

Clifford Gieg, Jonestown Survivor. Interview on 11/14/2008 with Kathleen Kreller of the Idaho Statesman.

Question: How are these people related to you, or are they?

////He's looking over a long list of people who died at Jonestown//// But Jason would have been my Cousin, Rob's, son. Rob and Rene's son. Rob was my cousin. Jason was their son. They were an interracial couple. Rene was black.

Stanley Brian is my brother. Stanley. He was at the airstrip. He was actually the driver of one of the vehicles a tractor in particular that went to the airstrip to gun down Ryan.

Question: Let's go back a little farther. I sort of want to know how you ended up in Jonestown.

We'd have to go way back to when I was about eight years old. My mother had joined the congregation, the church. It was known as the People's Temple Disciple of Christ at that time. My mother joined and my dad was against it. He's deceased now. Um. You gotta realize this church started. They were founded basically in Indianapolis, Indiana and Jones had an interracial family, adopted, Korean, Chinese, black. And then he had one natural son, Stephen Jones. This was back in the early, well, goodness. It would around '67 or '68 they moved to Red Wood Valley, California and built a church with a swimming pool in the church. All these things were attractive to people. So he essentially developed his flock little by little and at that time there were a lot of people doing catharsis, not séances, but they would get together and talk about issues. Group therapy, catharsis. Big on that. My mother joined. My father rarely attended. For myself and my brother it was 'Hey this is wonderful. Swimming pool? I'm in.'

Question: This was in California?

This was in Redwood Valley after they moved to and built the church.

Question: And you were eight years old at the time?

Correct.

Question: I've tried to read as much as I could about the history of the church prior to the Jonestown incident and it seems it was really about a peace movement and acceptance?

Absolutely. Jones was in the Martin Luther King March. It was all about the people. Jones was against the Vietnam war. Draft dodgers in the church, he would welcome anybody. People on drugs, help them get off drugs. Losers all over the place, bring them in and use them, basically. You gotta remember, I was a devout follower until the end. I mean, until it went down. Not so much out of being naive, but just unaware...naive maybe. I believed he could heal the sick and make the blind see. It wasn't until after this, it was just all phony stuff.

Question: Can you talk to me a little bit about growing up in the church? I mean, I know you were very young when you went to Jonestown, but obviously there was a time period in between.

Huge time period, yeah. Growing up in the church there was, of course, there was Wednesday night meeting for members only and a Sunday church and a Sunday night meeting. It was very involving. You had to be really involved in the church to remain a

member. And ...probably one of the biggest things, they always had a band in the church. So about 11 or 12 I would start playing in the church band.

Question: Did you? What did you play?

Drums. In fact, before Leo Ryan was murdered, I actually leaned over my drum set and shook his hand that night because we had been playing and everything was great... on the surface.

Question: Growing up did you think it was an unusual childhood? Or did it just seem like a normal kid heavily involved in their church like any other kid heavily involved in their church?

Well, at the time, not knowing what was going on. Basically, at the age of 11, well my parents had divorced and my mother basically could not take care of us. So the church took my brother and myself in and we were put in a foster home with the Deacon of the church's daughter. I think my mother was forced to give us up because we were living in poor conditions. I mean the whole split-toed sneaker thing. It was true. And not because it was my mother's fault, at all. Just because of conditions. I had a half sister and half brother who were also involved in the church. And financially my mother couldn't handle it, and emotionally, and I guess there were some other issues that, uh, came up. And the church basically took the two youngest ones; myself and my brother Stanley in.

Question: So the church was basically your family at that point? (24 minutes File 02 B)

Exactly. It's all we had. It was everybody I ever knew. Everybody I had ever communicated with suddenly died. I mean, coming back to the states after that happened I knew nobody. Yes, I knew my father. He actually picked me up at the airport in Reno when I flew in finally. But I knew nobody. Everybody I had known for 10 years was gone.

Question: So at some point, the church started getting a lot of ire from the community in the San Francisco area. A lot of attention and controversy. I know the IRS was poking into it's non-profit status and that sort of thing. And so the decision was made to go to Guyana. Do you remember that discussion and the beginnings of Jonestown. Could you just walk us through the process of how you ended up there?

The reason they got a lot of attention was Jones was a very charismatic person. He was very involved in electing officials. We had people coming through and speaking in the church that you wouldn't believe. Angela Davis, Huey Newton, Moscone, the mayor. He helped elect Moscone. Willy Brown. I mean so many influential speakers. There was a very famous Indian. The wounded knee Indian. Gosh what was his name. I can't remember. But very influential speakers came to speak at the Temple. I can't even remember them all. The Lt. Gov. Diamle. Governor Brown spoke in People's Temple. His influence was huge. He was on the board of housing in San Francisco. In San Francisco, the People's Temple had all these rooms where people lived in the church. And that's how he got away with it because he was on the housing board and no one investigated it because they would have said it wasn't safe. Yeah. Crazy.

Question: Do you remember when the talk started turning to going to Guyana?

The whole thing was this is the promised land. We are building our promised land. And I went probably a year, year-and-a-half after the first few people — namely the two Shays — went to start building the community. I went probably a year and a half after that.

Question: And your brother went with you?

My brother was actually there prior to me. He was there before.

Question: what about Guyana seemed so compelling? Did you believe?

I was a kid. I was 16 at the time and it sounded like an adventure. We are going to build a community, a town in the middle of the jungle. And it's a promised land. There will be no monetary system. Everything will be, it will be heaven on earth. That was the big promotion. It was like heaven on earth.

Question: Talk about getting there. What was it like when you first saw it and your experiences living there?

Getting there, there were several of us who drove all the way across country dragging a U-haul trailer. We got to Florida and we flew from Florida I think to Spain and then into Guyana and into Georgetown. Georgetown is the capital of Guyana. Jones had a house, a huge building there, a compound you could call it, for receiving people, processing, getting the government papers together and everything. From there, we'd take our boat, the Cudjo into the jungle. Which was a 24-hour trip. 24 hours on an 80-foot trawler for some of the people. A lot of the people would go to Georgetown and then take the ferry to just in out of the ocean into a stelling called Morowana. The Cudjo would come up 50 miles from the interior of the jungle, pick those people up and take them back, as well as ferry natives up and down and charge them for cargo or whatever. That's what I ended up doing after about a year. I was the pilot of the boat and it was awesome, awesome fun. Going 50 miles up the river, pick them up, stay for the night. I mean, eating curried venison and having a great time while people in Jonestown were eating rice and gravy three meals a day. It was great. But as soon as I got back to Jonestown, it was rice and gravy. So I liked to spend a lot of time on the boat.

