English dialect, "Claude" (as he asked us to call him) and Jones hit it off, each telling the other jokes with that typical brand of chauvinism that men in power like to display. Jones apologized to us afterward that he'd had to do it to win over the government.

During his hospitality, Claude arranged for us to be given tea and cheese, and the cheese was very good. Jones, as was his habit of using superlatives, said it was by far the best tea and the best cheese he had ever tasted in the whole world.

The next morning, Claude traveled with us by train the thirty-five miles from Matthews Ridge to Port Kaituma. There, drivers in Land Rovers were waiting to show us two places for settlement south of the airstrip. One site was seven miles from Port Kaituma, itself a place that appealed to us because it had both an airstrip and an access by navigable river to the Atlantic Ocean. The site had been partially cleared by the earlier settlers. We fell in love with it. Jones decided this would be it.

On Sunday, December 23, 1973, as we got ready to leave this remote location, the question arose as to the name to be given this wonderful site. Although Jones would later claim that Claude made the suggestion, it was Jones himself who manipulated him to do so. The name would be easy to remember. It would be "Jonestown."

Some three years later, I was being granted the high privilege of making this same Jonestown my future home.

At 10:00 a.m. on February 24, 1977, I climbed aboard a propeller-driven DeHavilland Twin Otter DHC-6, a Canadian STOL—short take-off and landing—utility aircraft. One hour later, having disquietingly skimmed one of the most impenetrable rainforests on earth, it touched down.

Aware that this new life adventure would have some kind of import, I took out a legal-size yellow pad to capture the moment of Jonestown arrival from the point of view of a sympathetic outside journalist. I wrote:²²

On Thursday, February 24, 1977, around 11:00 a.m., my two-engine (Otter) set down on the dirt airstrip of Port Kaituma, an outpost in the jungle of Guyana, a country of 83,000 square miles on the northeast coast of South America. The plane had

been “diverted” from its daily regular run between Georgetown, Guyana’s capital city of 160,000, and Mathews Ridge, the main airstrip for Guyana’s remote northwest district, which is totally inaccessible by road. I had been told of an amazing community taking place [7] miles from the Port Kaituma landing strip, a project christened...with the name of “Jonestown.”

The Ministry of Agriculture had graciously provided one of its employees to...drive us by Land Rover [4] miles...until we came to a road of reddish-colored dirt going off to the right with a crisscross fence...on each side of the road.

The driver explained that this was the entrance to [the boundary of] Jonestown. We turned down the road and noted that the thick jungle of purpleheart (a wood so dense it sinks in water) and [other] trees had been cleared... On much of these 2 strips had been planted young citrus trees (lime) adjacent to cassava, a ground provision which looks like a potato.

Approximately 1 1/2 miles down the road on the right I saw 40 acres or so of pasture... About 1 1/2 miles further I came to a low-strung bungalow of gray bark with a front porch.

This was the “amazing community’s” operational center—at this point a modest, gray, wooden bungalow.

From lunch on the porch there ran toward me a dark-haired, bright-eyed child making the universe shake. He had turned five on January 25. His name was John Victor Stoen, sometimes called John-John. He was the child prince of Peoples Temple and the precious subject of my solemn promise.

The Establishment part of my outlook soon vanished, like smoke from Savonarola’s bonfire of the vanities, in the raw pioneer world of Jonestown. Having decided to give the utmost to my new life, I worked in

the sawmill, happily sweating under a canvas canopy breasting a sultry tropical sun and portentous afternoon torrents.

My supervisor was slightly built, twenty-six-year old Jeff Carey from Flint, Michigan. Starting at 6:30 a.m. each day, we plunged crabwood boards into a planer's voracious jaws. Fittingly, the lumber came in by way of the Kaituma River on the *Cudjoe*, the Jonestown trawler, named after the heroic Afro-Guyanese slave who, in 1763, revolted against British rule.

Soul satisfaction invaded this enterprise. This lumber would transform into living quarters pledging a happy, nature-filled, Peace Corps life for youngsters now trapped in crime-glorifying urban ghettos. We had 3,852 acres, leased from the government of Guyana for twenty-five years, in which to develop so beautiful a dream.

I counted forty-seven of us adventurers in Jonestown—eleven children, eleven teenagers under eighteen, and twenty-five adults. The physical presence of the increasingly overbearing Jim Jones was, thank God, nowhere to be seen. Let him stay in California where he belonged—bringing in the money, and leaving those of us in the Jonestown trenches alone.

Around 4:30 p.m. each day, I forsook the sawmill to help Tom Grubbs, thirty-five, a masterful teacher from Willits, California, work with John and the other children. A cosmic glow pervaded that portion of the day.

We ate well. For breakfast, our cooks served eggs and biscuits with coffee or a cocoa drink called *mita*. Lunch included chili, peanut butter sandwiches, and cucumbers. Dinner commenced with fish or fried chicken with greens, often finishing with working-class delicacies like peanut butter fudge.

At meetings with the leadership, I noted some difficulties in the splendid project, now three years in the making:

- "Need steam generator—\$300,000"
- "SF don't realize a town, a city here—people on radio see a farm rather than a town"

- “\$30,000 to bring a hundred-ton barge of aggregate—no river run to make cement out of”
- “Big problem here—Guyana plastic shoes last one month = only work shoes for sale”²³

After dinner, John-John and I would stroll around the encampment as if it were Versailles and talk about things. He would then mimic me, gesture by gesture, as I stood before a metal mirror, tacked onto the back wall of the bark-covered bungalow, to soap and shave my face.

We would then go sport on the long-rope swings. As I pushed him, he would scream, “Higher, higher!” Tumbling into the sawdust, he would shake himself off and gaze up at me with his magnetic smile. “Thank you,” he would say. “Thank you very much!”

John already had a sense of protocol. One day I happened to pass an open door where attractive, brown-haired Joyce Touchette, forty-four, the main administrator in Jonestown, was shampooing John’s hair. He saw me and, feeling embarrassed, spoke as tactfully as if he were a United Nations diplomat.

“Is there,” asked the five-year-old, “something you could be doing?”

John usually called me “Dad.” But it was no secret to many that he claimed two “dads.”

During my first week in Jonestown, my sense of well-being was embellished by something in addition to John, and to the heady creation of relief for life’s rejects. It was a related, socioeconomic reason: Jonestown was a burgeoning utopia. Here we were establishing a socialist economic system that went beyond the quasi-communalism we had been restricted to within the US regime of overbearing capitalism.

Some years earlier I had roughed out a simplistic paper, for unschooled Temple members, discussing the fundamental opposition of the two systems. “Socialism,” I started out, “is a way of life, theory of reality, and economic system based on the principle ‘From each according to his capacity, to each according to his need.’ It stands in fundamental

opposition to capitalism, which operates on the principle 'Me first; devil take the hindmost.'²⁴

Since everybody's needs in Jonestown were equal, everybody's allotment of clothing, food, and shelter was equal. As for capacity, nobody could deny that some "misfits" under capitalism were blossoming. No longer were they subjected to being treated as the hindmost.

One sterling example sat there, with a cheerful face, before my very own eyes. She was Jan Wilsey, a Pomo Indian girl from Mendocino County. Way back in February 1971, she had been failing in her classes at Santa Rosa Junior College. She told me then that she was having trouble with words like *existentialism*, and did not feel competent to speak out in class. I scribbled down her words in my Seven Star Success Diary: "I have never been competitive. I was encouraged to be nothing."

Nothing! Jan's pain was so profound that one rejoiced in knowing there was one group, Peoples Temple, willing to intercede for her and love her. I personally called Jan's English teacher, who said Jan had failed to write three papers. I went into Jan's background, and told her that Jan was part of a group that cares, really cares, for its people. The teacher was gracious. We told her we would provide special tutors for Jan.

And we did. Jan managed to continue for a while, even surviving that particular class, but college overall was just too much. The odds she had of overcoming would become clear one year from then when, from that very place of Jonestown, she would spell out her personal history. Jan would write:

I spent the first seven years of my life on an Indian reservation called Round Valley in Mendocino County, California. My people had been relocated to this area at the time of the California Gold Rush. They were herded like cattle by the soldiers.

By the time I was fourteen years old, I was using drugs to escape from the unreality of life.

* When the single word "diary" is used in this book, it refers to a leather, six-ringed, pocket diary called the "Seven Star Success Diary," which I always carried with me.

One day I heard of Jim Jones. Christine Lucientes, a friend of mine, said he was different from any teacher she had ever had, and she wanted me to come with her to a night class. He found a seat for me to sit up front. This may seem like a small gesture to most, but to me it was not.

I was eighteen years old and alone in the city of San Francisco, a very lonely and depressed person. It was the last part of December [1967] and a very cold day in my apartment on the fifth floor. That day I reached a very low point. There seemed to be nothing in the way of drugs to bring me out of it. I had taken four tabs of acid, and I had no relief.

A week later I joined Peoples Temple.

I was one of the first to go through the drug rehabilitation program. What a job the people had on their hands as they stayed by my side around the clock. They tried to get me to talk, but I would not do it. In fact, Christine, for the first few months after I had joined Peoples Temple, did the talking for both herself and me.²⁵

But now, in February 1977, here was the same Jan Wilsey—now head of general agriculture and land clearing! No more need was there to struggle with “existentialism.” Now she was exercising authority. Now she was supervising—competently—seven Temple members, and fifty-five Amerindians whom we referred to as “nationals.”

Jan led the production meetings, holding court on the growth of eddoes, pineapples, and sweet cassava. She felt important now because she was important now. You could read it in her bearing, in her smile, in the sparkle in her eyes. Environmental determinism, her story screamed out, was a philosophy that worked.

Living each day in one of the world’s most pristine rainforests vivified the soul. The days were warm, but the nights cool enough to bless

sleep with felicity. The rains did raid like gangbusters in the afternoon, but within an hour or two slipped away, anointing us all with birth-of-the-world sweetness. Golden bananas, four inches in length, clamored for picking and were as tasty as ice cream. Scarlet macaws braceleted the encircling rim of forest like Tiffany jewels.

In a tropical rainforest, one does not work by a calendar, so I'm not absolutely sure of the exact date, but it was almost surely Thursday, March 3, 1977—one week to the day after my Jonestown arrival. Heralded by a plane circling overhead, a lean, shambling figure appeared two hours later, and headed down the sawmill path.

I fed one last rough plank into the greedy machine, flicked the coveted badges of proletarian labor off my dark-blue polo shirt, and headed up.

His face was tight. He wasted no time on greetings. "It's about Grace. We need to talk to you."

My mind shot forth a dozen ways. What has my estranged wife done now? Was it not enough that I had to leave a beautiful job because she left the group and was filing a lawsuit to take John away from us?

At the barely conscious level, however, there streamed forth a sense of guilt. It was I who, like Pygmalion, had tried to change her—this magnificent woman—into something she was not. I had sought to make her an activist, a radical, while all she wanted was a cottage with a picket fence and roses. So she had felt emotionally abandoned, and I deserved what I got when she left. How could she have known—for I did not tell her—that I was still crazy about her?

Upon reaching the clearing by the bungalow, my eyes alighted on four other chief operatives of "the cause." A siren sounded within. People assuming the burdens of the underclass do not travel, with no advance notice, thousands of miles—from the West Coast of North America to the northeast shoulder of South America—to go on a frolic.

The five visitors stood about in somber countenance. First was Carolyn Layton, thirty-one, Jones's mistress number one—slender,

brown-haired, attractive, stoical, cultured, a high school French teacher who had graduated from the University of California, Davis, and studied in Bordeaux. She was the inscrutable one who would rule behind the scenes should the time ever come.

Second was shorthaired Patricia Cartmell, forty-four, the attendant. She stuck by the leader's side as a robust personal servant. Hers was the loyalty of longevity. She had followed the leader from Indiana in his 1965 migration to California.

The publicist, Michael Prokes, twenty-nine, was third. He was the winsome, innocent-faced former television reporter who'd arrived in September 1972 to do an expose and decided to stay. He had an uncanny ability to win over cynics in the media.

Fourth was the lean figure that had come down the path—Eugene Chaikin, forty-four, the attorney of record for the organization. He was gifted, and UCLA Law School trained.

Finally, and of towering importance, was the leader, the authority—Jim Jones himself. Standing five foot ten, he was stocky, brown eyed, black haired, square jawed, and ambiguous enough in skin color to claim himself part Cherokee. He was then forty-five.

I viewed Jim Jones as utopian, administratively superb, passionate, audacious, and rhetorically gifted. He believed the end justified the means, provided the end was “noble.”

Jones pointed to a newly finished dormitory at the end of a board path defying the afternoon flooding. The six of us single-filed along the path. We entered a dusky interior. We sat ourselves down, one by one, onto plank benches serving a plank table.

Across from me, to my left, was Jones himself. Today he was Mister Obtuse, Mister Say-Nothing. His sideburns, I noticed, were still penciled in. He kept his shades on despite the indoor shade. His dark glasses—I disliked them. He seemed to wear them all the time now, even inside. They were a rebuke to transparency. They were for tactical advantage. He could see your eyes, but you could not see his.

All of a sudden, as if on cue in a small-town play, Mike Prokes, to my left at the head of the table, stood up and looked down at me.

"All right, Stoen," he said. "We know the evil you've been up to. All of it. We're here for a confession. You'd better start talking."

Momentarily taken aback, a cascade of thoughts raced through my mind. First, I recognized those were Jim Jones's words, not Mike Prokes's, and that they represented Jones's typical technique of the open-ended accusation. Second, it being obvious that the former Christian Scientist, too much a choirboy, could not pull off the Mafioso routine, I also knew that his handler, the one next to him, conceivably could.

Quickly I weighed all the possibilities and concluded I was safe. Jones needed me for Guyana diplomacy and, above all, to ensure his physical hold on the five-year-old roaming joyously somewhere outside.

"I don't know a damn thing you're talking about, Mike," I responded.

Mike Prokes repeated his demand. I repeated my response.

I glanced around at my one-time friends, now my accusers. They all, like I, had given themselves to social justice as a sole governing principle, which left little room for lightness. Today they were humorless Puritans stalking witchcraft in Salem.

Finally, Carolyn Layton exposed the nerve center of their accusatory mindset. "Did you come," she inquired, "to steal John?"

"What?" I responded. "Do you think I would take John away from this cause and his own father?"

Gene Chaikin revealed their evidence. "What about the bank accounts?"

"Oh, that," I answered. "Yes, I opened a bank account before I left—with my own money."

"How much," he further asked, "was in it?"

There was a pause. It was not clear whether they knew about a \$900 San Francisco DA paycheck, or a \$8,600 Mendocino County retirement check deposited in a San Francisco branch of the Chartered Bank of London.

"Nine hundred dollars."

"Why?"

"Security," I said, adding that it may have been a violation of communal rules but was a minor violation, and that I was the type of person who needed reserves in case of emergencies.

As I would learn, Maria Katsaris—Jones’s mistress number two—a few days before had picked up a letter.²⁶ The envelope was addressed to Mr. Timothy Stoen, Assistant District Atty., 880 Bryant Street, San Francisco, Calif. The return address was Joel A. Stoen, 6698 South Turkey Creek Canyon, Morrison, Colorado, 80465. The postmark was February 16, 1977, the day I’d left for Guyana.

Whether it was because I had set up the Peoples Temple’s banking system in Panama, or because I had absented myself from Peoples Temple meetings, or because I had found patent pleasure in my competing vocational life, the letter seemed to have shifted authority’s paranoia into high gear.

“Dear Tim,” it said. “We followed your instructions and enclose signature cards for you to sign on both sides, which you can forward direct. Love, Dad.” The signature cards came freshly spawned from New Accounts, Continental National Bank, Englewood, Colorado.

Eventually, like exhausted jurors after a mistrial, the six of us silently rose from the courtroom-sized table and began filing out of the cavernous dormitory space. Reaching the door and the welcoming tropical sunlight, Jim Jones, his brow and mouth decidedly grave, turned his shrouded eyes toward me and asked his first question of the day.

“Do you really think,” he asked, “that opening up a bank account in your own name was a minor thing?”

I assured him that I did, saying it was probably a residue of “my capitalistic upbringing.”

“I don’t want,” came the cliché, “all my eggs in one basket.”

“I wasn’t sure what you were up to,” said Jones, “so I had to send Terri Buford to Panama to change the accounts. You know I always want two people monitoring each other. I just hope I can trust her acting alone.”

He then asked me about my passport and Visa card, and why I refused to turn them over “for safekeeping,” as everyone else was required to do.

“Same reason, Jim—security.”

“Don’t you trust us?” he responded, anger edging his voice.

I assured him it was not a matter of trust, but simply security. I then crossed a bridge too far.

“Besides,” I said, “what if this cause goes down?”

Sparks flew upward. Jim Jones’s brow took on the further cast of night. How could I think of such a thing when he was in charge?

“Well, Jim, you mentioned it yourself—that they may be going after us in the press.”

Then came the grenade about the CIA.

Later that evening, having calmed down, I mused on the breach that had erupted between Jim Jones and his personal attorney. Whatever influence I had on him was more tenuous now. I was, in a way, grateful. Seven years of being watchfully on edge had taken its own toll.

The next morning, tensions still hovering, I joined Jones and his retinue on their return charter flight to Georgetown. They all then mounted wings for California. I stayed to work on agricultural mission business, which included buying a big two-story house in an upscale neighborhood called Lamaha Gardens.

Famished for outside stimulation, I decided to seek admittance to the Guyana bar but was dismayed to learn I had to go back to law school, to a Caribbean law school.

On March 21, I flew to Barbados to talk with the dean of academic affairs at the University of the Caribbean, who referred me across the water. The next day I flew to Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, and talked with Mr. Persaud, the director of legal education at the University of the West Indies. At first Mr. Persaud said I qualified for admission, and then someone came in and said only Guyanese citizens could be admitted.

To hell with all this, I thought, *I’ve got to get away*. I ignored the fact that the sojourn was not “cleared” and that Jones, paranoid enough to make that CIA charge, might go ballistic upon discovering that the one he depended upon for diplomacy and paternity had taken off for another continent.

Be that as it may, I booked a flight for Wednesday, March 23, from Port-of-Spain to London, and arranged for a telegram to be sent out two

days later. It was to go to Paula Adams, our administrator in Georgetown. Giving a Port-of-Spain return address, I said I would have to stay nine more days.

When I arrived at Heathrow Airport in London, it was cold and snowing. I had only an unlined raincoat, but I exulted in vagabond freedom from all that intense communalism, even though I had no idea of what I was going to do. What dominated my mind was a desire for gentleness.

A bookshop offered *Nicholson's Students Guidebook*, which impelled action on a particular listing: "London Musical Club, 21 Holland Park... Music practice and concert rooms... 50 beds. bb." It was in a sedate and well-to-do part of London, provided meals, and had an extra bed in a double room.

At the London Musical Club, there was an international group of residents, including a young woman pianist from Malta who reminded me of Grace, who was half Maltese. How splendid was the once-familiar, hauntingly delicious, sense of a home.

The emotion was too sweet not to extend the London moment. The promise to Jones about John could be kept by returning to Guyana when judicial proceedings heated up.

The plan for an extended stay was abruptly halted. I had left some packed suitcases with my good attorney friend in the San Francisco DA's office, William Hunter, for a situation such as this. I gave him a call, told him I was still with Peoples Temple, and asked him to send the belongings to me.

When I arrived at the Pan American cargo building in the late afternoon of Thursday, March 31, the luggage was accompanied by Temple members Mike Prokes and Sandy Bradshaw. Sandy was a Ukiah, California, probation officer. She was also a Temple zealot. Her eyes had once shot daggers at me after I publicly challenged Jim Jones.

Sandy and Mike entreated me to call Jones, now in Guyana. They said I was needed there to deal with a crisis.

From a public phone booth we finally reached Jones.

"My son," he started out, "why have you left?"

"I have not left, Jim. I just had to get away. I needed some culture."

"Well, Tim, if you really love this cause and all these people who are dependent on you, you'll get down to Guyana right now because we have a crisis."

"Well, Jim, I need some more time in London."

"Okay, take all the time you need, but remember that every day counts. What is it, Tim, that you don't like about us?"

"Well, Jim, two things. First, you are not making the people happy. Second, you lie."

"Lie! When have I ever told a lie?"

My mind began to reel at the myriad of instances of Jones's lying, and I settled on one.

"Well, I'll tell you when you've lied. When Gene Chaikin was in my living room in June 1972, and he asked you whether he could continue to meditate if he joined the Temple, you said he could. And then, when he joined, you told him he couldn't."

What came next would vex like periodic shocks from a cattle prod.

"Tim, that was just socialist realism."

Given Jones's high-strung emotions, it seemed fruitless to argue his egregious misuse of the sacred adjective.

"All right, Jim," I continued, "I will return on Sunday on the exact day indicated in my telegram to Paula. There is, however, one condition. You have got to promise that you are not going to put any psychological pressure on me to stay forever. I have never made a promise to stay in the Temple for life."

"I promise," he said.

After hanging up, I arranged to take Sandy for Shakespeare on Saturday evening. We went to the National Theater of Great Britain, where we witnessed Sir John Gielgud in *Julius Caesar*.

Afterward, Sandy and I went to an exotic candlelit restaurant, where we engaged in pleasant conversation just like normal people. Her lovely feminine side appeared, and we lingered until one o'clock in the morning. Even though I did not want Sandy knowing my retreat, I did not have

the heart to send her elsewhere, so she came and slept at the London Musical Club.

At 8:30 the next morning, Sunday, April 3, I boarded the British Airways 1905 flight for Guyana, my heart steeled for the unpleasant confrontations sure to come.

“Maybe, just maybe,” came the thought from Alice in Wonderland, “Jim Jones will see that people keep their promises.”

Too lacking in astuteness was I to apply Julius Caesar’s words to the culture-negating figure I would be greeting within hours:

I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much,
He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music.²⁷

Paranoid



“WE HAVE FREEDOM OF SPEECH and assembly under the First Amendment, Jim. You have a right to be a socialist. Nobody is out to get you.”

Undermining Jones’s increasing paranoia—his extreme, irrational fear or distrust of others,²⁸ in this case the federal government—had become, increasingly, my responsibility within Peoples Temple.

“Just remember, Tim,” he had occasionally responded, “even paranoids have enemies.”

Maybe after all, I thought, Jim Jones does have sufficient self-awareness.

On April 3, 1977, as the British Airways 747 from Heathrow touched down for a stopover en route to Guyana, it ignited an intense urge to bolt off the plane right then and there. The last thing I wanted to do was deal with the inevitable paranoia Jim Jones was going to have about me.

Upon arriving at Georgetown’s Timehri Airport that afternoon and setting foot on the stairs to disembark, I was momentarily transfixed, as always seemed to happen, by a sauna shot to the face of hot, humid, enveloping, tropical air.

Patiently waiting was the Temple’s Georgetown administrator, Paula Adams. An attractive strawberry blonde, she was the personal squeeze of Laurence “Bonny” Mann, Guyana’s ambassador to the United States. Wordlessly, we negotiated the narrow thirty-five-mile road into Georgetown, eventually passing the sugar fields and, finally, the rice paddies.

She pulled the blue Vauxhall van to a stop under our spacious rented residence at 121 Third Street in the Albertain district. Mounting the stairs for the renegade's reception, I set my face like a flint. Only one person present could reset it.

That was sweet-tempered Debbie Ijames Touchette, black and beautiful and the winner of singing competitions in the US. She had movingly told me she was making Guyana her permanent home because she would never have to hear the word "nigger" ever again.

Others, not so appealing at that moment, were also present—Jim Jones, Carolyn Moore Layton, Gene Chaikin, and Patricia Cartmell. Also in attendance were Jim Jones's "natural born" son, Stephan, and three of his adopted sons: Jimmie, Tim, and Lew. And there—scanning me with distrustful eyes—was Jones's chief strategist, Terri Buford.

"Welcome back, Tim," said Jones, breaking the ice and impelling Terri and Carolyn into forced smiles and feigned camaraderie. Strangely, Jones said nothing about any "crisis." Only later would I learn that on March 23, 1977, the day I failed to return from Trinidad, Jones collapsed while chairing a meeting of the San Francisco Housing Authority.

Early the next day, Jones approached and said, "Let's go for a walk and talk." We walked a number of blocks to the Guyana National Cooperative Bank. He greeted people along the way with a smile. Stopping to talk with a transient, he embraced him.

At the bank, Jones arranged to buy \$50,000 in Guyanese money (\$20,000 US) worth of national bonds to show our support for Guyana's ruling political party, the Peoples National Congress (PNC). This was a typical tactic of Jones—to invest money for public relations while retaining rights of retrieval on short notice.

While waiting in the lobby, Jones probed my feelings about the Temple. I said that the Temple was failing because its atmosphere had become grim, making the people unhappy. Jones did not argue the point. Instead, he said that we now had a chance, here in Guyana with a socialist black government, to do it right.

Jones then said, "I'm very grateful you came back, Tim. This may be a new era in the life of the church—where a person left and came back."

On our way back from the bank, we encountered the chauffeur for "the VIP house" where Jones, Dymally, and I had stayed in December. He was a skinny, elderly man.

When he saw Jones, he waved his hand, and said, "Hello, Bishop."

Jones responded with a kindly smile, saying, "Hello, Comrade." *Comrade* was the official word of greeting in the socialist Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

"Jim, you are not a bishop," I pointed out.

"I know that, Tim, and I hate it myself—being called 'bishop'—but people need authority figures, and if I am not their leader they will go to false leaders who don't believe in socialism."

During the next few days, Jones spent a lot of time with me. Jones's probing did not stop at the bank. He was obsessed with my attitude toward the outside world.

"What," he asked, "did you find so fascinating about London?"

"Shakespeare and culture," I responded. "When I went to see that play I felt plugged into something I had been missing a long time. I needed it."

Jones responded by his usual mantra—that with all the suffering and injustice in the world, attending to culture was unjust. He had a word for Shakespeare.

"Tim," Jones said, "don't you realize that Shakespeare was a homosexual?"

I said I did not really care.

Jones then weighed in on poets generally. He said that his "studies in psychology" had led him to believe that people who engage in "rhyming" are all "schizophrenics."

Finally, Jones got around to asking me what I "really" wanted. Spontaneously it came, from my disillusioned, carnal self.

"Women," I responded, "and jazz."

On all cylinders, still, was Jones's hair-trigger, promise-whatever-it-takes responsiveness. "Well, Tim, I'm going to look things over in Grenada. We'll buy the Holiday Inn there. You can run it as an international socialist convention center, and you can set up a jazz club."

"Fine, Jim," I said, suspecting he might be willing to do it if that's what it took to keep his attorney in the fold, but also knowing he would do what he could to get what he wanted without taking so expensive a step.

One memorable day during that early April, Jones and I were standing in the driveway of our Albertain house. Jones pointed to a tree in the neighboring yard, next to a pond breeding boundary-crossing mosquitoes.

"See that tree over there, Tim? I don't think anyone has the right to the fruit off that tree until everyone does."

As pragmatically ridiculous as his words were at face value, they nonetheless penetrated me for the moment. "You're right, Jim."

Jones then suggested I go visit the *favelas*—the shantytowns on garbage dumps in Brazil. What he then said threw me.

"If I know Tim Stoen, he will come back a communist."

That last word sent a spider up my spine. I rationalized that he did not mean he was a Soviet Communist, but that he was a share-all communalist. However, I was now no longer 100 percent sure. If the former, his premise was wrong. He absolutely did not know me. Based on an East Berlin experience, I knew that Soviet Communism was evil. For the moment, I put the matter out of my mind.

I then reflected on the fact that, despite my years as his attorney, I had never gotten to know Jim Jones well as a person. My most time-consuming work in Peoples Temple had been to give ongoing legal advice to its poor, and to the poor who came across its path. Not once had I been to Jim Jones's home for lunch or dinner. I did not attend Peoples Temple meetings unless a VIP was present. I was not a member of his key leadership committee, called "Staff." In sum, I had been mainly his business, political, and diplomatic adviser, with an occasional need to be his paranoia neutralizer.

As a result, this was my first prolonged exposure to Jim Jones in a casual, everyday setting. April 1977 had become a getting-to-know-you time. This ruminating also invited consideration of the maverick traits distinguishing Jim Jones from run-of-the-mill preachers. By one count there were twelve:

Earthiness. Despite his respectable occupation, Jim Jones was brazen, earthy, bawdy, even profane. In addition to being a minister with mistresses, he had shocked the pious more than once by accusing them of being “hypocritical bastards,” which—amazingly—kept them coming.

Physicality. And yet there was, in his role as minister, the therapeutic physical touching that made the old, the black, the rejected, and the sick claim that here was someone who cared—maybe the first person in their entire lives who ever cared. It was an episode in October 1968, when I had seen Jones look in the eyes of an older black woman, then kiss and embrace her, that kept returning, relentlessly, to mind.

Healer. This was a striking paradox in Jones’s traits. In addition to his constant agitating for a classless society, Jim Jones, with his extensive medical vocabulary, claimed to be a healer. After all my years as his attorney, I still believed him to be a healer for my two original reasons: first, people telling me he had healed them; second, the purity of his total equality message being rewarded by the universe with the gift of mind over matter. At any rate, my obsession in the Temple had always been social justice, and that was all that really mattered.

Hearts and flowers. To a Temple crowd, Jones could, in a matter of seconds, shift from railing against the universe or attacking his enemies to a dulcet-voiced “I love you all... I love each one of you.” It did not matter what he said before, for it was the haunting earnestness of the “I love you” that lingered in the enraptured souls.

Street cred. Jones’s syrupy sentimentality for his people played against his affinity for tough characters outside the Temple walls. He had street credibility in the crime-ridden Western Addition of San Francisco. He also had it with the law-and-order side of the spectrum, including the police chief in Ukiah, California, who had come up from Los Angeles

with a reputation as a tough-as-nails interrogator. He sought out Jones's company and loved his wit.

Audacity. There were times when you sensed that Jones was lying, but you were not sure of it, and he took advantage of your lack of certainty by his audacity. I once heard him say that if you are discovered in flagrante delicto with a woman, simply claim you were giving her artificial respiration. It will be enough, he said, to suspend a violent reaction.

Trip-hammer mind. If Jones had an assignment for someone, his words spilled out as from a cannon. His micromanagement and follow-up suggested a Prussian field general pacing inside his lantern-lit canvas tent, barking out orders, presumptuously expecting punctilious compliance.

Adaptability. Jones knew how to read a room and adapt his message accordingly. He carefully assessed his audience, however new, tried out various themes, watched their eyes until they lit up, and stripped down to that one particular theme, developed it, embroidered it, extracted principles from it, and invented practical illustrations of it, for the everyday lives of the people he was addressing—in their political frustration, their economic distress, or their relationship pain. Remarkably, Jones did not speak in clichés. He had mastered the power of the fresh word and knew which ones, and at which times, would penetrate deepest into the heart. “My God,” people would say, “he’s reading my mail.”

Drive. Jones's driving energy at the podium went beyond mere adroitness in a “showbiz” art form. When not in his preacher robe, with his bare arms in aggressive position, he often dressed—to my personal discomfort—like a rock star, dark glasses and all. He was a master on stage. Never once had I seen him without energy, without something to say, even if he had been up there for hours and hours.

Fear of the law. Another notable paradox was Jones's aggressive “the meek don't make it” disposition, combined with a superstitious fear of the law. Despite a willfulness that would have excited Nietzsche, Jones was stunningly fearful of crossing into illegality. That fit me perfectly, for as much as I cared about Peoples Temple, I loved my attorney profession more.

Schoolteacher socialist. For me, the shining aspect of Jones's maverick credentials had been his willingness, while a sixth-grade public school-teacher, to call himself publicly—in conservative Midwest-values Ukiah, California, during the middle of the United States–Soviet Union Cold War—a socialist. While other self-described radicals for social justice in America pussyfooted around the term, Jones trumpeted it. I viewed it, of course, as utopian socialism, the great antidote to Marxian socialism. But I knew that the average person in the street made no such distinction. Thus I found a maverick courage—even an integrity—in Jones's willingness to take abuse for the very name.

Control. Finally, there was Jones's maverick obsession with control. Even if his sermon topics danced around like the glass pieces in a kaleidoscope, the emotional drive behind all that jumping around was—increasingly—a desire for control. Whenever he thought he might be losing control—whether in an auditorium, in a counseling session, or on the street—he summoned up a charisma that froze people emotionally. In seeking control, Jones would work to earn your gratitude. But it did not end there. As a defector would one day say to me: “Jim expects gratitude by servitude.”

Now, in April 1977, and within a week of my return from London, I found myself having to skirmish with this maverick, for he proceeded to violate his promise not to apply psychological pressure.

Jones started by sending over Patricia Cartmell, Carolyn Layton, and Terri Buford. “Jim doesn't know,” they said, “how he will be able to manage. His health is deteriorating under the heavy load. This is because you are not willing to make a commitment to stay with us, like everyone else, for the rest of your life.” And they kept at it.

“Sorry,” I kept responding, “I have never made that promise.”

Having no psychological understanding about underlying personality disorders, I attributed Jones's violation of his promise to his conscious mind—to his philosophy. His basic philosophy about reality, as I chose to see it, was pantheism, defined as “the doctrine identifying the deity with the universe and its phenomena.”²⁹

Jones's pantheism had first surfaced on his return from a summer 1971 trip to Philadelphia, where he met a group founded by a Father Divine. Although Jones then proceeded to call himself a socialist god, I interpreted that to mean he was no more than a social-action prophet, for he adamantly assured me he was not claiming to be *the* god. He was, he said, just trying to get people not to rely on the "sky god" to rectify injustice. And he still claimed to follow the Christian ethic in Matthew 25 of serving the least.

However, enough siren bells went off inside me that, had I not been so damned ideological, I would have left Peoples Temple right there and then. So I put the most benign interpretation on Jones's statement as I could.

More acceptably, Jones defined God in humanistic terms as good. He said that people are God. And he explained why it was important for people to see themselves that way. "Humanism," he said, "the highest developed refinement in the superego, the most conscious love—that is God. God means good. We want people to recognize that they are God, and quit worshipping the sky, because the rich, the oppressors, the international bankers will use that to tell you to quit working against injustice."³⁰

In order for people to evolve into their god-likeness, they needed structure, which would lead to perfection. "God," Jones preached, "is love. Well, you can't have perfect love, without having a society that will guarantee that someone won't get unloving and take over again and hold and grab and push others down. So there has to be a structure that's a long time coming due. Man can evolve. Man can grow up till he can be trusted. That's what we're saying. The perfection of man."³¹

Structure, meaning utopian structure, was needed not only for perfecting individuals, but also for social purposes. This need, said Jones, was shown by the disproportionate treatment of the elite—President Richard Nixon's being pardoned for obstructing justice, and Vice President Spiro Agnew's being awarded straight probation when found guilty of felony tax evasion—and the underclass.

"We're in danger," Jones preached, "from a corporate dictatorship. We're in danger from a great fascist state, or a great communist state,

and if the church doesn't build a utopian society, if it doesn't build an egalitarian society, we're going to be in trouble. Did Agnew go to jail? Nah. [Did] Nixon go to jail? Never never. But if a black takes a piece of bread, he'll go to jail."³²

Had I been philosophically wise, I would have noted from all this that Jones's identification of God with the world—and himself—meant that, for him, there was no transcendent God rendering judgment on him, and there was no transcendent moral code rendering judgment on him. Thus, from his point of view, it was "anything goes," including the violation of a promise not to impose psychological pressure.

As irritated as I was by Jones's breaking that promise, I at first rationalized that he could not help it, given his principled commitment to the cause of total equality and my belief that he was doing more good than bad. I took my paternity promise so solemnly that it prevented me from judging him more deeply.

In future days, however, I would focus on how blatant Jones's dishonesty had been on the matter of psychological pressure, and the sting of it would resurface.

Concurrently, during that same April, Jones discovered that I had fallen in love with a woman I will call Barbara. One day Jones started asking questions about "this woman you are in love with."

"Do you want to marry her?"

"Well, yes."

"How does she do her hair?"

I told him what I simply surmised—that her hair did not need a lot of care, because after she took a shower it fell naturally into place.

"How does she do her nails?"

"Well, she puts on bright red nails only on weekends. She is so pretty that she doesn't want to make other women feel bad."

"Well, Tim, I know I am making a huge mistake, but she is black, so if you want to marry her and bring her to Guyana, I think we can accommodate that. I'm willing to let her join us if that will convince you to stay."

So I sat down and started a letter of proposal, but the words came hard. I knew I would have to get Jim Jones to own the process, so I decided to finalize the letter at the time Jones would be returning to the United States.

In the meantime, as I would later learn, Terri Buford had brought to Jones's attention the underlying heresy into which his personal attorney was plunging. After rifling through my briefcase, she typed out a memo:

To: JJ

From: TB

While you were out I took the opportunity to go through the briefcase that Stoen carries with him all the time... naturally you already know about [Barbara]. I saw her picture, and she is good-looking, and I wonder if perhaps he isn't walking right into a trap, what a way to compromise the group... a picture of him and John and Grace: there are so many pictures of John and TOS I don't know why he keeps one of Grace—other than the fact that he fantasizes of having a family so badly that Grace and him is better than nothing... I was afraid that you all would come up and I would get caught, so this is as much as I could write—I had Paula watch the stairs.³³

Terri could not have been more wrong about Grace. Getting back with her would have been delicious—the total opposite of “better than nothing”—but that appeared as likely as snowflakes glistening on Guyana ground on the morrow.

Terri was right, however, about my fantasizing about having a family. It was, of course, a non-communal hunger. Worse, it was serious heresy under Peoples Temple collectivism.

Ten days or so after my return from London, Jones, Carolyn, Terri, Patricia, Jones's sons, and I took a charter flight into Port Kaituma. When we got to Jonestown, the heavens opened, and I was with John Victor again. If a meeting on the porch was going on at night, John-John

would come and sit on my lap. Even if Jones had called him over, John would break free for me when Jones became preoccupied with a matter. John would fall blissfully asleep in my arms, after which I would carry him off like a treasure and into the bunkhouse.

In the morning, Jones sat in the office brooding or smoothing out disputes. He then walked around assessing things. He had high energy. It did not occur to naive me that an addiction to chemical stimulants might be at work.

After the young men got through clearing forest or planting or building, they came in around 4:30 and played touch football in the main clearing. Stephan Jones and the others were superb young athletes.

In late afternoon on Monday, April 25, Jones, Terri, Carolyn, Stephan Jones, the adopted sons, John-John, and I boarded the *Cudjoe* for the twenty-four-hour journey to Georgetown. The first half of the trip in the ninety-ton, seventy-two-foot shrimp trawler was on the Kaituma River.

Overlooking the sweet-flowing river was a canopy of trees two hundred feet high, thriving on iron-rich earth and sandy loams, a majestic setting for the ecologic marvel that is Guyana. Claiming some of the highest biodiversity in the world, the nation embraced 800 species of birds, and 225 species of mammals—including the jaguar (the largest cat in the Western Hemisphere), the puma, the ocelot, the giant river otter, the red howler monkey, and the golden-handed tamarin.³⁴

Being carried along a dark river sheltered by towering trees and sensing such cosmic companionship—yes, Robert Browning, all's right with the world.

John-John was with me on the roof of the cabin. When Jones came up, reverie still held me captive.

“You know, Jim, I wouldn't mind being captain of the *Cudjoe*.”

As usual came the whatever-it-takes response: “Well, Tim, that certainly could be arranged.”

Eventually, we encountered the rough Atlantic Ocean for the second half of our trip, and we finally arrived at the docks in Georgetown. We headed immediately to our new home, at 41 Lamaha Gardens. A roomy

two-story yellow stucco building with outdoor stairs, the house was perfect for our needs. We had paid \$33,000 US for it. There was open space across the street, where cows were grazing.

Jones being Jones, however, we took no time to walk around and appreciate the neighborhood. He called meetings that went on for three days. The main subject was planning for an accelerated increase in the Jonestown population in the event of an “emergency.”

I told Jones there was no likelihood of any such emergency developing, but I agreed to keep notes to hold at bay the burgeoning suspicions of my Peoples Temple disenchantment. My mind was thousands of miles away—on Barbara’s brown eyes.

Significantly, at no time did I sense that Jones himself might be planning to come live permanently in Guyana. There was no reason whatever that he should not continue to stay in California and engender the funds required to build Jonestown. At no time did I think Jim Jones was capable of a failure of nerve.

By Saturday, April 30, the meetings were over. That night we had a cake-and-ice-cream party. I had not for a long time seen everyone so relaxed and so happy. Earlier that day, I’d spent quality time with John. In the afternoon Stephan Jones and I indulged him in his favorite game: jumping off the second-floor stairs into our outstretched arms, screaming with delight.

At the party that night, John-John nestled in my arms and fell asleep. His face was serene. Marceline was sitting on the brown corduroy couch at my right. She looked over at John and me. She then said something in a very kind voice that I would never forget:

“Tim, I have never seen John so content.”

How I wished the good vibes of that Saturday night might have endured as a matter of course.

During this stay at Lamaha Gardens, which was from April 26 to May 7, I sought privacy because experience had taught me that strict communalism was just too communal. I made my home in a ground-floor storage room and took my rest in a sleeping bag on blue-felt squares glued over concrete. It was comfortable enough.

One early morning around 2:00 a.m., Jones came down from the upper floor to ask if I had time for a talk. He said he was getting “some paranormal messages.” I remember one exactly:

“Billy is the snare in the Treasury’s lair.”

I played along. I had previously mentioned to Jones my admiration of William Hunter as a man of principle, and that the president was considering him for appointment to be the US attorney for Northern California. This was the top federal prosecutorial job for that huge territory, and thus he would be in charge of prosecuting any cases that the US Treasury Department wanted to file. Jones was paranoid that Treasury would fabricate customs charges, or tax charges, against us for being socialist.

Hunter’s name was in some of my personal papers that, I would later discover, had also been rifled by Terri Buford. They induced paranoia about Swiss bank accounts, and about Hunter (underlined by Terri) being a possible “key.” Terry wrote a memo about her discovery:

TO: JJ

From: Terri

Re: TOS

— Went through the two brief cases that TOS left back here and found some things that you may find of interest—PASSPORT: His passport...has heathrow stamps—barbados—trinidad and Tobago—his passport lacks the double heathrow stamp which is indicative of going into Switzerland so I would doubt that he went onto the continent while in europe... IMPORTANT CONTACT OF STOENS: Hunter, William G:...occupation: DA’s office SF—Head of Robbery Felony Team—why this man is important to us: — in one note book TOS talks about calling Billy H. from London... I think that Bill Hunter is the one who kept his suitcase in SF and is probably the key to other things—if we wanted to find that out.³⁵

What Jones wanted, more than likely, was to distance me from being cozy with Hunter, as well as all other higher-ups in society. I told Jones,

however, that the only credible interpretation of his “message” was that “Billy” Hunter, being a man of integrity, would be a snare to the Treasury if they decided to bring false charges against Peoples Temple.

One day after this, Jones came over to me and said, quite casually, that he intended to become minister of propaganda for Guyana. I had seen so much of Jones’s successful audacity that it did not occur to me there would be any problem for this outsider, this US citizen, to be able to manipulate a different sovereign government to create a new cabinet post and then install him in it.

On May 7, 1977, a number of us—Jim Jones, Carolyn Layton, Johnny Moss Jones, Terri Buford, Debbie Touchette, and I—flew to the Caribbean island nation of Grenada. There, on the very next day and in the space of a morning, Jones mesmerized the prime minister, Eric Gairy. It was a phenomenon.

So persuasive was Jones that head-of-state Gairy—right then and there—decided to become a member of Peoples Temple. When Jones came out of his meeting in the prime minister’s office, he was beaming like a Cheshire cat. It was Rasputin manipulating Czar Nicholas II. Within a month, on June 2, Eric Gairy would fly to Peoples Temple in San Francisco.

Finally, on May 9, 1977, on the tarmac of Pearls Airport in Grenada before he boarded his plane, I handed a sealed letter to the utopian leader. I asked him to arrange personal delivery in San Francisco. He knew what was in it. He took it stoically, like a burdened philosopher.

As fate would have it, that philosophic moment would turn out to be my last face-to-face encounter with the man I had shared so much with over so many years.

Immediately following Jones’s Grenada departure, Debbie Touchette and I flew back to Guyana. Upon arrival in Georgetown, I quickly made my way back to Jonestown to be with John. Ah, all was well.

During the evenings in Jonestown, I buried myself in an appetizing, romantic novel entitled *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*.³⁶ It was about an exotic woman looking out at the stormy seas on the English Coast, longing for something out there that nobody could figure out.

Soon, however, I was once again asked to go to Georgetown. Once I got there, I started yielding, subject to the restraining condition of my paternity promise, to the fantasy of a nuclear family—Barbara coming to Georgetown, John Victor joining us there, my teaching political science at the University of Guyana.

At that point I made a decision to be proactive about the whole business and to simply take off for California to see Barbara. I chased from my mind the possibility that it might cause Jones to think I really was a CIA agent, as he brought to mind his underlying resentments concerning me—the desire for culture, the private bank account, the taking off for London.

There was also the open distaste for his planning commission (“PC”) efforts, and the regular absenting of myself from his meetings for years, the latter of which would give cause for written complaint: “Tim Stoen... was seldom at church.”³⁷ And would produce my Temple secretary’s contention explanation: “Tim Stoen enjoys ‘combat’... He rarely came to Temple services.”³⁸

Jones as an authoritarian personality probably had another resentment as well, fortified by written commentary by that same Temple zealot encountered in London who had once shot daggers at me:

“Analysis of those close in... TOS—he is the first to come to mind because of the recent issue on the floor... I feel that what he did the other night was amazing to put it mildly... I felt like killing him... The damage was done... I hope it wasn’t irreparable... I am appalled at his treatment of you...”³⁹

Jones’s basic resentment, I presumed however, was my refusal to give an unlimited commitment to the Temple, which was compounded by a related—and most paranoia-creating—factor of all: my excessive (in his eyes) love for John. For it had, most tellingly, led Carolyn Moore Layton to ask that accusatory question in the March confrontation three months before as to whether I was planning to “steal John.”

Burying all such thoughts, I proceeded to scratch out the message I would leave behind. “I have gone,” the message said, “to the States—own

\$. am planning to return to teach at Univ end of Sept; am in love with a Black woman—must see her and handle on own.”⁴⁰

At 4:30 a.m. on Sunday, June 12, 1977, I quietly stowed my luggage in the Temple’s Vauxhall van and drove off for the Tower Hotel to deposit it there. When I got back, Lamaha Gardens was lit up like a Christmas tree. I mentioned something about having to send a telegram and not wanting to wake anyone. Not everyone bought it.

Around 11:00 a.m., I had a Temple member drop me off at the Tower Hotel. I then had Harry Murray, my Indian-Guyanese taxi-driver friend, drive me to the airport where, at 1:00 p.m. Guyana time, I found myself on a Pan American plane for New York. Once again, I found myself taking off from Guyana—this time not for culture with a Shakespearean core, but for a woman with an angelic face.

I had left a verbal message with the hotel operator: “Please phone Marceline Jones at Lamaha Gardens and tell her that I will return within 45 days.”

With a stopover in Trinidad, I arrived at JFK after six hours. There, in New York, I stayed in the Dover hotel for three days just to exult in freedom. I spent time in a bar, where nobody was trying to save the world. I felt happy, like a child after the rain.

There may also, however, have been something at work in my subconscious to account for so strong a sense of relief, for it would turn out that I would never be setting foot in Peoples Temple again.

On Friday, June 17, 1977, after a side-trip to Washington, DC, I arrived in Oakland, California, to seek out the angelic-faced woman who had my heart.

Then came, that same day, the devastating message: she refused to see me; she had gotten engaged to someone I knew to be a top-grade man. The world went dizzy. I went to watch a war movie. *The Bridge on the River Kwai* did not stop the spinning.

The next day I hauled myself to the Oakland airport. There I saw a June 18, 1977, *San Francisco Chronicle* headline that froze me to a standstill: “Strange SF Break-In at Magazine.”

The article stated that the office of *New West* magazine on Pacific Avenue had been burglarized on Thursday night, June 16, and that, although nothing was taken, one Phil Tracy reported to the police that a file involving the Rev. Jim Jones and Peoples Temple had been disturbed.

Tracy said that one of the files had been jammed back in the filing cabinet, which caused him to speculate that an upcoming story in the magazine, by reporter Marshall Kilduff, "could have been taken out of the file and photographed."

Mike Prokes, "associate minister of Peoples Temple," said the Temple had called Police Chief Charles Gain's office and asked for a thorough evaluation of the incident. "We'd like to know," said Prokes, "what's behind this because it's not us."

The article then quoted Jim Jones himself as saying that Peoples Temple was not involved in any such activity: "If it (the burglary) was done, unquestionably there are some provocateurs who want to, I guess, stop genuine social reformers, to discredit our programs. How is it that someone knows exactly where to go (in the *New West* offices) to find papers that pertain to one particular church unless they have someone inside which we do not?"⁴¹

In March 1977, as I would later learn, *New West* magazine had given a *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter, Marshall Kilduff, the green light to pursue a story on Peoples Temple and had appointed Phil Tracy, one of its own reporters, to the story as well.

The San Francisco Police Department—following an initial investigation on June 17 by an Officer Duffy, and a follow-up investigation by an inspector—proceeded to report that it was all a false alarm.

"On Monday, 6/20/77," the report said, "Inspector Evans of the Burglary Detail responded to 325 Pacific and conducted the follow-up investigation. After inspecting the premises and interviewing the concerned persons, Inspector Evans also concluded entry had not been made."⁴²

Notwithstanding the critical fact of no forced entry at the New West office, paranoia already had its way. On the same day as the *Chronicle*

headline, Jones and Maria Katsaris, together with three of his children, left the United States for Guyana. My path and Jones's had crossed. Neither of us would set foot in a Peoples Temple building in California ever again.

This crossing of our paths in June 1977 would turn out, therefore, to be the closeout of my Peoples Temple pursuit of utopia. It would not, unfortunately, be the closeout of my encounters with James Warren Jones, all of which had commenced one otherwise fine day way back in August 1967.

CHAPTER 3

Altruist



BLITHELY MOUNTING THE COURTHOUSE STAIRS at 7:45 that evening, I had no idea that what lay ahead would be anything more than a job opportunity to provide legal services to the poor.

A secretary for the newly minted Legal Services Foundation would soon be typing out the official August 8, 1967, minutes, with nary a whisper of extraordinary significance: “The Board of Trustees assembled in the Courtroom of Department 2 of the Superior Court, in the Courthouse at Ukiah, California, at 8:00 p.m. on this date. Directors present were: Messrs. Brunner, Rawles, Bell, Golden, Petersen, and Rozyngo. Also present was James Warren Jones. Rev. James W. Jones was duly appointed by the Board to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Marceline Jones.”

“At the conclusion of the interviews, the Board duly selected Mr. Stoen for the position of Senior Attorney, to commence work on September 1, 1967, and, with the concurrence of Mr. Stoen, selected Mr. Larson for the position of Attorney, to commence work on September 1, 1967.”⁴³

The formal interview had proceeded conventionally enough. When my time came, I took a seat at the glossy mahogany counsel table nearest the jury box. Present were five attorneys I knew and two non-attorneys who were strangers.

Wasting no time, premier trial attorney Robert Petersen said, “Okay, Tim, tell us about yourself.”

The first thing to enter my mind came spilling out. “I am a theological conservative and a social radical.”

I might as well have been addressing the moon. Nobody asked any follow-up questions, including what I meant by “radical.” Had they done so, I would have mentioned the beliefs of radical sects in seventeenth-century England.

The results having been announced, I went back in to shake hands all around. One of the strangers approached.

“I want to thank you for your courage.”

“Thanks very much, but there was no courage. I was asked to apply for this job.”

“My name is Jim Jones. I’m a minister in Redwood Valley.”

I told him I was glad to make his acquaintance. I mentioned my belief in the divinity of Christ, the authority of the Bible, and the prophet Amos’s admonition to “let justice roll down like waters.”⁴⁴ He nodded his head knowingly. There was nothing prepossessing about him.

The other stranger serving on the board that night was Dr. Vitali Rozynko, a psychiatrist at Mendocino State Hospital. He too was concerned about poverty. He had a wife, forty-three-year-old Annie Joyce, who was a registered nurse; he had a daughter, Sandy; and he had two sons, thirteen-year-old Christian and ten-year-old Michael. They all lived in an upscale neighborhood called Deerwood in the hills outside Ukiah.

Little did “Vit” or anyone else remotely suspect, of course, that his wife and two children—all except, thank God, the daughter—would one fateful day be forsaking Deerwood for a faraway and deadly utopia, seduced by a siren song intoned by his ever-so-friendly colleague of that August 1967 evening.

It had been two full years since that man, James Warren Jones, had first set foot in Mendocino County, California. Followed from Indiana by one hundred or more people, he had, in July 1965, established residence in that peaceful, bucolic hamlet 120 miles north of San Francisco known as Redwood Valley.

Jim Jones made enough of an early splash that the local newspaper, during the same month as his arrival, heralded his entrance with a

front-page story, including a photo of him, his wife, and his children. He is, said the July 26, 1965, edition of the *Ukiah Daily Journal*, a man “who mixes considerable personal charm with a razor-sharp intellect and a deep compassion for his fellowman.”⁴⁵

Some three months later, as fate would have it, I too found myself migrating from the outside world—in my case the San Francisco Bay Area—to this tiny spot on the map called Redwood Valley.

At age twenty-seven, I was embarking on a new career, bright with the opportunity to do justice, and bright with easy prospects for the good life within Establishment privilege.

At 7:30 a.m. on Monday, October 18, 1965, I exited my new residence on Road J, turned left, and cruised along East Road to a point 2.8 miles south. There, I gave no heed to a pink two-story house, a hundred yards off to the west and surrounded by lush vineyards, where lived this other newcomer to Redwood Valley.

Born in Crete, Indiana, on May 13, 1931, he would at age three be moving to the small town of Lynn, Indiana. There he was raised on what he would one day call, with an attitude, “the wrong side of the tracks.” Now, at age thirty-four, he had chosen California to jump-start his own new career, one fueled by fierce ambitions not at all in synchronicity with Establishment culture.

After I drove 8.2 miles farther south, there appeared the Mendocino County Courthouse, in the county seat: Ukiah. At 7:50, I bounded up broad steps guarded by two green-tiled paw-like wings. The district attorney of Mendocino County, Tom Cleland, extended his hand. He had hired me after asking what I would do in a hypothetical case of cattle rustling.

The next day, a front-page photo article in the *Ukiah Daily Journal* headlined “Two New Deputy DAs Take Up Duties at Courthouse,”⁴⁶ of which I was one.

Happy was I in the valley. The white frame bungalow I inhabited sat grandly isolated, inviting Duke Ellington to resonate in high decibels over the grape fields. When Johnny Hodges on alto saxophone attacked his first solo notes in “Don’t Get Around Much Anymore,” all seemed right in my microworld.

In January 1967, there took office a fine new boss, Arthur “Bev” Broaddus. Soon I was plunging into a jury trial every three weeks. The attorneys and judges in Ukiah regularly convened for lunch at the Maple Cafe, on the ground floor of the 1889 building. It was a collegial and witty group, Harvard attorney Leo Cook once complaining I should have prosecuted a victim “for interfering with the flight of a bullet.”

Being a prosecutor is a high calling. It is no zero-sum game between attorneys over money. Prosecutors help keep the streets safe for family life, for civilized life in all its glories. I loved my job.

In the spring of 1967, however, a strange new wind began whistling down the corridors of the soul. It was a passion for social relevance—with its ever-present outgrowth danger: the taking up of a crusade.

During my junior year at Wheaton College in Illinois, I went on a Washington Semester program. Dwight David Eisenhower was then president. I had recently turned twenty-one and become eligible to vote. After attending seminars at the national headquarters for the Republicans, and then for the Democrats, partisanship remained elusive. On Thursday, March 12, 1959, I wrote in my journal: “Can’t make up my mind about party—‘liberally’ inclined in some areas, ‘conservative’ in others.”

Two days later a decision came. Based on the perspective of later years, the journal’s pivotal disclosure—a distaste for crusades—would seem inexplicable. On Saturday, March 14, 1959, I wrote: “Made up my mind to join the Republican party—emphasis on individualism; can encompass conservatives, moderates, liberals; more rational, less ‘crusade’ approach.”

This distaste for crusades resulted from a happy, secure, middle-class* upbringing. The first-born of three sons of loving parents, I’d grown up feeling contentment while believing I could do anything that I set my mind to.

* “State of Wisconsin... Milwaukee... Birth Record... Mt. Sinai Hospital... Timothy Oliver Stoen... Date of birth Jan. 16, 1938... Born alive 9:00 p.m.... *Father* Joel A. Stoen... *Claim Adjuster*... Ohio Cas. Ins. Co.” (Emphasis added.)

In September 1960, after college graduation, I headed off to Palo Alto and Stanford Law School. Approaching Stanford University via Palm Drive, my breath was taken away by its Romanesque buildings of massive, tawny stone. My first view was of an outer quadrangle surrounded by rhythmic arches of interconnecting arcades.⁴⁷ The School of Law, which was to be my home for three years, was right there before me, at left center.

After my first year, I took a break to go to Europe on a fellowship. In the summer after college graduation, my father had seen an article in the *Littleton Independent* inviting applicants for a Rotary Foundation Fellowship for International Understanding.

I applied and in the spring of 1961 was given this opportunity to be a goodwill ambassador. In August, I boarded an ocean liner for Europe, where I proceeded to hitchhike around before commencing the fellowship year in Southampton, England.

Now, some six years later, I found myself in California being gravely conditioned by the times. Exploding before one's very eyes was a cultural revolution. One day it would be known as "the Sixties"—a "cultural decade" loosely defined as beginning around 1963 and ending around 1974.⁴⁸

This period was far more than a political revolt against the Vietnam War. It was a social revolution normalizing recreational drugs, hedonism-glorifying music, flamboyant dress, and sexual freedom.

