

August 9, 1978

Mr. John Van de Kamp  
Office of the District Attorney  
210 West Temple  
Los Angeles, CA. 90012

*Copy of letter that  
went to DA + Ramirez  
Something quite  
similar to Windsor*

Dear Mr. Van de Kamp:

There have been many incidents of harassment of the Peoples Temple that have concerned us.

The whole issue with Kathy Hunter, for one, came as a complete surprise because Rev. Jones had always considered her a friend. In fact, he has shown her nothing but kindness over the years. When her son married a young Indian woman, an interracial marriage of which Mrs. Hunter did not approve, Rev. Jones paid the bills for the birth of her grandchild when the couple was destitute. On numerous occasions over the years, Rev. Jones assisted her through personal and financial crises. She was frequently in debt.

When Mrs. Hunter went to Guyana, outrageous and completely conflicting stories emerged, both from her own contradictory accounts and from other news media. Note the enclosed reprints for just a small portion of the confusion characterizes her reporting. In fact, the woman is known to have had a drinking problem.

When she went to Guyana, according to the Guyanese Minister of Home Affairs, the Honorable Vibert Mingo, she misrepresented herself to gain entry into the country, in violation of their immigration laws (Minister Mingo's statement attached). Her entire trip appeared to be either a provocation directly on her part, or she was being used by others to create "scenario" for which the Temple would be falsely blamed. It is difficult to know what else to think, as she had always shown so much admiration for Jim Jones publicly. Just a little while back she was saying how Rev. Jones' small son John looks just like him. Now she is championing Tim Stoen, who is falsely claiming paternity of the child. How Mrs. Hunter could make such a total, sudden switch is a mystery.

Her stories to our people in Georgetown were additionally perplexing and conflicting. One story she gave said she pawned a diamond ring to get to Guyana, that her husband would not let her go. However in a subsequent report, her husband defended what he called "her right to be there" in an editorial in his own paper. Where did her money to travel come from? She also claimed to our people that she had been sent by the Press Democrat and other publications; the Press Democrat denied this. She managed to live very expensively during her Georgetown stay.

Another situation which has been widely misrepresented is that of Deborah Layton. Her stories are illogical and absurd. She left Georgetown after being there several months, finally leaving in her own time and subsequently telling the ridiculous story that she had barely managed to "escape" from Jonestown a few days earlier. In fact, she left her mother, brother, and deserted her husband. Her motives and actions are highly questionable, as one can easily gather.

But we are in a real Catch-22 situation with her as well as others, because we are aware of things they have said or done that would belie their real motives. A case in point is the affidavit drawn up and signed by Tim Stoen, admitting Rev. Jones is the father of John, a fact he now disclaims.

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Stoen claimed he was "forced" or "tricked" into signing a document -- a perfect cover-up for denying his own admissions.

Not one whit of what these people are saying about Guyana and the Temple's mission there is true. Enclosed is the statement about the Project by Dr. and Mrs. John Moore. Rev. Moore is a Methodist minister of 34 years having headed the United Methodist Church of Northern California. The Moores are extremely positive about their recent visit to their daughters at the Project. Just last week, a woman who is employed by the U.S. government returned to the States from Jonestown following a two-week visit to her relatives; and left her children there for a stay. She had come with a doubtful point of view. But now she is very impressed, and has made herself available to speak to anyone who is interested in the Project.

We work in close cooperation with the local people in the region surrounding the Project. Hundreds of Guyanese people utilize the free medical clinic. People come and go daily with visitors, exchange food and goods, medical help, schooling, and lots of health care programs. Our young people date young people from the communities around the Project, and we continually attend community events, locally as well as in Georgetown, the capital. One hundred of our youth went to Georgetown for a recent national cultural festival and received rave reviews in the Guyana Chronicle, the nation's largest paper. Our band is very popular and plays frequently in the capital. Babies have been adopted into the community; about 200 are brought to the clinic each week for medical care.

Many people have visited the Project, and know the full range of the work, but the press will not publish it. The members of the press who have come have left very impressed, but their write-ups are either not printed or distorted beyond recognition. It is interesting though, that one very negative story did appear in both Toronto and London, an article containing untrue, malicious allegations. These two cities contain the largest number of Guyanese living outside Guyana; and was an obvious conspiratorial attempt to prejudice Guyana against Rev. Jones and the Peoples Temple. (They were unmoved by it, according to the government).

