

Uncertainty Surrounds Survivors of Jonestown

By Warren Brown

CHARLESTON, S.C., Nov. 28—State Department officials said today that they do not know if or when survivors of the Jonestown, Guyana, mass suicide-murder will be brought here to the Charleston Air Force base.

"I wish I knew what I could tell you. But we are dealing with a great, huge vat of uncertainty," Guyana task force spokeswoman Kate Marshall said.

Scores of reporters and federal officials have been here since Sunday—the day an estimated 80 survivors of the tragedy were expected to be flown here aboard C141 military aircraft.

Today was the next target date. Wednesday was supposed to be the next. But Marshall and other State Department officials said today that nothing was certain.

"It won't happen today. It probably will not happen tomorrow," she said.

She said part of the problem is that an undetermined number of the survivors are being held in Guyana for questioning by Guyanese officials. Also, some of the survivors may elect—or already may have elected—to return to the United States via commercial aircraft, Marshall said.

Marshall denied reports that seven elderly Jonestown survivors were en route to Charleston today aboard military aircraft. "I can tell you that that is not true. But I can't confirm reports that they may have left Guyana aboard commercial aircraft," she said.

Meanwhile, reporters and federal officials, including about 30 FBI agents on standby to interview the Guyana survivors should they arrive, continue to wait. The twice-daily press briefings have become more brief and less informative.

However, today, John W. Stahl, 60, a security guard from Russellville, Ky., told reporters that the State Department sent him a letter saying that his niece, whom he identified as Robin Tchetter, could be among the survivors, and despite the uncertainty, was still expected to arrive in Charleston sometime this week.

Stahl said he was told in the letter that the department believed that eight other relatives of his may be among the 914 People's Temple adherents who died in Jonestown.

"This girl, my niece, may be my herself. She may not have any other relatives except me," Stahl said.

So, he said, with some funds provided by the Red Cross, he caught a plane to Charleston.

Doctor's Body Identified By FBI Among the Dead

Associated Press

The FBI yesterday said it has identified the body of Dr. Lawrence Eugene Schacht, the Peoples Temple physician who allegedly helped administer the cyanide-laced drink that killed more than 900 members of the cult in the mass suicide-murder in Guyana.

The FBI said Schacht's body was identified from fingerprints compared with a file furnished by the California Bureau of Investigation and Identification.

Schacht's body had been sent to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware with the other victims from the sect's Jonestown jungle settlement in Guyana.

The only other person whose body has been identified positively by the FBI is the Rev. Jim Jones, the leader of the Peoples Temple.

The FBI said Schacht, 30, apparently died from poisoning, and that no bullet wounds had been discovered in his body.

Schacht, a native of Houston, worked for five weeks last year in a children's clinic at San Francisco General Hospital before he left for Guyana.

The Secret Service also is investigating reports that members of the Peoples Temple had plans to assassinate top-ranking U.S. officials, a spokesman said yesterday.

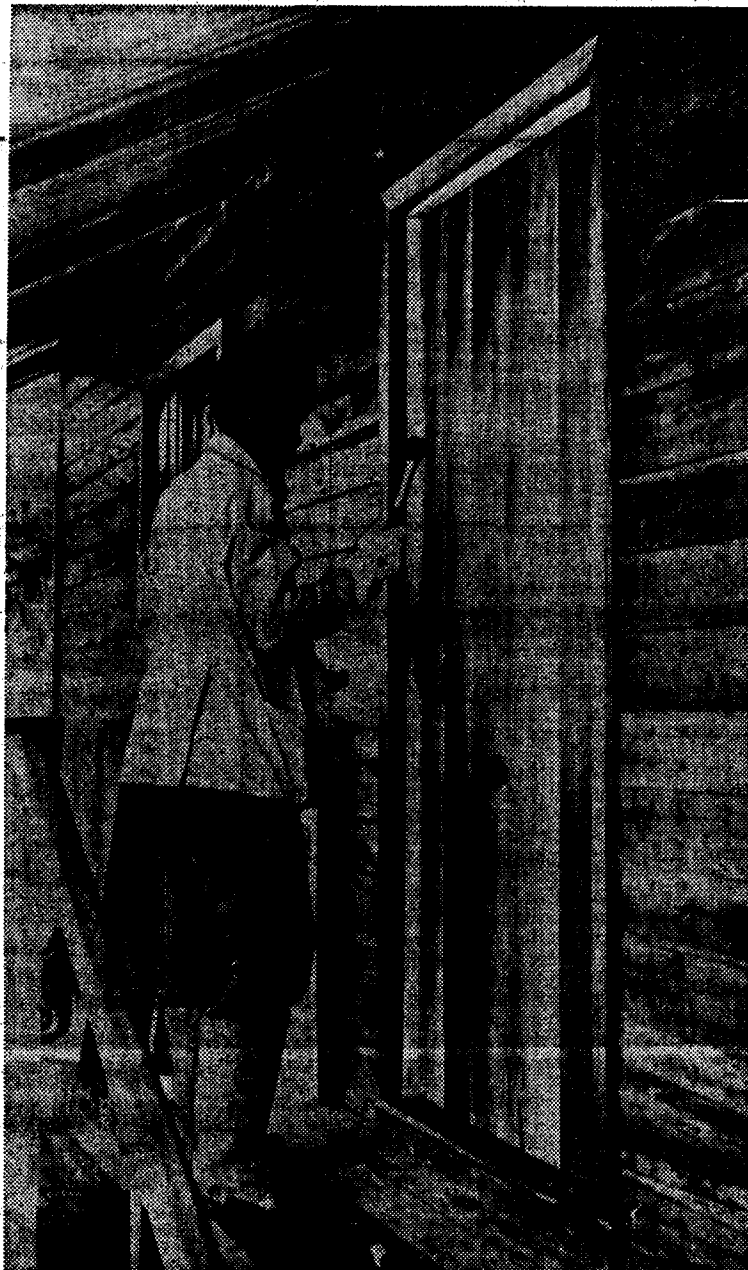
The spokesman, Jack Warner Jr., did not specify the targets of the supposed plans. But Secret Service responsibilities are limited to protecting the president, the vice president, members of their families and foreign heads of state.