Question: Did you find life satisfying when you were in Jonestown?

At first. At first there was plenty of food, chicken and regular meals. But as soon as more and more people started showing up, it was like things were getting rationed. There were no more pops. No more Pepsi. No more goodies. One of the things I did, I constructed a template or a jig to build the houses, 52 houses that were built there to house this thousand people. That was fulfilling. Of course, it was a lot of work. We were working 12-hour days, six days a week when I first got there. And that didn't stop until probably six months, maybe a year before that whole thing went down.

Question: One of the things that I've read and some of the survivor accounts and some of the letters left behind is that it was an idyllic life, and people got along and there was a lot of love there and a sense of community. Did you experience that?

At first. I mean, there is such a fine line between socialism and fascism. It can go either way at any time. Yes it was ideal. We have no worries, no responsibilities. We don't have to worry about paying bills. We can look at the monkeys in the jungle. But as more and more people got there and more and more pressure got on Jones it became he was on the loud speaker all the time, telling people, reading stories about all this terrible stuff that's going on in the world. As bad as it is here, we have it better than everybody else. It was a total brainwashing operation, and he was an expert at it. And it worked.

Question: And so could you see sort of things starting to spiral out of control? Or did you think it would all just work out at that time?

Well, when he first starting having the "White Nights," which was practice drills for taking the poison, um, it started to hit me, like 'what's going on here? Like, this is falling apart here.' And then you never seen him, either. All you did is hear him. You'd never see him walking around on the grounds, greeting people or communicating, it was all by loudspeaker. And he was out of sight out of mind, except for that loudspeaker, And it's

just like pounding loud music like the Koresh thing, the Jim Jones wanna be thing, they just play that loud music to drive them crazy.

Question: Did your brother feel the same way? Did he start to question?

To be honest with you, my brother and I didn't see really eye to eye on much. We were kind of discommunicated. In fact we were put in separate foster homes. And that's probably where it started the most. Pretty much separated.

Question: So he was more devout at that point, do you think? Is that a better word for it?

No. Stanley was always rebellious. He was always in trouble. He was always getting in trouble for something.

Question: What was his job at Jonestown?

He was a mechanic.

Question: So he worked on the vehicles?

He worked on the vehicles right.

Question: I have seen some documents on this website, again, that said you worked in the woodshop.

Right. We built all the houses. I kind of oversaw that whole process. Kind of like they make tuff sheds now. They have this huge jig thing and they just pop the stuff in place, nail it together. Pop a wall up, pop a rafter up. But I had designed all of that for 52 houses we built. Uh, Houses. These are 12 by 24...houses.

Question: so back to daily life. This loudspeaker was always going, Jones was playing music. You were eating rice and gravy if you were in Jonestown.

If you were in Jonestown you were basically eating rice and gravy three meals a day.

Question: And were people basically happy, or? (02, 12:50 B)

No. Miserable. And especially because we had a lot of meetings in the pavilion where, uh hell, everything was going on. Beatings. Beat. Fisticuffs. Someone would come up and just beat them as a discipline for disrespecting. One guy come up, a guy named Tom Grubbs. He was a teacher. And he complained to Jones that there was not enough nourishment in rice and gravy to educate — he was a teacher — to educate children. And he got beat for that complaining. There was dunkings, where they had this huge well, an open pit well, where they had like the old witch days. They would take someone and just dunk them in, whoosh, and pull them up. And dunk them in, whoosh, and pull them up. And you never hear about that on TV, but it's true. And they would also take the huge crates of stuff that would come over, shipping crates, that would come over. And they would actually nail people in those crates.

Question: For long periods of time?

A couple days at a time.

Question: And you saw all this?

Mhmm.

Question: What were you thinking when this was going on? Were you looking for a way to get out?

Well, the whole thing was these were bad people. They did bad things. They were against the cause. It's part of the brainwashing thing. They were against the cause. They were doing something to bring down this our promised land.

Question: Could people leave if they wanted to?

No. No.

Question: How did he keep them there? Through physical force or through threats?

Yeah, physical force. A few people tried to escape through the jungle and they were brought back and beat. I can't remember one person ... leaving and getting totally out.

Question: OK, so things were deteriorating. There was less food, Jones had turned the corner from a benevolent leader to more of a dictator.

The morale was lowest as you could get. Suicide. That's an easy way out. I think that was the main ingredient that the morale was so low that we are all going to heaven together.

Question: So let's talk about when Ryan started getting interested in Jonestown and pressures from the outside world started increasing on Jones at that time. Can you talk about when things started snowballing and Ryan showed up?

Well it was first talk about mercenaries. Mercenaries are coming to get us.

Question: Basically where'd they'd hire guns to come get you?

Excommunicated members had hired people to come in to get their loved ones out of Jonestown. It all started with that. I don't know the ins and outs of that. He always had his little private shack with two-way radio communication, whatever it's called, course it wasn't the internet then, he could contact the states from Guyana. Shortwave radio. That's where it really started, I think cause people were threatening to bring mercenaries in. That's when the White Nights started. I remember one time he had everybody walking down the road to go get on this Cudjo, which is an 80 foot boat and at that time there was probably 500 or maybe 600 people there to get on one boat that's 80 feet long. Yeah. And marched all the way down to the gate where Jonestown started. It's been, probably three miles.

\\\\\\HE'S LOOKING AT A MAP OF JONESTOWN.

That's the pavilion. Yes, all the houses. 52.

Question: and you designed the template and built all of those?

That's what I told you, right? 52? Laughs. That's correct. I built them all. These were the dorms. Here are the showers – no hot water. Uh, these were two tents.

Question: Does this bring back memories?

Oh yeah. It's pretty accurate, actually. This was Jones's here. This is Jones's first house. A couple of the guys who went in first as part of the first pioneering team, a guy named Tom Kice and Walter, I can't remember his last name. They built this house for themselves. And when Jones came a year later, finally, he took over their house and kicked them out and then they moved and lived in one of these and built these.

Question: Where did you live?

I lived, let's see, this would be the walking path. I was on an angle. Probably that one right there. Mugs, the monkey. Huh.

