

Lane Threat Reported by Ryan Aide

From Press Dispatch

WASHINGTON — Attorney Mark Lane wrote Rep. Leo Ryan an unfriendly letter Nov. 6, threatening "dire consequences" if the American government continued to harass the Peoples Temple, Ryan's administrative assistant says.

Joe Holsinger said he would make the text of the letter available today.

He said he and Ryan both thought that Lane — known for his conspiracy theories and defense of James Earl Ray in the Martin Luther King killing — was just using "typical attorney jargon" and they did not take the threat seriously.

Holsinger said he still 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 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 rumors that adherents were being held against their will.

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

"The letter seemed to indicate Lane felt the temple was subject to government harassment," Holsinger said, and the attor-

ney outlined what he saw as religious persecution.

In the final paragraphs of the letter, Holsinger said, Lane "indicated if this harassment did not cease, there would be dire consequences that would be somehow of great distress to the United States."

Holsinger said that Ryan "snorted and laughed" when he read the letter, but he resented Lane's attitude and spent two hours writing a point by point refutation of the allegations.

"He felt his mission in Guyana was being distorted and changed and he was going down there with an open mind to try and find out what was going on," Holsinger said.

He 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.

Garry was "pretty upset" by the letter, 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 to try to straighten things out," according to an aide in Memphis.

Barbara Pickrell, 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.

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. Pickrell said.

She said earlier reports that Lane was wounded were untrue.

"There have been no reports that he has been wounded," Ms. Pickrell, 30, an aide to Lane, said during an afternoon of ringing telephones at Lane's home at 1177 Central. "That was a mistake. We have no reason to believe he's been wounded."

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

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

However, Sue Putnam, 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 Peoples Temple for three months had been summoned by Garry, the longtime 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. Pickrell said.

Jim Jones, a former San Francisco City official, is the head of the Peoples Temple sect.

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. Pickrell said.

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

Apparently, Ryan and his party, including reporters and the news team, left Jonestown before they were scheduled to leave along with five or six people from the Peoples Temple who had apparently decided to come back with him to the United States via Georgetown, Miss Pickrell said.

Miss Pickrell said she believed Jones was "upset with Congressman Ryan for leaving" and Lane stayed behind to "soothe the situation," she said.

Ms. Pickrell said she has not slept since she heard the broadcast Saturday night. "And I won't until it's over," she said.