Warner said the alleged assassination plans "pertain to the protective responsibilities" of the Secret Service.

A source said there is no evidence of any specific "hit list" with the names of public figures in writing. The Secret Service is questioning survivors of the Peoples Temple, Warner said.

The FBI is investigating the death of Rep. Leo Ryan (D-Calif.). However, the Justice Department says federal law restricts FBI jurisdiction to the congressman's assassination and does not allow any broader investigation.

There have been reports that the survivors of the mass suicide included a hit squad of members who had been directed by Jones to carry out assassinations.



Associated Press

A Guyanese workman nails shut the door of the home of cult leader Jim Jones.

Jonestown Survivors Begin

By Leonard Downie Jr.

Washington Post Foreign Service

As officials here and in Guyana cope with a legacy of problems left by the mass killings at Jonestown, the first eight American survivors are being released by the Guyanese government to return to the United States.

Only one of the eight, 84-year-old Miguel De Pina, who had fallen ill and was treated in a hospital there, has left Guyana. He was flown to San Francisco earlier this week by his grandson, Michael Woodward, and a California newspaper reporter who took Woodward to Guyana, to search for his grandfather.

The other seven—also elderly survivors of Jonestown ranging in age from 61 to 79—are waiting for the U.S. Embassy in Georgetown, Guyana, to arrange for their transportation home. A U. S. State Department spokesman said last night that it is not yet certain whether they will be flown by military plane to the U. S. Air Force base at Charleston, S.C., as was reported earlier.

The State Department has guaranteed the survivors transportation back to the United States on military or commercial flights, the spokesman said. But there is uncertainty as to when more survivors will be allowed to leave Guyana and even as to whether they all want to return here.

U. S. sources in Washington and Georgetown said yesterday that some survivors, apparently those who were among the more trusted aides of Peoples Temple cult leader Jim Jones, have indicated to Guyanese authorities that they want to go to Cuba instead.

The approximately 80 survivors include 46 Peoples Temple members still being held under house arrest inside the cult's Georgetown headquarters, where they were during the events of a week ago that left 918 persons dead at three locations: the cult's Jonestown commune, the nearby Port Kaituma airstrip and the Georgetown headquarters.

The others, who are living under guard in a Georgetown hotel, had left Jonestown with Rep. Leo J. Ryan (D-Calif.) and survived the airstrip ambush in which Ryan and four others were shot to death, or escaped the subsequent forced mass suicide of the remaining 909 Jonestown residents.

Among the eight elderly Jonestown residents who survived, 70-year-old Hyacinth Thrush said she had slept through the "white night" roundup of residents by the commune's armed guards and discovered the massed dead, including the body of her aged sister, when she awoke later Saturday evening. Grover Davis, 79, said he hid

from the roundup in a drainage ditch. The others apparently were overlooked in and around the large barracks houses where Jones kept the elderly.

The elderly survivors were the first to be allowed to leave Guyana because they were the easiest for Guyanese authorities to clear of possible involvement in any illegal activities in connection with the murders and mass suicide or the illegal possession of firearms in Jonestown.

