

Justice Dept. Vows To Probe Causes Of Guyana Deaths

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The Justice Department declared its intention yesterday to find out exactly how and why more than 900 Americans died in the jungle of Guyana and whether any Peoples Temple church survivors there or in the United States pose a danger to other Americans.

"We want to know who led it, who planned it and how did these events come about," said Assistant Attorney General Phillip B. Heymann, referring to the forced mass suicide of 911 American members of the Peoples Temple in Jonestown, the murder of Rep. Leo J. Ryan (D-Calif.) and four others at a nearby airstrip, and the murder of four other temple members in the capital city of Georgetown.

The Justice Department's legal jurisdiction is limited specifically to trying to find and prosecute Ryan's murderers, because of a statute that makes conspiracy to murder a congressman a federal crime. But Heymann told reporters at a briefing yesterday that the investigation also will try to determine whether there is "any future danger for American citizens," from surviving cult members.

The FBI is checking reports that members of the cult once compiled a "hit list" of prominent politicians and journalists to be kidnaped or assassinated if something happened to the cult, Heymann said. But he cautioned that some of the allegations were "dated," and said at one point, "I don't want to suggest we have a valid list."

Justice Department briefings about ongoing investigations are rare, but officials said yesterday's unusual session was held because of the intense

public interest and voluminous press inquiries about the federal investigation of the massacre in Guyana. At one point, Heymann said that Justice wanted to help answer the question of "how 900 people can be made to kill themselves."

Among the other questions that remain unanswered is how many of cult leader Jim Jones' top lieutenants, many of whom were armed security guards in Jonestown, are among the survivors.

Guyanese authorities believe they have under arrest the only survivor among the Jonestown gunmen who ambushed Ryan and his party at the Port Kaituma airstrip. That man, Larry Layton, 32, from San Francisco, has been charged in court in Guyana with the five murders.

If Layton is put on trial there, as expected,
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pected, he could not be extradited later to face more charges in the United States, because of the terms of the extradition treaty between the two countries, Heymann said. "We will do anything in our power," he added, "to assist Guyana in its investigation."

Earlier attempts to send a team of FBI investigators to Guyana were rejected by the Guyanese government. But the State Department now has arranged for four FBI evidence specialists to fly there, sources said. They were expected to arrive in Georgetown last night.

One Justice Department source said the FBI agents will photograph and examine the scene of the murders and suicides but will not interview survivors or suspects in the murders.

Heymann also said yesterday that the U.S. government has decided to perform autopsies on four random victims of the forced mass suicide cause of death. The Guyanese government earlier had asked for an autopsy of Jim Jones, and the Justice Department decided to examine the bodies of Jones' mistress and, after a request from his parents—the doctor, Lawrence Schacht, who mixed the batch of poisoned soft drink.

None of the other five or six gunmen identified by survivors of the airstrip massacre is known to be alive, according to the Guyanese authorities. But Michael Abbell, the Justice Department attorney coordinating the U.S. investigation, said Wednesday that thus far just two of the gunmen have been identified as being among the dead.

Heymann, who said repeatedly yesterday that he did not want to discuss specifics of the U.S. investigation because that might hinder future prosecutions or the parallel probe in Guyana, added "a number of (the airstrip shooting suspects) will probably have turned out not to have survived."

Peoples Temple survivors have said they also fear others among the survivors, especially those still under house arrest by the Guyanese authorities in the cult's Georgetown headquarters house. Jim Jones' 19-year-old son, Steve, and other members of the Jonestown basketball team who are inside the house have been accused by other survivors of being trained, sharpshooting members of the Jonestown security force.

One resident of the Georgetown house, Charles Belkman, 43, from Indianapolis, has been charged with the murder of fellow temple member Sharon Amos Harris and her three children, who were found inside the house with their throats slashed on

the night of the forced mass suicide in Jonestown. Guyanese police are still investigating whether others in the house also were involved in the murders.

The deputy police commissioner in Guyana, Cecil A. Roberts, told reporters there yesterday that most of the survivors in the house and those staying under police guard in a Georgetown hotel have been cleared of involvement in any crimes. He indicated that they may be released to return to the United States as soon as this weekend.

He said all the survivors have been interviewed to determine whether any more should be detained as suspects or witnesses. Those interviewed, Roberts said, described at least three "dry run" mass suicide rehearsals in which Jonestown residents drank liquid they were told was poison.

