[Template:Other uses](/wiki/Template:Other_uses" \o "Template:Other uses) [Template:Use mdy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_mdy_dates) [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord) [Template:Location map many](/wiki/Template:Location_map_many) "**Jonestown**" was the informal name for the **Peoples Temple Agricultural Project** formed by the [Peoples Temple](/wiki/Peoples_Temple), an [American](/wiki/United_States) religious organization under the leadership of [Jim Jones](/wiki/Jim_Jones), in northwestern [Guyana](/wiki/Guyana). It became internationally notorious when on November 18, 1978, over 900 people died in the remote [commune](/wiki/Commune), at the nearby airstrip in [Port Kaituma](/wiki/Port_Kaituma), and in [Georgetown](/wiki/Georgetown,_Guyana), Guyana's capital city. The name of the settlement became synonymous with the incidents at those locations.

A total of 909 Americans[[1]](#cite_note-1) died in Jonestown, all but two from apparent [cyanide](/wiki/Cyanide) poisoning, in an event termed "revolutionary suicide" by Jones and some members on an audio tape of the event and in prior discussions. The poisonings in Jonestown followed the murder of five others by Temple members at Port Kaituma, including United States [Congressman](/wiki/United_States_House_of_Representatives) [Leo Ryan](/wiki/Leo_Ryan). Four other Temple members died in Georgetown at Jones' command.

The actions in Jonestown have been commonly viewed as [mass suicide](/wiki/Mass_suicide), although some sources, including Jonestown survivors, regard them as [mass murder](/wiki/Mass_murder) instead.[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3) It was the largest such event in modern history and resulted in the largest single loss of American civilian life in a deliberate act until [September 11, 2001](/wiki/September_11_attacks).[[4]](#cite_note-4) In recent years, the Jonestown massacre has been the subject of several [conspiracy theories](/wiki/Jonestown_conspiracy_theories).

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## Origins[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

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The Peoples Temple was formed in [Indianapolis, Indiana](/wiki/Indianapolis,_Indiana), during the mid-1950s.[[5]](#cite_note-5) Though its roots and teachings shared more with biblical church and Christian revival movements than with Marxism, it purported to practice what it called "[apostolic](/wiki/Four_Marks_of_the_Church#"Apostolic"_as_a_mark_of_the_Church) [socialism](/wiki/Socialism)".[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[7]](#cite_note-7) In doing so, the Temple preached that "those who remained drugged with the opiate of religion had to be brought to enlightenment — socialism."[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9) In the early 1960s, Jones visited Guyana – then still a [British colony](/wiki/British_Guiana) – while on his way to establishing a short-lived Temple mission in [Brazil](/wiki/Brazilian_military_dictatorship).[[10]](#cite_note-10) After Jones received considerable criticism in [Indiana](/wiki/Indiana) for his [integrationist](/wiki/Integrationist) views, the Temple moved to [Redwood Valley, California](/wiki/Redwood_Valley,_California) in 1965.[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12) In the early 1970s, the Peoples Temple opened other branches in California, including [Los Angeles](/wiki/Los_Angeles) and [San Francisco](/wiki/San_Francisco). In the mid-1970s, the Temple moved its [headquarters to San Francisco](/wiki/Peoples_Temple_in_San_Francisco).[[13]](#cite_note-13) With the move to San Francisco came increasing political involvement by the Peoples Temple. After the Temple's participation proved instrumental in the mayoral election victory of [George Moscone](/wiki/George_Moscone) in 1975, Moscone appointed Jones as the Chairman of the San Francisco Housing Authority Commission.[[14]](#cite_note-14) Unlike other figures considered as cult leaders, Jones enjoyed public support and contact with some of the highest level politicians in the United States. For example, Jones met with [Vice President](/wiki/Vice_President_of_the_United_States) [Walter Mondale](/wiki/Walter_Mondale) and [First Lady](/wiki/First_Lady_of_the_United_States) [Rosalynn Carter](/wiki/Rosalynn_Carter) several times.[[15]](#cite_note-15) [Governor](/wiki/Governor_of_California) [Jerry Brown](/wiki/Jerry_Brown), [Lieutenant Governor](/wiki/Lieutenant_Governor_of_California) [Mervyn Dymally](/wiki/Mervyn_Dymally), and Assemblyman [Willie Brown](/wiki/Willie_Brown_(politician)), among others, attended a large testimonial dinner in honor of Jones in September 1976.[[16]](#cite_note-16)

## Jonestown established[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

### Selection and establishment of Guyanese land[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

In the Fall of 1973, after critical newspaper articles by [Lester Kinsolving](/wiki/Lester_Kinsolving) and the defection of eight Temple members, Jones and Temple member [Tim Stoen](/wiki/Tim_Stoen) prepared an "immediate action" contingency plan for responding to a police or media crackdown.[[17]](#cite_note-17) The plan listed various options, including fleeing to [Canada](/wiki/Canada) or to a "[Caribbean](/wiki/Caribbean) missionary post", such as [Barbados](/wiki/Barbados) or [Trinidad](/wiki/Trinidad).[[17]](#cite_note-17) For its "Caribbean missionary post", the Temple quickly chose [Guyana](/wiki/Guyana), conducting research on its economy and [extradition](/wiki/Extradition) treaties with the [United States](/wiki/United_States).[[17]](#cite_note-17) In October 1973, the directors of the Peoples Temple passed a resolution to establish an agricultural mission there.[[17]](#cite_note-17) The Temple chose Guyana, in part, because of its own socialist politics, which were moving further to the [left](/wiki/Political_left) during the selection process.[[17]](#cite_note-17)[[18]](#cite_note-18) Former Temple member Tim Carter stated that the reasons for choosing Guyana were the Temple's view of a perceived dominance of [racism](/wiki/Racism) and multinational corporations in the U.S. government.[[19]](#cite_note-19) Carter said the Temple concluded that Guyana, an [English](/wiki/English_language)-speaking socialist country with a predominantly [indigenous population](/wiki/Indigenous_population) and with a government including prominent black leaders, would afford black members of the Temple a peaceful place to live.[[19]](#cite_note-19) Later, Guyanese Prime Minister [Forbes Burnham](/wiki/Forbes_Burnham) stated that Jones may have "wanted to use cooperatives as the basis for the establishment of socialism, and maybe his idea of setting up a [commune](/wiki/Commune_(intentional_community)) meshed with that."[[18]](#cite_note-18) Jones also thought that Guyana was small, poor, and independent enough for him to easily obtain influence and official protection.[[17]](#cite_note-17) In 1974, after travelling to an area of northwestern Guyana with Guyanese officials, Jones and the Peoples Temple negotiated a lease of over 3,800 acres (15.4 km²) of jungle land located [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) west of the Guyanese capital of [Georgetown](/wiki/Georgetown,_Guyana).[[20]](#cite_note-20) The site was isolated and had soil of low fertility, even by Guyanese standards.[[21]](#cite_note-21) The nearest body of water was seven miles (11 km) away by muddy roads.[[21]](#cite_note-21) Jonestown's location was advantageous not only for Jones, but for the Guyanese government at the time; the settlement stood not far from Guyana's disputed border with [Venezuela](/wiki/Venezuela), which would be reluctant to mount a military incursion on the land if it risked American lives.[[22]](#cite_note-22)

### Jonestown before mass migration[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[thumb|right|Houses in Jonestown](/wiki/File:Jonestown_Houses.jpg)