None of those lifestyle elements, however, beckoned to me. Instead, what began to undermine my Establishment faith and traditional values would be three others. Initially, the attraction would be rebellion against economic inequality. In two years, the life-changing attractions would be the revolt against racial discrimination and then the drive for human potential.

The concern about economic inequality had first surfaced in September 1961, when I found myself in Paris. For someone who had led a cocooned life, it was an on-the-ground epiphany.

The event that froze me in my tracks was trivial in itself. It was the sight of emaciated, rag-clothed human beings living under the bridges of the River Seine. What made it stick in my memory, though repressed,

was the startling contrast with the elegant figures striding, just a few blocks away, along the Champs Elysées.

The next step in that equality pilgrimage took place that very spring of 1967. From off the living-room shelves, I grabbed a red-covered textbook entitled *A History of Civilization*, by Brinton, Christopher, and Wolff. One particular episode in this highly regarded history was riveting. It reactivated that equality concern, as a positive matter, by showing it combining—in a pragmatically successful way—with two other values I was raised to believe in: Christianity and democracy.

“[T]he events of 1640–1660” in England, said the book, were of major significance in the history of the West. This significance included political democracy, which had resulted from such groups as the Levellers.⁴⁹

That twenty-one-year period, it said, also revealed “hints of the ‘socialistic’ drive toward economic equality,” which, during that time, was related to Biblical ideas. One group evidencing that drive, the Diggers, was a sect contending for the “sharing of earthly goods in a kind of communism.”

In addition to the Diggers, it continued, there were a dozen other radical sects, such as the Millenarians, which preached the Second Coming of Christ, and the creation of some type of “utopia on earth.”⁵⁰

And so, there it was, two centuries before Karl Marx: “utopia on earth.”

Although the doctrine of original sin still embedded itself in me, it was fascinating to note how other people were yielding to that other component of the Sixties: the human potential movement. It sanctioned quests for personal utopias by a new species, hippies, who were now converging like crazy on the Haight-Ashbury section of San Francisco.

Although not yet personally seduced by this human-potential drive, I did feel impelled to engage with related social trends. And so, upon discovering there was a group of Christians—coincidentally calling themselves “Diggers”—who were distributing food to the hungry in the Haight, I made a decision totally against the grain of my upbringing. In June 1967, I marched into the DA’s office.

“Sorry, Bev,” I said, “I’ve decided to resign. I’m going to San Francisco—to help the Diggers.”

Fate, however, intervened. Before I could escape Ukiah, John Golden, president of the Mendocino County Bar Association, made an offer. It was to apply to be senior attorney for the Legal Services Foundation, a brand new poverty-law organization.

“You mean I can help the poor and get paid for it?”

Indeed.

Following the August 8, 1967, hiring interview, my first duty was to find volunteers to patch, and paint, and clean some long-abandoned offices donated to us on the second floor of the 1889 Building.

Making call after call, I hit only brick walls on this fine opportunity to do good.

Finally, someone provided the name of a Joe Phillips, at a place called Fireside Lodge, with a phone number of 462-5826.

“You’re trying to help the poor,” said the voice on the other end, “aren’t you?”

“Well, yes.”

“What do you need done?”

“Fixing up seven office rooms,” I said.

“When do you want us?”

“Monday, Labor Day, 8:00 a.m.?”

“Fine, we’ll be there.”

On Labor Day morning, September 4, 1967, I drove into town in my blue Mustang convertible, expecting, surely, disappointment. Taken by surprise by Joe Phillips’s lightning response, I had neglected to ask who were meant by “we’ll be there.”

Heading west on Perkins Street from US Highway 101, I looked ahead and saw—what is *this*? It was a crowd. I pulled up and parked next to the Mendocino County Courthouse.

There they were, across the street, in front of the 1889 Building. Twenty or so cheerful people were milling around, dressed for work. They were young, old, black, white. They had hammers, nails, vacuums, buckets, mops, soap, spackle, brushes, paint, and shellac.

The double doors swung open to the long, long stairway. Up they ran. They seemed to know what it was all about—to make an inviting place for the underprivileged of Mendocino County.

What I thought would take ten days they did in one. They scrubbed every wood and enamel surface, fixed every wall, treated every ceiling, and cleaned every carpet. They brought in some furniture. They lugged it up, filling all seven rooms. They hummed cheery little tunes.

The leaders were a tall, philosophical, black man named Archie Ijames, about fifty-five, and a younger, bald, wise-cracking white man named Jack Beam, about forty-five. When asked, they said they were members of a “Peoples Temple.”

Their theology was simplistic. “We believe,” they said, “in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. We believe that the highest worship of God is service to our fellow man.”

The next morning they returned, unexpectedly, with Masonite paneling. They nailed it up. Then, without waiting around for one grateful word of thanks, they evaporated into the yawning gulf of a sunny afternoon.

Eventually, after Archie and Jack had mentioned their minister’s name as “Jim Jones,” the dots connected. He was the very person who had introduced himself at my hiring interview some three weeks before and who was now on my board. How could I have forgotten him?

At Legal Services, Jim Larson, my colleague attorney, and I proceeded to take in all kinds of people who could not afford legal representation. One came to see how the system was stacked against the poor.

We fought to help debtors keep the “necessaries” of life from seizures by credit agencies. We helped bankrupts get back on their feet and have a new chance to be productive. In reality, it was all small potatoes. But it was eye opening about the power of money in our society. And it would be a further stage in economic-equality conviction—a further radicalizing for me.

It was there, at the monthly board meetings, that I first got to know this Jim Jones. Nothing about his appearance singled him out in a

crowd. Aside from being articulate, there was nothing in his conduct on the board to distinguish him as a leader.

Although he did not propose policies, he faithfully attended the meetings. He was warm-hearted. He listened to others. He showed concern for poor people. He did not put on airs. He could tell a joke.

However, this Jim Jones, I soon learned, was a leader elsewhere. He was foreman of the Mendocino County Grand Jury. He had been appointed to that prestigious position in February 1967, having lived in the county less than two years. For a newcomer to advance that fast was unheard of. I knew it had solely to do with the gutsy presiding superior court judge, Robert Winslow. Most likely he had appointed Jones to shake things up in Mendocino County.

Jim Jones, I also learned, made his living as a sixth-grade public schoolteacher in nearby Boonville. In addition, he taught an adult night-school class on history and government at Ukiah High School. "Packed out," people said.

For all his citizenship credentials, however, Jim Jones invited surprising rumors around town. People said he was running a radical, faith healing church. More darkly, they said he was using his night-school class to preach radicalism, if not communism, to Ukiah Valley innocents.

Motivated either by altruism, or as a tactical plan to counteract such rumors, Jones had hit upon a carrot-cake enterprise. If the newspaper mentioned your name, you were fair game. Three or four days later, you would find a carrot cake at your office or on your doorstep.

The cake was rich and moist, with thick white frosting, sybaritically caloric. It would be delivered by a robust, smiling, nonstop talker, Patricia Cartmell. There would be a note: "From Jim Jones and the members of Peoples Temple in appreciation of your wonderful service to our community."

Less susceptible to a public-relations interpretation was the do-gooder reputation of Jones's people. A car in trouble beside the road? If a Peoples Temple member passed by, he or she would stop. A sick person unable to clean her house? A sweet-faced Temple woman would swiftly

appear to make the burden light. The leader of this group was clearly an altruist.

On April 4, 1968, there came flashing over the Associated Press wires some terrible news: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the black civil rights leader, had just been assassinated in Memphis. Between Jim Jones and me, there were two different reactions.

I decided that if the world was going to hell, I should take solace by doing what any red-blooded American young man in a position to do so would do. I went out and special-ordered a sleek new burgundy Porsche.

The killing of King seemed to make Jim Jones, on the other hand, go ballistic. Overnight there appeared a dramatic change in his public demeanor. He was asked to be one of the speakers at a memorial service for King at the Ukiah Presbyterian Church. He proceeded to scandalize many citizens in Ukiah by accusing the entire community of racism.

As if that were not enough, Peoples Temple committed a serious political blunder in Judge Winslow's campaign for reelection. Known Temple members started writing letters to the editor, criticizing his two challengers.

"I believe in Judge Robert Winslow," began a May 1, 1968, letter to the editor from Jack Beam. Then the letter went so far as to allude to the "prejudiced sentiments of those running against the incumbent."⁵¹

One of those running was the current district attorney, Bev Broaddus, who had made me chief criminal deputy and had set me up to be the next district attorney had I wanted it. So I was ticked off on his account, as well as on Winslow's, who, with his wife, were my two best friends in the county. Whatever his altruism, I saw that Jim Jones could be excruciatingly deficient in political savvy.

On primary election day, June 4, 1968, I was at dinner at the Oak Park Street, Ukiah, home of Judge Winslow. He was a brilliant man who gave training to judges in California. He was being accused, however, of liberalism and intellectual arrogance.

As we tuned in to the radio for the election returns that night, we were stunned to hear the incumbent judge was coming in third and

would not even be making the runoff.* To his credit, Jim Jones briefly dropped by to offer his condolences.

We then took solace in the fact that Bob's vivacious wife, Betty, would be going to the Democratic nominating convention in Chicago as a delegate for Robert F. Kennedy. Television news had just announced him the winner over Eugene McCarthy in the California Democratic Primary. Then came the unbelievable assassination news: RFK had, moments before, been gunned down—killed—at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles.

Something seemed desperately wrong in America as the memories of the three assassinations—John Fitzgerald Kennedy's, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, and Robert Francis Kennedy's—and of the political and racial enmities in the country took over my mind.

I remembered being nailed to the spot, in the entrance hallway of Stanford Law School, on November 22, 1963. I had just serenely passed through the golden-hued arches of the Outer Quad. Upon stepping inside, I was immediately accosted by a resonating, terrifying shout: "President Kennedy's been shot!"

After that, in 1965 had come the Watts riots, undermining President Lyndon Johnson's noble Great Society. In 1967 had come more riots, leading the President's Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, known as the Kerner Commission, to devastatingly report, on February 29, 1968: "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal."⁵²

Then, five weeks later had come King's assassination, followed by riots in 125 cities, requiring suppression by fifty-five thousand federal and National Guard troops. Finally, the young, idealistic Robert Kennedy himself had been gunned down at his moment of triumph, in a hotel kitchen hallway.

* Judge Winslow's loss in that election had its recompense. He moved to Beverly Hills and became the lawyer for the actor and singer Doris Day. On September 8, 1974, he won a damage award for her against her former attorney, in the amount of \$22,835,646.

If things keep going this way, Richard Nixon might be elected president in November, and pursuant to his “Southern strategy,” who knew what he might do to put sulfur on the explosive racial waters.

In September 1968, I decided to resign and go—really go this time—to San Francisco. I cared about my poverty-law job and had given it my best shot, but it was time to move on.

Of all the Legal Services clients, there was one who was truly unforgettable. Her name was Karen, and she was on permanent campaign against an uptight universe. She wore filmy, clinging dresses, used drugs blatantly, and spun out the bluest language I had ever heard. She was pretty as a poem. She was a nymph, a hedonistic nymph. We surveyed each other in amazement.

“You are,” she said, despite my beard, “the squarest person I have ever met.”

Leaving Legal Services, I steeled myself to the thought of having to read, someday soon, dear Karen’s obituary.

For Sunday, October 13, 1968, my last weekend in Mendocino County, Jim Jones invited me to a service. It was to be at the Ukiah Fairgrounds, with a lot of black people coming up from Macedonia Baptist Church in San Francisco.

Jones had never before invited me to a service, probably because he remembered how outspokenly I claimed to be a theological conservative. Because Jones had been a support, I decided to go. It turned out to be a Pentecostal-type healing service, but surely not a typical one, for the message was a fire-and-brimstone attack on the Vietnam War.

It was the first time I had witnessed someone so gifted at owning a room and a crowd. It was a different Jim Jones from the one encountered on the streets in daily life. He seemed as natural at the podium as if he had sprung from it full-blown, like Athena from the head of Zeus.

The setting encompassing him, however, was strikingly and parochially quaint. The yellow, homemade dresses in the choir glowed like a field of daffodils.

Afterward, we had a picnic at the Church of the Golden Rule, on the sumptuous, grassy grounds of Ridgewood Ranch. The retirement home of the famous racehorse Seabiscuit, the ranch adorned the rolling hills between Redwood Valley and Willits like a jewel.

At the picnic, I met Jim Jones's charming wife, Marceline, as well as their two adopted Korean children, and their adopted black son, Jimmy Jones, Jr. Surely Jim Jones must have integrity, I thought, to have adopted a black son in a conservative state like Indiana, to have given him his own name, and to have been willing to take the abuse that came with that until the child reached eighteen.

And there at the picnic, I encountered the white people in the Temple graciously waiting upon the black people. There, I overheard a middle-class black woman whisper, with a trace of marvel, to another: "Have you ever seen white people like this?"

Finally, I witnessed a moment that would replay in my mind for years. An older black woman, not beautiful by Hollywood standards, went up to Jones. He looked her in the eyes, embraced her, kissed her on the cheek, and said "I love ya', darlin'." Her face shone. Almost teary, I wondered how many other leaders cared enough to physically touch their people like this.

Despite all this, when it was time to go, I said farewell, for good, to Jim Jones. He and his group were the most altruistic I had ever encountered, but it was all too quaint. I wanted something offering more excitement.

CHAPTER 4

Agitator



"I AM MY BROTHER'S KEEPER." Thus proclaimed the sign, in bold, black, capital letters, pregnant with double meaning. It was being carried, that Good Friday, by a pretty teenage girl accessorized with a black armband.

It was a few minutes after twelve noon on April 8, 1966, and I was standing under a magnolia tree on the courthouse lawn, taking in a drama that was enlivening Ukiah.

Tension sprinkled the air like fairy dust. Ukiah's finest, in their crisp blue uniforms, were cordoning the streets. They blew their whistles. They pursed their lips.

Soon, from across Standley Street, came the demonstrators, with not a bomb-thrower type in the lot. Among the sixty or so marchers were innocent-faced women, wearing simple dresses, inexplicably plucked from the serenity of farm kitchens into the whirlpool of street activism.

Also striking were the honest, creased faces of workingmen, most probably on their lunch break from the Masonite Mill, a few blocks up State Street. Well-clad business and professional types were in the line, as well as some well-scrubbed teenagers abruptly shanghaied from their youthful idylls.

Scripture verses were marching along. "Love Thine Enemies," implored one sign, bobbing up and down like a cork above the encircling stream. Absent was any sign signifying a group of any kind.

Black armbands paid tribute to those killed in the undeclared war an ocean away in some blur-on-the-map place called Vietnam. Stoic poise greeted the bystanders' jeers.

Then came a short ceremony of singing and brief remarks by three speakers from the courthouse steps, none of which was Demosthenes. The basic message was that the war in Vietnam was incompatible with Christ's teachings.

One of the speakers was a tall, philosophical-looking black man. Another was a woman, a white, graduate student type. The third was an earnest sort of fellow with black hair, who spoke in low-keyed sorrow with no trace of anger.

You had to be impressed by the integration, sincerity, and particularly the working-class character of the demonstrators in "Ukiah's First Peace March."⁵³ But the moment they walked away that day, they vanished like smoke from all memory. Protesting a defensive war against Soviet-sponsored aggression had absolutely no appeal. The marchers were far too naive about Communism. Abandon Vietnam, and all Southeast Asia would fall like dominoes, so said the best and the brightest.

It was seventeen months later, when Peoples Temple members came to fix up Legal Services, that the memory of that peace march reignited. Archie Ijames had been one speaker, and the other male speaker had been the march's prime agitator: Jim Jones.

On October 14, 1968, the day after visiting Peoples Temple and Ridgewood Ranch, I moved to San Francisco. Instead of sunlit pastoral vistas, there now beckoned, from across the street, waves and fog and seabirds at Ocean Beach, a three-and-a-half-mile white-sand ribbon to a pulsating metropolis.⁵⁴

For \$165 a month, I had been granted possession of a third-story flat at 2284 Great Highway, one block from the streetcar terminus at Taraval. By streetcar I commuted, as though in an eastern city, to my new law office at 228 McAllister, half a block from Civic Center Plaza.

Almost immediately I was introduced to San Francisco's old-guard radical politics in the person of my office landlord, Lloyd McMurray.

He had been an attorney for the explosive labor agitator and forty-year leader of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), Harry Bridges.

Lloyd fed me clients, mainly conscientious objectors seeking escape from becoming cannon fodder in Vietnam. By then, I had looked realistically at the Vietnam War and recognized it as a locally inspired war for independence—not an internationally orchestrated one for Soviet domination.

Despite President Lyndon Johnson's great achievement in ramrodding the 1964 Civil Rights Act through Congress, he was now ruining things. Out of pure machismo, he was dispatching B-52 bombers en masse across the wide Pacific.

One day, Lloyd showed me two hand-written letters with a Redwood Valley "95470" postmark. They thanked him for representing some conscientious objectors. One was from "Jack Beam," the other from "Linda Amos." Each mentioned Jim Jones. Well, I thought, what's in it for Jones, living so far away from any potential converts, except unadulterated altruism?

On November 6, 1968, what many dreaded came to pass: Richard Milhous Nixon, the Republican, was elected president over Hubert Humphrey, the Democrat. The electoral margin was 301 to 191, but the popular vote was very close: 43.4 percent to 42.7 percent. Those of us opposed to Nixon steeled ourselves to the law-and-order regime soon to take over.

One fine day in mid-March 1969, I was stopped by an earnest young woman on the sidewalk outside my office as I was leaving Knight's Delicatessen.

"Pardon me," she said. "You look like a lawyer. Would you be willing to sign up for criminal cases representing unpopular defendants?"

"Of course," I said. Taking the pen, I signed something enabling one to do justice.

A few days later there appeared an existential juxtaposition in my diary:

“Monday, March 31, 1969...

“Take Porsche in--Tachometer...

“Call Black Panther Party.”

The name of my new client was Cleveland Brooks, who was charged with possessing explosives and with discharging a firearm from San Francisco’s “Pink Palace” housing project. He was a member of the Black Panther Party and thus qualified for what I had signed up for. The case had difficulties, because the dynamite caps at issue had been found in Mr. Brooks’s hall closet, the discovery being filmed in vivid, incriminating color by a TV reporter riding along with the police.

By this time, I had made a decision to work again for the poor. The next day, the first of April, I started a job as a staff attorney for the Legal Aid Society of Alameda County, in West Oakland. The office was in a black section of the city. The staff was mainly black. Almost all the clients were black. A new world of discoveries opened up to me.

An initial, highly negative, discovery was how deep-seated and ugly the systemic racism was out there. I was pro-cop due to my DA experience, but anger took hold upon hearing young black men share sincere narratives of being beaten up by police for just being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

One such person would keep coming back to mind. He was a clean-cut young man who looked like the actor Sidney Poitier. He had come into the office one day with his hand bandaged—permanently damaged—from hitting his fist full-force against a concrete wall, in frustrated anger at being unjustly roused.

A second, and this time highly positive, discovery was the beauty of communal elements in black family life. The black people I encountered seemed to stick together, to never abandon (unlike whites) their family members who got into trouble, to be spontaneous and exceedingly generous to one another, even communal. In a word—a marvelous word—they *shared*.

Actually, these West Oakland discoveries were but a second step—although a critical eyewitness, on-the-ground step—in a broader evolution toward racial equality.

The first step had been a theoretical one. It had come in the fall of 1962, at a constitutional law class, in an amphitheater classroom with curving, beige desks on rising tiers, led in front by a famous professor, Gerald Gunther. The blow landed upon reading *The Slaughter-House Cases*,⁵⁵ decided by the US Supreme Court on April 14, 1873, in which the court decimated the Fourteenth Amendment.

That strongly worded amendment says: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States...are citizens of the United States.” It further says, “No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States.”

The Supreme Court ruled that those national “privileges or immunities” did not include “civil rights,” but only such rights, says one commentator, as “access to ports and navigable railways, the ability to run for federal office, and to be protected while on the high seas.”⁵⁶

Thus the states were left free to adopt black codes and “Jim Crow” laws, discriminating against the civil rights of black people for decades to come. The decision, as I read it nine decades afterward, hit me at gut level.

Why I felt that strike of emotion in 1962 was not logical. The court had made amends under Chief Justice Earl Warren when, on May 17, 1954, it unanimously (9-0) decided *Brown v. Board of Education*.⁵⁷

By ruling that “separate but equal” was unconstitutional, the Warren Court protected the civil rights of black children to integrated schools from abridgement by the states. The basis of that decision was the Equal Protection Clause of that same Fourteenth Amendment. Subconsciously then, for whatever reason, I must already have been yielding to an illogical rebel spirit.

After witnessing the injustice of racial discrimination in West Oakland, there came, in May 1969, a different kind of shock to easygoing Establishment values. The episode acquired the innocuous name of “People’s Park.”⁵⁸

The city of Berkeley was under siege. On May 15, a crowd estimated at five thousand had begun marching south on Telegraph Avenue, where they met an impenetrable line of seventy-five California Highway Patrol officers. Shotguns were fired.

Berkeley was placed under martial law, resulting in the calling up of two thousand National Guard troops. Their helicopters dropped pepper gas on crowds. The uprising resulted in store windows being smashed, six hundred people arrested (496 in one swoop), hundreds injured, one man blinded, and another killed.

The technical issue was the status of a vacant piece of land that came to be called People's Park. The University of California owned it and had announced plans to build an intramural playing field on it. The underlying issue was authority.

A *Berkeley Barb* article signed "Robin Hood's Park Commissioner" called on the people to build their own park, saying, "Nobody supervises, and the trip belongs to whoever dreams." It seemed that everyone with a complaint about authority felt an ownership stake in the upcoming "trip" to People's Park.

On the morning of Memorial Day, May 30, I backed out the Porsche from my garage on the Great Highway, patted the dashboard as if it had a soul, and said to it, "Well, this might be my last day."

I drove a meandering route through Golden Gate Park as if it were a last rite. I arrived in Berkeley to act as a peace marshal with a group of Quakers. We were to place our bodies at the crush point—the fence between the demonstrators and the National Guard.

When I got to Berkeley, however, the sun was out, tempers were cooled, flowers were strewn, and the march became a festival rather than a riot. An irrelevant thing like the weather had tipped the balance against violence in a microcosmic social war.

If the underlying issue in People's Park was authority, the underlying cause was alienation. These were white, affluent, young people feeling alienated. For me, the communal appeal of black culture as an alternative became even more beautiful.

After People's Park, while working up the Black Panther criminal case, I became increasingly aware of the suicidal alienation of young black males toward American culture.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover was now referring to the Black Panthers as "public enemy number one." That was, of course, all the more reason that their members deserved effective representation.

The Panthers claimed the FBI was initiating violence to discredit them. Many years later, it would be revealed that Richard Masato Aoki, an FBI informant, had provided training in firearms to the Black Panther party in the 1960s,⁵⁹ before the occurrence of fatal shootouts with the Oakland police.

"Newly released FBI records" would further reveal that this San Francisco Bay Area radical hero, Aoki, was an early member of the Black Panthers, had given them some of their first guns, and had informed on Black Panther Party leaders Bobby Seale and Huey Newton. The FBI had assigned Aoki "a 'confidential source symbol number' to protect his identity—SF 2496-S or sometimes SF 2496-R."⁶⁰

In 1969 there were also reports of Hoover having targeted the non-violent Martin Luther King, Jr., together with his Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

The jury trial for Mr. Brooks was to begin on August 18. Despite having taken the West Oakland poverty job, I was allowed to do this jury trial. In order to get tips on jury questioning, I met with Charles Garry, the lawyer for Panther leader Huey Newton. The Panthers were good to me, paying what they could, usually in small bills.

Sunday, August 17, 1969, was a hot, sunny day. At twelve noon, I left the First Presbyterian Church in Berkeley, turned on KJAZ, and cruised across the Bay Bridge to a concrete building at 1336 Fillmore Street, in the crime-ridden Western Addition. I knocked on the slate-colored door of the Panthers' San Francisco headquarters and was admitted into the dark warehouse space by armed, beret-clad militants.

I had come to get information for the jury, as it might prove necessary, on the Panthers' lunch program for schoolchildren. I had come also for any other humanizing information. I had specifically asked to see the

Panthers' movie on their "Ten-Point Program for Self-Determination in the Ghettoes of America."

I got immediately to the point. "Is the movie ready?"

It was.

I was led to the back, where there were beat-up, brown-metal folding chairs. Wearing a gray pin-striped suit, I perched on my knee a leather Brooks Brothers briefcase to take notes, while an old-fashioned projector droned along, clickety-clack, and black-and-white images of angry faces and upraised fists flashed combatively across the screen.

When it was time to leave, I headed out the door. The brilliant sunshine was reflecting off the chrome roll bar of the Targa. I looked down. There on the street right before me was a stark, thick, linear shadow.

I looked up. There above me was a mass of trolley wires that seemed to be randomly toppled one onto another. The sight was trivial. The tipping-point repercussions in my soul were not. I said to myself, slowly, these exact, angry, indelible words: *The sons of bitches that run this world would never allow such an ugly sight if this were a white neighborhood.*

I was crossing some lines. No more transcendent "agent of reconciliation" business, with a foot equally in both camps. No more watching systemic racism in Oakland without joining the underclass to undermine it. I would identify with the oppressed.

Also, no more letting anger evaporate in the night hours. I would invite it as a ruling passion. I would preserve it like a butterfly in Baltic Sea amber. No more would I accept the Scripture quoted to me as a Sunday school youngster at Garfield Avenue Baptist Church in Milwaukee: "let not the sun go down upon your wrath."⁶¹

Although I was rebelling against the Establishment as too slow in creating racial justice, I knew in my heart that I was rebelling against something cosmic: I was rebelling against a too-slow God.

I would still believe in his remote existence as the watchmaker who "wound things up"—and in the ethics of Christianity. But I would no longer believe in a God of Providence who interacted in human history. I was, in sum, no longer a theological conservative.

There would be life-altering consequences—I did know it—but it would be, on the whole, liberating. I would be free to seek justice—by my own timetable, by my own standards, and by my own will. I would be master of my fate. I would replace God’s will with Self-will.

Without fully realizing it, I was at that moment also opening myself fully—not merely as a volunteer for the Diggers—to that third element of the Sixties: the drive for human potential. From that would come, almost inevitably, a belief in the dangerous doctrine of human perfectibility.

I would thus be treating as an anomaly the most horrific crime in this “progressive” century: the Holocaust, in which six million—a gasping, almost unbelievable number—Jews were murdered.

And I would thus be ignoring some of the wisest people in history—Aristotle’s “the wickedness of human nature,”⁶² Saint Paul’s “all have sinned,”⁶³ and Reinhold Niebuhr’s post-Holocaust statement that “human evil” is “primarily” manifested in “undue self-concern.”⁶⁴

As the sun smote hot on Fillmore, I hopped into my Porsche and turned onto Fell.

“SAN FRANCISCO WOULD BE A HELL OF A PLACE WITHOUT COPS.”

That was the August 18, 1969, message—tacked onto the bulletin board, in bold black capital letters, next to the swinging doors of Courtroom No. 24—accosting the jurors filing in to decide the fate of my Black Panther client.

Cleveland Brooks had taken my advice to shave off his beard, but not my advice to remove his gold pin, embossed with the deceptively benign face of the Chinese dictator then known as Mao Tse-tung. Nonetheless, based on my good police experiences as a deputy DA, I told the jury, avoiding eye contact with my client: “We agree with the sign you read coming in the door.”

The only defense coming to mind was that, since none of the dynamite caps had been tested, the prosecution could not prove beyond a reasonable doubt that they were, in fact, “explosives.” I cushioned the

blow, telling the jury that the failure to detonate any of the dynamite caps was simply “an oversight by our overworked police.”

Judge Robert Drewes, to his credit, actually took a long time to ponder this defense argument. But he eventually refused to instruct the jury accordingly.

The jury convicted on the “possession of explosives” charge, and acquitted on the firearm charge. The jury was fair. The prosecutor, Harry Clifford, came up to me afterward to say my client did not deserve the representation he got.

Following the trial, I moved to Berkeley. Mrs. Atkinson, my dignified landlady on the Great Highway, had learned I was representing the Black Panthers. She seemed upset, and there was no reason to hurt her feelings since I wanted to move closer to my job anyway. So I gave notice and moved across the bay to Berkeley.

One day in late August, a call came in to our West Oakland office. It requested bodies to demonstrate at the Federal Building in San Francisco that day at noon. I do not recall the exact issue—it was probably the war, or the “Chicago Seven” trial arising from demonstrations at the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago—but being a limousine liberal, I was generically available.

Upon arriving at the Federal Building, I grabbed a sign and started marching around on the plaza. Suddenly, I noticed that the guy in front of me was wearing an expensive, fringed buckskin jacket. There came over me a feeling of revulsion.

What a bunch of hypocrites we were! We would leave this demonstration, go to our cocktail parties, and declaim how moral we were when it had not cost us one red cent. I turned on my heel, and, with a secularized appreciation of Puritanism, left in my Porsche.

A week or so later I was standing outside my Oakland office, ruminating. It had become clear I would have to dedicate myself to what I had finally come to believe in, which in a nutshell was equality—economic, racial and, eventually, social.

I would put equality above all else, to the exclusion of all the other virtues for the time being, because such narrowness of purpose was the only way to really get things done in this complex, bureaucratic world.

Concentrating on the single virtue of equality would exact, indeed, a stiff price. It would make me an ideologue and, to the extent that I ignored competing virtues such as freedom, an extremist. Well, so be it.

And then came, inevitably, the next thought: the only way to fight effectively for total equality would be as part of a group. A lone individual, of course, could do nothing.

The first type of group that came to my mind, of all things, was a labor group—probably because of my landlord having represented Harry Bridges. That imbecilic thought lasted no more than five seconds. And then it came, like a lightning flash:

Well, of course. Peoples Temple.

Peoples Temple would be a malleable group. It would be my personal agency for social justice. I already knew the guy who ran it. I could deal with him. He needed polish. Maybe I could be of help with that.

And if the whole thing did not work out, well, it would be no more than a life-broadening experience. It would be no more dangerous than when I rode a Brahma bull as a life-broadening experience.

Of fundamental importance, I was making a brazen, rather than a calculated, risk. In addition, I failed to realize that the decision to commit myself to a utopian conception of “total equality,” implemented by the decision to make Peoples Temple a personal agency to that end, would be an act of excessive pride. It would be what the ancient Greeks called hubris, which always led to disaster. The Hebrews, too, had recognized that causal relationship. I had read, as a child, the warning in Proverbs that “Pride goeth before destruction,”⁶⁵ but I would now take no heed.

At 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, September 7, 1969, I set out to consider self-recruiting into the movement I had rejected eleven months earlier. Leaving my new residence in Berkeley, I picked up a girlfriend named

Mimi, and headed 130 miles north up US Highway 101, by way of the Richmond–San Rafael Bridge, to our destination: Redwood Valley.

Arriving around 10:45 a.m., what we first saw, looming portentously a few feet from East Road, was Peoples Temple's new, modern, redwood structure. At the apex of its broad sloping roof was a sign proclaiming to the world, in bold white capital letters: "PEACE."

Exiting our vehicle, Mimi and I were engulfed by enthusiasts, including Linda Amos and Patricia Cartmell. I recognized Linda as a psychiatric social worker I had once met, and Patricia as the person who had delivered the carrot cakes.

Mimi and I entered the building by the west door. To the left was a swimming pool, fronted by an iron-grill fence. The auditorium was jam-packed with gray-metal folding chairs. At the stage far to our right was a large stained-glass window, which depicted the orange rays of the sun and a white dove of peace. There was no cross.

Below the window was the podium platform covered with thick royal-blue carpeting. Above the podium was an American flag. To the right, the adult choir was gathering, the women wearing, this time, blue homemade dresses.

Suddenly, there came a celebratory stirring around the door to an office east of the swimming pool. A tough ex-con had, that very day, overcome a heroin addiction after a number of long days going "cold turkey." Jim Jones had sat with him.

This reclaimed addict would be eternally grateful, and useful, to the guy who had taken him off. Chris Lewis, six feet two and 220 pounds, would become Jones's bodyguard, and over the years would provide Jones with "street cred" in the ghetto.

People were streaming into the building, many of them black. They too had come a long way. Each Redwood Valley member seemed assigned to make visitors feel at home. The children acted as little hosts and hostesses. I estimated about six hundred people were present, twice that of the year before.

The service did not start for some forty-five minutes. Nobody was in any hurry. Then a rock band started playing, and the choir started singing. The leader of the band was a professional, Jack Arnold Beam, recently returned from the nightclub circuit. The music was upbeat and stirring.

A soloist came to the microphone to sing "Walk a Mile in My Shoes." Wait! I cannot believe it. It was Karen, my Legal Services client—the one who was as pretty as a poem, who was a hedonistic nymph wearing filmy dresses, who swore like a sailor and extolled drugs, and who had said I was the squarest person she had ever met.

She first thanked her pastor for "saving me from brain damage and a life strung out on drugs." There was no argument from me as to what she was saved from. She appeared utterly transformed.

Next came testimonies by people claiming to be healed, or saved from accidents, by "the Christ force" working in their pastor. It was too over-the-top for me. I looked around, saw the enraptured faces, and felt a twang of guilt for skeptical elitism.

Finally, Jim Jones emerged from the back of the room. He walked down the aisle to the platform, greeting people right and left.

He was wearing a blue robe. His hair was black with sideburns. He sat down on a barstool behind the podium, and did so with a sense of ease and command.

"This is a house of love," he said in a measured but impassioned tone, "so let us show affection for one another."

Everyone hugged someone. It all seemed natural. Guests were introduced and individually welcomed by Jones. He made it clear he was pleased that "the people's lawyer" had returned.

Jones proceeded to lead some singing. They were cheery little songs about loving people. He had a powerful, ringing baritone voice, and he put himself fully into it. He had none of the too-good-to-show-emotion business like some leaders I had known.

"This is a practical church," Jones said. "We don't worry about the furniture of heaven or the temperature of hell." Jones instructed people

to take out paper and pencil and write down some names. Pencils and paper appeared like magic.

Jones read off a list of senators to be written to. The people were to oppose President Nixon's nomination of Clement Haynsworth to the US Supreme Court, the reason being his pro-segregation and antilabor decisions as a federal judge.* His voice became loud and commanding. He denounced Nixon. He denounced Haynsworth.

Pious, praying, black middle-class men and women who had never before thought about politics were now stomping and cheering and encouraging the radical political agitator up front. It was surreal.

Jones told the people to say good things about the Temple and—disquietingly—their pastor. “If you are a registered Republican—as I am,” said Jones, with a grin, “let the Republican senators know that.”

It was after one o'clock when Jones got into the sermon. There was a set to his jaw not there the year before. His sermon was, again, a fiery denunciation of “our aggression in Vietnam,” with an added attack this time on the capitalists behind it. He did not mince his words. He was a firebrand.

“This is a war for profit,” he shouted. He walked from side to side on the podium. “This is a war against people of color by a Pentagon that is nothing more than a tool of Wall Street, which wants this war to get markets for US armaments and to get control of Southeast Asian tin, rubber, and offshore oil.”

Jim Jones, I saw, had now evolved into a full-fledged, passionate, Wall Street-damning social agitator.

Depending on the topic, Jones's voice covered the spectrum from crooning warmth to staccato anger.

Jones did not use notes. At times his inflections were those of a philosophy professor explaining the meaning of justice to neophyte students.

* Clement Haynsworth, who was a federal judge in South Carolina, had been nominated to the Supreme Court by Nixon on August 21, 1969. His nomination would be defeated in the US Senate on November 21, 1969, by a vote of 55 to 45.

When getting specific about a particular racist condition in the world, he would shout and pummel his fist into the air. He would then change pace and lapse into the melodic cadence of a black Baptist preacher. When making a point, he would go from hands on the podium, in a distinguished stance, to waving his arms and pointing his fingers.

His brown eyes were penetrating, and looked directly into faces. His gaze would go from person to person, with a defiant gleam as if to dare anyone to contradict him. Each person he looked at seemed transfixed. Jones was in complete charge of the room. Nobody even in the back was exempt from his gaze.

After attacking the war, profiteers, and racism, Jones's voice became softer. "We in Peoples Temple," he crooned, "are making a place where everybody is equal, where none of you will be looked down upon because of your color, where each of you is important."

This struck me at heart level: here, indeed, was a movement identifying with the oppressed!

"We call what we're doing apostolic socialism, after the early Christian church, which, before it became corrupt, shared everything in common and distributed everything according to each person's need."

Jones's voice became loud again, defiant. "Just because we know the Bible is full of errors," he said, "and we tell the truth about the most segregated hour in America being eleven o'clock Sunday morning, that doesn't mean we aren't entitled to be a church."

Hearing a murmuring, Jones addressed himself to the "church people." There erupted from him something startling: "Tell me, you hypocritical bastards out there, where have you seen more real love practiced than in this place?"

The sermon lasted more than an hour, maybe an hour and a half. Then came the sweet, soft tones of the faith healer in action. "Everybody clasp hands," he said. "When I say 'clasp hands,' during a healing that means to shift the energy pattern by switching hands. Now, everyone think lovingly of your neighbor, and when someone is called out, meditate love to that person. Eyes closed."

Jones called out a woman's name, revealed personal things about her life, said the Temple believed in medical science, told her she was feeling pain in some part of her body, asked her if she believed in "the God of equality" who could heal her, and shouted out some commands. Presto—she responded that she felt healed.

Jones then said, "You are healed!" The organ ramped up like in a Billy Graham crusade. The congregation was clapping and singing and dancing and rocking. Jones followed the same template again and again.

The thought came to me that it was all psychosomatic, the result of suggestion. Then I started rationalizing. Many of these good people claimed to be actually healed. Who was I to say they were not? What really counted was that, Pentecostal or not, these healings were secondary to, and in the service of, political courage.

And who knows, maybe Jones was onto a discovery. Maybe the universe was so configured that the energies of physical healing were a corroboration of "social justice" thinking.

It was now after three in the afternoon. Mimi and I were emotionally strung out and hungry. "We don't believe," continued Jones, "in a little grape juice and a wafer. In Peoples Temple you get food to nourish the whole body."

Then came the communal banquet meal of chicken, potatoes, vegetables, and decadent desserts prepared by the sweet-faced wives of the Temple.

The white people, cheerfully serving, were what a sociologist would call "working class." I marveled that Jones could raise the political consciousness of white working-class people about the Vietnam War, profiteering, and, above all, racism. I remembered that it was this working-class character that affected me most when witnessing that 1966 Good Friday Peace March in Ukiah, which had been led by Jones.

Wait a minute—this thing was not over! There, while people were eating, sat Jim Jones on a podium barstool, with people lined up telling him their troubles. A secretary, Edith Bogue, stood alongside taking notes. The loudspeakers rang out in Jones's baritone voice.

Urgent announcements from Jones poured forth, a typical one to the following effect: "Everybody, quiet! Our brother, Fred Randolph here, has been fired by the Consil Corporation for being black. This is a damned shame, an outrage. Telephone secretaries, make sure the name and address of its CEO get to every member. Everyone is to write and turn in his or her letters as soon as possible. I'm going to call him myself."

Jones asked me to give legal advice to some of those lined up, and I was happy to oblige.

The loudspeaker interruptions about people's problems went on nonstop. One could not carry on a quiet conversation. I felt suffocated.

"We are family," Jones repeatedly said. This must have been the reason everyone was so willing to stay. People needed to feel they belonged.

Finally, around 5:30, Linda Amos came over to me.

"You're going to stay for the evening service, aren't you?"

It was hard to keep a straight face. *What?* I thought. *There's more?*

I mumbled about having to get Mimi back. We said our good-byes to Jim Jones.

"Thanks," he said, "for helping out. There are so many, many needs that have to be met."

Mimi and I headed back to Berkeley, not saying much. We stopped outside Cattleman's Restaurant in Petaluma to stretch our legs and, very silently, to reclaim our bearings.

Utopian



AFTER WAITING THREE WEEKS TO process the September 7, 1969, visit, I returned to Peoples Temple, whereupon I encountered Jim Jones dropping the adjective *apostolic* from the noun *socialism*.

“Apostolic” referred to the economic system practiced by the early Christian church, as set forth in the New Testament book called “The Acts of the Apostles.” The underlying principle of that Biblical system was socialism: “From each according to his ability, to each according to his need.”*

Jones probably dropped “apostolic” because he saw it as too sectarian, but he was still preaching the same Christian principle. He was not, however, preaching political socialism, which seemed outside his immediate concern. His immediate concern was sociological—to make the small group of Peoples Temple a socialist model, meaning a sharing model, for the larger society.

Given his attacks on Wall Street for fomenting the Vietnam War, the public, however, would see Jones as advocating political socialism, essentially defined as government ownership of the means of producing goods.⁶⁶

It would be important, therefore, for Jones, who preached peace and the need to persuade by example, to be viewed, should people attribute

* The Acts of The Apostles 2:44-45 (KJV): “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.”

political motives to him, as a classic Utopian socialist, not a Marxian one. The Utopians believed equality would come by incremental persuasion. The Marxians believed it could only come by revolution.

Soon, Jones would be preaching total equality, which included social equality, not merely economic equality. You were not, for example, to dress so as to show off, since it would make others feel bad.

During that three-week interim before returning to Peoples Temple, I was asked by the Black Panthers to spend a night at their national headquarters on Shattuck Avenue in Oakland, in "a vigil against police attack." I was to critique any warrants should there be a police raid.

"Of course," I said.

The moment of truth struck when I emerged up the stairs and saw—resolutely piled up against the windows—sandbags upon sandbags. Present was the Oakland Black Panther captain, David Hilliard, then under federal indictment. During our conversation, I made two comments not directly relevant to his immediate concerns of police-Panther violence.

First, having recently argued a beach access case to the California Court of Appeal,⁶⁷ I told him that the Panthers should be more concerned about the environment. Second, while spotting a bookcase containing titles by Marx and Lenin, I burst out, "Jeez, you guys are communists!"

Captain Hilliard looked at the visiting young lawyer as if he were from another planet. By the end of the evening, upon considering how armed Panther members were following police cars with access to SWAT teams, I felt confirmed in my Peoples Temple decision to choose a liberation movement that was not suicidal.

Upon returning to the Temple, I proceeded to take a dozen or so activist attorneys from the Bay Area up to Redwood Valley. The most interested was a highly intelligent attorney named Michael.

Both of us were particularly moved by the monthly Saturday night "Equal Birthday" parties. Each person with a birthday that month received a two-dollar gift, and either stood there, or did whatever skit he or she could, all to wild applause.

Then Jack Beam, Patricia Cartmell, and others would do a chorus-line dance, a notable one being the celebrating of National Brotherhood Week. They lustily sang how wonderful it was to hate during the remaining fifty-one.

Afterward, the band would swing out. First, there was free dancing. And then, the most incredible thing: couples dancing with no wallflowers. Whenever in the past I had gone to a dance, I could not stand to watch young women who were not asked onto the floor putting on a brave face to hide their acute sense of rejection.

Here, in Peoples Temple, on the other hand, every young and old woman was selected to dance. In fact, nobody was left out because he or she was too old or not attractive enough. I could not get over it. It was social equality, not just economic and racial equality. *If that's socialism*, I thought, *it's getting a bad rap*.

In December I started attending regularly. As usual, Jones requested letters to be written, but not only on political issues or social justice matters. I noted, for example, in my diary: "Sunday, December 21, 1969. Mrs. Cora H. Cress, R. Rt. 1, Laura, Ohio 45337—son shot in heart—hunting accident—relieve load of guilt."

What's in it for him? I thought. *It must be a sign of integrity.*

In order to come to a better understanding of socialism, having come from a highly capitalistic upbringing that placed no premium on alternative considerations, I hunted out a 1949 essay by Albert Einstein, entitled "Why Socialism?"⁶⁸

From that essay I picked out one sentence and carefully wrote it down in my pocket diary. For the next eight years I would carry it around everywhere as my guide to life: "Man can find meaning in life, short and perilous as it is, only by devoting himself to society."

Since I still believed in Christ as the greatest moral teacher, even if not divine, and in his ethic of concern for "the least"* as the highest morality, that quote seemed totally consistent.

* Matthew 25:35-40 (King James Version), which I would later arrange to be placed on Peoples Temple letterhead.

As the New Year approached, I knew I would be making an important decision. I could be of use to Jim Jones's group as an advice-giving attorney, and he could be of use to me in fulfilling my desire for socialism. We would be using each other. I felt life required, as Arnold Toynbee said, challenge and response, and that one should not shy away from sacrificial commitment if it seemed the right thing to do.

On New Year's Eve, I returned with some more Bay Area friends for a Temple celebration. The band was playing. People were dancing. A new couple stood in the middle of the room taking it all in, mesmerized. I went up to the newcomers, Deanna and Elmer Mertle, and said, "Have you ever seen people happier than this?"

They beamed back. No, they never had.

The clock hit midnight. It was the first morning of the New Year. It was the first morning of the new decade. It was time to identify with the oppressed. It was time to follow the socialist dream.

I walked over to Jim Jones, up there in front on the barstool, taking it all in.

"Well, Jim, I've decided to join."

He looked directly at me. His eyes reflected infinite sincerity. He responded with utmost gravitas: "Tim—you—will—never—be—sorry."

Nine days later, there came a visit to Berkeley by Temple members Jim Cobb and Mike _____. Afterward, I wrote to Jim Jones. I asked him questions about the communal standards expected of members as to alcohol, keeping "expensive paintings, art books," and attending nightclubs.

After acknowledging how important these aspects of materiality were to me, there bubbled forth, as if from a cauldron, my basic reason for joining: "I have, however, decided to live up to the standards of the communal Christian church as set forth in Acts to the best of my ability, and, therefore, am willing to donate everything I have to the 'community' or sell it, whatever seems best."⁶⁹

The week before, I had checked out the Mendocino County job market for lawyers. Although my letter asked Jones for his opinion between

assistant district attorney (civil) and directing attorney of Legal Services, I decided to follow my personal preference before giving Jones time to weigh in. I committed to the first option.

A week or so after this letter, Jones suggested a memo on the question: "Should Peoples Temple Adopt a Share-All Economic Plan?" After I wrote four pages of pros and cons, a conclusion arrived in the affirmative. Two personal reasons came forth—one pragmatic, the other spiritual: "So speaking from a personal point of view, I need the support that participating in the plan will give me to adhere to the values I believe in. If we fail, so be it. We might learn the exhilarating spiritual life Jesus had in mind for the rich young ruler when he advised him to sell all that he had and give it to the poor."⁷⁰

The memo was too radical for Jim Jones. He decided to stick with his existing requirement: each member was to give a mere 25 percent of gross income to the Temple.

Then, in February, two warnings about Peoples Temple struck like a flash. The first came from Michael. He said he had decided not to go back to Peoples Temple, and then he added words not to be forgotten: "Tim, that place is heavier than you think."

Too full was I of ideological passion to ask him what he meant, or to give him space to explain.

The second warning came from intuition, as if shot by a beacon from Mount Shasta: "Jim Jones will never go down quietly."

Belligerently, I replied to intuition: "Better a bang than a whimper."

On February 28, 1970, Temple members Don Sly, Bob Houston, and Jim Randolph drove down to Berkeley to help move me back to Mendocino County. They moved me into a rented house in Redwood Valley, on Road E.

The following Monday, March 2, 1970, I mounted the same courthouse steps as I had on October 18, 1965, this time to work as Mendocino County's civil attorney. Although my title was assistant district attorney, it had nothing to do with criminal law. My function was that of county counsel.

Since I would be living in two universes—both the Establishment and the counterculture of Peoples Temple, terms had to be laid down. As much as I was taken by the Temple and was willing to take heat for identifying with it, I had no willingness to sacrifice my career for it. I told Jones that if he wanted me to be his volunteer, *pro bono*, lawyer, he would have to stay within the law at all times.

“Of course,” he said.

Major life changes often conjoin—like large waves merging into an explosive blue-white surge off the Mendocino Headlands. While all this radical change of life was sweeping me up at the group level, another momentous change had been, for more than four months, sweeping me up at the personal level. The cause, of course, was a woman.

Back on August 17, 1969, immediately after leaving Black Panther headquarters, I had gone back to my apartment on the Great Highway. To settle myself for the next day’s trial, I ensconced myself on the third-floor balcony and gazed out upon the tranquil sea.

Two young women appeared from the right. They had been cheerfully strolling down the sidewalk, singing. Suddenly, the one in the lavender blouse stopped in her tracks below. She looked over the fence into the garden. Then, sensing she was being observed, she looked up. She was too far away to get the details of her face, but close enough to note the radiance of her smile and the color in her voice.

“You have,” she said, “a lovely garden.”

My heart skipped. “Thank you. I will tell the landlady.”

She proceeded on her merry way.

Isn't that the way life is? I thought. Two trains passing in the night, a flash of light upon a beguiling countenance, then forever...gone.

Utterly unaware was I that the laws of reencounter improbabilities were about to be suspended. Equally unaware was I of the fact that I had, on the day I stepped forth on the path to perdition, glimpsed the face of my salvation.

The twenty-fifth day of October 1969 was a beautiful, sunny Saturday. Rock-band rhythms were rippling down McAllister Street from half a block away to my law office, where I worked on weekends.

Pushing aside the law books, I trotted on over to City Hall Plaza, spotted a beautiful woman with raven hair, and parked myself down next to her, on the ledge of the reflecting pool.

Her complexion was olive, possibly Mediterranean. Her facial features were perfectly chiseled. A colorful lei framed a slender neck.

“Hi.”

“Oh, hi,” she responded.

Her brown eyes were luminous, her voice melodious. She quickly turned away to look toward the speaker at the microphone.

I recognized him. He was Congressman Pete McCloskey, a principled politician. I knew him, having introduced him at a law forum. I turned to my immediate focus of interest. “Been here long?”

“Not too long.”

“What’s it all about?”

“It’s about population problems and ecology.”

“Have you ever been to one of these before?”

“No, this is my first. My girlfriend from work is concerned about these things, so she asked me to come on the march. She’s got me reading a book called *The Population Bomb*.

“How do you like it—the demonstration, I mean?”

“Just fine,” she said, again turning away.

Her friend approached. “Hi, I’m Susan. I see you’ve met my friend Grace.”

“Glad to meet you, Susan. Glad to meet you too, Grace.”

Light conversation ensued, enough for me fully to notice an elegance in the way Grace enunciated her words—precise, unhurried, warm.

“Grace, would you like to get a Coke?” I asked.

She hesitated.

“Go ahead, Grace,” said Susan. “He’s all right.”

We walked over to Knight’s Delicatessen directly below my office. I introduced Grace to the dean of the Hastings Law School and then escorted her upstairs. It looked, indeed, like a law office.

We returned to the rally.

“Where do you live, Grace?”

“San Francisco.”

“And where do you live?” she asked.

“Berkeley.”

“I was born and raised in San Francisco, but I’ve never been to Berkeley.”

I asked Grace and Susan if I could take them to Berkeley and show them around. Susan begged off, saying she had an appointment, but she encouraged Grace to go.

I drove Grace to Berkeley, and showed her famous Telegraph Avenue, where the People’s Park riots had taken place. Some windows were still boarded up. We went into a bookstore, where the proprietor voiced an opinion on something or other.

Then, out of the blue, I heard emerging from the lips of my lovely new friend the firmly stated words, “I am sorry, but I must disagree with you on that.”

I perked up—this new friend had shown no materialistic interest in my car, and she had a mind of her own.

We went to my apartment behind 2142 Sacramento Street. While friends came and went, Grace buried herself in the art books. We went out for dinner. On returning, I read her some poems by D. H. Lawrence, put on soft music, invited her to dance, and made no passes. By the time I drove her back to her home on Twenty-Fourth Avenue in San Francisco’s Sunset District, chemistry was setting in.

A week or so later, I took Grace to dinner at the home of the grandmother of my “little brother.” For the past year I had been in the Big Brothers program, which meant being a weekend father figure to a twelve-year-old black boy, Adrian. Every Saturday we would go fishing at Lake Merced, visit the zoo, play basketball, go to movies like *Love Bug*, or fly kites at Ocean Beach.

Grace shone. After a delicious repast, Adrian’s grandmother, Ethel, one of those salt-of-the-earth black mommas, took me aside. “Tim,” she whispered to me in a confidential tone, “let me give you some advice. You should know how lucky you are to have someone like Grace.”

A couple of weeks after Grace and I met, I asked my friend, Herb Pruett, who had written a guidebook on Golden Gate Park, to show Grace around. As part of the tour, he pointed out the building where I used to live across from the beach.

Afterward, Grace met me.

“Tim,” she said, “do you remember a few months ago two girls coming by, and one of them saying you had a beautiful backyard?”

“Yes,” I said, definitely remembering.

“Well, Tim, that was me!”

I was taken aback. I had at that time gotten a mere glimpse of her from a distance, had not gotten her name, had since moved to another city, and had now met her—months later, many miles away, in a crowd, without an introduction, present at a rally at which she was simply tagging along.

The lavender girl had turned out to be *not* forever gone.

In November I took action to alleviate the cognitive dissonance between my materialism and my social-justice extremism. I sold the Porsche. Then, for the heck of it I decided to experiment with being more “environmental.” I would try using public transportation or a bicycle.

An attorney friend, Richard Hodge, then contacted a famous *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist, Herb Caen. On Friday, December 12, 1969, he wrote, “Today’s one-man battler against pollution is Tim Stoen, atty.” for the Alameda County Legal Aid Society, who “sold his ’69 Porsche and switched to a bicycle.”⁷¹

Some eight years later, Jim Jones would slip his own item to Caen about me, thus rounding a circle.

After the Herb Caen article, I had to make a good-faith effort to live up to it. I had already been doing so. Since I was courting this winsome young woman clear across San Francisco Bay, and across its namesake city itself, it was highly inconvenient. Grace, however, was very patient with my truculence. We traveled to each other’s home by bus and by the Taraval streetcar. I sometimes would not get home till after 2:00 a.m.

During these rides, we read to each other the engrossing short stories of Guy de Maupassant, a French author who wrote masterful little tales satirizing "bourgeois" values, which he related with ironic wit. Grace's favorite was called "The False Gems." She told me I was the first person to have respected her mind.

In late December Grace received a new religious and social experience. I had told her about the social-justice crusader Jim Jones. When I mentioned the faith healing, Grace looked at me a little strangely but still said she would like to come.

Since we had no car, the Temple arranged for us to ride up with a young San Francisco black couple in the rain. The service in Redwood Valley followed the same format as in September. Grace took a respectful, though detached, interest in everything. The healings did not make an impression, but the current events in the sermon did. What really attracted her were the children.

After I made my New Year's Day decision, I forsook environmental for egalitarian values. I bought a used, white, 1965 Ford station wagon. After the Porsche it was like driving a boat. The heater did not work, and I decided not to fix it in order to empathize better with the down-and-out.

During the first three months of 1970, I drove Grace in it to Temple services three or four times.

In the meantime I fell deeply in love with Grace. On Sunday, April 19, there were Temple meetings in San Francisco at a former Scottish Rite auditorium on Geary Boulevard. Borrowing Dan Kutulas's blue pickup after the evening meeting, I drove Grace to her home in the Sunset District before heading back to Redwood Valley.

In the driveway in front of her house, I proposed to Grace. I told her I loved her and wanted to marry her. However, I also told her that the cause would have to come "first." I told her to take her time thinking it over. "The cause," as I then defined it and would continue doing so for years, was the "total equality" philosophy of Peoples Temple. That included social equality.

As if the two warnings in February were not enough, in early June there arrived a third warning, this time in the form of an omen.

Grace had come up to Redwood Valley for the weekend. I had a wonderful little cocker-poodle dog that had been given to me by a deputy sheriff. Grace named the dog Peter. We both loved that dog. On the day in question, Grace and I decided to visit our friend Jim Jones at his East Road house behind the new Temple building.

Grace was carrying Peter in her arms. Jones was relaxing in a chair between the house and the garage. He had sitting next to him a huge dog—a German shepherd I think, the emotions of what happened making it impossible for me to recall exactly. Suddenly, Jones's dog growled and jumped at Peter who, terrified, leaped from Grace's bosom, whereupon Jones's dog bit Peter on the neck, leaving him prostrate. Jones took the stricken Peter into his house, laid him on a bed, and tended to his wounds. Peter died.

Grace and I were thunderstruck. Why I did not immediately see this third warning—this dramatic episode—as a terrible omen, it is impossible to say. Probably it was because Jones, who had a reputation as a lover of animals, got blood on his hands as he tried to revive Peter.

There would come a time, some eight years later, when this same Jim Jones would disclose his mind about the character of the owner of a biting dog: "Dogs take on the dispositions of the people. A dog won't bite if you don't want that dog to bite. It's a matter of attitude of the owner. They take on the disposition."⁷²

I composed our wedding invitation, which Grace wrote out in her elegant calligraphic hand. The invitation⁷³ showed that we did not intend to be a couple unto ourselves. As to why we were marrying, it was utopian:

They do so because they love each other and
can together best work for a world
where mankind is united,
life is revered,
wealth is shared,
and joy is common.

On June 27, 1970, Grace and I were married in Peoples Temple, Redwood Valley. Three or four hundred people came to the wedding. They included local Establishment figures that probably never thought they would set foot in Peoples Temple: Judge Bev Broaddus, former DA Tom Cleland, current DA Duncan James, newspaper editor George Hunter. A lot of Bay Area attorneys showed up.

My brother Jonathan, who was best man, came from Karachi, Pakistan, where he was an oil exploration geologist for the Amoco Corporation. My brother Tom came from Denver, where he was vice president of Columbia Savings and Loan.

