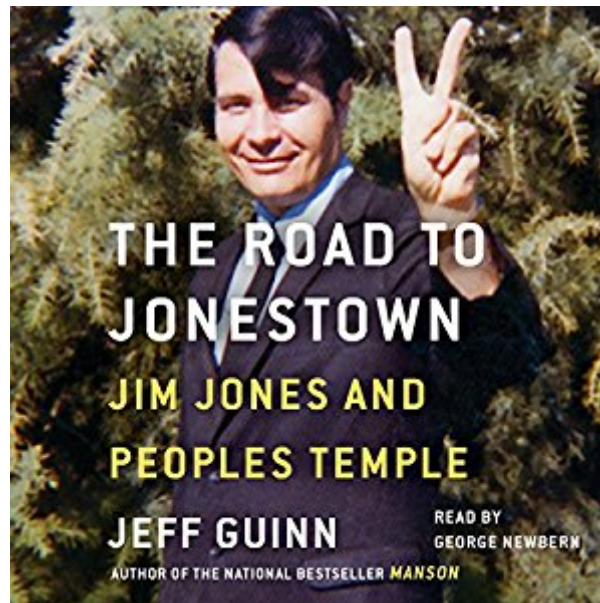




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Road To Jonestown: Jim Jones And Peoples Temple



Synopsis

From the New York Times best-selling author of *Manson* comes the comprehensive, authoritative, and tragic story of preacher Jim Jones, who was responsible for the Jonestown Massacre - the largest murder-suicide in American history. In the 1950s a young Indianapolis minister named Jim Jones preached a curious blend of the Gospel and Marxism. His congregation was racially integrated, and he was a much-lauded leader in the contemporary civil rights movement. Eventually Jones moved his church, Peoples Temple, to Northern California. He became involved in electoral politics and soon was a prominent Bay Area leader. In this riveting narrative, Jeff Guinn examines Jones' life, from his extramarital affairs, drug use, and fraudulent faith healing to the fraught decision to move almost 1,000 of his followers to a settlement in the jungles of Guyana in South America. Guinn provides stunning new details of the events leading to the fatal day in November 1978 when more than 900 people died - including almost 300 infants and children - after being ordered to swallow a cyanide-laced drink. Guinn examined thousands of pages of FBI files on the case, including material released during the course of his research. He traveled to Jones' Indiana hometown, where he spoke to people never previously interviewed and uncovered fresh information from Jonestown survivors. He even visited the Jonestown site with the same pilot who flew there the day that Congressman Leo Ryan was murdered on Jones' orders. *The Road to Jonestown* is the definitive book about Jim Jones and the events that led to the tragedy at Jonestown.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was 16 when it happened, and remember reading a book about the tragedy several years later. That decades-old book didn't compare to the detail, depth, and insight of *The Road to Jonestown*. I won't go into the details of the story, as there are other synopses here. The lesson then, and it certainly applies today: when you listen only to one point of view, and surround yourself only with people who agree with you, you lose the ability to think for yourself. And the echo chamber becomes a trap. Whether it's religion, or politics, it's never a good idea.

OMG this was a page turner! If you are into true drama/true crime/true adventure, this is a fascinating, extremely thorough account of the man Jim Jones and the cult that he built and destroyed. There is so much going on here beyond the standard cult headlines: successful socialism, mass manipulation, human ego and frailty... this is a deep and wide story that will disturb you for weeks.

I received an e-ARC of this book through NetGalley and Simon & Schuster True Crime. Thank you. This is a story which will disturb you during the time you are reading it and after you put the book down. I wanted to see how Jim Jones was able to convince so many people that he was one person when he so obviously was another. One of the things which came as such a surprise to me was how his ministry began around such a good thing: equality and dignity for everyone. And Jones absolutely believed in helping people attain those things. What also surprised me was how willing some of his followers were to allow him to use whatever means he wanted in order to forge his ministry into his ultimate goal. I think about the only thing Jones never actually did was commit murder, but he sure made people who tried to leave his mission think that he wouldn't hesitate to do that too. Living the perfect socialist lifestyle (later with definite leanings toward communism) is how this incredibly charismatic man took his small town Christian revival teaching to the front pages of the world's newspapers. Of course, by then it was too late for those who had shown their ultimate love and loyalty to him by dying for him. Even then Jim Jones didn't follow his own teachings because he took a bullet in the head instead of the agonizing death by cyanide poisoning which his followers endured. Some might have needed persuading by the armed guards before they gave the infants and children the poison squirted from syringes while adults drank it from cups, but most were willing participants. Some members simply told the guards they wanted to leave and they were allowed to go. Down to the bitter end this was a contradiction of good intentions versus evil manipulation. Author Jeff Guinn has written an absolutely fascinating revelation of exactly how Jim Jones became the leader he was so we can understand the power and control Jones had over

almost everyone he came into contact with. Even people who were never members of his Peoples Temple were willing to do his bidding after spending even a small amount of time in his presence. How do you fool so many people? The answer is, you have charm, you tell them what they want or need to hear, and you have people backing you up to help you run the con game. Good people joined Peoples Temple because Jones promised them racial equality and dignity or because they saw through his religious façade to his socialist intentions and agreed that was the way the world would work best. Not everyone remained with Peoples Temple, some left. Some even left many times and returned. I was absolutely fascinated to learn at what point the Peoples Temple followers knew about the mass suicide plan. What an incredible hold he had over them. I read this book on an e-reader. The final 15-16% of the book is taken up with the Footnote information. There was an impressive amount of research which went into the making of this book.

I've read Guinn's last two books and really enjoyed them. In my mind, he's now 3/3. In this perfectly named and thoroughly researched book, he takes the reader on a journey that leads to the tragedy in Jonestown. The balanced tone is remarkable given the unbalanced character who is at the center of the story. Guinn is an author who clearly respects the facts (it's sad that in today's climate, that too is remarkable). Can't wait for his next effort.

I was a young girl when the tragedy unfolded in Jonestown. I remember the shock and horror of my parents, and the total disbelief that 900 people died, over 300 children, because of a cult. As the years have passed, I've read a lot about Jones, the church, and the tragedy itself. I thought I knew quite a bit about it until I heard Mr. Guinn on NPR and I had to know more. I read the book in a day, I couldn't put it down. His writing style is mesmerizing, I felt drawn into that world. I'm left with a solitary question, was Jim Jones always bad or did his success, ego and excesses turn him into the person he became?

I love reading about his past and how he got to where he did in his mind. Very interesting past information about that era as well. This author did thorough research and there are a lot of great details

I remember when the Jonestown tragedy occurred and was very interested to read all the background information as well as the details of the final days. Mr. Guinn did an excellent job of recounting the rise and fall of Jim Jones.

Couldn't read enough about the tragedy when it happened, but this book finally tied everything together. Can't believe the smart people who were willing to give up their free will, \$ & lives for that lunatic! Loved the background info on "him" and the first hand reports of the survivors. So glad I got the book.

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