Roberts said he has been unable to determine from the survivors or other evidence exactly how Jim Jones was

shot to death. The cult leader's body was found on the platform of the commune's assembly hall in front of his green, high-backed wooden throne chair. A handgun, Roberts said, was found "nearby."

An autopsy of Jones' body could help answer the question of whether he or someone else fired the shot that killed him. It also could provide clues about physical illnesses Jones apparently was suffering from and whether he was drugged.

"We had been divided about doing autopsies," Assistant Attorney General Heymann said yesterday. "I myself wanted us to take any step—even those that in another situation might have seemed excessive—to nail down all the available evidence in this case."

In Guyana, Roberts said authorities there consider the deaths of all the children fed poison in Jonestown Nov. 18 to be murder. Adults forced against their will to take the poison also should be considered murder victims, Roberts added. Such distinctions could matter when relatives of the dead make insurance claims or file suit against what remains of the Peoples Temple.

Roberts also said police in Guyana found less than \$1 million in U.S. and Guyanese currency in Jonestown and found no valuables in the heavy suitcase that three of the survivors said they were given by Jim Jones' mistress to take to the Soviet embassy. The three, who have been questioned closely by Guyanese police, said the suitcase contained gold and jewelry besides the cash found on them when

they were given by Jim Jones' mis-
abandoning the suitcase, which they
found too heavy.

Both of the Jonestown boats also
have been accounted for, Roberts said.
The Marcellene, which was believed
to have been missing, was another
name for a fishing boat named the
Cudjoe that the Guyana Defense
Force found upriver from Jonestown,
he said.

Heymann said that the Guyanese
government had supplied U.S. authori-
ties with fingerprint cards for most of
the cult figures who entered the
South American country. The finger-
print cards, plus medical and dental
records will be used by technicians at
Dover Air Force Base in identifying
the victims.

One Justice Department official
said, however, that decomposition of
the bodies might make it impossible
to identify positively as many as 25
percent of the 911 dead cult members
at Dover.

Delaware Gov. Pierre S. DuPont IV
said yesterday that he had been as-
sured there would be no mass burial
of the bodies in his state. Federal offi-
cials hope that relatives will claim the
bodies and arrange for their burial in-
dividually.

Heymann noted at yesterday's brief-
ing that the Justice Department's civil
division is researching whether the
government can recover the cost of
transporting the bodies—an estimated
\$9 million—from the remaining assets
of the Peoples Temple, which had real
estate holdings in California and al-
legedly had large sums of money in
domestic and foreign banks.

In California, meanwhile, seven eld-
erly members of the cult were greeted
by relatives yesterday on their return
from Guyana.

Kay Johnson, a relative of one of
the survivors, 78-year-old Carol
Young, said she had attended a Peo-
ples Temple meeting in Los Angeles
just before the group left for Guyana.

"I thought the whole thing was
phony, but you couldn't talk to her
(Young) against Jim Jones. She had

pictures of him all over the house,"
Johnson said.

Heymann noted at the briefing that
the Justice Department has hesitated
to investigate allegations of kidnaping
and brainwashing of members of reli-
gious cults because of First Amend-
ment protections. There is usually no
sign of physical detention in such
cases, he said, and what is brainwash-
ing to one person may be a true con-
version to another.

*Contributing to this story was Wash-
ington Post staff writer Fred Barbash
from Georgetown, Guyana.*

Aide Denies That Ryan Leaked Data to Schorr

SAN MATEO, Calif., Nov. 30 (AP)—
An aide to slain Rep. Leo Ryan (D-
Calif.) has denied reporter Daniel
Schorr's statement that the congress-
man leaked a story to him on covert
Central Intelligence Agency opera-
tions in Angola in 1975.

Aide Joe Holsinger said on Wednes-
day that Schorr's remarks were
"reprehensible."

Ryan was killed Nov. 18 while on a
fact-finding trip to the Peoples Tem-
ple settlement in Jonestown, Guyana.

Schorr, a former CBS television
newsmen, said Wednesday, Ryan leak-
ed the information after receiving a
top-secret briefing from the staff of
the House International Relations
Committee.

Holsinger said Schorr had contacted
Ryan and asked Ryan to confirm in-
formation Schorr had received from
another source.

"Schorr tried to trap Leo, to use
him," Holsinger said. "Leo refused
and he told me later he was glad he
refused."

"Leo did not have much respect for
Schorr, and I'm sure time will justify
that opinion," Holsinger told report-
ers.

Holsinger said there were other per-
sons who could support the denial,
but he did not identify them.