As 500 members began the construction of Jonestown, the Temple encouraged more to relocate to the settlement, which was formally named the "Peoples Temple Agricultural Project".[[23]](#cite_note-23) Jones saw Jonestown as both a "socialist paradise" and a "sanctuary" from media scrutiny.[[24]](#cite_note-24) In 1976, Guyana finally approved the lease it had negotiated (retroactive to April 1974) with the Temple for the over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of land in Northwest Guyana on which Jonestown was located.[[21]](#cite_note-21) In 1974, Guyanese government officials granted the Temple permission to import certain items "duty-free."[[21]](#cite_note-21) Later payoffs helped safeguard shipments of firearms and drugs through Guyanese customs.[[25]](#cite_note-25) The relatively large number of immigrants to Guyana overwhelmed the government's small but stringent immigration infrastructure in a country where emigrants had outweighed immigrants.[[26]](#cite_note-26) Jones reached an agreement to guarantee that Guyana would permit Temple members' mass migration. To do so, he stated that Temple members were "skilled and progressive", showed off an envelope he claimed had $500,000, and stated that he would invest most of the group's assets in Guyana.[[26]](#cite_note-26) Guyanese immigration procedures were also compromised to inhibit the departure of Temple defectors and curtail the visas of Temple opponents.[[27]](#cite_note-27) Jones purported to establish Jonestown as a benevolent [communist](/wiki/Communism) community, stating: "I believe we’re the purest communists there are."[[28]](#cite_note-28) Jones' wife, Marceline, described Jonestown as "dedicated to live for socialism, total economic and racial and social equality. We are here living communally."[[28]](#cite_note-28) Jones wanted to construct a model community and claimed that Burnham "couldn’t rave enough about us, the wonderful things we do, the project, the model of socialism."[[29]](#cite_note-29) Jones did not permit members to leave Jonestown without his express prior permission.[[30]](#cite_note-30) The Temple established offices in Georgetown and conducted numerous meetings with Burnham and other Guyanese officials.[[31]](#cite_note-31) In 1976, Temple member Michael Prokes requested that Burnham receive Jones as a foreign dignitary along with other "high ranking U.S. officials."[[32]](#cite_note-32) Jones traveled to Guyana with Mervyn Dymally to meet with Burnham and Foreign Affairs Minister Fred Willis.[[32]](#cite_note-32) In that meeting, Dymally agreed to pass on the message to the [U.S. State Department](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_State) that socialist Guyana wanted to keep an open door to cooperation with the United States.[[32]](#cite_note-32) Dymally followed up that meeting with a letter to Burnham stating that Jones was "one of the finest human beings" and that Dymally was "tremendously impressed" by his visit to Jonestown.[[32]](#cite_note-32) Temple members took pains to stress their loyalty to Burnham's Peoples National Congress Party.[[33]](#cite_note-33) One Temple member, Paula Adams, was involved in a romantic relationship with Guyana's Ambassador to the United States, Laurence "Bonny" Mann. Jones bragged about other female Temple members he referred to as "public relations women" giving all for the cause in Jonestown.[[34]](#cite_note-34)<ref name=group>After the tragedy at Jonestown, Adams married Mann. On October 24, 1983, Mann fatally shot both Adams and the couple's child, and then fatally shot himself. (Weingarten, Gene. ["The Peekaboo Paradox."](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/01/18/AR2006011801434_5.html) *The Washington Post*. January 22, 2006).</ref> Viola Burnham, the wife of the prime minister, was also a strong advocate of the Temple.[[18]](#cite_note-18) Later, Burnham stated that Guyana allowed the Temple to operate in the manner it did on the references of Moscone, Mondale, and Rosalynn Carter.[[35]](#cite_note-35) Burnham also said that, when Deputy Minister [Ptolemy Reid](/wiki/Ptolemy_Reid) traveled to [Washington, D.C.](/wiki/Washington,_D.C.) in September 1977 to sign the [Panama Canal Treaties](/wiki/Torrijos-Carter_Treaties), Mondale asked him, "How's Jim?", which indicated to Reid that Mondale had a personal interest in Jones' well being.[[35]](#cite_note-35)

### Investigation and mass migration[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) [thumb|right|Migration to Jonestown (](/wiki/File:PTinGuyana_Cen_image001.gif)[Migration figures after June 1978 are not known](http://jonestown.sdsu.edu/?page_id=35655), Jonestown Report)

In the summer of 1977, Jones and several hundred Temple members moved to Jonestown to escape building pressure from San Francisco media investigations.[[36]](#cite_note-36) Jones left the same night that an editor at *New West* magazine read him an article to be published by [Marshall Kilduff](/wiki/Marshall_Kilduff) detailing allegations of abuse by former Temple members.[[36]](#cite_note-36)[[37]](#cite_note-37) After the mass migration, Jonestown became overcrowded.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Jonestown's population was just under 1,000 at its peak in 1978.

### Jonestown life after mass migration[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

Many members of the Peoples Temple believed that Guyana would be, as Jones promised, a paradise or [utopia](/wiki/Utopia).[[39]](#cite_note-39) After Jones arrived, however, Jonestown life significantly changed.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Entertaining movies from Georgetown that the settlers had watched were mostly eliminated in favor of [Soviet](/wiki/Soviet_Union) propaganda shorts and documentaries on American social problems.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Bureaucratic requirements after Jones' arrival sapped labor resources for other needs.[[38]](#cite_note-38) Buildings fell into disrepair and weeds encroached on fields.[[38]](#cite_note-38) School study and nighttime lectures for adults turned to Jones' discussions about revolution and enemies, with lessons focusing on Soviet alliances; Jones' crises; and the purported "mercenaries" sent by Tim Stoen, who had defected from the Temple and turned against the group.[[38]](#cite_note-38) For the first several months, Temple members worked six days a week, from approximately 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., with an hour for lunch.[[40]](#cite_note-40) In mid-1978, after Jim Jones' health deteriorated and Marciline Jones began managing more of Jonestown's operations, the work week was reduced to eight hours a day for five days a week.[[19]](#cite_note-19) After the day's work ended, Temple members would attend several hours of activities in a pavilion, including classes in socialism.[[8]](#cite_note-8) Jones compared this schedule to the [North Korean](/wiki/North_Korea) system of eight hours of daily work followed by eight hours of study.[[41]](#cite_note-41)[[42]](#cite_note-42) This also comported with the Temple's practice of gradually subjecting its followers to sophisticated [mind control](/wiki/Mind_control) and [behavior modification](/wiki/Behavior_modification) techniques borrowed from North Korea and [Maoist China](/wiki/People's_Republic_of_China).[[43]](#cite_note-43) Jones would often read news and commentary, including some from [Radio Moscow](/wiki/Radio_Moscow) and [Radio Havana](/wiki/Radio_Havana),[[44]](#cite_note-44) and was known to side with the Soviets over the Chinese during the [Sino-Soviet split](/wiki/Sino-Soviet_split).[[45]](#cite_note-45) "Discussion" around the topics raised often took the form of Jones interrogating individual followers about the implications and subtexts of a given item, or delivering lengthy and often confused monologues on how to "read" certain events. In addition to Soviet documentaries, political thrillers such as [*The Parallax View*](/wiki/The_Parallax_View), [*The Day of the Jackal*](/wiki/The_Day_of_the_Jackal_(film)), [*State of Siege*](/wiki/State_of_Siege), and [*Z*](/wiki/Z_(1969_film)) were repeatedly screened and minutely analyzed by Jones. Recordings of commune meetings show how livid and frustrated Jones would get when anyone did not find the films interesting or did not 'get' the message Jones was placing upon them. Nothing in the way of film or recorded TV (shown on the commune's [closed-circuit](/wiki/Closed-circuit_TV) system), no matter how innocuous or seemingly politically neutral, could be viewed without a Temple staffer present to 'interpret' the material for the viewers. This invariably meant damning criticisms of perceived capitalist propaganda in Western material, and glowing praise for and highlighting of [Marxist–Leninist](/wiki/Marxist–Leninist) messages in material from Communist nations. [[44]](#cite_note-44) Jones' recorded readings of the news were part of the constant broadcasts over Jonestown's tower speakers, such that all members could hear them throughout the day and night.[[46]](#cite_note-46) Jones' news readings usually portrayed the United States as a "capitalist" and "imperialist" villain, while casting "socialist" leaders, such as [Kim Il-sung](/wiki/Kim_Il-sung),[[47]](#cite_note-47) [Robert Mugabe](/wiki/Robert_Mugabe),[[48]](#cite_note-48) and [Joseph Stalin](/wiki/Joseph_Stalin)[[49]](#cite_note-49) in a positive light.