Question: So he walks you down the path to the gate in Jonestown and what happens?

I mean here, is Jonestown, here the whole thing. The road goes all the way like this. And the gate, and the main road that goes all the way to Port Kaituma goes this way. So all these people are walking down, we may not have even gotten to here before he turns around and declares the “White Night” over and says everything is OK, it’s great, no mercenaries are coming tonight. His deal was we are going to get on this boat and go to Grenada, because they will accept us. He even had people, a couple guys from the Russian consulate that we picked up in Georgetown, on the boat, and drove them back to Jonestown on the boat. And they were smoking and drinking. And we never smoked and we never drank the whole time I was in the church. I never even had a cigarette until after this whole thing went down. It was very clean living. I mean, that was one of the good things. It’s crazy.

This is the main road to Port Kaituma. This is the airstrip over here. And this is the stelling in Port Kaituma. Guyana. This area of Guyana was an old mining area that the British mined for boxite, which makes aluminum and manganese, which makes aluminum. So there is a lot of old, in fact it’s called Matthew’s Ridge in Guyana. If you went this way to Matthew’s Ridge, they had a decent airport and that was the main mining area for the British until they kicked them out. There is actually a train that goes from Port Kaituma to Matthew’s Ridge. I rode on that a couple times.

Question: So you are in the process of these White Nights because the mercenaries are coming to get you?

Right. Get everybody scared all of the time. You know, the world is falling down around us. We are doing better than anybody else. But we are still living in hell.

Question: And since you had no contact with the outside world you didn’t know what was really going on?

None. None whatsoever. The only time I had one — ////POINTS TO PICTURE OF HIMSELF AND HIS BROTHER///// this is just a propaganda photograph. This was sent to my parents, particularly my dad because he wanted us out of there and come home. And this was sent to show how happy we were. We even went on short wave radio and talked to him. He was on the short wave radio at People’s Temple in San Francisco on that end and we talked to him. Said ‘yeah, everything is great. We fish, we’re great.’ (laughs). Yeah.

Question: What do you think when you look back now, and you see that picture?

Oh, I miss my brother, of course. He drove one of the big six by six old Army trucks from World War II.

Question: Did he like it there?

No. No.

Question: So Leo Ryan shows up with his entourage and family members?

And defectors and family members

Question: And there was some question that he would get in. But he got in to Jonestown.

Mhmm. They would put logs in the roads. They’d done that several times to block anybody from getting in, even Guyanese government officials. They threw logs in the roads and whatever else to make sure they couldn’t get in. They just wanted to inspect because they have had warnings or had heard things going on. What’s all the gun shots,

cause he had a huge weapons cache. Huge. When I finally made it back to Georgetown after finally being arrested in Kamaka off the boat. I saw a helicopter coming in with a net full of guns that would have filled this whole room from Jonestown. Excuse me for a minute.

////CLIFFORD LEAVES THE ROOM. HE'S UPSET.////

Question: Would you spell your name for me while I'm here.

Sure. It's N-O-R-M-A.

Question; How long have you guys been married?

Four years.

Question: Have you heard about all of this before or does he not talk about it very much?

It's a sore subject with him. He doesn't like to talk about it. He has nightmares every night. He hasn't had a good night's sleep in 30 years.

Question: So it's still going on for him?

Oh yeah, it's awful.

Question: What does he say? Does he say anything about it.

He doesn't bring it up to me. I try not to mention it. He doesn't like to talk about it.

Question: So are you hearing a lot of this for the first time, then?

All this, in depth, yes. He's getting choked up, that's why he left.

////CLIFFORD COMES BACK WITH A FRAYED CAMOFLAGE HAT HE WORE IN JONESTOWN. HE SITS DOWN AT THE TABLE AND STARTS LOOKING THROUGH THE LIST OF SURVIVORS////

There was only a handful of people in Jonestown that morning who actually made it out. Me and Herbert Newell, my mate on the boat.

Question: So you were on the boat that day?

Yeah. Jones had his security guards come and woke us up about 5:30 in the morning. And all they said was Jones wants the boat downriver. Go to Kamaka, which is 50 miles away, five hours.

Question: Was this on the 18th?

This was on the day that he died. I mean, OK. And my brother Stanley drove us to the boat in Kamaka and there were some senior citizens on there, sleeping on the boat, watching the boat. There's pirates. Guyana is definitely a third-world country, I mean these people are making \$8 a month to live on. You, fortnight came around. It was \$8 a week or \$8 a month or something, some ridiculous amount. So he dropped us off at the boat, myself and Herbert Newell who is on the list. Oh, and then one of Jones's security guards gave us a case of spent ammunition shells and told us to dump them on the river. So we are going down the river and we dump the shells.

///NORMA INTERRUPTS BUT SHE SPEAKS SO QUIETLY NO ONE CAN HEAR HER.///

Question: So you are on the river and you dump these ammo shells. And then what happens?

We go to Kamaka. Here

////HE GRABS PEN AND STARTS DRAWING A MAP OF THAT AREA OF GUYANA.////

Say this is Port Kaituma, let's call it PK. Then you go out here and go down river, blah blah blah, the Kaituma River and then it breaks down to the Burima River and this breaks off into Kamaka, where Jones had his store where he sold everything. When people would come in he would confiscate all their goods and he would black market sell as his stuff here. Before I left the states we made almost I think it was like 500 crates. They were three feet long, two feet by two feet. Every person who went over was allowed the fill up one crate. That's how he was able to smuggle in a lot of the guns and also a lot of the large six feet high, eight feet wide crates and smuggle in the parts and pieces and ammo. Basically the size of the footlocker people would put in all their worldly possessions. I mean photographs of family, maybe a radio, maybe a calculator, maybe personal belongings, jewelry. Those would come into Jonestown off the boat and they'd go into a receiving area and they'd be pilfered through. That merchandise would be sent over here to Kamaka to be sold on the black market. You gotta remember, Venezuela is only 10 miles away, over here. I mean, I've taken from Kamaka a speedboat over to Venezuela and bought Vienna Sausage and Irish Potatoes. I was on the boat. I was out kind of free. That was kind of fun.

