

# House Unit Plans In-Depth Probe of Temple, Assets

By T. R. Reid and Fred Barbaan  
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The congressional committee that inherited Rep. Leo J. Ryan's investigation of the Peoples Temple has plans for a far-reaching inquiry covering the past, present and future of the cult, including its members, its money and its relations with U.S. and Guyanese officials.

The House International Relations Committee also plans to focus on whether and how the U.S. government can use the church's assets to reimburse the Treasury for costs incurred in bringing home survivors and bodies from the church's Jonestown colony in Guyana.

Some committee members also hope to compile a roster of U.S. cults operating abroad, although constitutional protections may limit this phase of the inquiry.

Preliminary planning by the four staff members working full time on the inquiry indicates that the committee will convene public hearings next year to create a detailed record, based on eyewitness testimony, of life and the mass death of more than 900 persons at Jonestown.

This plan still has to be approved by Chairman Clement J. Zablocki (D-Wis.), who has pledged to complete the investigation begun by Ryan, who was murdered by followers of the cult after touring Jonestown two weeks ago. But Zablocki has put off a decision on whether to hold public hearings.

The Justice Department is conducting a multifaceted investigation of the Jonestown tragedy and the Peoples Temple.

At the request of the State Department, Justice's civil division is investigating the financial structure of the church.

Justice's criminal division and the FBI are pursuing the Ryan killing, armed with eight sealed arrest warrants obtained a few days after the Nov. 18 murder just in case any of the suspects were still alive. All of the eight are thought to be dead (five have been confirmed dead), according to department sources.

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Many former Peoples Temple members are still living in fear. Page A8.

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The FBI is also investigating charges that a Peoples Temple "hit list" existed of public officials and dissident temple members to be murdered in the event of a crisis. One bureau source said yesterday that there is "every indication that there was a very loose" assassination plan.

George Berdes, the committee staff member directing the initial phase of the House investigation, says the staff has had difficulty narrowing its inquiry because "all these things about the members of the church, its money, its dealings with the governments, are tangled in a knotted web of way."

However, the committee plans to concentrate on a few specific issues: relations between the U.S. embassy in Georgetown, Guyana, and the cult, the embassy's handling of complaints about Jonestown, and the adequacy of the information the embassy gave Ryan before his fatal trip.

The committee also will look into the colony's relationship with the Guyanese government to determine whether the Guyanese withheld information that might have warned the embassy or Ryan about the danger to his expedition.

At the urging of several members of Congress, the committee staff is also investigating the possibility of reimbursement for federal expenses resulting from the massacre. Several members of Congress said yesterday that the most emphatic point in constituent mail on the tragedy is a demand that the government get its costs back from the church.

"That one takes you into tougher questions," Berdes said, "like who the church is now, and where the money is, and how much, and can you legally seize a church's assets?"

Rep. Dante B. Fascell (Fla.), the committee's third-ranking Democrat, has expressed interest in a probe of some sociologists have theorized that other U.S. religious colonies overseas, there may be hundreds of religious sects with settlements in foreign countries.

Berdes said the committee will try to compile a list of such colonies, but he noted that constitutional protections of privacy and religious freedom might prevent investigations of the groups activities.

Meanwhile, the State Department yesterday strenuously defended the conduct of Richard McCoy, the career diplomat now posted in Washington who served as chief consular officer in Guyana during most of Jonestown's existence.

According to internal Peoples Temple documents obtained by the Associ-

ated Press, temple leaders thought they had a special relationship with McCoy. During his tenure, the documents indicated, temple head Jim Jones would get advance lists of the Jonestown residents the consulate wished to interview regarding complaints of abuse at the camp, allowing Jones to coach them in their responses.

McCoy's boss at the time, John Blacken, former deputy chief of the U.S. embassy in Guyana, explained in an interview yesterday that the names were provided to Jones in order to guarantee the availability of those to be interviewed by U.S. officials.