Jonestown's primary means of communication with the outside world was a [shortwave radio](/wiki/Shortwave_radio).[[50]](#cite_note-50) All voice communications with San Francisco and Georgetown were transmitted using this radio, from mundane supply orders to confidential Temple business.[[50]](#cite_note-50) The [Federal Communications Commission](/wiki/Federal_Communications_Commission) cited the Temple for technical violations and for using amateur frequencies for commercial purposes.[[50]](#cite_note-50) Because shortwave radio was Jonestown's only effective means of non-postal communication, the Temple felt that the FCC's threats to revoke its operators' licenses threatened Jonestown's existence.[[51]](#cite_note-51) Jonestown, being on poor soil, was not self-sufficient and had to import large quantities of commodities such as wheat.[[52]](#cite_note-52) Temple members lived in small communal houses, some with walls woven from Troolie palm, and ate meals that reportedly consisted of nothing more on some days than rice, beans, greens, and occasionally meat, sauce, and eggs.[[52]](#cite_note-52)[[53]](#cite_note-53) Despite having access to an estimated $26 million by late 1978,[[54]](#cite_note-54) Jones also lived in a tiny communal house, though fewer people lived there than in other communal houses.[[53]](#cite_note-53) His house reportedly held a small refrigerator containing, at times, eggs, meat, fruit, salads, and soft drinks.[[53]](#cite_note-53) Medical problems, such as severe diarrhea and high fevers, struck half the community in February 1978.

Although Jonestown contained no dedicated prison and no form of capital punishment, various forms of punishment were used against members considered to have serious disciplinary problems. Methods included imprisonment in a 6 x 4 x 3-foot (1.8 x 1.2 x 0.9m) plywood box and forcing children to spend a night at the bottom of a well, sometimes upside-down.[[5]](#cite_note-5) This "torture hole", along with beatings, became the subject of rumor among local Guyanese.[[55]](#cite_note-55)[[56]](#cite_note-56) For some members who attempted to escape, drugs such as [Thorazine](/wiki/Thorazine), [sodium pentathol](/wiki/Sodium_pentathol), [chloral hydrate](/wiki/Chloral_hydrate), [Demerol](/wiki/Demerol), and [Valium](/wiki/Valium) were administered in an "extended care unit."[[57]](#cite_note-57) Armed guards patrolled the area day and night to enforce Jonestown's rules.

Children were generally surrendered to communal care, addressed Jones as "Dad," and at times were only allowed to see their real parents briefly at night. Jones was called "Father" or "Dad" by the adults as well.[[58]](#cite_note-58) The community had a nursery at which 33 infants were born.[[59]](#cite_note-59) Up to $65,000 in monthly welfare payments from U.S. government agencies to Jonestown residents were signed over to the Temple.[[60]](#cite_note-60) In 1978, officials from the [United States Embassy](/wiki/Diplomatic_missions_of_the_United_States) in Guyana interviewed [Social Security](/wiki/Social_Security_(United_States)) recipients on multiple occasions to make sure they were not being held against their will.[[61]](#cite_note-61) None of the 75 people interviewed by the Embassy stated that they were being held against their will, were forced to sign over welfare checks, or wanted to leave Jonestown.[[61]](#cite_note-61)[[62]](#cite_note-62)

## Events in Jonestown before Ryan visit[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

### White Nights[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

Jones made frequent addresses to Temple members regarding Jonestown's safety, including statements that the [CIA](/wiki/Central_Intelligence_Agency) and other intelligence agencies were conspiring with "capitalist pigs" to destroy Jonestown and harm its inhabitants.[[48]](#cite_note-48)[[63]](#cite_note-63)[[64]](#cite_note-64) After work, when purported emergencies arose, the Temple sometimes conducted what Jones referred to as "White Nights".[[65]](#cite_note-65) During such events, Jones would sometimes give the Jonestown members four choices: attempt to flee to the Soviet Union; commit "revolutionary suicide"; stay in Jonestown and fight the purported attackers; or flee into the jungle.[[66]](#cite_note-66) On at least two occasions during White Nights, after a "revolutionary suicide" vote was reached, a simulated mass suicide was rehearsed. Peoples Temple defector Deborah Layton described the event in an affidavit:

"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."[[67]](#cite_note-67)

The Temple had received monthly half-pound shipments of [cyanide](/wiki/Cyanide) since 1976 after Jones obtained a jeweler's license to buy the chemical, ostensibly to clean gold.[[68]](#cite_note-68) In May 1978, a Temple doctor wrote a memo to Jones asking permission to test cyanide on Jonestown's pigs, as their metabolism was close to that of human beings.[[69]](#cite_note-69)

### Stoen custody dispute[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) In September 1977, former Temple members Tim and Grace Stoen battled in a Georgetown court to produce an order for the Temple to show cause why a final order should not be issued returning their five-year-old son, John.[[70]](#cite_note-70) A few days later, a second order was issued for John to be taken into protective custody by authorities.[[71]](#cite_note-71) The fear of being held in contempt of the orders caused Jones to set up a false sniper attack upon himself and begin his first series of White Nights, called the "Six Day Siege." During the Siege, Jones spoke to Temple members about attacks from outsiders and had them surround Jonestown with guns and machetes.[[72]](#cite_note-72) The fiery rallies took an almost surreal tone as black activists [Angela Davis](/wiki/Angela_Davis) and [Huey Newton](/wiki/Huey_Newton) communicated via radio-telephone to the Jonestown crowd, urging them to hold strong against the "conspiracy."[[73]](#cite_note-73) Jones made radio broadcasts stating "we will die unless we are granted freedom from harassment and asylum."[[74]](#cite_note-74) Ptolemy Reid finally assured Marceline Jones that the [Guyana Defence Force](/wiki/Guyana_Defence_Force) would not invade Jonestown.[[75]](#cite_note-75)

### Exploring another potential exodus[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

After the Six Day Siege, Jones no longer believed the Guyanese could be trusted.[[76]](#cite_note-76) He directed Temple members to write to over a dozen foreign governments inquiring about immigration policies relevant to another exodus by the Temple.[[76]](#cite_note-76) He also wrote to the State Department inquiring about North Korea and [Albania](/wiki/Socialist_People's_Republic_of_Albania), then enduring the [Sino-Albanian split](/wiki/Sino-Albanian_split).[[76]](#cite_note-76) In Georgetown, the Peoples Temple conducted frequent meetings with the embassies of the Soviet Union, North Korea, [Yugoslavia](/wiki/Socialist_Federal_Republic_of_Yugoslavia), and [Cuba](/wiki/Cuba).[[77]](#cite_note-77) Their negotiations with the Soviet Embassy included extensive discussions of possible resettlement there; the Temple produced memoranda discussing potential places within the Soviet Union in which they might settle.[[77]](#cite_note-77) Sharon Amos, Michael Prokes, Matthew Blunt, Timothy Regan,[[78]](#cite_note-78) and other Temple members took active roles in the "Guyana-Korea Friendship Society", which sponsored two seminars on revolutionary concepts of Kim Il Sung.[[79]](#cite_note-79) On October 2, 1978, Soviet dignitary Feodor Timofeyev visited Jonestown for two days and gave a speech.[[80]](#cite_note-80) Jones stated before the speech, "For many years, we have let our sympathies be quite publicly known, that the United States government was not our mother, but that the Soviet Union was our spiritual motherland."[[80]](#cite_note-80) Timofeyev opened the speech stating that the U.S.S.R. would like to send "our deepest and the most sincere greetings to the people of this first socialist and communist community of the United States of America, in Guyana and in the world."[[80]](#cite_note-80) Both speeches were met by cheers and applause from the crowd in Jonestown.[[80]](#cite_note-80) Following the visit, Temple members met almost weekly with Timofeyev to discuss a potential exodus to the Soviet Union.[[77]](#cite_note-77)