Grace was the picture of loveliness. "The bride's short sheath dress in a long-sleeved shirtwaist style," reported the society editor for the *Ukiah Daily Journal*, "was made of crepe with hand-embroidered trim. Her flowers, in a nosegay, were white carnations and roses."⁷⁴

The wedding went smoothly. Jim Jones conducted the service. Anita Ijames Kelly, a lovely black woman, sang "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel To Be Free." Her eloquent, from-the-heart, syncopated black-gospel voice penetrated hearts. Afterward, the church band with its upbeat music played for dancing. Outside a young newcomer, Larry Layton, gave pony rides to the children.

The only thing negative was my mother's response. She was drawn to Grace. But she, a fundamentalist Christian, sensed something sinister about the minister. I tried to reassure her, but she did not succeed in hiding the tears. My brother Jonathan drove her and Dad to the San Francisco airport, and reported back that Mom came close to a nervous breakdown.

Grace and I drove to the town of Mendocino, overlooking the ocean, for a one-night honeymoon at the Mendocino Hotel, a classic Victorian building.

Afterward, we returned to our Road E, Redwood Valley home. It was a drafty, rambling, three-bedroom house, fronted by a horseshoe driveway surrounded by bushy evergreen trees. In the back was a deck and beyond that a horse pasture. To the west were grapevines that captured the golden colors of the retiring sun.

Grace and I had a goat, Angelina, who jumped onto the bed when we were sleeping on the porch. Grace started a garden. We commenced pottery lessons together at the Renaissance Gallery in Ukiah.

Grace, though nervous, beautifully hosted a meet-and-greet for a congressional peace candidate, Bill Kortum.

Grace and I started out happy together. We saw our marriage as permanent. Michael, the attorney, had even written a poem to that effect for our wedding:

Today the world is green and sweet,
We come to dance and play;
For Grace and Tim are marrying,
Together they will stay.

I knew it would have to take a set of powerful forces to undermine that prophecy. It took no more than a few weeks, however, for the first of that set to arrive. It was a bombshell from Grace: "I love you very much, Tim, but I don't want to go back to Peoples Temple anymore."

Although I could honor my commitment to the Temple and still accommodate Grace, Jim Jones was not of that same mind. He immediately dispatched his wife, Marceline, and it was all too much for Grace to fight. However, it was clear that from then on her heart would be at odds with the cause I had committed to.

My sexual relations with Grace during time being fully satisfying, I decided to investigate getting a vasectomy to respect the carrying capacity of the planet. So one day in July, the month after my wedding, I drove over to 502 North Pine Street, Ukiah, to meet with Nicholas Zbitnikoff, MD, on the matter. He was quick to discourage me, saying I was too young and healthy for him to consider it.

Despite my conscious ideological commitment to equality, I had retained at a deeper—a more existential—level an inconsistent appetite that revealed itself soon enough: "Wednesday, October 21, 1970. 8:30—CIVILISATION ON TV."

This was the public broadcasting series by the famous art historian Kenneth Clark. I watched all thirteen episodes, read the book, and found myself cheering, guiltily, for values at odds with equality.

After celebrating “the exhilarating lightness and lucidity of the palace of Urbino,” Kenneth Clark said that even if one does “not like courts,” at certain periods it is exclusively in a court that a person “may do something extravagant for its own sake,” adding that it is sometimes, by such willful and unnecessary actions by individuals, that “societies discover their powers.”⁷⁵

Yes, I was one of those hating the idea of courts but who, in his heart, would have agreed that extravagance, as exemplified in Renaissance palaces, did lead to great art that blessed the human condition. This cognitive dissonance, however, would require resolution after episode thirteen. Urbino would then require dispatch—at least until Peoples Temple matured as an egalitarian organization—to the netherworld of suppression. So I resumed buying books on the “underclass.”

The Temple all this time was keeping up its thank-you letters campaign, boldly stating to one and all its “total equality” doctrine. As one example, Jones asked for a letter to be sent to San Francisco on behalf of a new Temple member who had been a college instructor: “Saturday, October 31, 1970. Write Captain Nelder, Chief of Police, Sgt. Sugru, Officer Paganucci—Act of helping Edith Roller retrieve purse—Total Equality for All people. Complete Integration.”

In addition to influential people, Jones had letters written on behalf of prisoners. The following month, for example, he got a letter from an inmate at the US penitentiary at McNeil Island, Washington, who wanted out of “punitive segregation.”

Jones wrote on the back of the envelope his characteristic message at this time of his career. He called for love for those who “wrongfully use” us, and he underlined his own handwritten word, *good*: “Let Tim Stoen see this. Advise the young man to attempt to win his battles thru the principles of Dr. King’s teachings. Love for those who wrongfully use us can and still does win many to our cause. One has no other choice in an age of violence & repression but to utilize the principles of overcoming evil with good.”

Jones soon showed he was not restricting himself to passive sentiment. In a matter of days, as I noted in my pocket diary, he proceeded to capitalize on dramatic current events: "Thursday, December 3, 1970. Letter to (1) Leonid Brezhnev, (2) Richard Nixon re Switch of Angela Davis with 11 Jewish hijackers."

Jones was proposing that the United States and the Soviet Union make an exchange whereby Angela Davis would be traded for eleven Jewish hijackers.

Angela Davis was a well-known, black, avowed Communist. She was facing murder charges for buying a shotgun that, on August 7, 1970, was used to kill a judge in Marin County.*

"Jewish hijackers" referred to a group of Soviet Jews who, on June 15, 1970, attempted to steal a civilian aircraft in Russia to escape to the West, were caught, and were charged with high treason.

Jones was being presumptuously audacious. First, he had not cleared his request with Angela Davis, whom he did not know. Second, he felt perfectly at ease in writing to the supreme leaders of the two superpowers of the world—the Soviet Union and the United States—to propose his own version of a deal. If he were to continue in this direction, he might be inviting scrutiny from more than the most innocuous agencies.

Two months later, the undated notes in my diary of a phone call to the Food and Drug Administration showed how serious this concern could get: "FDA-562-2062. Mr. Wursher. Cosmetics Act. Food Supplements. Technically resold. Properly relabel with same label as appears on bulk label. Reprint then with Xerox."

Jones, advocating good nutrition for his people, had asked Temple member Rose Gieg to buy vitamins in bulk wholesale and then rebotle them for individual families, to be sold at cost. So I had called Mr. Wursher of the federal Food and Drug Administration to make sure it was legal. His advice was as my notes indicated.

This was what our utopian movement was now required to attend to, after Nixon and Brezhnev: the legality of reselling vitamins.

* On June 4, 1972, in San Jose, California, an all-white jury would find Angela Davis not guilty of all charges, i.e., murder, kidnapping, and criminal conspiracy.

Organizer



COMMENCING IN 1971, JIM JONES showed himself to be an adroit organizer in six areas: relationship intrigue, base expansion, crowd psychology, micromanagement, public relations, and foreign diplomacy.

RELATIONSHIP INTRIGUE

I may have been the first person to experience Jones's exercise of relationship intrigue, his most likely motive being to keep needed talent in the group.

On January 25, 1972, there blazed into my life with the emotional force of a meteor a newborn child, born to Grace: John Victor Stoen.⁷⁶ A week or so before that date, Jim Jones had come by to make a dramatic announcement: that he was the biological father of the child about to be born.

This resulted from an idiotic act I had done because of an ideological commitment to social equality. Before getting married, I had given Grace and myself permission to relate to others on the basis of the other's "need."

As a further act of idiocy, I chose to believe Jones when he said he was the father—because of his healings, because of his socialist courage, and because I could not fathom a good person saying such a thing if it were not true. All in all, I believed "the universe" was bestowing on me the opportunity to love—extravagantly—a child who did not carry my genes.

Whether Grace had related to Jones or not, my imposing on her an open-marriage policy gave her implied permission. Bless her. Despite assuming Jones had acted on the “need” of his attorney’s wife to have the strongest possible tie to his utopian movement, I was miffed at his lack of courage in not clearing the matter with me in advance. At no time did I discuss the matter with Grace, for I had exercised that open-marriage policy with a lonely single woman with five children, and I did not want to be a hypocrite. And since it would be unfair to the child to be deprived of his biological father, I promised—a fateful, pivotally entrapping promise—to protect Jones’s paternal access to John Victor.

Grace selected John Victor’s first name after her brother. I chose his middle name after the famous labor leader Eugene Victor Debs. Twelve days after John Victor’s birth, I signed a declaration to give Jones emotional reassurance that I would not seek to take John from him. Under California law I was conclusively deemed the father,⁷⁷ and therefore the statement had no legal effect, could not constitute perjury, and could never be used in court. I had to make it inordinately eulogistic of Jones for the purpose, the only possible purpose, of causing myself maximum embarrassment in the highly unlikely event of my ever trying to deprive Jones of John Victor. Everything about the declaration was intentionally untrue. I chose not to make it an affidavit, for I did not want to swear to anything untrue before God.

Despite the unconventionality of his birth circumstances, John Victor brought Grace and me closer than ever. On February 9, 1972, we took him on his first excursion. We drove down to Sausalito Yacht Harbor to visit my brother Jonathan who, with his French wife, Francoise, had arrived on his yacht to see the baby.

The boat itself was a jewel—a sixty-five-foot-overall double-ended ketch, “all teak on oak frames, copper fastened.”⁷⁸ Named the *Ron of Argyll*, it had been built in Scotland in 1928 and later used as a cruising yacht by King George V and Marilyn Monroe.⁷⁹

I relapsed that evening into my former life. It became a beautiful moment of being together in a nuclear family setting—one that would haunt my memory when, one day, things started going awry.

Grace and I raised John Victor in our own home for the next two years. There was nothing else in my life, ever, that gave me the thrill of the baby's little fingers curled around mine and of holding him against my chest as I rocked him and sang to him.

I relished getting up early in the morning to prepare the formula and place it in the boiling water. I relished changing him and bathing him. In the evenings, I took John to my courthouse office in his bassinets. There I would occasionally glance up and just sit and stare at this precious little miracle.

John-John became a favorite in the Temple for his laughter and precocity. He seemed to be an unusually altruistic child. As if preordained, he was treated by everyone as a child prince. The downside of all this was that John gave a glow to my life in the Temple world, thereby accentuating the blindness of ideology.

Despite the radiance of John's presence, however, I remained quietly angry with Jones for months. He could detect a slight, however, from light-years away, and his organizational skills included preemption.

It thus came to pass that one day, in May 1972, the truest of all believers, Linda Amos herself, came to my office in the Mendocino County Courthouse to see me for something. After distracting my attention, she did some trash diving.

Two months later, she came to Grace's and my home and again dug for compromising dirt. The results must not have seemed promising at first, but the leader might eventually find some use for it all. As I would later discover, Ms. Amos proceeded to type up four pages of single-spaced notes⁸⁰—as if they were FBI notes going to J. Edgar Hoover—for submission to her own director of investigation.*

* These two excursions by Linda Amos were, of course, never revealed to me by Jones. Linda Dunn, Jones's former secretary, gave them to me on October 27, 1978.

The first set advised him of the results of a May 16, 1972, visit ("V") by Linda Amos ("LA") to my office in my presence ("direct"):

Tim & Grace Stoen

Redwood Valley

Revelation to LA V 5/16/72 (direct)

(from Tim's office)

—checks/Savings Bank of Mendocino acct # 1211-0406-01-5353-0



—Dr. George P Rostel 3/27/72 (Grace signed)—this may be the dr in Santa Rosa that you know about already



—bill from City of Paris SF \$20 date on it 12/13/71



(their checks are in both their names Timothy O. & Grace Stoen)

P. O. Box 126, Ukiah

462-7163

The second set of notes was a little more encouraging. It advised of the results of garbage diving at our house two months later, outside of our presence ("Indirect"):

Revelation to LA V 7/18/72 (Indirect)

Garb:



—Card to Tim/...Dear Tim; many many thanks for rescuing us. Remember what I said about your first baby. My warmest love, Liz



—yellow cab Co 5/21/70 Receipt of \$650 from airport to 217 W 1st Los Angeles cab/ (this may be \$6.50 but can't see any dot)



—typed letter to Timothy 11/29/68 from James L. Larson (Petersen & Lonergan) addressed to Tim at 228 McAllister St, SF, congratulates him...



—*New Republic Magazine* addressed to Tim July 8, 1972 issue & *Wall Street Journal* addressed to him, Mon July 10 issue



Garb Food:



Swanson Chicken Pie Discount 28¢, (with monosodium glutamate [sic], chicken fat, lard, lactic acid)/we were warned not to eat meat pies.

Writing down "\$650," for a cab fare, before saying, "can't see any dot," was a typical example of Linda Amos's literalist obedience.

Because of the ecstasy John Victor brought into my life, by September 1972, I had forgiven Jim Jones.

When John Victor turned two years of age on January 25, 1974, Grace and I agreed to let him be raised communally. He moved to the home of Barbara Cordell, on School Way, in Redwood Valley. Barbara was a loving caretaker of other children, so John received the gift of new brothers and sisters. Almost every day after work, I swung by Barbara's house to play spiritedly with John.

During 1974 and continuing through 1975, Grace brought John to the courthouse. Everyone engaged with him. He went around inspecting everything, being particularly fascinated by the electric typewriter. Once, he ran out the door, up and down the courthouse hallways, playing with a ball and sending it into county offices. Government smiled.

For lunch, Grace and I would take John to a health-food bar on School Street in Ukiah. His presence was so commanding that Evelyn, the Seventh-day Adventist lady who ran the place, would stop everything to come interact with him.

After one such visit, John saw a man on the sidewalk smoking and went up to him with a question: "Do you want to die?"

Sometimes I would take John to the Ukiah library after work. The librarian was Mary Luther, the wife of my good friend, attorney James Luther, who had compassion for the underdog. Mary went far out of her way to entertain John. He went crazy at the children's exhibits—rabbits, guinea pigs, and particularly goldfish. Sometimes he was so happy he would run circles on the carpet.

On one occasion, I was with John in San Francisco, picking up some airline tickets at Union Square. As we walked down Post Street, a vendor stopped everything to talk to this three-year-old. John, acting as if it were the normal thing for a child to do, asked questions of the vendor as to what he did.

"How do you like it?" he asked.

On another occasion, when John was three, I was carrying him when, upon encountering one of our black members, he pointed to his little chest and said, "I'm going to protect you!"

In 1975, we sent John to a preschool at the Ukiah Methodist Church. At five o'clock I would tear out of the courthouse—even if the board of supervisors had not yet adjourned, rush the three blocks to pick up John, and walk hand in hand to the car discussing his day. Nothing in the world could match it.

John's presence in our household had been the glue keeping Grace and me together. Once John was gone from our home, Grace and I would be drifting apart. It would be my own fault, for I had placed the cause, which Grace had never adopted, above her.

BASE EXPANSION

One day—September 4, 1972, to be exact—the sweeping message above the stage of the former First Church of Christ, Scientist, Los Angeles, dramatically changed: “GOD IS LOVE” became “LOVE IS WORK.”

On that day Jones's new Southern California outpost was dedicated—a mixed Italianate and Spanish Romanesque building at the corner of Hoover and Alvarado that had been designed, in 1912, by the noted Los Angeles architect Elmer Grey.⁸¹

Smacking of dignity, the building had a rounded, high-columned, half-circle portico, above which was a high tower with elongated windows. The auditorium, which included a huge stage and a high balcony, was now resounding with rhetoric not of a piece with the quiescent ambiance of the church's Christian Science predecessor.

Also in 1972, the Temple purchased an expansive, three-level building at 1859 Geary Boulevard in San Francisco. Built as a Scottish Rite temple in 1902, Jones had been renting the building for services off and on since early 1970. It contained a large stage with a stately oak podium, where Jones authoritatively stationed himself for his six-hour performances.

The result of these two purchases was that Jones now had a statewide communal base. Encompassing California's two major cities, it extended south from Redwood Valley for five hundred miles.

In Redwood Valley, the Temple purchased the town's major business complex, where it established a publishing operation. It then built

behind it a bus garage the size of an airplane hangar. This was used to house and maintain the Temple's eleven Greyhound-type buses, which traveled the California highways seemingly nonstop.

Jones also established a home-care system that included five homes for foster children and eight residential-care homes for the elderly. In addition, the Temple purchased a forty-acre ranch, called Happy Acres, for the developmentally disabled. Happy Acres grew wine grapes, and harvest time became a happy communal enterprise. Finally, the Temple bought a communal dormitory for the Temple's thirty to forty students at Santa Rosa Junior College.

To pay for this expanding empire, the Temple members, who were extremely hard working, tithed 25 percent of their gross income. Because the Temple worked on a barter economy, where people did services for one another—digging a septic line, offering a refrigerator, cutting hair—everyone reduced their expenses so much that they got out of debt.

Combined with these members' "tithes" were the donations from the meetings. All of this resulted in the Temple's acquiring millions in the bank—practically all of it from laboring people and none of it from rich Beverly Hills heiresses.

CROWD PSYCHOLOGY

While engaged in the expansion of Temple properties, Jones showed a mastery of crowd psychology that manifested in an extraordinary meetings schedule. His double purpose was to attract numbers for donations, and to develop passionate group loyalty.

On alternate weekends, Jones held a Friday evening service in San Francisco, then filled up the eleven buses with his die-hard members for a nine-hour drive to Los Angeles, where services would be held on Saturday afternoon, after which they returned to San Francisco for Sunday morning services, and then made it back to Redwood Valley for a Sunday evening meeting. In a later period, Jones had everyone from Northern California stay overnight Saturday in Los Angeles, then

conducted services there Sunday until 5 p.m., and then had them embark on the buses to return to San Francisco and Redwood Valley.

In order to induce crowds to his Saturday and Sunday urban services, Jones advertised his healing ministry. Once these “loaves and fishes” people, as he called them, were in the building, he preached at them—relentlessly—his utopian socialist vision of total equality—giving them far more than they had bargained for. His inner core of ardent members raised the emotional temperature of these meetings to the level of a rock concert.

However, since Jones made it clear that one would have to make a total commitment of time and energy to be part of the movement, most first-time visitors quickly dropped by the wayside. As a result, out of the maybe thirty thousand people who over the years came to Temple meetings, Jones would filter out three thousand to be the real, rock-solid, full-fledged members of Peoples Temple.

There were occasional functions besides Temple meetings that Jones set out for his people. When, in 1972, a movie came out entitled *Marjoe*, Jones arranged for the Ukiah Theater to set aside a showing just for Temple members. The movie was a behind-the-scenes documentary of a former child-prodigy evangelist, Marjoe Gortner, who used trickery in his faith healings.

Jones’s recommendation of that movie fortified my belief that his healings were genuine. I had already concluded that they were, for two reasons. First, so many people were telling me they had been healed, and who was I to say they had not? Second, as I had begun to rationalize on my September 1969 visit, the cause—total equality—was so pure that the universe, in all its mystery, was momentarily ousting the mind-body separation.

MICROMANAGEMENT

In a fourth area, Jones established a micromanaged administrative system, based on (1) “need to know,” (2) utilizing every person’s capacities, and (3) meeting group psychological needs.

As for the latter, Jones was a masterful, savvy psychologist, for he had to satisfy—continually—the psychological needs of three types of

Peoples Temple members. One group included superidealists. A second included middle-class religious people seeking—and finding—full-scale racial integration in the Temple. A third included society's rejects, whom nobody outside the Temple seemed to care about, but whom Jones seemed to welcome with open arms.

As for structure, the only formal leadership in Peoples Temple was a board of directors composed of Jones's most trusted leaders. However, its members interacted, for the most part, informally and only occasionally.

Except for this board and Jones's position as minister, there were no other formal positions in Peoples Temple. So far as I know, not a single person during 1971-1975 was on salary. This included Jim Jones himself, whose wife Marceline brought in the family income as a California state nursing home supervisor.

The actual Temple leadership consisted of concentric circles, with micromanager Jones at the center, and power distributed from it on a "need to know" basis.

In the first circle was a group of six highly loyal women called "Staff." Staff in 1972 was headed by Carolyn Moore Layton, the French teacher at Ukiah High School. It also included long-time loyalist Patricia Cartmell, thirty-five year-old psychiatric social worker Linda Amos, and twenty-six-year-old deputy probation officer Sandy Bradshaw.

The members of Staff functioned for Jones as counselors, trouble-shooting agents, and—as I would years later learn—spies. Jones gave freedom to Temple people to do their assigned jobs so long as they did not stray from the Temple's goals. But if they did stray in major ways, these Staff women quickly brought the matter directly to Jones's attention for immediate action.

In the second circle at this time—only after September 1973 would there be the intervening circle of a catharsis-centered "planning commission"—were the professionally trained. These aides were members with useful talents, particularly in business, law, and public relations.

These included three new members arriving in the summer of 1972. One was attorney Eugene Chaikin.

A second was Michael Prokes, the television reporter.

A third was young Teresa (Terri) Buford, born in 1952, whose father was a career naval officer. While hitchhiking through Redwood Valley as a hippie, she learned of Peoples Temple's social justice philosophy and promptly decided to join. Highly talented, Terri was admitted to the University of California, Berkeley. Preoccupied with Temple matters giving her little time to study, she nonetheless graduated in 1976, majoring in journalism, with an A average. During this time she became a member of Staff, and also Jones's chief "strategist."

There were already present in the Temple two others highly gifted in the arena of public relations. The first, in her mid-twenties, was Jean Brown, a beloved Ukiah high school teacher whose idealistic sincerity won over political people on both the left and the right. The other was twenty-nine-year-old Richard Tropp, a cultured, cello-playing, Shakespeare scholar who had dropped out of "the system," and then found meaning for the first time in his life at Peoples Temple.

Richard would become Jones's chief propagandist, and would supervise hundreds of Peoples Temple members for the writing of personal letters extolling public officials and ordinary citizens who did good works, and consoling those who suffered tragedy. These letters established a formidable base of community goodwill.

In the third circle were the drug and employment counselors, and a number of ad hoc councils.

Of heart-warming significance was the success of the counselors who worked to rehabilitate drug addicts, and those who taught people, some never previously employable, new skills in mechanics, construction, electronics, or carpentry. These counselors would also teach them how to find a job, how to present and groom themselves at interviews and, finally, to be held accountable for performance.

The councils were composed of trusted members not in top leadership. They were assigned, as occasion demanded, to deal with minor rule breaking and with relationship counseling.

After the Staff, the professional aides, and the counselors and councils, came the mass of Temple members. Each of them—no matter how

underprivileged his or her background—was given a position. As Jones drew in new members, many from the urban ghettos and a much lesser number of middle-class superidealists, he would assign them to various departments based on their abilities.

Especially joy-producing were the results of the court attendees. Every Temple member, no matter how lacking in employment or social skills, could go to court on behalf of criminal defendants. Sometimes there would be fifty, even a hundred, Temple members crowding a courtroom to show support for some poor, disregarded, and otherwise invisible person in trouble. Judges, being human, were taken aback, and listened when Jones's people spoke up on behalf of these people, so eminently salvageable.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

In the meantime, beginning in September 1972, Jones was engaged in a fifth area of prowess, namely, a comprehensive public relations campaign. This was to thwart criticism in the press over his faith healing and his socialism. In October 1971, after some meetings in Indianapolis, he had been attacked on his faith healing in the *Indianapolis Star*; in September 1972, he was attacked on his faith healing in the *San Francisco Examiner*.

Although neither attack did damage, I determined to show that Peoples Temple cared about the community, and Jones determined to prevent any attacks happening again.

On February 8, 1973, I was the keynote speaker at an Eagle Scout Recognition Dinner in Santa Rosa. My speech was a paean to the Founding Fathers, based on the book *Miracle at Philadelphia*, Catherine Drinker Bowen's splendid day-by-day account of the 1787 Constitutional Convention.

I saw no inconsistency in being a socialist and also admiring the "public service gene" that prompted the founders, with their willingness to compromise and yet remain true to principle. "We the People," said archconservative Gouverneur Morris in the Preamble to the Constitution, "in order to...establish Justice..."⁸² Justice!

As industrialization replaced the agrarian economy during the following decades, and as the beckoning American frontier to the West for a “new start” disappeared, the founders would have, I believed, come to see equality as a key element of justice, for the seed had already been implanted in the priceless words of the Declaration of Independence eleven years before: “all men are created equal.”

During the week of March 21, 1973, I moderated a panel on “Environmental Controls and Proposition 20.” It was in Monterey, at the civil law conference of the County Counsels and District Attorneys Association. Proposition 20 was the far-reaching “California Coastal Conservation Act,” adopted by the voters in November 1972 to protect the spectacular 1,072-mile California shoreline.

In the meantime, Jim Jones went about, in his systematic way, to preempt any future attacks.

First, he invited friendly, social justice-oriented reporters to come to Redwood Valley for face-to-face interviews, and to investigate Temple members’ care homes.

Second, in support of “freedom of the press,” Jones arranged for money grants to be given to twelve newspapers, a newsmagazine, and a television station.

Third, he set out to befriend every liberal organization he could think of, particularly prestigious ones like the American Civil Liberties Union. After arranging for a gift to be given to the ACLU in his name, he qualified to be a “sponsor” of the Northern California chapter.

Soon he was invited to an ACLU party in honor of the author of a best-selling book on World War II: *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*. Jones asked if I would go, and thus I noted: “Thursday, May 31, 1973. 8. William Shirer, Evening with—home of Alan and Carol Becker, 3699 Washington Street, SF.”

At eight o’clock that evening, Grace and I arrived at this palatial residence in Pacific Heights. Grace attracted a lot of attention with her sparkling looks, but above all for her freshness and directness, and for her utter lack of concern for people’s fame or status. One person who

went out of his way to engage with her was the famous brand-name designer (of, for example, the Coca-Cola script), Walter Landor.

Grace and I both played up the Temple as a force for social justice. I told Shirer, who was very friendly, about how we were trying to fight fascism, and how it was a shame that the people in Nazi Germany did not wake up soon enough to fight the fascism of Hitler. People at the party picked up on the numbers Jones was drawing.

Soon enough, Jones's PR campaign started paying off in other ways. A US congressman, George Brown, started inserting positive stories about the Temple's stand on freedom of the press in the *Congressional Record*.

During the summer of that same year, Jones loaded up the buses for another of his cross-country trips, stopping off in Washington, DC. Always the tactician, he ordered everybody to pick up trash, had the *Washington Post* called, and was rewarded with an August 18, 1973, editorial headlined "The Welcome Tourists":

"The hands-down winners of anybody's tourists-of-the-year award have got to be the 660 wonderful members of Peoples Temple Christian Church of Redwood Valley, Calif.—who bend over backward to leave every place they visit more attractive than when they arrive."⁸³

Jones also won over Carlton Goodlett, PhD, MD, president of the black National Newspaper Publishers Association, and also a leading figure in the politics of San Francisco. Goodlett, as reported by writer Kenneth Wooden, had given Jones an award, and responded most wryly to complaints by black ministers of Jones's inroads: "Listen, this man (Jones) looks to me like he's pretty successful in interpreting the functional gospel. I don't know what kind of whiskey he drinks, but if he drinks a special brand of whiskey, you better drink it yourselves."⁸⁴

FOREIGN DIPLOMACY

A sixth area of Jones's organizational ability was foreign diplomacy, as shown by his founding of Jonestown in December 1973, and by his thinking

ahead for the need for a foreign outpost. That had been occasioned by destabilizing events at both the national level and the Temple level.

During the course of that year, an astonishing set of destabilizing events was going on at the national level: the Watergate cover-up scandal. It arose from a June 17, 1972, burglary by Republican operatives of the Democratic National Committee's headquarters, on the sixth floor of the Watergate building complex in Washington, DC.

On November 7, 1972, before the cover-up acquired legs, Republican President Richard Nixon was reelected over Democrat George McGovern with 60.7 percent of the popular vote and by an electoral vote margin of 520 to 17.

On March 23, 1973, a US district judge, John Sirica, read a letter from a former Nixon aide, James W. McCord, who had been convicted by a jury of conspiracy, burglary, and wiretapping in the Watergate burglary:⁸⁵ "There was political pressure applied to the defendants to plead guilty and remain silent."⁸⁶

On May 17, 1973, the US Senate commenced public Watergate hearings. On June 13, the Watergate prosecutors found a memo, addressed to top Nixon adviser John Ehrlichman, describing in detail the plans to burglarize the office of the psychiatrist for Daniel Ellsberg, who had discovered and released the "Pentagon Papers." These documents revealed that the United States had secretly bombed Laos and Cambodia.

On June 25, like millions of others, I sat mesmerized before a television set, hearing the president of these United States accused, in sworn testimony by his former counsel. John Dean accused Nixon of being a party to a White House cover-up, including the offering of executive clemency to the burglary defendants.

On July 16, also on national television, Alexander Butterfield, a deputy to chief-of-staff H. R. Haldeman, admitted the existence of a secret taping system in the Oval Office of the president.

One of these tapes, as it would eventually become known, had the president explicitly advocating "cover-up" to Attorney General John Mitchell on March 22, 1973, the day before Judge Sirica read McCord's

letter on “political pressure.” Said Nixon on that tape, “I don’t give a shit what happens. I want you all to stonewall it, let them plead the Fifth Amendment, cover-up or anything else, if it’ll save it—save the plan.”⁸⁷

On August 29, Judge Sirica ordered Nixon to turn over nine White House tapes. Nixon then offered “summaries,” a compromise turned down by Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox.

Then, on Saturday, October 20, 1973, Nixon ordered Attorney General Richardson and Deputy AG Ruckelshaus to fire Cox. When they refused and then resigned, Nixon appointed Robert Bork to be acting attorney general. Bork proceeded to fire Cox. FBI agents then sealed off the offices of both Richardson and Ruckelshaus.

Public reaction to the “Saturday Night massacre” was enormous. Congress viewed Nixon’s dismissal of Cox as a gross abuse of presidential power. It led to sixteen impeachment resolutions in the House of Representatives. Nixon finally agreed to Sirica’s order, but asserted that two of the tapes never existed. On a third tape there appeared an eighteen-minute gap.

As these surreal events unfolded, it seemed as if both American democracy and the rule of law were being seriously undermined. The Bill of Rights no longer seemed secure to protect groups outside the mainstream.

There were even rumors of Nixon’s planning to defend his presidency by military action. On November 15, 1973, I clipped from the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* an article by mainstream political columnist Jack Anderson. Its headline set juices flowing: “THE COUP THAT COULD BE.”

Certain officials at the highest level, said Anderson, being mindful of Nixon’s combative reaction toward his Watergate detractors, “wonder” whether he would assume “emergency powers” to keep the presidency if he were to be confronted by “impeachment.”⁸⁸

While all these destabilizing events were going on at the national level, there was occurring a destabilization crisis in Peoples Temple. It had been initiated on Labor Day weekend, 1973, when eight Temple college students defected.

In light of all these 1973 events, prudence seemed to dictate that the Temple, as a self-described socialist organization, set up a retreat. I learned that, in 1963, Jones visited a small nation on the northeast portion of South America while traveling from Brazil. It was then called British Guiana, and was now called Guyana. Jones said the people were friendly, the people were black, and the people spoke English.

Researching the matter, I learned the government was now avowedly socialist, the country needed hard dollars, and the country was under populated. It seemed, therefore, the perfect place for a retreat and agricultural mission.

On October 8, 1973, as chairman of the board of Peoples Temple, I called together the directors for a meeting. We met in Redwood Valley for the purpose of voting on Resolution 73-5: Should the board of directors of Peoples Temple vote to authorize establishment of a branch church and agricultural mission in Guyana?

All seven board members—Jim Jones, Marceline Jones, Carolyn Moore Layton, Linda Sharon Amos, Archie Ijames, Michael _____, and I—showed up. All seven of us voted in the affirmative.

And thus began the enterprise called Jonestown.

Authoritarian



ON LABOR DAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1973, upon discovering that eight college students had, without warning, defected from Peoples Temple, Jim Jones acted as if he'd been struck by lightning. These were four interracial couples with great promise. Shortly thereafter, the "Coca-Cola Revolutionaries," as Jones would one day mock them, sent him a manifesto giving their reasons for leaving:

"Staff," they said, "have wiped out progressive and revolutionary thought."

"Where," they asked, "is the black leadership, where is the black staff and black attitude?"⁸⁹

One of the eight was Jim Cobb, a black star athlete with great leadership potential, and a person highly admired by those who knew him.

Whether Jones mocked them or not, I was not wise enough to see that Jones's reaction to these defections was based on control, not love. Nor was I wise enough to see the far-reaching implications in a new, authoritarian role assumed by Jones to deter future defections.

This role involved a seventh area of Jones's organizational talent, benignly labeled "catharses." It was a talent he would exercise during all of 1974 through 1976, while all the other events affecting Peoples Temple rolled on.

In the meantime, in February 1974, a physician at Ukiah General Hospital asked if I would revive the defunct Mendocino County chapter of the "Heart Association of the Redwood Empire." In order for people in the Ukiah Valley to see that Peoples Temple cared for their

community, I agreed to become the chapter's president. This responsibility would last two full years and would turn out to be a meaningful, even pleasurable, experience.

Temple member Jean Brown, with her charm and kindness, joined me to run it. Everybody seemed to love Jean. She was the appealing face of Peoples Temple leadership. We put together a prestigious board, mounted a fund-raising drive, and got recognized as a chapter doing particularly well.

Soon I was invited to the annual state convention of the California Heart Association Directors, held in Indian Wells: "Friday, May 17, 1974. 10. SF Airport. Leave by AIR CALIFORNIA. Ar. Palm Springs 11:30."

At the Friday night banquet, the television was on in another room showing something incredible, in real time: a Los Angeles police versus Symbionese Liberation Army shootout, with tear gas and fire. I was riveted and kept going back and forth from the banquet to the TV screen, where the shootout continued for two hours.

The SLA was a prison-originating militant group that, in November 1973, murdered an Oakland school superintendent. To gain publicity leverage for the release of two members charged with that murder, the SLA, on February 4, 1974, kidnapped publishing heiress Patty Hearst, a student at the University of California, Berkeley.

Patty Hearst was then subjected to SLA indoctrination, causing her—within a mere thirteen days of her capture—to express, on tape, SLA ideology. She soon announced she would use the name "Tania."

On April 15, Patty/Tania participated, holding a rifle, in the robbery of a branch of the Hibernia Bank at 1450 Noriega Street in San Francisco, during which two civilians were shot. Security camera footage caught her holding the rifle, and also yelling commands at bank customers in Swahili.

Six SLA members had now, this May 17, been discovered in a house in Los Angeles with automatic weapons. When the SLA refused a police request to come out, the police sent in tear gas and were met by heavy bursts of automatic gunfire, after which the house caught fire. All the SLA members died. Patty/Tania was not present in that house.

It was hard to believe that the six SLA members—one a young, upper-middle-class former cheerleader at Montgomery High School in Santa Rosa—would commit suicide for such an outlandish organization. It seemed even more incredible that a young, upper-class woman could be brainwashed into becoming a totally different—gun-toting and homicidal—person in a mere ten weeks. There had to be some explanation other than mind control.*

After the September 1973 college student defections, Jones set out in a practical way to deal with the potential of further defections. He reorganized the existing “planning commission” for a purpose going far beyond planning: “catharsis” sessions based on group criticism and self-criticism. They would, in one sense, be modeled on the “encounter groups” taking root throughout what would be called “new-age California.” They would differ, however, in the leader’s manipulating these catharses for the purpose of group solidarity.

Even more extreme than this, Jones was taking utopian socialism into a new dimension: the destruction of the individual ego, and its replacement by the group ego. The sum of it all was that Jim Jones was setting out to create the “new human.”

In pursuit of this objective, Jones set an ambitious schedule of planning commission (PC) meetings—twice a week or more. Starting with about fifty Temple leaders, the number would eventually reach 115.

At the outset of these meetings, Jones would deal with business matters, particularly the Guyana agricultural mission, which was an enormous undertaking.

Then, upon a subtle or open cue from Jones, a person in the room would stand up and then proceed to criticize someone else in the room for not living up to the highest standards of socialism. The reasons ranged from making simple mistakes, failing to follow directions, quarreling, romantic “compensating,” gossiping, or hedonistic conduct of

* Patty/Tania eluded capture until November 18, 1975. She was convicted of the Hibernia Bank robbery and sentenced to seven years in prison. She served twenty-one months before her sentence was commuted by President Jimmy Carter. She was later pardoned by President Bill Clinton.

any sort. The person singled out had to stand up, accept criticisms without being defensive, and then had to target some other person in the group.

After witnessing some of these meetings, I decided they were, thank you very much, not for me. I was accepting of all my flaws. It was hard to believe, however, that even the intellectual members of PC were so willing to put up with it.

Only later would I come to see that there was a combination of three ingredients apparently at work. One writer has aptly applied two of these to Peoples Temple members—"an overwhelming desire to do good" and "an existential awareness of major destructive forces in the world."⁹⁰ There was also a third ingredient important to some members, as would be revealed by the personal testimony of the Temple's leading intellectual: the need for a Nietzschean superman or "overman."⁹¹

This ideal human being, said Friedrich Nietzsche, the nineteenth-century German philosopher, "possesses...the courage to claim...the right to rule, the courage to feel a sense of reverence toward himself,"⁹² Nietzsche himself defining "good" to be "[a]ll that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself in man."⁹³

Only a few have been fully able to act on this Nietzschean standard of will to power—and thereby, to become, "in fact, no mere man but a master, a superman, an overman," these rare examples including "Alcibiades, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Cesare Borgia, and Napoleon."⁹⁴ In addition to "will to power," the main qualities of these men were "hardness, courage, and creativity," which allow one "to operate without norms because one is creating new ones."⁹⁵

Richard Tropp was this Peoples Temple and PC member who would, one day, provide an account of how, especially, the apocalyptic and Nietzschean factors had coalesced in his own soul. Starting from an unpromising background, he achieved both culturally and academically. "I started out," he would write, "in the Bedford-Stuyvesant, grandson of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Lower middle class upbringing in suburbs on Long Island, and did very well in school. Deep interest in music, and studied cello from age nine. Went to University of

Rochester, where I majored in English and comparative literature and developed intellectual interests.”

He read the works of celebrated intellectuals of the age. Finding none of this satisfying, he became “consumed” by thoughts of the imminent destruction of the world: “Studied with Norman O. Brown, Hayden White, other excellent teachers. Interests in existentialist philosophers, drama, history of ideas, mysticism. Graduated with highest honors. Went to Europe on a travel scholarship. Lonely, depressed a lot, and felt that all I had learned was somehow an exercise in futility. I was seeking for something else. All intellectual friends, everything, seemed to be poised at the verge of total failure. Studied Beckett with Ihab Hassan, which had deep influence over me. Consumed with idea of apocalypse, and found my life directionless.”

He tried academia (under a coveted Woodrow Wilson fellowship), and then a wide gamut of counterculture experiences:

Tried to pursue academic route at Berkeley, 1965-66 on a Wilson Fellowship. I was supposed to go “to the top” in my field, but somehow I had profound dissatisfaction with it all. I equated academic life with death. After I received Masters, I had been experimenting with psychedelic drugs, and drifted into the “hip” culture of Berkeley, and my outlook became that of a confused radical Utopian. I lived on several communes, all disappointments. I was torn between several poles: intellectual, social conscience (I was a participant in civil rights demonstrations and marches, and by the mid-sixties I was attracted by revolutionary ideas), transcendence (the urge to overcome, to become “enlightened,” to have supreme-awareness type experiences). Also hedonistic side of personality that kept me from concentration anywhere.

He taught at a leading black university, where a rebel spirit manifested:

In late 1967, I accepted a teaching position at Fisk University in Nashville. I became involved in everything from radical politics,

supplying some of the kids there with good marijuana from New York, teaching very offbeat (for Fisk) classes that got me in trouble with the faculty and administration. I ran in a lot of circles, and finally, when the year was up, the administration decided that they had enough of me. I had planned to leave anyway. Back to Berkeley to study classical Indian music with Ali Akbar Khan. The other pole. Music—culture—search for transcendence. I was seeking for something. Berkeley was a nirvana supermarket, and I was a shopper. Very unhappy.

He eventually made it to Mendocino County:

I was accepted in a teaching post at Santa Rosa Junior College (back to the nipple of knowledge). But a few weeks before I was to start, I went through some kind of change—I again feared I would “die” in the college. I made a spur of the moment decision to move to Mendocino County and mine jade with a friend of a friend. My girlfriend and I settled in Redwood Valley in a cabin in late 1969. The jade business lasted two months. I was unemployed, drifting. Looking for people with whom to buy land and start a community. I had some plans—fairly Utopian. But never could seem to find the right people. There were either too far one way or another, yet at the same time (typically) I was too far from them.

In Mendocino County he found the resolution he was seeking. It was personified in a Nietzschean “overman,” who qualified for this high designation in a striking way:

I met Jim Jones in the spring of 1970. In Peoples Temple I have found the synthesis I was always looking for, personified in Jim Jones. At once a spiritual teacher, a down-to-earth human being, a person who represents to me the Nietzschean

“overman” who builds that transition between the human animal and the human being. And who is not one to transcend for himself, but who has sacrificed himself for the cause of human overcoming on a myriad of levels. I have never met any person who brings those seemingly disparate and mutually exclusive worlds together. He is a psychic technician, a person with a strong, extraordinary imaginative/mind/ power who uses that power for good.⁹⁶

There was no way that Richard Tropp, having found psychological stability via Jim Jones, would object to Jones’s authoritarian PC manipulations to create the New Human.

At the national level, President Nixon, on August 5, 1974, finally released the transcripts of three tapes that revealed he had knowledge of a cover-up even before March 1973, and that he had ordered, personally, a halt to the investigation by the FBI.⁹⁷

Nixon’s die-hard defenders, including Republican Senator Barry Goldwater, considered this the “smoking gun” evidence sufficient to support one of the articles of impeachment. That charge stated that the president had “engaged personally” in conduct designed “to obstruct the investigation of the Watergate break-in,” and “to cover up, conceal, and protect those responsible.”

On August 8, 1974, Nixon announced his resignation for the next day, August 9, saying he did not have any longer a strong enough political base.

One month later, on September 8, the new president, Gerald Ford, gave Nixon an unconditional pardon for all federal crimes that he may have committed or taken part in.

Whether one agreed with the pardon or not, most Americans knew Gerald Ford to be a decent man who, looking at the big picture, wanted to spare the country any further tearing apart. Nixon had taken a real pounding in the media and had done salutary things for the environment, so I was not angry over the pardon.

In December 1974, back at the Temple level, Jim Jones decided to have some of his people, including Grace, visit the agricultural project in Guyana. He had Norman Ijames, our pilot, charter a plane.

By that time, however, Jones had—just like Richard Nixon in his own way—gotten cocky. All had been going well, with no recent attacks and with people flocking to his meetings. So he told Mike Prokes to organize a high-powered healing service in a Catholic church in Georgetown, Guyana. When I told Jones in the strongest terms not to do it, he brushed me off.

The December 30 healing service at the Sacred Heart Church turned into a fiasco. The ecumenically oriented priest thought it was to be “a prayer service and a little healing.” Afterward, the priest, Father Andrew Morrison, wrote an article in the *Catholic Standard*, disassociating Sacred Heart from “the alleged healing service.”

Jones went into overdrive damage control, sending Karen Layton and Johnny Moss Jones and others, all attractive clean-cut members, to meet with ministers and officials, to minimize the healing service, and to apologize all over the place.

When Jones returned to the United States from that trip, he took me aside to say he had greatly misjudged the public reaction. He wondered if his Redwood Valley years and cross-country trips had made him lose touch with the masses. He said he would now try to regain his touch, by concentrating on the big cities.

For the first time since that *Ukiah Daily Journal* letter about Judge Winslow’s “prejudiced” opponents in May 1968, I allowed myself to see Jones’s clay feet as a strategist. I also began to see how stressed his PC people were from the catharses.

In February 1975, I went to a PC meeting. I mentioned that “we” had to start being “more humane” to people.

Jones did not need a paranormal gift to sense the attack. “Do you think,” he responded with a hint of acid in his tone, “you are in a position to know what’s humane better than I?”

The aftermath of Jim Jones's December 1974 Guyana trip was ironic. While diminishing my trust in Jones as a strategist, it had done the opposite for Grace's commitment to Peoples Temple.

Grace came back from her Jonestown visit a transformed person. She was full of energy, asked what she could do for the Temple, and was made administrator of the Redwood Valley project center. This was the major complex of buildings in the little town. She made her office beautiful with plants and paintings, and became the alluring face of Peoples Temple to the outside world.*

During this time Grace, warm to me but estranged, became close with Walter Jones, a general contractor who was working in the bus garage next door. I accepted the relationship—Walter was a hard-working, kind-hearted man—and blamed myself. But when I saw how “principled” Grace had become, I lusted to have her back, and I praised her to everyone, including Jones.

Despite my disillusionment with Jones over the Guyana healing service—and his authoritarianism, generally—I rationalized that he was accomplishing far more good than bad. The Temple welcomed and empowered the rejects of the earth, the underclass: drug addicts, prison parolees, grade-school drop-outs, witnesses to racial violence, and emotionally wrecked victims of rural destitution or the urban ghetto.

I still saw our mission in Peoples Temple as being Christ's admonition to honor “the least.” One such person was Henry Mercer.

Henry, a black man, had first come to a Temple service in early 1973. He was born in Jessup, Georgia, on April 3, 1885. While a union steward in Philadelphia, he had been blinded by tear gas and hospitalized. One day he heard Jim Jones on a New Jersey radio station, over which Jones had been broadcasting since visiting Father Divine's Peace Mission in Philadelphia in 1971.

* Grace told me later that the change in her attitude was due to her resigning herself to the thought she could never leave the organization, and therefore she might as well keep criticism to a minimum by just losing herself in activity.

Henry had witnessed oppression of both blacks and whites: "I went to school to the sixth grade. My daddy died when I was thirteen years old and I had to go to work to help my mother. I considered then that there was something wrong at that young age because I knew that I seen the white kids had something that I just couldn't have. I seen the oppression of all people, white and black."

He was personally threatened:

When I got to be a young man, I was working one night at the ice plant and a honkey picked me up in a car and said, "I just got to kill me a nigger tonight." And I was scared to death. He put a pistol to my head and drove all around. And he came back, he brought me back and said, "Well, you're a good nigger, go ahead and go to work. You ain't the one I was looking for." There was a time, if you was a black man, you couldn't come through there on the train, and if you did, they'd throw rocks at the train. I was working down at the depot one night, and we had a white fellow kill a black man on the train and nothing was done about it.

He witnessed the effects of lynching and was finally able to leave for the north: "I never saw a lynching, but I saw it after it happened. It's an ugly looking thing. What they do, they hang you up on the trunk of a tree and they'd cut your penis off and put it in your mouth... You were always in fear of your life and I was glad when I was big enough to leave [for Philadelphia]."

In Philadelphia he became a union steward, and after calling a strike, suffered the consequences: "I went to work for the Board of Education. During that time I was a union steward in the union and we got along pretty good. We had some terrible working conditions, where they worked women part-time. We demanded they work them eight hours. They claimed they couldn't work the women eight hours, so we had a meeting and decided to call a strike. That was around 1968. That's when I got it—I got my eyes blinded from tear gas."⁹⁸

Another of “the least” was Elsie Bell, a black woman born in Eudora, Arkansas, on July 11, 1918. She had first come to a Temple meeting at the Embassy Auditorium in Los Angeles on March 17, 1971.

She had been raised in destitute circumstances: “I was born in the country. I belonged to my grandmother and my granddad. I had no clothes. Had to make them out of adult underclothes. I was illegitimate. I don’t know who my father was. My mother rejected me and my grandmother accepted me. My mother had two children by her legal husband. That’s where my problems started, because I was resented. My grandmother had been a slave and had twelve children.”

She experienced abuse early on:

My stepfather began to molest me from the time I was very small. I was made to take care of the other children by my mother. If I let the children cry, my mother would beat me with a buggy whip. These were terrible beatings. If I did any little thing wrong, I would get beat. Only my grandmother intervened. I was light, the other children were dark. If I was dark maybe I wouldn’t have gotten beat so much, because my mother wouldn’t have hated me so much. The older I got, the more my stepfather would molest me. My grandmother moved out of the house in 1928. She fell dead on August 1, 1929, while carrying two buckets of water. I asked God why he did this to me. I was totally alone. There was misery all around me.

Like Henry Mercer, she witnessed the results of racial violence: “Where I lived blacks were getting shot. We would find their bodies in the woods.”

She got pregnant by her molester, was discarded by her mother, and was never told of the physiology of pregnancy:

From age ten to fifteen, things got worse. I finally got pregnant by my stepfather. My mother wanted me to be turned out of the house. It was a nightmare. I had never been out in the world.

I was fifteen and pregnant, had no education. Didn't know a thing, if the baby was going to come out of my mouth or what. I had to work like a dog. My mother threw me out pregnant and said that I was not good enough to be around people. I bore the child alone, with no midwife and no doctor. I was in labor for twelve hours. I didn't know about womanhood. I screamed and screamed. It was a beautiful boy child.

She received no love from church people: "I was sent away from the house when my mother's church friends would come. That is why I hate churches and preachers and 'church people.' I would never go to church or Sunday school. My stepfather was not through with me after I bore his child. He got me back in the house to be his servant until I ran away at seventeen."

Pregnant with another child, she experienced further misery: "I married while pregnant, but my husband kicked me out of the house. I was nine months pregnant when that happened. I walked for weeks with no place to stay. Church people who knew me wouldn't take me in. I was only allowed to stay on the porch. On the night my child was born, I walked twenty-five miles to get to a hospital."

She became a prostitute in order to feed her children: "I had seven children before I was out of my twenties. I got a job for ten dollars a week. I had to sell myself to get food for the children."

After being accused of whistling at a white woman, her son was institutionalized, with devastating results: "When my son was twelve years old, a white woman said he whistled at her, and he was sent to reform school. He went for three years, but I didn't have the money to get him out. But when I finally got him out at eighteen, he was a totally different person. He drank heavily. When he was twenty-one, he was charged with rape. I feel he was ruined in that reform school—it was a mental hospital, actually."

One day a white person came into her life and provided a needed benefit: "Light-skinned people. I can't say how much I detested them. I

had to work for them. My son was destroyed by whites. But Jim Jones told me, taught me that all whites are not the same. I am glad I met him. I had a stroke in 1968. I thought I was going to die. I said I can't die. My daughter needs me. I am much improved since I joined Peoples Temple. Jim Jones got plastic surgery done on my face and it was done beautifully."⁹⁹

For Monday, June 23, 1975, I had entered in my "month-at-a-glance" appointment book an entry: "PC." Jones had specifically asked me to come down to San Francisco for it. Unbeknownst to me, he had decided on a major gamble.

I drove down to San Francisco, worked in a back room of the San Francisco Temple on business matters, and some hours later went to the red-carpeted stage where the meeting was going on, to await my ride home. It had been a long meeting, and by the time I arrived it may have been as late as 3:00 a.m. As I was standing there in the back, Jones looked at me and spoke to the following effect:

"Tim, the other day, you said that you really loved Grace, and I am wondering what you meant by that in light of the fact that there is no such thing as disinterested romantic love. Given nature's response to population overcrowding, are you not, like all other men, a homosexual?"

I was taken aback, stunned, and I braced myself for my first catharsis. Grace, with worry on her face but love in her eyes, whispered: "Tim, just tell them what they want to hear."

I had always regarded homosexuals as a persecuted minority and, as part of a desire to "analyze" myself as well as to identify with the "oppressed," had experimented. But Jones was seeking falsification of identity. Samuel Johnson, the eighteenth-century British philosopher, had nailed it: "You don't call a man an ironmonger for buying and selling a pen knife."

"No, Jim," I answered. "I am not."

A palpable shock rippled across the room. There were 85 to 115 loyalists present, none of whom probably expected Jones's attorney would defy him in public, much less amid a group of zealots. After some time, Jones, smoldering, said, "Well, we'll let Tim think about it."

So I did. I decided, on the long ride home to Redwood Valley, that I could still keep my paternity promise, and could still work for a utopian society, but from a friendly stance outside of Peoples Temple. A loyal exit, however, could not be done in Ukiah, where I was a conspicuous member. When the opportunity presented itself, I would move elsewhere and exit anonymously.

Still, I was simmering over the confrontation. The next day, Jones called me to say: "Please don't tell Marceline about what happened." Then, a few days later, he took me aside to say: "Tim, I feel convicted about what happened." As I thought about that comment, I questioned its sincerity if Jones was trying to express remorse, because I had never heard Jones apologize about anything.

Once, I had loaned Jones a Sheaffer wrap-around, fine-point fountain pen, which he returned with the nib violently twisted. He offered no apology, which I then attributed to his not being aware of the damage. Now, however, I took Jones's present words as a sign of his feeling convicted for having gambled and lost.

I did, however, change my lifestyle. I ceased buying my suits at the Salvation Army thrift store and went down to Cable Car Clothiers in San Francisco. I bought gym clothes and took John Victor to the Calpella School after work, where we played together on the exercise field.

Some weeks later, most likely in September 1975, there came a moment that would haunt me over and over in the years to come and would cause me to harangue myself repeatedly with the words *idiot... idiot...idiot!* I showed up in San Francisco at a PC meeting, unexpectedly. When Jones saw me come in, he took me aside and said these exact words: "Whatever happens tonight, Tim, I want you to know that I do not believe in suicide." Then, during the meeting, he passed out wine all around, and after everyone had drunk some, said that everyone would die in forty-five minutes. None did.

Since Jones looked so damned sincere when he told me he did not believe in suicide, and since he had invested so much time and energy in building up Peoples Temple, and since I had never had a single suicide

thought in my life, the whole subject being incomprehensible to me, I chalked the episode up to a psychological drama to help people face their mortality, instead of seeing it for what it was: Jim Jones selling out, at that very instant, to Satan.

A few weeks after this, I happened to be in San Francisco on some legal business unrelated to Peoples Temple. I was tired and decided to drop in at the San Francisco headquarters. Jim Jones happened to be there. He was sitting on the stage with Carolyn Layton and Terri Buford.

As soon as he saw me, Jones extended his hand with some pills, saying, "Here, Tim, this will give you energy." Something in my puritanical background kicked in, and I said, "No, thanks, I prefer not to use drugs." Years later, I came to believe that the pills were methamphetamine. I interpreted this as one more occasion where some force had intervened to save me from crossing over into the abyss.

For four months after the June 1975 confrontation, I continued to be in tension with Jim Jones. Then, around the first of November, he moved his full-time residence to an apartment in the Peoples Temple building in San Francisco. Suddenly, the tension eased, and his volatility went into remission.

Jim Jones's era of celebrity was positioned to begin.

CHAPTER 8

Celebrity



ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1975, the day following a City of San Francisco primary election, I got a call at my Ukiah courthouse office from Willie Brown, the brilliant politician who represented San Francisco in the California State Assembly.

The assemblyman wanted me to set up a meeting between Jim Jones and George Moscone, who had made the mayoral runoff. Moscone, a liberal, would be facing the fiery conservative, John Barbagelata, in the general election on December 11.

Early in the morning on November 13, I came down from Ukiah to San Francisco. First I met Jones at the Temple's building on Geary Boulevard. Then, at 8:00 a.m., Jones, Mike Prokes, and I met with Moscone at his campaign office on Mint Street, a short block up from the *San Francisco Chronicle* building.

At the meeting, Jones told Moscone he might be able to find some volunteers to help get out the vote for the runoff in the black sections of San Francisco. Moscone did not offer him any deal.

In the meantime, I had been keeping up efforts to keep the tension between Jones and me under wraps. On Sunday, September 21, 1975, I took Marceline Jones down to Stanford to hear President Gerald Ford dedicate the new law school buildings.

It was the first occasion I'd had to spend quality time with Marceline, and I was struck by her sweet but melancholy graciousness. She seemed like a bird caught in a gilded cage. It became obvious that her life was her children.

Marceline had been a twenty-one-year-old nursing student at Memorial Hospital in Richmond, Indiana when Jim Jones, then working as a hospital orderly, as an eighteen-year-old just finishing high school, proposed to her.

Coming from a highly respected, upper-middle-class Methodist family, whose father was a Republican member of the city council, Marceline Baldwin got swept off her feet by this energetic young orderly. He seemed on his way, at the very least, to becoming a fine hospital administrator, so attentive was he to medicine and so concerned for the down-and-out. They got married on June 12, 1949, at the Baldwin family home.

The day following my trip with Marceline, I flew down to Los Angeles for the California State Bar Convention at the Century Plaza Hotel. When I returned to San Francisco, I arrived with a renewed appreciation for the cause.

A prominent San Francisco attorney, a friend who would one day become a judge, had taken me aside at the convention. He was deeply bothered by the loneliness of life for old people in America, including his own parents.

He had, he said, come by the Temple one day and witnessed the youngsters helping, ever so kindly, the oldsters board the buses. He could not get over how wonderful it was for our young to be part of the lives of the old.

Six weeks after the Stanford dedication visit—and two days before the December 11, 1975, runoff mayoral election in San Francisco—I set off on an overseas banking mission.

The mission was based on a memorandum I had prepared the preceding year but never acted upon once Nixon resigned. Temple funds were in the millions. We wanted to set up a banking system as secret as possible to thwart any hostile forces in the future.

In 1974, I had driven down to the San Francisco Public Library to learn about numbered accounts and had found out they were utterly simple. You merely go to a foreign bank that does numbered accounts and ask that you, as a depositor, be given a number like “5-Ring.” There would be two or three officials in the bank given this information, each

being instructed that when any deposit ticket came in for "5-Ring," the funds were to go to your particular account. That was the total mystique of a numbered account.

I wrote up a memorandum surveying Switzerland, Netherlands Antilles, Bermuda, Caymans, New Hebrides, and the following: "Panama: special treaty with US. Dollar in Panama on legal tender par with Panamanian dollar. One of the few Latin American countries placing no restrictions on flow of currency into or out of the country. Banks offer numbered accounts like Switz, and secrecy laws cover identity of owners of Panamanian corporations as well. No corporate or capital gains tax, but does tax personal income and property. Organizing a corporation is cheap and easy, business regs are minimal. Stable currency."

Since all Temple monies had income taxes fully paid on them by the donors, and since the Temple was a legitimate tax-exempt nonprofit corporation, the Temple, unlike many other depositors, would not be setting up a numbered account system for tax-evasion purposes.