And anyway, this is the Burima River. It comes out right here. There is a stelling right here at Morowana. This is Kamaka. That's Port Kaituma. This is the main stelling from right here out to the ocean. This is another like 10 miles. From Port Kaituma to either one of these stellings was about 50 miles. And this right here, where this river comes in and it's flowed by the tides, so there's huge turbulence in this corner right here. I've actually come around this corner and had the boat go around in circles because of the turbulence. This is wide open, probably half a mile wide, the Burima, and this is probably 100 feet wide in the narrowest places or 250 feet, it's like going up the Amazon. The water is brown like root beer because of all the vegetation rotting and so on.

Question: Can't see through it? It's brackish? (03 B 51:51)

Very. Root beer. Because I've swam in it. It's like swimming in root beer it's so brown. There was manatees and pirhanna. Oh yeah, I've caught pirhanna before. Cause I took a trip up. Of course, we needed to get lumber and Kamaka was one of our lumber supplies to build these houses. But also it went out here to the ocean. There was another inlet to another river that you'd have to go out in a huge circle and come around way into the jungle where these little aboriginies, I mean bare footed carrying logs to a steam saw mill cutting mahogany and all these different tropical forest woods. At that time, I had twenty-thousand Guyanese cash to go up here and pick up this lumber. But my brother was here in Jonestown. Because I was going to make a run for it, but I couldn't because my brother was there. I couldn't leave him.

Question: So the day of Jonestown the security guards said they want you here? (pointing to Kamaka on map) (50:37)

Right. And there is how wide the river is, the Burima, and this is land. In Kamaka there are some guest houses, or whatever and in here. But about 1:30 in the morning we are sleeping that night and we hear all these jeeps pulling up, screech, screech. And then we hear all these breaches pulling, cha-cheech, cha-cheech. It was like 30 Guyanese defense force, you know had the boat surrounded with machine guns. And I was like what was going on. We were sleeping in the boat in bunks, That's when it all went down. They

took us into custody and put us into a tiny, about and eight by eight, jungle jail, Herbert and I. And by going back and forth, this was where the steamboat or ferry would come and we would ferry all these natives up carrying all their goods, belongings, cases of beer, we would charge them a quarter a case for beer, pigs feet, whatever it was and fill this hold for cargo and a dollar or whatever a person. It was a money-making deal and it was fun. I mean I had the natives come and they'd cook curried crab, or whatever. I'd throw it on the stove in the boat going up the river. It was fun, that part. But back to what I was saying, went down here, this is where we ended up getting arrested. There was little tiny jail up here. We'd have some of the natives who knew us for a year or so, cause they'd ridden on the boat, they'd cooked on our boat and to know us. There was little like bean slots in the bottom of the jail and they'd come up pushing food in and talking to us. The Guyanese natives. They knew we didn't have anything to do with it. We were good people, just kids, actually. Just 18. Grew up fast.

Question: So you had to work it out with the Guyanese authorities that you were not there? Or you didn't know what happened? How did you get back to the states?

Oh, that's a long story there. I mean, we're skipping through so much stuff. What happened here, this jail, after two days. Well that morning, probably 5 or 6 in the morning because we got arrested at 1:30, about five we got interrogated by the Constable of Police, put back in the jail. Next day, it was like two days later, they knew we didn't have anything to do with it. They thought Jones was on the boat, had escaped by getting on the boat. And on the boat there was plenty of food; chickens, frozen food and fresh water. The GDF just ransacked the boat. We had like 2,000 condoms, yeah, and those are contraband down there. So they ransacked the boat, took everything. And finally the Constable let us out of jail and let us sleep up in the constable's quarters with the other police. It was we are not a threat to anybody. So two days later, the next day, they had us go down to the boat because it was sinking. It had what is called a bilge pump to drain out the water. It was a wooden hulled boat so you have to drain the bilge because it leaks, and it was sinking. It was this deep in water to where we could barely get the bilge pump working and yet the ferry needed to come around and moor over here. With the GDF along, we got the bilge pump going and moved our boat in here in the river, the ferry came in, docked and we re-docked. And then about three days later, um, the GDF drove our boat out here, out and then to Georgetown with us on it. Just like this with guns drawn on us. I told them, why don't you just shoot me dude? Do you think I'm going to jump over? Put your gun down, relax. These were big black dudes. They were primarily black down there, and big. And very...I'm not a racist, but they are huge and scary and with guns on top of it. And I'm like I'm coming out dude and having a cigarette and you can just shoot me. What are you going to shoot me and I'll jump over. They finally chilled out and relaxed. And, of course, the GDF gunboat was escorting the Cudjo all the way to Georgetown. Herbert lost like 11 relatives down there.

Question: If this is too difficult, tell me. But I want to talk a little bit about what happened? Was it at 1:30 when they showed up? How did you hear?

When we first got interrogated by the Constable. They said there has been a mass suicide at Jonestown. We were just crying and carrying on.

Question: Did you believe it, because of the White Nights?(44:57)

Yeah. And like the next day they wanted to know if we would fly into Jonestown and help identify bodies. And that never happened. But they asked if we would and we said sure. It never happened. After he told us, everybody is dead in Jonestown, he put us back in the cell and we were like bawling kids, you know. There were probably 10 people consoling us on the outside of this jail. It was just a little looks like an outhouse next to

the police station, you know, on stilts. WE were just sitting there, me and him, and people were coming up and consoling us and that's what happened.

Question: And at that point you knew your brother was part of that group?

Oh yeah. They said everybody was dead in Jonestown. (Long pause)

Question: Have you maintained contact with any of the other survivors?

No.

Question How come?

Because so many of them knew that he was phony. They knew he was phony. I was a believer. He had me duped to the end.

Question: So do you feel guilty about that then?(43:48)

No. I was naive and taken advantage of. No. I feel guilty that so many people and innocent children who had their whole life to lead died. A lot of good people died. You gotta remember that probably 75 to 80 percent of the people down there were of color, black. Good people. Good, down-to-earth people. They didn't make it. I did. I do have some guilty feelings about that. They didn't make it, I did. Why did I survive? My nephew, Jason, he was only three years old. He died. He had his whole life ahead of him.

Question: Has it stayed with you all of this time? Have you been able to put the past behind you?

I still have dreams. Nightmares. (Long pause)

Question: This is sort of an amorphous question. Maybe we can zero in on it a little more. To you, what is the legacy of Jonestown? What is that people don't know or that they're missing that they should know? What is the legacy of all of this? Or is there one?