### Concerned Relatives[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

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Meanwhile, in late 1977 and early 1978, Tim and Grace Stoen participated in meetings with other relatives of Jonestown residents at the home of [Jeannie Mills](/wiki/Jeannie_Mills), another Temple defector. Together they called themselves the "Concerned Relatives."[[81]](#cite_note-81) Tim Stoen engaged in letter writing campaigns to the U.S. [Secretary of State](/wiki/United_States_Secretary_of_State) and the government of Guyana, and travelled to Washington to attempt to begin an investigation.[[82]](#cite_note-82) In January 1978, Stoen wrote a "white paper" to [Congress](/wiki/United_States_Congress) detailing his grievances and requesting that congressmen write to Prime Minister Forbes Burnham; 91 Congressmen wrote such letters, including Congressman [Leo Ryan](/wiki/Leo_Ryan).[[83]](#cite_note-83)[[84]](#cite_note-84) On February 17, 1978, Jones submitted to an interview with [*San Francisco Examiner*](/wiki/San_Francisco_Examiner) journalist [Tim Reiterman](/wiki/Tim_Reiterman).[[85]](#cite_note-85) Reiterman wrote a story the next day in the *Examiner* about the Stoen custody battle that prompted the immediate threat of a lawsuit by the Temple.[[86]](#cite_note-86) The repercussions were devastating for the Temple's reputation, and made most former supporters even more suspicious of the Temple's claims that it was being subjected to a "rightist vendetta."[[86]](#cite_note-86) Still, others remained loyal. On the day after Reiterman's article was published, [Harvey Milk](/wiki/Harvey_Milk) – a member of the [San Francisco Board of Supervisors](/wiki/San_Francisco_Board_of_Supervisors) who was supported by the Temple – wrote a letter to [President](/wiki/President_of_the_United_States) [Jimmy Carter](/wiki/Jimmy_Carter) defending Jones "as a man of the highest character," and stating that Temple defectors were trying to "damage Rev. Jones' reputation" with "apparent bold-faced lies".[[87]](#cite_note-87) On April 11, 1978, the Concerned Relatives distributed a packet of documents, including letters and affidavits, that they titled an "Accusation of Human Rights Violations by Rev. James Warren Jones" to the Peoples Temple, members of the press, and members of Congress.[[88]](#cite_note-88) In June 1978, defector Deborah Layton provided the group with a further affidavit detailing alleged crimes by the Temple and substandard living conditions in Jonestown.[[67]](#cite_note-67) Tim Stoen represented three members of the Concerned Relatives in lawsuits filed in May and June 1978 against Jones and other Temple members, seeking in excess of $56 million in damages.[[89]](#cite_note-89) The Temple, represented by [Charles R. Garry](/wiki/Charles_R._Garry), filed a suit against Stoen on July 10, 1978 seeking $150 million in damages.[[90]](#cite_note-90)

### Additional events[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

During the summer of 1978, Jones sought the legal services of Lane and Freed, both [Kennedy assassination conspiracy theorists](/wiki/John_F._Kennedy_assassination_conspiracy_theories), to help make the case of a "grand conspiracy" by U.S. intelligence agencies against the Peoples Temple.[[91]](#cite_note-91) Jones told Lane he wanted to "pull an [Eldridge Cleaver](/wiki/Eldridge_Cleaver)" and return to the U.S. after repairing his reputation.[[91]](#cite_note-91) In September 1978, Lane spoke to the residents of Jonestown, providing support for Jones' theories and comparing him to [Martin Luther King, Jr.](/wiki/Martin_Luther_King,_Jr.)[[91]](#cite_note-91) Lane then held press conferences stating that "none of the charges" against the Temple "are accurate or true" and that there was a "massive conspiracy" against the Temple by "intelligence organizations," naming the CIA, the [FBI](/wiki/Federal_Bureau_of_Investigation), and even the [U.S. Post Office](/wiki/U.S._Post_Office).[[91]](#cite_note-91) Though Lane represented himself as a disinterested party, Jones was actually paying him $6,000 per month to generate such theories.:[[92]](#cite_note-92))

### Jones' declining physical and mental health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

Jones' health significantly declined in Jonestown. In 1978, Jones was told that he might have a lung infection. Once informed of this condition, Jones announced to his followers that he in fact had [lung cancer](/wiki/Lung_cancer), clearly a ploy to foster sympathy and strengthen his support within the community.[[93]](#cite_note-93) Jones was said to be abusing injectable [Valium](/wiki/Valium), [Quaaludes](/wiki/Quaalude), [stimulants](/wiki/Stimulant), [LSD](/wiki/LSD), and [barbiturates](/wiki/Barbiturate).[[94]](#cite_note-94) Audio tapes of 1978 meetings within Jonestown attest to Jones' declining physical condition, with the commune leader complaining of [high blood pressure](/wiki/High_blood_pressure), small [strokes](/wiki/Stroke), rapid [weight loss](/wiki/Weight_loss), temporary [blindness](/wiki/Blindness), [convulsions](/wiki/Convulsions), and, in early November 1978, grotesque swelling of the [extremities](/wiki/Limb_(anatomy)). Jones often mentioned chronic [insomnia](/wiki/Insomnia); he would often say he went for three or four days without any rest.

During meetings and public addresses, his once-sharp speaking voice often sounded slurred; words ran together or were tripped over. Jones would occasionally not finish sentences even when reading typed reports over the commune's PA system.[[94]](#cite_note-94) In addition to the various physical problems suffered by Jones, his mental state deteriorated rapidly during 1978. His deep-seated [persecution complex](/wiki/Persecution_complex), [paranoia](/wiki/Paranoia) and [megalomania](/wiki/Megalomania) grew steadily worse over the months. [Template:Citation needed span](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed_span)

Reiterman was surprised by the severe deterioration of Jones' health when he saw him in Jonestown on November 17, 1978.[[59]](#cite_note-59) After covering Jones for eighteen months for the *Examiner*, Reiterman thought it was "shocking to see his glazed eyes and festering paranoia face to face, to realize that nearly a thousand lives, ours included, were in his hands."[[59]](#cite_note-59)

## Ryan delegation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

### Initial investigation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[thumb|Congressman](/wiki/File:Leo_Ryan.jpg) [Leo Ryan](/wiki/Leo_Ryan) Congressman [Leo Ryan](/wiki/Leo_Ryan), who represented [California's 11th congressional district](/wiki/California's_11th_congressional_district), announced that he would visit Jonestown.[[95]](#cite_note-95) Ryan was friends with the father of Bob Houston, a Temple member whose mutilated body was found near train tracks on October 5, 1976, three days after a taped telephone conversation with Houston's ex-wife in which leaving the Temple was discussed.[[96]](#cite_note-96) Over the following months, Ryan's interest was further aroused by the allegations put forth by Stoen, Layton, and the concerned relatives.[[96]](#cite_note-96) On November 14, 1978, Ryan flew to Jonestown along with a delegation of eighteen people.[[97]](#cite_note-97) The group included Ryan; [Jackie Speier](/wiki/Jackie_Speier), then Ryan's legal advisor; Neville Annibourne, representing Guyana's Ministry of Information; Richard Dwyer, Deputy Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy to Guyana; *San Francisco Examiner* reporter Tim Reiterman; *Examiner* photographer Greg Robinson; [NBC](/wiki/NBC) reporter [Don Harris](/wiki/Don_Harris_(journalist)); NBC video operator Bob Brown; NBC audio technician Steve Sung; NBC producer Bob Flick; [*Washington Post*](/wiki/The_Washington_Post) reporter Charles Krause; [*San Francisco Chronicle*](/wiki/San_Francisco_Chronicle) reporter Ron Javers; and Concerned Relatives representatives, including [Tim and Grace Stoen](/wiki/Timothy_Stoen), Steve and Anthony Katsaris, Beverly Oliver, Jim Cobb, Sherwin Harris, and Carolyn Houston Boyd.[[98]](#cite_note-98)