The plan was to retain a Panamanian lawyer to organize two Panamanian corporations, two being required in the extremely unlikely case that one got looted because of the bearer-stock provision. The lawyers would name themselves as initial directors, publicly known. They would immediately appoint trusted Temple members as their secret successors. The secret Temple-member board would appoint a secret Temple member to be a financial officer, who in turn would monitor secret numbered accounts in two Swiss banks located in Panama.

For further secrecy, the corporations would issue "bearer stock," rather than stock registered to named persons. Whoever possessed the stock would have the power to change the board of directors, and thus gain access to the money in the numbered accounts. For further protection, we would place the stock certificates in bank safe-deposit boxes in two other countries, such as Bermuda and the Netherlands Antilles, with different trusted Temple members having the respective keys.

The Temple would then order the manager of the Bank of America in Ukiah to wire Temple monies periodically to the numbered accounts. Thus would the monies be protected, and thus would they remain accessible for the millions required to establish a sound Guyanese agricultural mission.

There would be only one risk, and in ordinary circumstances it would be too great: making sure the possessors of the bearer stock were utterly principled and trustworthy, or else the whole structure would be a house of cards and come tumbling down, decimating Temple prosperity. Only an organization that bred principled, altruistic people could pull it off. We had many such people.

Given combative future charges that I manipulated the December 11, 1975, San Francisco mayoral runoff election, my absence from California during that time happened to get noted, fortuitously, in my *Seven Star Diary*.¹⁰⁰

Tuesday, December 9, 1975



7:05 a.m. SFO—PanAm #515 to Panama
10:50 p.m. Arrive Panama City



Saturday, December 13, 1975

7:00 a.m. Leave Panama City Airport on Taca Int'l Air...for San Jose, Costa Rica
7:00 a.m.—Arrive San Jose



Sunday, December 14, 1975

7:30 a.m.—Leave San Jose on Lacs Air #620 for Miami
11:15 a.m.—Arrive Miami

1:05 p.m.—Leave Miami on Braniff #72

4:05—Arrive Denver



Tuesday, December 16, 1975

9:00 a.m. Leave Denver

10:23—Arrive SF.

During the three days in Panama City, I retained an attorney, arranged for two “bearer stock” corporations to be set up, and opened up a numbered account with the Credit Bank Suisse.

By the time I returned to San Francisco, the mayoral runoff had come and gone. Moscone had beaten Barbagelata by 4,370 votes. Although Jones never mentioned to me what he did to get out the black vote, the estimate made by some that he sent two hundred volunteers to do so sounded right.

It was a watershed election, for it resulted in the three top executive jobs in the city being occupied by liberals. In the November 4 general election, liberal Joe Freitas, a newcomer, won the district attorney race, and liberal Richard Hongisto was reelected sheriff.

A few days after returning from Panama, I picked up a *San Francisco Bay Guardian* newspaper, which had a favorable article on the newly elected “reform” DA. Here was a “loyal defection” chance. No time was wasted in setting up an appointment.

I met Joe Freitas at his labor-law office in the financial district and asked him to hire me for a supervisory position. He said he wished he had known of my interest, but all those slots had now been filled. He encouraged me to fill out an application anyway. During the interview I told Joe about my involvement with Peoples Temple. He told me he had not heard of either the Temple or Jones.

Despite his late 1975 entry into urban politics, Jones was about to master it as if he had been doing it all his life. His only prior big-city

political experience was as executive director of the Human Rights Commission in Indianapolis.

For many months Jones and Prokes had been doing a full-court press on the famous *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Herb Caen. On March 2, 1976, it dramatically paid off. Jim Jones won over “the master of ‘three-dot-journalism,’”¹⁰¹ who would one day be awarded a special Pulitzer Prize for “extraordinary and continuing contribution as a voice and conscience of his city.”¹⁰² And Herb Caen would have another credit to his name: triggering Jim Jones into celebrity status.

First, in his article, Herb Caen showed Jones in the company of the city’s movers and shakers: “Ranged along the all-important east wall of Bardelli’s a few noons ago, ex-Mayor Elmer Robinson, next to ex-Mayor George Christopher, next to Assemblyman Willie Brown, next to Rev. Jim Jones, head of the Peoples Temple.”

Second, he made Jones look humble: “The Rev. Jones, head of an 8,000 member church, is soft-spoken, modest, publicity shy, and will not be pleased to see his name in the paper.”

Third, he compared Jones to “Santa Claus” for giving “sizable checks,” with letters of appreciation, to people and projects doing “good.”¹⁰³

On Sunday, March 21, 1976, there was a classic public relations service at the San Francisco Temple. Attending were a number of dignitaries, including American Indian Movement (AIM) leader Dennis Banks, Angela Davis, gay activist Harvey Milk, Joe Freitas, and Willie Brown, who had by now become a die-hard Jones supporter. I sat next to John Maher, head of the famous Delancey Street Foundation, relishing his sardonic sense of humor.

Along with upbeat music by the choir and band, Deanna Wilkinson, our “pitch-perfect songbird,”¹⁰⁴ sang in her haunting, black-gospel, heart-wrenching voice. Dennis Banks and Angela Davis talked about how happy the Temple children were.

People spoke glowingly of the love shown between blacks and whites. They spoke of how wonderful it was for Jones to be so courageous and outspoken a socialist. The entire meeting was the highest emotional

peak I had ever experienced in Peoples Temple. The underclass had people championing it with pizzazz and joy! For the moment I had a reignited appreciation for the cause.

One day, during the week of April 4, 1976, I was sitting in my office in Ukiah when my secretary said that the district attorney of San Francisco was on the line.

It was Joe Freitas. He told me he was being “crucified” in the press regarding a “voter fraud scandal.” The *San Francisco Examiner* had, the prior October, started making a huge deal out of people who voted in San Francisco while residing elsewhere. He had one specific question for me.

“Can you handle the press, Tim?”

“Probably as well as anybody.”

“Let’s meet,” Joe said.

On April 12, I met with Freitas and his capable top assistant, Daniel Weinstein. They offered me the job of special voter fraud prosecutor.

Friday, May 14, 1976, was my last day as assistant district attorney in Ukiah. The Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, which I had advised for six years, touched my heart with a resolution of commendation for “herculean labors” as a public attorney and county counsel.

Only in America, I thought, would government officials overlook ideology—my open espousal of socialism—for performance. I felt gratitude and sadness in leaving. The supervisors, along with DA Duncan James and County Administrative Officer Al Beltrami, had provided six happy years.

I was riding high. I had successfully managed to negotiate two worlds at one time: the Establishment and the counterculture. I had just received a heart-warming commendation from the board of supervisors. I had just been appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to the California State Advisory Council of the Legal Services Corporation. I was now embarking on a prestige job as a special prosecutor for the district attorney’s office of a major American city. The world was my oyster. Closer to reality, I was like a man who had just jumped off the fifty-second story of the Bank of America building in San Francisco and then said to himself, halfway down, *So far...so good.*

On Monday, May 17, I officially started my new job as assistant district attorney in San Francisco. It was in the gray, fortress-like Hall Of Justice, at 880 Bryant Street. Freitas gave me an office a few doors down from his, in Room 307, on the third floor's "felony row."

My new residence, in which I was a boarder, was a bedroom in the home of Temple secretary Leona Collier, at 1033 Page Street, half a block up from Divisadero Street. My 1965 Ford station wagon was upgraded to a compact 1968 Toyota.

Two experienced DA investigators were assigned to me full-time. They were Bruce Austin and Ed Castagnetto. I told them they had to conduct themselves so openly and so fairly that, when placed on the witness stand, they could testify exactly as to how we had selected people to be prosecuted, and that no undue outside influence of any sort either promoted or stopped a prosecution. From that day forward, they participated in my every prosecutorial decision.

The people in San Francisco were polarized on how seriously to take voter fraud. One segment thought it an infraction offense. Another seemed to think it a prison offense. Instead of initiating prosecutions in the standard way by filing a complaint, I chose to use the grand jury so as to get their guidance, as officially representing the people.

After I presented the evidence in each case showing probable cause of guilt, and they returned their indictment, they could indicate either misdemeanor (jail potential) or felony (prison potential). The nineteen grand jurors were a conscientious group. They decided to vote for felonies.

We ended up prosecuting people representing various ranks of life: firemen, city officials, labor leaders, businessmen. No group was singled out. All the prosecutions were based on evidence vetted by the DA investigators.

In the meantime, on May 23, 1976, I went down to the Los Angeles Convention Center to introduce the speakers at a "spiritual jubilee." It was co-sponsored by Peoples Temple and the Black Muslims. An estimated ten thousand people showed up, including Los Angeles Mayor

Tom Bradley. There was great music, and it was an impressive event. Jones was in good form:

“With magnificent presence,” historian Tim Reiterman would later write, “Jones planted himself behind the microphone. ‘Peace, peace,’ he uttered, motioning for silence. ‘We are grateful of this symbolic merging of our two movements... If the Peoples Temple and the Nation of Islam can get together, anybody can.’”¹⁰⁵

On July 4, 1976—the two hundredth anniversary of our nation’s independence—Grace Stoen, by now head counselor of Peoples Temple, exerted hers. Immediately upon returning to Redwood Valley from a three-week Temple road trip, she defected, befriended by Temple member Walter Jones.

After “getting her head together,” she planned to return to get John, who was now living communally in the San Francisco Temple. Both Grace and I knew that John was being incredibly well cared for.

Grace’s was the most catastrophic defection yet. Jones went ballistic. He did not dare announce it to the membership because of its effect on morale. For Grace had by now become “gatekeeper” to Jim Jones. Although I had never witnessed Grace in this role, I’d heard enough to suspect she had become, possibly, the most loved person in the entire Peoples Temple for her qualities of generosity and compassion.

To make it more difficult for Jones to track her down, Grace went to Carson City, Nevada. The day after her arrival, she was sufficiently settled emotionally to call Jones. She refused to tell him of her whereabouts.

Jones made it clear he would not give up John. Further phone calls ensued, and a deal was made. Grace would come to a Temple meeting in Los Angeles over Labor Day weekend, and tell the people she had been on a mission, and in return she could see John.

Because we were estranged, I did not know why Grace left. Only later would I learn that a precipitating reason was her witnessing the rage of some PC members. They had pummeled a forty-year-old woman who had said that Jones was turning them all into robots.

I had two emotions about Grace's defection: grief because I still loved her, and anger because she had not told me of her plans. In addition, I was angry because my plans to defect were ruined. If I were to do so now, Grace no longer being part of the Temple, I would betray a solemn promise to guarantee Jones's full involvement in John's life.

After the defection, Jones sent Terri Buford to Grace's apartment above the Temple's office complex in Redwood Valley to see if there were clues to where Grace had gone. Terri discovered a host of my personal files in the attic, including some papers not immediately examined about a 1961 Berlin experience.

During this time, as part of a daily routine, I would go back to Leona's after work for a nap and then return to the DA's office by way of the Temple, so that I could visit with John. Pat Grunnet, his teacher, would rave about how altruistic John was and what an excellent example he was to the other children. Each visit was the nightly "high" that made a document-intensive workload seem light. John was sunshine.

On Labor Day weekend, Grace did come to a Temple service in Los Angeles to see John. The next day, after spending the night with John, she met with Jones. He tried to get her to come back to the Temple or at least tell him where she was living. She refused.

"Your wife," Jones told me after this, "is driving me insane. I have never dealt with a woman like her."

On September 30, 1976, I made what turned out to be a fateful and terrible decision regarding John Victor. Jones asked me to consent to John's temporarily being sent to Guyana, in the care of Joyce Touchette. I consented, figuring it was Jones's way to get Grace to come back to the Temple, and that it would indeed be temporary because Jones, like me, would want access to John, and because he too was now riding high and would not soon, if ever, be leaving for Guyana.

In the meantime, Jones had been looking for a way to have a testimonial banquet without it appearing to be initiated by him. He soon found a way.

On September 10, 1976, Jones sent buses two hundred miles south to Fresno on behalf of the "Fresno Four." These were *Fresno Bee* newspaper reporters, currently jailed for refusing to reveal their sources after publishing information about secret grand-jury proceedings.

Jones with his members, most of whom were black, picketed outside the jail for some four days on behalf of four white guys committed to freedom of the press. It was too good a story for the news media to pass up. The *Fresno Bee* published a shot of Jones carrying a picket sign that quoted a founding father: "If it were for me to choose between the government without the press or the press without government, I should not hesitate to choose the latter. —Thomas Jefferson."¹⁰⁶

It was also, like Herb Caen, another coup. The result was better than Jones expected. He even got a September 11 headline in the *New York Times*: "Jailing of Newsmen Protested on Coast: 10 Busloads of Church Members from San Francisco Picket Courthouse in Fresno."¹⁰⁷

After the Fresno Four got released, Jones invited them to San Francisco for his testimonial dinner. The date was Saturday evening, September 25, 1976.

An eye-opening array of notables assembled at Peoples Temple, 1859 Geary Boulevard, for a gala occasion—linen tablecloths, flowered table settings, candles, cello music, and everything—in honor of a one-time nobody born on the wrong side of the railroad tracks in rural Indiana.

At the head table was the lieutenant governor of California and his wife, Mervyn and Mrs. Dymally; San Francisco Mayor George Moscone; District Attorney Joe Freitas; and Assemblyman Willie Brown. At the various tables around the room sat the high and mighty of the political world and, stunningly, from the entire ideological spectrum: left-wing radicals, Democrats, Republicans, and right-wing reactionaries. No blood would be shed.

Steve Gavin, city editor of the *San Francisco Chronicle* was there. Police Chief Charles Gain was at my table. Avowed Communist activist Angela Davis was present. The avowed right-wing John Bircher, Walter Heady of Ukiah, came down, as did Marge Boynton, chairwoman of the

Republican Central Committee in Mendocino County. Former Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver also showed up.

The Fresno Four were introduced, and part of their letter of thanks was read: "There is no doubt that what you, Rev. Jones, and your flock did in Fresno...is the most eloquent testimony possible to the brotherhood of man."¹⁰⁸

Republican State Senator Milton Marks presented Jones with a plaque from the California State Senate, commending Peoples Temple as "an outstanding institution, which has shown that hope and love still reside in this city." Robert Mendelsohn, who was Mark's Democratic opponent, presented Jones with a certificate of honor from the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.

Reverend Cecil Williams gave Jones a plaque from his famous Glide Memorial Church. The deputy Guyanese ambassador to the United States, Claude Worrell, told everyone that Peoples Temple had "become a great part" of his government's "direction."

The master of ceremonies was Assemblyman Brown. He did the introduction for the evening's star:

"Jim Jones is a rare, rare, rare specimen. Jim Jones is a symbol of what we all ought to be about... Jim Jones is, in my opinion, a true human being. Let me present to you what you should see every day when look in the mirror in the early morning hours. Let me present to you a combination of Martin Luther King, Angela Davis, Albert Einstein..."¹⁰⁹

Jones just sat there, looking pious. Afterward, to thunderous applause, he stood up as nonchalantly as a king.

In the meantime, on September 14, 1976, Rosalynn Carter, America's future first lady, appeared for a rally at the Democratic headquarters on Market Street for her husband, Jimmy Carter. When it appeared that the crowd would be embarrassingly small, the state Democratic leaders called for help from Jones, who appeared with six hundred people.

Although Jones got more applause than anyone, Rosalynn and her advance team were delighted by his appearance and by his enthusiastic

people. Rosalynn, inimitably gracious to all she met, was so moved that she granted Jones's request for a private audience.

She met with Jones that evening at the Stanford Court Hotel at the top of Nob Hill. He later told me that he found Rosalynn Carter to be totally admirable, and that were it not for her being caught up in "the system," she would be "one of us."

Even though the face-to-face conversation had lasted a mere fifteen minutes, Rosalynn a few days later made a courtesy phone call to Jones. When Jones asked her if there was anything he could do for her, she said "no," adding that "Jimmy" had asked her to call him because of a letter he received in which Jones said "nice things" about him.

Jones would, later that fall, also be invited to confer with Walter Mondale, the vice-presidential candidate, on his private jet.

On November 2, 1976, the United States elected a new president, Jimmy Carter, who seemed to have a heart for the poor. It was satisfying to know he won.

In addition to politicians, Jones had shown an ability to impact others among the worldly wise. One Saturday night, October 9, I was working in the DA's office when Jones personally called me to say an investigator was doing surveillance on the Temple's Redwood Valley complex, and that he had the license number. He said it was probably the CIA, and I told him the CIA would not be so conspicuous.

To allay Jones's fear, I immediately called Hal Lipset, who had worked for us. Hal was reputed to be the premier private detective in America. He had been the chief investigator for Sam Dash on the Senate Watergate Committee. I had seen a fascinating movie, *The Conversation*, allegedly based on his life. He was a family man who hated guns—an idealist in a cynical profession. He was famous as inventor of the "bug in the martini olive."

Hal was interrupted at a party. He was very gracious, and soon called back to say the license number was connected to an automobile insurance company. A luncheon appointment was set up.

On October 26, I got in my 1968 Toyota and drove out to Hal Lipset's luxurious home on Pacific Avenue. He then drove me in his new Citroën

to a cooking school on Bush Street, where some of the fashionable young and older matrons of San Francisco were learning the art of fancy cooking. We were served high-quality wine and some beautifully prepared dishes.

Hal had just gotten out of the hospital, and it had been a harrowing experience, making him reassess things.

“You, Tim,” he said, “are doing the right thing by being part of a group that is trying to help the poor.”

America’s most celebrated private detective then turned to me, and said something that touched my heart: “When I retire I just want to come to the Peoples Temple and wait on tables.”

In the meantime, on October 18, Mayor George Moscone announced that Jim Jones would be appointed to the San Francisco Housing Authority, the agency that governed public housing. I had told Jones not to take it because it was a no-win situation, for middle-class San Franciscans would see public housing as one more welfare grant. Jones took it anyway.

At his swearing in, Jones told the mayor, “I think what you want from us is action, not words. I will vote my conscience.”

Action, at least, was to come, all right. The meetings soon became exciting as Jones, supported by his entourage of Temple members, articulated the rights of minorities and the poor. Eugene Chaikin, our full-time Temple attorney, came to keep Jones compliant with parliamentary procedure.

Before long, the housing authority had before it a truly dramatic issue. It was the proposed demolition of the International Hotel, on prime San Francisco commercial property at 848 Kearny Street, built the year after the devastating 1906 fire.

The hotel was inhabited by low-income people, including many Asians, and had been purchased by Taiwanese business people in the name of the Four Seas Investment Corporation. With plans to demolish the building, the corporation had served eviction notices on some eighty elderly tenants, and this was leading to a serious protest movement by “radicals.”

Jones soon decided he could be more effective for the tenants at the International Hotel, if he were made chairman of the housing authority. He asked me to call Moscone to apply pressure, which I did.

Moscone led me to believe he would call his appointees on the commission and tell them that Jones was his choice. I presume he did for, finally, on February 24, 1977, all opposition having been cleared, Jones would be elected chairman.

Jones had framed the International Hotel issue as impoverished tenants versus a greedy multinational corporation. He was supported by Sheriff Richard Hongisto, whom Jones admired as the most principled politician in San Francisco. Hongisto, however, found himself in the difficult position of being ordered by Superior Court Judge Ira Brown, Jr., to evict the tenants.

On Saturday, January 15, 1977, the Peoples Temple auditorium was filled with four thousand people for a Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday celebration. It was sponsored by the San Francisco Council of Churches, and was attended by the governor and the mayor. Jones, still true to form as an agitator, proceeded to present King as an anti-capitalist: "It is interesting that Martin Luther King was assassinated just when he was making the connection between racial exploitation and economic exploitation. He was a threat to the capitalists' drive for profits and exploitation."

In the meantime, Jones had actually produced on the International Hotel issue. Using his persuasive abilities, he got the housing authority to vote \$1.3 million in development funds to acquire the hotel and have it turned over to a nonprofit tenants group. However, the courts refused to stop the evictions, just as they would eventually succeed in blocking eminent domain proceedings.¹¹⁰

Jones then decided to take a stronger stand on the side of the tenants. On Sunday evening, January 16, 1977, he brought busloads of Temple members to join three thousand other "radicals." All of the protesters proceeded to ring the hotel, chanting. The next day, the *San Francisco*

*Examiner*¹¹ published an article with a dramatic headline: “No, no, no evictions’—5,000 march for tenants.”

First, the article proceeded to say that “about two thousand demonstrators” arrived on the buses of Peoples Temple, which had become an “increasingly active force” in San Francisco.

Second, it went on to quote Jim Jones as he framed the dispute: “We feel a foreign corporation... shouldn’t move out our elderly people. This is a chance for the system to prove it works.”

Next, it mentioned Jones’s somewhat audacious plan for the housing authority, which was “to buy the building and sell it to a nonprofit corporation so the hotel’s residents, mostly elderly Filipinos, can stay.”

I showed up with Jones that night to act as a go-between with the demonstrators and Hongisto’s aides. Police received word that a sniper was on the roof, and that Molotov cocktails were being poured. The tension, thick with potential violence, lasted past midnight. Finally it died down. I felt lucky to make it out of there unscathed.

Sheriff Hongisto, having refused to comply with Judge Brown’s order, got himself held in contempt and sentenced to five days in jail.

As a result, however, of his championing the tenants, including his ability to put so many supporting troops on the ground, Jones ended up gaining the admiration of progressives, leftists, and labor leaders. He had already, astonishingly as a white man, been accepted by many leaders in the black community.

During the course of my time in the DA’s office, I made friends with a black prosecutor, William Hunter, whom we called “Billy.” He had been a wide receiver, in the National Football League, for both the Washington Redskins and the Miami Dolphins. All in all, he was a prince of a man. He rendered the huge compliment of saying he detected no racism in me.

Oftentimes after work, Billy Hunter would come to my office and, without being defensive about it, talk about some of the problems he faced as a black man in an establishment profession such as ours.

I encouraged him to set up a black prosecutors association within the broader framework of the California District Attorneys Association, and he became a contributor to the monthly CDAAs journal. He would prepare his articles, and then together we would critique them sentence-by-sentence.

After Jimmy Carter was elected president, a number of highly qualified attorneys, including Daniel Weinstein, sought the president's appointment to the top federal prosecutorial job: US attorney for Northern California. Later, Billy Hunter decided to seek the position himself, which created tensions in the office.

Despite knowing of my support for Dan Weinstein, Billy Hunter made a promise to me. "Look," he said, "you have administrative skills, you know how to deal with people, you have compassion, and we get along well. I would like you to be my chief assistant if I get the appointment."

Billy Hunter, sure enough, would be true to his word.

During my stint in the San Francisco DA's office, it was my daily routine after work to amble over to a little bar across the street from the Hall of Justice. Known as La Fe's, it was dingy but homey. A lot of the deputy public defenders congregated there, as well as a few of the newly hired prosecutors. Fraternalization was encouraged by the Freitas regime.

I made friends with an attractive young female public defender investigator named Vicki. Because I was feeling very lonely, La Fe's became a haven.

One afternoon in November, a beautiful, statuesque black woman strode into La Fe's. She made every head turn. She was more than beautiful, for when Vicki glimpsed her, her reaction was immediate: "What an angelic face!"

I could not take my eyes off of that angelic face.

This was the woman, whom I am calling Barbara, whom Jim Jones would inquire about in Guyana five months later.

Barbara was a graduate of the most prestigious schools and yet was not full of herself. She had just been hired by Freitas as a prosecuting attorney. I took it upon myself to become Barbara's mentor, including

critiquing her first jury trial as a prosecutor. I became star-struck by her eyes.

One day in early December, Barbara was in my office when my two voter-fraud investigators, Bruce Austin and Ed Castagnetto, rushed in with a surprise.

"We just got the news," they said, "that you've been appointed Head of Special Prosecutions, and we would like to be your investigators."

Joe Freitas confirmed the appointment, saying that the voter-fraud prosecution was successfully over. The *San Francisco Examiner* had written an editorial saying we were doing a good job prosecuting voter fraud. We would end up getting thirty-seven convictions out of thirty-nine indictments.

What the DA wanted was for me to set up a new felony team that would investigate public corruption, organized crime, and delicate prosecutorial matters. What made it a dream job were such requirements as flying around the country to learn about organized crime syndicates.

This dream job was, of course, at risk if Grace were still to file divorce papers for John's custody. Any refusal to return John from Guyana would subject me to contempt proceedings in the California courts, such refusal after January 1, 1977, amounting to a felony. Since the future was unknown, however, I decided to put this undesirable prospect out of my mind and do the job as if it were to last indefinitely.

On Sunday, January 9, I flew to Memphis for an advanced organized crime workshop, my way paid for by the National District Attorneys Association. I attended workshops on such subjects as intelligence coordination, and on syndicates like the Cosa Nostra. *You mean, I thought, I am being paid to do this?*

There I met an attorney who had prosecuted the kidnapper, in February 1974, of J. Reginald Murphy, who now was editor of the *San Francisco Examiner*, when he was editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*. This prosecutor was so enthused about the death penalty that he wore a button with a noose on it. I argued vociferously with him against capital

punishment, contending that it was inhumane and not a deterrent. He said I was the first prosecutor he had ever met with such strong views.

On my return to San Francisco, I continued on as before. On February 1, 1977, however, Grace dropped the bomb. She called, saying she was going to “take action” regarding John, who was now five years old.

Knowing how attorneys work, I figured it would be three weeks before a summons and complaint would be ready to be served, so I set a date to leave for February 16. I hoped against hope for the impossible—that things might work out with Grace, thereby enabling me to return to the DA’s office in six months. Joe Freitas, who had been so good to me, was very accommodating.

On February 16, I did not get out of the grand jury room until around 6:45 p.m. When I got to my office, Barbara was there, waiting to say good-bye. She had never led me along, but I had fallen in love with her.

After hurriedly packing up my remaining things, I headed over to the Temple at 1859 Geary Boulevard. Maria Katsaris presented a one-way ticket, and Tom Adams drove me to the airport for my National Airlines night flight to Miami. The next day, after various Caribbean stops, I arrived at Timehri Airport in Georgetown, Guyana.

Life would never be the same.

Machiavellian



AFTER JIM JONES LEFT SAN FRANCISCO on June 18, 1977, and touched down in a country where he could become an absolute dictator, it would take less than two weeks for him to reveal that a major promise—one he had made to the members presently in Jonestown—was a lie. A lovely young black woman, Yulanda Crawford, would one day come forward as a witness and say, “I was in Guyana, South America, as a member of Peoples Temple from April 1, 1977, until June 29, 1977. Jim Jones prior to June said that people would be coming to live in Guyana for a temporary period of time. In June, Jim Jones stated that the people he brings over will be staying in Guyana ‘permanently.’”¹¹²

Prior to that June reversal, I believed that Jones lied only when it was for a “noble” end. In the months ahead, as I would discover, Jones’s willingness to lie would be so constant that it could be only for power. He had thus become, in practice, a follower of Niccolò Machiavelli, the “Italian political theorist whose book, *The Prince* (1513), describes the achievement and maintenance of power by a determined ruler indifferent to moral considerations.”¹¹³

On Saturday, June 18, 1977, after seeing that “New West Burglary” headline at the Oakland airport, I quickly recovered and got on a plane for Denver. I met my parents at Stapleton International Airport. Ah, the beauty of family! They were overjoyed to see me. They were too diplomatic and loving to ask me any probing questions about what, specifically, I had been up to overseas. Learning that I had stopped off in

Washington, they proudly suspected, as they would later disclose, that their eldest son might be with the CIA.

I needed space to think out my future relationship to Peoples Temple. Pierre, the brother of Francoise, Jonathan's wife, offered me the use of his apartment flat in Paris at 74 rue des Vignoles. I took advantage of Pierre's kind offer. In Paris, however, I felt a desperate need to connect with my estranged wife, who had gone "underground."

From Paris, I called Jonathan and asked him to find Grace and get her to call me. With detective skill he located her. He then called me to say she was going to go public against Jim Jones in *New West* magazine. I knew this would be a moment of truth for Jim Jones, for Grace was so truthful and persuasive he could not—and knew he could not—best her on television.

Indeed, Grace's appeal was ubiquitous, as exemplified by the reaction of the primary reporter in the *New West* story, who met her on the very Saturday of that "New West burglary" headline: "Grace was beautiful. [Marshall] Kilduff was speechless. He extended his hand and Grace smiled shyly."¹¹⁴

So I wanted to stop Grace. I believed her going public would ruin the possibility of a negotiated truce for the custody of John. At Jon's behest, Grace called me. She was cold. But she agreed to meet me in Colorado.

I immediately took a Trans World Airlines flight back to the United States. On Tuesday, July 12, I met my estranged wife in Colorado. It was at Jonathan's cottage on the west side of a mountain in Turkey Creek Canyon, above Denver, near Evergreen. When I saw lovely Grace I ached to touch her, but between us was an emotional lead wall that not even a blowtorch could breach.

Grace asked me to accept service of her custody papers. It was a moment of truth. I saw the pathos in her eyes. I heard the strain of stoicism in her voice. I could not stand it. On July 13, 1977, I had Jonathan serve Grace's documents on me.

During her visit Grace told me what she had observed about Jim Jones's character for the months she was the head counselor at Peoples Temple. He was, she said, abusive, deceitful, and cowardly. She told me

about what happened to the woman who said that Jones had turned people into robots. She said that he lied about working round the clock, and that he spent his afternoons in Berkeley with Carolyn Layton. She summarized her opinion: "Jim Jones looks after himself."

Grace also told me that, one day, she had witnessed Jones in the Temple parking lot trying to calm two guys on the street who were creating a disturbance. At first he was in front of a group of Temple members at the fence. Suddenly a gun was produced, and "the next thing I know, Jim is in the middle of the group."

Grace knew I still thought Jones was more good than bad. So during one of those stressful days together, as we were walking up the road next to some red-rock boulders, Grace turned to me and said, "If somebody were up there shooting at us, would you be willing to blame Jim Jones?"

Unlike my momentary sense of rainforest vulnerability at the time of that CIA accusation in Guyana, here was Grace's sustained fear in the United States of America.

I asked Grace to come back to me. She did not say she didn't love me. "Walter," she said instead, "has been too good to me." I had to agree.

Grace asked me what I planned to do about returning to Guyana. Intuition took what Grace had told me, and weighed in on it with a message as clear as a church bell on a starry night:

If you return to Guyana, you will be a corpse in the jungle within thirty days.

For once in my life I decided to honor my intuition. But I would not have honored it if I had not believed in the truthfulness, the utter integrity, of Grace. My estranged wife, as a result, saved my life.

What to do now? Well, I could not directly turn on Jones if I were to keep my promise to protect his paternal access to John—although that's what he would think I was doing when he learned, as he without a doubt would, that I had accepted service of the custody papers.

I told Grace that I was going to wait for Jones's inevitable return and then, in return for my defending him as before to the Establishment, negotiate his giving custody to Grace for six months of the year. "If these negotiations fail," I added, "I will travel to Guyana to institute legal proceedings."

In late July, after Grace had returned to California, the *New West* article by Marshall Kilduff and Phil Tracy hit the stands. It told the stories of ten defectors, including Grace and Walter, but as many mentioned, there was no smoking gun. It was easily survivable once Jones returned to the United States and fought back as he had when attacked on previous occasions, which I certainly expected him to do.

On August 18, 1977, Grace Stoen—acting alone, and with insider knowledge of Jim Jones’s volcanic character, need for control, and iron-clad hold on people—committed an intrepid act. She signed, as “petitioner” in her custody suit, a declaration against Jim Jones.

First, Grace pointed out that even after John Victor was allowed to live with other Temple members, she remained a constant, loving presence in his life: “Because of the strong love I felt for my son, I was able to maintain close contact with John, generally seeing him at least four times a week. We enjoyed a warm and affectionate relationship.”¹¹⁵

Second, she declared that John Victor Stoen was being held in the Peoples Temple “Agricultural Mission in Guyana,” and that the organization was “tightly controlled by the Reverend Jim Jones.” She said that Jones had “erratic” behavior and “a paranoid world vision.”

Third, she said that the court needed to act: “I further believe that unless this court acts, John will continue to be held in an atmosphere that is detrimental to his mental and emotional well-being and that he will be permanently deprived of the loving and stable home I can provide for him.”¹¹⁶

Based on her declaration, the San Francisco Superior Court, on August 26, 1977, made the following order regarding temporary custody: “Petitioner [Grace Lucy Stoen] is awarded custody of John Victor Stoen, age 5, d.o.b. 1/25/72 pending further order of this court.”

The court at that time also made the following highly significant order: “Good cause appearing, the Rev. Jim Jones is ordered joined as a party to this action pursuant to Section 5159 of the California Civil Code.”¹¹⁷

On October 14, 1977, the court ordered Jim Jones to appear the following month regarding permanent custody: “Claimant Rev. Jim Jones is ordered to appear before this court on November 18, 1977, Room 481,

City Hall, to show cause why Petitioner should not be awarded custody to said minor.”¹¹⁸

After Grace’s Colorado visit in July, I had gone to New York with plans to take its bar exam. Wanting to start saving money, I took a Greyhound bus. Upon my arrival, Stephen Heard, a law-school classmate and good friend, had me stay two nights at the Harvard Club. He told me Jim Jones’s people had tried to get in touch with him.

Damn you, Jim, I thought. *You must have rifled all my diaries and recorded all the names of my friends.* I then went across town, socioeconomically, to stay at the Chelsea Hotel, tenanted by a different clientele.

I then learned that an ex-con private investigator was alleging, in the *San Francisco Examiner*, that in June 1973 I had forged a defector’s name to a deed. The charge was utterly false. So I decided to go back and confront things. I flew back on August 10.

I called my friend, the superb trial attorney Patrick Hallinan, who agreed to represent me—and who at first refused to even charge me.

After I arrived in San Francisco, Pat said the press was after me because they were after Jones, who was no longer around, and that to get the pressure off me, I should turn on Jones. Without going into my paternity reason, I told him I could not.

On August 8, 1977, Jones resumed using his famous new mouth-piece. Acknowledging Jones was “under fire from the media,” Herb Caen wrote that Jim Jones is staying in Guyana because of his “suffering from a form of deafness.” He then wrote that Jones’s aides “scoff” at the rumors that Jones will never return to San Francisco.”¹¹⁹

In fact, Jones had no deafness and, as events would show, he never intended to return to San Francisco.

Then, on August 18, Caen told the public that Jones desired to return to San Francisco and “answer” charges. He then quoted Jones’s aide, Mike Prokes,” as saying that attorney Charles Garry advises against

* Whenever, in this book, a Peoples Temple member is referred to as writing a letter or affidavit, or making a public statement, it is fair to assume that Jim Jones, whom I personally knew to be a micromanager in control of all such statements, was doing the speaking.

it because "Jim would be chewed up by the media," that "Jim is dying to come back," and that he is a victim of a campaign at the "highest level." Caen's quoting of Prokes went on: "This campaign against Jim is orchestrated at the highest level, perhaps FBI or CIA. We know the FBI became interested in Jim years ago, when he was an outspoken civil-rights advocate in Indianapolis. It seems significant that whereas Peoples Temple is 80 percent black, 90 percent of those making these wild charges are white. We know many of them to be provocateurs and conspirators in the past. In my opinion, some of them are being paid."¹²⁰

I had been Jones's personal lawyer for seven years, and never once had the FBI manifested an interest in him. Most significantly, Prokes was not saying a word about the child, John Victor Stoen, being a reason for Jones's not returning to the United States.

Next, on September 1, 1977, Herb Caen appeared to accept, *carte blanche*, a dissembling statement by Jones reciting a prestigious offer from Governor Jerry Brown. After saying that Moscone had refused a first letter of resignation by Jones in June, Caen mentioned the contents of a second letter: "Jones wrote another letter of resignation on July 13, disclosing that Gov. Brown had offered him a spot on the State Bd. of Corrections (hey, that's news), 'an area in which I have great interest.'"¹²¹

In fact, no offer to Jim Jones had been made by the governor. Significantly, Peoples Temple had been advised of the contents of the *New West* article on July 12, 1977.

In late August, I decided to go "underground" in Denver to await Jones's return. I again took a Greyhound bus. My spirit was at an all-time low. Sometime in 1976 after Grace left, I had become an atheist. I was feeling so desolate, so angry at the universe, that when I arrived at the downtown bus station in Denver, the sun shining hot, I ran around the downtown pavements looking for any magazine that might have the title *American Atheist*.

Since the Temple's new attorney, Charles Garry, was now making frantic calls to my parents in order to have me come back to defend Jones, I did not let my parents even know I was in Denver. I rented

Apartment 205 at 2424 York Street, near Denver University. I consumed psychology books, rented a piano, and took French lessons.

But the wretchedness of my Peoples Temple situation kept gnawing away. Finding a biological echo in a psychology book, it released something deep: "9/19/77. There's so much pain in this fucking world. An example in *Psychology Today* textbook p. 576 shows a hypothetical little child with saddest face born with a biochemically unusual nervous system (high lability—strongly susceptible to emotional arousal). He gets ordinary illnesses with no lasting effect on most children, but with hallucinations for him. As grows older, tries to integrate this experience and discuss memories with parents, who are too insecure themselves not to rebuff child and make him feel bad. Biochemistry makes him react strongly to this and he experiences conflict btwn need to talk to parents about innermost feelings and fear of cold response. Well on way to becoming psychologically disordered. What did this type of kid do to go through all that pain? What 'loving' force in the Universe allows it?"

By November, however, I was feeling obligated to return to Guyana because of the promise to Grace that if negotiations with Jones failed on his return to the United States, I would go to Guyana to initiate legal proceedings. Jones had not, against all my expectations, returned so as to let me negotiate anything.

I started to think that I could sidestep intuition's "corpse in the jungle" business by staying in Georgetown, thus avoiding the jungle. At the same time, I started to rationalize that the intuitive message might be an illusion, and that maybe I should even go into Jonestown because I could then see John.

I kept obsessing on our times together in Jonestown following my return from Grenada in May 1977. I had gotten to see John-John's socio-centric character develop more than ever.

One day, I saw him throwing mud clods at our pet chimpanzee, Mr. Muggs, in his fancy wooden pole cage.

"John," I said, "how would you like it if somebody did that to you?"

Immediately, John got teary and asked me to put him in the cage and have someone throw mud clods at him.

On another day, we were walking past a large oil-barrel receptacle when John, having picked up a broken toy from the ground, tossed it in.

"John," I said, "that toy may have been broken, but it may have meant something to the child to whom it belongs."

John immediately fished out the toy, marched into the bunkhouse, went to his trunk at the foot of his bed, extricated his favorite leather belt and then, holding it in both hands, took it over to the bed of the child to whom the toy belonged, laying it gently down.

"John," I said, "you did not have to do that."

One night, when I was tucking John into bed, I beamed at him and said, "John, I tell everyone how great you are."

It was my turn for an admonishment. John looked up at me and spoke quietly. "You shouldn't," he said, "brag about your own kid."

As I thought about these things I was again tempted to believe that any cause that produced a child like that had to be fundamentally good.

On November 5, 1977, Jonathan dropped by my Denver apartment, looking serious.

"Tim," he said, "you have got to make a decision on what you are going to do. You can't just sit around and wait. It does not appear that Jim Jones is coming back. Mom and Dad are besieged with phone calls from the attorney, Charles Garry, trying to find out where you are."

Jon's visit triggered me to call Grace. When I asked her what had developed, she said that her attorney, Jeff Haas, had gone to Guyana in early September to get a Guyana court to enforce Grace's California temporary custody order. Apparently, something strange had stopped proceedings in their tracks.

After mentioning Jeff's lack of success in Guyana, Grace then, in her stoical way, said something that resolved, forever, my future plans.

"Tim," she said, "I found out from an eyewitness what they are saying to John. They are saying that I never loved him, that I locked him in a closet, and that I abandoned him."

It took a few moments for what Grace said to sink in. It was one thing for Jones to seek custody. It was a totally different thing for him to dishonor a mother to her child. Such was a violation of a higher law that superseded, infinitely, any paternity promise I had made.

“Grace,” I said, “give me a day.”

And then, on Sunday, November 6, 1977, I reached for the beige telephone and made the call. Instead of being a half-fledged enemy allowing Jones six months’ custody, I would have to become full-fledged and allow him no custody. I had no illusions but that these would be the most fateful words I had ever spoken: “I’ve made a decision, Grace. I’m taking him on.”

Before I even made that decision, Jim Jones—ever the master of intrigue—had already, as I would later discover, displayed his Machiavellian hand.

On August 20, 1977, Jones had Temple leaders sign false affidavits about me. They were designed on their face to destroy my credibility with the government of the socialist Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

In a first sworn statement, Jones had me bad-mouthing the prime minister as mentally deficient: “Tim Stoen was not cooperative with the development of our programs and was, in fact, a sower of discord and negativity. As time moved on he grew more and more judgmental of the PNC government, including the prime minister and cabinet. He said they were lazy, bungling ‘idiots’ and did not want to spend any more of his time and energy in such a ‘backward’ place.”¹²²

Second, Jones had me saying the leaders of Guyana would leave the people in an uncivilized state: “Stoen stated that he...had had the opportunity to meet with many of the [Guyanese] leaders and certainly was not favorably impressed by them. He stated that they did not have an understanding of what was needed to lead people to success and that they would be doomed to their primitive jungle existence for decades to come.”¹²³

Third, Jones had me attacking Guyana’s basic government ideals: “Timothy O. Stoen is a man that is committed to destroying socialism

both in the United States and in Guyana. I am very concerned about the way he uses his connections to turn people's minds against an equalitarian social society such as Guyana is."¹²⁴

And, in a fourth statement, Jones had me accusing the prime minister, by name, of being another Stalin: "Tim Stoen reacted to Guyanese society in a manner that caused myself and others much alarm. He accused Prime Minister Burnham, on one of the last occasions I saw him, of being a Stalinist-type dictator who had created forced labor camps for Guyanese youth and blocked all opposition."¹²⁵

After concluding my phone call to Grace on November 6, I abandoned my Denver apartment and left, that very day, for San Francisco.

On November 14, in a telephone call, my sixty-five-year-old mother informed me of a message that disclosed how serious a fight was afoot.

"Tim," she said, "I got a call early this morning while I was still asleep. A man's voice commanded me to take down, word for word, a lengthy message. It took three pages to write it down."¹²⁶

She then read it to me. After starting out with "Tim—We are fully aware of everything," the message went incandescent: "Tim should know that Jim will make the ultimate sacrifice before giving up John. That will leave Tim in a terrible position. Jim will tell everyone before he does that that it was because of Tim. And Jim will just as soon as make the ultimate sacrifice as deal any further with treachery here like Tim's. He must remember that we have his own written statement about the real father of John."

As for the words "ultimate sacrifice," they were clearly foreboding and could mean a number of things. Whatever they meant, the meanings were not good. However, I knew Jim Jones politically, and that he was given to hyperbole.

Shortly after I arrived in San Francisco, Grace had me stay with her and Walter. But when she came into the room in the early morning to raise the blinds, I almost went crazy not being able to touch her. It was too much, so after a few days I found relief by staying with my good friend, Larry Bryant, in Corte Madera.

On the day before the November 18 hearing at which I intended to testify for Grace, I sent Jim Jones a demand letter.¹²⁷ It was delivered to "Rev. James Jones c/o Mrs. James Jones," at 1859 Geary Boulevard. He was not left in ambiguity as to my position:

URGENT

November 17, 1977

Dear Jim:

I am asking your cooperation in delivering John Victor Stoen to Grace Stoen and me in San Francisco by next Friday noon, November 25, 1977. We will, of course, raise John in an interracial and sharing environment consistent with the highest teachings.

I have received reliable information to the effect that Grace is being seriously discredited in John's eyes. Not only is this deeply offensive to me, but it could easily cause irreparable emotional harm to John. I ask you to immediately reverse the hate campaign and to advise John repeatedly what you and I both know to be true: that Grace loves him deeply and has never abandoned him. You and I both know, and John should be told, that Grace's leaving the Peoples Temple was not in any way due to a lack of commitment to the goals of racial equality, economic fairness and social justice.

Jim Jones used to say, "The one thing Tim Stoen cannot stand is public humiliation." In case I did not understand the implication of his message to my mother about "his own written statement about the real father of John," Jones made sure I would get it another way. With perfect timing he had his agent, probably Mike Prokes, release to Herb Caen the juicy news.

And so, on the morning of November 18, 1977, all the *Chronicle* readers in Ukiah and San Francisco woke up to the first installment of what I could more fully expect if I stayed in the field.

After first saying that the DA, “after long investigation,” had no plans to prosecute, Caen—for the first time—attributed Jones’s remaining in Guyana to a “father” status. “The Rev. Jones,” said Caen, “is afraid that if he returns to S.F.,” his mother “will take the boy from him—and why does he care about that so strongly? Because, according to well-informed sources, the true father of the child is—Jim Jones.”¹²⁸

So the public reasons for Jones’s nonreturn to California had once again shifted—first deafness, then conspiracy, and now paternity.

On that same morning, I drove from Corte Madera across the Golden Gate Bridge to Civic Center Plaza. I was driving an older brown Dodge loaned to me by two defectors, Al and Jeannie Mills, who out of fear of Jim Jones had changed their names from Elmer and Deanna Mertle.

There was no use hiding now from Peoples Temple. They would be expecting me. Sure enough, as I came to a stop in the underground garage and opened the door of the car, two figures sprang forward out of the shadows. They were two Temple stalwarts. I braced for a bullet. Today’s tactic, however, was in effect an appeal: how can you do this to us?

“I’m going in,” I told them. “Just get out of my way.”

Although I did brace myself for further Temple interactions, I made it peaceably to the elevator. It coursed up to the fourth floor of the Civic Center, under the fifth largest dome in the world. Reporters were present. Feelings engulfed me. The building we were in overlooked the very plaza where Grace and I had first met face to face—eight long years before.

And here we were now, to throw down a gauntlet against the most aggressive—and most unpredictable—human being either of us had ever known.

Despite Herb Caen’s shot across the bow, Grace that day, as usual, carried herself tall, with quiet dignity. She was now twenty-seven, and I was now thirty-nine. I marveled again at her Maltese and Mexican beauty: olive skin, lustrous brown eyes, rich black hair, tapered fingers, and expressive hands. I was still in love.

And so Grace and I, not divorced, did appear together as a united front against Jim Jones. I testified to the truth: Grace “is a very fit and proper mother—an excellent mother.”

Jim Jones had been properly served notice of this day’s custody action. At the close of the hearing, the Honorable Frank G. Finnegan, Judge of the Superior Court of the State of California, in and for the City and County of San Francisco, issued and signed his permanent “Order Re Child Custody.”

First, the court said, “it is found that Claimant Reverend Jim Jones had actual notice of the pendency of the proceedings, of his joinder, of this court’s order directing him to appear, and of the instant hearing.”

Second, it ordered that “Grace Lucy Stoen...and...Timothy O. Stoen...will share joint legal custody.”

Third, it did something truly portentous: “It is ordered that Reverend Jim Jones will immediately deliver the minor, John Victor Stoen, to the Petitioner, Grace Lucy Stoen.”¹²⁹

Charles Garry, the famous “street lawyer,” had replaced me as Jones’s attorney. He did not appear at the hearing, but that was because Jones had no legal basis to stop what was happening. It was not because Charles Garry did not believe in Jim Jones.

In fact, if I had to have named the most worldly-wise people I knew of, in this most worldly-wise city called San Francisco, three names at the top of the list would have been Assemblyman Willie Brown, columnist Herb Caen, and street lawyer Charles Garry.

Just like the other two, Garry had already gone on record for Jim Jones. Eight days before the court hearing, and following his November 6, 1977, trip to Jonestown, the press reported some remarkable, eyewitness-based words:

“When I returned to the States, I told my partners in the office that I had seen paradise. From what I saw there, I would say that the society that is being built in Jonestown is a credit to humanity. This is not propaganda. I’m not a propagandist. I’m a hard-hitting, factual-analysis lawyer. I saw this with my own eyes. I felt it.”¹³⁰

After the court hearing, I took a copy of Judge Finnegan's custody order to District Attorney Joe Freitas. He graciously agreed to write Guyana's Foreign Minister, Fred Wills, and request that Guyana honor this California custody order.

I told the reporters that unless John was back with Grace by January 1, 1978, I would personally go down and get him.

Jones, of course, let the November 25 deadline pass and then, no surprise, made it known we were in for a long haul. He orchestrated a warning gesture, and then a coded-threat letter. First came the gesture. Jones did not yet know where I lived in the Bay Area, but he was always willing to act on assumptions.

Thus, on December 7, 1977, his bodyguard Christopher Lewis, and one other person, were observed "glowering" for approximately one and a half hours at a building at 3028 Regent Street, Berkeley, which was the address on the registration of the car I had driven to court on November 18. The Berkeley Police Department was called, and an officer arrived to take a report after Lewis had left.

Second, there arrived, on baby-blue stationery, the letter, in care of my father. Postmarked December 13, it was addressed to "Tim Stoen c/o Joel Stoen, 6698 Turkey Creek Road, Morrison, Colorado 80465": "Dear Tim: I know all about your intended visit. Come on down. I will be expecting you... I expect things will be clarified when you arrive. It will be a test of your sincerity."¹³¹

In the meantime, Al and Jeannie Mills invited me to rent a house they owned next to them, my new address being 2733 1/2 Woolsey Street, Berkeley. In their own house they had set up a "Human Freedom Center," which had become a magnet for many of the defectors and relatives of people in Jonestown.

In a journal entry a week later, I recited a news event related to that December 7 visit. It was of considerable importance to some of the defectors:

Wednesday, December 14, 1977. Yesterday's *SF Chronicle*¹³² carried a picture of Christopher Lewis choking Justin Herman at a

SF redevelopment meeting in 1971, and a story about his murder Sunday morning. He was shot with a pistol and a shotgun? by two persons, probably by street avengers unrelated to PT. This is a blow to Jim because he has nobody left in SF who is quite so credible a threat as Chris, who has killed in the past and was tried on a first-degree murder charge, subsequently acquitted on a self-defense theory... Joyce ____ and Grace seemed quite relieved.

This Chris Lewis was the same person who made the cold-turkey breakthrough, from his heroin addiction, on that September day in 1969 that I made my first revisit to Peoples Temple. From that day forth, he loved Jim Jones and, even though he was not able to keep the rules, was ready to do anything Jones asked him to.

By now it was also time to get serious about making a living. I went out and found a law office in the Financial District of San Francisco. It was on the seventeenth floor of the Equitable Life Building at 120 Montgomery Street. I would be doing civil and criminal litigation.

In the meantime, there had come into my life, following my turning on Jones in November 1977, a group of people different from any I had ever encountered. They were a group of Hollywood psychics. Although I had never taken an interest in the paranormal, beyond accepting Jones's healings, the mere fact that these Hollywood outsiders cared for us, were companionable with us, and were willing publicly to support us meant everything. The leader, whom I will call Serena, was a leading figure in those circles.

Grace, who had never believed in Jones's healings and was always skeptical of people claiming paranormal gifts, said that Serena was the first person—and the only person—to have demonstrated to her an authentic gift. Grace suggested I give her a call.

Serena and her psychic colleague, Karen, both with long red fingernails, had been meeting with former Peoples Temple members in Berkeley, and giving "readings." I called Serena for a first reading. She immediately gave infinitely encouraging news: Grace and I would succeed in getting John Victor back.

On December 8, 1977, Serena, Karen, Steve Katsaris (whose daughter was in Jonestown), Al Mills, Jeannie Mills, and I went out for dinner to a fancy San Francisco French restaurant, called L'Etoile. It would be my last beautiful evening for some time to come.

By that same evening, I had come to a momentous conclusion about fatherhood beyond the spiritual: I, not Jim Jones, was John Victor's biological father—based on the bonding between us, the fact that John would regularly leave Jones for me, and Grace's strong and convincing assurance to all who asked, including the press: "Tim is the biological father of John." This new belief, however, made not one iota of difference as to my motivation to fight for John, for I had loved him unconditionally all along.

The next day, I had a second reading by Serena, who referred to John Victor's singular importance in Peoples Temple. She also said I would have a court victory in Guyana, which would lead to John's return three months later:

Friday, December 9, 1977. I am commencing this journal at the suggestion of [Serena], who gave me a reading this evening. She said that John Victor was being given drugs for hypertension, that a lot of jealousy centered on him for being treated number 1. She said Jim would not bring John to the court but would feign a kidnapping and that after getting a positive order for custody [I] would have to go to Jonestown (with the army) to find him but would figure out where John was then in a matter of seconds and would raise a commotion. She said we would have John back by March.

Four days later, after returning to Los Angeles, Serena called with further "news":

Wednesday, December 14, 1977. [Serena] called yesterday. Her reason for calling was that she had been meditating and "I'm getting something very strongly vindictive...fire." That she sees

some type of fire occurring around the first of the year involving me or possibly Steve Katsaris. She said that when I went to Guyana to get John Victor and went into the mission camp that Jim would be “hiding” your son “underground.” She said I would be going into the camp with a jeep, and that if he is not there he will be underground. She said that the fire would be “down there or around Steve.” She apologized for giving negative information but thought I ought to know.

In order to give myself anything else that was positive to hang onto regarding John Victor, I started reading, at the suggestion of Serena, and for the first time in my life, two books of metaphysical material. The first was Joseph Murphy’s *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*. The message here was to unlock the “awesome” powers of your subconscious mind, which would then solve your difficulties and put you on the road to success and happiness.

The second was Ken Keyes Jr.’s *Handbook to Higher Consciousness*. The message here, Buddhism-inspired, was to replace “addictions and demands” with “preferences,” which would make you a happier person.

Both of these books were “God as Self” approaches to reality, in direct contrast to “God as the Other” of Christianity. What I mainly took from them was to think positively, to visualize a happy outcome with John, and to avoid hatred toward Jim Jones.

But I also made a decision based on my past mistakes. I would follow my own strategic judgment in fighting Jones—no matter what any other person claiming authority, or claiming “insider” information, might be encouraging to the contrary.

January arrived soon enough. Grace asked if I wanted her to accompany me when I went to Guyana to enforce our California court order. I was so grateful it hurt. On Tuesday, January 3, 1978, Grace and I went with grim determination to San Francisco International, where we would follow the same itinerary I had taken only eleven months before—then as a friend, now as an enemy, and now into wired territory.

We boarded National Airlines Flight 30 at 10:15 p.m. We arrived in Miami on Wednesday, January 4 at 6:54 a.m. There we boarded KLM Royal Dutch Airlines at 3:00 p.m. for the next stop, which was in Curacao. Grace and I arrived in Georgetown, Guyana, on that same Wednesday, at 11:30 p.m.

As I stepped off the ALM Antillean Airlines plane from Curacao, my emotions were on edge. Instead of the lovely, hospitable, tropical warmth I had previously experienced upon arriving thus, this time I felt cold dread, as if entering the belly of a beast. I almost, it would turn out, encountered a real one.

Grace and I were quite aware of being transgressors in foreign territory ruled by officials swayed by the Jonestown interloper, and that we were ripe plums. We knew that Jones, whom I now saw as a Machiavelli, would not be forgetting his prediction that things would be "clarified" when we arrived.

Sure enough, as Grace and I would be told in May 1978, by an eyewitness, that almost happened. À la Machiavelli's hero, Cesare Borgia, Jones hired a hit man from the waterfront to do a "choke-and-rob." It was slightly more than that.

"When you were down there," said the eyewitness, whose name I will not disclose, "did you realize you were being followed?"

"Grace and I did look around but did not see anyone we recognized," I responded.

"Well, you were being followed by a Chinese girl who joined after you both left the church, so you wouldn't recognize her."

This witness-participant went on to give details:

- "Jim had a contract out on you."
- "Jim was not able to control Chris Lewis in Guyana, and therefore sent him back to the United States."
- "Jim made this contract with a friend of Chris's from the Tiger Alley waterfront."

- “This waterfront person was told that ‘a fellow was coming down from the United States who was responsible for the death of your friend Chris.’”
- “This waterfront person was then paid one-half now, one-half to be paid later—after doing a choke-and-rob on you.”

The witness then opened a palm, and made the gestures of someone flicking off bills.

“What’s a choke-and-rob?” I asked.

“He was supposed to slit your throat, while you were walking from the Tower Hotel to the Pegasus Hotel.”

“What happened?”

“He missed his cue. You took a taxi.”

Photographs



Reds Kept Local Student 15 Hours Without Food for Taking Photos

Fifteen hours in Communist hands. That was the experience of Tim Stoen, Littleton graduate, who had the audacity to take a picture of a sign being erected in East Berlin.

Stoen told about his ordeal at the Rotary Club last week after returning from a year abroad on a Rotary Fellowship.

"I thought I should go to East Berlin and see what it is like behind the Iron Curtain," Stoen said. "The first thing that I noticed was

of the building and put me in a Czech car. We drove and we drove in silence. I didn't know Berlin was so large. We came to a building with bars on it and I was taken in and questioned. They kept trying to trip me up, coming around to the same questions in different words to see if I would contradict myself. I had to take everything out of my pockets. They found a roll of exposed film and kept it. The guards were curious about my nail clip and wanted to see how it worked. They had never seen an American coin purse that opens a crack when you bend it, and they were like children with it. I was getting both weak and apprehensive, and I was trying to test the power of positive thinking. I had had no food for 18 hours and I was glad when they brought me some unpalatable ham sandwiches. Soon afterwards, they took me to the border and let me go."

Stoen had a happier experience in West Germany, 5 miles from the East German border. A little old lady recognized him as an American without much in the way of funds.

"She pressed two things in my hands," Stoen reported. "One gift was about 40c worth of coins and the other was a sack containing four bananas. She told me that she loved Americans for the kindness she received from them at the close of World War II."



TIM STOEN

the blank expression on the faces of everyone. You could tell they were just waiting for the day they might have some freedom. This will come slowly. Poets are already getting some freedom, and so are theatrical people and musicians. It was noteworthy that a journalist was able to print in Moscow the interview with President Kennedy."