Well, the problem is that people who are susceptible to charismatic leaders, people who are down and out, or have no life, who have lost everything their family or whatever and are looking for something to grab on to and the first fancy pants comes along and promises them something, um, they grab on to. False hope. I think that's the biggest thing. Like I said, he took in draft dodgers and drug addicts, senior citizens who'd been homeless, homeless people. A lot of people, desperate for anything. And here was Jim Jones, a strong tree, something to grab on to, who'd give them a meal. You know? They are susceptible to that. As far as your question, to avoid it in the future, I don't think you can. There are going to be more charismatic leaders who will do this. I don't think on the scale of Jim Jones, maybe. You, about Jones, I don't look at it like 'Oh, I was such a victim.' There are so many people who are victimized everyday and so many thousands of people who are murdered and persecuted every day. I feel like I'm nothing. And you know, just because I didn't lose my life makes me feel like I'm so much of a victim, I'm lucky that I'm alive. I'm lucky that I'm alive. I could have been one of those people. I probably would have been one of those people who were shot, because I would have ran or done something. Even though, I'm telling you, up to now I was a follower and devoted. But, I mean, when people started dying in front of me, I'd be out of there. And that's what happened to a lot of people. They started running and they were shot.

Question: You wanted to talk to me about your brother. When I called you, you wanted to tell me about what happened to him. Do you want to do that now.

I think I basically already have. About what?

Question: About his fate. I mean, we know he was at the airstrip.

He was at the airstrip. (Long pause)

Question: And then he went back to Jonestown, apparently, with the group.

Mhmm. (Long pause)

Question: And do you know what happened to him after that?

I don't know the scenario. But I know he was shot. So he must have tried to defect or leave or run or something. He did not drink the kool-aid. And so much of that was a downer there, I can imagine dying of suicide knowing Jim Jones is telling you you're going to heaven. 'Flock, let's go to heaven.' You know, they were just drinking it and dying left and right. The brainwashing was so intense, that dying would have been better than living another day with Jim Jones.

Question: So, you got back to the states, however you managed to get back, and you found your dad. He picked you up at the airport.

That's a long story. Once I got out of, once they took me back to Georgetown. We were in the police station there. Interrogated again. And then some of the people who had been at the airstrip and survived come through. There was several of them who survived the airstrip.

///HE'S AGAIN LOOKING THROUGH THE LIST OF SURVIVORS///

Cordell, cordell. Yeah Harold Cordell. He came through and several others kind of identifying us as enemies. Like we were part of ...would have killed them if we had the chance.

Question: And so you had to cool your heels there a little bit longer it sounds like?

Another day. And it was false and we went to the compound in Georgetown and were under house arrest. There were maybe 30 or 35 survivors. Most of these people had already been in Jonestown. The ones that had been at the airstrip were not at the house in Georgetown. They were allowed to go back to the States, cause they were victims. Along with the people who came in with Ryan. But the people who had been in Jonestown, Stephen Jones, Jimmy Jones, Tim Tupper, a whole bunch of them (which was Jones's adopted son.) They were in Jonestown playing basketball. The basketball team. Plus the people who had been in Georgetown. Like I said, Herbert and I were really the only newcomers who came out of the jungle into that house arrest situation where they had GDF surrounding the whole house, guns and everything. This is where you're at. They would bring us food and everything. We were in jail, house arrest. We could not leave. So it was like a week, two weeks later. They let us go to a hotel in Georgetown where my dad had actually sent some money for my airfare back. And we stayed in this nice hotel, swank hotel in Georgetown. A bunch of us, probably like 20. And then we were scheduled to fly back to New York from Spain on one day. And then one of the knuckleheads had a knife on them. Somebody in the group had a knife on them. It was ... one of them had a knife. I can't remember who it was. I can see his face right now. Stroud, Bobby Stroud. He had a knife on him. So they said, you ain't flying with our airlines. So we went back to the hotel and a week later, they sent another jet and would only let 20 of us board. And each one of us had sky marshals on either side of us. There were like 40 federal agents and 20 Jonestown survivors on one jet. They kind of felt sorry for us. They were cool. At that time we could smoke on the plane. When we landed in Spain, I guess Madrid, they went out and bought us a pack of cigarettes and were chilling out. And we fly into JFK and all you can see at the terminal were all these photographer lights, the cameras. It was weird. WE are off boarding onto the tarmac. They had

Greyhound buses lined up. Eight or nine Greyhound buses. Two or three of us would get on one bus with all these marshals. They would drive the bus over to a huge air hangar. They had all these Winnebago homes set up for interrogation in this huge air hangar. These buses would pull in and all these CIA and FBI, the (indecipherable) here. This probably got in there at midnight and we were interrogated until probably five in the morning. Fingerprinted and given what they said was a vaccination shot, and I think it was sodium pentothal, myself. I mean we were searched, fully searched, everything. Body cavity searched, strip searched. There was one person per Winnebago home. So there had to be 20, 25 of these Winnebago homes. Several four or five agents, one or two outside three inside interrogating. It was a big deal.

Question: What were they asking you? Do you remember now? (31:30)

Oh, about the guns. About Jones, just the whole involvement. Everything. I was just an innocent kid. A victim. I was duped. I believed Jones could raise the dead, heal the sick, you know make the blind see. Yeah, that he could see the future. He would say "I am the I am." You know, he was God. He declared himself God, and all by trickery. He would make people believe this. And he did.

Question: And it was all you had known?

It was all I had known from 8-years-old. I grew up into it. I seen all these things come about. He would fake have people throwing up cancer right in the service. WE are going to heal you. Throw this cancer up right now, and they would throw up a pile of chicken guts or whatever he did, and this would heal them of cancer. All in the name of getting money and duping these old black senior citizens out of their retirements and social security. There is probably money floating all over this world that still hasn't been claimed. (LONG PAUSE)

Question: So you get back to the states, I presume, after the FBI is done with you.

I'm in New York and I flew to Denver and then into Reno. And all I have on me is a shirt jack. It's a little thing with a straight cut and little pockets. It's a South American shirt because it's warm climate there. And in the middle of December, and freezing, well not on the plane. But it's all I had was a little shirt jack. And this lady on the plane felt sorry for me and said 'You're going to freeze when you get out there.' She lent me her coat to get off the plane, and I gave it back to her when I met my dad in the terminal.

Question: So how did you sort of step back into life, then?

Well, my Dad was pretty much a crutch. He gave me a job at his landscaping yard, retail, selling rock and delivering. Cause I had nothing.

