

BACK WHEN I went to high school there was a kid there named Ray who was what we used to call a Rock. Being a Rock meant you were tough, something of a hood, that you wore your hair greased and in a DA, that you wore a garrison belt with the buckle on the side, sharpened so that it was a weapon, and took no course more difficult than shop, where you made weapons on the sneak. Ray, in short, was a menace. He was also a school monitor.

He was not the only Rock who was a school guard. All the tough kids were school guards. They used to sit in the halls, singing rock and roll songs, ducking into the bathroom for a smoke, dispensing what used to be called frontier justice. When you complained, when you said something to the teacher about how the fox had been hired to guard the chicken coop, you were told that Ray and his buddies were learning responsibility. Besides, they

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Rules Do Not Apply To 'Useful' Persons

kept order. They were, in other words, "useful." It's an important word—useful.

Now from Ray to Jonestown is an enormous leap, but you get there after a while and the link is the word useful. It is, after all, the judgment made by politicians about the Rev. Jim Jones and his cult. They found him useful. He turned out the vote. They came to his church and they spoke from his pulpit and they certified him with their presence, added to his bona fides, and, while it is hard to say how this looked in the eyes of his adherents,

it apparently wowed the officials of Guyana. He was armed to the teeth with letters from American politicians saying what a wonderful man he was.

There is a phenomenon here and Jonesville is just one example of it. The first time I saw it was with Ray in high school, but it became widespread in the social ferment of the 1960s. The last thing you did back then was question the credentials of groups that shared or said they shared your concern for social justice. The rules for some reason were not supposed to apply to certain people and they were almost always black or poor. There was always in all of this something patronizing, as if you could not expect some people to know the difference between right and wrong.

The Black Panthers come to mind as an example. They sort of symbolized what you could call double-think—that you could not, for instance, expect them to be both unarmed and for civil rights.

See COHEN, B11, Col. 1

Link Between Schoolyard, Jonestown Is Word 'Useful'

COHEN, From B1

Once they declared their intention, you had no right to ask them to drop their rifles. Somewhat the same thinking was at work when it came to the 1968 Poor People's Campaign. Then lots of people came to Washington ostensibly for the purpose of putting more food into the mouths of poor people. Some of them, though, robbed and stole and threatened the press, but you were not supposed to say anything because there was a larger goal in mind. They were useful.

In a way, politicians have regarded these groups the way they used to regard money. You ask no question. You take what you are offered and do nothing to look a gift horse in the mouth. Time after time you would come across politicians who would look at you like you were crazy if you asked them about dirty money or corporate contributions. Money—it was not their department.

It's easy, of course, to lay the blame for all this on politicians. But they are not alone. They were only a part of a trend, a general feeling, a fear that the worst thing that could happen was to be

behind the times, to be stuck with the old morality, to hold rigidly to what are sometimes called middle-class values that are, everyone knows, outdated. This was the era of doing your own thing and withholding judgments and in this the newspapers were as guilty as anyone. Groups appeared and disappeared with rapidity and it appeared that their own thing, very often, was disappearing.

There is nothing hard and fast about this. These are all judgment calls and there are times when it pays to overlook a few blemishes and concentrate instead on something bigger. But there are also times when it pays to dig a little deeper, to question, to wonder about the nature of certain groups, to ask, for instance, why it is that it can turn out a certain amount of people at the polls as if they were automatons.

In the end, you have to ask who is using whom. The politicians, of course, thought they were using Jones, getting him to get his people to vote for them. But it was Jones who was using the politicians, having his prestige enhanced, his standing certified. It was the same with Ray in my old school. He knew what the school was attempting to do and he knew further that no one would really look into what he had been doing. He was useful, and as long as he remained useful, he could get away with murder.

Once, that was just an expression.



Associated Press

In Georgetown, members of Peoples Temple bid farewell to those returning to U.S.

7 Jonestown Survivors Arrive in U.S.

By Fred Barbash
and Lee Lescaze
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NEW YORK, Nov. 29—Seven elderly survivors of the Jonestown, Peoples Temple arrived in New York today, the first group of the Rev. Jim Jones' followers to return to the United States.

FBI and Secret Service agents boarded the Pan Am plane immediately after its arrival at Kennedy airport at 6:35 p.m. to interview the seven survivors, who range in age from 61 to 79.

An FBI spokesman said the interviews were the FBI's first opportunity to talk to these survivors as part of their investigation of the murder of Rep. Leo J. Ryan (D-Calif.) by Peoples Temple members in Jonestown, Guyana.

As they prepared to fly back to the United States today, many of the old people seemed dazed and uncertain about what had happened over the past two weeks. Many also seemed to have no idea where they would go or what they would do now. Collectively

they were a far cry from the self-confident elite group of young men and women who ran the temple operation with Jones.

Some of today's group suffer from serious old-age ailments. They walk slowly, and one 76-year-old woman had to be carried from her hotel to face the 11-hour journey.

Only two were actually at Jonestown when the cult's mass suicide took place 11 days ago. One, 74-year-old Hyacinth Thrash, slept unnoticed in her bed through the entire horror and then fled into the forest. Grover Davis, 79, hid in a ditch at the campsite and remained undiscovered long enough to also slip away.

Davis said he simply did not want to die at Jonestown like the others. But, he said, "I didn't hear nobody else say they weren't willing." The other five were taken from the temple headquarters house at Georgetown, where they were staying when everything happened.

About 70 temple members remain in Georgetown waiting word from the Guyanese government that they are

not needed in the investigation. A few of them may be charged with crimes. Others are said to be needed as material witnesses.

Today's operation almost came to a halt when Guyanese troops guarding the headquarters refused for a time to allow the survivors' release.

U.S. officials here said that the Guyanese apparently forgot to tell the troops of what was to happen. So with their rifles poised, soldiers would not allow entry for the party that came to pick up the survivors.

Only the frenzied but successful efforts of the embassy to get word to the local government and the willingness of Pan Am to hold its commercial jet flight for an hour and a half finally allowed the group to leave, amidst a throng of reporters.

The headquarters, about two miles from the center of Georgetown, is said to house many of the most feared Temple leaders, as well as some of the elderly and ill people who were there for treatment when the tragedy occurred.

The 45 inside the house have been

kept incommunicado since then. A few are thought to be witnesses to the murder there of four Temple members—a mother and three children—on the evening 909 of their cohorts committed suicide 120 miles away in Jonestown.

None of those questioned today said they knew how the murders occurred. As they left, they also gave simple reasons why they had originally gone to Jonestown and they seemed representative of many of the elderly people who constituted a large percentage of Jonestown's population.

"He healed my wife," Davis said of Jones. "He told her God would take over and heal her and He did. Her heart used to be hurting her so bad, I had to sit up all night with her. He healed her." Davis' wife died of a stroke in the United States before he went to Jonestown.

"I thought he was a very wonderful person because he provided for senior citizens and children," said Madeline Brooks, 73. "He helped the senior citizens and took people out of the ghetto," said Raymond Godschall, 62.