Began Taking Pictures

Stoen said he took a number of pictures in East Berlin without difficulty. Then he took one of a sign being erected near the newly-built wall.

Three German officers rushed over to Tim and an East Berlin student who was showing him around. They took the pair at 12:30 p.m. to a building and held them there until 8 p.m.

"I was fearful for my new-found friend because he had taken too many liberties for the Communists, and I didn't want to get him into trouble," Stoen said. "Finally, at 8 p.m., three men escorted me out

The *Littleton Independent* (Colorado), September 7, 1962. James Warren Jones on March 20, 1978: "[W]e've got a news article showing...he may've been an agent a long, long way back." Courtesy of the Littleton Museum and the *Littleton Independent*.



Grace and Tim. Pre-Wedding. Redwood Valley, California. June 26, 1970.



Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, 1972.
An Establishment reality check, 1970-1976.

Grace L. Grech

and

Timothy O. Swen

will marry on

Saturday, the twenty-seventh of June

at one o'clock in the afternoon

at People's Temple Christian Church

Last Road

Redwood Valley, California.

They do so because they love each other and

can together best work for a world

where mankind is united,

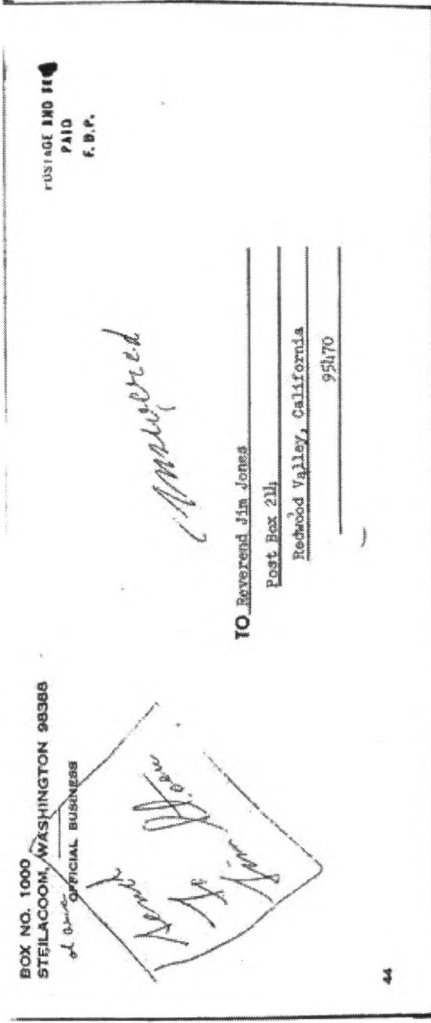
life is revered,

wealth is shared

and joy is common.

You are cordially invited.

Grace's calligraphy, Utopian vision. Redwood Valley,
California, wedding. June 27, 1970.

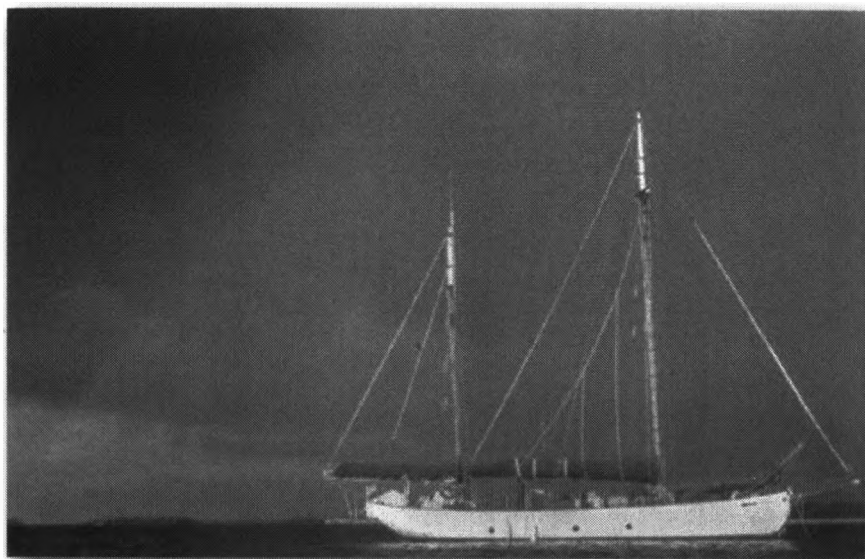


DO NOT REPRODUCE WITHOUT WRITTEN PERMISSION FROM THE CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO.

Answered
 Let Tim Stoen see this.

Advise the young man to attempt to win his battles thru the principles of Dr King's teachings on non-violence. Love for those who wrongfully use us and still does win many to our cause. ~~One~~ One has no other choice in a age of violence & repression but to ~~win~~ win with the principles of ~~the~~ the principles of overcoming evil with good.

Envelope containing November 1970, letter from a prisoner at the US penitentiary at McNeil Island, Washington, who wanted out of "punitive segregation." Back of envelope contains Jim Jones's hand-written instruction: "Advise the young man to win his battles" by "Love for those who wrongfully use us."



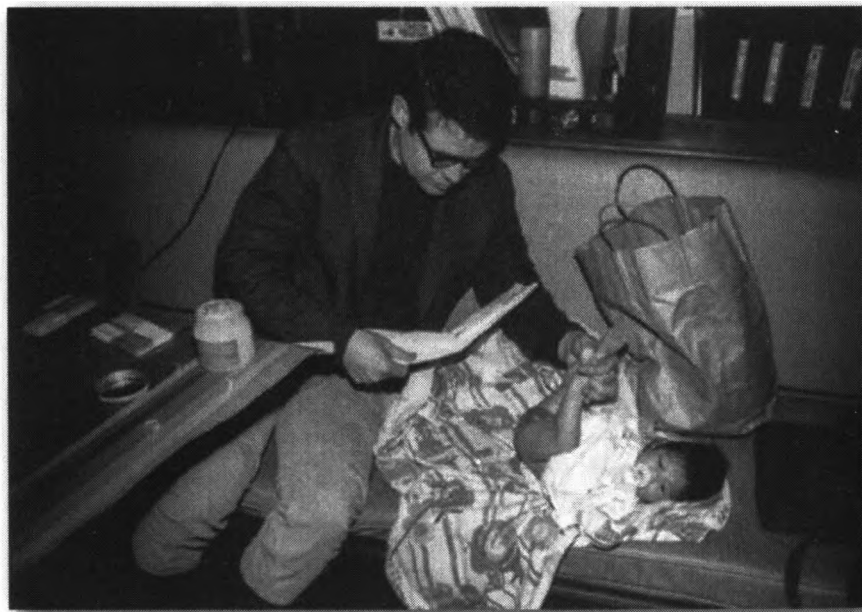
Jonathan Stoen's *Ron of Argyll*, built in Scotland in 1928 and used as a cruising yacht by King George V. Courtesy of Larry Bryant.



Aboard the *Ron of Argyll*, Sausalito Yacht Harbor, California. February 9, 1972. Left to right: Jonathan's wife, Francoise; baby John Victor Stoen (born January 25, 1972), Grace, Tim.



Francoise Stoen, John Victor, Tim, Jonathan
Stoen. Sausalito. February 9, 1972.



Changing John Victor. Sausalito, February 9, 1972.

d

Tim & Grace Stoen
Redwood Valley

Revelation to LA V 5/16/72 (direct)
(from Tim's office)

- checks/Savings Bank of Mendocino acct # 1211-0406-01-5353-0
- Nodal Bakery \$1.21 4/18/72 (grace signed check)
- Dr Rea \$7 4/4/72 (Grace signed)
- Dr George P Rostel 3/27/72 (grace signed) - this may be the dr in Santa Rosa that you know about already
- Farmer's Produce \$27.84 3/27/72 (grace signed)
- Bank Americard \$15 4/3/72 (Grace)
- S.O. Western \$49.71 4/2/72 Grace signed
- Hansens \$6.83 4/5/72 Tim signed
- Mendocino County Recorder \$3.00 4/6/72
- GECC \$11.00 4/14/72 (Grace signed)
- Larry Rogers \$30 3/20/72 Grace signed
- bill from City of Paris SF \$20 date on it 12/13/71
- statement of a payment on 2/23/72 of \$11/previous balance \$77.99/finance charge 1.08/new balance \$68.07, annual percentage rate is 18.00% period covered 2/10 to 3/9 account number CB26 6506 E33933

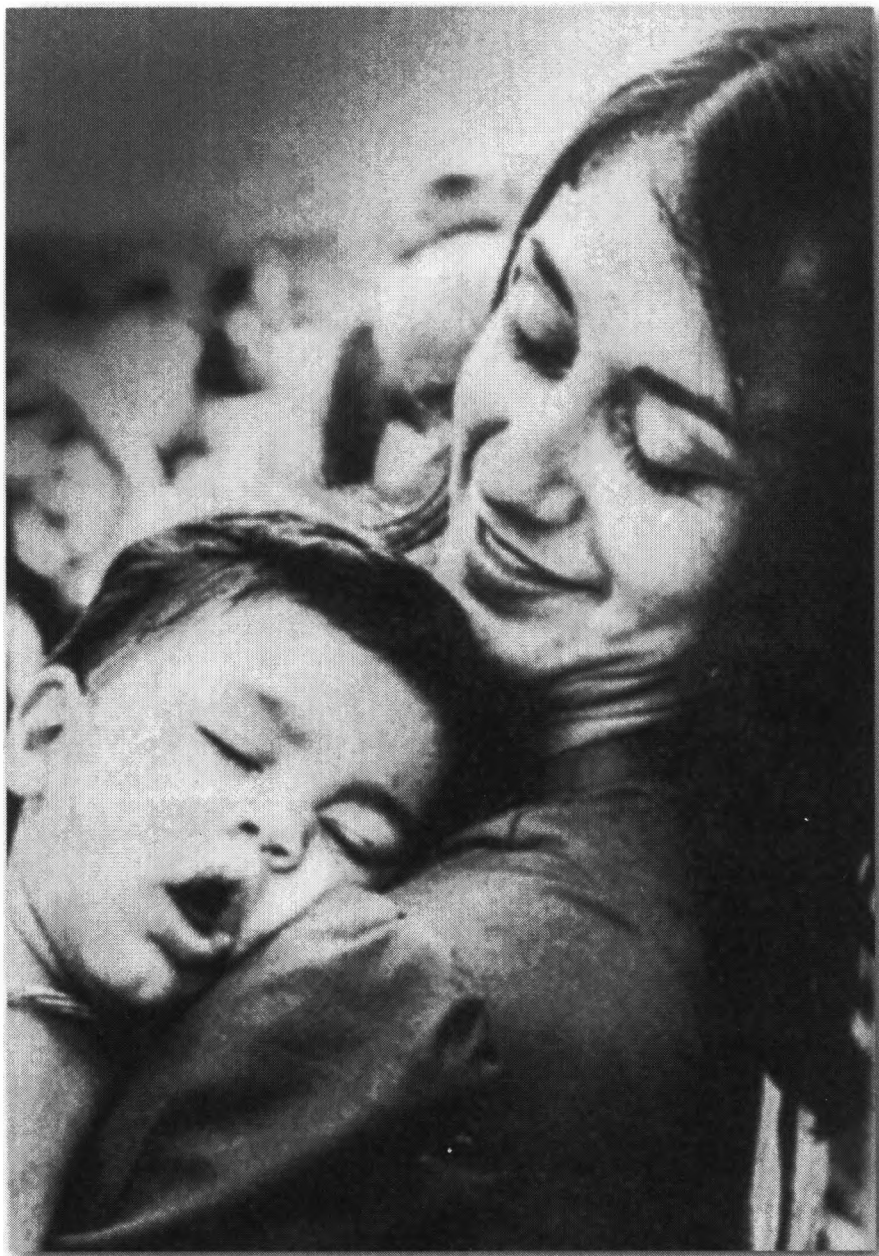
(their checks are in both their names Timothy O. & Grace Stoen)
P.O. Box 126, Ukiah
462-7163

Revelation to LA V 7/18/72 (Indirect)

Garbs

- telephone credit card 1971 /Timothy O Stoen (when he lived at 400 Oak Park Ave /his credit card # 462-7163 223 N
- Amendment of Automobile Policy Endorsement/effective date 5/8/70/
Insured: Tim Stoen issued by Reliance Insurance Co, Policy # AF 4 06 76 91/Bodily injury\$100,000 each person, \$300,00 each occurrence, property damage liability \$25,000 each occurrence, medical payments \$1,000 each person, Collision \$100.00 deductible (all are the same except for the \$100 deductible says a32 annual \$83 & \$72 additional (total endorsement premium \$72)
- the policy declarations pertaining to items checked are changed to read Loss Payee & \$100 deductible Collision cov. added. Mendocino County Employees Credit Union P.O. Box 457, Ukiah 5/22/70 amf Shore, Ready & Engelman zz (5/22/70 is the date of endorsement) this applies to 65 Ford Station Wagon #55741180439
- bill Richard P. Mc Clintock, Jr MD 1971 1/11 \$12.00 balance

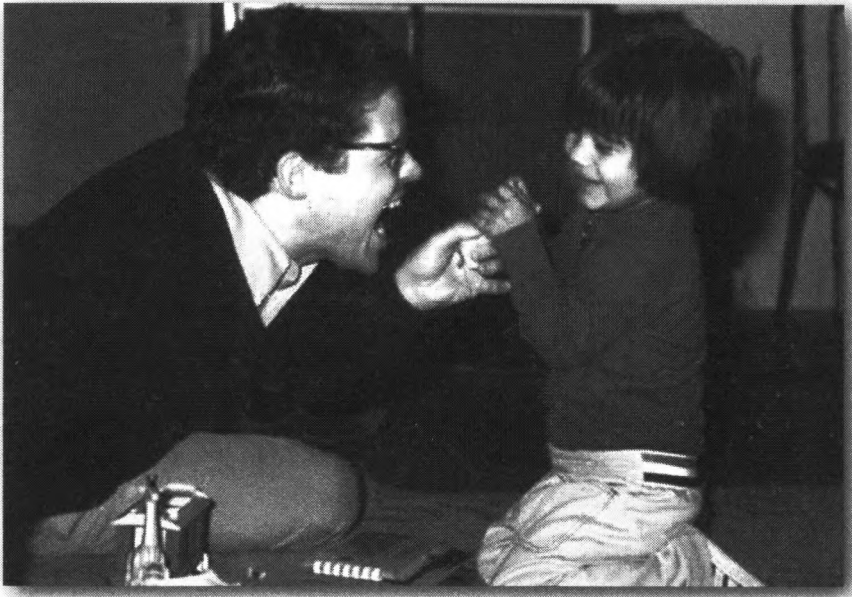
Spy reports (excerpts from four pages) by Linda Amos to Jim Jones: May 16, 1972, report from DA office ("direct"), and July 18, 1972, report from household trash ("indirect"). Linda Amos's literalistic obedience was also shown by "Receipt of \$650 from airport...(this may be \$6.50 but can't see any dot)."



John Victor and Grace. Redwood Valley, California. September 1972.
Courtesy of Terry Schmitt Photography.



John Victor. Redwood Valley, January 21, 1975.



John Victor. Redwood Valley, January 21, 1975.



James Warren Jones at the podium. San Francisco, circa 1974.

Love Them to Death

To: JJ
From: TB

While you all were out I took the opportunity to go through the briefcase that spoon carries with him all the time-- not the one that he had the other day but the small leather one that he carries with him.

--naturally you already know ~~about~~ about , I saw her picture and she is good looking and I wonder if perhaps he isn't walking right into a trap, what a way to compromise the group.

a picture of him and John and Grace: there are so many pictures of John and TOS I don't know why he keeps one of Grace--other than the fact that he fantasises of having a family so badly that Grace and him is better than nothing.

--he must have an account at Bank of America--- on his agenda one day in London was a trip to the bank: his contact at bank of America is Mike Ledgerwood; 626-4722.

the next day he has a note to call Dad about money : call Bill H re: suitcase;

here are some things I got down-- I was afraid that you all would crap and I would get caught so this is as much as I could write --- I had Paula watch the stairs--

some things--

- visit law society
- Roland Young 353-9119
- 01-570 8794-- Granada Hotel-- Mr. Landis

April 1

- send tele to Paula
- call Bill H re: suitcase
- call Dad re: money
- British Museum meet sandy
- Joel A Stoen 6698 S Turkey Ck, Canyon
- Morrison Colorado 80465 303-697-4726
- Crescendo Publications-122 Warden St 437-8892
- Alexander Technique--Rolland Tube station
- Christine Marie
- March 29
- Dennis Summers Flat 35
- call jazz pianist
- 42 Craubourne - WCR 437-7631

American Express card (use 6 Haymarket street)

- April 5 - expiration of first weeks rent London Musical club.

Spy Report (excerpted, woman's name omitted) from Terri Buford to Jim Jones referencing the keeping of photo "of Grace." Georgetown, Guyana. April 1977. Courtesy of the California Historical Society.



John Victor. Georgetown, Guyana. December 30, 1976.



Victoria Law Courts. Georgetown, Guyana. January 10, 1978. Scene of battle to enforce California custody order awarding John Victor to the Stoens.



Tim Stoen as San Francisco Assistant District Attorney. San Francisco, September 25, 1976. Courtesy of the *Ukiah Daily Journal*.

excerpted from Trip notes:

I saw things that textbooks and newspapers can't make vivid. I saw what a police state can do to individual human beings....I will now talk of the most startling and disconcerting experience in my life.

The restrictions of a communist police state are as bad as you read about. At newsstands you buy papers of East Germany only which serve as propaganda only.

... more notes---- pages of unreadable stuff on East Germany and how he was treated while under arrest.

.. "now I will reveal some information gleaned from a person I met but whose name I can't reveal because I fear for his safety.

-that each week a person must attend meetings some as often as 2-3 times a week. Meetings can last as long as four hours--what is discussed is Marxist writings and the virtue of a democratic state. The groups are so arranged that they separate friends and people with common interests are separated. My informer told us that the meetings were not too successful in indoctrination because too many people had been to the west.

-He said that if East Berliners had known before the borders were being set up that 40% of them would have left all worldly goods to escape. Less than 10% of them still support the regime.

-It is extremely difficult to have an underground spying system because you can't trust anybody.

-Even in East Germany army Saxons had to be brought in from other areas to keep check on the local soldiers because many of the local soldiers had anti-communist sympathies. It was from fear alone that most men carried out orders. One must note that the system of morality is quite simple. The soldiers are told that there are two kinds of Germans good and bad---the good are those who obey communist orders and the bad are to be shot.

-ending sentence:

"But when you see what people like you and I have to go through. They just want one thing. They want freedom to think and act as they see fit-to be able to choose between alternatives-where to work- and how to live and whom to worship--a state or a God--- they couldn't care less about creature comforts.-- All I can do is anguish about the problem and pray to God that it won't last forever.

TOS

*Very important
in seeing TOS
suspect*

(Notes taken by J. Buford)

Terri Buford memorandum to Jim Jones, probably written after Tim Stoen left Guyana on June 12, 1977. This was Terri's abstracting of private notes confiscated from the Stoen apartment after Grace's defection on July 4, 1976. Courtesy of the California Historical Society.



Major factor in recovery: Grace Stoen, who forgave me and cared about me. Berkeley, California. January 6, 1979. Courtesy of Mel White.



Major factor in recovery: Friends. Colorado Springs. Spring 1983. Left to right: John Colbrunn, Betsy Colbrunn, Tom Stoen, Cherry Starr, Bart Starr, Tim Stoen.

Timothy Oliver Stoen

ATTORNEY AT LAW

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94105

TELEPHONE (415) 396-2850

FACSIMILE
(707) 482-4008
ELECTRONIC MAIL
ABAInet: TSTOEN

Please reply to
Ukiah office

March 30, 1993

Special Agent Bob Seale
FBI Area Director
Waco, Texas
FAX: (817) 757-6320

Re: **Koresh Standoff -- Mass Suicide Threat**

Dear Agent Seale:

As the lawyer for Jim Jones for 7 years and as a chief adversary for 1 year, I have first-hand experience with the mind of a cult leader. Based on the second-hand information from the news media regarding recent developments in ATF's standoff with the Branch Davidians, I increasingly see disquieting parallels between Waco and Jonestown, where 913 people committed "revolutionary suicide." I hope you will not mind my giving you gratuitous advice, but I think it increasingly likely that you will have a mass suicide on your hands unless you change your tactics. My strong advice, therefore, is as follows:

1. **Situation:** Koresh, like Jones as of November 18, 1978, appears to have reached the point of being "too far gone" to deal with rationally, and therefore you can deal rationally only with the followers.

2. **Strategy:** The only way you will reach the followers is to (a) invade their consciousness with the "good" in the world outside their compound, and (b) clearly provide them an honorable alternative to "dying with loyalty" for their leader.

3. **Tactics:** Suggested tactics for doing this are as follows:

a. **Immediately withdraw all tanks, armor, uniformed personnel, and other signs of a military invasion (which simply feeds the Armageddon consciousness of the leader and plays into his hold over his followers);**

Special Agent Bob Seale
Re: Koresh Mass Suicide Threat
March 30, 1993
Page Two

b. Locate every "loved one" (fathers, mothers, siblings, children, grandparents, childhood sweethearts, and best friends) of each person you know to be in the compound;

c. Fly these loved ones immediately to Waco and ask, by loudspeaker or otherwise, Koresh point-blank to let them in, giving their specific names (no outspoken past "enemies" of Koresh); if he won't do this, set up loudspeakers and have each person make a personal appeal to his loved one;

d. These personal appeals should be based on scripts approved by common-sense and experienced cult-aware psychologists, and should do the following:

(1) clearly identify the speaker and the person in the compound being addressed;

(2) repeat over and over a message of love and acceptance (nothing negative whatsoever);

(3) emphasize the importance of staying alive to "tell the message" of Koresh;

(4) remind the person of the "good times" the speaker had in the past (to appeal to subconscious);

(5) promise "support";

(6) directly urge them to "leave now"; and

(7) lay out specific simple steps for leaving, e.g. "just open the door, wave a shirt up and down three times, and I will come to meet you."

Time may be getting short.

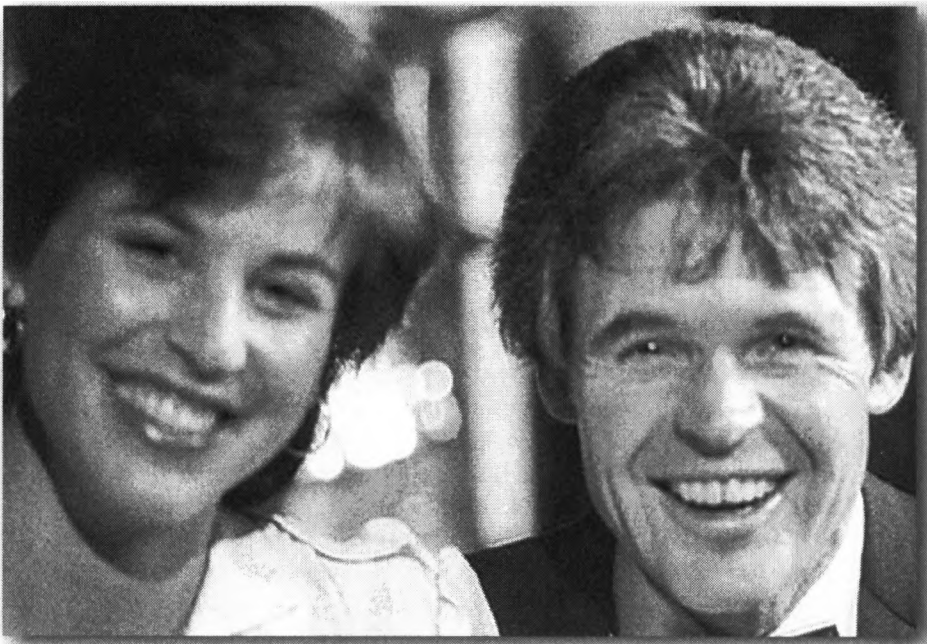
Sincerely yours,

Timothy O. Stoen
Timothy O. Stoen

On April 19, 1993, after a 51-day siege, the FBI and the ATF (US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms) attempted to raid the Branch Davidian ranch of David Koresh in Waco, Texas. A gun battle erupted, resulting in the deaths of four government agents and six Branch Davidians. A fire followed, started by the sect members themselves. In total, seventy-six people died. On March 30, I wrote this letter both to Special FBI Agent Bob Seale in Waco, and to ATF Director Steve Higgins in Washington, D.C. That same day I called Special Agent Seale in Waco at 817-752-8321. He asked me to immediately fax him the letter at 817-757-6320, the Marshal's office, where he would then pick it up. I faxed the letter as told that day at 1:25 p.m. No response was received.



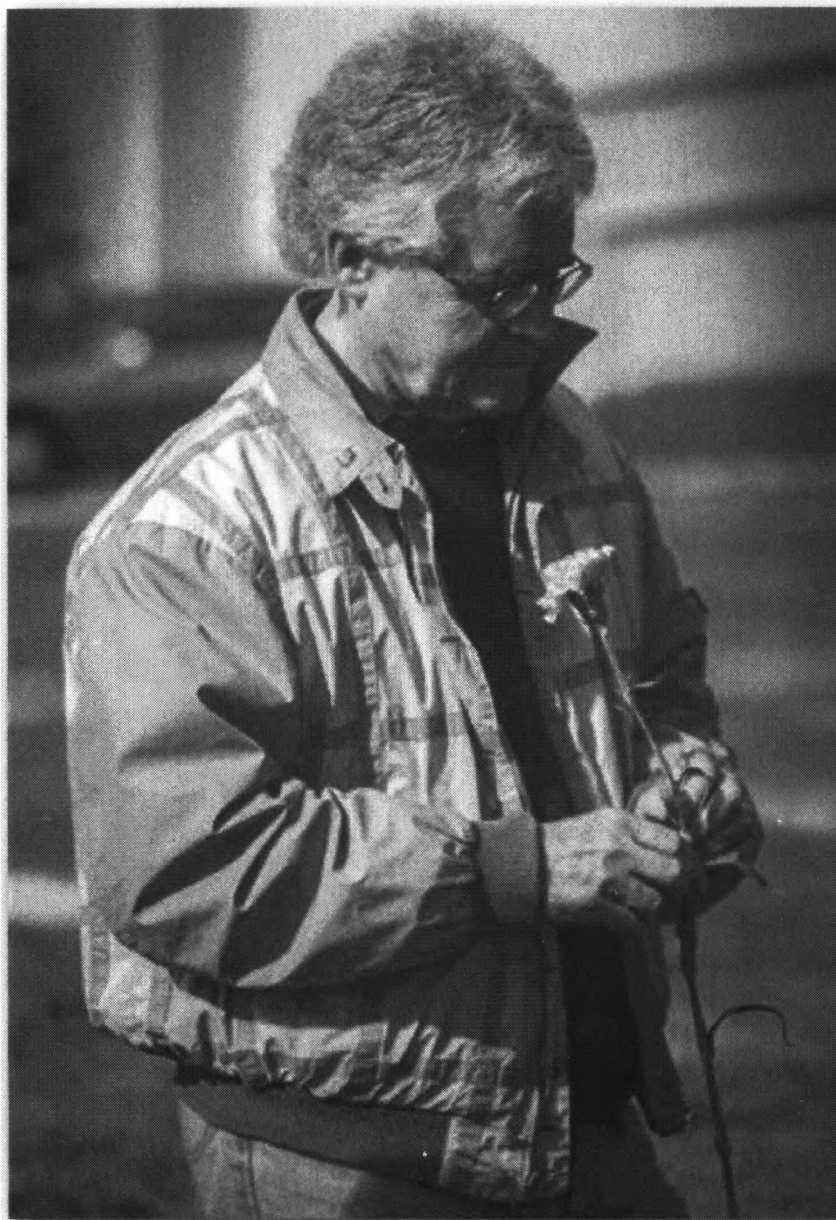
Major factor in recovery: Stoen Family. Colorado Springs. Summer 1983. Children, left to right: Alex, Magali, Eric, Erin, Anne. Adults, Left to right: Lucile, Joel, Tim, Tom, Jon, Françoise.



Major factor in recovery: Giselle Fernandez. "The Great Colorado Springs Invitational Jazz Party." The Broadmoor Hotel, November 12, 1983.



Kersti Stenstrom Stoen. Mendocino, California.
April 1998 (one year after marriage).



Thirty-Second Annual Jonestown Memorial Service. Evergreen Cemetery, Oakland, California. November 18, 2010. Photographer: Eric Risberg. By Permission of the Associated Press.



Kersti and Tim Stoen. Mendocino Street Fair. July 27, 2013.
Courtesy of Daniel Markoya Productions.

Dictator



BY NEW YEAR'S DAY 1978, Jim Jones had been in Guyana six full months, and had consolidated his rule into a dictatorship. He would not be keeping it long a secret. On April 12 Jones became so exasperated over "elitism" among Jonestown leaders that he erupted.* He revealed his real mind as to the nature of Peoples Temple and as to where Jonestown's true power lay: "This organization is built upon the dictatorship of the proletariat, and I am, goddammit, very much in control."¹³³

Grace and I had felt the impact of that control within two days of our January 4, 1978, arrival in Guyana: "Wed eve—11:30. Tim and Grace arrive on ALM at Timehri. Check into Tower."

The Tower Hotel was second in rank to the Pegasus Hotel, and between the two hotels ran Main Street, a leafy tree-lined boulevard enclosing a wide sidewalk. This is where that "choke-and-rob" was to take place.

On Friday morning, January 6, after recovering from jet lag, I tried to initiate things through Dr. Ptolemy Reid, Guyana's second-in-command, underlining the word "I" on the paternity question: "Fri a.m.—Wrote letter to Dr. Reid requesting a 5 minute interview and his help in getting my boy, that I was desperate, that I hadn't changed from being democratic socialist and believing in racial brotherhood, that I was natural father, that 'I wished Jones no harm.'"

* It was only after 1978 that I would learn of Jones's taped messages during that year. However, I was able to get an accurate fix on what he was up to based on documents that did surface—combined with a finally developing intuition.

In my letter, I also asked Dr. Reid to make sure, particularly, that the judicial system functioned, and to have an open mind about me despite whatever defamations Jones had made. I also issued him an unhappy warning: "Jim has become corrupted by power and bodes ill for Guyana."

My journal summary continued: "Phoned Miss Foster, Dr. Reid's secretary, asking her to verbally request Dr. Reid for interview and to follow up that letter delivered. Miss Foster cold. (I had told her fighting PT but not vindictive.) Late morning Miss Foster called back to me at Tower, sounded friendlier. She told me 'Dr. Reid said for you to see Comrade Mingo at Home Affairs.'"

After Miss Foster's phone call, I went to see Vibert Mingo, the minister of home affairs. Mingo's reception was as frosty as if I were a leper.

Our Guyanese attorney, Clarence Hughes, had been optimistic about our getting an order requiring Joyce Touchette (whom Jones claimed had legal custody of John in Jonestown) to appear with John Victor based on our California order.

Jones, however, had already wrapped up the leading barristers in Guyana, including Sir Lionel Luckhoo, a "Queen's Counsel." More than that, Sir Lionel was already famous for a huge string of successful murder defenses. He would eventually have 245 consecutive such defenses. Incredibly, he would one day gain an entry in the *Guinness Book of Records* (1990) as "the world's most successful lawyer."¹³⁴

On top of that, although Clarence Hughes had a good reputation, he had unfortunately represented the wife of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham in his divorce.

On Tuesday, January 10, at 3:00 p.m., Grace, her attorneys Clarence Hughes and Jeff Haas, and I appeared for an initial hearing of our custody case in the nineteenth-century, gracefully porticoed, veranda-fronted Victoria Law Courts. At the outset Judge Aubrey Bishop announced in open court words of foreboding:

"I have been beleaguered by calls from American citizens. They have come from the Pegasus Hotel. I deprecate this. They will have no influence on me. They are trying to reach me in chambers."

Afterward, Clarence Hughes told Grace and me that the calls had been worded to make it appear they came from “your supporters”—as if we had any. My January 12 journal was hopeful on the judge’s discernment: “Grace conjectured that the church members called as us. It just shows how stupid Jones can be to overdo everything. The judge would see the court spectators’ eyes and know which side was acting militantly.”

Jones was not so stupid after all, for he was to get what he wanted: Judge Bishop would end up refusing to rule, thus preserving the status quo of John Victor remaining in Jonestown, and thus rewarding Jim Jones’s Machiavellian hand.*

I also recorded in my January 12 journal the entry, that day, of the US consular officer into my Peoples Temple conflict: “US chargé d’affaires Dick McCoy called and said that he visited both Clarence and Luckhoo, where there were PT members who told him that Stoen had gone to Mingo saying he was sent by Dr. Reid and that he had not been so sent. So it’s clear there’s a leak in Home Affairs.”

On January 13, at 3:50 p.m., an immigration official from Vibert Mingo’s ministry came to the Tower Hotel and ordered Grace and me out of the country “by tomorrow.” He could give no reason, although Grace and I well knew it was due to Jones’s dictatorial influence. Since Grace and I had visas for three weeks, we went to the US embassy to protest.

I told Richard McCoy that I was not leaving, for the reason that it was a violation of international law to be ordered out of a country before a visa expires. I said Grace would be going to Trinidad and coming back on a new visa, but that I was staying in Guyana to get arrested as “a political prisoner.”

“You will,” I added, “have an international incident on your hands ’cause I’m not going.”

* On August 13, 1978, a headline in the *Guyana Chronicle* will proclaim: “Judge Hits Out at Mean, Despicable Acts, Declines to Hear Case.” The article will quote “High Court Judge Aubrey Bishop” as saying: “[T]here have been persistent efforts of an extra-legal or opprobrious nature, in the form of letters and other documents, as well as telephone calls, intended to influence the outcome of the proceedings, in favor of one side or the other. I consider those acts mean and despicable and feel obliged to decline adjudicating the cause.”

McCoy, a decent man, asked me not to cause trouble, said I should do as Grace was doing, and warned that the conditions in Guyanese jails were not agreeable. He said he would be working on the matter with the US State Department.

The next morning, January 14, I called the embassy to ask if they had gotten any word that the order was rescinded. They said no, so Grace and I went by taxi to the airport. As she was standing in line at Pan American Airlines, another immigration official came up and said the order had been rescinded. Again, no reason was given.

By now, Grace and I were running out of money, and she had to get home to her job. I had taken out a \$15,000 loan from a Colorado Springs bank. However, with all the expenses of attorneys, airfares, meals, and lodging, it was fast being used up. We decided I would play it by ear, and that Grace would leave the following Wednesday. We returned to the Tower Hotel. Grace's day of leaving would turn out to be eventful:

Wednesday, January [18], 1978

9—to Pan Am to get Grace ticket for today.

11 a.m.—Leave for Airport with Grace. Taxi Driver Harry Murray.

12:30 p.m. Surrounded by Tim Swinney, Deborah Touchette, a white male American with "karate hands" according to Harry, all from PT. They said there to see me off. Told me to drop proceedings involving John, said they had things I had signed and my "hospital records." Said they had nothing to lose and that I had everything to lose. When I asked what I had to lose Tim Swinney, looking cold in my eyes, said firmly, "Your life." I looked him back. Told them Jim Jones was a fascist and they were brain-washed, mind controlled. They backed off and Grace came up and said, "You can't take hearing that, can you?" Grace went out to plane. The 3 from PT sat down. I got camera and took 2 flash

pictures and tried to get corroborating threat on tape. Called them bullies for coming in group and “chicken shits.” (Probably shouldn’t have been so antagonistic.)... Harry witnessed physical acts. PT had to have inside info as to when Grace going.

Returning from the airport, I took a cab to police headquarters and spoke with Police Commissioner Lloyd Barker. My journal for that day continued: “Told Barker of incident. He seemed genuinely concerned and said he would not tolerate anybody being threatened. I told him PT had a lot of good in it but that JJ going crazy. That J may be bringing drugs in though I couldn’t prove it. “

The next day, Thursday, January 19, I went back to visit with Assistant Police Commissioner Skip Roberts. He was brusque. Like Mingo, it would turn out, he too had yielded to the day-after-day propagandizing of Jim Jones and Sharon Amos: “I asked him for advice as to whether I had a case and he said, ‘No, because you admitted to us you had no fear.’ I said I had no fear of assault at that time but nonetheless thought the threat credible. He said Guyana law requires fear in victims. Roberts said Jones wanted me prosecuted for libeling him...but that he told PT it was only a civil matter.”

Earlier that same day I made a visit to the US embassy. “Thursday, January [19], 1978. Saw McCoy at Embassy, who was on phone to PT. Said PT ‘very upset’ about possibility I was filing a criminal complaint against Debbie Touchette, a law-abiding black girl resident 4 years. I told McCoy that I would file only against Swinney if at all. He said PT threatened to go on ‘sit down strike,’ to which I replied ‘against whom, themselves?’”

Finally, that same evening I received a relief call from my youngest brother: “Jonathan called me around 10:15 and suggested I fly to Denver to help do legal work on Fiji concession. Jon truly cares, and someday I hope to make it up to him.”

I flew out the next day, feeling lucky to get out of Guyana at all.

Following my arrival in Denver on January 20, I at first did legal work for Jonathan, in a field light-years away from the concerns of Peoples Temple. A geological genius, Jonathan had found evidences of oil seeps

in the South Pacific, where no oil had ever been found. He was acquiring the oil concessions for Fiji. Within two years he would be persuading hard-nosed oil companies like Chevron to send ships from Norway to drill in Fiji.

When he saw how demoralized I was, Jonathan asked what he could do to help. "Look," he said, "I have a Telex machine, so why don't we send messages off to congress and ask them to help?"

On January 22 we sent mailgrams, in the names of Grace and me, to numerous US senators and US representatives having to deal with foreign relations. We asked each to "request the US State Department...to demand that the Government of Guyana honor" the California Superior Court order requiring Jim Jones to "immediately deliver the child John Victor."¹³⁵

On January 23, I left for Washington, DC, where I lobbied congressional offices for most of thirteen days. A college classmate and erudite attorney, Chuck Petty, donated office space in his Seventeenth Street law firm. He helped me prepare a white paper for distribution to Congress regarding "John Victor Stoen, age 6," who was "now held illegally by Jim Jones."

The document showed our desire to avoid an "army" confrontation: "Jones strongly resists release of the child and is politically influential in the highest circles of the Guyanese Government. The court is expected to award custody to the Stoens, but enforcement may require a political decision to use the Guyanese Army and could result in harm to John Victor or other innocent persons. The Stoens wish to avoid a dangerous confrontation with Jones and to enlist the aid of the US and Guyanese Governments to this end."¹³⁶

The Temple had quickly gotten word of the mailgrams, and quickly mounted a counter-attack. On January 27—four days after I appeared in Washington, DC—Jim Jones executed his most penetrating attack on my willingness to stay the course.

It reached the public, including every Northern California official in the Congress, again by way of Herb Caen.¹³⁷ After substantially increasing the Temple size to "20,000 strong" from an "8,000 member church" in March 1976, Caen went for the kill.

First, he stated that Jim Jones, in describing a six-year-old boy “as ‘my son’...means ‘my son’ literally, even though Timothy...Stoen...and his more or less estranged wife...claim the lad is THEIR son.”

Second, after stating there was “floating around” an “affidavit”¹³⁸ signed by Timothy Oliver Stoen on February 6, 1972, Caen proceeded to give the “money quote” from it:¹³⁹ that in April 1971, I “entreated” James W. Jones “to sire a child by my wife” because I “was unable after extensive attempts to sire one myself.” Jones very well knew I had never entreated him to do any such thing, and he very well knew there was no basis for believing any such inability.

In addition to using Herb Caen as a propaganda mouthpiece, Jones had “diversionary” letters sent to officials in Congress—to divert attention from Jones’s wrongdoing onto me, and to divert the issue from custody of a child to foreign aid to Guyana.

As one example, he had a letter sent to Congressman Don Edwards from “A. Elizabeth Moore,” who was Jim Jones’s nurse and the sister of his main mistress, Carolyn Moore Layton: “Dear Mr. Edwards, Recently a San Francisco attorney named Stoen came to Guyana to pursue a disputed custody matter. He decided, not being successful, to try to create an international incident. What he is now doing is contacting US Government officials and congressmen in a deceptive effort to enlist their aid in undermining negotiations for US assistance to that nation.”¹⁴⁰

Day after day, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., I tramped the marble halls of the US Capitol buildings, clutching as my bible a little blue book, *Braddock’s Federal-State-Local Government Directory 1977-78*. Oblivious to all the surrounding beauty and historic meaning, I concentrated solely on the terrible mission.

By the time I reached the various offices, I could expect an interrogation that followed a certain track:

Question behind the words: “Why should we believe your bizarre story, and why should we help you to steal a child from his father in Guyana—a father you once claimed, in writing, to be the actual father?”

Answer: “Look me in the eyes. I am here because I love that child, and because his mother loves him and deserves to raise him. The child’s

welfare is at stake. Do not blame the child over my mistakes. Why else would I be coming here, and putting myself through this, if I did not love the child and believe he is being harmed?"

Many of the lawmakers, and many of their staff people, looked past "the noise." They believed me. Republican Senator Mark Hatfield of Oregon, an antiwar Christian, took the lead with the US State Department. He immediately set up a meeting for Steve Katsaris and me with five officials for January 27. His staff people, Tom Getman and Riki Poster, went far out of their way to help.

Five Congressmen from California were beautifully supportive. They were Leo Ryan, Don Edwards, Pete McCloskey, Norman Mineta, and George Miller. Ryan would later offer help greatly surpassing letters and telephone calls.

Edwards, a liberal Democratic congressman, wrote to the Guyanese ambassador to the United States and met with me personally. He and his staff person, Gary Fay, could not do enough, as was true of Republican McCloskey and his staff person, Michelle Farrar. Mineta and Miller, along with Senator Tim Wirth of Colorado, stuck their necks out by writing to head of state Forbes Burnham directly.

Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts wrote to the Guyanese ambassador to the United States the very day our mailgram hit his office. Senator Richard Lugar, of Indiana, wrote to the US embassy in Guyana, and had his staff call attorney Jeff Haas in San Francisco.

Others also gratuitously wrote to the State Department. These included fifteen additional senators, two additional representatives, and Vice President Walter Mondale.*

The main problem for Grace and me was the US State Department. From the outset, a lead official had taken a position that, according to

* These wonderful additional federal officials were Senators DeConcini of Arizona, McGovern of South Dakota, Sparkman of Alabama, Church of Idaho, Javits of New York, Humphrey of Minnesota, Case of New Jersey, Sarbanes of Maryland, Inouye of Hawaii, Leahy of Vermont, Glenn of Ohio, Schweiker of Pennsylvania, Clark of Iowa, Hayakawa of California, and Baker of Tennessee; and Representatives Stark of California and Bonker of Washington.

knowledgeable attorneys, was in violation of international law. Once he took it, the department was unwilling to be dissuaded from it.

State's position had been set in concrete by a December 9, 1977, letter from Douglas J. Bennett, Jr., the assistant secretary for congressional relations.¹⁴¹ His letter was addressed to Representative Robert Duncan of Oregon, who had been contacted, on behalf of Grace, by her attorney, Margaret Ryan.

Ms. Ryan had also made a special trip, for Grace, to the US State Department in Washington.

Mr. Bennett's letter, tragically, was factually misleading, disregarded the applicable principles of international law, and took a pro-Jones and anti-Grace stance from the outset. It seemed that somebody had gotten to him.

First, he said that "Mrs. Stoen previously signed over custody of John to the religious group," omitting the refuting fact of the San Francisco Superior Court's November 18 "null and void" order: "Based on testimony offered at the hearing on November 18, 1977...and notarized documents provided to and filed with the court, the court finds and orders that all previous statements signed by...Petitioner [Grace Lucy Stoen]...authorizing one Joyce Touchette, Jim Jones, or any other person to act as guardian of said minor child is hereby declared null and void."

Second, Mr. Bennett said that "[d]uring her visit to the department, Ms. Ryan had some doubt about her ability to satisfy a foreign judge about Mrs. Stoen's character or ability to provide a proper environment for her child."

This was a gratuitous aspersion against Grace, for the San Francisco court's ruling had granted Grace custody, thereby showing she had, indeed, "proper" character and ability. This court ruling was based on evidence: Grace's unrefuted declaration that because of her "strong love" for John, she had been "able to maintain close contact with John" at all times in Peoples Temple, and had "enjoyed" with him "a warm and affectionate relationship."

Third, Mr. Bennett said that Ms. Ryan “was unable to be specific” in “her belief that the pending judicial proceedings” in Guyana “were going to be unfair in some manner.”

He was thus disregarding the refuting fact that the US embassy in Guyana—his own US State Department embassy—had already sent a diplomatic letter to the Guyana Ministry of Foreign Affairs protesting an actual denial of justice: that a high-ranking official in the Guyana government, had illegally instructed a clerk not to issue a warrant for Jones’s arrest—after a Guyanese judge had, on September 10, ordered that arrest.¹⁴²

Mr. Bennett here was also disregarding, in relation to Grace, two applicable principles of international law. The first was that “a trial or other proceeding to determine the rights or liabilities of an alien must be fair.” The second was that “[d]enial of justice exists where there is a denial, unwarranted delay, or obstruction of access to the courts.”¹⁴³

Fourth, and of terrible significance, Mr. Bennett said that Grace’s California custody order was to be considered as merely “useful”:

“Although the California court orders may be useful in the case in Guyana, the family must not expect that the hearing in Guyana is to enforce the California court order. The hearing in Guyana is to determine the custody of John Victor Stoen. His family and their attorneys must be prepared to discuss the basic custody matter with the court in Guyana and not expect that court to accept the decisions of a foreign [US] court at face value.”

By saying that Grace’s California order “may be useful,” Mr. Bennett was saying the Guyana court could take it or leave it. This was in the face of Judge Finnegan’s November 18, 1977, findings that Jim Jones, as “claimant” for John Victor, (1) had “actual notice” of the proceedings, (2) had failed to appear “contrary to the order of this court,” and (3) was subject to “contempt proceedings.”

Moreover, attorney Charles Garry could have traveled the few blocks from his office on that very day—had there been the slightest ground under the US Constitution or otherwise—to protest any order being directed personally against his client Jim Jones.

Here, too, Mr. Bennett was disregarding a key principle of international law. It was Section 178 of the Restatement on Foreign Relations Law. The scholarly lawyer Chuck Petty would be so exercised about Mr. Bennett's opinion as to call me about it: "Thursday, February 16, 1978. Chuck Petty called to say...Doug Bennett's letter for State Dep't misunderstands law—State Department not to be neutral if US citizen before a US court giving orders against him. See Restatement on Foreign Relations."

Two weeks after that, I got a call from the office of Representative Pete McCloskey, a distinguished lawyer himself, stating that Doug Bennett's position was invalid: "Friday, March 3, 1978. Michelle Farrar called saying McCloskey wrote letter to Bennett at State finding his neutral position 'unacceptable' because Calif & US presumption that child of marriage legitimate—designed to protect the rights of the child."

Congressman McCloskey was so principled as to maintain consistent views in his responses to the pro-Temple letters: "Should Reverend Jones be indeed the natural father of John Victor Stoen, this would not in any way remove the child's right to the presumption of legitimacy which is given him under California law. As I understand Reverend Jones's position, he is in effect claiming that the child is a bastard; this the California law refuses to accept."¹⁴⁴

In sum, then, as a result of Doug Bennett's "killer letter" of December 5, 1977, the legal rights of both Grace Stoen and of the child, John Victor Stoen, had been violated by their own US State Department. Never once would the US State Department officially present Grace's California custody order to the Guyanese government.

Thus, when Steve Katsaris and I met, on January 27, with the five officials of the US State Department—Elizabeth Powers, Frank Tumminia, Steven Dobrenchuk, Fred Henneke, and Michelle Truitt—the game had already been rigged through no fault of their own.

Following my visits to the congressional offices, Jones proceeded to send his wife, Marceline, and other Temple members to undo any damage. Edwards's office called to say Marceline was "very smooth."

On February 16, after returning from Washington, I gave an interview to reporter Tim Reiterman of the *San Francisco Examiner*. I

immediately owned up to signing the statement that Jones was the father, and I declared it to be false.

I went on the counterattack, contending that Jones was trying to divert public attention from the key issues of (1) the welfare of John, and (2) Grace's indisputable custody rights as John's natural mother. I challenged Jones, whose blood type was the same as mine (O positive), to take whatever medical tests could resolve the issue of biological paternity.

After the interview, I went to see a San Francisco urologist, Frank DeM. Hill, to prove I was able to sire children. He was soon to submit his report undermining the "affidavit": "February 27, 1978... The urinalysis and stain of sediment were within normal limits. A semen specimen (delivered in the office) showed a 3 cc. volume with 80,000,000 sperm per cc., about 95% excellent directional motility, fewer than 10% abnormal forms, and these primarily microheads. There was about 65% motility at three hours. It was my impression that this specimen appeared to be within the limits of normal."¹⁴⁵

Tim Reiterman's front-page article appeared in the *San Francisco Examiner* on Sunday, February 26, 1978. Four days before this, Jones from Guyana had called the reporter at his home at 7:30 in the morning. During that call Jones had stated that he, Jim Jones, had been "present at the birth" of John Victor.

That was a lie, leading Reiterman to write that the attending physician, Dr. John Bodle, had told him that the person in the delivery room was Tim Stoen, not Jim Jones. That lie went an appreciable way toward destroying Jones's credibility among the open-minded public.

Four days later I received a letter evidencing Jones's recognition of his mistake. It came from someone whose initials I did not recognize: "Wednesday, March 1, 1978. Letter from 'R. T.' saying they know I would like to end 'this distasteful exchange.' Up to me, stop now or necessity will compel them to publish my notes on 'Project M,' 'the Final Ace,' etc."¹⁴⁶ I visualized gnomes, in green eyeshades, creatively manufacturing such notes.

In the meantime, Jones's attack on Grace intensified: "Monday, February 27, 1978. Rosemary Williams called saying Marceline called

meeting at PT Saturday a.m. and asked for letters and telegrams to president and senators that Grace an unfit mother.”

Results soon surfaced: “Friday, March 3, 1978. Gary Fay called saying church sending much mail—‘trash’ letter accusing Grace of going from bar to bar, TOS a revolutionary, etc.” I had never seen Grace go to a bar in my life.

That same day, I sent to Richard McCoy in Guyana, via McCloskey’s office, an air ticket for John Victor, and a “repatriation request” for him “and persons with custody who show up.”

Concurrently, Jones continued his full-court press of “diversion” letters to Congress. He was very clever. He had Mike Prokes write to Congress in such a way as to invoke this March 7 reply from Congressman B. F. Sisk: “Regardless of Mr. Stoen’s efforts, I have been assured by officials of the Department of State that we plan to continue our foreign aid to Guyana in the context of our overall Caribbean policy.”¹⁴⁷

Jones also had a Temple member write, as a “Minister of Divinity,” to random members of Congress alleging my “ruthless pressure on Rev. Jones for seven years,” and inciting their egos:

We have heard that Timothy Stoen is boasting that he has your complete support in a custody case which is currently being settled in a Guyanese court. It appears he considers you an easy mark and has said that your support is “assured.” The child in question is not his at all. He and his ex-wife, though estranged, have joined forces to attempt to pursue custody of a child they have never shown any interest in at all. On the contrary, they have used the whole matter as a means of applying ruthless pressure on Rev. Jones for seven years.¹⁴⁸

Congress members did not like being told they were an “easy mark.” One representative, Mario Biaggi, responded to that letter to make it clear he was not to be taken in:

“Dear Sir: Thank you for your recent letter regarding the activities of Timothy Stoen. I regret the problems he has caused and appreciate your telling me that he has been claiming my support. Prior to receipt of your letter I had never heard of Mr. Stoen. I assure you that I would never support activities such as those described in your correspondence.”¹⁴⁹

After the *Examiner* article, I was feeling demoralized in the public fight with Jones, and wondered if I had lost all my friends. So I was near tears when, after the article came out, numerous friends from the past, and from all over the country, started contacting me and offering to help.

On March 14, 1978, the day Jones would be releasing a pivotal open letter to Congress, I received another “anonymous” letter. Postmarked the day before, it was addressed to me at my office. The letter, which was typed over the name of an unknown “P. Mark,” stated: “You seem determined to bring out all of the genuine, fine-tempered courage in us. And you may, but you won’t enjoy the same dignity.”¹⁵⁰

On Monday, March 20, 1978, Jones’s influence over Guyanese political officials would show its hand. That evening he called all the Jonestown residents to an emergency session, which he characterized as a “White Night* Alert.”¹⁵¹

A woman proceeded to report about a “big meeting over the weekend” with the top of Guyanese officialdom, the topic of discussion being “the article about us.”¹⁵²

Those at the “meeting” were Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, Deputy Prime Minister Dr. Ptolemy Reid, Minister of Development Desmond Hoyte, Minister of Health and Labor Hamilton Green, Minister of Information Shirley Field-Ridley, and Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Hubert Jack.¹⁵³

From what this woman said, politics had in fact contaminated the judiciary and, further, had resulted in the extraordinary step of making a particular individual persona non grata:

* “White Night” was a term used by Jones for any “emergency meeting.”

Woman 1:* “So Hoyte asked Burnham straight up what was the position toward us, and Burnham made the reply that it was—we would win the cus—custody case, and the arrest orders would be dropped...”

Jones: “That means the custody case we’ve had uh, with John [Victor Stoen] and Dana [Truss] and all those cases, they’ll be dropped, and the arrest orders will be dropped. Now go on.”

Woman 1: “The decision was that Tim Stoen will not be allowed to even step foot in Guyana.”¹⁵⁴

On April 1, 1978, James Warren Jones called a meeting in Jonestown, Guyana, and lit into his former colleague.

First, he expressed guilt for not taking advantage of the chance to “twist” this person when he was ignoring the rules: “I have Tim Stoen *somewhat* in my psyche tonight... He needed to come down. (Pause) But you can’t get a guy like him down enough, unless you get a Learning Crew [hard labor at double time] all the time. (Chuckles.) Too bad we didn’t have it then, we coulda kept him. He might’ve, you know, one little twist and turn in history, a person might have gone a different way. That’s why we don’t dare allow elitism to take place. The people get to thinking the rules don’t apply to them, and they do up all kinds of (unintelligible word) and finally they go and do something like *he* did. (Pause). Tim Stoen should have been *long* ago. I have a lot of guilt. We should have cornered him.”¹⁵⁵

Second, he made it clear what his emotional reaction was, and what he would like to do to that person now: “I’m a man filled with rage... I could kill him, I could *really* kill him. Literally kill him. He’s a son of a bitch to do what he did to me, to this people, to do what he did.”¹⁵⁶

Third, he said he had the very man who could do the act, but that there was a downside if he made this arrangement and a downside if he did not: “I got the man that’ll *get* him. All I got to do is say the word, ‘Go.’ [Pause] I love those people too much, it’s not worth it... Yeah, but there’s only—only one little catch to that. If he ever gets in a court of ru—of law, he can hurt you more.”¹⁵⁷

* “Woman 1” is the unknown person referred to as such in the transcript of the tape obtained by the FBI.

Fourth, in an instance of Freudian projection of the animal roving about in his soul, he declared his fantasy as to a perfect solution: "I'd like to make him the tiger bait. That tiger's been awfully nice to us. He's gotten our enemies and never bothered us. I'd like to park his ass on a stake out there in the yard, let the—let the tiger see him."¹⁵⁸

Fifth, he had an ultimate plan for this particular enemy should there ever be a real "White Night": "*Tim Stoen*...hasn't made a *move* in the United States, there hasn't been somebody on his bottom side. (Shouts) Just waiting... All they need to hear is to say, 'It's it. It's a White Night. It's it. Get our enemies,' and there'll be two, three hundred people on those sons-a-bitches faster than...(voice drops to normal)...flies on...honey. You bet your life."¹⁵⁹

The following night, Jones described his situation as "war" and, making reference to those who "wanted to kidnap John," fabricated a story that a particular enemy had current plans to do so: "We're in a *war*. They tell us to be careful of everyone comes in here now, because we have an absolute—absolute—informer who stepped forward, told us of the plans of—of Stoen..."¹⁶⁰

On April 3, Gary Fay in Washington sent me the document that made my blood freeze. It was an open letter to Congress on Peoples Temple stationery, signed by one "Pamela G. Moton" but in the vocabulary of an authoritarian "I":

March 14, 1978

TO ALL US SENATORS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS:

We at Peoples Temple have been the subject of harassment by several agencies of the US Government, and are rapidly reaching the point at which patience is exhausted.



It is...evident that people cannot forever be continually harassed and beleaguered by such tactics without seeking alternatives that have been presented. I can say without hesitation that we are

devoted to a decision that it is better to die than to be constantly harassed from one continent to the next.¹⁶¹

The effect of this letter on me was cataclysmic. Suddenly, I realized what Jim Jones was up to, way back in September 1975, when he conducted that wine test, which I fatuously attributed to a psychological drama. Instead, he was “testing the possibilities” should he someday decide to kill! So when I read, “we are devoted to a decision that it is better even to die,” I took it at face value. It momentarily changed the motivation of my fight.

Before, it had been John Victor’s welfare and Grace’s motherhood. Now, it was John Victor’s life. This, therefore, would require a comprehensive attack: one calculated to force Jones to release John if he wanted to save both his US properties and Jonestown itself.

Such an attack, however, would necessarily be based on a major assumption: trusting that the intellectuals in Jonestown leadership—Eugene Chaikin, Richard and Harriet Tropp, Tom Grubbs, Carolyn Moore Layton, Jim McElvane, Jann Gurvich (attended Vassar), and Terri Buford—would be clearheaded enough, and strong enough, to force Jones to release John Victor based on Jones’s own constantly repeated philosophy of “the greatest good for the greatest number.”