Question: And you were only 18-years-old. Just a kid?

Yep. So my dad took care of me, took me in.

Question: How'd you end up here in Boise? Long story?

Long story. Not much to do with Jonestown. But 19-years-ago it was very attractive economic wise, housing.

Question: So you just decided to come down here and make a life?

Pretty much. (Long pause)

Question: So do you want to tell me a little more about your brother? You said he was a rebel, always breaking the rules?

He was always in trouble. They had people in trouble. He was in the hard hat brigade. Which were these yellow hard hats, when they did something wrong. Say they took food,

stole some food, things as small as that. They'd have to wear these hard hats and run around the compound. Yeah everywhere they'd go, they'd have to running. Something as little as cussing at someone, or stealing food, or any violation of Jones's law. The dunkings and the boxes and the beatings was for more severe things like direct insubordination or trying to leave.

Question: So has this stayed with you then? Do you think about this everyday or can you go long periods of time where you forget? (27:15)

There's probably not been one day that I haven't thought about Jonestown in 30 years. Not one day.

Question: So the legacy for you is that it's still here?

Well, yeah. I hope it never happens again. It's still rememberable. (sic) I lost nearly 950-something family friends. Those were everybody I knew in my life in that period. That last two and half last years.

Question: Did you have a girlfriend there?

(Pause) Yeah. She died. She died and it is what it is.

Question: You talked to me about some of the good memories. Let's go down that path. You said you enjoyed getting to interact with the locals.

Building Jonestown was phenomenal. It was a challenge. I mean, we worked like slaves. When the torrential rains coming, we were walking in two feet of mud carrying rafters and walls out to the building site, because the (points to the map I brought) right here approximately was where we constructed the sides, ends, rafters, everything for the houses. So these had to be walked out here to the...yeah. And it would be literally, I had boots two feet tall that would get sucked into the mud and I'd be barefoot. The horrible rashes, the boils, the ringworm, the horrible funguses that you'd get were terrible, horrible. In fact, Jim Jones's mother died there for an ulcer on her leg. She's probably still buried there. I don't know if they ever dug her up?

Question: Were you aware that he was ill, very sick towards the end?

No.

Question: Because you never saw him?

You never seen him and all you would hear is his ranting and raving over the loudspeaker. I mean he sounded ...there was some slurring in his voice. I did notice that towards the very end. Probably the last couple three weeks. I think he was taking some heavy drugs or something.

Question: That's what the FBI file said, that he was dying and heavily drugged.

So let's take everybody with me. He's a chicken-shit bastard. To have all these good people who really believed in him, followed him and then he promised them you're all going to heaven if you die right now. It's nonsense I don't believe it.

///LONG DISCUSSION ABOUT THE RECORDINGS AND SOME OF WHAT IS AVAILABLE OVER THE INTERNET AND IN MEDIA REPORTS. CLIFFORD SAID HE DOESN'T LOOK AT IT OR LISTEN TO IT///

It' must have been horrific. I mean seeing people screaming and dying and negotiating and arguing. That must have been something else.

Question: Obviously the anniversary is Tuesday. All the news outlets are gearing up. I'm here.

It's not that I've been hiding. I just haven't exposed it. At one time, I thought about writing a book. I was like a little church mouse. I was always hiding in the corner watching everything that's going on. But my mother was against that totally. Because of the whole having to give us up, and having us go into the church.

Question: Have you reconciled with her?

Somewhat. It's not something we talk about. I think she has extremely guilty feelings. I don't have any animosity towards her. I don't think my life would have been any better with her than it was without. Maybe if there was a third party something totally different, without Jonestown. But...

Question: talk a little bit about your foster family. Because you were raised by a family in the church from eight-years-old and on?

Eleven on. Not quite up to 18, because I was with them until I was sixteen. (Five years). I had brand new shoes, brand new Levis. I was living high.

Question: Did they go to Jonestown?

Both. I'm not going to tell you who it was. He survived and so did she. She was a nurse. She was actually in Barbados and Caracas tending to someone terminally ill from Jonestown accompanying that patient. So she wasn't there.

Question: Do you stay in touch with your foster family?

They're separated now, but yeah. I spoke to her a couple weeks ago. It's a positive connection. She's a great woman and wonderful person. But she knew what was going on.

Question: Is that why she got out when she did?

No. I think that was just luck. But I think she knew that Jones was phony. And that's a really kind of hard, like a lot of these people who survived, knew it was phony. Just a façade.

Question: But how do you get out of it? (17:40)

You couldn't. They were connected too, whether it was money, were they getting paid. But a lot of these people who survived had to get paid off or something, even though they knew it was phony, the healings were phony, you see what I'm saying. I think they knew it was phony and they were just as guilty as Jones. I was duped. I mean until the very end I thought he was the 'I am.' The promised land, a heaven on earth. But I was young, I was a kid. Especially when I got the pilot job, we're doing good. I was having a blast.

Question: How did you get that job?

Well because on one of the trips back from Georgetown bringing new residents to Jonestown, the skipper got us stuck in the mud in Venezuela. He was off course by about 60 miles, He got us stuck on a sand bar, and so we were almost 24 hours delayed coming to Jonestown. And he got beat, and he didn't get to pilot anymore. I just piloted from Port Kaituma to Kamaka and Morawana. I didn't go out in the ocean. You had to have a pilot's license for that. But I had piloted Georgetown all the time with the skipper named Tim Sweeney. He used to kick my butt. I was just a kid, He was a gorilla. A big dude.

(he goes off track for a while, randomly looking up names on the survivor's and dead lists)

Question: So Jonestown wasn't the Nirvana that the outside world was told.

No the last year was hell. The first year was rough, we were working 12 hours a day six days a week. The first year we were eating pretty good for the first six months. I remember one of the disciplines he would have early on, there was only like 50 of us there for a while. One of us would do something, steal something, something small. He'd make them eat a cayenne pepper. 'Here, chew on this,' Until they'd, they'd throw up their guts.

Question: Were you ever subjected to punishments? You said you sort of hid in the background.

I, well, I never got caught. Cunning. Yeah. I didn't do anything harmful to anybody. I remember one time I found a calculator, I was in Georgetown, I found a calculator in one of the boxes. I sold it to a store around the corner for some cookies. Here, give me some cookies. And I got caught. I got talked to. 'Well, you know you can't be doing this. I didn't' get no severe punishment because they relied on me to piloting that boat. And I've always done good. I got a slap on the wrist. But I wasn't a trouble maker. Stayed out trouble and kept my nose clean.

