

# Memphis Press-Scimitar

WEATHER FORECAST: Increasingly cloudy through tomorrow. Low tonight in lower 40s. High Tuesday in the mid-50s. (Details on Page 2.)

MEMPHIS, TENN., MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1978

TELEPHONES: NEWS and GENERAL 52  
CIRCULATION 52  
WANT ADS 52

## Memphian Mark Lane Mass Suicide Scene

## Recounts in Guyana

BODIES OF MURDERED AMERICANS LIE ON AIRSTRIP BESIDE PLANE IN JONESTOWN, GUYANA



— UPI Telephoto

# 400 Cultists Drink From Poison Tub

## Bulletin

GEORGETOWN, Guyana (UPI) — The Rev. Jim Jones, leader of a fanatical American religious cult, was one of the almost 400 found dead after a mass suicide-murder ritual, the Guyana government announced today. A government spokesman announced the death of Jones, his wife and his son.

GEORGETOWN, Guyana (UPI) — Attorney Mark Lane said today a band of American religious fanatics who massacred a California congressman and four members of his party apparently used a tub of poison in a mass suicide ceremony that left 400 of them dead. Six hundred others were missing.

Lane told a news conference he counted 85 bursts of semi-automatic weapons fire when the People's Temple sect gathered at an open air auditorium of its commune at the Guyanese jungle town of Jonestown, presumably for a mass suicide rite.

The lawyer, who won prominence for his defense of James Earl Ray in the Martin Luther King Jr. assassination case and who now maintains an office and a home in Memphis, said he had heard that the doctor and nurse of the commune carried a tub of poison to the auditorium prior to the mass suicide.

Lane said the Rev. Jim Jones, who heads the religious community, had sent him and fellow attorney Charles Garry away from the scene.

"We could hear him speak of the dignity of death, the beauty of dying. Jones shouted 'mother, mother, mother, mother!' Then there was the first burst of shooting," Lane said.

Lane said he and Garry fled into the bush near the commune settlement after the massacre. He said they heard lots of gunfire and people screaming, including children, fleeing through the jungle.

The attorney told newsmen at an impromptu poolside hotel news conference that in a statement to Guyanese police he suggested that Jones may have escaped from the commune. The commune was known to possess a launch.

**Guyanese Information Minister Shirley Field-Ridley** said the whereabouts of the remaining 500 to 700 Americans at the People's Temple camp was not known, but they apparently fled into the surrounding jungle, in the northwest corner of this South American nation.

The hundreds of bodies — including that of Rep. Leo J. Ryan, D., Calif., were found by Guyanese troops who raided the camp Sunday. Miss Field-Ridley said some had gunshot wounds but most showed no signs of violence.

"A witness said that people in the area were having mass suicide," she told a news conference. "He said the poison was being administered to them, that they were lining up for it." The poison, whose type was not known, reportedly was brewed in a

large vat.

According to Lane's account, the mass deaths must have occurred an hour or more after the Saturday afternoon ambush of Ryan and his group, which had gone to the camp to investigate reports of alleged large-scale abuse of sect members.

Ryan's party was trying to escort some disenchanted members from the camp when it was attacked at a nearby airstrip. Adherents of the People's Temple,

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whose founder, Jones, established the agricultural commune last year, reportedly had long planned mass suicide if they felt their sect was threatened.

Lane told The Associated Press earlier today that suicide was discussed at a community meeting and he was later informed by two sect members "We are all going to die now."

"They were smiling... they looked genuinely happy," Lane said. The guards let Lane and fellow attorney Charles Garry flee just before the shooting broke out.

Lane and Garry went to the camp to act as counselors during the visit by Ryan.

Miss Field-Ridley said the military was trying to identify the bodies, some of which were found in homes and some in

open areas of the camp, and that so far Jones himself had not been found among the dead.

The 53-year-old Ryan, who represented San Mateo County, was accompanied by aides, reporters and relatives of some sect members on the trip last week to this former British colony.

A knife-wielding assailant had attempted to stab Ryan earlier while the congressman was visiting Jonestown. Lane and Garry disarmed the attacker, and Ryan was not injured.

The dead included three newsmen and one of the settlement's defectors. Ten persons were wounded, three seriously, and the husband of one of the wounded had a stroke. The U.S. Embassy said they were all Americans.