The first step would be to attack Jones for violating human rights. It began the very next day, at my office at 120 Montgomery Street: “Tuesday, April 4, 1978. Drafted Petition on Human Rights.”

To start this, I had only to walk three and a half blocks to 312 Sutter, the headquarters of the San Francisco chapter of the World Affairs Council. There I was graciously allowed to research the Guyana Constitution, and the United Nations Charter on Human Rights.

Steve Katsaris, a highly principled Ukiah psychologist and former Greek Orthodox priest, whose daughter was in Jonestown, proceeded to give invaluable help.

Inspired by Emile Zola’s 1898 *J’Accuse*—an open letter accusing the French government of the unlawful jailing of a Jewish army officer,

Alfred Dreyfus—we prepared a forty-eight-page “Accusation of Human Rights Violations by Rev. James Warren Jones Against Our Children and Relatives at the Peoples Temple Jungle Encampment in Guyana, South America.”¹⁶²

The Accusation attacked Jones for violating specific rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and under the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. It was signed by twenty-five “grief-stricken parents and relatives of thirty-seven persons in Jonestown.” We documented our accusations of four basic human-rights violations, by Jones in Jonestown:

- Stationing guards and threatening residents with death if they attempt to leave;
- Confiscating their passports and money;
- Employing physical intimidation and psychological coercion as part of a mind-programming campaign; and
- Depriving the residents of their rights to privacy, free speech, freedom of association, and freedom of movement.¹⁶³

We mentioned three sets of parents who had traveled to Guyana to see their children, only to be frustrated by Jones. One was Steve Katsaris, who had twice traveled to Guyana to see his daughter Maria, age twenty-four.

The first time, he was refused all contact. The second time, he was allowed to see her in the presence of a US embassy representative and in the presence of three Temple members. Maria, showing evidence of sleep deprivation and a behavior pattern different from that ever manifested before, accused her father of being part of a conspiracy against the Temple.

The second set of people turned away by Jones was a precious black couple, Howard and Beverly Oliver, who went to see their two sons, seventeen-year old William and twenty-year old Bruce. The third set was Grace and me.

The essence of our Accusation was a demand for answers to two broad-based questions relating to the March 14, 1977, letter to Congress:

When you refer to “a decision that it is better even to die than to be constantly harassed,” has this “decision” already been made or is it to be made in the future? If made, when and where? Were our relatives consulted? Did anybody dissent? By what moral or legal justification could you possibly make such a decision on behalf of minor children?

When you say you are “devoted” to this decision, does that mean it is irreversible? If irreversible, at what point will the alleged “harassment” have gotten so great as to make death “better”? Would it be an International Human Rights Commission investigation, or an on-premises investigation of your operations by the US government? Who besides you will decide when that point “to die” is reached?¹⁶⁴

Writing these words sent an arrow of terror into my soul. Why on earth would someone in Jones’s position of absolute power ever talk that way? As writer John Peer Nugent would one day show, Jim Jones had it all:

Jonestown was many a man’s dream come true: one’s own unrestricted and unmonitored empire. There were no building inspectors, health inspectors, or police inspectors. Jones had his own hospital and police force; his own fire department, judicial system, and prison system. Since all religious schools in Guyana had long ago been secularized, Jones ran the only private school in the country. His doctor was permitted to oversee his own internship program at his own clinic, while other doctors in Guyana were required to complete a year of postdoctoral training in government hospitals. His Georgetown headquarters was a veritable embassy, and he was seriously considering opening a

diplomatic mission in Washington. Jones had his own merchant marine: two oceangoing trawlers that brought in goods from the Caribbean islands or Venezuela. He had a black pilot based in Miami to fly in shipments ordered from the United States. He had his own uncensored newspaper and his own broadcasting operation. He had permission to name his colony after himself; even [Prime Minister] Forbes Burnham didn't have a Burnhamtown."¹⁶⁵

As to why someone in Jim Jones's position would, from a "conscious" point of view, despite having done that wine experiment to test the possibilities, actually proceed to hatch a collective "decision to die," that question probably had to have been best answered in 1887 by Lord Acton. "Power tends to corrupt," he said, "and absolute power corrupts absolutely."¹⁶⁶

Narcissist



WHEN, ON APRIL 3, 1978, I became aware of Jim Jones's March 14 letter to Congress announcing a collective "decision to die," I had no idea he had diabolically, six days after that, fleshed out an implementation plan: "But if tonight, we couldn't get our freedom, and we all said we're going to commit suicide and drink some *potion*, that would be—that would be an honorable act, if that was our only alternative, and uh, that was our *best* alternative... That would be revolutionary suicide, and that would be an honorable thing to do."¹⁶⁷

Had I known of that implementation threat, I would have given it credibility based on that September 1975 wine episode combined with the "absolute power" dictum of Lord Acton—"who knew more history," said William Temple in 1942, "than any other Englishman of the last generation."¹⁶⁸

I would have lacked, however, an understanding of the psychological mechanism behind that implementation threat. I would have lacked psychoanalyst Erich Fromm's understanding of how extreme narcissism—ordinary narcissism being defined as "excessive love or admiration of oneself"¹⁶⁹—supercharges "absolute power" corruption.

For Jones's narcissism at that time went far beyond penciling in his sideburns. Said he in his March 20 "White Night Alert" meeting: "I'm so sure of my principles and my goodness and my honesty and my introspection and soul-searching analysis, that I can answer any question you've got to ask. And if you can see my goodness, then you would work on your goodness..."¹⁷⁰

In 1964, Erich Fromm, who after fleeing the Nazis had studied their leaders, wrote about the relationship between absolute power and “a particular instance of narcissism which lies on the borderline between sanity and insanity.” It is found in leaders who have reached extreme power, such as “[t]he Egyptian Pharaohs, the Roman Caesars, the Borgias, Hitler, Stalin, Trujillo.”

All these men had achieved such absolute power that their “word” became “the ultimate judgment of everything, including life and death.” The more such a man “tries to be god, the more he isolates himself from the human race.” This, in turn, causes him to be “more frightened,” which makes everybody his “enemy.” Finally, to deal with this fright, he is forced to “increase his power, his ruthlessness, and his narcissism.”¹⁷¹

Fromm coined the term “malignant narcissism”¹⁷² for such people—a narcissism based on “something he has”—as distinguished from “benign narcissism”—a narcissism based on what he “does or produces.” The end result of malignant narcissism is the removal of oneself from reality, thus requiring an increase in the “narcissistic charge.”¹⁷³

Eight days after learning of Jones’s “decision...to die” letter, I finally finished, at 2:30 a.m., the typing of our Accusation of Human Rights Violations. Later that same morning, a group of us concerned relatives went to serve it on Peoples Temple at 1859 Geary Boulevard: “Tuesday, April 11, 1978. 10:15. Met at church. Stayed in background. Steve Katsaris & Howard Oliver were leaders—approx 30 people. Nobody answered front door—gave to Hugh Fortsyn at gate. Leona Collier & Jim Randolph & others stayed back visible—wldn’t approach. Mickey Touchette said ‘You sure don’t represent your church very well.’”

Later that day I found at my office another letter waiting for me, postmarked April 10. This one would corroborate the eyewitness’s account of Jones’s solicitation, in January, of Chris Lewis’s “Tiger Alley” friend to do a job: “You must remember that we have nothing to lose... We have been approached by friends of the one you once said should be killed. They are definitely not feeling kindly toward you. They have asked us what to do, and we have told them to let the due process take care of it.”¹⁷⁴

In Jonestown that same evening, Jones called a White Night meeting in response to our visit to the Peoples Temple building. He was not complimentary of the poor soul who had come out to take our Accusation: "And if our people had the balls—Hugh Fortson made a mistake, went out and took their petition. I'd a throwed the petition in the goddamned face, hit the camera, *shoved* their asses off, every man, woman and child in San Francisco...and they'da had no news conference on our church steps."¹⁷⁵

Jones at that meeting also let slip that he, himself—not "the collective" as he at other times propagandized—had made the decision to not give back John Victor Stoen. And he did so in words smacking, as did *tiger*, of Freudian projection: "My decision is that, I will personally see that John does not suffer or be made a pawn to go back, as we have information that he be deprogrammed and that his mind be taken and op—by—used by their e—evil means and whatever chemicals to try to drain his mind..."¹⁷⁶

Finally, in that April 11 evening meeting, Jones made known what would be in store for two defectors if they ever tried to enter Jonestown. He revealed it in a confrontation, for rule breaking, with one Stanley Clayton.¹⁷⁷

"[W]hat's happening now, Stanley?"¹⁷⁸

"[W]e're having a White Night because...the enemies...are walking around our building, the building in San Francisco with some type of paper, protesting..."

"What else, what else, Stanley...who's coming after.. John?"

"Tim and, um, Grace."

"Tim and Grace? Not on their life. Tim and Grace come in here, they get their *brains* blown out."¹⁷⁹

The next day, April 12, we sent the Accusation, in the name of our new group called "Concerned Relatives," to Prime Minister Forbes Burnham. The name of our new group had been suggested by Sherwin Harris, whose daughter in Guyana was twenty-one-year-old Liane Harris, her mother being the fanatical Linda Sharon Amos.

"We are just beginning," we said in our cover letter, "in this group effort to save our loved ones. We do not want to destroy Jim Jones or the

Peoples Temple Agricultural Mission. All we want is for our relatives to live in freedom, not a concentration camp.”¹⁸⁰

On April 18, Jim Jones took up our Accusation’s gauntlet on the meaning of “decision...to die.”

Hastings Law School graduate Harriet Tropp, now taking the name of Sarah, read from Jonestown a press release delivered in Charles Garry’s law office. After first attacking Concerned Relatives as a “criminal effort,” she did a clarification of the March 14 letter to Congress. It was equally terrifying: “And we, likewise, affirm that before we will submit quietly to the interminable plotting and persecution of this politically motivated conspiracy, we will resist actively, putting our lives on the line, if it comes to that. This has been the unanimous vote of the collective community here in Guyana.”¹⁸¹

On April 19, we sent the Human Rights Accusation to six top officials of the Department of State, including Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations Douglas Bennett. No response was ever to come.

The following week I received at my office another anonymous letter, with a certain word underlined. Based on Jones’s March 14 letter to Congress, it made me even more determined: “Your self-love has blinded you to reality. You can’t see that even if you captured every trick, you can never play the final trump card.”¹⁸²

On April 25, Steve Katsaris, Al Mills, and I flew to Los Angeles for a meeting of Jonestown relatives at Saint James Missionary Church, near the University of Southern California campus. Only ten people showed up. One of them was a delightful woman named Fanny Mobley: “Thursday, April 27, 1978. Tuesday evening we stayed at Fanny’s. She is one of those down-to-earth, basic, salt-of-the-earth black women. She said she joined Jim Jones to help feed the hungry children. She said at first it was a happy place, but at the end it was miserable. Jones had said in 1976 that *New West* was going to do a good story on the Temple, so she had subscribed. When she read the expose in July 1977, she saw the truth about Jones and quit the Temple.”

Also present at that meeting was a sweet black couple, Wade and Mabel Medlock. They had a tale of woe, saying that Jim Jones, in February 1977, had threatened they would die if they didn't turn over their property, and so they did. Their loss came to \$123,000.

Steve told them to call me for help, and the next day they did. They asked me to sue Jim Jones and Peoples Temple, but not until they had moved to safer living quarters, for fear Jones "would send someone into our apartment at night and stab us."

On April 27, my journal also noted what, finally, I had come to see as a basic Jones character flaw: "I think Jones is so cynical and incapable of feeling the emotions of love that he cannot really understand that we really do feel love for our children so strongly that nothing is going to stop us."

Nine days later, there appeared on my doorstep a mysterious visitor from Guyana: "Saturday, May 6, 1978. At 1 p.m. Howard Oliver came over with his friend Clive Gall, age 20. He is clean cut, very military and very bright. He said his career was ruined because of Jones pressing charges against him [for trying to smuggle out Howard's two boys]. He said he had been Prime Minister's bodyguard. He showed some inconsistencies. He asked questions why don't you get 'plastics' and bomb the church. They were all questions which a smart prime minister like Burnham would be interested in because they are the accusations Jones makes against us."

Thus, so it appeared, Jim Jones had gotten into the head of the prime minister himself.

Three days after that, there came a call from the honorary consul for the Republic of Guyana, stationed in Los Angeles, about something that had not yet happened: "Tuesday, May 9, 1978. Joe D'Olivera called—asked me to send any clippings on the demonstration for tomorrow."

On May 10, thirty or so concerned relatives and friends mounted a demonstration at the plaza of the Federal Building, on Golden Gate Avenue in San Francisco. Twenty-five or so Temple loyalists, having been tipped off by the media, circled us in a counterdemonstration, which made our little demonstration seem more significant. Serena, bless her heart, came with me to join this, probably her first, venture into the world of "direct action."

Three newspapers and one TV station attended. Grace's sign made a direct appeal to the prime minister, underlying "please": "Mr. Burnham: Please make Jim Jones obey US Court order to give back our six-year old son."

On the same day as the demonstration, Jones was ready with a press release. Distributed in San Francisco, it was entitled an "Open Statement by Members of Peoples Temple in Jonestown, Guyana, South America."

It was an ad hominem attack on many specific individuals in "a group of people calling themselves 'Concerned Relatives':"

"The statement of the 'Concerned Relatives' was signed by a sordid crew of individuals who, among other things, have tried blackmail; have embezzled from Peoples Temple while infiltrating it... Included in the group are people who have used and trafficked in drugs; some who have molested children, including their own, such as Maria Katsaris just publicly exposed her father; some...who have exhibited a series of highly unstable personal patterns in their private lives, e.g., sadism."¹⁸³

Steven Katsaris, prominent in our group, was the highly respected administrator of Trinity School for emotionally disturbed children, in Ukiah. In addition to this May 10 libel, Sandy Bradshaw had, on April 11, told the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* that the charge that Katsaris had sexually molested his daughter was "the truth."

Because of the damage to his reputation, Katsaris had voluntarily submitted to a polygraph examination by a top-tier examiner, during which he totally denied every aspect of these charges. The May 3, 1978, report of Harman & Shaheen totally exonerated him: "It is the opinion of the examiner, based on Katsaris's polygraph charts, that he is telling the truth..."¹⁸⁴ Steve asked me to sue Jones.

All in all, we could not blame people if they would rather not join the Concerned Relatives, for you naturally thought twice about being collectively called "sordid," much less being part of a group with "sadism" in it.

On May 12, the Concerned Relatives sent to the US State Department a follow-up to our April 19 letter that had enclosed the Accusation. This follow-up included a May 10 "Petition Entreating Secretary of State Cyrus Vance to Protect the Human Rights of United States Citizens in

'Jonestown,' Guyana."¹⁸⁵ It was signed by 57 "grief-stricken" petitioners of "82 Relatives in Jonestown."

The petition stated, "Jonestown has turned into a 'concentration camp' in which the rights of its residents under the US Constitution, the United Nations Charters, the Guyana Constitution, and the Guyana Penal Code are being systematically violated by Jim Jones." It itemized six specific violations as established facts.

The petition was sent by certified mail to Cyrus Vance, 2201 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20520, and its receipt was signed for, on behalf of Secretary Vance, by "Ophelia Durant" on "5-15-78."¹⁸⁶ No response was ever to come.

On May 12, we also sent a "request" letter to Prime Minister Forbes Burnham, based on the Human Rights Accusation previously sent him. A copy of this letter was also sent to Secretary Vance. We asked Burnham to do five things:

- ♦ Launch an investigation;
- ♦ Order "Bishop Jim Jones' (as he presents himself to you)" to cease and desist from his unlawful acts;
- ♦ Order Jim Jones to permit and encourage our relatives a one-week visit, return fare guaranteed;
- ♦ Order Jim Jones to abide by three custody orders of minor children; and
- ♦ If Jim Jones refuses to abide by your orders, "expel him from Guyana so that Jonestown can become a democratic society in accordance with the Guyana Constitution."

The next day, Fanny Mobley reported her call to the Guyana honorary consul, his "economic determinism" response, and her warning to him as to Burnham's replacement: "Saturday, May 13, 1978. Called Fanny Mobley—said called D'Olivera, who said can't do anything, besides Jones bringing modern facilities. She said you better try else Jones will take over Guyana and replace 'Forbes.'"

On May 15, another typewritten letter, postmarked two days before, arrived in the office mail. Starting out "Tim," it continued: "You don't know how lucky you have been to this point... Don't think...that we are just going to stand by when you threatened to destroy us, and we know it. You had better stop now, because if anything happens to Jim like you have in mind for him, it would be the biggest mistake of your life. You had better stop now."¹⁸⁷

On May 16, I took an actual step beyond the "human rights" prong of our comprehensive attack to a second one: litigation. That day I drove up to Ukiah and filed, in Mendocino County Superior Court, a \$15 million lawsuit against Jim Jones and his agents for their molestation libel of Steve Katsaris. The complaint was "for compensatory and punitive damages for libel on its face and for slander per se."

Some two weeks later, I experienced another of Jones's diversion tactics: "Wednesday, May 31, 1978. Reiterman called to say PT letters accuse me of saying he supports my armed mercenary plans."

A week later, I took an Air California flight to Orange County Airport. The next day, June 7, I filed in Los Angeles an \$18,523,000 suit, including punitive damages, for the Medlocks. It was against Jones, and his agents, including James McElvane, for "conversion based on coercion and for intentional infliction of emotional distress."

Finally, on June 22, I filed, in San Francisco Superior Court, a third piece of litigation. It resulted from a May 11 meeting with former Temple member Jim Cobb. He asked me to file a lawsuit for being libeled in that March 14 Peoples Temple letter to Congress. That release had falsely accused him of being a "radical Trotskyite" who recommended a "violent course."

The Cobb lawsuit sought \$22,900,000 in damages (compensatory and punitive) against Peoples Temple, and against Jim Jones, for "intentional infliction of emotional distress and for libel on its face."

It would not take long, of course, for the reaction.

In the meantime, there had come to our attention an event clothed in mystery: "Monday, May 15, 1978. Grace called, said [Michael] _____

called to say Debbie Blakey left church, gone to brother in LA, wants Mike to fly down. I told her acid test was if Debbie denounced Jones to press.”

Three days before, it turned out, twenty-five-year old Deborah Layton Blakey had suddenly appeared at the US embassy in Georgetown and became the only leadership defector, ever, out of Jonestown. At the time she was assistant Temple financial secretary, and she had a husband and brother and mother who lived in Jonestown.

By her own hand, Deborah wrote out an affidavit. It gave US State Department officials—directly—written warning of what it would one day be dealing with:

Georgetown, Guyana

I, Deborah Layton Blakey, hereby swear that the following statement is true and correct to the best of my ability. I have decided to leave the Peoples Temple Organization because I am afraid that Jim Jones will carry out his threats to force all members of the Organization in Guyana to commit suicide if a decision is made in Guyana by the Court here to have John Stoen returned to his mother. I know that plans have been made to carry out this mass suicide by poison that is presently at Jonestown. I also know that plans are made to kill the members who are unwilling to voluntarily commit suicide. I believe that this plan will be carried out.



/s/ Deborah L. Blakey

Sworn to this 12th day of May 1978.

/s/ Daniel P. Weber, American Vice Consul¹⁸⁸

Deborah Blakey was then able to get on a plane to the United States.

On June 15, 1978, Deborah Blakey signed a more extensive affidavit based on her experiences in Guyana between December 1977 and May

12, 1978. Its contents were reported that same day in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. The article contained a picture of Deborah Blakey, four inches high, and was headlined, "Grim Report From Jungle."¹⁸⁹

Deborah Blakey's June 15 affidavit made an excruciatingly unnerving point: how Jim Jones, during a "White Night," had prepared his people psychologically for "mass suicide"—through role-playing:

During one "white night," we were informed that our situation had become hopeless and that the only course of actions 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.¹⁹⁰

On that same day, Jeff Haas forwarded this affidavit, with a cover letter, to "Douglas J. Bennett Jr.," in which he stated, "without question," Jim Jones's "threats of mass suicide" constitute "excessive delay."¹⁹¹ No response was ever to come.

Two days before this, on June 13, there had taken place a meeting in Jonestown in reaction to the first two lawsuits, the Cobb suit not having yet been filed.

First, Jones mentioned a radio attack made on Jonestown, spearheaded by a certain category of Temple enemies, with an implied reference to recent defector Deborah Blakey: "Last night CBS came out—CBS Radio—and put it just exactly where it was, that we were socialist, Guyana was moving toward communism, and the attack was gross indeed, *spearheaded* by the usual enemies who we must never forget, class

enemies of the people, Stoen, those that've fed them the input that have left in recent times."¹⁹²

Second, he said that the Medlock suit required calculation around the clock, and that a certain enemy of the people would assuredly pay for it: "Stoen has whipped up one eighteen million dollar suit, trying to plague us. That's why I have to be up night and day strategizing around these kinds of offenses against us. The enemy of the people Stoen one day will meet justice. That can be assured."¹⁹³

Third, he correctly surmised there was a strategic "property" purpose in both lawsuits: "After inspiring the Medlocks in a fraudulent claim of eighteen million dollars to try to tie up our properties and starve our people there and here...he was not satisfied that they had whipped up a defamation suit through Katsaris for fifteen million dollars... So we now have thirty-three million dollars of lawsuits hanging over our heads."¹⁹⁴

Fourth, he declared that his enemies had every reason never to feel at ease: "Nonetheless the conspiracy goes on. The news does not just rank us now as healers and religious connotations. They call us socialist and say that our enemies live in fear of their lives, that they could die at any moment for attacking us. Certainly enemies of the people should live in fear."¹⁹⁵

And thus, by June 13, 1978, the stakes between Jones and the Concerned Relatives were more fully drawn.

When Jones told his people he had to "be up day and night strategizing" about "offenses against us," he was not joking. I gratefully suspected, however, that Jones felt himself to be a prisoner in Jonestown, and therefore would be unable to "take the field" to implement his strategies firsthand.

John Victor's case was having a double effect in keeping Jones out of Georgetown.

The first, as reported to Jones on March 20, was the government's announced position of not wanting Jones coming into Georgetown until the judge ruled, the reason being economics:

Woman 1: “[T]he second point he [Guyana Foreign Minister Fred Wills] made was that uh, Dad should not come to town before the decision comes down from the judge, because it will look like the rules were bent in Dad’s favor and that it—justice was not done. And that—fur—and then he went on further, and he said, Burnham has done a couple things to irritate the United States in regards to their loan policy—”¹⁹⁶

Jones: “International Monetary Fund, that—that means we might have a—have a real nice full class revolution which I’d like. I’m glad when he irritates USA.”

Woman 1: “One thing that uh, that irritated them was that he’ll be visiting the U—the USSR very soon... And Wills didn’t feel we should have Dad go into town because of Guyana’s need for money.”¹⁹⁷

The second effect of John Victor’s case in keeping Jones out of Georgetown was, as he acknowledged in that same March 20 meeting, highly personal: “The arrest order’s been on me and on Joyce Touchette...since, hell, September... But they’re saying if I go into uh—see, I’m in violation of law.”¹⁹⁸

After filing the Cobb suit on June 22, I braced for the expected blow-back from all three lawsuits. I did not tell the press about the Cobb lawsuit. The *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, however, found out about it on their own. Thus did I write: “Wednesday, June 28, 1978. *Press Dem* article—Jones furious.”

Despite Jim Jones feeling restricted to the encampment, it was wise to be wary. One month later, while monitoring the Jonestown radio traffic, Al and Jeannie Mills recorded a statement made by Jones himself to his San Francisco stalwarts. It pertained to a person who would one day pull a knife on a visiting US congressman. Jeannie transcribed it: “7-24-78...‘JJ’...Sly is on his way. I said Sly is on his way...”¹⁹⁹

Three weeks later, Al Mills took action based on radio traffic intimating something was afoot: "Thursday, August 17, 1978. 10 p.m. Arrived Berkeley on BART—met by Al (came on own because radio traffic indicated someone 'getting ready')." "

During this time I had kept in my car some aerial maps, rolled up in a big tube. The maps had been given to me by my brother Jonathan, in conjunction with oil exploration in the "Wyoming overthrust belt." They were prepared by a company called "Eureka Resources Associates, Inc." I regularly parked my car at the Rockridge Bay Area Rapid Transit ("BART") station, located at the border of Berkeley and Oakland.

At a meeting on August 19, Jones made reference to the result of one of his agents entering my vehicle at that station. After saying that all of his troubles started in 1976 when Senator John Stennis, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, sent a CIA agent to spy on the Temple, Jones asked aloud the name of a public relations firm that had been subsequently hired by Temple opponents: "What? (Pause) It was *not* Eureka Research Associates. (Controlled patience) Goddamnit, I've said that was *later*, dear. That's when we've caught that—I ain't gonna say how we got that—Stoen was trying to do an aerial map study of this. They may be a CIA front, Eureka Research, undoubtedly. But he was making an aerial surveillance on how to attack with *mercenaries*."²⁰⁰

Jones neglected to tell his people that the aerial maps were of Wyoming.

On another occasion that August—I made no journal entry—Al Mills told me that, according to Jonestown radio traffic, people were to meet "Doctor White" at "the junction."

I interpreted that as my code name, knowing Jones's practice of negating the social justice views of anyone who dared to defect from the Temple.

I interpreted "the junction" to be the Rockridge BART station. Since the best way to avoid being assassinated is to alter one's schedule, that day I took the BART train from San Francisco to the downtown Oakland station and then took a bus to my home in Berkeley, passing Rockridge and leaving my car there overnight.

In the meantime, there had come a spectrum of repercussions from our three lawsuits.

On July 1, 1978—three days after Jones learned of the Cobb lawsuit—there came an exquisite moment: the consideration of an “exchange.” It resulted from Jones’s need for money—so pressing, now, that he wanted to sell the San Francisco Temple. What Jones said would show that even though he was now morally insane, he was not intellectually insane.

First, he rationally, if ungrammatically, acknowledged the developing financial pressure on him: “If we don’t move out in *time*, we’ll lose our property... But *one* thing, we *need* the money. And we’re not going to let that building—because one thing we can’t change unless you want to negotiate, and I thought about that.”²⁰¹

Second, he irrationally saw his opposition as driven by guilt from the reflected goodness of himself: “I *know* what these fuckers want. They want the death of Jim Jones. That’s what they really want. It’s Jim Jones that showed them themselves.”²⁰²

Third, he perfectly understood a solution to his problem: “And I’ve uh, I’ve uh, thought of the exchange. This place is where it ought to be, I’d make an exchange. You drop your goddam suits—You say you’re concerned about the well-being of your relatives, you drop your goddamn suits, fifty some million dollars of them now, trying to stifle our people, and you can have me.”²⁰³

Although Jones, in his deluded narcissism, said that it was him we wanted rather than our relatives, we would have known that if an exchange did involve him, it would be only a short time before the good people in Jonestown, free of Jones’s mind control, would release our loved ones to us. So we would have taken that exchange.

Then came the terrible follow-up: “No, I’m talking what I’ve felt. I know that’s not *feasible* because the place won’t *function* now.”²⁰⁴

Jones’s refusal, then, was not based on an inability to understand reality, and it was not based on his believing we would not have accepted the exchange. Given what was to ensue, the real reason had to be Jones’s irreversible commitment to death.

Within a month of that July 1 “exchange” statement, I would indirectly transmit to Jones an explicit offer to “get off of his back.” But Jones would be too set on his own path to accept it. Instead, he would have the person I had contacted near the Hall of Justice sign a declaration for use in litigation:

Walter Duncan Jr. declares as follows:



On or about July 27, 1978, on Thursday, at 3 p.m., I saw Tim Stoen waiting for a bus at Fourth Street and Bryant while I was in my car with my son, Walter Tyrone Duncan, age 19. I waved at Tim Stoen and he came over to me and said the following:

“I understand that you are going to visit Jonestown, Guyana, along with your wife, to visit your daughter there.” I said “yes, we are.”* He then said, “don’t do it, because they will take your passport away from you and you will not be able to return.” Then he went on to say that “Jim is now a changed man, he’s really mean. He’s not what he used to be. I wouldn’t be surprised if he has had anybody killed there or had somebody killed.”

He then said “if Jim Jones was smart, then he would return John Stoen to me and then I would get off of his back.”²⁰⁵

During the three months following Serena’s December 1977 predictions, I had been too preoccupied with other things—the January trip to Guyana, lobbying Congress, the Concerned Relatives—to give much thought to Serena and the Hollywood psychics.

In late April, however, I had started making regular trips to Los Angeles to organize concerned relatives, which brought Serena and her

* On September 18 I would record that which caused a catch in the throat: “Katie Williams called saying Walter Duncan taking [his wife] Verdulla to Guyana.” She would die on November 18.

people again into my life. Obviously, by that time, Serena's December 9, 1977, prophecy about the March 1978 return of John Victor had not come true. *Well, I thought, everyone makes mistakes.*

Following my April 25 visit to Los Angeles, I returned to meet with various relatives, including Gene Chaikin's very concerned brother. During these visits, I usually stayed overnight in the home of the very hospitable Serena.

One morning, as we were sitting at the breakfast table with the sun streaming through the light-filtering curtain, she swung a small pendulum over her watch to try to get a reading on John.

"He's doing good today," she said.

Serena was a true ally, always willing to help. Moreover, she introduced me to a lovely woman who would help me emotionally through the difficult times: "Tuesday, June 6, 1978. Got threat letter from Peoples Temple. Met by Ray Chaikin at Orange Co. airport. 7:30 St. James Missionary Baptist Church, 1225 W. Jefferson—18 people incl Steve, Howard,... [Serena] took us home... Nice mellow evening. Anita _____ came in—as beautiful as described."

On a number of evenings, I went to Serena's classes, where she had her students or colleague psychics "read" me. They included Shelly, Diana, Lois, Charlene, Joan, and some others. Every single one said, without exception, that I would get John back, which was the only thing that really mattered. Some had additional points to make.

One of these encounters entailed an encouraging word from an astrologer: "Wednesday, June 7, 1978. Shelly gave astrology reading for John and me—said John making significant move in September—will be darling of media in July—very incisive and gracious."

The following week I received word from a psychic that caused a physical response:

"Wednesday, June 14, 1978. 8 p.m. [Serena's] class... Heavy meditation... Diana—willowy, gave me reading. Saw John coming home soon, saw me in October in Greece & Aegean islands walking with 'your wife' and John, each holding his hand... Saw Jones dying soon, w/in year, &

a teenager putting torch to all bldgs in Jonestown... I was so grateful I embraced Diana's knees."

Another psychic in the class that evening saw something happening to Jones himself: "Lois had meditation that Jones has a brain tumor, worse each day, holds head, won't disclose to anyone; Marceline has had enuf & will turn if approached right, need to use SF member, but Bradshaw can't be trusted (by us). Sees explosion in Jones's head (from tumor or gunshot). John very lonely—thinks of Grace holding him."

During my trip to Los Angeles on the July 1 weekend, it was predicted that deals would be offered and, again, that I would enter Jonestown itself: "[Serena] said I would be contacted 3 times by PT members to work a deal, that I should turn down the first 2 times. I told [Serena] I had had already determined no deals until John Victor is in my arms in San Francisco. She said the third time Jones would make an offer regarding John and I could talk with him if I wished. She said she saw me going back into Jonestown with the Guyanese Army in September (with Jim Cobb) as the camp breaks up."

The following month, I was told that John was in touch with me: "Saturday, August 12, 1978. [Serena] saw John tall, long hair, sun splotches on skin due to improper nutrition, on inside of circle going around as our agent—'he's heard you.'"

I had some doubt about the nutrition aspect of this reading, because John had always held a privileged position in the Temple.

Altogether, it was deeply gratifying, emotionally, to hear these psychics give forth their upbeat predictions about John Victor's return. Rationally, however, these predictions had to be taken with a grain of salt, for there was no independent evidence of their validity.

March had come and gone without John Victor being back as had been predicted. Now July had come and gone, with John not having become the media darling that had been predicted. So there was no alternative but to keep on, as before, with the trench warfare against Jones.

A major factor keeping my spirits up was the companionable friendship of Anita. She stayed with Serena and would make breakfast for us.

She was incredibly sweet and was described by Serena as “the perfect hostess,” who “loves to wait on people.” Although Anita was open about the other men in her life, she felt free enough to write encouraging, even loving, letters to me.

Three weeks after the June 22 filing of our Cobb lawsuit, Charles Garry’s law firm filed, in San Francisco Superior Court, a lawsuit by Peoples Temple against me.²⁰⁶ The press called me before I knew about it: “Monday, July 10, 1978. Robert Bartlett of *SF Chronicle* called to say Garry filed \$150 M lawsuit vs. me. Gave him quote very pleased JJ & Garry so frightened.”

In addition to asking for \$150 million in damages, the Temple sought a “preliminary injunction” prohibiting me from “[p]rosecuting any complaint already filed.” The basic charge was that I “utilized confidential information obtained during the course” of my “attorney-client relationship” with Peoples Temple.

I was at peace about the Temple’s lawsuit. I thought it would provide Jones an outlet for his rage that did not involve violence.

Attorney Patrick Hallinan and I prepared an extensive response to the lawsuit. On August 1, we filed our answer to the complaint. I denied using any confidential information obtained in my attorney work as a member of the Temple. We included declarations from Steve Katsaris, the Medlocks, and Jim Cobb, each of whom said they had sought me out for help.

On August 3, I received another anonymous letter, postmarked the day before, which stated: “Congratulations. You’re doing a great job. But why don’t you slow down a bit? You need to enjoy life a little. Just don’t let it eat you up, because it can. Hang in there.”²⁰⁷

I proceeded to work on my defense to the Temple’s lawsuit. On October 3, I filed a declaration putting on record, in court, my overall assessment of things.

First, there came a statement of both primary and secondary motives: “I have not filed any lawsuit against plaintiffs because of any personal vendetta... I do not wish Jim Jones or Peoples Temple destroyed. What

I want...is the return of my beloved son, John Victor Stoen. Secondly, I want the 1100 people in Guyana living under the control of Jones to be given the choice to return home.”²⁰⁸

Second was a reference to Jones’s effect on others: “I believe that his members...are ‘mind-programmed’ by Jones.”²⁰⁹

Third, there was an assessment as to what Jones was actually willing to do:

“I believe that he is willing to murder all 1100 people now living under his dictatorial control in Jonestown, Guyana.”²¹⁰

Fourth, there came a conclusion as to Jones’s underlying psychological condition: “I believe that Jim Jones has lost the capacity for self-criticism... I believe that Jim Jones has delusions of grandeur and has a totally irrational fear that everyone is out to get him.”²¹¹

In the meantime, these delusions of grandeur had surfaced again in Jonestown. On August 8, Jones had explicitly revealed his self-regard to be reaching an apex, and had, by implication, revealed the secret of his remarkable talent for “mind-programming.”

This secret was the verbal use of “love” for the purpose of what Orwell had predicted in his book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: the “capture of the inner mind.”²¹² Said Jones: “I suffer to the depth of my bone that no human being ever lived—never lived before in history that suffered over people, because I care deeply about every blessed one of you.”²¹³

By then, however, all the ingredients were in place: James Warren Jones was a Molotov cocktail—“a makeshift bomb made of a breakable container filled with flammable liquid and provided with a...wick that is lighted just before being hurled.”²¹⁴ The container was Jones’s absolute power. The flammable liquid was Jones’s malignant narcissism. And the wick, soon to be lit, was Jones’s genius for mind control. The result would be the exact possibility despairingly referenced in that October 3, 1978, court declaration: murder.

CHAPTER 12

Murderer



FIVE WEEKS AFTER FILING MY October 3 declaration in the superior court—that “James Warren Jones” was “willing to murder”—there would issue forth, from his own mouth, strong confirmation of it.

On November 10, 1978, Jones would become enraged at some Jonestown residents wanting to return to the United States. He then shifted the target of his lethal vengeance from the Concerned Relatives to his very own people:

JONES: I’m tired of you people draining me. I’ve lost 21 *pounds* in two weeks because of you assholes.



JONES: And I’m tired of it. I’m going to take—to turn in my judgment on *you*. I’m not much to do that. I usually take it upon myself, but if I turn my judgment for five seconds on you, they’ll have to carry you tonight down to the SCU [Special Care Unit]. I can lay you on that floor, man. You don’t know who you’re dealing with.

CROWD: That’s right, that’s right.



JONES: (Deliberate) I will see *you* in the grave. Many of you...I’ll wipe out some of you just like that.²¹⁵

Ever since Deborah Blakey's June 15, 1978, affidavit, we Concerned Relatives very well knew Jones was murderous to us. And it is almost certain that a certain brave US congressman would not have felt himself totally exempt. In any case, he decided to enter the fray: "Monday, July 24, 1978. Returned call to Cathy Greenwald of Cong. Leo Ryan's office—wants to talk to Debbie."

On October 13, ten days after I filed that Jim Jones "is willing to murder" declaration, Charles Garry filed affidavits and declarations from Jim Jones and twenty-six other Temple members, most of whom were in Guyana and not available for cross-examination.

To get me removed as the attorney in the three cases I had filed against Jones, some of these "witnesses" falsely stated that I had counseled Maria Katsaris to seek a "conservatorship" from her father, that I had personally handled the Medlocks' negotiations with the Temple, and that I had "on occasion" said that Jim Cobb "should be killed."

In his affidavit, Jim Jones stated he had done nothing with respect to his organization without first getting another person's legal "approval":

When Timothy O. Stoen ("Tim Stoen") joined my church in 1969 I was thrilled.



I did nothing either with respect to the church or with respect to my own personal legal affairs without first consulting with him and getting his legal approval.



/s/ James W. Jones



This document was signed by James W. Jones at Georgetown, Guyana, in my presence this 11th day of October 1978.

/s/ Alvin Oswald Hugh Roy Holder

Notary Public²¹⁶

It was all surreal. My concern was that a judge might think, “where there’s smoke, there’s fire.” There was no local judge, probably, who ever had personal experience with so Machiavellian a figure as James Warren Jones.

Soon came the big day: the Temple’s motion—to “preliminarily” halt me from prosecuting the three lawsuits—was to be heard by the Honorable Ira A. Brown, Jr., reputed to be the smartest and toughest judge on the San Francisco bench. Charles Garry, whose book, *Streetfighter in the Courtroom*, had been published in July the year before, was to be on the attack.

Something since that time, it turned out, had happened to the streetfighter:

Tuesday, October 17, 1978. PT v TOS. Case called by Judge Ira Brown at 9:30. Argument at 10. Charles Garry read Teresa Buford’s affidavit, Walter Duncan’s, Mae Janero’s, Marceline Jones’s, my notes to Chaikin—he was nervous, shuffled feet, surprising (PT must have done to him what’s it done to all of us—get us so involved and compromised we feel no way out in hostile world) / feigned anger. (Pat: “Those whom the gods destroy they 1st make angry.”) Judge refused continuance & said no evidentiary hearing at this time. Pat & Steve and I had coffee at Art Museum. Both Pat & I felt “successful” vibration.

During the summer a number of us Concerned Relatives had been meeting with Congressman Ryan. Then came the day when he gave us truly portentous news: “Saturday, September 30, 1978. 1:45 Jeannie & Al

picked me up—to Leo Ryan’s office in San Mateo—good mtg—Ryan appears committed—18 people going to Guyana Nov 10 or 14.”

All this time I continued to keep alive hope in the Jonestown intellectuals’ willingness and ability to force Jones to make an “exchange” for our relatives. At some point Eugene Chaikin and Sarah Tropp were, in fact, writing out a memo (undated)²¹⁷ to Jones giving him a basis for doing so:

Jim: The lawsuits are a major issue. They will certainly result in judgments, at least the Katsaris and maybe the Medlock.

These judgments will be used to harass us as long as we operate in the States. It will cost a great deal of money to defend them. We don’t think it is worth it beyond a rear guard type action.

Of course this leaves us in a severe financial predicament here... We are not sufficiently secure to develop businesses where the money is, namely in Georgetown.

So long as we have to cover our ass, so long as P.R. has priority over production, so long as we are not free to invest and use our money in town, we will not make it here. Unfortunately time is very much against us now.

Some two weeks prior to Charles Garry’s October 17 court appearance, I had been alerted to a radio talk show revealing a fresh accuser: “Thursday, October 5, 1978. KGO—Jim Easton—Mark Lane on PT saying...you trace back and everything comes from Tim Stoen, a former assistant district attorney here and the attorney for all of the people in any way attacking Peoples Temple.”

There was a background, as I would learn, to that KGO appearance. On September 5, Peoples Temple had picked up the tab for a meeting in San Francisco at the Saint Francis Hotel in Union Square.²¹⁸ Attorney Mark Lane was present, as well as his cohort Donald Freed. They had

written a novel in 1973 about President Kennedy's assassination, entitled *Executive Action*.

The hotel discussion soon focused on an agent provocateur. "We are interested in Stoen," said Freed. "Here is a man who travels to countries all over the world. A man who is spending a lot of money flying around to meetings and organizing people."²¹⁹

Lane brought in the pregnant conspiracy phrase of "deep cover": "If you have got this guy going behind the Berlin wall...and then the idea's later on to destroy the Temple, is it possible he is in deep cover, setting up a whole series [of problems] which even the Temple didn't know about at the time?"²²⁰

The basis for these charges had been enunciated by Jones some five months before, on March 20, 1978, in Jonestown: "Hell, those fascists have ways of working, 'cause we found on Tim Stoen that he was in East German—the com—the communist German uh, republic, the German Democratic Republic... So uh, we found that Stoen was in East German Democratic Republic and went to jail for some kind of activity, subversive activities, and he denied he'd ever been there, and we've got a news article showing he was there before he ever came to our church... So he may've been an agent a long, long way back, a long, long time ago."²²¹

The news article, with a photo, was from a Colorado newspaper, the *Littleton Independent*.²²² It reported, on September 7, 1962, a speech made the week before to the Littleton Rotary Club, following my return from Europe.

On September 16, 1961—one month after the August 13 surprise erection of the Berlin Wall—I had been arrested for taking photos, from the Communist side, of East German border guards interrogating people entering apartments comprising part of the wall.

My purpose in visiting East Berlin was to "breathe Communist air" as a life-broadening experience. Upon arriving, I decided to obtain graphic, on-the-scene photos so as to spice up my talks to Rotary Clubs in England, where I had been given a fellowship for the coming year.

One of the quotes in the news article must have particularly agitated Jones, who was now avowing Communism: "I thought I should go to East Berlin to see what it was like behind the Iron Curtain," Stoen said. "The first thing that I noticed was the blank expressions on the faces of everyone. You could tell they were just waiting for the day they might have some freedom..."

That article had been with some East Berlin notes confiscated by Terri Buford from my Redwood Valley apartment attic following Grace's defection in July 1976. Most likely, Jones would have had Terri go through those papers carefully after he concluded in June 1977 that I may not be returning.

After Terri went over them, she proceeded to type up, single-spaced, a memorandum²²³ for her leader:

- ♦ excerpted from Trip notes:
- ♦ I saw things that textbooks and newspapers can't make vivid. I saw what a police state can do to individual human beings.
- ♦ The restrictions of a communist police state are as bad as you read about. At newsstands you buy papers of East Germany only which serve as propaganda only.
- ♦ ...more notes—pages of unreadable stuff on East Germany and how he was treated while under arrest.
- ♦ now I will reveal some information gleaned from a person I met but whose name I can't reveal because I fear for his safety—
- ♦ that each week a person must attend meetings some as often a [sic] 2-3 times a week.
- ♦ Meetings can last as long as four hours—what is discussed is Marxist writings and the virtue of a democratic state.
- ♦ The groups are so arranged that they separate friends and people with common interests are separated.
- ♦ My informer told me that the meetings were not too successful in indoctrination because too many people had been to the west.
- ♦ He said that if East Berliners had known before the borders were being set up, that 40% of them would have left all worldly goods to escape.

- ✦ Less than 10% of them still support the regime.
- ✦ It is extremely difficult to have an underground spying system because you can't trust anybody.
- ✦ Even in East German army, Saxons had to be brought in from other areas to keep check on the local soldiers because many of the local soldiers had anti-communist sympathies.
- ✦ It was from fear alone that most men carried out orders.
- ✦ One must note that the system of morality is quite simple. The soldiers are told that there are two kinds of Germans—good and bad; the good are those who obey communist orders and the bad are to be shot.

Terri then quoted, in full, the “ending sentence”: “But when you see what people like you and I have to go through, they just want one thing. They want freedom to think and act as they see fit—to be able to choose between alternatives—where to work—and how to live and whom to worship—a state or a God. They couldn't care less about creature comforts. All I can do is anguish about the problem and pray to God that it won't last forever.”

Under this Terri wrote her name with the comment: “Very important in seeing TOS perspective.”

Despite their reputation for unfounded conspiracy mongering, I saw Lane's and Freed's entry as extremely damaging. The reason was that they would feed Jones's unfounded paranoia that the CIA and others were out to get him. This would make him more likely to keep fueling the death train.

Concurrently, the US State Department was becoming even more obdurate in its position promoting the status quo in Jonestown. They had shown no response to Deborah Layton Blakey's affidavits of Jones's mass-suicide threats—despite her signing the first one at their own official's behest. Specifically invalidated was Douglas Bennett's implied promise to act if “the pending judicial proceedings,” in Guyana, “were going to be unfair in some manner”: “Tuesday, September 5, 1978. Called by Mrs. [Eileen] O'Kane of State Dept—read cable from Guyana Chronicle whereby Judge Bishop withdraws from case because

of 'despicable' attempts to interfere with ct. process. State Dept. says don't know who resp. I...advise her State Dept irresponsible—not keeping Elizabeth Powers promise to act forcefully & that int'l law has principle of procedural due process.”

I interpreted Mrs. O’Kane’s remark of not knowing “who” was responsible as meaning not knowing which side—Jones’s with a thousand followers on site, or Stoen’s with none—was responsible.

Within a month, on October 3, 1978, all hope of help from the executive branch of the US government had extinguished itself:

Eileen O’Kane of the State Department called to say that the Embassy had gotten in touch with Guyana Chief Justice Bollers, who said the whole custody case would have to start from the beginning.

I asked her why State Department was so naive to think threats would not be exerted on replacement judge.

I said I was not going to wait another year and that I was going to go in “with force” and “with mercenaries” and that she had better put that down in her memoranda to the legal department and should send it to [Deputy Secretary of State] Christopher’s office as well.

Her attitude became more respectful when I told her I would be naming the State Department for its inexcusable conduct when the press picked up on my activities there.

After the phone call I sent a telegram to Warren Christopher’s office saying I will retrieve my son “by any means necessary.”

I said State Department conduct inexcusable and cited ignoring mass suicide rehearsals document by Blakey affidavit, violating

promise to forcefully request Guyanese government to ask Jones to return my child, ignoring Section 178 of the Restatement on Foreign Relations Law (Procedure due process standard of international law, “no unwarranted delay”).

So now it had become a US congressman—or nothing.

Ryan had given Jones plenty of notice of his visit. On November 2, he sent a polite telegram to “Reverend Jim Jones” at “Peoples Temple, Box 893 Mission Village (Guyana).”²²⁴

After saying his office had been contacted by constituents who were both critics and supporters of Jim Jones, Leo Ryan asked to visit Jonestown. He said it was “in an effort to be responsive to these constituents with differing perspectives, and to learn more about your church and its work.”

On November 6, attorney Mark Lane—most certainly at Jones’s dictate—responded to Ryan’s request. Writing as a “Member of the Bar of the State of New York,” Lane began with “Dear Congressman Ryan,” and ended more aggressively than the recipient probably anticipated: “You should know that two different countries, neither of which has entirely friendly relations with the US, have offered refuge to the 1,200 Americans now residing in Jonestown... Thus far, the Peoples Temple has not accepted either of these offers, but it is their position that if religious persecution continues...that they will be constrained to consider accepting either of the offers... You may judge, therefore, the important consequences...which might very well result in the creation of a most embarrassing situation for the US Government.”²²⁵

On November 10, Ryan responded: “No ‘persecution,’ as you put it, is intended, Mr. Lane. But your vague reference to “the creation of the most embarrassing situation for the American government” does not impress me at all. If the comment is intended as a threat, I believe it reveals more than may have been intended. I presume Mr. Jones would not be supporting of such a statement.”²²⁶

Jones had been concerned for some time about the possibility of Guyana's Peoples National Congress Party kicking him out someday because of the US publicity. This was one of the prospects itemized by Carolyn Moore Layton in an "Analysis of Future Prospects" memo: "What happens if we stay here?... The crux of the question seems to be just how much will the PNC stand of criticism of us?"²²⁷

As early as April 13, 1978, Jones had discussed with his people the idea of seeking asylum in the East: "[W]e're not going to demand everything just go our way if we went to Russia."²²⁸

Two days after that, a reporter from Tass, the official Soviet Russian news agency, visited Jonestown, described by Jones that day as "this beautiful communist society."²²⁹ Alexandre Voropaev's report on Jonestown in TASS was adulatory.²³⁰ Jones began requiring his people to learn Russian.²³¹

On October 2, 1978, Soviet Consul Feodor Timofeyev himself came for a visit to Jonestown, during which he took the microphone to say: "It is a great pleasure to see how happy you are being in a free society."²³²

On October 25, Eugene Chaikin, Tom Grubbs, and Dick Tropp submitted to Jones a memo on places to move to in the Soviet Union. Their ranking was based on climate for agriculture: "Memo... The USSR—Possible Settlement Locations, Geography, and Climate. First Choice Areas—Mediterranean Climate, citrus production: No. 1. The east coast of the Black Sea, south of the Caucasus Mountains."²³³

The US State Department, including its embassy in Guyana, did not believe that the Soviets' negotiations were serious, just like they did not believe Jones's threats of mass suicide were serious. If, however, Jones were to take his people to Russia, the propaganda value to the Soviets would have been sensational, with four-inch headlines in newspapers around the world: "900 Flee US for Freedom in the USSR."

The articles would have stressed that these nine hundred refugees, most of them black, had fled the "Free World" for reasons of conscience, as contrasted with every Bolshoi ballet star who had ever fled the Soviet Union—all for reasons of mammon.

On Tuesday, November 14, 1978, at 2:30 p.m., Grace Stoen and I boarded, at JFK in New York, a Pan American World Airways jet for Guyana. Five years before I had gone there in anticipation of utopia. This time I sensed, deep down, the possibility of hell.

After boarding the plane, however, I felt a momentary sense of relief. For 361 days I had braced myself every time the doorbell rang for a shotgun or pistol shot to the chest. At my office the previous Sunday evening, the kindly janitor's face showed unforgettable alarm when I told him to stand back before I turned on the ignition. Now, at least for the early portion of this trip, I could relax.

But I could not relax. My thoughts proceeded to wander all over the place. Recurringly, I fantasized that I was holding John Victor in my arms for five seconds before the bullets came. It would be worth it.

We had boarded Flight 227 in conjunction with an official US Congressional delegation. It was headed up by the congressman who had so graciously met with us. His purpose was to investigate the welfare of American citizens in the colony of Jonestown. Grace's and my purpose was to rescue a six-year-old child, over whom hung the sword of Damocles by a thread.

The Honorable Leo Joseph Ryan was a craggy-faced, silver-haired, fifty-three-year-old politician with resoluteness stamped on his gestures. Born in Nebraska, he proceeded to acquire a master's degree in Elizabethan drama, then he became a public high school teacher, and, finally, in 1972, he was elected to Congress. He was one of a handful there that truly believed, as did Edmund Burke: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

More than that, Ryan had acted—with indisputable bravery—on that sentiment. In 1965, to gain a first-hand understanding of the causes of the Watts riots, he moved there to work as a substitute schoolteacher.

In 1970, in order to expose brutal incarceration conditions, he had gotten himself admitted—handcuffed and in leg irons—into the maximum security Folsom State Prison as a maximum-security inmate. It was, he said later, "the most fearful experience of my life."²³⁴

A few days before this November 14 Guyana trip, Grace had been interviewed by NBC-TV correspondent Don Harris. She looked straight at the television camera and, in her striking I-know-what-I know demeanor, said the following exact words: "You have never met a man like Jim Jones."

Grace was so outspoken as to the dangers awaiting that Ryan asked her to tone it down so as not to spook his staff. His chief aide, Jackie Speier, however, went out and made her will.

The US State Department was to remain willfully blind until it was way too late, and despite Leo Ryan and staff members meeting department officials—five times—in preparation for his trip.

Of critical importance, at a meeting on September 13, Ryan asked about the mass-suicide threats reported by Deborah Blakey. A State Department official characterized her report as "nonsense."²³⁵

On November 13, 1978, Ryan went so far as to bring Deborah Blakey and Grace and Steve Katsaris to the meeting with State Department officials. Despite Debbie's face-to-face account of mass-suicide threats, the officials acted as if they had never heard the allegations before.²³⁶

Now, on November 14, Grace and I found ourselves on a plane heading south with three groups of people, each with a different specific agenda but each needing the others. After a stopover in Trinidad, we finally arrived in Guyana five minutes after midnight. We had traveled 2,554 miles by air from New York.

Staring out the window as the plane came to a stop on the tarmac of Timehri International Airport, I had the sense of being gulped into a gigantic maw—a darkened canopy beyond the airport lights extending on and on where awaited, 150 miles into its impassible jungle, a malignant force ready to swallow us up.

Not everyone, however, was feeling that way, for among the twenty-six of us in the entourage, apprehensiveness was proportional to exposure to the personality all of us hoped could be persuaded to give the congressman access to his kingdom.

In addition to Ryan's three-person congressional delegation, there was a group consisting of nine media personnel. This included an NBC

television crew planning to do a seven-minute human-interest segment for the *Today* show.

Finally, there was the group of which Grace and I were a part: fourteen people self-described as Concerned Relatives.

As the door of the Boeing 707 swung open, and the hot, humid tropical air blasted against our faces, all of us were jolted into realization of the new atmospheric eight degrees north of the equator.

We crossed the dimly lit tarmac toward the terminal where immigration officers awaited. Many, we knew, had developed affections for the female surrogates of the man named Jones. Indeed, their boss, Guyana's Home Affairs Minister Vibert Mingo, had been openly manipulated by this guest of his own government.

Grace and I looked to see who would be the welcoming committee from the Peoples Temple Agricultural Project. Sure enough, from behind the railing, staring at us with eyes like daggers, were a disparate couple: four-foot-eleven, stocky, fanatical Sharon Amos, leader of the Temple headquarters in Georgetown, and six-foot-seven giant James McElvane, former head of Temple security. Grace was nervous. I told everyone not to look at them.

The congressman and his aides were whisked through immigration and customs by US embassy personnel, who wore blue shirt-jackets. All but one of the rest of us eventually got cleared, and we took taxis to the capital city of the country.

We passed the waterways, the sugar and rice fields, and the houses on stilts. Upon entering Georgetown, we took in the air of fermented sugar cane escaping from a rum distillery.

We were let off at the leading hotel in Georgetown, known as the Pegasus, looking like an eight-story Los Angeles octagonal condominium. It sat next to the seawall that protected this city originally laid out by the Dutch.

After finally getting our rooms, we waited two excruciating days for the result of the long-distance telephone negotiations between Leo Ryan and Jones's two lawyers. Mark Lane and Charles Garry were still in the United States and had to clear everything with Jones by radiophone.

On Thursday, November 16, I still nursed outside hopes that some good could come out of Leo Ryan's visit. However, had I been privy to a certain loudspeaker message slicing the airwaves that evening, a brooding landscape away, my hopes for getting John Victor would have vaporized right then.

In his message that evening, Jones would mention my offer to get off his back and would reveal his dismissal of it. Of utmost significance, however, would be his line about "wheels" already turning: "Stoen...had the nerve to go to Walter Duncan and say...Jim Jones, all he had to do is just give me John, then I'll get off his *back*. Hell's fire. Hell's fire. *He* won't get off my back. If I'd give 'em *all* of you, they wouldn't get off my back. And he's gonna stop the wheels from turning? They've already started turning."²³⁷

Worse, Jones that night made two further chilling comments. The first had to do with the prospect awaiting Congressman Ryan:

I didn't come this far to be pushed about by someone from Burlingame or San Mateo, and uh, now we found the CIA, we found our link, he's the *catalyst*... I'm, I'm *sick* of this shit, and I'm liable to sail the Russian flag... He thinks he's sent down here from the holy father of Rome, and the Constitution and the Monroe Doctrine gives him the privilege to go ever—wherever he wants to, it also gives me the right to shoot him in the ass... So you want to see your congressman tomorrow, stick around, he may come *in*. I don't know what—how long he'll *stay*, and I don't know what uh, necessarily will take place and what kind of sequential *arrangement*. But I can *assure* you that if he stays long enough for *tea*, he's gonna regret it... I'm 47 years. I've been running from folk for 47 years only for others. I want to shoot somebody in the ass like him so bad, so long, I—I'm not passing this opportunity up.²³⁸

The second blood-freezing comment, amplifying the "wheels" that were turning, implied what was in store for the Jonestown residents themselves:

JONES: I'm talking business tonight. I'm talking business. I'm not gonna talk no White Night all night long. I'm not gonna talk about it. So how many—how many would just as soon die as live anyway?



Now if the—if uh, anybody has any *feelings* about it, you'd better *speak* now, 'cause I saw some hands didn't go up. You better speak now. You better speak now. I'm talking serious business.



Anybody got—anybody—feelings, I *know* you gonna have some feelings tonight. You better get your—better get your security out 'cause I know the way the wind blows. I can smell when folk are afraid. (Pause) 'Cause we be—we been here...now 16, what is it 18 *months*? Eighteen months and we've been through, I said something like 80 times, I guess, 80 times we were up here debating, do we or do we *not*, and if so, how. Ah, fuck it. I'm—fuck it, I'm sick of it.

MALE IN CROWD: Right.

SCATTERED VOICES IN CROWD: Right.