### Visits to Jonestown[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

When the Ryan delegation arrived in Guyana, Lane and Garry initially refused to allow them access to Jonestown.[[99]](#cite_note-99) However, by the morning of Friday, November 17, they informed Jones that Ryan would likely leave for Jonestown that afternoon regardless of his willingness.[[100]](#cite_note-100) Ryan's party, accompanied by Lane and Garry, came to an airstrip at [Port Kaituma](/wiki/Port_Kaituma), 6 miles (10 km) from Jonestown, some hours later.[[101]](#cite_note-101) Because of aircraft seating limitations, only four of the concerned relatives were allowed to accompany the Ryan delegation on its flight into Jonestown.[[102]](#cite_note-102) Only Ryan and three others were initially accepted into Jonestown, while the rest of Ryan's group was allowed in after sunset.[[103]](#cite_note-103) That night, they attended a musical reception in the pavilion.[[104]](#cite_note-104) While the party was received warmly, Jones said he felt like a dying man and ranted about government conspiracies and martyrdom as he decried attacks by the press and his enemies.[[59]](#cite_note-59) It was later reported (and verified by audiotapes recovered by investigators) that Jones had run rehearsals on how to convince Ryan's delegation that everyone was happy and in good spirits.[[105]](#cite_note-105) Two Peoples Temple members, Vernon Gosney and Monica Bagby, made the first move for defection that night. In the pavilion, Gosney passed a note to Don Harris (mistaking him for Ryan), reading, "Dear Congressman, Vernon Gosney and Monica Bagby. Please help us get out of Jonestown."[[106]](#cite_note-106) Ryan, Speier, Dwyer, and Annibourne stayed the night in Jonestown while other members of the Ryan delegation, including the press corps and members of Concerned Relatives, were told that they had to find other accommodations. They went to Port Kaituma and stayed at a small café.[[107]](#cite_note-107) In the early morning of November 18, eleven Temple members sensed danger enough to walk out of Jonestown and take a train to the town of [Matthew's Ridge](/wiki/Matthew's_Ridge), which is located in the opposite direction from the Port Kaituma airstrip.[[108]](#cite_note-108)[[109]](#cite_note-109) Those defectors included members of the family of Jonestown's head of security, Joe Wilson.[[108]](#cite_note-108)[[110]](#cite_note-110)[[111]](#cite_note-111)[[112]](#cite_note-112) When reporters and concerned relatives arrived in Jonestown later that day, Marceline Jones gave them a tour of the settlement.[[113]](#cite_note-113) [thumb|right|Entrance to Jonestown](/wiki/File:Jonestown_entrance.jpg)

That afternoon, the Parks and the Bogue families, along with in-laws Christopher O'Neal and Harold Cordell, stepped forward and asked to be escorted out of Jonestown by the Ryan delegation.[[108]](#cite_note-108)[[114]](#cite_note-114)[[115]](#cite_note-115) When Jones' adopted son Johnny attempted to talk Jerry Parks out of leaving, Parks told him, "No way, it's nothing but a communist prison camp."[[116]](#cite_note-116) Jones gave the two families, along with Gosney and Bagby, permission to leave.[[117]](#cite_note-117) When Don Harris handed Gosney's note to Jones in an interview in the pavilion, Jones stated that the defectors "lie" and wanted to destroy Jonestown.[[118]](#cite_note-118) After a sudden violent rainstorm started, emotional scenes developed between family members.[[119]](#cite_note-119) Al Simon, a [Native American](/wiki/Native_Americans_in_the_United_States) Temple member, attempted to take two of his children to Ryan to process the requisite paperwork for transfer back to the U.S.[[119]](#cite_note-119) Al's wife, Bonnie, summoned on the loudspeakers by Temple staff, loudly denounced her husband.[[119]](#cite_note-119) Al pleaded with Bonnie to return to the U.S., but Bonnie rejected his suggestions.[[119]](#cite_note-119)

### Port Kaituma airstrip shootings[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Infobox civilian attack](/wiki/Template:Infobox_civilian_attack)

While most of the delegation began to depart on a large dump truck to the Port Kaituma airstrip, Ryan and Dwyer stayed behind in Jonestown to process any additional defectors.[[120]](#cite_note-120) Shortly before the dump truck departed for the airstrip, Temple loyalist Larry Layton, the brother of Deborah Layton, demanded to join the group.[[120]](#cite_note-120) Several defectors voiced their suspicions about Larry Layton's motives.[[120]](#cite_note-120) Shortly after the dump truck initially departed, Temple member Don "Ujara" Sly grabbed Ryan while wielding a knife.[[121]](#cite_note-121) While Ryan was unhurt after others wrestled Sly to the ground, Dwyer strongly suggested that the congressman leave Jonestown while he filed a criminal complaint against Sly.[[122]](#cite_note-122) Ryan did so, promising to return later to address the dispute.[[123]](#cite_note-123) The truck departing to the airstrip had stopped after the passengers heard of the attack on Ryan, and took him as a passenger before continuing its journey towards the airstrip.[[124]](#cite_note-124) The entourage had originally scheduled a nineteen-passenger [Twin Otter](/wiki/Twin_Otter) from [Guyana Airways](/wiki/Guyana_Airways) to fly them back to Georgetown. Because of the defectors departing Jonestown, the group grew in number and now an additional aircraft was required. Accordingly, the U.S. Embassy arranged for a second plane, a six-passenger [Cessna](/wiki/Cessna).[[123]](#cite_note-123)[[125]](#cite_note-125) When the entourage reached the Port Kaituma airstrip between 4:30 p.m. and 4:45 p.m., the planes had not appeared as scheduled. The group had to wait until the aircraft landed at approximately 5:10 p.m.[[123]](#cite_note-123) Then the boarding process began.

Larry Layton was a passenger on the Cessna, the first aircraft to set up for takeoff.[[126]](#cite_note-126) After the Cessna had taxied to the far end of the airstrip, Layton produced a gun and started shooting at the passengers.[[127]](#cite_note-127) He wounded Monica Bagby and Vernon Gosney, and tried to kill Dale Parks, who disarmed him.[[127]](#cite_note-127) At this time, some passengers had boarded the larger Twin Otter.[[128]](#cite_note-128) A tractor with a trailer attached, driven by members of the Temple's Red Brigade security squad, arrived at the airstrip and approached the Otter.[[128]](#cite_note-128) When the tractor neared within approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of the aircraft, at a time roughly concurrent with the shootings on the Cessna, the Red Brigade opened fire while at least two gunmen circled the plane on foot.[[123]](#cite_note-123) There were perhaps nine shooters whose identities are not all certainly known, but most sources agree that Joe Wilson, Thomas Kice Sr., and Ronnie Dennis were among them.[[129]](#cite_note-129) The first few seconds of the shooting were captured on [ENG](/wiki/Electronic_News_Gathering) [videotape](/wiki/Videotape) by NBC cameraman Bob Brown.[[130]](#cite_note-130) Brown was killed along with Robinson, Harris, and Temple defector Patricia Parks in the few minutes of shooting. Ryan was killed after being shot more than twenty times.[[130]](#cite_note-130) Speier, Sung, Dwyer, Reiterman, and Anthony Katsaris were among the nine injured in and around the Twin Otter.[[130]](#cite_note-130) After the shootings, the Cessna's pilot, along with the pilot and co-pilot of the Otter, fled in the Cessna to Georgetown. The damaged Otter and the injured Ryan delegation members were left behind on the airstrip.[[127]](#cite_note-127)