Question: And you were a hard worker?

Very hard. I worked like a slave down there. That's why my body is the way it is now. You are looking at a 65-year-old man in a 48-year-old body. We worked like slaves. A bunch of us. This hand here got chopped up like this, whoosh, working for Jones in Los Angeles.

Question: Did you have no interaction with Jones beyond that he was your minister?

First time I was eight years old we would call him 'Uncle Jim.' I remember sitting on his lap at Easter and getting a chocolate Waster egg from him.

Question: How do you reconcile those two people?

That's a true story. Clifford Gieg come up and see what I have for you. He called me up and sit on his lap on the big podium and he gives me a big box with a chocolate Easter egg in it. (he laughs) (long pause).

Question: So again, how do you reconcile those early memories of somebody that you clearly had some feeling for? (11:00)

He was definitely a father figure to me. He became a monster. But early on he was father pretty much a figure to me. I would stay over at their house with the Jones kids. Slumber party, or whatever, a sleepover. He had a thing where one of his sons would come and stay at my house and I would come and stay at their house. Several times, but very early on. And the bus trips that we took all across the nation, up through Canada, through Niagara Falls. Several times I've been crisscrossed across this United States on the People's Temple buses. The rallies we would go to. The services throughout all these cities, Philadelphia Indiana, all over. It was exciting, I mean seeing all these things that kids nowadays would never see. And you know, after I was moved into the foster home, my grades were excellent. I graduated with an A-minus average, a year and a half early. I've always had a job ever since about 11. I always worked after school. That's how I got extra credits to graduate, the work. My first job I was making 85 cents an hour cabinet making. That's basically been my trade, mill and cabinetry for 38 years. I do it. I don't have to do the physical so much anymore. I work for a major store. I don't' do the physical work anymore. I can't. I have had too many surgeries.

Question: what else would you like to talk about.

We've touched on all of the major things. I shook hands with Leo Ryan the night before he died.

Question: What was your impression of the man.

Very friendly. Himself very charismatic. What a great speaker. He had a speech and then, actually, I visited his memorial in Foster City California. Several times. I used to live in Foster City. He was the Congressman for San Mateo County. I felt sorry for the guy. He got himself into something that was crazy, He was just another innocent victim. He was trying to do right and help these people concerned about their relatives and he paid the ultimate price. He was the first Congressman to die in the line of duty. And he didn't deserve it. He was a good man. He was trying to help the people. And I knew it in his tone when he talked to the congregation that evening. It was funny. All of the sudden we were eating chicken and having great meals the day before Leo Ryan shows up. Were eating high on the hog. Two days before we were eating rice and gravy. It's just part of Jones's his M.O. OK, we've got this event coming up. Let's eat good and make everybody happy, full bellies and everybody is in a good mood. The guy shows up and people pretty much stay that way. But there were a few people who said 'This is bullshit. I'm outta here.' Tucked him letters and whatever later. And that's what happened. (5:15) Jones seen it all unraveling and sent us out, get the boat out of here, there's no transportation out of this jungle. There was no leaving. There was no other way out of there. That's the only thing I can think of, there is no way out, no way to go. That's the only thing I can think of. Yeah, I'm grateful he did because I was on it. But I'll tell you for 30 years of whatever, I would have rather had one of those little kids survive but myself. It's been rough. Mentally, physically. I would have much rather seen one of those senior citizens, black senior citizens, die a peaceful death. Because they worked their asses off all their life and then get to Jonestown and have everything taken away from them and eating rice and gravy. Worse than if they were slaves. These were good people. I would have much rather had one of them survive than myself. I don't even know if I can call it fortunate, but it happened. Sad isn't it.

Question: I think there is somebody here who knows why you survived.

Well, yeah, my lovely wife.

////////NORMA LEAVES.////////

Question: is it hard to talk about this?

No.

Question: Are you finding this a catharsis, because your wife said you don't talk about this very often.

There's not much good to say about it. Pretty much. (long pause).

Question: What don't people know about Jonestown about growing up in the church. There's been so much media coverage and analysis. (2:40)

I think a lot of what hasn't been brought up, like I said, about the tortures, the dunkings, You've never heard that before. And that's all true. It was a hell on earth. We thought we were building a promised land, and we worked hard in that effort and then it would all be destroyed because this egotistical maniac. Self centered. It was all about him all the time. Like I said he claimed himself God. He said 'I am the I am.' ...He was on the run. The authorities were after him. There was some lewd and lascivious things in Los Angeles that all kinds of things chasing him. IRS, different things. Yes, he was isolated in a different country where they couldn't get him. He was running against the wall. The brick wall. Rather than doing the right thing, and giving himself up, he took everybody down

with him. That is unfathomable. I can't understand why he just didn't shoot himself and get it over with. And he let everything just fall apart. Why did he have to take everybody down with him....in the end he was a total coward. If I'm not mistaken he was actually shot by Johnny Brown....he didn't drink the poison from what I understand.

////he walks away for a while and starts talking about his dad///

He was with my step brother watching TV and seeing the names scrolling down. He sees my brother's name and not mine. And I hadn't had any contact with him until I got back to Georgetown, were talking about two weeks later.

Question: It seems to me, that Jonestown has impacted you physically and emotionally and every other way. (04, B, 9:30)

Physically emotionally, absolutely. (long pause) Absolutely. It's ruined my life. It could have been a utopia. It could have been heaven on earth. It could well have been because there was a lot of good people there. There was a lot of good intent. Hard working people. Like I said, It was so nice to have no monetary system. It was a utopia, socialism. NO money. It was like Marx and Lenin. Each according to his ability, each according to his need. It was supposed to be a utopia. But it turned out to be fascism. A total dictatorship. I still believe wouldn't it be nice not to have to pay a bill. To have housing provided to your needs, no power bills, no gas bills, all you have to do is get up and work and do your best and contribute to society, or that society and be able to exist and no war. No racial violence. No haves and have nots. No first and second class. That's utopia. But it can't happen. But I just can't see it happening. People are people. There is always...I'm in the middle. There is always going to be someone who has more than me and always someone who will have less. So I'm happy in the middle. And I have nothing. But having nothing, I also have nothing to lose. I never had been materialistic. I lived on a boat for a year and a half. It was awesome.

