



# The Strongest Poison - How I Survived the Jonestown Guyana Massacre

*Mark Lane*

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Nearly one thousand members of the Peoples Temple settlement in Jonestown, Guyana, died in a massacre in November 1978. The deaths followed the killing of United States Congressman Leo Ryan and other Temple members as they attempted to leave the compound. Those killings, along with the massacre, were ordered by the cult's charismatic leader Jim Jones. Mark Lane had accompanied Congressman Ryan into Jonestown on a fact-finding mission and was captured and held hostage during the massacre.

"I will tell the world the truth about what happened here." With those words, Mark Lane's guards allowed him to escape from his makeshift prison from what would soon become one of the most tragic events in 20th century America. Lane found himself fleeing for his life through the impenetrable darkness of the Guyanian rainforest as the sounds of the Jonestown massacre echoed behind him. In *The Strongest Poison*, Lane tells why he was there, what happened in the days leading up to the massacre, and relates the stories of the nearly 1,000 men and women who put their faith in Jim Jones and his jungle paradise, and died there.

In this riveting tale of hope and renewal, despair and devastation, Lane explores the reasons behind the Peoples Temple's journey to Guyana, of the joyous celebrations and the hardships of the pioneering community. He also explores the reasons for Congressman Ryan's investigation into the community, exposing the decisions made by representatives of the United States government that pushed the increasingly irrational Jones to his breaking point.

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