Survivors of the attack said a band of black and white members of the People's Temple opened fire with automatic weapons and shotguns as Ryan and his party were boarding planes at the Port Kaituma airstrip, eight miles south of Jonestown.

The dead were Ryan, reporter Don Harris, 42, and cameraman Robert Brown, 36, both of NBC News and both Los Angeles residents; Gregory Robinson, 27, a photographer for the *San Francisco Examiner*, and Patricia Parks or Parker, 18, who was trying to escape from Jonestown. Her home address was not known.

A California psychologist who accompanied Ryan to Guyana to try to get his daughter out of Jonestown said members of the group, which is composed mostly of Californians, rehearsed mass suicide and signed undated suicide notes before they left California.

"They will all be dead tomorrow," said

Stephen Katzaris, whose son Anthony, 23, was critically wounded in the Saturday night airstrip ambush.

One survivor, NBC field producer Robert Flick, said the killers fired 50 to 75 shots at Ryan's group as the planes were being loaded.

"People were being wounded and falling to the ground. As they fell, people with shotguns would walk over and at point-blank range shoot the victim in the head," Flick said in an account broadcast by NBC. "That was how Ryan and Harris died."

According to Flick there were eight to 12 gunmen, both black and white.

# Letter From Mark Lane to Warned of 'Embarrassing

By ORVILLE HANCOCK and CLARK REID  
Press-Scimitar Staff Writers



— San Francisco Examiner  
UPI Telephoto

## THE LAST HOUR

California Congressman Leo J. Ryan rests shortly after he escaped an attack by a knife-wielding member of the People's Temple in Jonestown, Guyana. Memphis attorney Mark Lane helped fight off the attacker whose blood spotted Ryan's shirt. Shaken by his narrow escape, Ryan left for the airstrip where he and four others were gunned down.

Attorney Mark Lane of Memphis wrote Rep. Leo Ryan an unfriendly letter Nov. 6 warning of a possible "embarrassing situation for the U.S. Government" if it continued to harass the People's Temple, Ryan's administrative assistant said today. However, in Guyana, Lane jumped to Ryan's defense, warding off a possibly fatal knife attack.

Joe Holsinger, Ryan's administrative assistant, told *The Press-Scimitar* he and Ryan both thought that the letter from Lane — known for his conspiracy theories and defense of James Earl Ray in the Martin Luther King killing — contained "typical attorney jargon" and they did not take the letter seriously.

Shortly before Rep. Ryan and four members of his party were gunned down in an ambush in Guyana, an attempt on Ryan's life was made at the Jonestown camp of the People's Temple. Lane grabbed the knife of a young man who lunged at the congressman, according to an eyewitness reporter.

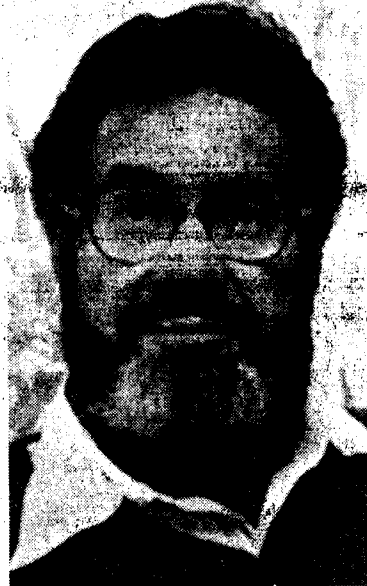
At a nearby airstrip, before the shooting, Ryan told the reporter: "I wouldn't be alive if it were not for Mark Lane."

Minutes later, the congressman was lying dead on the airstrip, his face shot away after attack by members of the People's Temple, eyewitnesses said. Holsinger said he does not think Lane knew that Ryan would be killed when he visited the religious sect in Guyana, but added, "I'm afraid I'm too far into this thing to give an unbiased view."

Ryan got the Lane letter after he wrote cult leader Jim Jones "a very civil and very friendly letter" saying he had heard pros and cons about the group and would visit Guyana to see for himself what prompted reports that adherents were being held against their will.

In return, Holsinger said, Ryan received a letter from Lane, apparently acting as attorney for Jones.

