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Nightmare In Jonestown: Cult Of Death (Singles Classic)



Synopsis

Jonestown, Guyana. December 4, 1978. In an appalling demonstration of the way in which a charismatic leader can bend the minds of his followers with a devilish blend of professed altruism and psychological tyranny, some 900 members of the California-based Peoples Temple died in a self-imposed ritual of mass suicide and murder. The followers of the Rev. Jim Jones, 47, a once respected Indian-born humanitarian who degenerated into egomania and paranoia, had first ambushed a party of visiting Americans, killing California Congressman Leo Ryan, 53, three newsmen and one defector from their heavily guarded colony at Jones-town. Then, exhorted by their leader, intimidated by armed guards and lulled with sedatives and painkillers, parents and nurses used syringes to squirt a concoction of potassium cyanide and potassium chloride onto the tongues of babies. The adults and older children picked up paper cups and sipped the same deadly poison sweetened by purple Kool-Aid. This story is part of the TIME Classic Coverage Collection from Time Inc. This is a reproduction of a story that appeared in the December 4, 1978 issue of TIME magazine. Time Inc. is one of the world's most influential media companies — home to 90 iconic brands like People, Sports Illustrated, Time, InStyle, Real Simple, Food & Wine, and Fortune. The Spotlight Stories in this collection aim to provide you with a quick read on a single subject, highlighting our readers' most popular stories and featuring great reporting from our Time Inc. journalists.

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Customer Reviews

Some of the most enjoyable reading that I've done the last few years are the Kindle Singles. They're free or very inexpensive, and it's a great way to read shorter works, both fiction and nonfiction. Now has brought back some older works and labeled them Singles Classics. "Nightmare in Jonestown: Cult of Death" was written only days after the charismatic but totally insane Jim Jones led or forced more than 900 followers into death. The tragic story is well known today, but this was one of the first looks at the aftermath. Ultimately, as the story fades, what may be most remembered about Jonestown is the birth of the expression "Drinking the Kool-Aid." (And there is some evidence that the cyanide-laced drink may have actually been a less expensive powdered drink named Flavor Aid, not Kool-Aid.)

A very interesting read despite the grim topic. It definitely had me thinking about my own religious beliefs and I feel gratitude for them.

It seems impossible that so many people could follow a lunatic to their death and not question or resist him.

Oohgi

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