



Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His People

Tim Reiterman

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His People

Tim Reiterman

Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His People Tim Reiterman

The basis for the upcoming HBO miniseries and the "definitive account of the Jonestown massacre" (*Rolling Stone*) -- now available for the first time in paperback.

Tim Reiterman's *Raven* provides the seminal history of the Rev. Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and the murderous ordeal at Jonestown in 1978.

This PEN Award winning work explores the ideals-gone-wrong, the intrigue, and the grim realities behind the Peoples Temple and its implosion in the jungle of South America. Reiterman's reportage clarifies enduring misperceptions of the character and motives of Jim Jones, the reasons why people followed him, and the important truth that many of those who perished at Jonestown were victims of mass murder rather than suicide. This widely sought work is restored to print after many years with a new preface by the author, as well as the more than sixty-five rare photographs from the original volume.

"

Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His People Details

Date : Published 1982 by Dutton Adult

ISBN : 9780525241362

Author : Tim Reiterman

Format : Hardcover 622 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Crime, True Crime, History, Biography, Religion, Mystery, Cults

 [Download Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His P ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His People Tim Reiterman

From Reader Review Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His People for online ebook

Shannon says

Excellent, thoroughly comprehensive account of Jim Jones and his cult. This book is often chilling and terrifying. Jim Jones was a total psychopath and, if one is inclined to believe in such concepts, truly evil. The book really makes you think about why and how people are psychologically brainwashed. I highly recommend this book.

Debbie says

Tim Reiterman was a reporter for the San Francisco Examiner who was in Jonestown, Guyana on November 18, 1978 when the infamous massacre occurred. This book gives a very detailed chronology of the People's Temple, starting with Jim Jones childhood and finishing with the reporter's evacuation after the tragic events.

For the most part the account is dry and surprisingly boring considering all the prurient happenings around the People's Temple. I found that I really had to force myself to slog through it. That changes when Mr. Reiterman goes into what happened to him and the other members of his fact finding party in Jonestown on November 17th and 18th, 1978. At that point the book almost reads like an action novel. Reiterman is shot and injured, his cameraman friend is murdered. Others are hurt and left laying on the primitive Guyana runway. Reiterman and some of the other survivors had to spend the night hiding in a disco.

I'm sure that this book is the most comprehensive one written on the People's Temple. It left me feeling well informed about all things surrounding Jim Jones and Jonestown. It also left me feeling really bummed out.

SAM says

I've never used the word 'Tome' to describe a book but it's an apt description for Raven. It's 600 pages but the physical size of the book is huge! When the zombie apocalypse arrives i'll be using this as a weapon.

At times this was a brilliant and unbelievable read. Exceptionally researched and well written, it was epic. Every other page i was asking out loud 'How and Why!!!'. I could never imagine dedicating my life to one man but luckily I've never met anyone as manipulative as Jim Jones.

This book was a victim of it's own ending. Pretty much throughout i was thinking 'Need to get to the end!' because that's the part everyone wants to read. Yes, the foundations of the Peoples Temple is important and interesting as is the exodus to Guyana but honestly it was the ending i was most fascinated with, which doesn't disappoint.

So given the above praise why only 3 stars? It's because of how much detail the author goes into. It's OK for the first 350-400 pages but after that i was periodically losing interest during a few of the chapters. I didn't need to know every insignificant detail about the pre-mass suicide events.

Chris says

This is a very in depth book on Jim Jones and the People's Temple. A story so incredible it's hard to believe it actually happened. A very good read.

Bogdan says

A gripping read about the story of Jim Jones and the People's Temple, this book is probably THE book you want to read if you want to know what happened in Guyana in 1978 and all the events that lead to the mass suicide. I would recommend it to anybody interested in cults, psychology and the general failure of socialism, top-down governance of people and the western/Christian ideology. The book is well written and well researched by somebody who was closely involved with the cult and it presents the story from multiple angles (both inside and outside of the People's Temple). Loyalists, survivors, defectors, politicians, reporters and all manner of people involved are covered. The only downside i could find to the book is that i would have liked to know more about what happened in the aftermath of the suicide (the epilogue is short and it does not cover in detail the stories of survivors and the people affiliated with the temple). Other than that, it's a great read. Anybody who harbors (or knows people who harbor) any type of strong ideology (be it political, religious etc.) should pick up a copy of this book and see what authority, deprivation, social proof and the charisma of a man who pronounced himself God can do to the human mind.