## Deaths in Jonestown[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Anchor](/wiki/Template:Anchor) Before leaving Jonestown for the airstrip, Ryan had told Garry that he would issue a report that would describe Jonestown "in basically good terms."[[131]](#cite_note-131) Ryan stated that none of the sixty relatives he had targeted for interviews wanted to leave, the fourteen defectors constituted a very small portion of Jonestown's residents, that any sense of imprisonment the defectors had was likely because of peer pressure and a lack of physical transportation, and even if 200 of the 900+ wanted to leave "I'd still say you have a beautiful place here."[[131]](#cite_note-131) Despite Garry's report, Jones told him, "I have failed."[[132]](#cite_note-132) Garry reiterated that Ryan would be making a positive report, but Jones maintained that "All is lost."[[132]](#cite_note-132) [Template:Listen](/wiki/Template:Listen) A 44-minute cassette tape, known as the "death tape",[[133]](#cite_note-133)[[134]](#cite_note-134) records part of the meeting Jones called under the pavilion in the early evening. Before the meeting, aides prepared a large metal tub with grape [Flavor Aid](/wiki/Flavor_Aid), poisoned with [Valium](/wiki/Diazepam), [chloral hydrate](/wiki/Chloral_hydrate), [cyanide](/wiki/Cyanide),[[135]](#cite_note-135) and [Phenergan](/wiki/Phenergan).[[136]](#cite_note-136) When the assembly gathered, referring to the Ryan delegation's air travel back to Georgetown, Jones told the gathering "one of those people on that plane is gonna shoot the pilot, I know that. I didn't plan it but I know it's gonna happen. They're gonna shoot that pilot and down comes the plane into the jungle and we had better not have any of our children left when it's over, because they'll parachute in here on us."[[133]](#cite_note-133) Parroting Jones' prior statements that hostile forces would convert captured children to Fascism, one temple member states: "The ones that they take captured, they're gonna just let them grow up and be dummies."[[133]](#cite_note-133) On the tape, Jones urged Temple members to commit "revolutionary suicide".[[133]](#cite_note-133) Such "revolutionary suicide" had been planned by the Temple before and, according to Jonestown defectors, its theory was "you can go down in history, saying you chose your own way to go, and it is your commitment to refuse capitalism and in support of socialism."[[137]](#cite_note-137) Temple member Christine Miller argued that the Temple should alternatively attempt an airlift to Russia.[[133]](#cite_note-133) Jim McElvane, a former therapist who had arrived in Jonestown only two days earlier, assisted Jones by arguing against Miller's resistance to suicide, stating "Let's make it a beautiful day" (followed by applause from Temple members) and later citing possible reincarnation.[[133]](#cite_note-133) After several exchanges in which Jones argued that a Soviet exodus would not be possible, along with reactions by other temple members hostile to Miller, Miller backed down.[[133]](#cite_note-133) However, Miller may have ceased dissenting when Jones confirmed at one point that "the Congressman has been murdered" after members of his "Red Brigade" squad returned from the airstrip after shooting Ryan.[[133]](#cite_note-133) When the airstrip shooters arrived back in Jonestown, Tim Carter, a Vietnam war veteran, recalled them having the "[thousand-yard stare](/wiki/Thousand-yard_stare)" of weary soldiers.[[138]](#cite_note-138) After Jones confirmed that "the Congressman's dead," no dissent occurs on the death tape.[[133]](#cite_note-133) Directly after this, referring to his Red Brigade security squad that shot Ryan, Jones stated, "But the Red Brigade's the only one that made any sense anyway," and, "Red Brigade showed them justice."[[133]](#cite_note-133) In addition to Jim McElvane, several other temple members gave speeches praising Jones and his decision for the community to commit suicide, even after Jones stopped appreciating this praise and begged for the process to go faster.[[133]](#cite_note-133) According to escaped Temple member Odell Rhodes, the first to take the poison were Ruletta Paul and her one-year-old infant.[[139]](#cite_note-139) A syringe with its needle removed was used to squirt poison into the infant's mouth and then Paul squirted another syringe into her own mouth.[[139]](#cite_note-139) Stanley Clayton also saw mothers with their babies first approach the table containing the poison.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Clayton said that Jones approached people to encourage them to drink the poison and that, after adults saw the poison begin to take effect, "they showed a reluctance to die."[[140]](#cite_note-140) The poison caused death within five minutes.[[141]](#cite_note-141) After consuming the poison, according to Rhodes, people were then escorted away down a wooden walkway leading outside the Pavilion.[[139]](#cite_note-139) It is not clear if some initially thought the exercise was another "White Night" rehearsal. Rhodes reported being in close contact with dying children.[[139]](#cite_note-139) In response to reactions of seeing the poison take effect on others, Jones counseled, "Die with a degree of dignity. Lay down your life with dignity; don't lay down with tears and agony." He also said, "I tell you, I don't care how many screams you hear, I don't care how many anguished cries...death is a million times preferable to ten more days of this life. If you knew what was ahead of you – if you knew what was ahead of you, you'd be glad to be stepping over tonight."[[133]](#cite_note-133) Survivor Odell Rhodes stated that while the poison was squirted in some children's mouths, there was no panic or emotional outburst and people looked like they were "in a trance".[[142]](#cite_note-142) This statement was a contradiction to the crying and screaming children heard throughout the majority of the testimonial death tape.[[133]](#cite_note-133) Jones was found dead lying next to his chair between two other bodies, his head cushioned by a pillow.[[143]](#cite_note-143) His death was caused by a gunshot wound to his left temple that Guyanese coroner Cyrill Mootoo stated was consistent with a self-inflicted gun wound.[[144]](#cite_note-144) The events at Jonestown constituted the greatest single losses of American civilian life in a deliberate act until the incidents of [September 11, 2001](/wiki/September_11_attacks).[[145]](#cite_note-145)

### Survivors/eyewitnesses[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

Three high-ranking Temple member survivors claim they were given an assignment and thereby escaped death. Brothers Tim and Mike Carter, aged 30 and 20, and Mike Prokes, 31, were given luggage containing $550,000 in US currency, $130,000 in Guyanese currency, and an envelope, which they were told to deliver to Guyana’s [Soviet](/wiki/Soviet_Union) Embassy in Georgetown.[[146]](#cite_note-146) The envelope contained two passports and three instructional letters, the first of which was to Feodor Timofeyev of the Embassy of the Soviet Union in Guyana, stating:

[Template:Quote](/wiki/Template:Quote)

The letters included listed accounts with balances totaling in excess of $7.3 million to be transferred to the [Communist Party of the Soviet Union](/wiki/Communist_Party_of_the_Soviet_Union).[[147]](#cite_note-147)[[148]](#cite_note-148)[[149]](#cite_note-149) The Carters and Prokes soon ditched most of the money and were apprehended heading for the Temple boat (Cudjo) at Kaituma.[[146]](#cite_note-146) It is unknown how they were supposed to reach Georgetown, [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) away, since the boat had been sent away by Temple leadership earlier that day.[[146]](#cite_note-146) The brothers were given the task before the suicides began, and soon abandoned it when they realised what was about to happen; Tim Carter desperately tried to search for his wife and son, discovering his son in time to witness him being poisoned, and his wife killing herself in despair. At this point Carter had a nervous collapse and break from reality, and was pulled away from the village by his equally distraught brother.

Just before the start of the final meeting in the pavilion, Jones' lawyers [Charles Garry](/wiki/Charles_Garry) and [Mark Lane](/wiki/Mark_Lane_(author)) were told that the people were angry with them.[[150]](#cite_note-150) The lawyers were escorted to a house used to accommodate visitors. According to the lawyers, they talked their way past two armed guards and made it to the jungle, before eventually arriving in Port Kaituma.[[150]](#cite_note-150) While in the jungle near the settlement, they heard gunshots.[[150]](#cite_note-150) This observation concurs with the testimony of Clayton, who heard the same sounds as he was sneaking back into Jonestown to retrieve his passport.

