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Garry Blames Lane For Temple Deaths

Los Angeles

Blame for the deaths of more than 900 Peoples Temple members in a mass suicide last year at Jonestown, Guyana, yesterday was placed squarely on attorney Mark Lane by the Temple's lawyer, Charles Garry.

Garry was a member of a panel discussing "Cults and the Law" at the concluding session of the annual California State Bar convention. Although Garry has feuded publicly before with Lane, his remarks yesterday apparently were the most specific in linking Lane to direct responsibility.

The mass suicide of Nov. 18, 1978, "was created through the hunger" of this lawyer — Lane, according to Garry.

Lane, reached in New Orleans where he is trying a lawsuit, denied Garry's charges. He described Garry variously as "a liar," "a very, very sick man," and "suffering from delusions."

"The person responsible was the catalyst," Garry said. "He may not be legally responsible but he is morally. Mark Lane is responsible."

Garry outlined the background to Lane's role this way:

Peoples Temple leader Rev. Jim Jones and his followers were "paranoid" in believing that there was a conspiracy to destroy them on the part of United States officials.

Garry said he sought evidence of this by requesting disclosure of government documents through the Freedom of Information Act. But he said he came up with nothing. The San Francisco lawyer said he was convinced that there was nothing to the conspiracy theory and conveyed that to Jones.

However, he said that "behind my back," Lane got into the case masquerading as a member of Garry's office. Garry said Lane represented to the Temple leaders that he "knew for a fact" that there was a conspiracy.

Lane passed on word to Jonestown that Representative Leo Ryan, who was killed while visiting there last November to inquire into the complaints of cult members' relatives, was working "hand in hand" with law enforcement, Garry said.

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