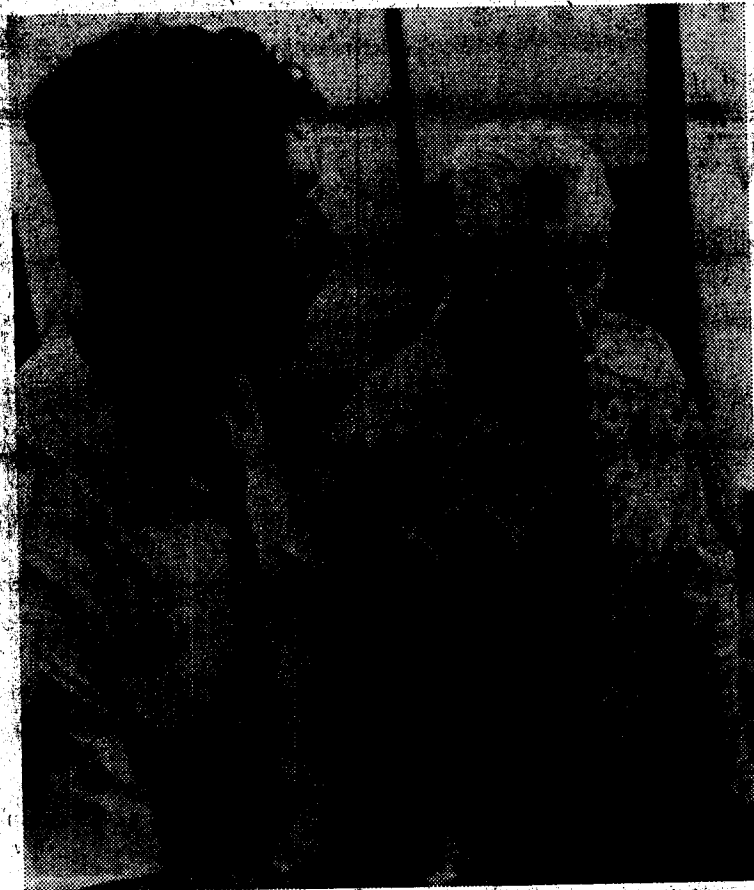
Blacken said that on officials' first visits to Jonestown for interviews, Jones would often say that the subjects were unavailable or on boat trips to Georgetown.

"We provided the names so he wouldn't have an excuse for not producing the people," Blacken said.

A State Department spokesman said yesterday that the department had "carefully investigated the personal conduct and professional performance of Mr. McCoy" and that so far the results showed that he "performed his duties in a manner completely consonant with the highest standards of professional competence and ethical behavior."

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Associated Press

Guyanese guard leads Charles Belkman to preliminary hearing in Georgetown.

# Cultist Accused of Helping Mother Kill 3 Children

GEORGETOWN, Guyana, Dec. 15 (AP) — Prosecutor Carlton Weathers says Charles Belkman of the Peoples Temple killed Sharon Amos, a woman official of the cult, at her request after holding her three children while she cut their throats.

"He at least assisted by holding the hair of the children as Amos cut their throats, then he killed the woman herself," Weathers told a reporter Monday during a recess in a preliminary hearing to determine whether Belkman, 43, will be tried on murder charges. "The doctor will say he

performed a suicide ritual at Jonestown, their religious commune 120 miles northwest of Georgetown.

Of the 86 known survivors, 28 have returned to the United States and 18 are expected to leave Wednesday. Belkman and another survivor, also under arrest, and some others are being held as material witnesses.

Belkman, a 20-year member of the cult, denied that he killed the Amos family. His son, Thomas, 21, has said he saw Amos herd her three children into a back bedroom, get a kitchen

knife and cut their throats. Belkman entered the bedroom while the murders were being carried out and Belkman tried to help her. He managed to inflict a cut but failed to get any blood, and the girl escaped screaming.

Weathers said testimony from residents of the Peoples Temple headquarters in Georgetown indicated that Belkman went into the second bedroom with Amos, 42, the cult's public relations director, and their three children — Martin, 8, Charles, 7, and Diane, 2.

The bodies of the four Amoses were found in a pool of blood Nov. 18 not long after Jones and more than 800 members of the cult died in a murder-

Thomas Belkman said he heard 11 screams. He said that Amos and her three children of the Amos went into the back bedroom and came out screaming.

He insists his father is innocent. "He locked me in the eye in prison and said, 'I don't care what anybody else said, I want you to know if nobody else knows that I did not cut their throats' and I believe him," the young man said.

Belkman's lawyer, Rex H. McKay, said the preliminary hearing is expected to last at least a week. McKay said he will also defend Larry Layton, a Peoples Temple member charged with murdering Rep. Leo Ryan (D-Calif.), three U.S. newsmen and a defector from Jonestown at an airstrip near the settlement.

# Mary Cult Ex-Members Living in Fear

By Paul Grabowicz  
Special to The Washington Post

**SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 6**—It has been more than two weeks since the bloody events in Jonestown, Guyana, but many Peoples temple ex-members here are still living in fear, in seclusion, not revealing their telephone numbers or addresses.

They say they fear for their safety, and they are specific about whom among the survivors of the Peoples Temple cult they are concerned:

• Mike Prokes and Tim Carter, two of the Rev. Jim Jones' aides in Guyana, who were dispatched from Jonestown just before the mass suicide with \$500,000 and two handguns and who are currently being questioned in Guyana.

• Carolyn Layton, one of Jones' mistresses and most trusted aides, involved in the church's international financial operations. Layton has been reported among the confirmed dead at the Dover, Del., Air Force mortuary.

• Terry Buford, the highest-ranking church official still known to be alive, who they say was in charge of keeping tabs on temple ex-members. She was last seen in Memphis today, where she was conferring with Temple attorney Mark Lane.