Lane's warning to Ryan was made in a



MARK LANE

letter dated Nov. 6 which was released today.

In that letter, Lane charged that "various agencies of the U.S. government have somewhat consistently oppressed the People's Temple institution."

"You may judge therefore," Lane wrote, "the important consequences which may flow from further persecution of People's Temple which might very well result in the creation of a most embarrassing situation for the U.S. government."

In a Nov. 10 reply to Lane, Ryan challenged the attorney's charges of government persecution, adding that his investigation of the People's Temple was at the request of the relatives of members of the cult who were concerned about their welfare.

"It is true that most of the comments I have heard from relatives are negative, but that is precisely the purpose of this inquiry," wrote Ryan. "Rather than take the word of relatives who can be presumed to be under some emotional bias, I intend to go to the source and to allow those 'on the other side' the opportunity to speak in their own behalf."

The representative told Lane, "your vague reference to the creation of the most embarrassing situation for the United States 'does not impress me at all.'"

"If the comment is intended as a threat, I believe it reveals more than may have been intended," concluded Ryan.

# Rep. Ryan Situation'

Holsinger said Ryan felt that once he arrived in Guyana he would be able to convince the cultists "he really was there on a mission searching for the truth."

Holsinger said he showed Lane's letter to attorney Charles Garry, famed for his defense of the Black Panthers, in the belief Garry represented the Peoples Temple.

Holsinger said, and contended that he, and not Lane, was attorney for the group.

Lane, meanwhile was reported today to be staying in a Georgetown, Guyana, hotel, and was "apparently trying to straighten things out," according to an aide in Memphis.

Lane moved to Memphis from New York in early October and operates his office from his home at 1177 Central.

He said he came to Memphis to be near the sources of his investigation into his theory that James Earl Ray, whom he now represents, did not kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. alone. Lane contends there was a conspiracy and that the FBI played a role in the slaying.

He contends that Mrs. Grace Walden Stephens, who was in the South Main boarding house from which the fatal shot was fired, was illegally held in the state mental hospital to keep her from talking about what she knew of the King slaying.

Lane said Mrs. Stephens says she saw the killer of Dr. King run from the scene and that it was not Ray.

He has been named co-guardian of Mrs. Stephens.

Barbara Pickerell, 30, an assistant in Lane's Memphis office, said she had talked to another Lane aide in Washington last night who told her she had talked to Lane in Georgetown yesterday.

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have no reason to believe he's been wounded."

Ms. Pickerell said she has been receiving reports from attorney April Ferguson, another aide to Lane, who flew to Washington, Sunday, and has been conferring with the State Department.

Ms. Pickerell said she had heard from Ms. Ferguson earlier yesterday that Lane stayed behind in Jonestown with Garry, Ms. Pickerell said.

Sue Pittman, press officer at the State Department, said "to the best of our knowledge" Lane and Garry were at Port Kaituma's airstrip and are now reported to be in Jonestown.

Lane, who had been doing legal work for the People's Temple for three months, had been summoned by Garry, the full time attorney of the commune, she said, when it was learned that Ryan was setting up a "fact finding team" to investigate conditions at the commune, Ms. Pickering said.

Ryan had gone to South America "to investigate claims by some of his constituents that their children were being held against their will, drugged and mistreated," Ms. Pickerell said.

Lane arrived in Jonestown "last Wednesday or Thursday," she said.

Apparently, Ryan and his party, including reporters and TV newsmen, left Jones-

town before they were scheduled to leave, along with five or six people from the People's Temple who had apparently decided to come back with him to the United States via Georgetown, Miss Pickerell said. Miss Pickerell said she believes Jones

was "upset with Congressman Ryan for leaving" and Lane stayed behind to "soothe the situation," she said. Ms. Pickerell said she has not slept since she heard the broadcast Saturday night. "And I won't until it's over," she said.

## From Page 1

The aide in Washington said Lane was staying in Georgetown, but was registered under a different name and was not talking to reporters.

Apparently, he plans to remain down

there for a while and try to help straighten out the situation," Ms. Pickerell said.

She said earlier reports that Lane was wounded were untrue.