That's the way I think Jones got that whole thing done. Is people gave up. Dying was better than living another day. It's the only thing I can think of that made people do it.

(B, 04, 5:48)

For years I've heard people joking about the Kool-aid....I can understand it. If I were them, to hell, wanna drink some Kool-aid. I've heard this for 30 years, joking about this. It's not a joke, It's real. I don't get hurt about it. They're naive. They don't understand the facts. They don't understand the truth about Jonestown that the majority of people there were black and elderly, probably 30 percent were elderly, underprivileged, homeless, drug addicts, draft dodgers, people who had no life. They were clinging to the tree, Jones, for existence. Once the tree got cut or fell down or whatever happened it all fell apart. They were just reaching out to survive like everything else. They got caught up in a horrible thing.

I lost everything. All my worldly possessions. Probably 200 cassettes, what didn't get sold on the black market, but I don't know. America is the best place in the world to live.

Question: Why do you look at this as a memorial tribute to your brother? (B 05 16:15)

I mean, he died. He was murdered. I know he was murdered. He was shot. And he was a victim. And I want him recognized as a victim and not as a part of it.

Question: Would he have had any choice?

He would not have had any choice. No. He would have not had any choice. After that happened I'm sure he was crying. After he got back to Jonestown, if he made it back, he was murdered. He probably tried to run or something. He had some morals. I bet you he was bawling, after realizing what was going on. I don't think he was involved in any shooting. He was driving one of the tractors that hauled the shooters down there. That's what I know. He was a driver of one of the tractors that hauled in a trailer the shooters. And I would imagine after the shooting started and saw the blood I imagine he was probably bawling.

Question: He was a sensitive guy?

Yeah. Well, he was hard assed, his exoskeleton. But he was like breaking an egg.

Question: He was a handsome kid.

Oh yeah, the ladies liked him. Well, I wasn't bad. But yeah, he was a year and half older than me. I bet you he was bawling when it was all going down the shooting. I bet you he cried like a baby.

Question: Is it hard to imagine this scenario playing out or have you lived it so many times now?

I've lived it so many times and in so many different ways. I wasn't there. I can only imagine, but knowing my brother forever. I bet you he bawled like a school girl. I know he had a sensitive side, but he was always a hard shell. He was something else.

Question: And so you want your brother honored on this 30th anniversary?

That would be nice. In some way.

Question: Did you ever get to memorialize him before?

No. He was actually buried out at sea. Cremated and buried, I think it's called the Neptune Society in the Pacific Ocean in San Francisco. He's not married at the mass grave in Oakland. I've been hounded to come over there, but I'm not interested. There's a lot of people I don't want to see.

Question: Because you felt like they knew the truth and did nothing about it?

Absolutely. They should be dead. As well as some of , instead of some of the kids. There were like 300 kids there. They deserved a future. Even me at 18, I lived a partial life. The seniors they lived a full life except the last couple years of hell....I felt guilty going up and down the river eating like a king. It was all good, I enjoyed that part. To this day, I would still be riding up and down the river if I could.

Question: Do you still eat rice?

I do. I do. Actually I do eat rice. I still like rice. That's a good question. Yes, I still like rice.

Question: Would you go back, do you think to Guyana, to see the river? Or are there just too many bad memories there?

I'd love to. Yeah, I'd like to go back and maybe see some the kids that used to come around the boat, that are grown up now, I'm sure. They used to hang around the boat when we were out there working, cleaning it. Remi is the one I really remember. Little Guyanan kids running around in shorts, bare feet, bare chested. Little kids. Fishing. We let them fish off the boat. They'd have this knack. They could catch fish without even a worm, just a hook. They'd throw it in and shoom! Before you'd know it they would have

30 little fish. We'd cook them on the boat and have a great time. I'd like to go back, of course, I wouldn't want to pay for it. And it's dangerous down there.

Question: And you don't have a passport?

Yeah, I'd have to get one of those too. They seized my passport. No big deal there. I don't blame them.

Question: Do you feel like you've been treated fairly in the court of public opinion and by the U.S. Government?

Absolutely. What else are they going to do? I mean, they have a Congressman dead and have a thousand people, American citizens dead. Look at the massive excavation of bringing all those bodies home. The United States Government, because a lot of this....as a matter of fact, I shook hands with Rosalyn Carter at one of the fundraising things. I think there was a lot of leniency given to Jones for this whole project. In retrospect, if the government would have been a little more tight....I don't think it happened until almost the end when it was too late.

///Goes into a lengthy discussion about politics and the People's Temple members left in the U.S.///

Question: Did you ever worry for your own safety when you got back?

Oh yeah, I was paranoid and looking around every corner for the first couple three years. Yep. Had gotten an attorney, because what had happened when I was in Jonestown I was underage and that's why my dad wanted to get me out of there because I wasn't of age yet. So Jones had me marry some chick there. Her name was Joan. Legally marry her so I would be legally married.

Question: And this was not somebody you had a relationship with?

No this was someone of age so I could be legally married and so my parents couldn't get me. Terrible isn't it. I don't even remember my first wife.

Question: How much time did you spend with her?

None.

Question: And she died there?

No Joan Pursley. She survived. I had hired an attorney to get an annulment in the states. The same attorney, I had purchased a hunting rifle to go hunting. The FBI wanted that they thought I was going to do something crazy. But it was for hunting (the attorney fixed it.). I think I spoke to her once after that. I have somewhat of a memory for 30 years ago.

Question: Does it seem like yesterday or does it seem like 30 years ago?

It seems like yesterday. 30 years is a long time, I know. But some of the things I see in my mind. I have a photographic memory. I can't remember names for anything. A few of them I do, I guess. But these were people I knew for years.

Question: So it still feels like it just happened?

Oh yeah, I can close my eyes and see Jonestown and the layout of it. I can see the huge, what they called Mountain Chickens. They are huge toads that are like this big. Five, six pound toads that hop around at night. That's what they called them Guyanese. They'd eat them. Their legs are like chicken eggs. Everything is big in the jungle. Gosh. Beetles sized like that. Called horned beetles. I've seen pythons, cougars....well panther, yeah at night.

Question: Do you think it will get easier, ever?

It will never change. My memory is not going to deteriorate, I hope. It's like it happened yesterday, a lot of it. The good times and bad times, the people. 30 years ago.

Question: Somebody has to remember, though.

Oh yeah. I remember. I was there.