

February 17, 1978

District Attorney Joseph Freitas
Hall of Justice
850 Bryant Street
San Francisco, California

Dear Mr. Freitas:

I am writing out of concern for my good friend, Jim Jones, who has been a loyal and tireless friend to the Indian people, and to all oppressed minorities in the United States. I understand that his work in Guyana, as well as his small son John, are being threatened by some very ugly tactics. As a champion of justice through thick and thin, there is no one who could deserve such treatment less than Jim Jones.

I first met Jim when my wife, Ka-Mook Banks, was imprisoned in Oregon on false charges that were later dropped. At that time we were penniless and her bail was \$20,000. She had delivered our baby in jail. The baby had been taken away from her and she was not allowed to receive the proper medical treatment she needed. Jim Jones learned of our plight, and I was invited to come to the Peoples Temple church along with several of my associates from AIM. That same night Jim Jones raised the money for Ka-Mook's bail from members of his congregation. I could not believe that these people, many of them from poor backgrounds themselves, were making this kind of a sacrifice for me. But I learned later that Jim Jones himself has made this kind of sacrifice over and over again through the years, and it was just his way, and the way of his people, to extend their help to the farthest limit when an injustice was involved.

Later I witnessed Jim Jones made the object of the same kind of false accusations I had been subjected to, and I was even approached myself by a man, David Conn, who said he was working with Treasury Department agents and could give me help avoiding extradition. (You know that certain death awaits me in South Dakota.) The only price was that I join the people who were lying on Jim Jones. He also implied that things would go badly for me if I did not agree or "blew their cover." It was clear to me that he was trying blackmail. I refused to go along with the scheme and later exposed the man publicly for what he had done. This same man told me that one of the people he was working with was Grace Stoen, and that she was the mother of a son of Jim Jones' -- John!

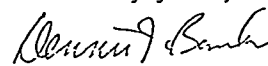
I did not know the background of John's situation at the time, but trusted in the integrity of a man I had seen do so much for me and so many others with no thought of reward or praise. Now that I know the background of the custody situation, and how Grace Stoen rejected and abandoned her own son, I can well understand how she is working to try to ruin Jim Jones and the Temple. I have fifteen children, Mr. Freitas, and this woman -- the same one who was tied in with a scheme to blackmail me -- did not care whether I lived or died, whether my children had a father or not, or whether my people were

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left without a leader.

I am writing to you because I know that Tim Stoen used to work in your office, and he has been pressuring people he knows to take up his cause. I think it would be a terrible mistake for any U.S. officials to try to put pressure on the course of events taking place with this case. And my deepest empathy is with Jim and his child who are very happy together in Guyana. I know the thousands of Peoples Temple members and supporters, both here and there, are united in support of Jim in this matter -- which is a moral issue with them, and with me.

Sincerely yours,


Dennis J. Banks