Four more people who were intended to be poisoned managed to survive.[[146]](#cite_note-146) Grover Davis, 79, who was hearing impaired, missed the announcement to assemble on the loudspeaker, laid down in a ditch, and pretended to be dead.[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[151]](#cite_note-151)Hyacinth Thrash, 76, realized what was happening and crawled under her bed, only to walk out after the suicides were completed.[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[151]](#cite_note-151) Odell Rhodes, 36, a Jonestown teacher and craftsman, volunteered to fetch a stethoscope and hid under a building.[[139]](#cite_note-139) Stanley Clayton, 25, a kitchen worker and cousin of [Huey P. Newton](/wiki/Huey_P._Newton), tricked security guards and ran into the jungle.[[140]](#cite_note-140)

### Medical examinations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

The only medical doctor to initially examine the scene at Jonestown was Guyanese Chief [Medical Examiner](/wiki/Medical_Examiner) Dr. Leslie Mootoo. Mootoo visually examined over 200 bodies and later told a Guyanese coroner's jury that he saw needle marks on at least 70.[[152]](#cite_note-152) However, no determination was made as to whether those injections initiated the introduction of poison or whether they were so-called "relief" injections to quicken death and reduce suffering from convulsions from those who had previously taken poison orally. Mootoo and American pathologist Dr. Lynn Crook determined that cyanide was present in some bodies, while analysis of the contents of the vat revealed several tranquilizers as well as [potassium cyanide](/wiki/Potassium_cyanide) and [potassium chloride](/wiki/Potassium_chloride).[[152]](#cite_note-152) Plastic cups, Flavor Aid packets, and syringes, some with needles and some without, littered the area where the bodies were found.[[153]](#cite_note-153) Mootoo concluded that the gunshot wound to Annie Moore could not have been self-inflicted, though Moore had also ingested a lethal dose of cyanide.[[153]](#cite_note-153) Guyanese authorities waived their requirement for autopsies in the case of unnatural death.[[152]](#cite_note-152) Doctors in the United States performed autopsies on only seven bodies, including those of Jim Jones, Dr. Lawrence Schacht, Annie Moore, and Carolyn Layton.[[152]](#cite_note-152) Annie Moore and Carolyn Layton were selected among those autopsied, in part, because of the urging of the Moore family, including Rebecca Moore, the sister of the two victims, who was not a Temple member herself.[[152]](#cite_note-152)

### Notes from deceased residents[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

Found near Marceline Jones' body was a typewritten note, dated November 18, 1978, signed by Marceline Jones and witnessed by Annie Moore and Maria Katsaris, stating:

I, Marceline Jones, leave all bank assets in my name to the Communist Party of the USSR. The above bank accounts are located in the Bank of Nova Scotia in Nassau, Bahamas.

Please be sure that these assets do get to the USSR. I especially request that none of these are allowed to get into the hands of my adopted daughter, Suzanne Jones Cartmell.

For anyone who finds this letter, please honor this request as it is most important to myself and my husband James W. Jones.[[154]](#cite_note-154)

Annie Moore left a note, which in part stated: "I am at a point right now so embittered against the world that I don't know why I am writing this. Someone who finds it will believe I am crazy or believe in the barbed wire that does NOT exist in Jonestown."[[155]](#cite_note-155) The last line ("We died because you would not let us live in peace.") is written in different color ink. No other specific reference is made to the events of the day. Moore also wrote, "JONESTOWN—the most peaceful, loving community that ever existed."[[155]](#cite_note-155) In addition, she stated,"JIM JONES—the one who made this paradise possible—much to the contrary of the lies stated about Jim Jones being a power-hungry sadistic, mean person who thought he was God—of all things."[[155]](#cite_note-155) And "His hatred of racism, sexism, elitism, and mainly classism, is what prompted him to make a new world for the people—a paradise in the jungle. The children loved it. So did everyone else."[[155]](#cite_note-155) Found near Carolyn Layton's body was a handwritten note signed by Carolyn Layton, witnessed by Maria Katsaris and Annie Moore, dated November 18, 1978, stating, "This is my last will and testament. I hereby leave all assets in any bank account to which I am a signatory to the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R."[[156]](#cite_note-156)

## Deaths in Georgetown[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

In the early evening of November 18, at the Temple's headquarters in [Georgetown](/wiki/Georgetown,_Guyana), Temple member Sharon Amos received a radio communication from Jonestown instructing the members at the headquarters to take revenge on the Temple's enemies and then commit revolutionary suicide.[[157]](#cite_note-157) Later, after police arrived at the Temple headquarters, Sharon Amos escorted her children, Liane (21), Christa (11), and Martin (10), into a bathroom.[[158]](#cite_note-158) Wielding a kitchen knife, Sharon first killed Christa, and then Martin.[[158]](#cite_note-158) Then Liane assisted Sharon in killing herself with the knife, after which Liane killed herself with the knife.[[158]](#cite_note-158)

## Aftermath[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) At the airstrip, journalist [Tim Reiterman](/wiki/Tim_Reiterman) photographed the aftermath of the violence.[[159]](#cite_note-159) Dwyer assumed leadership at the scene and, at his recommendation, Layton was arrested by Guyanese state police.[[160]](#cite_note-160) Dwyer was grazed by a bullet in his buttock during the airstrip shootings.[[160]](#cite_note-160) It took several hours before the ten wounded and others in their party gathered themselves together.[[160]](#cite_note-160) Most of them spent the night in a café.[[160]](#cite_note-160) The more seriously wounded slept in a small tent on the airfield.[[160]](#cite_note-160) A Guyanese government plane arrived the following morning to evacuate the wounded.[[159]](#cite_note-159) Five teenaged members of the Parks and Bogue families, with one boyfriend, followed the instructions of defector Gerald Parks to hide in the adjacent jungle until help arrived and their safety was assured.[[161]](#cite_note-161) Thereafter, those members were lost for three days in the jungle and nearly died. Guyanese soldiers eventually found them.

After escaping Jonestown, Odell Rhodes arrived in Port Kaituma on the night of November 18, 1978.[[139]](#cite_note-139) That night Stanley Clayton stayed with a local Guyanese family and travelled to Port Kaituma the next morning.[[140]](#cite_note-140) The Carter brothers and Michael Prokes were put into protective custody in Port Kaituma.[[146]](#cite_note-146) They were later released in Georgetown. Rhodes, Clayton, and the two lawyers (Garry and Lane) were also brought to Georgetown. Michael Prokes committed suicide on March 14, 1979, four months after the Jonestown incident.[[162]](#cite_note-162) Larry Layton, who had fired a gun at several people aboard the Cessna, was originally found not guilty of attempted murder in a Guyanese court, employing the defense that he was "brainwashed".[[163]](#cite_note-163) Layton could not be tried in the United States for the attempted murders of Vern Gosney, Monica Bagby, the Cessna pilot, and Dale Parks on Guyanese soil and was, instead, tried under a federal statute against assassinating members of Congress and internationally protected people (Ryan and Dwyer).[[163]](#cite_note-163) He was convicted of conspiracy and of aiding and abetting the murder of Congressman Leo Ryan and of the attempted murder of Richard Dwyer.[[163]](#cite_note-163) Paroled in 2002, he is the only person ever to have been held criminally responsible for the events at Jonestown.[[164]](#cite_note-164)[thumb|right|Pictures of those who died in Jonestown laid out at a 2011 memorial service](/wiki/File:Jonestown_Memorial_Service_Pictures.jpg) [thumb|right|The grave site at Evergreen Cemetery, and the memorial plaques](/wiki/File:Peoplestemplememorialgravesite.jpg) The event was covered heavily by the media and photographs pertaining to it adorned newspaper and magazine covers for months after its occurrence, including being labeled "cult of death" by [*Time*](/wiki/Time_(magazine)) and [*Newsweek*](/wiki/Newsweek) magazines. In February 1979, 98% of Americans polled said that they had heard of the tragedy.[[165]](#cite_note-165) George Gallup stated that "few events, in fact, in the entire history of the Gallup Poll have been known to such a high percentage of the U.S. public."[[165]](#cite_note-165) After the deaths, both the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the State Department itself criticized the State Department's handling of the Temple.[[166]](#cite_note-166) Political opposition seized the opportunity to embarrass Guyanese Prime Minister Burnham by establishing an inquest which concluded that Burnham was responsible for the deaths at Jonestown.[[166]](#cite_note-166) The [Cult Awareness Network](/wiki/Cult_Awareness_Network), a group aimed at deprogramming members of cults, was formed soon after the Jonestown deaths. The group, which included Patricia Ryan, Congressman Ryan's daughter, was involved in various personal, social and legal battles with a range of religious organizations, from [The Family International](/wiki/The_Family_International) and [Scientology](/wiki/Scientology) to David Koresh's [Branch Davidians](/wiki/Branch_Davidians), where they were found to be influential on law enforcement's concerns for children in the eventual [Waco siege](/wiki/Waco_siege). After a slew of legal and fiscal issues, CAN disbanded in 1996.

