

On Inquest Tour of Site of Massacre, Guyana Coroner Says: 'I Feel Quite Ill'

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the oppressive air.

"And what is this?" Bacchus asked, picking out an empty diet cola can. He looked at it closely and handed it to a nearby witness for further inspection.

"And where was it made?" Bacchus asked.

"San Francisco," came the answer.

"Aha," Bacchus said, "make a note of that, please. San Francisco."

There were some in the group, even one or two jurors, who smiled quietly, but the smiles faded as Bacchus turned and advanced up the pathway, past torn packages of Flavor Aid that left rain-soaked red stains on the light brown clay mud, past heaps of clothing, silent numbered cabins and numberless black-and-white sneakers, left here and there in the grass, always in pairs.

Bacchus stopped before half a dozen cabins, asked questions of Odell Rhodes, one of the two men who fled Jonestown during the night when their fellow residents were dying. Rhodes pointed out the children who lived in this cabin, elderly women in another. The party pressed on to the assembly area where Jones had gathered his people for their final audience.

The ground had been swept bare and then soaked with gasoline and singed in a not-completely-successful effort to burn away the odor of decaying bodies.

Coroner Bacchus urged the jurors to move through the center of the area.

"Smell," he instructed. "Just come and smell."

Piles of clothing, sleeping bags, mattresses and other material had been gathered at the side of the assembly area. A reporter looking through it found an organizational chart of the Peoples Temple. Bacchus ordered the report-

ers away from it, and, after lengthy debate and consultation with prosecutor Ramao, ordered the chart covered and brought away by a policeman.

"I feel sick," said Bacchus. "I suggest we move on. I feel quite ill."

The group moved on, through the kitchen, with its rotting dishpans full of cheese sandwiches, the uneaten last supper of the Peoples Temple.

Finally, the jurors insisted, they wanted to see the house where Jim Jones himself had lived.

"I must see his house," said Albert Graham, the jury's foreman. "I must see the place where the man himself lived."

Coroner Bacchus pressed on. It was not a pleasant site. Thirteen people had died there. There were bloodstains on the mattresses. The odor was heavy. The tour filed through in the choking heat. Feet scraped on the board floors. The jurors looked on, their faces set.

"Let's move on," said Bacchus, and the group continued, out of the dimness of the cabins and into the stunning, brilliant sunlight.

The inquest will continue Friday and possibly through the weekend at Matthews Ridge.