"There have been no reports that he has been wounded," said Ms. Pickerell, during an afternoon of ringing telephones at Lane's home. "That was a mistake. We

## Text of Mark Lane's Letter to Rep. Ryan

This is the text of Mark Lane's letter to Rep. Leo Ryan:

Dear Congressman Ryan:

It is my understanding that you and another member of Congress and possibly two members of the staff of the International Relations Committee of the U. S. House of Representatives wish to visit Jonestown, Guyana, due to complaints that have been made about the project there. It is also my understanding that you or members of the staff of the Committee have been briefed by persons hostile to the People's Temple and the project in Jonestown. It would seem to me both fair and appropriate for you to seek information from the other side as well before embarking upon a trip to Jonestown. Since I represent the People's Temple in various matters, I should be happy to meet with you and tell you of my experiences in Jonestown and with Jim Jones and with the People's Temple.

I have been informed that you wish to tour Jonestown during the middle of November. My client has asked that I be present while you make that tour. It seems entirely appropriate and proper that I should be there on that occasion. Accordingly, I placed a telephone call to your San Mateo office at 9 a.m. on Friday, Nov. 3, 1978, to make arrangements for your trip to Jonestown and to discuss the entire matter with you. Your aide stated that you would return my telephone call but I have not as yet heard directly from you. However, I did receive a telephone call from Jim Schollaert who told me that he was a member of the Committee's staff. I informed him that I would be engaged during the middle of November in that I would be representing several witnesses who were to appear in public testimony before the House Select Committee on Assassinations in Washington, D. C., from the middle until the end of November. I suggested to Mr. Schollaert that if you called me we could no doubt work out a date which would be satisfactory to all of us.

You should understand that Jonestown is a private community and that while they appear willing to host your visit there under certain circumstances, courtesy requires that arrangements be made in advance of your visit. For example: there are no hotels or restaurants in the area and you would be the guest of the community during your entire visit. The people of Jonestown have expressed a willingness to care for your needs and the needs of your staff and associates but they suggest, and I certainly agree, that a date which would be convenient to all of us should be arrived at through discussion.

You should be informed that various agencies of the U. S. Government have somewhat consistently oppressed the People's Temple and sought to interfere with the People's Temple, a religious institution. I am now exploring that matter fully in order to bring an action against those agencies of the U. S. Government that have violated the rights of my client. Some of the members of the People's Temple have had to flee from the U. S. in order to experience a fuller opportunity to enjoy rights which were not available to them within the U.S. You should know that two different countries, neither one of which has entirely friendly relations with the U.S., have offered refuge to the

1,200 Americans now residing in Jonestown. Thus far, the People's Temple has not accepted either of those offers but it is their position that if religious persecution continues and if it is furthered through a witch hunt conducted by any branch of the U.S. Government, that they will be constrained to consider accepting either of the offers. You may judge, therefore, the important consequences which may flow from further persecution of People's Temple and which may very well result in the creation of a most embarrassing situation for the U. S. Government.

I hope that this matter can be resolved in an amicable fashion and I continue to wait for a telephone call from you so that we may discuss this matter more fully.

Very truly yours,  
Mark Lane

# Reporter Recounts Airstrip Slaughter

By RON JAVERS  
San Francisco Chronicle

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Jones-town is every evil thing that everybody thought — and worse.

We knew that before the shooting started.

The slaughter began at 4:20 p.m. Saturday (Guyana time) while we were standing beside the twin-engine airplane that had brought us to Port Kaituma on Friday and had returned to pick us up.

I was waiting between Bob Brown and Don Harris, the two NBC men who were killed. We had become close friends during the course of our ordeal.

The firing erupted from guns close by. I was hit first. I was knocked to the ground by a slug in the left shoulder, apparently from a .30-caliber weapon.

I crawled behind the right wheel of the plane.

Bob Brown stayed on his feet and kept filming what was happening, even as the attackers advanced on him with their guns.

He was incredibly tenacious. While I was trying to decide whether to stay where I was or risk the 100-yard-dash across the close-cropped grass field to the jungle, I saw Brown go down.

