

EX-AIDE MAY KNOW OF TEMPLE MILLIONS

Lawyer Says Woman Has Data on \$8 Million in Foreign Banks and Alleged Death Squad

By JOHN KIFNER

Special to The New York Times

MEMPHIS, Dec. 1 — The key to the People's Temple's hoard of millions of dollars in foreign bank accounts — and to a reputed contingency plan with the potential for more murders and suicides by cult members — may be held by a former mistress of the Rev. Jim Jones who left Guyana shortly before the mass deaths last month.

The young woman, Terri Buford, a slim, intense, onetime journalism student who rose to the Temple's inner circle of power, is now speaking only to Mark Lane, who, as the cult's attorney, accompanied the late Representative Leo J. Ryan's ill-fated expedition to Jonestown.

The lawyer said that Miss Buford came to him saying that she was afraid that surviving members of the cult might attempt to kill her.

On the West Coast, however, relatives of cult members and defectors, said that they feared Miss Buford.

Sources on both sides said that there was a contingency plan of long standing for what was to happen if Mr. Jones called for "mass suicide for socialism."

A small group of survivors, they said, were assigned to kill defectors, politicians and reporters who had written critical articles. The assassination squad members would then kill themselves.

Whether the spell of the cult is broken and the plans will be abandoned or whether true believers might still act upon them is a matter of uncertainty and concern.

Federal Bureau of Investigation sources involved in interviewing present and past members of the Temple said that, to their knowledge, Federal officials had not reached Miss Buford as of Friday evening.

Insight Into Temple World

Miss Buford's story — indeed, even the uncertainty over her present role — provides an insight into the convoluted world of the People's Temple.

And the story also raises questions about Mr. Lane's activities during Representative Ryan's trip. The California Democrat, three newsmen and a defector from the cult were slain; then more than 900 cult members died on Mr. Jones's order.

Miss Buford told him before the trip of the mass suicide plans, the stockpile of arms, and the use of drugs to keep members in thrall. Mr. Lane said in an interview in his home here, where he is re-

searching conspiracy theories.

But at the time he continued to defend the cult and did not warn the others of what he knew.

Mr. Lane contended in the interview that Mr. Ryan and the newsmen should have been even more aware of the danger than he because they had access to defectors and others opposing the Temple. The lawyer, who had earlier publicly spoken of Jonestown as a utopian settlement under attack by American intelligence operatives, now says he blames the State Department for what happened.

"I went down there fearing there would be a tragedy," he asserted. "I wanted to

get as many people out of Jonestown as possible."

Terri Buford was a confused young woman, sick and strung out on drugs, when she came to the People's Temple community in Ukiah, Calif., in the early 70's, former members recalled. Now believed to be in her mid-20's, she grew up in Philadelphia, the daughter, they were told, of an Army colonel. But she had been hitchhiking, wandering.

Mr. Jones sent her to college and she proved bright and apt, graduating from the University of California at Berkeley with a journalism degree in 1976. Among other things she handled public relations for the Temple and became one of the few people in control of the cult's rapidly growing coffers.

She also became Mr. Jones's mistress and a part of the ruling circle and was noted for her dedication.

"Terri has a self-destruct tape in her head because she sees herself as a true revolutionary," said Timothy O. Stoen, once the church's lawyer and now one of its enemies. "She has a communist mentality, which means she is willing to use whatever brilliance she has for an ultimate God-figure. She thinks what she is doing is right."

Mr. Stoen recalled her saying, "I want to die for the cause."

Terrified of Temple Members

Mr. Lane said that when she came to him, Miss Buford had broken with the Temple and was terrified.

He said she told him that she had been sent to give poison to another high-ranking woman in the Temple in San Francisco. The woman had been a mistress of Mr. Jones and wanted to return to the role in Jonestown, but Mr. Jones had tired of her. Mr. Jones allegedly wanted the poison administered in San Francisco so that the woman would develop symptoms before arriving in Jonestown. Otherwise she might become suspicious because poison and drugs were being used to keep people in line in the settlement, Mr. Lane said he was told.

Miss Buford told him the task was the last straw, the lawyer said.

Asked why she would come to him since he was, at that point, Mr. Jones's lawyer, Mr. Lane replied: "She trusted me."

Mr. Lane said that Miss Buford told him of the post-mass suicide assassination plot, which he said was named "The Last Stand Plan," and of some \$8 million in Swiss and other foreign bank accounts. Mr. Lane said that he now has the bank account numbers.

However, Jeffery Haas, a lawyer for many of the cult's defectors, said: "Terri is the one they are most frightened of. She is the mastermind of the hit squad." He recalled that several of the defectors were badly shaken when, after a long pre-trip meeting with Representative Ryan and State Department officials in Washington, they encountered Miss Buford and Mr. Lane in a parking lot.

Mr. Lane kept Miss Buford for a time in a house he owns in Washington. The house, he said, was ransacked and now he will not say where Miss Buford is. And by week's end persons at his home here would not say where he was either.