JONES: Just sick of it. I think you all lo—all love Tim Stoen—I'd rather die than to be there and let Tim Stoen—Hope he comes in.²³⁹

Finally, on Friday morning, November 17, there came roaring into Georgetown the two attorneys claiming to represent Jim Jones, each hating the other. Charles Garry was highly resentful of possibly being replaced by Mark Lane. Both, however, got on the short-wave radio at the Temple's Lamaha Gardens headquarters.

Each of these sophisticates had seen Jonestown and contended it was a terrific place with nothing to hide. Most importantly, they argued to Jones that the NBC television crew would otherwise be at the Jonestown gates showing the whole world scenes of Jones's people aggressively blocking access to their "open" community.

Mark Lane and Charles Garry finally persuaded Jones to let in Congressman Ryan—with no assurance, however, that any of the media people or relatives would be admitted. Ryan had already chartered, through the US embassy, a nineteen-passenger plane to go to the Jonestown gates no matter what. It would be leaving Timehri airport that afternoon. After allowing for space for others, there was room for only four relatives.

The Concerned Relatives quickly met around the Pegasus pool to make our choices. Grace and I had been told that Ryan might not be allowed into Jonestown if either of us was even on the plane. Deeply disappointed, we understood. The fortunate four—Anthony Katsaris, Beverly Oliver, Jim Cobb, and Carol Boyd—were unanimously selected on the basis of prior attempted visits, racial balance, and relationship to Ryan.

Around noon, twenty-three people in our entourage headed off for Timehri Airport. Those not going on to Jonestown simply went along to wish "bon voyage" to the lucky souls who were going.

In addition to the four relatives, the nineteen souls boarding the plane included Leo Ryan and Jackie Speier representing the US Congress; Richard Dwyer, the US embassy deputy chief of mission in Guyana; a Guyana public information officer; attorneys Charles Garry and Mark Lane; and the nine media personnel—Don Harris, Bob Flick, Bob Brown, and Steve Sung of the NBC-TV news team; reporter Tim Reiterman and photographer Greg Robinson of the *San Francisco Examiner*; and reporters Ron Javers of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and Charles Krause of the *Washington Post*. Gordon Lindsay, a *National Enquirer* reporter, would also embark but would be denied access to Jonestown and would immediately return.

Three of us relatives did not go to the airport, whereupon reality returned to consciousness and cast its dark, stinging cloud over hope.

Howard Oliver, Bonnie Thielmann (who had been treated as a daughter by Jones and his wife), and I went off to visit the deputy commissioner of police, Cecil Glasgow.

“Congressman Ryan and his group,” we pleaded, “are on their way to Jonestown. Is it possible for any armed police to accompany them? There is going to be bloodshed. Lives will be lost if you do not help.”

The deputy commissioner leaned back in his chair, began to smile—and then laughed at this blatant exaggeration. Bonnie asked, “Is that funny to you?” We got no answer. We returned to the Pegasus Hotel to await the unfolding of events.

On the ensuing clear, pleasant Saturday morning of November 18, 1978, Grace Stoen and I took breakfast at the Pegasus Hotel. Our earlier fears had partially dissipated. We had gotten word that US Congressman Leo Ryan’s visit the day before to Jonestown had been a success. We therefore awaited Ryan’s return, with hope against hope that at least some of our loved ones in Jonestown would come back with him.

Grace and I knew that, given Jim Jones’s rage toward us as key defectors, it would be exceedingly difficult for him to give us our son, John Victor. But one cannot survive without hope. And maybe Jones was still lucid enough to know he could save the group by giving us John. Maybe, then, just maybe.

During the afternoon, the remaining ten Concerned Relatives gathered in the lobby of the Pegasus Hotel to await the good news. The hours then began—ominously—to drag.

Suddenly, around 7:45 p.m., Stephan Jones, who with thirteen other members of the Jonestown basketball team had been in Georgetown to play Guyana’s national team, entered the lobby. Stephan strode over to me. His face was white and taut.

I braced for the flash of a blade.

“Why,” he said, “are you causing all these deaths?”

“What deaths?”

Despite being theoretically aware of the possibility, hearing the word “deaths” sent my mind into a panic spin.

“Do you mean he’s going to kill everybody? Oh my God! Stephan, your dad’s a madman!”

“I know.”

Stephan then turned and walked away. No knife.

At 8:45 p.m., the management came and told all of us, gravely, to get out of the lobby and go upstairs.

Eight of us retired into Steve Katsaris’s room. It was Room 403. Bad news started to come—in bits and pieces. It felt like we were in a tomb. I struggled to record something in a journal—just to keep sane.

12:10 a.m., Nov. 19.

We are quietly sitting in Room 403 of the Pegasus Hotel. Grace, Mickey [Touchette], Bonnie [Thielmann], Nadyne [Houston], Steven [Katsaris], Howard [Oliver], Clare [Bouquet], myself. 20 minutes ago we were told that Sharon Amos, Liane Harris, Martin Amos, and Christa Amos were found dead a short ways away from Lamaha Gardens, an apparent murder-suicide.



The police [had come] and asked for Sherwin Harris, and he has not returned, presumably staying downstairs under police protection. Sherwin had returned so happy after spending a whole afternoon with Liane. They had played cards and made plans to spend the day together tomorrow.



[Concerned relative] Wayne Pietila and [reporter] Gordon Lindsay are in Room 412. Gordon is making phone calls to the States based on information from the US Embassy an hour and a half ago: that Congressman Ryan was wounded by gunfire and is possibly dead, that—

As if sliced by a saber, the journal cut off.

Deep in the rainforest, the events leading to Ryan being “possibly dead” had played out. Jones had successfully executed Phase One of his murderous plans. These events would soon be reported, in his official capacity, by eyewitness Richard Dwyer, the US embassy deputy chief of mission in Guyana:²⁴⁰

I walked over to discuss arrangements with Captain Spence, the pilot of the [Guyana Airways] aircraft, which was mid-way down the airstrip... Shortly thereafter shots rang out from a tractor and two trailers belonging to the PT which had been parked at the side of the runway nearest the aircraft. Shots also began from the PT truck parked in front of the airplane on the other side of the runway.

Congressman Ryan ran under the nose of the aircraft or close by the nose of the aircraft to get away from the shots coming from the tractor and two trailers, as did I. I saw the Congressman hit once and go down, apparently attempting to seek shelter behind the wheels of the aircraft.

I also saw that at least one and possibly two others of the group had already been hit. I therefore threw myself on the ground on my back to simulate death. As I was falling I was hit by a slug from what apparently was a small caliber weapon, possibly a .22, in my left thigh.

The firing continued for several minutes and then there was a short pause before the firing recommenced. It seemed to me that one or more of the assailants with shotguns was proceeding amongst the wounded, firing a blast at each of them.

I went over to the Congressman, who had been badly hit. It was clear that he was dead; I then moved the body away from under the wheels of the aircraft and checked on the others. The

NBC newsmen, Bob Brown and Don Harris, were both lying dead under and to the rear of the aircraft. I ran around to the steps of the aircraft where Mr. Greg Robinson of the San Francisco Examiner lay crumpled, also apparently killed instantly.

I cannot recall whether I first saw Ms. Jackie Speier still on board the aircraft or at the foot of the steps. It appeared evident, however, that she was seriously wounded as was Mr. Anthony Katsaris, who lay near the foot of the aircraft steps. I ran up the steps of the aircraft where I found that Mrs. Patricia Parks had received what appeared to be the full blast of a shotgun in the back of her head.

Jones had thus orchestrated, at the Port Kaituma airstrip, the assassination, by gunfire, of five people, including a US Congressman.

Back in Pegasus Room 403, Bonnie Thielmann also managed to write something:

“Everybody’s holding up well. Grace and Tim holding onto each other, wondering if John is still alive... Clare Bouquet is using her rosary. Mickey is pacing back and forth saying, ‘Now if you feel you’re going to go hysterical, tell someone.’ She wants to make plans to shove mattresses against the door in case they knock off the guard.”²⁴¹

My own journal resumed, following the grave arrival of a member of Ryan’s delegation. He was a staff member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the US House of Representatives, and he had stayed behind. He had a contemporaneous report from the pilot who had gone in to the Port Kaituma airstrip to pick up Ryan:

“2:25 a.m.—Jim Schollaert came by. Guy Spence said everybody shot up pretty bad... Truck came up with men in back—with guns—going for Leo Ryan. People went under cover.”

Grace and I had been lying on the floor like stone statues. We got up to greet Jim.

“This means,” I said, “they are committing suicide in Jonestown.”

One hundred fifty miles away, while sitting on his pavilion throne, Jim Jones himself had, on this terrible subject, self-reported the executing of his murderous plan, Phase Two. He tape-recorded himself.

“How much I have loved you,” Jones began. “How much I have tried to give you a good life.”²⁴²

His preparation for all this had been highly methodical. Next to the pavilion was “a vat with the potion”—a purplish Kool-Aid-like drink called “Grape Flavor Aid,” containing potassium cyanide. Next to this poison were vials of liquid Valium and other drugs. “Security people” and shooters returning from the airstrip wielded guns, thus preventing anyone from running to escape.²⁴³ While “singing and music” were going on in the background, Jim Jones proceeded:

JONES: (Unintelligible name), do you think I'd put John's [John Victor Stoen's] life above others... [H]e's no different to me than any of these children here.



JONES: It's all over. The congressman has been murdered.



JONES: Well, it's all over, all over. (Pause) What a legacy, what a legacy... They invaded our privacy. They came into our home. They followed us six thousand miles away. Red Brigade showed them justice. The congressman's dead.



JONES: (Speaks authoritatively) Please get us some medication. It's simple. It's simple. There's no convulsions with it. It's just

simple. Just, please get it. Before it's too late. The GDF [Guyana Defense Force] will be here. I tell you. Get movin', get movin'.



JONES: (Pleading) Please, for God's sake, let's get on with it. We've lived as no other people have lived and loved. We've had as much of this world as you're gonna get. Let's just be done with it. Let's be done with the agony of it.



JONES: Who want to go with their child has a right to go with their child. I think it's humane.



JONES: Where's the vat, the vat, the vat? Where's the vat with the Green C on it? Bring the vat with the Green C on it. Please? Bring it here so the adults can begin.²⁴⁴

Back in Pegasus Room 403, Jim Schollaert responded to my statement about suicide.

"We have no way of knowing," he said.

Beautiful Grace, an infinite sadness in her luminous eyes, then turned to the others and me.

In her stoic voice she softly said the words, emphasizing the second, that nobody wanted to hear:

"I know."

Avenger



JAMES WARREN JONES, AS OF that March 1978 “decision that it is better to die” letter to Congress, was already a man of vengeance, and he did not change character on his day of death. On November 18, 1978, in addition to murdering Nine Hundred and Twelve innocent human beings in Jonestown and Port Kaituma,²⁴⁵ he appointed blame for his downfall and exhorted revenge:

“Somebody—can they talk to—and I’ve talked to San Francisco—see that Stoen does not get by with this infamy—with this infamy. He has done the thing he wanted to do. Have us destroyed.”²⁴⁶

In sum, Jim Jones had himself a postmortem target. Jones’s apologists, utilizing a cooperative media, would waste little time before implementing the admonition to “get” his enemy.

Justifying media scrutiny, however, was the fact that what happened in Jonestown on November 18 sent a shiver into the nation’s soul. It was unfathomable to everyday people. It lingered in their minds as the residue of what George Gallup headlined on December 29, 1978: “Jonestown

* Nine Hundred and Eighteen people died in Guyana on November 18, 1978. Five--Rep. Leo Ryan, NBC correspondent Don Harris, NBC soundman Bob Brown, newspaper photographer Greg Robinson, and Temple defector Patty Parks--were killed by gunfire at the Port Kaituma airstrip. Four--Sharon Amos and her children Liane Harris, Christa Amos and Martin Amos--died by knife in Georgetown. The remaining 909 died in Jonestown. Of these 909, Jim Jones and his nurse died by gunshot. The remaining 907 died by cyanide—603 adults and 304 children under 18. There were 1,000 US citizens, plus an adopted Amerindian boy, who were Temple members in Guyana and legal residents of Jonestown. A total of 914 Guyana Temple members died that day.

Story Riveted the Public.” Said Gallup: “The mass suicides and murders in Jonestown, Guyana, was the most widely followed event of 1978, with a remarkable 98 percent of Americans saying they had heard or read about it.”²⁴⁷

There was good reason for the riveting: the “suicides and murders” were based on the orders of a single person, with unsettling implications of mind control. A Stanford psychology professor, Philip Zimbardo, would, five years later, give such an assessment, in striking comparative terms:

The CIA would have had to acknowledge that Jones succeeded where their MK-ULTRA program failed in the ultimate control of the human mind.²⁴⁸

As I saw it, the fundamental fact of the Jonestown tragedy was that Jim Jones—before having his nurse put a gun to his head, and then to hers—orchestrated the deaths of Nine Hundred and Seven people by cyanide. Of these cyanide victims,²⁴⁹ there were Three Hundred and Four children under eighteen,²⁵⁰ who were not of the age of consent. Hence they were, by anyone’s estimation, murdered.

As for the Six Hundred and Three adults who died by cyanide,* “mind-control” was one of the two basic “explanations” being offered, and the other was “pointed guns and rainforest isolation.” In reality, both were the means employed by Jones to “murder,” but probably the most important was mind-control for four reasons.

First, all of these 603 adults—some highly educated, some from wealthy homes—had refused to leave with Congressman Ryan while having the opportunity to do so, and while being aware of Jones’s frequent past allusions to the possibility of mass suicide.

Second, the armed guards themselves marched up and took the cyanide.

* One of these was dear Karen, my Legal Services client whose demise from drugs I had feared in 1968. After joining the Temple she married Larry Layton.

Third, nobody tried to stop the momentum by the simple step of overturning “the vat with the Green C on it.”

Fourth, Jim Jones—by simply transmitting, over the radiophone to Lamaha Gardens in the capital city of Georgetown 150 miles away, the simple word “knife”—had gotten Linda Sharon Amos, the fanatical psychiatric social worker, to kill herself and her three children.

Of the 1,001 Temple members (all but one being US citizens) who were legal residents of Jonestown, Guyana, on November 18, 1978, only 87²⁵¹ lived to see Sunday, November 19—some because of luck, and others because of pluck.*

Confronted by these terrible facts of death and possible mind-control, Jim Jones’s avengers found it easy to quench public thirst for a scapegoat still living, as well as to provide a focus for the conspiracy-minded. The resulting attacks would have bite: instead of stabilizing Jim Jones over the years, this person had initiated “plans of violence” for him.

After I returned from Guyana to California on November 20, 1978, it would not take long to experience a new round of stressors unleashed by the devilish Jim Jones. It was an avenging campaign initiated by Jones’s last-day attorney—the same attorney who had defamed federal agencies to the Jonestown residents with demoralizing effect: “Over the radio and on loudspeakers, Mark Lane told the residents of Jonestown about the evils of the FBI and the CIA, how there were their enemies, and how they would torture them if they talked to them. This put them in great fear of federal US officials.”²⁵²

Mark Lane had now taken under his wing Terri Buford. Terri, who also went by Teri, deeply loved the members of Peoples Temple who died,

* Eighty-seven Temple members in Guyana survived November 18, 1978: 14 of 15 true defectors leaving with congressman Ryan, and 1 false defector (Larry Layton) leaving with him; 11 escapees leaving earlier that day by a picnic ruse, led by Richard Clark and Julius Evans; 3 taking money to the Soviet Embassy; 1 nurse in Venezuela; 4 crew members on the trawler in the Caribbean; 14 basketball players and 35 others at Lamaha Gardens, the Temple’s administrative headquarters in Georgetown. In Jonestown, 1 elderly woman (Hyacinth Thrash) would sleep through it all, 1 elderly man (Grover Davis) would lower himself into a ditch while others lined up, and 2 street-wise blacks (Odell Rhodes and Stanley Clayton) would use their wits to escape.

particularly a little boy named Dietrick,²⁵³ and blamed me for Jones's downfall. Taking advantage of the public dismay and disbelief about Jonestown, and Terri's despair, Lane sought to use Terri—first, to falsely accuse me of having “masterminded” illegal activities by Peoples Temple, and, second, to induce criminal indictments based on specific false charges.

Mark Lane led things off with “hit squad” warnings calculated to create an ongoing sense of public terror. On November 28, 1978, he told ABC News Correspondent Barbara Walters that a Peoples Temple “hit squad...may strike during next month's Democratic mid-term conference in Memphis, Tenn., that President Carter and Vice President Mondale are scheduled to attend,” and that “the plot is apparently part of a larger scheme to murder American government officials, defectors...and reporters critical of the settlement.”²⁵⁴

Lane then proceeded to actively orchestrate things. On December 7, 1978, the *San Francisco Examiner* reported that Terri Buford, “the mystery woman of Peoples Temple,” had been interviewed, in secret, by upper-echelon federal law enforcement officials in San Jose, and that the meeting was “arranged by Mark Lane.”²⁵⁵

On that same December 7, I sat down to be interviewed by a group of reporters at KQED-TV, the public broadcasting station in San Francisco. Among the points I made were the following:

- Neither CIA agents nor anyone else could have infiltrated Jonestown because of the effectiveness of the “self-criticism” sessions conducted by Jones.
- It was “very strange” that Jones's attorney Mark Lane was going around with Terri Buford.
- There was a question that had not been answered: “Why didn't they get on the truck with the others when it left for the airstrip?”
- The idea of a Temple “hit squad” was being overplayed, but the returning Temple members were “still programmed” by Jim Jones.
- My life was in danger “no more than in the past thirteen months.”
- I knew of no instance where Jim Jones had compromised politicians.

On December 11, 1978, the *Los Angeles Times* published an interview with “Terri Buford, 26,” in which she said that Jim Jones “had planned to use money found at his jungle outpost—perhaps as much as \$3 million—for ‘contracts’ on his enemies.”²⁵⁶

On December 21, Lane and Terri held a San Francisco press conference that resulted in “Hit List” headlines: “Terri Buford, once a top aide of Peoples Temple leader Rev. Jim Jones, warned” (1) that “Sens. Barry Goldwater and John Stennis were on a Temple ‘hit list,’” (2) that “California Attorney General Evelle Younger and US Attorney William Hunter appeared on the list of people slated for death in case anything happened to Jones,” (3) that “Jones instructed the assassination squad ‘to kill as many people as they could kill until they were killed themselves or took their own lives,’”²⁵⁷ (4) that “the Temple planned to kill ‘all defectors,’ including Stoen,” and (5) that Jones’s “instructions were to never let anyone forget Jim Jones’s death.”²⁵⁸

Getting personal, Terri Buford “identified the person in charge of carrying out the hit list as Sandra L. Bradshaw, 32, a Temple member in San Francisco,” and added that “Jones had asked her to drug Ms. Bradshaw because she had been his mistress and he wanted to get rid of her.”²⁵⁹

With attorney Mark Lane by her side, Terri also went after attorney Charles Garry: “Miss Buford said attorney Charles Garry, who took over” as the Temple’s “attorney after Stoen left in 1977, was aware of arms shipments to Guyana and plans for a mass suicide.”²⁶⁰

Finally, Terri made another personal attack, this time full-bore: “Terri Buford...accused attorney Timothy Stoen of ‘masterminding’” the Temple’s “illegal activities,” said that “every illegal act, every plan for violence was either initiated or approved by Stoen,” and said that “Stoen, who worked in the San Francisco district attorney’s office, used his position to quash a 1976 investigation of Peoples Temple in connection with voter fraud.”²⁶¹

In the meantime, I sensed myself being sucked down, slowly, into a personal whirlpool gyre:

Sunday, December 10, 1978, 7:30 p.m. I saw the NBC film clips of John-John at Jonestown. He was beaming, fascinated by the

camera and the lights and was the most beautiful child I ever saw. I broke down quietly and cried. NBC really exploited Grace and me today, watching and filming our reactions, then wanting an interview on John. The film on Jonestown showed so many beautiful people who had been so dear to me and are now dead. Dick Tropp, Harriet, Barbara Hoyer...the gorgeous smiling youngsters. We saw Tom Kice and Ronnie Dennis huddling together just before boarding the tractor-trailer and commencing the assassination. Wesley Breidenbach, sweet Wesley, was there too. What could make him kill? Why hadn't I awakened sooner? What more could I have done? Did I push Jones too hard on JOHN? Oh God, may the answers come. I don't like being depressed. I know I am yielding at the moment. I am so sad right now. I want so much to understand the meaning of life and its tragedies. How grateful I am for the nurturing friendships, for my parents who still love me, for my brothers who support me when I am in need and fight like tigers on my behalf.

During all this time, I felt sorrow for the surviving San Francisco members of Peoples Temple. Most of them continued to cling hard to its ideals while trying to come to grips with the deaths in Jonestown. On December 10, after interviewing some of these survivors, reporter Henry Weinstein of the *Los Angeles Times* wrote about them with a touching assessment that accorded with my own experience: "And yet these people appear to be full of love for their fellow humans."²⁶²

One such survivor was a twenty-nine-year old black man, Irvin Perkins, who had lost his wife, his son, and his brother to death in Jonestown. In his remarks to the reporter, he still seemed stunned by it all: "What happened there in Jonestown is not what we worked and lived for. It's totally contrary, a complete turnaround... I don't see many other places where a person of my background (a ninth-grade education) would be manager of a fleet of buses, responsible for hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of equipment."²⁶³

Another was the former Ukiah High School teacher, Jean Brown, who had been raised as “the Presbyterian daughter of a chemical engineer.” Referring to her as “a strong woman” and a “once affluent Orange County girl,” the reporter recorded Jean Brown’s experience in Jonestown only one month before the end: “I was broken up when I had to leave Jonestown in mid-October... To me it was a dream come true.”

Becoming politicized as a graduate student in Berkeley in the 1960s, Jean came to see her identity at one with society’s outcasts: “Ultimately we went to Guyana because we were the rejects of this society and wanted to find another way, where senior citizens wouldn’t be lost and forgotten.”

A third survivor interviewed by the reporter was former probation officer Sandy Bradshaw. A member of Peoples Temple for eight years, her assessment remained glowing: “I never saw people being harmed by the church. I saw people being helped, people (who) came to the church aimless and got direction. I saw the beauty of what was going on.”

One year later, Sandy would reveal, stunningly, how strong her commitment to Jim Jones still remained. On November 18, 1979, she told *New York Times* reporter Wallace Turner,²⁶⁴ with reference to Jonestown: “I am still a socialist, and I still believe in what was being done there.”

“Would she,” asked the reporter, “have sipped the poison?”

“The only possible decision that showed concern was the one they took,” she said, “and if I’d been there I would have died with the others.”

Sandy’s statement would leave a permanent impression on Richard Dwyer, the US embassy official shot at the airstrip. He would cite it eleven years later when providing a “diplomatic history.”

The “big question,” said Dwyer, was this: “did these people in Jonestown kill themselves and commit suicide or were they forced to do so?” Acknowledging that, under the common law, children cannot commit suicide voluntarily, and noting that they, of course, were “murdered,” he then said he was “still convinced” that “the great majority did in fact kill themselves.”

In support of his conclusion, he referred to the November 1979 *New York Times* article referencing “a woman” who had been in the United

States, but who “still regretted that she had not been there to take her own life with her colleagues.”²⁶⁵

For me, back in California in late 1978, the grim sadness of the overall situation kept seeping in, while the media attack went national: “Tuesday, December 12, 1978. Steve Katsaris called—emotionally distraught re runaround at State Dept re Maria’s body. *Time* magazine said that US investigators had discovered that Stoen set up ‘personal accounts,’ which implies I did something illegal.”

A transatlantic flight ensued on the mere basis of rumor: “Wednesday, December 13, 1978. Pat Hallinan called—saying Kilduff on way to Paris/London to ‘your’ safe deposit box.”

It soon became apparent that the Temple loyalists were not ready, yet, to do much forgiving, as I noted in my journal: “Saturday, December 16, 1978. Called John Crewdson—*NY Times*... Said we’ve come across a number of people who would like to do you bodily harm.”

For a month I had been hanging on to a futile hope, based on various headlines, that John Victor might still be alive. “Peoples Temple Escapees Possibly in Venezuela,” said one such headline, on December 1.²⁶⁶ The death knell finally struck: “Sunday, December 17, 1978. Last night Terri Cobb told me that Johnny Cobb had told her he saw John Victor’s body at Jonestown. She was so kind in telling me. Today I went over to Grace’s. When I told her about John, she was so stoic. She and I both cried a little. She expected it, but didn’t want to tell her parents until after their party scheduled today.”

On the day after Lane and Terri’s sensational December 21, 1978, “hit list” press conference, they added another specific charge—in addition to voter fraud—in what would amount to a two-pronged attack, and would be the only two sets of charges that the media ever found reason to view seriously.

This second prong, guns, created biting headlines in various editions of the *San Francisco Examiner* on December 22, 1978. The headlines instilled a lingering sense, in the public mind, of a propensity for violence: “US digging: Did Stoen smuggle guns to Guyana?” (with photo);

and “US probers study charge that Stoen smuggled weapons.” A third headline proclaimed: “US to probe Stoen, arms smuggling.”²⁶⁷

The article under those headlines led off by stating “[f]ederal investigators will pursue the question of whether Timothy Stoen participated in weapons smuggling to Guyana while he was still the chief legal adviser to Peoples Temple leader Jim Jones.” After saying that “a federal source” found this allegation by Terri Buford to be “the most interesting” among “a host of others,” it quoted “Buford’s attorney, Mark Lane,” as claiming that Stoen was a “target” of the federal investigation.²⁶⁸

The single basis for the charge was that, around 1972, the Temple wanted to prevent any of its members from ever acting out with a firearm, so all were asked to turn theirs in. I was asked to store them until they could be sold to a gun dealer in San Francisco, which was probably done in 1973—before Jonestown even existed. The arms-smuggling charge was totally and utterly false.

Lane and Terri’s other prong of attack—“voter fraud”—was even more sensational and stigmatizing. For this one, they went to the California attorney general’s office, alleging a violation of California state criminal law. Unlike the US attorney’s office, the AG was not able, early on, to discern the speciousness of a charge that was also totally and utterly false.

The “voter fraud” charge was nonetheless alarming to the public, for it meant corruption of the democratic process. The charge was two-fold: electoral manipulation, and cover-up.

More fully stated, it was that I had, as Jim Jones’s attorney in Redwood Valley, “manipulated” the December 11, 1975, mayoral runoff election in San Francisco, by orchestrating illegal voting by Peoples Temple members and then, in an act of considerable chutzpah, finagled a job with the San Francisco DA’s office so as to become a special voter-fraud prosecutor, my purpose being to “cover up” my crime.

The opening shot came from the *New York Times* on December 17, 1978.²⁶⁹ After stating that former Temple members say Jim Jones ordered a voting practices campaign “that included importing busloads of illegal voters to cast their ballots” in the 1975 San Francisco municipal elections,

the article said that Jones's "adherents probably numbered 5,000—a sizable bloc" in a city where the average election turnout was "200,000." Then, after mentioning that DA Joe Freitas had "placed Timothy O. Stoen...in charge of" a "vote fraud investigation," the article had a headnote saying "Allegation Not Recalled," immediately followed by a statement that "Mr. Stoen said no one had ever made the allegation to him that temple members had voted illegally in San Francisco." The truth was that there was no such allegation ever made during my DA "placement" to be "recalled."

That same day, December 17, the Associated Press took the five thousand "adherents" mentioned in the *New York Times* and turned them into five thousand possible "ballot-casters": "The New York Times...estimated that 5,000 Temple members may have cast ballots in the 1975 election."²⁷⁰

Aside from the fact that none of these "various estimates" of a Temple voting bloc of 5,000 could have had verifiable credibility, there was the major undermining, credible fact that Temple "membership," according to Jeannie Mills, who had been in charge of the membership files, "was never more than 3,000."²⁷¹

But the groundwork was now laid for speculation that Peoples Temple had "fixed" the mayoral election in a major American city. If the Temple had "5,000" members who "may have cast ballots in the 1975 election," then, in a mayoral runoff election won by Moscone over Barbagelata by 4,370 votes, those 5,000 swung it.

On Wednesday, December 20, 1978, Lane and Terri met with the state attorney general officials in San Francisco to formally make their voter-fraud charges.

The next day, the Associated Press again did its reporting on the spicier side. After stating that "Terri Buford...testified yesterday before... officials of the state attorney general investigating voter fraud in San Francisco involving Peoples Temple members," it mentioned that "Ms. Buford...who wore a navy blue pants suit...smiled to reporters through an open door from a grand jury waiting room," and then went on to state that "[a]ccording to published reports, up to 1,000 Temple members were shipped from Los Angeles and Mendocino County to San Francisco to vote in the city's 1975 municipal election."²⁷²

The AP story's charm went beyond navy blue pants suits and smiling to reporters:

"Investigating voter fraud...involving Peoples Temple members," it said, not "alleged" voter fraud.

"Covered up a probe involving Peoples Temple," it said, during the exact season Jones was riding high and there were zero allegations of wrongdoing, much less any "probe."

"According to published reports, up to 1,000 members were shipped from Los Angeles and Mendocino County," it said, when the Temple had only three times that number of members, 70 percent of whom were black and poor, with every single one of the "1,000" apparently being able to show up at a polling place, during a vitriolic election with poll watchers everywhere, without creating a suspicion of being "organized," and then being able to smoothly and self-confidently ask for a ballot, sign in with a false address, vote, and nonchalantly leave the election station to board, some distance away, a bus or other "shipping" vehicle inconspicuously parked, there to breathe a triumphant sigh of relief in having committed, most likely for the first time in his or her life, a perfect crime.

In addition to the inherent improbability of the media's scenario, there was a particular contrarian fact: the only Temple busing that anyone even claimed to have witnessed was for "get-out-the-vote" activities, and these were not "busloads of illegal voters." Once the media picked up the scent for a kill, as I was learning, contrarian facts vanished into the ether.

On January 2, 1979, after being with my parents in Colorado for Christmas, I flew back to San Francisco. There, I tried to put aside all the Jonestown coverage so that I could resume making a living.

Two fathers who had lost daughters in Guyana had the kindness, and the class, to check in on me! "Tuesday, January 2, 1979. Sherwin Harris called—just to see how doing." "Monday, January 8, 1979. Steve Katsaris called to find out how doing."

By the middle of January 1979, it had become increasingly clear that there would be an ongoing three-pronged attack: on my motive, on my strategy, and on my history.

On December 31, 1978, Terri Buford, who was living with Mark Lane in Memphis, commenced the attack on my motive. She claimed my motive in fighting Jim Jones was ideological anti-Communism: "Ms. Buford...said Stoen left the Temple suddenly, shortly after she discovered an old newspaper clipping saying that in the 1960s he was on a Rotary-sponsored speaking tour denouncing Communism."²⁷³

This would be followed by a statement by Michael Prokes, just before he committed suicide on March 13, 1979, in Modesto, California, indicating his belief that I was a CIA operative.²⁷⁴

Subsequently, Rebecca Moore, the sister of Jones's mistress Carolyn Moore Layton, would dismiss any "parental" motive on my part in the custody war. "The fight between Jim Jones and disillusioned ex-member Tim Stoen," she wrote, "was not over the custody of a child," but "was, instead, a power struggle between two men and two ideologies."²⁷⁵

These attacks on motive were untrue. If ever I have acted out of love, it was in this fight. Furthermore, nobody in his or her right mind would have taken on the terrifying Jim Jones for "ego" or "ideology."

The "strategy" attack, which would be advanced by a number of writers, contended that I pushed Jones over the edge. This attack would begin with Terri Buford at her December 21, 1978, San Francisco press conference: "'Tim Stoen left Peoples Temple to destroy it,' she said. 'He knew how to provoke Jim Jones to put his mass suicide plan, which was in reality mass murder, into effect.'"²⁷⁶

Terri would further elaborate her attack during her December 31 Memphis interview: "'It was the ultimate provocation,' she said of Stoen's efforts in the custody case. 'Jim Jones said he would kill himself and John Stoen before he would give up custody. So he (Stoen) was asking Jim Jones to kill himself, which would destroy the movement at that time. Morally, he was driving the man to suicide.'"²⁷⁷

This strategy attack was also baseless. Jones was planning to orchestrate the suicides at least since that March 14, 1978, letter to Congress—no matter what.

As for the "history" attack, this had already commenced with Lane and Terri's charges of smuggling guns to Guyana, and committing voter

fraud. What would give it underlying impetus, however, was the widespread public belief that Jim Jones, given the explosiveness of his violence on November 18, 1978, as expanded upon by Terri Buford and Mark Lane in their “hit list” press conferences, would have, of necessity, committed acts of violence during his years in California, and that his personal lawyer, if not complicit, would surely have known about such acts of violence. So indelible was this public belief that it would be used against me professionally for two decades. How could Jim Jones *not* have acted out during all those years?

Thus, the media refused to give any special attention to a stunning development occurring immediately after Jonestown. This was the report by an aggressive San Francisco special prosecutor—Harvard Law School trained—that he and his team had spent a huge number of hours investigating Jim Jones in the summer of 1977, had interviewed a large number of witnesses, and had come up with zero:

On November 20, 1978, two days after the suicides, San Francisco District Attorney Joseph Freitas announced for the first time that his office had conducted a six-week investigation of Peoples Temple in 1977. His office interviewed more than seventy people. Robert Graham, chief of the DA’s special prosecuting unit, said they found no evidence of criminal activity. “We put thousands of hours into the damn thing and came up with nothing,” Graham said.²⁷⁸

What would now give overlaying impetus to the “history” attack was the power of the office of the California state attorney general.

On January 20, 1979, a *San Francisco Chronicle* op-ed piece led off with an innuendo smear on the DA who had befriended me, who had done nothing wrong, and whose reelection was at risk because of me.

First, the columnist referred to me as “the inscrutable lawyer” creating a “karmic shadow” over the reelection of District Attorney Joe Freitas.

Second, he quoted Deputy Attorney General Tim Reardon, “who heads the state probe of the DA’s office,” as saying that “[i]t’s the

Stoen-Freitas relationship that causes the potential conflict, and that's what we're going into."²⁷⁹

The Jonestown coverage seemed to have had tentacles everywhere. It even reached into my brother Jonathan's Colorado company, Pacific Energy & Minerals, Ltd.: "Tuesday, January 16, 1979. Jonathan called—said atty from French co. there all day looking at records to see if PT money used in Pacific—'cleared.'"

The personal Peoples Temple pressures were not to let up either: "Monday, January 22, 1979. Grace called—upset because *Examiner* running front page photo today of John & Jones... Left for home... Depressed—kept seeing John's picture on *Examiners* on bus & BART."

Three days later, Jeannie Mills called, and I came face-to-face with how all the headlines were having their effect: "Thursday, January 25, 1979. John's Birthday. Jeannie said Lowell Stryker (psychologist in San Mateo Co.) commented—'From the newspapers I expected Tim Stoen to be a member of the Gestapo. He's a teddy bear.'"

Since the media did not seem open to what I had to say, I gave up. From that day on I decided to keep my mouth shut. I would keep it shut—on television, at least—for the next nine and a half years.

The next day, Jones's adopted daughter, Suzanne—who had defect-ed years before—made a touching phone call. In it she affirmed Jones's long-time suspicion that his personal attorney had superseding loyalties: "Friday, January 26, 1979. Returned Suzanne Cartmell's call. She offered to testify for me as character witness and as to JJ's attitude toward me—i.e., not trusting."

The following month, I had an eye-opening chat with a reporter concerning the deputy attorney general assigned to investigate me: "Tuesday, February 20, 1979. Today I went to the Hall of Justice for a pre-trial and severance motion. Talked with Peter Cleveland from Channel 7, who said Tim Reardon of the attorney general's office was one attorney who he would not like to have after him because once he bites on something he won't let go. I felt relaxed even when he said it though Reardon is investigating everything I did in the district attorney's office."

It did not take long to see what Peter Cleveland meant, for Mr. Reardon was making sure that people would receive subpoenas that had bite: "Monday, March 5, 1979. Saw Jeannie—showed subpoena from Atty General 'In the Matter of the Investigation of TIM STOEN for alleged misconduct and violations of law while Ass't DA for City & County of San Francisco.' Told her to cooperate & go. She had called and 'screamed' at them."

The AG was interviewing Grace, too: "Friday, March 9, 1979. Called Grace—said AG wants to talk to her tomorrow about Voter Fraud—told her to cooperate and tell the truth."

The next day came word about what the AG investigator had said, but which I could not quite believe was sincere: "Saturday, March 10, 1979. Grace said AG Investigator said 'we don't have anything on Tim Stoen.'"

On March 16, 1979, it appeared that the AG investigator might not have been up-front with Grace. On that day the *Ukiah Daily Journal* published an article about me, which came to my attention the following week: "Thursday, March 22, 1979. Saw Jeannie & U.D.J. article. AG Investigators investigating alleged 'sabotaging' of investigation & 'perversion' of justice."

If any article was going to stigmatize me, long-term, in my "home" of Mendocino County, this was a good candidate. The article displayed no reticence in using words having penetrating power into the public mind.

This *Ukiah Daily Journal* article was on the front page, "above the fold," with a photo of me smiling.²⁸⁰ The headline was pejorative: "Justice agents probing voter fraud cover-up."

In addition, the *Ukiah Daily Journal*, although using the term "allegations," left an impression with its readers that there certainly must be a factual basis to there having been a "probe" of the Temple while I was in the San Francisco DA's office, because why else would the AG go to all this investigatory trouble about it: "State Department of Justice special agents were in Ukiah this week investigating allegations that former Mendocino County Assistant District Attorney Timothy Stoen sabotaged a probe into alleged Peoples Temple voter fraud during a 1975 San Francisco election."

Mr. Reardon himself, although careful to use the term “allegations,” did not shy away from such phrases as “used his office” and such words as “pervert” and “obstruct” and “cover-up”: “Deputy Attorney General Timothy Reardon said today he and four agents are working full time to check out allegations that Stoen, while a San Francisco assistant district attorney, used his office to ‘pervert, obstruct or cover-up’ an investigation into allegations that the temple bused people to San Francisco from Mendocino County and Los Angeles for the sake of illegal registration and voting in a general municipal election.”

Allegations that “Stoen...used his office” were in direct contradiction to what one of the two on-the-spot, supervising voter-fraud investigators, a man of integrity, had publicly stated on January 21, 1979, to all who cared to listen: “DA voter fraud investigator Bruce Austin said, ‘Every case we worked up that was a bona fide violation was presented to the grand jury by Stoen. There was no way he covered up anything.’”²⁸¹

Back to the article, Mr. Reardon then acknowledged that Terri, as well as the press, had led him to Ukiah: “What Stoen allegedly did, and what the temple allegedly did, are the two focal points of the state’s investigation, Reardon said... The allegations come from two sources, he said—former Jones lieutenant Terri Buford, and the press. Investigation Field Supervisor Norm Gard said 99 percent of the investigation is limited to Mendocino County and the Bay Area.”

The article itself went on to mention, again, the fictitious “probe”: “Stoen was in charge [of] the San Francisco District Attorney’s voter fraud unit when he allegedly derailed a probe into alleged voter fraud committed by Rev. Jim Jones’s church.”

This had not been the first time San Francisco agents made their way to Ukiah: “Special agents Earl Ansley and Ron Derenzo were at the Journal last week and Thursday researching back stories about the temple and Stoen.”

Finally, Mr. Reardon made it clear that my whole history, in both DA offices—from 1970 to the present, thus going far beyond voter

fraud—was open season: “Their boss, Reardon, said the investigation could expand beyond the 1976-77 time frame.”

Had the Attorney General investigators been interested, they could have readily inspected my Lawyer’s Day records at the office of Robert Fabian, the Peoples Temple “Receiver,” which was located in the financial district of San Francisco. Those records showed hawk-eyed concern by the League of Women Voters about voter fraud at the time this “probe” was being “derailed”:

- ✦ May 10, 1976... Call Honor Kinch, Elections Unit of LWV, 333-9177
- ✦ June 1, 1976... Honor Kinch... Called LWV—Asked for 4 women for min. of 4 hrs/day for 3 months period
- ✦ June 29, 1976... Call Sylvia Asher—League of Women Voters
- ✦ September 8, 1976... Call LWV 566-7434, Mrs. Zabel²⁸²

After the article, and presenting a different note, I had a surprise encounter with three Temple stalwarts whom I once loved: “Saturday, March 17, 1979. Seacliff. Walked headlands path—simply beautiful. Met Jean Brown, Tim Clancy, & June Crym on path—they said ‘good afternoon.’ I said ‘hello.’ Did not detect hostility.”

One month later, at a grief-stricken occasion, I was able to tell someone how heroically she had acted after being wounded to the point of death: “Sunday, April 22, 1979. 12:30. Foster City—Ryan Memorial Ceremony. Told Jackie Speier how great I thought she acted.”

And then, on May 1, beginning at 6:28 in the morning, three trucks bearing unbearable cargo arrived at Oakland Army Base. It was the arrival of “150 bodies,” said John Jacobs of the *San Francisco Examiner*. These were a first portion of “some 500 bodies” that had been held in Delaware, at Dover Air Force Base, after being airlifted by the US government out of Jonestown.

The bodies arriving today, said Jacobs, have been identified along with 101 others, but 248 bodies remain unidentified, of which 209 are

“victims under 17.” All of these bodies were scheduled, by the end of the month, to be trucked out to Evergreen Cemetery in Oakland.²⁸³

On Monday, May 7, I had to show up at San Francisco City Hall to begin a vehicular manslaughter jury trial,²⁸⁴ the opposing attorney being, naturally, from my former office. Although the DA’s office had enough grounds to charge my client, I had concluded he was in fact innocent, which was why I had to take the case to trial.

It was, however, difficult to keep my focus because of Grace’s emotional state about John Victor’s body. Neither the government nor the court-appointed receiver had tried to identify him.

The next day, midtrial, I called Robert Fabian, the receiver, who was in charge of the dissolution of Peoples Temple assets: “Tuesday, May 8, 1979. Called Fabian—he will not open caskets w/o a court order.”

The trial continued all week.

Five days later, I proceeded to the other business: “Sunday, May 13, 1979. Drafted Petition for Injunction on coffins.”

At the close of the trial’s next day, Grace canceled her request, with thanks for a token gift: “Monday, May 14, 1979. 5. Office. Called Grace—so nice—said talked to Fabian who said let John stay with his friends—wants me to hold off because ‘too much for me now.’ Appreciative remodeling school. God, what a magnificent woman.”

The jury trial continued. On Wednesday, I gave my argument, which I noted as “too dramatic.” The next day, thank God, the jury did the right thing.

Three weeks later, Grace provided some desperately welcome news, which I desperately hoped was true even though hearsay: “Friday, June 8, 1979. Grace said _____ Rose said Odell [Rhodes] witnessed John’s death—it was painless—he was given sleeping pill & then injected. Made me feel so much better.”

Finally, on July 2, 1979, there appeared, in the *San Francisco Examiner*,²⁸⁵ attorney general vindication. First, the AG found no evidence of any cover-up. After stating that the investigation, which had taken seven months, included the obtaining of “hundreds” of documents and

“interviews with more than 100 people,” the reporter, James Finefrock, stated that the AG investigators found “no” evidence that Stoen “obstructed any inquiry into the temple.”

Second, the AG found no evidence of any illegal Temple voting. After stating “there was a widespread impression” that the Temple “brought busloads of illegally registered voters to San Francisco to cast ballots” in the 1975 mayoral elections, the reporter stated that “none” of the Temple survivors “ever witnessed specific instances.”

Third, the AG found no evidence of any voter-fraud charge even being made during my time in the DA’s office. “Nor did” the state investigation “find,” said the reporter, “that the district attorney’s office received any allegations of Peoples Temple voter fraud during Stoen’s tenure.”

Fourth, the AG found that the DA himself had done absolutely nothing wrong after all. After stating that DA Freitas had occasionally appeared at Temple functions, the reporter stated that the AG investigation “did not find evidence that Stoen was hired by Freitas out of political considerations or that Freitas...had an improper relationship with the Rev. Jim Jones.”

I felt gratitude toward the *Examiner* reporter, James Finefrock, who had been decent enough to be very specific in showing no evidence as to any of the charges against me.

The article also changed my mind about Tim Reardon. Yes, he was relentless in going after me based on bad advice in a time of hysterical atmospherics, but he went to where the evidence (in this case, lack of it) led him. Further, he had the professionalism and class to allow himself or his authorized investigator to respond in detail to the reporter’s detailed questions, instead of doing what some prosecutors did, which was to give generic “insufficient evidence” responses that kept all the original suspicions alive. I was grateful to him.

That feeling of gratitude, however, did not extend to the creator of the *Examiner* headline, “Temple vote probe fails: evidence unfound,” for this left, of course, the impression to someone not reading the entire story itself that evidence of criminal acts had once existed somewhere.

Nonetheless, as I looked out my seventeenth-floor window late afternoon the next day, I had a momentary sense of elation: "Tuesday, July 3, 1979. 5. Such a lovely view—fog over the city, Dinah Washington's mellow, lilting 'What Will I Tell My Heart' on KJAZ. So lucky to be alive." The sense of being lucky to be alive, however, would soon dissipate like that lovely fog.

A week later it became clear that, regardless of my being cleared in these scandalous matters, the public mind was set in concrete: "Tuesday, July 10, 1979. Stopped on sidewalk by bearded but professional type man saying, 'I always remember a face. You're the famous lawyer. Or should I say infamous. Shouldn't you [be a factor in] DA's race? If can't find anything on you, it's your guys... Why, you look & talk like an everyday normal person.'"

Three weeks later, it became clear that some investigators in the attorney general's office, and certain of the media, were not going to take the voter-fraud vindication lying down. Headlining its July 31, 1979, article by "A Sleeper in DA's Office," the *San Francisco Chronicle* had a field day.²⁸⁶

First, the article quoted anonymous "attorney general's investigators" to say I had "lived" in the DA's office "for several months in early 1976," and that I "used shower facilities there." I had never showered in the DA's office, and did not even know there was a shower there.

Second, it said these AG investigators "believe" my presence "through the night" gave "Jones" access to the DA's "most sensitive files," including "investigations" and "access to the state and police computer record system." The article cited not one piece of evidence that any file had been compromised for Jones. Indeed, not a single file ever was.

Finally, the article found a way to present, as if true, a creative picture by which the actions of both "Stoen and his wife" could linger in the minds of *Chronicle* readers: "They had, said one source, 'a free romp through the place after hours.'" Grace had never set foot in my office.

After discovering the article upon returning from a trip, I noted that the *Chronicle* had also made a follow-up "cartoon" attack: "Sunday,

August 5, 1979. Discovered that *Chronicle* had attack on me as 'sleeper in DA's office' last Tuesday. Next day, cartoon of my applying to DA hotel & Freitas in repres of PT—with silhouette looking through files."

Six days later came a further reality check on my July 3 feeling of "lucky to be alive." More than that, it stamped "failure" on the energies invested during the past nine months in psyching myself up:

"Saturday, August 11, 1979. 9:45 Libby Gatov came by—said that Pacific News Service agreed I could review manuscript before published. Talked to 12 noon. Worn out. She says I look 6 years older than last August—lot of pain in my eyes."

Prophet



JAMES WARREN JONES CONSIDERED HIMSELF a prophet and, as with vengeance, he did not change character on his day of death. On November 18, 1978, after the murders and exhortation of vengeance, he prophesied his enemy's internalized future:

"We will win. We win when we go down. Tim Stoen has nobody else to hate. He has nobody else to hate. Then he'll destroy himself. I'm speaking here not as, uh, the administrator. I'm speaking as a prophet today."²⁸⁷

It was not only a prophecy. It was also a curse—an invocation of "evil."²⁸⁸

Now that I had temporary relief from external media attacks, a new phase of life took on urgency. It was to confront what most likely had caused Elizabeth Gatov to mention "pain in your eyes." It was to deal with what Jim Jones, as prophet, had most consciously targeted: stark emotional survival.

More immediately, by the time of that Elizabeth Gatov interview on August 11, 1979, I knew what I needed to do that was new. I had stuck around San Francisco all this time so that nobody could say I ran. I was not a masochist. I was free now to get away and brood.

Two days later I encountered the assistant DA who was head of the Economic Crimes Division: "Monday, August 13, 1979. Met Ray Bonner on street—very friendly. 'I've meant to call you a hundred times. Not everyone's turned on you. I keep telling press it was my idea to Freitas he consider you for voter fraud prosec.'"

The next day, I contacted Robert Fabian's office to ask for my personal papers that were seized from Peoples Temple. When his assistant mentioned what the photocopy boy had said, I realized, anew, my pilgrimage through the valley of humiliation had no exit sign in sight: "Tuesday, August 14, 1979. 2 p.m. [Dick] Houdak. Says photocopy boy sees my name: 'Oh, he's the guy in all that trouble.'"

Two days later, in the early-morning hours, I finally headed out of the Bay Area. Driving a U-Haul truck through the night, I looked forward to a new beginning—where nobody knew me—on the stunning central California coast: "Thursday, August 16, 1979. Arrive 10 in Morro Bay—feels good, like a fresh start in life."

The following month, it became evident that the *Chronicle* article on Grace and me "romping" through the DA's office had done its damage: "Thursday, September 13, 1979. 4:45 Called Grace. Said Levi Strauss turned her down last minute because of *SF Chronicle* article on me sleeping in DA's office."

Next month, my reporter friend called to read me her article. She gave an opinion of Grace matching everyone else's: "Tuesday, October 9, 1979. 6:20. Libby Gatov calls. She said, 'Grace was so beautiful. She has her head together. I wasn't prepared for anyone so lovely.'"

A few days later, I noted that the *Chronicle* had finally weighed in on the AG's investigation and did not seem pleased at the AG being "stymied": "Saturday, October 13, 1979. *Chron*—AG Report saying No improprieties found on Stoen—& that not one person cld testify of PT Voter Fraud—headline says: AG 'stymied.'"

Two weeks later came the one thing most consciously heavy on my heart:

Thursday, November 1, 1979, 8:20 a.m.

It came last night—the end. Grace called around 9:30 and spoke in a voice that seemed weary. As if she had been debating things with her attorneys. I had asked her to come live with me for a week before she finalized the divorce, as a trial reconciliation...

Grace started out by saying, Tim, I want to thank you for your offer, but I've decided not to come. I've made up my mind and I know what I want.

This morning, I had shots of perspective. Life just seems to be shattered dreams. The key issue is not to become incapacitated, which means you can't hold on to fixations. I know I want to reconstruct the past in one sense, but I truly, truly love Grace. I just can't seem to reach her. Well, I wish her well. I am so distraught—that's self-pity—I better get out of here and get some breakfast.

Five weeks later, upon returning from Denver, there came verification of the end. The superior court reported that a "Final Judgment of Dissolution of Marriage" was entered on "11-21-79": "Wednesday, December 5, 1979. 8:15 Morro Bay—mail. Final Divorce decree from SF Co Clerk—So I'm finally 'divorced'—the catastrophe but I'm not dead!"

To deal with my addiction to Grace, I had been reading, this time more seriously, that metaphysical book, *Handbook to Higher Consciousness*.²⁸⁹ Although I stuck with the book for a few weeks, I eventually gave up: "Friday, November 23, 1979. HHC—One's essence is his consciousness awareness—ultimate is cosmic consciousness—you are everything—for some reason that kind of detachment seems a cop-out."

In the end, what came to bother me most was the book's nonchalance about injustice: "Thursday, January 3, 1980. HHC—brings up Q of social responsibility but doesn't really address except to say okay to do if preference—symptom not cause."

New Year's Day having come and gone, I opened up a law practice in San Luis Obispo, took a marine biology class at Cuesta College, and buried myself in art history and philosophy.

One day, I came across a little book that produced a sting: "Wednesday, January 16, 1980, 5:30. Read *How to Analyze Fiction*, by Kenney—basic handbook—good—Hawthorne's '[Young] Goodman

Brown' example seems like similar to me—disillusionment at life being mixed when started out as idealist & now realistic after getting involved with the devil.”

At the time, I decided to let that scary thought simmer. Seven years later I would come across a book that provided a psychological explanation.

To get away from thinking at all, I would sometimes go to a bar down at the Morro Bay wharf, and indulge in the organist's rendition of Frank Sinatra's philosophy: “Thursday, January 31, 1980. Rose's. ‘That's life—pick yourself up & get back in the race.’ So true.”

I now shifted my early-morning reading to something dealing with the reality of warfare in life, and the importance of the conscious mind. It was *The Meditations*, by the Roman emperor from AD 161 to 180: “Friday, February 1, 1980. Up at 5. Marcus Aurelius—1/2 hr—‘In a word, everything which belongs to the body is a flowing stream, and what belongs to the soul a dream and a vapor, and life is a warfare and a stranger's sojourn, and future fame is oblivion. What then is there which can guide a man? One thing, and only one, philosophy.’”

Four weeks later came terrible news bespeaking, again, such “warfare” of life: “Tuesday, February 26, 1980. 1 or so in the morning—tragic call from Holli [Morton] at Berkeley P.D. Station: ‘don't know how to tell you this. Al & Jeannie have been murdered.’ Daphene shot twice—critical condition—at Alta Bates—Happened between 7 & 10. Linda Mertle called around 2 to say, ‘Tim, be very very careful’—expressed my profound sympathy. Called Jonathan—who suggested I get out of Morro Bay. Tom called to say same. Slept fitfully—every time heard creak thought assassin might be outdoors.”

The news was all over the place for a few days. Later, it would be determined that there was probably no Peoples Temple involvement, but the murders remained unsolved.

By then, however, I had gone to Denver and received an offer not to be refused: “Friday, February 29, 1980. 10—Fairmont Hotel—Pacific Energy & Minerals annual shareholders meeting—Tom & Jon

impressive. Dad so proud. 11:30 left for Golden. All of a sudden it hit me that now would be perfect time to become house counsel for Pacific—get income, feel productive, help Jon & Tom. Got *Modern Petroleum* book from Jon's office."

That evening, the murder of Al and Jeannie Mills registered hard: "Bed around 9—Fitful sleep thinking of Al & Jeannie—were so very nice to me—took me in—loaned me car—waffles every Sunday morning—scared but bravely stayed right there in Berkeley—misunderstood by so many defectors—haunted by pensive photo of them in *NY Times*—one bullet in head. What a tragedy. Daphene died, said TV today."

In the meantime, having finally got some perspective on it all, I had a deep feeling of gratitude to Walter Jones for taking care of Grace. I knew they would soon be marrying, and I knew he would be a loving husband. I wrote him a profuse letter of thanks.

Soon thereafter, I called Grace from Denver, and suddenly it was like two very good friends sharing. She thanked me warmly for the letter to Walter. She said she had received four job offers and took one at Arthur D. Little. She was happy at work: "Friday, March 14, 1980. Called Grace—talked 35 minutes—seemed as though she had to tell me—doing well at work. 'They really like me, Tim.' at work. Only negative remarks I get is where do I get money to buy such nice clothes 'so I say, well, my former husband is a lawyer and there's no reason to go into details.' Class."

My journal that day continued: "Walter got on line to say, 'I didn't know how to answer your letter'—very sincere and kind. I told Walter it was an honor to know him and that I 'am so grateful Grace has somebody like you to take care of her.'"

A few days later, I had another conversation with Elizabeth Smith Gatov. She had once been Democratic national committeewoman from California, and she had been treasurer of the United States under John F. Kennedy. As a sophisticated woman, she could "read" people. She still could not stop going on about Grace: "Tuesday, March 18, 1980. Called Libby Gatov. She said she was not only impressed by Grace, but had been 'bowled over' by her."

On March 25, there came the prospect of a diversion from my Jonestown depression, based on Jonathan's hard work to win oil concessions in the South Pacific, where no oil had ever been found. With Tom and his two children, Eric and Erin, we all flew to where Jon and Francoise, and their two children, Alex and Anne, would be greeting us: Fiji.

After spending a few days encountering the luxuries of Pacific Harbour, located outside the capital city of Suva, I joined Jon, Tom, Eric, and Alex as we drove across the island. I witnessed once again Jonathan's extraordinary kindness:

"Saturday, March 29, 1980. 9—Left on Queen's Highway for Nadi... On way Jon stopped at Indian farmer's house, took out large 12" glossy of him driving bulls—Jon said he had been speeding along, liked the scene, told the farmer he would send him a picture. Jon keeps his promises—like he said, only a few people in the world do keep their promises to send photos."

Two days later, however, I was forced to come face-to-face with a psychological reality that echoed the remark of Libby Smith Gatov the previous August. Despite all attempts at positive thinking and all attempts at philosophy, and despite the exotic beauty of Fiji and the exhilaration of big business, a stranger whose name I did not get saw through it all, and did not hesitate to make her biting observation about me known to me:

Monday, March 31 (April 1, Fiji time), 1980. 7:30. Left for Suva—dinner party at home of US Ambassador John Condon & wife Nancy. Pleasant evening. French chargé d'affairs was there...&... new Australian High Commissioner... [Stranger]: "I am a widow, not a professional widow"—attractive, born in New Hebrides, married a doctor who died of spinal meningitis, has 4 children, gutsy, works 7 jobs. She said Jon "has kind eyes. I always look at the eyes--yours are blank... Nothing there." So I explained I'd lost a son but getting out of depression—though her candor did jolt me a bit but I had felt I was genuinely becoming more curious about life & wanting to live it—well, can't rely on other's opinions.

As I was leaving Fiji a week later to return to California, a certain four-year-old left a poignant impression: "Tuesday, April 8, 1980. 9:15 Left Pacific Harbour—said good-bye to Alex, Anne, Francoise. Anne's personality—utter self-confidence, curiosity in life, winsome personality—that reminds me so much of John Victor."

Six days later, in Morro Bay, the packers came. I set forth to my new home—Colorado—filled with new hope: "9:20 Arrive Denver—Mom & Dad met me at airport. A New Life begins—it will be good, even wonderful."

As the new corporate counsel for Pacific Energy & Minerals, Ltd., I was headquartered in the Armory Building in Golden, near the famous Colorado School of Mines. Jonathan had gotten Chevron to send drill ships to Fiji, and the early indications from drilling, wrote Jon, seemed positive: "Monday, May 5, 1980. Telex show he's excited about drilling... lost circulation on the mud so shows hit something, heat good, some methane—like a detective story."

