

Lane Declares Leader Of Cult Responsible For 400 Deaths

By LAWRENCE BUSER

Mark Lane, a survivor of last week's ambush massacre of a U.S. representative and others in Guyana, said last night cult leader Jim Jones is responsible for the deaths of 400 followers and that the United States is responsible for deaths of at least that many who fled into the jungle.

Lane, who still wore Band-Aids on several fingers from his own 14-hour jungle escape, said the safety of those who fled for their lives from the People's Temple commune has been of little concern to this country because they are poor and black.

"If it was a body of a soldier or prisoner of war, we'd have half the state department there with Henry Kissinger and a

mahogany coffin," said Lane.

"If they were white or influential we'd have rescue operations going on over there now. We'd still be in there waiting if we hadn't found our way out because they (American search parties) have yet to come in."

Lane, who moved to Memphis in September, was interviewed at his home at 1177 Central.

He and the group's lawyer, Charles Garry, spent 14 hours in a jungle infested with snakes, scorpions and other dangers before finding their way to freedom. The men had accompanied Rep. Leo J. Ryan (D-Calif.) to Jonestown when learning from Jones that Ryan planned to investigate re-

ports of abuses of sect members who were being kept against their will.

At one point during the visit, Lane and several others wrestled a knife from one of Jones' followers who had attacked Ryan. Last night Lane said he believes Jones ordered the man, Don Sly, to kill Ryan but that Sly only went through the motions.

"He could have stabbed him four times in the back before any of us could do anything about it," Lane said. "He didn't really want to kill him. Instead, he put one arm around the congressman's neck and pressed the knife flat against Ryan's chest. We wrestled with him and all of us fell to the ground. Ryan wasn't even scratched."

Jones later argued with Lane whether to allow a family of six to leave the camp and placed Lane and Garry under house arrest, guarded by the man who had attacked Ryan.

They also argued when Jones said it was time to "take action," a statement Lane interpreted to mean a mass death ceremony was about to take place.

"Then two guards came up to us and said, 'We're all going to die,'" said Lane. "I didn't ask him who we included because I was afraid the answer was going to be terribly disappointing."

Lane escaped from the compound with Garry as they heard Jones cry out, "Mother, Mother, Mother," which was followed by shots from semiautomatic rifles, he said.

He said some leaders of the temple were carrying footlockers loaded with \$3 million in \$100 bills. Authorities reportedly have so far found about \$300,000.

The author and lawyer said the deaths of the more than 400 Americans who lived in the camp in Jonestown were murders and sharply criticized the media for calling it a mass suicide. He said many camp

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I have on tape Lane's interview with Channel 5 here. --PM

Lane Says U.S. Is Responsible In Other Deaths

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members were given Valium and other tranquilizers to calm them before their deaths.

"The decision was how they were going to die, not whether they were going to die," said Lane, who arrived in Memphis shortly before 1 a.m. yesterday and spent the day giving interviews to reporters.

"How can a 6-week-old baby commit suicide? Little babies died, poison was squirted into their mouths with syringes. The people were surrounded by guards with crossbows pointed at their chests and semiautomatic weapons.

"Calling it suicide makes Jim Jones' day complete.

He said the deaths marked the first stage of the temple master plan and that stage two is for surviving leaders such as Jones' son, to condemn the deaths as murder and mass suicide and that stage three is to kill all defectors from the temple.

He said the second stage also calls for the remaining leaders to depict Jones as a fanatic or disturbed man. Lane said the national media, especially The New York Times, are playing into the hands of the cult.

"The only reason to take it (the cult) seriously now is that they have completed stage one," said Lane. "Before, it

was a mad, insane plan . . . a disturbed fantasy. Stage four should be of some concern to public officials, even here in Memphis, because it is to kill public officials."



Mark Lane

He said the group was not religious ("They didn't believe in God except as a curse word") but had a vague notion of spreading its political viewpoint through the master plan.

"This is the way they were going to spread socialism to America," Lane said. "They

get their so-called Marxism from Jim Jones. He says the way to get people to follow is to keep them poor and tired. But Jones couldn't distinguish Karl from Groucho Marx."

He said the movement could die out without Jones' leadership or it could continue.

"The death scene at Jonestown was horror, like Auschwitz," said Lane. "Maybe the people feel remorse and without Jones maybe they'll just abandon the plan."

Lane described Ryan as "a very decent man" who liked the school and health systems found in Jonestown but who thought it "terrible" that members were not allowed to leave.

He said Jones suffered from "paranoia" and that he had "a desire for absolute power." Jones invited Lane, Daniel Ellsberg, Dick Gregory and "any number of people" to Jonestown to see the operation there, though not all had made the visit. He said Jones invited him after reading his book, "Rush to Judgment," attacking the Warren Commission findings on the killing of President Kennedy.

"If he (Jones) was looking for respectability, he didn't have quite the right person," said Lane, who has frequently been criticized for his controversial political and social stands.

Lane said that when he visited Jonestown in late August, the cult leader seemed somewhat vague and rambling about plans. Last week's visit, however, showed Jones to be a different man.

"This time he was determined, hard and quite together and calm," he said. "He was very firm and determined about what he planned to do. He had a desire for absolute power."

Although he was critical of Jones and his fanatical rule in the camp, Lane said the United States should consider why some 1,000 poor blacks would choose life in Jonestown over life in their country.

"The vast majority of people there preferred to stay there with these living conditions rather than go back to ghettos in Watts or in San Francisco," Lane said. "Why do they? People left their urban homes to live in the jungle. That's something America is going to have to face."

Lane, who has written books alleging conspiracies and official cover-ups in the deaths of President John F. Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., said he cut three guides to keep from getting lost in the jungle.

"When I got out of there and heard a report that I was dead, what sustained me was knowing the FBI would have to call off the party at the J. Edgar Hoover Building."