Guyanese police are continuing to question the rest of the survivors. Some have been accused by the others as being among Jones' most trusted aides and sharp-shooting members of the Jonestown security force.

"Their status is being reviewed, and some will be allowed to go," said Skip Roberts, the assistant police commissioner in Guyana. "Some will be held for judicial proceedings."

Two of the survivors already have been arrested and charged with murder. Larry Layton, 32, from San Francisco, who was taken into custody at the Port Kaituma airstrip, has been charged in the murders of Ryan, three newsmen and a Jonestown defector by four to six gunmen who ambushed Ryan's fact-finding party after it left Jonestown. Charles Belkman, 43, from Indianapolis, has been charged with murdering Sharon Amos Harris and her three children in the Georgetown headquarters on the night of the mass suicides.

Three others—Tim Carter, 28, and his brother Michael, 20, and Michael Prokes, 32,—were questioned a second time this week about their story of how they escaped from Jonestown with guns and a large sum of money.

They have told police and reporters they were given the guns and a large suitcase by Marja Katsaris, Jones' mistress and the commune treasurer, and told to take them to the Soviet Embassy in Georgetown. They said they found the suitcase too heavy to drag into the surrounding forest and stopped to open it, finding in it cash, jewelry, gold and a letter to the Soviet Embassy. They pocketed some of the cash and ran off, they said.

A U. S. official said yesterday that Guyanese authorities in Jonestown have recovered \$500,000 in U.S. currency, \$250,000 in Guyanese currency and stacks of uncashed U.S. Social Security checks. The Guyanese still have possession of the cash, the official said, but have turned over a carton of Social Security checks to the embassy.

Guyanese authorities have set up a police post at the now deserted and partially looted commune and are making a complete inventory. The U.S. Embassy has informed the Guyanese government of its duty to repre-

sent the estates of the Jonestown dead and oversee the eventual disposition of property they left behind there.

The Guyanese Cabinet met last night to decide the future of the 3,000-acre Jonestown site amid reports that it would commission the military to maintain Jonestown as a government agricultural station and harvest its beans, tapioca, bananas, pineapples, oranges and other crops.

Many other problems spawned by the Jonestown tragedy also remain unsolved, including:

- Disposition of the more than 900 bodies being processed for identification at the U.S. Air Force base in Dover, Del.

The process is moving slowly. About 40 bodies have been positively identified from fingerprints and dental records thus far, including those of Jones and the commune doctor, Lawrence Schacht, 30, who reportedly prepared the vat of poisonous drink that the Jonestown residents were forced to take.

As the bodies are identified, the State Department will notify next of kin, who are expected to make preparations for their removal from Dover. The U.S. government is absorbing the approximately \$9 million it cost to bring the bodies to Dover from Guyana.

A State Department spokesman said yesterday that it had not yet been decided what to do with bodies that remain unidentified or unclaimed by relatives.

"We're going to try to treat them with dignity," the spokesman said.

- Dealing with the Jonestown survivors who choose to return to the United States.

The U.S. government will make certain they have transportation back to the United States, but will require each survivor to sign a document promising to repay, if they can, the cost of the transportation and that of their food and housing in Georgetown. Many of the survivors, particularly the elderly, are destitute.

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Trip Home

When the survivors reach the United States, they will be interviewed by representatives of the Immigration and Naturalization Service for reentry, the Internal Revenue Service about what happened to money sent to them in Jonestown, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare for any assistance that can be offered to the destitute and the FBI, which is investigating the murder of Ryan.

An FBI spokesman said the survivors would be asked a list of questions about Ryan's murder, which is a federal crime because he was a congressman, and about "rumors of a hit squad" of Jones' lieutenants who may have survived and pose a danger to Peoples Temple members, defectors or critics in the United States.

Washington Post staff writer Fred Barbash in Georgetown also contributed to this story.

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Pravda: Cultists Sought Justice in Guyana Jungles

MOSCOW, Nov. 28 (UPI)—The Soviets said today that the Peoples Temple cultists who committed mass suicide 10 days ago were seeking justice and equality in the jungles of Guyana but could not escape the "punishing hand of American authorities."

The Communist Party newspaper Pravda also suggested the United States was intent on cutting short its investigation of the Nov. 18 suicide ritual of 909 men, women and children in the Jonestown commune.

"American authorities make every effort to quickly wind up their investigation of the incident and to bury this case which threw a shadow on the prestige of the United States and the American way of life," Pravda said.

"There is information that it was most likely mass murder or compulsory suicide. Noted American lawyer Mark Lane, who was in Guyana during the tragic events, calls in question the version of voluntary suicide."