The sheer scale of the event, as well as Jones' socialism, purported inconsistencies in the reported number of deaths, allegedly poor explanation of events related to deaths at Jonestown, and existence of classified documents[[167]](#cite_note-167) led some to suggest [CIA involvement](/wiki/Jonestown_Conspiracy_Theory),[[168]](#cite_note-168)[[169]](#cite_note-169)[[170]](#cite_note-170)[[171]](#cite_note-171) though the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence investigated the Jonestown mass suicide and announced that there was no evidence of CIA involvement at Jonestown.

The bodies of over 400 of those who died are buried in a mass-grave at [Evergreen Cemetery](/wiki/Evergreen_Cemetery_(Oakland,_California)) in [Oakland, California](/wiki/Oakland,_California). In 2011, a memorial to them was erected at the cemetery.[[172]](#cite_note-172) Although Jones used [Flavor Aid](/wiki/Flavor_Aid) in the poison, the drink mix was also commonly referred to as [Kool-Aid](/wiki/Kool-Aid) due to its status as a [generic trademark](/wiki/Generic_trademark). This has led to the phrase "[Drinking the Kool-Aid](/wiki/Drinking_the_Kool-Aid)", referring to a person or group holding an unquestioned belief, argument, or philosophy without critical examination.[[173]](#cite_note-173)

## Former site[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

Now deserted, the compound at Jonestown was first tended by the Guyanese government following the deaths.[[174]](#cite_note-174) The government then allowed its re-occupation by [Hmong](/wiki/Hmong_people) refugees from [Laos](/wiki/Laos) for a few years in the early 1980s.[[174]](#cite_note-174) The buildings and grounds were looted by local Guyanese people, but were not taken over because of their association with the mass killing. The buildings were mostly destroyed by a fire in the mid-1980s, after which the ruins were left to decay and be reclaimed by the jungle.

During a visit in 1998 to tape a segment for the [ABC](/wiki/American_Broadcasting_Company) news show [*20/20*](/wiki/20/20_(US_television_show)), Jim Jones, Jr., the adopted son of the cult leader, discovered the rusting remains of an oil drum near the former entrance to the Pavilion.[[175]](#cite_note-175) Jones recognized the drum, originally adapted for use during meal times, as the drum used for drink mixtures during the "white night" exercises, and which he believed was used to hold the beverage mix of poison and grape-flavoured punch on November 18, 1978.[[175]](#cite_note-175) In 2003, with the help of Gerry Gouveia, a pilot involved with the Jonestown Massacre cleanup, a television crew recording a special for the 25th anniversary of the event returned to the original site of Jonestown with the intent to uncover any remaining artifacts.[[176]](#cite_note-176) Although the site was covered with dense vegetation, after searching for several hours the team uncovered a standing [cassava](/wiki/Cassava) mill (possibly the largest remaining structure), the remains of a tractor (speculated to be the same tractor used by the airstrip shooters), a generator, a filing cabinet, an overturned truck near the site of Jim Jones' house (claimed to be his favorite vehicle by Gouveia), a fuel pump, and other smaller miscellaneous items. The former pilot also led the team to the site where the pavilion once was, and they found the remains of a steel drum, an organ, and a bed of daisies growing where the bodies once lay.[[176]](#cite_note-176)[[177]](#cite_note-177)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal)

* [*Jonestown: Paradise Lost*](/wiki/Jonestown:_Paradise_Lost), a 2007 History Channel documentary
* [*Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple*](/wiki/Jonestown:_The_Life_and_Death_of_Peoples_Temple), a 2006 documentary film
* [*Seconds From Disaster*](/wiki/Seconds_From_Disaster), a documentary television series that covered the events at Jonestown in season 6, episode 2 ("Jonestown Cult Suicide")
* [The Sacrament (2013 film)](/wiki/The_Sacrament_(2013_film)), a thriller whose plot borrows heavily from the events of Jonestown
* [List of United States Congress members killed or wounded in office](/wiki/List_of_United_States_Congress_members_killed_or_wounded_in_office)
* [Jonestown conspiracy theory](/wiki/Jonestown_conspiracy_theories)
* [Heaven's Gate (religious group)](/wiki/Heaven's_Gate_(religious_group)) in [San Diego](/wiki/San_Diego), [California](/wiki/California)
* [Order of the Solar Temple](/wiki/Order_of_the_Solar_Temple) in [Canada](/wiki/Canada) and [Switzerland](/wiki/Switzerland)
* [Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God](/wiki/Movement_for_the_Restoration_of_the_Ten_Commandments_of_God) in [Uganda](/wiki/Uganda)
* [Puputan](/wiki/Puputan), mass ritual suicide in [Bali](/wiki/Bali)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

* [Template:Citation](/wiki/Template:Citation)
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## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
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* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book) Based on interviews with Odell Rhodes.
* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
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* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book) (published in the UK as [*Black and White*](/wiki/Black_and_White_(book)))
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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Prone to spam](/wiki/Template:Prone_to_spam) [Template:Z148](/wiki/Template:Z148) [Template:Wikisource](/wiki/Template:Wikisource)

* [List of Jonestown massacre victims](http://jones-town.org/victims/918-JONESTOWNNAMES.pdf)
* [*Alternative considerations of Jonestown and Peoples Temple*](http://jonestown.sdsu.edu/), an extensive resource on the topics, sponsored by the Department of Religious Studies at San Diego State University
* ["Jonestown: The Life and Death of Peoples Temple"](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/jonestown/), website for the film broadcast on PBS includes video interviews with survivors from 2006
* ["The Jonestown Death Tape (FBI No. Q 042) (November 18 1978)"](https://archive.org/details/ptc1978-11-18.flac16), an unofficial web-publishing (digital) of the death tape seemingly made just before and during the mass slaying
* [Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news), *Time* magazine cover story, Monday, December 4, 1978
* [*Father Cares: The Last of Jonestown*](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1509317), a 1981 audio documentary produced by [NPR](/wiki/NPR) (90 minutes)
* ['Jonestown Legacy'](http://www.jonestownlegacy.com/) website run by David Wise, once a Pastor of the Los Angeles Branch of the Peoples Temple, but latterly an opponent of Jim Jones.
* [Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web), the contents of US Government archives on the subject obtained through the [Freedom of Information Act](/wiki/Freedom_of_Information_Act_(United_States)). (web-archived copy of the original website, no longer extant; unfortunately the scanned pages are missing)
* [Template:Wayback](/wiki/Template:Wayback), excerpt from: *Report of a Staff Investigative Group to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, U.S. House of Representatives, May 15, 1979*
* [Template:Findagrave](/wiki/Template:Findagrave)
* [interview with Julia Scheeres, author of "A Thousand Lives: The Untold Story of Jonestown" and Thom Bogue, one of the survivors"](http://kdrt.org/audio/davisville-8414-listening-survivor-and-story-jonestown/%22Radio), KDRT, August 2014
* [FBI Files"](https://archive.org/details/Jonestown-FBI%22Jonestown) at Internet Archive

[Template:Peoples Temple](/wiki/Template:Peoples_Temple)

[Category:1978 crimes](/wiki/Category:1978_crimes) [Category:1978 in Guyana](/wiki/Category:1978_in_Guyana) [Category:Former populated places in Guyana](/wiki/Category:Former_populated_places_in_Guyana) [Category:Ghost towns in South America](/wiki/Category:Ghost_towns_in_South_America) [Category:Guyana–United States relations](/wiki/Category:Guyana–United_States_relations) [Category:History of Guyana](/wiki/Category:History_of_Guyana) [Category:Intentional communities](/wiki/Category:Intentional_communities) [Category:Mass murder in 1978](/wiki/Category:Mass_murder_in_1978) [Category:Mass murder in Guyana](/wiki/Category:Mass_murder_in_Guyana) [Category:Massacres in Guyana](/wiki/Category:Massacres_in_Guyana) [Category:Murder in Guyana](/wiki/Category:Murder_in_Guyana) [Category:Murdered American children](/wiki/Category:Murdered_American_children) [Category:Peoples Temple](/wiki/Category:Peoples_Temple) [Category:Suicide in Guyana](/wiki/Category:Suicide_in_Guyana) [Category:Utopian communities](/wiki/Category:Utopian_communities)