A noted Black newspaper publisher, who is also a doctor and respected community leader will be visiting Jonestown in a week or so. Rev. Jones and the Temple community stay in close contact with many community leaders via radio-telephone patch. Many supporters who have been in communication with Rev. Jones by this means include Robert Gnaizda, head of the Public Advocates public law firm in San Francisco; John Maher; Thomas Fleming, Managing Editor of the Sun-Reporter; Enola Maxwell, Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission in San Francisco. Community leaders and supporters have expressed their expectation for a visit to Jonestown in the near future.

The people of Jonestown are very well-informed, and are abreast of all current events. There are continual broadcasts from the BBC and U.S. stations, and a tremendous flow of informational and educational materials. They have read all the things Debbie Layton alleged and are disgusted!

The allegations about controlling people are ridiculous. A large segment of the people at the Project come from ghetto environments, and many out of prisons. They are not people who would tolerate mistreatment or confinement. Published allegations of Ms. Layton's like, "I'm sure everybody wants to leave" almost defy comment. People are free to come and go as they choose. There are no fences, and if anyone wanted to leave, there is a free railway passing by the Project every day.

People in Jonestown feel very free in fact, and some of the most wonderful results we have seen are young people who have been rehabilitated from all sorts of anti-social behavior. Many were candidates for jail, or bidding ti

LL-3-a-2

in-between stays, but now live wholesome, productive lives, exemplary in every way. Marie Lawrence (article enclosed) was a hard-core heroin addict. Now she is in charge of the Project's pest control project on the agricultural acreage, which entails a detailed knowledge of applied chemistry and biology. She's brilliant and using her creative abilities constructively, having discovered a deep sense of motivation and fulfillment since joining the Peoples Temple. Another young man's anti-social behavior went back to the Watts riots; he is now calm and fulfilled, doing the regular boat run up the river to deliver medical supplies to the surrounding communities. Any number of youngsters were considered "incorrigible", in school and in their respective communities, but now have a positive self-image and a bright future. It is impossible to calculate the savings from the damage that would have eventually been done, at the expense of the California taxpayer. This kind of complete, successful rehabilitation is the best thing America could ask for. And residents of Jonestown, aside from the professional people, had virtually nothing in the way of worldly possessions. If the program were shut down, there would easily be over 600 welfare recipients at the doors of Los Angeles and San Francisco overnight. Children in Jonestown are taught to be constructive and non-violent. It's a whole new generation, a break from the patterns of the past. It is the culmination of the highest ideals of the Peoples Temple and Rev. Jones, to bring racial and economic equality, and peaceful social change. And everyone receives help in the process: the people themselves; our cities; and future generations.

But perhaps the greatest test of our pacifism and commitment to non-violent ideals is to know of the conspiracy working to tear all of this down, to have positive proof of specific people involved in the conspiracy yet to let well enough alone and not bother them. Even the President would have a hard time standing up to the kind of pressures and conspiracy we have endured. There are many people in Los Angeles who are supporters although non-members of the Temple. We have talked to many, in all walks of life, who agree there is irrefutable proof of a conspiracy.

The truth of Jonestown is so plain to see -- yet who will see it? It is obviously worrisome to us that respected people in the media tell us that no matter who goes from the media, no matter how positively they should write, there would be nothing positive printed about us. Two from the San Francisco Chronicle and one from the Examiner have told us this. It is hard to know where to turn in this situation. In San Francisco, the Bay Guardian did a very thorough and excellent article (enclosed). The work is now the same, even more impressive in numerous respects -- but since the conspiracy, good news about Peoples Temple is barred from the public.

So we simply proceed with our work, the best we know how. The caliber of the medical program in Jonestown is fantastic. In the past year, 40 babies have been delivered in our medical clinic, and there have been no fatalities. Medical care is available around the clock: right by the seniors' residences, and everyone on the Project receives thorough, routine check-ups.

The local representative of the U.S. State Department in Guyana, an arch-conservative, has been to the Project many times, and checked out every one of the allegations made about persons by their relatives, and detractors. The State Department has been highly impressed, as you can see from the statement enclosed. The above representative has come frequently, arrived unannounced, and talked with people alone and independently. He has found all the allegations directed to him to be untrue, and remarked that he has really never seen so many people so well cared-for as at Jonestown.

LL-3-a-3

So this is where we stand with our current situation. We know the type of tactics being waged against us in Los Angeles, we are all too familiar with harassment. But we trust you will take the foregoing information into account for an accurate perspective.

Thank you.

Respectfully yours,

*Frances Davis*  
Frances Davis

CC: Mr. Steven J. Ramirez

LL-3-a-4