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F.B.I. Reportedly Has Warrants For Suspects in Murder of Ryan

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

Special to The New York Times

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 4 — The Federal Bureau of Investigation has obtained sealed arrest warrants for a number of persons it believes were involved in the murder of Representative Leo J. Ryan, according to Federal law enforcement sources.

One source said the warrants issued thus far numbered fewer than a dozen, all naming members of the People's Temple cult.

Mr. Ryan, Democrat of California, had been investigating the cult when he and three American newsmen were shot and killed Nov. 18 at an airstrip near the cult's settlement at Jonestown, Guyana.

[In Guyana, a preliminary hearing began for a member of the cult who is charged in the slaying of a cult official and her three children in Georgetown, the Guyanese capital. Page B11.]

[Meanwhile, personal papers of the Rev. Jim Jones indicate that his senior aides maintained closer ties with

American embassy officials than have so far admitted. Page B11.

[And in Washington, Mr. Ryan's mother called for a Congressional investigation into the killings and suicides in Guyana. Page B13.]

All of those named in the warrants are

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members who claim to have seen the murders.

The Guyanese authorities are already holding one cult member, Larry Layton, on charges of first-degree murder in the shooting of Mr. Ryan.

The F.B.I., sources said, has not yet determined the whereabouts of the suspects it is seeking. One source said that at least some of the suspects were "presumed to be dead."

The warrants were issued in New York rather than San Francisco, the site of the cult's offices, because those members of the cult who survived the killings and suicides that followed the airstrip murders have been returning to the United States through Kennedy International Airport in New York.

Legal Basis for Inquiry

Federal sources said that no evidence had yet been developed of a conspiracy involving any of the cult's members, among them several top officials, who were in the United States at the time of the murders.

Lee Laster, an F.B.I. official in New York, said yesterday that bureau agents meeting the returning survivors were carrying arrest warrants, but he declined to say who was being sought or why.

Asked about Mr. Laster's comments today, the F.B.I. would say publicly only that it was seeking four fugitives who had fled to Guyana from this country some time ago and who were not known to have had any direct connection to the cult.

The four fugitives were identified by Federal sources as David Hill, wanted on a fraud charge in Cleveland; Albert Louis Bradford, sought on a six-year-old rape charge in St. Louis; Herman Benjamin Ferguson, charged in 1970 in New York with conspiracy to commit murder, and Claude Herbert, also wanted on a charge of murder.

Longstanding Federal warrants for the four men specify that they are wanted on charges of flight to avoid prosecution.

Mr. Hill, who now calls himself Rabbi Edward Washington, is the leader of a group of black converts to Judaism who, like Mr. Jones's followers, have established a community in Guyana.

In addition to the F.B.I.'s wide-ranging investigation of a possible conspiracy in the Guyana murders, the United States Attorney here has been summoning cult members and others before a Federal grand jury in an effort to determine whether such a conspiracy, if it existed, had roots in the United States.

Justice Department officials have declined to comment on all aspects of the investigations. They have specifically refused to disclose the names of grand jury witnesses and to say whether any of them have been granted immunity from prosecution.

One Federal source said, however, that Terri Buford, a former top aide to Mr. Jones who defected from the cult a few months ago, was believed to be seeking immunity preparatory to telling her story in public.

Negotiations on Survivors

Special to The New York Times

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, Dec. 4 — United States officials said today that Pan American World Airways and the Government in Washington were trying to work out an arrangement to return 18 male survivors of the People's Temple to New York. The men were refused passage by Pan American yesterday because the pilot said he had orders not to carry them without armed guards on board. Other survivors have said some of the men in this group were part of a security squad at Jonestown that maltreated cult members and served as an armed defense team.