• Sandy Bradshaw, another top Jones aide, currently holed up at the temple's San Francisco headquarters along with several other church members also to some degree feared by former temple members.

Prokes, Carter and Carter's brother, Michael, in Guyana, have discounted the fears of other Jonestown survivors. They said last week that they are afraid that they may be the target of reprisals by temple ex-members. But this has not brought the ex-cult lists out of hiding.

The FBI has been given the names of some 20 temple members feared by the former cult followers, according to one informed source. The San Francisco Police Department has a list of those they consider potentially dangerous. The list has reportedly ballooned to over 60.

As Jones became increasingly en-

gulfed in paranoia over more "defections" from his ranks and critical press reports about the church, the temple ex-members say, he turned to his most trusted advisers to take action against his detractors.

According to one former high-ranking temple member, this group included a half-dozen of his closest confidants, almost all women.

"He hated men, he didn't trust them," one ex-member says. "But he could get the women physically and emotionally attached to him."

Several of these aides, apparently including Carolyn Layton, died in the mass suicide at Jonestown two weeks ago.

Layton, according to one temple ex-member, was Jones' mistress, head of staff and "coordinator" of the entire church when Jim was gone.

She was the former wife of Larry Layton, one of the men sent from Jonestown on Nov. 18 to attack Rep. Leo J. Ryan (D-Calif.) and his party at the Port Kaituma airstrip. Ryan and four others were killed and several people were wounded. Eyewitnesses said Layton shot and wounded two people but was not involved in the five killings. Nevertheless, she has been charged with five counts of murder and additional counts of attempted murder.

She was also involved in the international financial operations of the church, according to a temple ex-member. As such, she may have had access to the millions of dollars of church money Jones reportedly squandered away in a number of foreign bank accounts.

Prokes and the two Carters narrowly escaped the Jonestown mass suicide two weeks ago. The three have said that they were given a satchel containing \$500,000 in cash, gold and jewelry and two handguns, by another Jones mistress, Maria Katsaris, who dispatched them from Jonestown.

For former cult members here in the San Francisco area, the main concern centers on several individuals at

the church's San Francisco headquarters and another high-ranking cult member in Memphis.

Sandy Bradshaw, reportedly a top aide and yet another mistress of Jones is currently at the San Francisco temple. She holds a license to carry a weapon, according to several ex-members, and Jones once said she has "an obsession with guns," according to a third former member.

The "key" figure in the future, according to virtually every temple ex-member interviewed, however, will be Terry Buford.

Buford, described as very high-strung and also familiar with guns, was the "head of all diversionary tactics" against "defectors" from the church, according to temple ex-members. She allegedly kept files on the ex-members and was also in charge of "how to track someone down who has left the church," according to one former temple member.

None of these Temple members has been charged with any crimes.

The FBI in Washington last week acknowledged that bureau agents across the country are checking a report that the Peoples Temple had a hit list of prominent politicians and journalists to be killed if anything should happen to Jones or the cult.

The FBI has expressed some questions about the reliability of the list, which included "President Nixon."

FBI sources said today that, based on their interviews so far, there is "every loose plan (to hit people) if nothing else," but they would not indicate who they were investigating.

The FBI reportedly has obtained sealed arrest warrants for a number of Peoples Temple cult members it says it believes were involved in the murder of Ryan.

But according to the temple ex-members, "the second phase after the mass suicide was to slay those who had left the church and spoken against it."

The existence of an alleged assassination scheme was a relatively recent development within Jones' cult, according to the ex-members. One former high-level Jones aide says that in the early 1970s Jones first began to warn members of the danger they faced if they left the church.

Initially, the source said, the threat was "You better not leave or we'll find you and beat you." But by the late 1970s the warnings had become a blunt "We'll kill you."

Another temple ex-member says the first cryptic reference by Jones to harming defectors came years ago, when a former member of the temple died and "Jones claimed he had his angels do it." Later, according to this and other sources, the code phrase used inside the church for discussing the murder of a defector was "Send him to New York."

The ex-members say that the original plan for the mass suicide and killing of "traitors" always included Jones' escape of Jonestown, and they may be lost now that Jones has been confirmed to be among the Jonestown dead.

Moreover, many hope, the current members may have been so shocked by the mass suicide and the events of the last few weeks that their faith in Jones and the church has been seriously shaken.

Various spokesmen for the San Francisco temple office last week denied repeatedly that there are any plans for "hit squads." They also expressed their shock over the events in Jonestown, and said they have received threats and are afraid of retaliation by opponents of the church.

Despite those assurances, ex-members still fear that the fanatic dedication Jones instilled in his followers could provoke any of them to strike out against the "traitors" to the church.

"One of my biggest fears," said one former temple member, "is that there are people, even some low in the church hierarchy, who perceive their roles in the church are to avenge their death by silencing his critics."