Concurrently, the new challenges in my life—a long way from the concerns of Peoples Temple—were having an effect. One day I happened to mention it to a Los Angeles friend, Maria Papapetrous, one of the few outsiders—precious indeed—to have publicly supported us Concerned Relatives: "Tuesday, May 20, 1980. Called Maria. Told Maria I had not wanted to overreact from PT experience but that had found positive experience in free enterprise & believed in it, which seemed to please her."

Finally, there came an inconclusive result from the drilling for oil, as reported by the *Wall Street Journal*: "Thursday, June 26, 1980. *WSJ* had article 1st Fiji well abandoned due to 'mechanical difficulties' at bottom of hole."

Later, after a second dry well, Chevron decided not to continue. But Jonathan, having returned to Colorado, remained optimistic about the existence of sediments containing the precious fluid: "Friday, August 22, 1980. Lunch with Tom & Jon. Discussed taxes & oil prospects—Jon still enthused because...data shows missing window of limestone—i.e., did not extend to sequence of structure on which drilled."

On the surface, Jon kept up his enthusiasm for other projects—in Vanuatu, Wyoming, France. But he started feeling extreme guilt for having induced investors to provide \$47 million for drilling in Fiji without results. To a sensitive soul like Jonathan, it didn't matter that all the investors had been “big boys” employing their own highly competent, confirming geologists. The guilt would gnaw at him from that point on.*

In December 1980, Jon and I flew to France, where he had invited me to stay at his villa as long as I wanted—“to recover.” We drove to the little community of Puymeras, in Provence. Seeing the children momentarily renewed a sense of the world's capacity for goodness: “Tuesday, December 9, 1980. Arrived in Paris around 10 a.m. Flew to Marseilles, arriving around 1:40 p.m. Met by Francoise—looks healthy. Drove to Puymeras—felt jet lag and the cold seemed penetrating—we're told people can't remember it being so cold... [T]here's an attraction about the region—some call it the luminescent air. Alex and Anne seem happy—so nice to watch the spontaneity and curiosity and joy of discovery of youth—it seems to [be] part of happiness and therefore the essence of being human.”

Seven days into the New Year there came about a rapturous event: “Wednesday, January 7, 1981. It's 10:30. At 8 p.m., Francoise gave birth to a baby girl—Magali—in Carpentras.”

The next day we encountered the beautiful, fair-haired child, and a poignant memory was ignited: “Thursday, January 8, 1981. Drove to Carpentras to see Magali Claire and Francoise. Whole thing brought back memories of John Victor's birth—felt a spiritual aspect, a spiritual experience.”

On February 6, 1981, I returned to Colorado. Things returned to dreariness. Dreary months passed.

In September, however, there came another momentary relief to my soul. To take a break from his divorce, we drove out to California in

* Whether long-term misplaced guilt was a factor or not, there would come, in the spring of 1992, the very sad news of Jonathan's fatal heart attack: “Thursday, April 30, 1992. 6 a.m.—Mom called: ‘Jon's gone—Francoise found him on his back on the floor’—am devastated... Today at 7 called Grace to tell her Jon died & I choked so bad I couldn't talk. What a precious brother—feel so desolate today that I don't concentrate on work, I break down.”

Tom's Mercedes convertible. Asked as to my favorite place in California, I said "Sea Ranch," located on the Sonoma County coast in Northern California:

Saturday, September 19, 1981. Bkfst at Sea Ranch. Salesman Peter Mankowski gave Tom and me a tour, and showed us existing homes on Ocean Terrace. Tom wanted to see all, so was shown a beautiful home on point built for Louis Lundberg, Chairman of Board of BA, as retirement home. Stained glass, lawn clear to mean high tide with no paths in front, recently rich green sod in front lawn installed—allowed as only Sea Ranch home to have because hidden from view. Tom liked its formalistic aspect & decided to offer exchange—listed at \$695,000. Tom said was good therapy for him to make deals ("I'm a deal maker") but he is unbelievably generous.

As a deal maker, Tom made his money as a real-estate developer. Although he would never call himself an environmentalist, he "refused to build on a ridgeline." The reason he did so well is that, when making a deal, he tried to leave money on the table for everyone rather than squeeze a last dollar for himself. So people kept wanting to deal with him.

As we were leaving Sea Ranch, Tom turned to me and revealed why he had made the offer: "I just wanted the former chairman of the Peoples Temple to be living in the home of the former chairman of the Bank of America."

The deal ended up not going through, but no matter. It was the thought.

That same September, Pacific Energy moved its offices from Golden to the Holly Sugar Building in Colorado Springs. Tom gave me his basement at 2 Gentry Lane as my new home.

I continued to withdraw from all outside contacts. Other than work and an occasional weekend night at a Colorado Springs pub, I proceeded to just read, read, read. I was totally self-absorbed. One day Tom made a

comment that brought home my psychological situation full-force: "We have to throw meat down to Tim in the basement."

In November, additional books came out about Jonestown, and I could not stand the effect on my family: "Friday, November 5, 1982. When I was in SF and all this was breaking it was bearable, because away from family. God, why do I have to embarrass innocent people? Almost want to shoot myself."

To get away from the anniversary impact, I signed up three days later for an expedition to the Galapagos Islands. When you travel, of course, you take your troubles with you. The day following that anniversary date, I found myself clamming up at a luncheon with our terrific guide: "Friday, November 19, 1982. Had nice luncheon chat with Macarena. She's 21, a marine biologist who studies fishes. Felt lonely as a child, but read and observed—wanted something 'deeper.' A beautiful soul. She asked how my son had died, and I told her I'd rather not say—have been feeling cheerful, curious on this trip—though last night looking out from side of boat into the ocean, felt a little depressed; it was 4th anniversary of John's departure."

The months went by. In early 1984, I came to the unwelcome realization that there would be no emotional healing for me unless I returned to the California community most traumatized by Jonestown to confront its hostilities.

And so it came to pass that on Saturday, May 5, 1984, Larry Bryant and I drove a U-Haul truck into Ukiah, and on the following Monday I opened a law practice in the same building—the 1889 Building—where I had once been the senior attorney for the Legal Services Foundation.

It did not take long to learn, from another attorney, that my homecoming would be less than smooth: "Tuesday, May 15, 1984. 8:15 or so. Nancy _____ came upstairs and said, 'Come on, I want to talk to you.' We went to her office. She said, 'I feel a resentment' about you—maybe will go away if I get it out. I felt distressed when learned you were going to move into this bldg. after Jonestown."

The next day, a California Highway Patrol officer let me know how conversant Ukiah was with my San Francisco enemies, including the one

who blamed me for his mayoral loss: "Wednesday, May 16, 1984. Saw two CHP guys in hallway outside Jud Ct. Evans said Barbagelata on radio pointing finger at you and Jones."

Six days after that, my barber, Frank Porzio, showed why members of his profession are often astute common-sense philosophers: "Tuesday, May 22, 1984. Talked with Frank the barber. He said reason for mind control was 'you have to get the trust first, and then things get rolling out of control.'"

The following month, a former friend weighed in. "Sunday June 3. Mary _____ still reserved—'People didn't want to think about it—and now you've come back.'"

At an election victory reception for supervisor Marilyn Butcher, a former secretary in the DA's office brought up, with her friend, a conversation about "pain": "Tuesday, June 5, 1984. Esther Clark said Pat _____ told her, in response to Esther saying 'Well, he suffered a lot of pain': 'Well, he caused a lot of pain.' So, TOS, that's true."

A few days later I went to a Mendocino County Bar outing, where a distinguished lawyer made known his suspicions of me, reciting the same words as the AG and the *Ukiah Daily Journal* had used: "Sunday, June 10, 1984. Norm _____ said 'what about the allegations you used your office?' I said, 'give me specifics'; he cldnt."

Three days later, the full force of how Jonestown had ravaged the wonderful community of Ukiah came home to me. A former probation officer, who was thoughtful and compassionate, called me. I underlined parts of what she said:

Wednesday, June 13, 1984

Faith started talking of...how painful Jonestown was and still is in this community. "This community has never healed... It seems there needs to be a community memorial service...an expression county-wide of our loss." PT "comes up quite often. I still cry about Jonestown. I just did."

It's affected problems in our county—Jim Jones incident gave us national news...

We need service to heal us... [W]e don't want it to get [ugly]... want to maintain a loving world...therefore need to deal with it.

How is Sandy Bradshaw? We shared office most of the years.

Later that same day, my dear current secretary showed, as did Esther, her concern for me: "Talked to Carol about PT: 'My brother said, "you work for him"!' as if were cursed or something... 'I told my brother your mistake was no different from those he made.' Love you, Carol."

Two months later, counteracting all this sadness surrounding death, there arrived a message full of radiance surrounding life: "Sunday, August 26, 1984. Grace called from Children's Hospital happy and chatty—she had a 'natural' childbirth—with no medications—baby girl, Jennifer Elizabeth, arrived yesterday (around 1 or 2 a.m.)—breathing lessons blocked out pain...talked easily of John's birth & comparisons of hair, etc. Oh God, thanks for giving Grace a healthy kid!"

The full impact of what I was dealing with professionally hit one day in the courthouse hallway. A superior court judge walked toward me, looked me in the face, and asked, "Why did you come back?" He then turned on his heel and left in the direction from which he came.

In December, I let my kindly dentist set me up for another reality check: "Tuesday, December 4, 1984. 12:15 John Myers picked up for Rotary...afterward asked me if I'd like to rejoin. I said yes."

Some weeks later, a Ukiah real estate agent gave me the inside scoop of what to expect: "Tuesday, February 26, 1985. Lois said when I first came back a group of people in this town wanted to circulate a petition to have me leave the community but decided not to when they heard I came from a wealthy family in Colorado! Money made you respectable, she said. When I mentioned was a member of Rotary Club & seeking to rejoin, she said it was that kind of people who were so upset."

Two weeks later, sure enough, the results were in: "Monday, March 11, 1985. John Myers came by to say Bd of Directors voted to reject me—'first time in history of club'—he said felt really bad—I said no problem...expected it—main thing is to surface & put self out."

The following month came a moment of truth: "Wednesday, April 17, 1985. Met with Dena Finn and Shawn Gaynor—invited to give keynote speech to high school on Peace Day, & stay around all day for seminars."

Many Ukiah High School teachers had taught students who died in Jonestown, and they were deeply angry: "Tuesday, May 7, 1985. Pat Wilson's speech class—principal Spence was there...said I'd become a big object of controversy—many did not want me to be 'keynote'—I'm viewed as symbol of PT—told them it didn't matter, just want to be helpful."

On Friday, May 31, I set foot on the campus of Ukiah High School for the day I dreaded. The administration brought in a co-keynote speaker to take the pressure off them. My talk was "Dealing with Tragedy," after which I spoke at four seminars, fifty minutes each, and opened myself to questions. The principal sat in on one of them and the mayor in another.

The students were ready for me, many (or their parents) having read the sensational books and articles on Peoples Temple and Jonestown. Many seemed to view me as Jim Jones reincarnated—mass murderer of young people who had, not long before, gamboled cheerfully in these very halls.

Determined to follow the advice of a friend, I went with the idea of trusting my inner self. I was truthful, tried to be nondefensive, and said, over and over, that I had been "stupid," "foolish," and "humiliated," and that I "felt guilt."

The most relevant question, I thought, came during the second seminar, when a student asked if Peoples Temple would have worked if Jim Jones had not been the leader. I said no, "because there was too much authoritarianism built into it," adding that "power corrupts."

At the end of the day I was exhausted, and my voice was strained. I did not get much feedback, but it was a relief to know that one such experience was enough.

A few days later, one teacher did give me some feedback. It left mixed feelings: "Tuesday, June 4, 1985. At health club a teacher (Gary) at UHS who is wrestling coach came up & thanked me for talking—he said a couple times—you are really brave—he said that teacher up there with you is 'very bitter' towards you."

The next day two people had something more encouraging to say: "Mike P-R...said the kids had come to my seminar thinking it would be a downer and 'left feeling uplifted.'" A fellow named John "in evening came by & said his friend Robin, who is a counselor, had a troubled student tell her that my talk had been helpful to her. Thanks, God, for helping me to be helpful!"

The following week, the owner of a bookstore said his child "really enjoyed it," as did another parent who met me on the street. So maybe it was worth it.

From then on, I just carried on in my law practice, not sensing that things had gotten any friendlier in the general community. Nine months later, there came an exception. An attorney came by who had written, ten years before, a eulogistic recommendation to DA Freitas on my behalf: "Tuesday, March 4, 1986. Merle Orchard came by—had long talk about PT—admitted he had misgivings and wasn't pleased about my coming back—you read all these things—but now you've shed some light on this... [H]e asked about Jones sending me to SF to protect him—I said would never have taken job—professional life always protected...ended on warm, misty note."

A couple months later, there came another welcome bit of life-embracing news: "Tuesday, May 27, 1986. Called Grace—sounds wonderful—will have a boy—'Alexander.'"

The next day I put on a real property partition trial in front of Judge Arthur "Bev" Broaddus. The case involved a falling-out of partners. On September 12, 1986, Broaddus ended up awarding my client a greater interest than the opposing side expected, and he approved a "statement of decision" I had drafted. The opposing trial attorney had been given the right to make objections to it in advance.

The opposing side went and got an appellate attorney who seized on Jonestown as an emotional trigger. He would eventually file a petition to the US Supreme Court telling the justices that I had used “mind control” on the trial judge: “These [writing] methods are familiar tactics of practitioners of mind control... Petitioners request that this Court in that regard take judicial notice of Stoen’s role as attorney for and close association with the Reverend Jim Jones in the governing of the People’s Temple.” The appellate attorney then cited, as a supporting footnote, “Lifton, R. *Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism: A Study of Brainwashing in China.*”²⁹⁰

Judge Broaddus was as independent a judge as any I knew. Even though our side eventually won the whole thing, I hoped the judge would not see me, by all this, as causing undue trouble in his life.

A year passed after the partition trial.

In December 1987, I moved to San Francisco for culture reasons. My new residence was in an apartment complex called Opera Plaza, at 601 Van Ness Avenue. It was close enough for me to walk over to seminars by dancers with the San Francisco Ballet. My law practice, however, was still based in Ukiah.

The months passed.

Finally, the tenth anniversary of Jonestown approached, and media interested reawakened. At the entreaty of someone in Chicago who cared about me and said I needed to go public for healing, I decided after all these years to cooperate.

My first Mendocino County excursion was not promising. In late October, I foolishly went back up to Redwood Valley for a *Santa Rosa Press Democrat* photograph:

Thursday, October 27, 1988

Felt stabbed in heart today—went to Ukiah early to be photographed in front of church. Man in pickup drove up, asked me what doing & I said taking picture & he pointed to “no

trespassing” sign & I said I thot it applied beyond fence & he says “I told you you are not welcome here.”

I went over friendly & said “wld you be kind enuf to give me your name” & he said “Jerry _____.” He said “I told you in 1985 never to come onto this property...in 1985 when you came back.”

I said I honestly don’t remember any such conversation. I said, “I’m sorry, I apologize, I will leave.”

He said, “your apology is accepted. I have vehement feelings about this” & drove away.

Four days later, I got word that someone, once a top member of Leo Ryan’s staff, had not only succumbed to the conspiracy hysteria, but was claiming I was top-level complicit:

“Tuesday, November 1, 1988. Karen Matthews called—said Joe Holsinger says PT was part of CIA’s MK-ULTRA program & that ‘Jim Jones and you’ organized it! Told her that was 1st time ever heard I was part of it.”

The following week I allowed myself to go to Guyana with a CBS television program, *West 57th Street*. Beforehand, I told producer Steve Reiner, in writing, that I was doing so for one single reason: to provide “light” on the Jonestown experience by showing the “dignity and humanity” of those who died there.

When I got to Georgetown, Guyana, it was clear, after the first day of interviewing on November 10, that neither Reiner nor his interviewer, John Ferrugia, were planning at all to go in that direction. I refused, therefore, to go with them to Jonestown, and got on a plane for home.

As the year 1988 was coming to an end, I realized that despite a pivotal spiritual healing having come my way earlier that year, there would be a long time needed henceforth to claw myself back to social and vocational recovery. There was simply no way to escape the maxim

commonly attributed to Robert Louis Stevenson: "Everybody, soon or late, sits down to a banquet of consequences."

This hit like a brick when I drove up to Ukiah one day to confer about a legal case. There I met with a Ukiah attorney—a straight talker—who rendered a judgment on my past attempts to recover socially and professionally:

Wednesday, December 14, 1988

Saw Albert Kubanis at lunch today. He said, "if I were you I would move far away and change my name and get a fresh start," that the public believes what it wants to believe regardless of the truth; implied it was a no-win for me: "You came back here for your own psychology," stayed 3 1/2 years, "and was given the cold shoulder."

Al said this as a friend, but it still shocked me, for he circulates with the Rotary Club as well as the bar. I went to my music lesson recovering from a blow to my emotional solar plexus.

Vanquished



THERE WAS MORE THAN STARK emotional survival being targeted in Jim Jones's last prophecy. A profound sense of guilt remained at both my conscious and subconscious core, and hence that "he'll destroy himself" prophecy remained, for this reason alone, a possible future. In sum, there was the matter of stark spiritual survival.

I had guilt for "intellectual" blunders, two of the major ones being guilt for joining an authoritarian organization like Peoples Temple, and guilt for waiting too long to side with Grace over Jones as to custody of the precious child.

Both of these intellectual errors could have been avoided had I been able to distinguish between "genuine ideals and utopian fantasies." That is a distinction that, said a respected philosopher, "can be made only when we have a well-developed sense of what is possible and what is not."²⁹¹ I obviously had lacked that sense. Guilt for intellectual errors could, to some degree, be relieved by "forgiving oneself."

But I also had deep guilt for violating the "moral code"—for sinning against God. Guilt for replacing the whole truth of God with the half-truth—the idolatry—of ideology. Guilt for violating fidelity in marriage. Guilt for giving Jim Jones credibility while blinding myself by ideological passion, to his emerging flaws. Guilt for making numerous untrue statements, and committing other moral compromises along the way. Guilt, most biting, for my ideological blindness—my idiocy—in not recognizing what was really happening when Jim Jones, in September 1975,

orchestrated that wine test. That he had, at that point, turned himself over to killing. That he had, at that point, turned himself over to Satan.

The only way for moral guilt to be relieved would be if a day were to come that bestowed the gift of “special grace.” I could be made ready for that day, however, by the gifts of “common grace.” These were experiences showing life to be worth living because the One behind the moral code was benevolent and joyous. This was an understanding that Christians, myself not then being one, found in a certain Scripture: “he...sendeth rain on the just and the unjust.”²⁹²

The initial gift of common grace would be the fierce loyalty of my brothers and parents, and the providing by my brothers of “big business” excitement. The subsequent gifts would be a woman named Giselle; a gifted bel canto singing teacher; a moving reconciliation with my main—and very outspoken—San Francisco enemy; Jungian psychology; and, finally, the superseding “historicity” wisdom of William Foxwell Albright in conjunction with the spiritual impact of Grace Cathedral.

As for my brothers, they had given me even more than loyalty. They had provided excitement. First had been Jon’s pioneering oil explorations in the South Pacific, and then a residential introduction to the glories of France.

Then had come Tom’s expansion project in professional football, initiated by a visit from a retired economics professor at the US Air Force Academy: “Monday, February 15, 1982. John Colbrunn came by house—represents a group of 6 who have inside track for Phoenix franchise for National Football League—to be operational August 1985. Wants [Tom] to be the major investor... [N]eeds \$304,000 seed money including \$150,000 by next week & answer this week... Key mtg in Phoenix on March 21 of NFL annual mtg. Tom wants it, & I’m encouraging his dream... Cost of franchise estimated at \$31,000,000.”

I joined Tom for the trip to Phoenix, and there I became acquainted with one of his new partners, a former American Football League Commissioner and World War II fighter pilot ace awarded the

Congressional Medal of Honor: “Monday, March 22, 1982. Arizona Biltmore... [T]ook van to Wrigley Mansion. Dee Foss there preparing to host NFL owners’ wives—15 came. Joe Foss came by—a lot of love between him & Didi—had lunch for 4 hrs? maybe in Orangerie restaurant—Foss an amazing raconteur—can tell story after story about his life w/o repeating self.”

Another legend was later to become a partner. Tom hired the Hall-of-Fame former Green Bay Packers quarterback, Bart Starr, to be his director of operations. Just like Joe Foss’s elegant wife, Didi, Bart’s wife, Cherry, was extraordinary: “Wednesday, June 29, 1983. 7:30 Met Bart and Cherry Starr with Tom for dinner in Cascade at Red Cloud Inn. Sat with Cherry—what a charming lady. She said reason Packers did so well after the strike was because they held together ‘as a family.’ She arranges to be at hospital before, during, and after surgery, bring sandwiches, the players call her ‘mom.’ I was touched.”

Tom’s partnership with Joe and Bart ripened into deep friendships.* Joe had us come up to his ranch in the Black Hills. Bart came a number of times to visit Tom in Colorado Springs. And thus did I experience the most gripping of contrasts. Having once been a “friend” of the most horrific person in public life, I had now made friends with two of the classiest people I had ever witnessed in public life.

One day, six years after taking up the dream for the “Arizona Firebirds,” Tom would get the bad news: he would be undercut by the owner of the St. Louis Cardinals because of the precedent set when the Oakland Raiders moved to Los Angeles. On March 16, 1988, the National Football League owners voted to approve the Cardinals’ move to Phoenix. The *New York Times* reported that Tom Stoen, as president of “a Phoenix group,” had spent \$2 million in an attempt to bring an expansion team there.²⁹³ In the long run, an NFL franchise for my brother was not to be, but as he said with a grin, “the game was worth it.”

* On January 14, 1989, Bart Starr told the *Baltimore Evening Sun* that “Tom Stoen” was “the most honest man I’ve ever known.”

The next event of common grace was the woman named Giselle. She materialized on a Friday night, in September 1983—out of the ether.

I was standing in line at the Golden Bee, an authentic nineteenth-century English pub located at the famous Broadmoor Hotel. A woman with a radiant, beatific smile walked in. She was with a man, but I was nailed to the floor by her smile. When they decided to leave, the line being crowded, a force came over me, the nails uplifted, and I followed them out the door saying to myself, *Tim Stoen, you fool, you are always taking risks.*

Reaching the sidewalk, I invited the two of them to come with me to The Tavern, where there would be a tuxedo-clad band playing Manhattan jazz. The woman introduced herself as Giselle Fernandez and the man with her as her brother.

After accepting the invitation, Giselle and I talked and talked. When she asked about my life, I first mentioned the Black Panthers to see how that set. When she did not blink, I mentioned Peoples Temple. After listening to my story, she said words that would cut into my psyche like a diamond: “Tim, you were just trying to make a better world!”

I felt like crying.

Giselle was a rookie television reporter, just out of college, working for a station in Colorado Springs. She was beautiful but not full of herself. She had a zest for life. I watched her do the evening news. She had passion and compassion. It took two months to get a date, but it finally happened:

Saturday, November 12, 1983

[T]o Broadmoor for 1st session of “The Great Colorado Springs Invitational Jazz Party.” Giselle arrived at 4 or so—in white silk dress—stunning, gorgeous—took her hand & said it’s been so hard getting together I’m not letting you go.

Walked with Giselle around 1/2 the lake... Home for dinner party. Larry [Bryant] cooked salmon. Jonathan told me “I’ve fallen in love with her... [C]losest thing to Grace” you’ve had. Larry kept on and on.

Put on tux. Walking in Broadmoor West—black tie night. Giselle said she really liked this. Evening jazz utterly superb. Giselle kissed me. I started again the process of falling in love.

Finally, after five years, I had been blessed, if only momentarily, by an experience of ecstasy. We dated for three months and I fell deeply in love. Then came the bombshell, at the downtown hotel in Colorado Springs:

“Tuesday, February 28, 1984. 11—Antler’s. Giselle had coffee with me—2 hrs. Wore pink sweater, brown sparkling eyes, exquisite face. Said she has main anchor job for ABC-TV affiliate in Santa Barbara...’so I’ll have enuf to live on.’ Leaving in 2 weeks...”

On March 14, I sent Giselle a letter of proposal. Early the next morning, deciding a mere letter was lame, I flew out to Westlake Village, California, where Giselle’s parents lived. I told the surprised Giselle to expect a letter of proposal. She was quiet but kind.

Six days later came the letter of rejection:

“I want so badly to develop myself very well before I give myself to another person. I know you’d make a wonderful partner—but I wouldn’t make a wonderful wife...not now anyway. I’ve got too much to do and grow and become, and that takes time... I love you dearly... Please don’t receive this as rejection...but rather as an affirmation of eternal friendship... Love, Gigi.”

Although feeling this was another blow to my life, I was able to see kindness in it. “Thank you, Gigi,” I wrote in my journal, “for so holy a response.”

Despite the “eternal friendship” sign-off, I decided to hold out for Giselle.

After Giselle had come an instance of common grace in the form of a gifted singing teacher. Five months after returning to Ukiah, I picked up a weekly counterculture newspaper, the *Mendocino Grapevine*. I read an article by Tom Hine about a masterful singing teacher who had retired to Willits. I deeply wanted to sing but could not carry a tune. This teacher said that nature had created a “perfect instrument” in everyone. Well, I would test her on that:

“Friday, October 5, 1984. Called famous ‘grande dame’ of vocal teachers, Naidine Patton, warm & friendly personality—re singing lessons. Grapevine article says she has trained some of the most talented singers, instructors, & vocal therapists of past 50 years. Believes in voice’s ‘magical qualities’—each voice has a particular quality—her job is to get it to come out—very emotional discovery.”²⁹⁴

I proceeded to take lessons from Naidine on and off for twelve years, and many times I was ready to hang it all up. “Anglo-Saxon speakers,” she said, “have lazy tongues.” So she strove to get me to raise the back of my tongue “like an Italian,” and then to “spin the tone at the base of the nasal pharynx.”

Unbelievably difficult it was to change my physiological habits. But the grande dame believed in me, and so I persisted in what I suspected might be her one losing project. One day, it would turn out; I would “get” it. Never, came the lesson once again, give up.

During the course of discovering these lovely Italian arias, there came into my life came another instance of common grace. It was a major reconciliation.

On October 27, 1986, John Barbagelata, having recovered from a stroke, emerged with his zest for battle undiminished. Warren Hinckle of the *San Francisco Chronicle* proceeded to write that the former “most conservative supervisor” was “out on the streets again,” and was distributing throughout San Francisco 175,000 copies of his own “tabloid” newspaper, called *Homewords*, which was “possibly the greatest hit piece” in the history of the city.

In his newspaper, Barbagelata detailed, said Hinckle, “the ‘Stolen Election of 1975’ theory,” wherein volunteer registrars of voters, including “Peoples Temple members, bused in from out of town,” produced enough “fraudulent votes” for George Moscone to beat Barbagelata by the small margin of “4,000 plus votes.”²⁹⁵

Some eleven months later, in September 1987, Barbagelata surfaced in the San Francisco press to once again attack me for his mayoral loss. Instead of doing what I usually did—grin and bear it—I sat down at my computer to render an invitation:

September 21, 1987

Dear Mr. Barbagelata:



I know that you have had some serious questions about my personal role and knowledge of Temple activities regarding your mayoral race in 1975. Your feelings about this have always bothered me, because I know you are a very righteous and upright man. I don't know, however, whether you are open to talking with me. Since I will never know unless I make some overture, I am hereby indicating my desire to meet with you for the purpose of answering all your questions about what I know or did. I would like you to feel free to bring your wife, a friend, or anyone else. I would be happy to come to San Francisco.



Sincerely,

/s/ Timothy O. Stoen²⁹⁶

A few days later, I pushed the button on my answering machine and heard a gruff voice: "This is John Barbagelata. I would love to meet with you. Confession will be good for the soul."

This led to a phone call to Barbagelata:

"Thursday, October 1, 1987...—John Barbagelata—I'd like to talk to you. I'm a moral man. I don't think you'd have any problems with me. I'd love to talk with you."

I agreed to meet him at 6:00 p.m. the following week Friday for dinner.

That day, October 9, I drove down to San Francisco to meet my enemy. We met in front of his real estate office at 314 West Portal Avenue. Neither of us had met face-to-face before, and I had the momentary thought that it might be like two animals circling.

But John Barbagelata greeted me cheerfully and had me follow him to his house in upscale St. Francis Woods. There at the door, meeting me warmly, was John's patrician wife, Angela. She led me to the dining room, where a fire was burning and a feast was spread out on the table as if I were the prodigal son.

From 6:15 p.m. to midnight we talked, while many of the children in this devout Catholic family dropped by to look over their guest who had, presumably, been a frequent subject of conversation over the years.

Midway during the dinner, I cut to the chase: "John, I want you to look me in the face. I know of no Peoples Temple wrongdoing in your election, or in any election."

Immediately, without a second's hesitation, came the response: "I believe you."

Angela immediately spoke up: "After all these years!"

Just before midnight the oldest daughter came in from a date, looked me over, and said, "So you're Tim Stoen. I thought you were tall, fat, and obnoxious."

At the door, Angela clasped my hand with some benedictory words: "Aren't you glad you wrote that letter?"

That evening was so precious I just wanted to freeze it and do nothing for a while that might mess with it.

One year before, in the meantime, I had seriously commenced the dreaded prospect of "interior" exploration. An erudite physician, who was then a general physician and would later become a board-certified psychiatrist, introduced herself to me in the post office in the town of Mendocino.

Her name was Mary Ellen Black, and she proceeded to take a deep interest in my life. After hearing me talk regularly of legal and political matters, she quickly sized me up:

"Sunday, October 19, 1986. 3—Saw Mary Ellen Black—said 'what will it do to you' if not explore internal & are pragmatic only."

Two months later, she gave me a book by Heinz Kohut, *Self Psychology & Humanities: Reflections on a New Psychoanalytic Approach*,²⁹⁷ which introduced a new psychoanalytic theory of the "self." I was not smart enough

to really follow it. But Kohut did trigger me into a line of thought I could follow: Jungian psychology, with all its fascinating talk of psychological types, active imagination, individuation, and archetypes such as “the adventurer” in the “collective unconscious.”

The following month, Mary Ellen gave me a Jungian assessment. It was of some surprise by referencing intuition:

“Thursday, January 8, 1987. Mary Ellen came by—said she thinks I am thinking-intuitive type—she said JJ may have been my ‘shadow’ since refer to him as crude, etc.”

I could understand enough of Kohut, however, to render a commentary:

“Thursday, April 2, 1987. Called Grace—warm chat—told her I wrote ‘Grace’ in margin of Kohut essay ‘on courage’ re heroic nuclear self—she said ‘thanks, I needed that.’”

Two days later came a reality check as to some intense emotions struggling for release when I was trying, once again, to write a book on Peoples Temple:

“Saturday, April 4, 1987. 12:30 to 3:50—Mary Ellen came by—nice talk—when she said she read my 2nd page—said ‘purple’ prose & that I’d totally given over to feeling. Felt narcissistically wounded but thanked her.”

One day in December 1987, a few weeks after I had moved back to San Francisco, I was browsing in a bookstore called A Clean Well-Lighted Place for Books (after a Hemingway short story). There I came across a book²⁹⁸ that would significantly clear away the cobwebs as to the essential character of my Peoples Temple nemesis.

I took the book home and started reading. Immediately, however, my anger toward orthodox Christianity got in the way:

Wednesday, December 30, 1987

I read the beginning of Scott Peck’s book *People of the Lie*, describing evil as killing without biological purpose, which certainly fits Jones to a T...

As for this book on evil, I was depressed to read Scott Peck talking about being baptized as a Christian in his 43rd year, and that living for the Lord is the most important thing in life, etc. I almost threw the book away, but now that I'm into it, he has still kept his rationality, and is trying to treat evil as a real scientist, using the medical model and the Christian model.

The next day, I continued with Peck, and concluded that he was presenting the issue at the core of my Peoples Temple experience:

Thursday, December 31, 1987

Continued reading *People of the Lie*, where Peck speaks of evil as a person who is willful on the point of scapegoating so as to put aside the unconscious recognition of lack of perfection and sinfulness (falling short of the mark) by insisting they are perfect, hence malignant narcissists. Fits Jones to a T. Very rich book for me to read by dealing with what on the face of it is THE issue: evil. Mary Ellen says Peck is a good psychiatrist "but a bit mushy." Still, that makes him real, readable, and very likeable.

Came the New Year, and things continued to happen in the "interior," this time through Jungian psychology. One of my college friends gave me a book entitled *The Psyche as Sacrament: A Comparative Study of C. G. Jung and Paul Tillich*.²⁹⁹

The author was a Catholic priest and analyst, John Dourley, who was examining the "deeper meaning" of God, Christ, the Trinity, morality, and the religious life. His conclusion was that "the psychological and the religious tasks are one."

Two days after New Year's Day, I did something I had not expected ever to be doing. I went to church:

"Sunday, January 3, 1988. Went to choral Eucharist at Grace Cathedral at 11:00 a.m. Am strongly drawn to the Gregorian-type chants, stained glass...cannot bring myself to take communion though

have been baptized and believe, maybe, in the Christ, nor can I [accept] the Nicene Creed.”

Six days later, I saw a truth in Dourley that reflected on my past championing of utopianism:

“Saturday, January 9, 1988. Up at 5. Dourley...(am starting 2nd reading) as saying man’s nature, his fabric is essentially religious, and even if forsake religious trappings, political and social and cultural expressions—anything called an ism—will replace.”

Two days later, I read *People of the Lie* again, which caused me to come even more face-to-face with myself:

“Monday, January 11, 1988. This evening read Peck, emphasizing role of laziness and narcissism in evil, especially My Lai and the responsibility of the military, president, and American society. Applies to me, I never was willing to search out and think if Jones was honest even though had suspicions.”

And then, one Sunday two months later, there came a truly consequential day in the matter of spiritual recovery.

First on that day came a Eureka moment on “historicity,” and the consequent vital difference between union and communion with God. All this resulted from having taken off the shelves a very thoughtful book by a scholar from Johns Hopkins University:

Sunday, March 20, 1988

Important day today in my spiritual life. For a couple weeks have had this deep-seated urge to look at the historicity of the Bible. It started when I was trying to dialectize my views for my book: e.g., Christian fundamentalism, Utopian separatism, Christian humanism. Well, thinks I, what is humanism? So I recalled a book by William Foxwell Albright on *History, Archaeology, and Christian Humanism*.³⁰⁰

He critiques the great thinkers with a lucidity and fairness and scholarship that is astounding, including Toynbee and Tillich

and Jung. His point about the latter, who I've about decided is the best guide I'm likely to get is, that Jung esp is gnostic, and that gnosticism or any point of view that is based on ontology and is hostile to history "vaporizes" into words. That the Biblical tradition has supreme value because it is the record in great detail of God working in human history.

Albright talks of pantheists, including Medieval Christians like St. Francis, interested in "union" with God, whereas traditional Christianity and Judaism are interested in "communion" with God. That strikes a chord in me as to what keeps nagging at me when I try to pour myself into the *Tao of Physics* or the *Course on Miracles*—I want to preserve the separate consciousness between God and Man; I don't want union, which can lead to the arrogance of saying "I am God," but all this reading is making me see that I have a deep-seated passion for communion with God.

Second on that day, having intellectually acknowledged such a passion, I proceeded to do something to experience that passion: I took Holy Communion. It happened after hearing a sermon quoting Saint Augustine on the fundamental choice facing each person alive. The words burned into my self-centered soul:

Today at Grace Cathedral, Dean Alan Jones gave a heart-felt talk on people having a choice between a living death and a dying life, that we are called to die to "absence, alienation," etc. That is the Christian revolution. He who exalts his life shall lose it. Did that strike home, esp. his remark on the cult of self-fulfillment. That had been my philosophy for most of the past ten years, but it is based on archetypes that are nebulous.

Today I actually took Communion. It felt wonderful, and yet I sit here wondering if I'm keeping my integrity.

How different I feel right now than when reading Emerson's transcendentalism—don't get on your knees, prayer is contemplation.

Finally, on Good Friday, I spent a highly emotional, meditative time at the "stations of the cross":

"Friday, April 1, 1988. 12-3. Beautiful 3-hrs at Grace Cathedral—began to empathize—1st time in 19 yrs—with suffering of Christ for us."

In response to that utterly poignant Good Friday, I recognized the truth that Jesus the Christ had suffered and died for me, that he had then conquered death, and that he was now offering—to all who asked—forgiveness for the wrong things they had done.

I asked Jesus the Christ for forgiveness.

Miracle of miracles, I was given it.

The grief was assuaged.

The guilt was gone.

Mercy had triumphed.

The curse--Jones's further trespass into Satan's dominion--was smashed.

The prophet was vanquished.

Epilogue



AFTER THE ACCEPTANCE OF GOD'S mercy and the vanquishing of grief and guilt on Good Friday, 1988, my life received a number of benedictions. These included the building of a solid friendship with my former enemy John Barbagelata, the taking of breakthrough advice from the delightful Giselle Fernandez, a "breaking of the ice" with the community of Ukiah, a lovely deepening friendship with Grace, a blessed marriage to a Swedish widow, and a gratifying return to my prosecutorial profession.

My new friendship with John Barbagelata included Grace. In April 1988, which was six months after my October 1987 reconciliation with John, I asked Grace and Walter if I could take them out to dinner at the Inn at the Opera in San Francisco. The occasion was Grace's birthday, which was April 9. On the spur of the moment, I asked if it would be okay for me to have my two new friends join us. Of course, Grace said, registering a few seconds of silence when I said who they were. The evening came: "Friday, April 8, 1988. Wonderful dinner with Angela and John & Grace & Walter."

Two days later, in the evening, came a thank-you call, in the course of which another classy woman, in addition to Libby Smith Gatov, gave her assessment of Grace:

"Sunday, April 10, 1988. 8:30. Lovely call from Angela Barbagelata thanking me for the special evening. She & John went into kitchen saying they cldn't get over what nice people they'd been with—Angela said saw a lot of depth in Walter—that God has tested us both and that she &

John enjoyed dinner so much. She said she still can't get over Grace—so beautiful, so much integrity—'like she's from the Middle Ages.'"

I immediately called Grace at home: "Grace, Angela says you're from the Middle Ages!"

Her response was characteristic: "Oh, that's so sweet."

And then, one year later, I received a call in my office that, two years before, I would not have anticipated in a million years: "Thursday, April 13, 1989. John Barbagelata called to ask me to represent him in a half-dozen small matters."

I immediately commenced work on some litigation cases for John. Soon there appeared—probably causing a few people to take a second look—the caption in a document filed on October 10, 1989, in the Municipal Court for the City and County of San Francisco: "Timothy O. Stoen...Attorney for...John Barbagelata..."³⁰¹

John Barbagelata was to become, until his death in March 1994, my best friend in San Francisco. I stayed at his home on overnight visits, visited him at the hospital, took one of his cases to trial,³⁰² and threatened suit, over his membership dues, against the prestigious Olympic Club.

In November 1998, on the twentieth anniversary of Jonestown, a San Francisco reporter called me for a quote about my close friendship with John Barbagelata as he "grew sicker in his last years":

"By then, I had become a Christian and John was a Christian; we had our Christian relationship," Stoen said. "We were able to talk candidly about death. He was very, very willing to go. He knew he was going to meet Christ. I knew my son was with Christ."³⁰³

Back in October of the pivotal year of 1988, I received a call from Giselle Fernandez, who was then an anchor for the CBS television station in Chicago, and I paid her a visit. One day, I went over to WBBM-TV to watch her work, and I witnessed once again what freshness she brought to every place she went. She had recently obtained a journalistic coup, and there was a buzz at the station:

"Monday, October 3, 1988. Watched Giselle anchor early news at 4. Weatherman: 'Giselle, Giselle, where have you been all my life. You've brought excitement to our station.'"

Giselle persuaded me, for full emotional healing, to finally go public on television after all the years of keeping my mouth shut. The interview went out on multiple nights into the Chicago heartland, was indeed an emotional release, and led to my willingness to go to Guyana with CBS out of New York. Despite my having walked out of the interview with *West 57th Street*, after the program aired nationwide, there was a change in the atmospherics of the very community in which, after trying for four years, I had not made even a dent.

This mood shift became sensible to me when I moved back to Ukiah in June 1989, but the first clue had occurred when I made a trip there four months earlier: “Thursday, February 16, 1989. Bob of Pawnshop came by to say he appreciated what I said on *West 57th*—‘You told it like you felt it.’”

All this time there had been developing a deep friendship with Grace. Even before our divorce, Grace had gone far out of her way for me. After Jonestown, Grace had been asked to appear on a number of television talk shows, during which she impressed everyone with her “I know what I know” authenticity.

Stunningly, Grace also defended her estranged husband, which made his mother fall more in love with her than ever before. One day, after Grace appeared on Phil Donahue’s talk show, my mother called: “Tim, when Grace was asked how could her husband, who graduated from Stanford Law School, have ever gotten involved with Jim Jones, Grace said, ‘Oh, Tim is just naive.’ She could have crucified you!”

In 1994, I moved, as I had once before, to the town of Mendocino, located on the rocky headlands overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Mendocino had been founded in 1852, “when San Franciscans came north looking for salvage from the wreck of the sailing ship *Frolic*, but instead found the immense redwood forests along the coast.”³⁰⁴

For a residence I rented a big water tower—the classic signature structure in the town—across from the community center. Three times a year Grace proceeded to bring up her children to stay in the water tower. On one occasion she brought up her father and Walter, and we all went to Cotton Auditorium in Fort Bragg to watch the *Don*

Quixote-based musical *Man of La Mancha*. Grace came up a number of times for Mendocino's Fourth of July parade:

"Tuesday, July 2, 1996. Lovely Grace came."

In sum, despite my having wounded her so deeply, Grace had not only forgiven me, but she had also reestablished a deep friendship with me. It touched me in depth.*

One day, in January 1997, a highly winsome British couple, Peter and Miranda Harris, came to stay at my water tower. They were the founders of a Christian conservation movement in Europe called *A Rocha*, and they had been invited by the Mendocino Presbyterian Church to share their vision.

Deeply impacted by the marriage of Peter and Miranda, I proceeded to make a major decision. Acknowledging, finally, that marriage to career-successful Giselle** was not likely to be anytime soon, on Saturday, January 25, 1997, I got down on my knees and asked God for a wife—specifically, a Christian widow.

It did not take long for the hint of an answer:

"Wednesday, January 29, 1997. 12:34. Buchanan—tried to call Kersti."

On Wednesday, February 5, 1997, I was working in my Mendocino law office, at 45060 Ukiah Street, next to the post office. At 2:44 p.m., a fifty-one-year-old widow from Sweden walked into the office. Her name was Kersti, pronounced "Shesti." She was blond, beautiful, and had the kindest blue eyes I had ever seen.

She was also heroic. While a staff worker in a Humboldt County children's shelter in Eureka, California, she had been assaulted by a psychotic fifteen-year-old boy as she tried to save a nine-year-old Native American boy at risk of abduction.

Our eyes met, sparks flew. I crossed the boundaries of the attorney-client relationship:

* On July 9, 2013, there took place in Concord, California, a memorial service for Grace's husband, Walter Jones, who, sadly, had died the month before. Grace had me do a eulogy. She did me great honor.

** Giselle was already an Emmy award-winning journalist.

“What was it like to care for your husband with a brain tumor for eight years?”

“Oh, every moment was pure gold.”

I am not, I said to myself, letting this woman out of my office.

Five weeks later, on March 9, 1997, we married—between hymns at a Sunday worship service at the Mendocino Presbyterian Church. Kersti’s three wonderful children showed up—Jordan, Renee, and Eva. And thus began the happiest of marriages.

And then, three years later, I experienced another benediction: restoration as a prosecuting attorney. It happened on June 26, 2000, when Norm Vroman, a maverick Mendocino County DA, acting against in-house advice based on my Peoples Temple past, took a chance by hiring me, after which he soon appointed me felony prosecutor. That occupation, with numerous gratifications, has now continued for sixteen years.

So my story ends, with profound gratitude to God for the stupendous gift of being allowed to live in America—country of the second chance.

So my story ends, with profound gratitude to God for another stupendous gift—the one referred to by Romain Rolland’s *Jean Christophe*,* which could have saved all those beautiful people in Jonestown:

The Bible is the marrow of lions. Strong hearts have they who feed on it... The Bible is the backbone for people who have the will to live.³⁰⁵

* *Jean Christophe*, a ten-volume novel, was completed by Romain Rolland in 1912. It earned him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1915.

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REGARDING THIS BOOK, I ABOVE all acknowledge and thank my dear former wife, Grace—for not only saving my life, but also for forgiving me and continuing to love me when she had a thousand reasons not to.

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I also thank the following congressional office holders who especially went out of their way to help Grace and me in our custody fight against Jim Jones: Mark Hatfield, Pete McCloskey, Don Edwards, Norman Mineta, and George Miller.

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I am profoundly grateful to the hundreds of people who have, mainly since June 12, 1977—when I left the Peoples Temple—contributed to my life. Since I cannot name them all, I will simply name those most instrumental in my recovery and beyond. None, except for she who wrote the Foreword, has read this book and none should, in the least, be held to be in agreement with any part of it. By naming them, I simply want to express my gratitude to them as human beings. These wonderful people are: Steve Katsaris, Sherwin Harris, Jim Cobb, Al and Jeannie Mills, Marge Boynton Moynahan, Duncan James, Joe Foss, Bart and Cherry Starr, Giselle Fernandez, Earl Palmer, Don and Bonnie West, Richard Wilson, Elizabeth Smith Gatov, Duane Jon and Carrolyn Schmidt, Larry Bryant, Beverly Brown, Anita Crane, Jonathan Lehan, Tomas and Erin Dertner, John and Debbie Turnbull, Jared and Danile Kelly, Daniel and Valerie Markoya, Ed and Katey O’Brien, Gary Evans, John and Angela Barbagelata, Bill and Kathy McGuinness, Peter and Miranda Harris, Don and Shari McCullough, Paul and Ruth Tay, Don Claybrook, Paul Van Buren, Gaylord and Vickie Smith, George and Kit Nelson, Norm and Raleigh Vroman, Paul Gallegos, Roger and Georgia Collin, Clay and Cheri Ford, Rick and Megan Sacks, Daniel U. Smith, David and Robin Marie Matlin, Patrick Hallinan, Peter and Gale Mosgofian, Bill Bertain, Ken and Linda Bareilles, Richard Foushee, Miko Higashihara, Jim Luther, Gary and Joy Clatterbuck, Chuck and Vivian Jones, Garnish and Gail Daly, Bill and Valerie Mangrum, John Shackelford, Ted and Carole Hester, Holly Chapin, Bob and Betty Winslow, Chuck and Betsy Petty, Maria Papapetrous, C. Stephen Heard, Tom and Karen Getman, Richard Hodge, Jeffrey Haas, Margaret Ryan, Karen Page, Richard Wagner, Ray Chaikin, Yulanda Williams, Howard and Beverly Oliver, Bonnie Thielmann, Mickey Touchette, Nadyne Houston, Anthony Katsaris, Carol Boyd, Clare Bouquet, Wayne Pietila, Joan Culpepper, Gary Fay, Freddy Lewis, Vitali Rozyenko,

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* Author photo of Tim Stoen was taken in Mendocino, California, on April 5, 2014. Courtesy of Daniel Markoya Productions.

Notes



Each transcription of an audiotape is based on an audiotape found in Jonestown by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and is archived as a US FBI Peoples Temple recording. Each transcription has been provided by The Jonestown Institute at *Alternate Considerations of Jonestown and Peoples Temple*, <http://jonestown.sdsu.edu/>.

All FBI documents begin with the prefix RYMUR (for RYanMURder) and the digits 80-4286-, and can be found at <http://vault.fbi.gov/jonestown>. An annotated presentation can be found in “Primary Sources” at The Jonestown Institute website.

A citation referencing the California Historical Society means the document is in its Peoples Temple collection in San Francisco. “MS 3800” refers to documents received from Robert Fabian, the Peoples Temple receiver, and from sources other than the FBI. “MS 3801” refers to documents received from the FBI.

For clarity purposes, there are punctuation changes and word omissions in some quotations in this book, but the meanings have not in any way been changed.

Except as otherwise indicated, the author’s quotations from his diaries, “Lawyer’s Day,” appointment calendars, and journals (collectively, “journal entries”), and from the other of his documents quoted in this book, will be found in “Timothy Stoen papers, to be given to the California Historical Society.”

NOTES FOR EPIGRAPH

1. George Orwell (né Eric Blair), *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, 1949 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf "Everyman's Library," 1992), 267.
2. M. Scott Peck, MD, *People of the Lie: The Hope for Healing Human Evil* (New York: Simon & Schuster), 42, 65, 68. Reprinted with the permission of Simon & Schuster, Inc. from *People of the Lie* by M. Scott Peck, MD, Copyright 1983, M. Scott Peck, MD.
3. George Gallup, "Jonestown Story Riveted the Public," *San Francisco Chronicle*, December 29, 1978.
4. Dr. Philip Zimbardo, Professor of Psychology, "To Control a Mind," *The Stanford Magazine* (Winter 1983), 60. Reprinted with permission of the *Stanford Magazine*, published by Stanford Alumni Association, Stanford University.

NOTES FOR PREFACE

5. John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton, Lord Acton, *Letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton*, April 5, 1887, in John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 15th ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1980), 615.
6. C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1943, 1945, 1952), 10.
7. 1 John 4:18 (NRSV).
8. Orwell, 267.

9. Under 18 U.S.C. § 2331, “International terrorism” means activities with the following three characteristics:
 - Involve violent acts or acts dangerous to human life that violate federal or state law;
 - Appear to be intended (i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and
 - Occur primarily outside the territorial jurisdiction of the US.
10. Gallup, December 29, 1978.
11. Zimbardo, 60.
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116. Declaration of Grace Stoen, August 18, 1977, *In re marriage of Petitioner: Grace Lucy Stoen and Respondent: Timothy O. Stoen*.
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147. Congressman B. F. Sisk Letter to Mr. Mike Prokes, March 7, 1978, RYMUR 89-4286-148-127-p. 118.
148. Rev. G. B. Young Letter (form letter) to "Congress of the United States," date unstated [January-April 1978], RYMUR 89-4286-148-pp. 127-128.
149. Congressman Mario Biaggi Letter to the Reverend G. B. Young, April 17, 1978, RYMUR 89-4286-148-p. 125.

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151. James W. Jones, "White Night," March 20, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 833. Transcription by Michael Bellefountaine, p. 3. The Jonestown Institute, accessed 5/11/13.
152. Jones, March 20, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 833, p. 20.
153. Jones, March 20, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 833, p. 20.
154. Jones, March 20, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 833, pp. 20–21.
155. James W. Jones, "April 1 Sat Night Service," April 1, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 757. Transcription by Fielding M. McGehee III, p. 5 ("somewhat," "he," and "long" emphasized in transcript). The Jonestown Institute, accessed 4/26/14.
156. Jones, April 1, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 767, p. 5 ("really" emphasized in transcript).
157. Jones, April 1, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 767, pp. 5–6 ("get" emphasized in transcript).
158. Jones, April 1, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 767, p. 6 (accuracy was not at the top of Jones's list, the largest cat in Guyana being a jaguar).
159. Jones, April 1, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 767, p. 10 ("Tim Stoen" and "move" emphasized in transcript).
160. James W. Jones, "Service April 2," April 2, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 781. Transcription by Michael Bellefountaine, p. 20. ("War" emphasized in transcript.) The Jonestown Institute, accessed 12/4/13.

161. Peoples Temple letter, "TO ALL US SENATORS AND MEMBERS OF CONGRESS," March 14, 1978, RYMUR 89-4286-148-p. 106.
162. "Accusation of Human Rights Violations by Rev. James Warren Jones Against Our Children and Relatives at the Peoples Temple Jungle Encampment in Guyana, South America" (April 11, 1978), RYMUR 89-4286-144-pp. 21-69.
163. Accusation of Human Rights Violations, 3.
164. Accusation of Human Rights Violations, 5.
165. John Peer Nugent, *White Night: The Untold Story of What Happened Before—and Beyond—Jonestown* (New York: Rawson, Wade Publishers, Inc., 1979), 138-139. Reprinted by permission of Phyllis Nugent, Santa Monica, California.
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167. Jones, March 20, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 833, p. 13 ("potion" and "best" emphasized in transcript).
168. William Temple, *Christianity and the Social Order* (London: Penguin Books, Inc., 1942), as quoted in Richard J. Foster and James Bryan Smith, *Devotional Classics* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 226.
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171. Erich Fromm, *The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964), 66.
172. Peck, 78.
173. Fromm, 77.
174. Anonymous "we have been approached" letter to Timothy O. Stoen, April 10, 1978. Timothy Stoen papers, to be given to the California Historical Society.
175. James W. Jones, "April 12, 1978 Meeting #1" in re April 11, 1978 meeting, Audiotape No. Q 635. p. 4. Transcription by Fielding M. McGehee III, p. 4 ("shoved" emphasized in transcript). The Jonestown Institute, accessed 4/27/14.
176. Jones, April 12, 1978 Meeting #1, in re April 11, 1978 meeting, Audiotape No. Q 635, p. 2.
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178. Jones, April 12, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 635, p. 24.
179. James W. Jones, "April 12 1978 Meeting #2," April 11, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 636. Transcription by Fielding M. McGehee III, p. 2 ("brains" emphasized in transcript). The Jonestown Institute, accessed 4/27/14.
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 184. Harman & Shaheen, "Confidential Report" of polygraph examination of Steven A. Katsaris. "Exhibit D" to "Declaration by Steven A. Katsaris Opposing Application for Preliminary Injunction," executed on July 29, 1978, and filed in *Peoples Temple et al vs. Timothy Oliver Stoen*, Superior Court of California in and for the City and County of San Francisco, Case No. 740531.
 185. "Petition Entreating Secretary of State Cyrus Vance to Protect the Human Rights of United States Citizens in 'Jonestown,' Guyana," addressed to Honorable Cyrus Vance, Secretary of State of the United States of America, May 10, 1978. Timothy Stoen papers, to be given to the California Historical Society.
 186. "Proof of Receipt by Cyrus Vance on May 15, 1978, of the...Petition Entreating Cyrus Vance to Protect the Human Rights of United States Citizens in 'Jonestown,' Guyana (Dated May 10, 1978)," signed by Ophelia Durant. Timothy Stoen papers, to be given to the California Historical Society.

187. Anonymous ("Guy") "don't think... just going to stand by" letter to Timothy O. Stoen, May 13, 1978. Timothy Stoen papers, to be given to the California Historical Society.
188. "May 12, 1978 Affidavit of Debbie Layton Blakey," May 12, 1978, *Report of a Staff Investigative Group to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives* (Washington: US Government Printing Office, May 15, 1979), 304-305.
189. Marshall Kilduff, "Grim Report from Jungle: Ex-Peoples Temple Member," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 15, 1978.
190. "Affidavit of Deborah Layton Blakey," par. 32, June 15, 1978, *Report of a Staff Investigative Group to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, US House of Representatives*, 316.
191. Jeffrey Haas letter to Douglas J. Bennett Jr., June 15, 1978. Timothy Stoen papers, to be given to the California Historical Society.
192. James W. Jones, "6-13-78," June 13, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 188. Transcription by Fielding M. McGehee III, p. 1 ("spearheaded" emphasized in transcript). The Jonestown Institute, accessed 4/28/14.
193. Jones, "6-13-78," June 13, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 188, p. 1.
194. Jones, "6-13-78," June 13, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 188, p. 1.
195. Jones, "6-13-78," June 13, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 188, p. 2.
196. Jones, "White Night," March 20, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 833, p. 3.

197. Jones, "White Night," March 20, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 833, p. 22.
198. Jones, "White Night," March 20, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 833, pp. 25-26.
199. Transcript of Peoples Temple radio traffic between Jonestown and San Francisco, July 24, 1978, p. 7-W-2. Timothy Stoen papers, to be given to the California Historical Society.
200. James W. Jones, "Sat Nite Aug 19," August 19, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 242. Transcription by Fielding M. McGehee III, p. 5 ("not," later," and "mercenaries" emphasized in transcript). The Jonestown Institute, accessed 12/1/13.
201. James W. Jones, "7-1-78 Peoples Rally," July 1, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 273. Transcription by Fielding M. McGehee III, p. 2 ("time," "one," and "need" emphasized in transcript). The Jonestown Institute, accessed 12/3/13.
202. Jones, "7-1-78 Peoples Rally," July 1, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 273, p. 2 ("know" emphasized in transcript).
203. Jones, "7-1-78 Peoples Rally," July 1, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 273, p. 3.
204. Jones, "7-1-78 Peoples Rally," July 1, 1978, Audiotape No. Q 273, p. 3 ("feasible" and "function" emphasized in transcript).
205. "Declaration of Walter Duncan Jr.," dated August 8, 1978, filed on October 13, 1978, in *Peoples Temple et al vs. Timothy Oliver Stoen*, in the Superior Court of California in and for the City and County of San Francisco, Case No. 740531 (action filed by Peoples Temple on July 10, 1978).

206. *Peoples Temple et al vs. Timothy Oliver Stoen*, Superior Court of California in and for the City and County of San Francisco, Case No. 740531.
207. Anonymous “don’t let it eat you up” letter to Timothy O. Stoen, August 3, 1978. Timothy Stoen papers, to be given to the California Historical Society.
208. “Declaration by Defendant [Timothy Oliver Stoen] Opposing Application for Preliminary Injunction,” filed on August 3, 1978, pp. 10–11, in *Peoples Temple et al vs. Timothy Oliver Stoen*, Superior Court of California in and for the City and County of San Francisco, Case No. 740531.
209. Stoen Declaration, p. 10.
210. Stoen Declaration, p. 10.
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