

# A Jones Aide Says Move to Soviet Was Imminent Before the Deaths

By JOHN KIFNER

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MEMPHIS — The People's Temple commune in Jonestown, Guyana, had turned so "miserable" that the Rev. Jim Jones was preparing to move it through Cuba to the Soviet Union just before the mass suicides and murders in November, according to a former aide.

"It was too hard, too rough," explained Terri Buford, who said she defected from the cult on Oct. 27. "Oh, it was superior to living in Watts," she said, in a reference to the Los Angeles district, "but it was a miserable situation. Jim wanted to go to the Soviet Union real bad."

In an interview at the home of her attorney, Mark Lane, Miss Buford portrayed herself as being attracted originally to the People's Temple by its socialist politics, but then becoming disillusioned as Mr. Jones became, she said, "a maniac."

Other defectors in California have charged that Miss Buford was a key figure in the Temple's strange activities and that they fear that she now might be carrying out Mr. Jones's plans for revenge.

## Stoen Called the Mastermind

Miss Buford, who has testified before a Federal grand jury and state officials in California, charged that many of the Temple's activities, including the establishment of a "hit list of enemies to be killed," were masterminded by Timothy O. Stoen, formerly the Temple attorney and legal adviser.

Mr. Stoen, who is in seclusion in Colorado and could not be reached for comment, denied earlier, similar allegations by Miss Buford.

She said that it was Mr. Stoen's effort to regain custody of his son John — whom Mr. Jones asserted that he had fathered — that precipitated the first threat of mass deaths, in October 1977.

"At that point," she added, "I became totally disillusioned." She recalled that the fear and hysteria in the telephone calls she received in San Francisco from cult members in Guyana convinced her that the threat was genuine.

Miss Buford said that until Mr. Jones threatened to order the commune to mass death if Mr. Stoen did not stop trying to gain custody of the boy, she thought her doubts about the Temple were because of flaws in herself.

"I thought it was because I still wasn't a good enough socialist, that I still had capitalist tendencies," she said.

She did not leave the Temple for another year, she said, because she feared her defection would further unbalance Mr. Jones and endanger the lives of the other commune members.

Miss Buford finally left, she said, after Mr. Jones ordered her to drug another Temple member, Sandy Bradshaw, in San Francisco. Mr. Jones did not wish to continue having an affair with Miss Bradshaw, Miss Buford said, but he wanted her to develop symptoms before she came to Guyana so that she would not become suspicious that she was being poi-

sioned, she wrote Mr. Jones that she was having difficulty administering the poison because Miss Bradshaw's diet consisted largely of potato chips. Then, she said, she left behind a note saying she had gone to infiltrate Mr. Stoen's organization of defectors from the People's Temple and worried relatives. Instead, she said, she flew to New York and met with Mr. Lane, with whose family she has been staying with since.

Throughout much of a rambling, four-hour interview, Miss Buford contended repeatedly that Mr. Stoen had goaded Mr. Jones into destroying himself and the People's Temple.

## Stoen Effort Called 'Provocation'

"It was the ultimate provocation," she said of Mr. Stoen's efforts in the custody case. "Jim Jones had said he would kill himself and John Stoen before he would give up custody. So he was asking Jim Jones to kill himself, which would destroy the movement at that time. Morally, he was driving the man to suicide."

"He was playing with a very sick individual."

Miss Buford said she had told the Federal grand jury and state law enforcement officials that Mr. Stoen had set up the "Diversion Department," whose mission was to manufacture floods of mail and telephone calls, and that he had committed a number of "crimes," including election fraud, using his position on the staff of the District Attorney in San Francisco to protect the Temple and keep its members in line. He also smuggled money out of the country, she said.

She said that Mr. Stoen left the Temple suddenly, shortly after she discovered an old newspaper clipping saying that in the 1960's he was on a Rotary-sponsored speaking tour denouncing Communism.

Then, she contended, Mr. Stoen began filing suits on behalf of former Temple members, some of them involving activities that Mr. Stoen himself had instigated while a high-ranking Temple official.

Miss Buford said Mr. Stoen's knowledge of Temple activities and its secret finances and his knowledge of an incident in which Mr. Jones had been arrested for soliciting a male undercover vice officer in Los Angeles had given him leverage against Mr. Jones.

## The Signing of Confessions

Miss Buford also said in the course of the interview that she and other Temple members were required to sign confessions to various crimes. She said she had been told that as long as she was a dedicated socialist, the statement would not be used to cause her any trouble, so there was no reason not to sign it.

"I'm not an apologist for the People's Temple; I think there were a lot of problems there," Miss Buford said at one point, adding, later:

"There were people in that organization that gave up everything they had to follow a socialist dream. They struggled together and they had pride. I have a



Associated Press

Terri Buford

maniac. At the same time I think he was manipulated into that."

Part of the rationale for the move to the Soviet Union, Miss Buford said, was "to make a pretty powerful statement: that here are 1,000 Americans whose human rights have been denied and who want to live in the Soviet Union. It would give a final slap in the face."

She said she supported the move because it might have given her a chance to leave the Temple safely and because she felt it might remove the pressure put on the Temple by the Stoen case, inquiries by reporters and lawsuits that were pending.

"At least there's freedom of movement and freedom of speech there," she said of the Soviet Union, "and at least it would give Jim Jones some freedom."