

Students peddle Kool-Aid to mock Lane

"It's good until the last one drops...right Mark?" read the sign, posted on the door of the Queen's University lecture hall where Mark Lane was speaking.

Mary Herbert, a second year politics student, had mounted the sign, and others like it, to protest what she called Lane's "bloodsucking" methods.

She and other students protesting outside the building felt Lane was exploiting "a tragic situation." Lane, as counsel for cult leader Jim Jones, had been in Guyana last November when 900 people died in self-imposed mass suicide, and the incident was to be the topic of his speech, for which the Queen's Alma Mater Society was paying him \$3000.

To drive home her point, Herbert had cups of Kool Aid for the students lined up for the speech, a reminder that the 900 who

died in Jonestown had been killed by imbibing a lethal dose of cyanide mixed with Kool Aid.

Paul Steep, who led 15 law students on a crusade against Lane's appearance, said: "We object to someone profiteering on a tragedy of this magnitude. We also object to the amount being spent on this while Amnesty International (a group concerned with political prisoners and torture in various countries) was only given \$200 for a speaker's fund for the entire year."

Jamie Robertson, another protestor, said he was offended by the Jonestown attorney's visit because "Queen's is legitimizing his commercializing of the affair."

Alma Mater Society president David Brown said Lane's fee was justified: "as long as he is here to make serious comments."

According to newspaper accounts, Lane faces possible disbarment in New York State and criminal charges stemming from his alleged prior knowledge of the murder of United States Congressman Leo Ryan in Jonestown.

However, Brown said, Lane is considered innocent by law and that innocence must be accepted in business dealings.

AMS education commissioner Vicki Steele who was responsible for Lane's visit, echoed Brown's concerns: "If this man had been convicted, I don't think we would bring him in."

Lane is on a tour of Canadian universities that was to include Guelph, McMaster and Queen's. However, at Guelph early ticket sales were so bad Lane's appearance was cancelled.

Cult leader a genius Lane tells students

By JENNIFER HUNTER
Staff writer

Jonestown, the site of a ritual suicide by 900 people last November, "was one of the great pioneering efforts made by Americans," says Mark Lane, the lawyer who worked for Rev. Jim Jones and his crew of People's Temple converts.

"They did it all by hand, cleared out that jungle," Lane told 600 Queen's University students, last night. "There were hundreds and hundreds of people who wanted to go down there."

"I talked to a black woman from one of the ghettos in Southern California and she said the reason she went there was because her three children didn't have the chance for a good education in Watts."

"The school facilities in Jonestown were superior to any school system in the United States."

'Jones was a genius'

"Poor black people from America went there to realize a dream that could never be realized for them in their native country."

"It's important to realize what the conditions were in the United States that led them to desperately try and find an alternative life style."

"Some of those people thought Jonestown was the greatest thing that ever happened to them."

Lane characterized the charismatic cult leader Jim Jones as a "genius" who was "brilliant in some ways but blinded by his desire for power."

"If you met him, I'm sure you would think he was a sympathetic man."

Later, when questioned by a student about these remarks, Lane retorted: "I have just finished talking about a man who was going mad. My God, you cannot be so dense."

He conceded Rev. Jones "was a strange man. He was a man who genuinely loved poor, black people and a man who genuinely loved to exploit them."

'Out to get him'

But he believed he was being

exploited too. By the CIA. "He thought they were out to get him," said Lane. "He was terrified."

In fact, Jones had been negotiating with the Soviet Union to seek asylum there. "The people in Jonestown realized they had failed. They could not make the ground productive. They felt if they could clear the jungle they could make anything grow. But the ground was not fertile."

"It was costing Jim Jones \$500,000 a year to support the people there. It was a dead end."

"Jones wrote a letter to the Central Intelligence Agency saying they had given up. But he was afraid that if they returned to the United States they would be harassed by intelligence agents. He even told the CIA he'd pull an Elridge Cleaver. He would tour for the State department and say America is the greatest country in the world." Meanwhile Jones continued his talks with the Soviet Embassy in Guyana.

If maverick Congressman Leo Ryan had postponed his trip to Jonestown "the confrontation would not have taken place," says Lane. Jones and his people would have moved to Cuba or the Soviet Union.

'I warned Ryan'

"I told Congressman Ryan that they would see his presence there as a provocation and in fact, I said to him if you go there they might move prematurely to another country."

Lane claims he is the only one who warned Ryan and places blame on the FBI and CIA for failing to counsel Ryan about the dangers.

"They knew how dangerous it was

but they took no action," Lane said.

Lane discounted allegations that he may be disbarred for failing to tell Ryan of the risks. "I begged him not to go. I told him everything I knew. And I didn't know much."

He says Jones panicked when he heard Ryan was coming. The realization that some of his people wanted to return to the States sealed Jones' fate, Lane believes. "If I could see a death warrant in somebody's eyes that is what I saw in his."

The controversial lawyer, who made headlines with his theories of a conspiracy in the John Kennedy assassination, said he went along on the trip to Jonestown to act as a "moderator". He was imprisoned in a building at the east end of the Jonestown compound when the mass death took place.

'Dignity in death'

He claims it was murder not suicide because he could hear people protesting when Rev. Jim Jones suggested "there was dignity in death." Lane also says there were armed guards who threatened to shoot anyone who didn't take the fatal dose of Kool-Aid and cyanide.

Lane first met Jones when he was invited to Guyana to lecture on the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. "Two months before the mass murder I had never heard of Jim Jones or the People's Temple but it all sounded intriguing."

Describing his own experiences during his last days in Jonestown,

Lane referred to his heroism in preventing the stabbing of Leo Ryan when they first arrived. He also recalled, in vaudevillian style, that during the escape his colleague Charles Garry insisted on fleeing with a red hair dryer.

"He said 'I can't leave it behind it's a very good hairdryer. I told him I'd buy him a new one when we got back to San Francisco but he refused.'"

At the end of the rambling three hour speech, one student questioned Lane about his alleged "profiteering." Lane claimed he did not make "a cent" from his books or lectures and that all the money was put into The Citizens Commission of Inquiry, which he directs.

This was greeted by loud guffaws from the audience. One person screamed: "Where did you get your nice blue velvet jacket from, Mark? What do you live on?"

Stephen Rosenbloom, another spectator, said Lane was too evasive in his account of the Guyanese incident. "He must be hiding something," Rosenbloom concluded.

Finally, one female student told Lane to loud applause: "I think you spent a long time talking about your jungle escape but we never got to the point. What are you saying exactly? What really happened in Jonestown?"