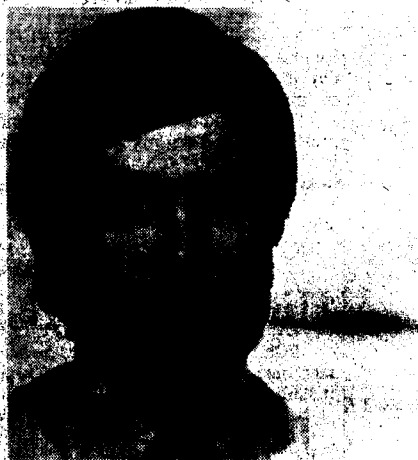
Then I saw one of the attackers stick a shotgun right into Brown's face, inches away, if that.

Bob's brain was blown out of his head. It spattered the blue NBC minicam.

I'll never forget that sight as long as I live.

I ran, and then I dived head-first into the brush.

I got up and scrambled as far into the



Ron Javers

swamp as I could. I was about 150 yards from the airstrip and up to my waist in water.

I pushed through the rain forest, walking parallel to the runway, trying to figure out what had happened.

I couldn't see much. I had lost both pairs of glasses I had with me.

But there was silence. Apparently the party of attackers which must have included four, five or six men with guns, had fled.

I was far down the field by the time I returned to the airstrip.

And then, like the other survivors, I returned to the crippled plane.

Leo Ryan was on his back in a blue cord

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# Guyana Airstrip Slaughter Is Recounted

(Continued from Page 1)

suit, lying in the mud in front of the right wheel of the aircraft.

His face had been shot off.

Don Harris lay alongside the middle of the plane.

Brown was at the tail of the 18-passenger Otter.

Greg Robinson, the San Francisco Examiner photographer at the scene, was at the left wheel, his body crumpled almost in half.

There were four Guyanese soldiers at the far end of the field.

They told us they had not been able to hoot at the attackers during the assault because they were afraid they would kill till more people.

The only policeman at the field, carry-

ing a single-shell shotgun, had been disarmed the moment the men from the People's Temple began firing from their truck and trailer while we were getting ready to board the two planes; our own craft and the smaller one that was set to carry away the fugitives from Jonestown.

We took our most seriously wounded to the soldiers' tent and then we retired into Port Kaituma, the settlement next to the airstrip.

The local Guyanese knew they were risking their own safety by letting us stay, but they were extremely kind to us.

We stood watches during the stormy night — taking turns standing guard in pairs outside the police hut where our wounded were lying.

When we first reached Jonestown, on Friday night, the atmosphere was lively and cordial. We found ourselves getting a real Cook's Tour, with everything arranged for us. There was great rock music from the Jonestown band and entertainment during dinner.

But before we left for an evening's drive through foot-deep mud to Port Kaituma, a young man slipped Don Harris of NBC a message written on a child's slate, saying, "Please help me get out of Jonestown."

It had four signatures.

Back in Port Kaituma, where the entire group of us spent Friday night in a tin-roofed disco — a small beer parlor with a phonograph and a few records — local Guyanese began telling us horror stories.

They told us about one man who had escaped from the colony last summer, only

to be captured by guards from Jonestown and then beaten.

When we returned the following morning to Jonestown, we were not surprised to see Rev. 'Jim' Jones' carefully stage-managed production start to crack.

Edith Parker, one of the 1,200 followers trapped in Jonestown, approached Ryan and said she wanted to leave with him.

Finally, about 20 got up their courage to defy Jones.

There were too many of us for one truckload. The reporters and cameramen were told we would go out in the first batch, but Ryan would wait to leave in the second.

Suddenly, there was a commotion in the central building that serves as the colony's meeting place — a large structure with a tin roof and packed dirt floor.

A cheer rang through the crowd.

Then, a young white man made a direct lunge at Ryan with a knife.

The blade was at Ryan's throat when Mark Lane and Charles Garry, Jones' lawyers and long-time supporters, grabbed the weapon.

The attacker was cut before he could be disarmed.

And Ryan's shirt was drenched with the attacker's blood.

Ryan ran to the truck at that point and we lumbered off through the mud to the airstrip.

Shaken by what he thought was his successful narrow escape, Ryan told us as we reached the airstrip, "I wouldn't be alive if it was not for Mark Lane."

Ryan lived only a few minutes longer.

HW: CA had no sidebar story today about Memphian Mark Lane. But NBC channel had interview w/ Barb. Pickerell (sp?), Lane associate here. Lane then unaccounted for. Barb's face not shown: cloak & dagger.