Rebecca McNutt says

WOW. Okay... to think, my mom and dad were considering a *summer vacation* three years ago for them, my brother, sister and I right there in Guyana around the spot where this happened! They opted not to go and to pick Puerto Rico instead. Thank god for small favours.

Raven was scary, really unsettling and eerie in that this could become so powerful a cult that one man was able to sway over nine hundred people to leave behind everything they knew in the US and flee to Guyana for the creation of a "socialist paradise". In a mere hour or so in 1978, they pretty much all died via cyanide-laced Flavor-Aid and were discovered not long afterwards. This book was still an excellent read though, both because it was authored by a guy who experienced this event first-hand and because it's so deep. Most books on Jonestown only look at the massacre itself, but rarely attempt to question how exactly it occurred and why nine hundred were willing to die a painful death for one charismatic albeit strange, potentially ill individual. These weren't morons, either. These were intelligent people, many post-secondary students, black Americans trying to leave the racism they faced back in the US, lonely people seeking fulfillment in a cause they believed in and even well-off lawyers and scientists! Jim Jones offered up something special, a congregation filled with love and peace, not prejudice and fear. This book, complete with info on Jones himself and some of the defectors who escaped and the congressman who was tragically murdered trying to help rescue people, is one of the best on Jonestown that I've ever read. I must say it was extremely courageous what the defectors went through, and I hope the survivors were able to recover and start things over free from this whole mess elsewhere.

Nancy Oakes says

Tim Reiterman was one of the journalists who accompanied Congressman Leo Ryan to Jonestown in November of 1978. His book not only examines what happened there, but goes back to the childhood of Jim Jones and the beginnings of the movement known as the Peoples Temple so as to "capture the lure of the Temple, to convey the thinking and personalities of not just disgruntled defectors but also of the heartbroken loyalists with something positive to preserve and remember -- and to unmask the real Jim Jones. And I wanted to humanize them all to get at the truth, to make the ending comprehensible" (5). To achieve this goal, he and his co-author John Jacobs did 800+ interviews, reviewed tens of thousands of pages of documents, tape recordings, video, and film. The result is a phenomenal book.

What really interested me the most, I think, was Reiterman's examination, starting with Jones' boyhood, of how exactly Jones learned to get others to do exactly what he wanted them to do. The people who came to the Peoples Temple and who became followers of Jones early on weren't coerced or forced into it -- they all had various reasons for being there and for embracing Jones' message. However, it was what happened once they were inside that matters, as little by little Jones began to isolate them from the rest of the world so that they came to depend solely on him and the movement. Reiterman shows clearly how this occurred, and how Jones, along with his top tier of chosen people, manipulated things from inside.

He also shows how when there were attacks on the movement (from the media, "defectors", etc.), Jones' paranoia only made things worse, causing him to do and say things that only heightened their attackers' interests in the Peoples Temple. It was this type of paranoia that led Jones to Guyana and Jonestown and ultimately to the horrifying events of November 1978.

The narrative is at times chilling, but very clear, based mostly on first-hand evidence and testimony. I very highly recommend this book to anyone even remotely interested in Jonestown, the Peoples Temple movement or in how otherwise intelligent people might find themselves in this sort of predicament.

Excellent reading; long, but well worth every second.

Stefani says

In case you weren't aware, Jim Jones was one crazy televangelist motherf****, who led over 900 members of his People's Temple Church to commit mass suicide by drinking cyanide laced Flavor-Aid (yes, that's right, it was generic Kool-Aid) in the late 70's. Yes, this happened a long, long time ago, but yet it still gives me chills when I think about the mindfuck that Jones was perpetuating and that lots of people *actually bought into it*. Jones, according to the book, was apparently the Rico Suave of his time, complete with leisure suits and mirrored sunglasses, and a master at manipulating people to get what he wanted. Once Jones had convinced enough susceptible people that he was God reincarnated, there was no stopping his realization of a utopian socialist paradise in the Guyanese jungle. Jim was a sick fuck, and the book explains that in pretty mind-numbing detail, including an early childhood obsession with death and religion that carried over into adulthood.

Brenna says

“To me, if we never got further than this, it would be heaven.”

Reverend Jim Jones sat on his throne at the pavilion before a thousand or so displaced people – people he had lured away from their homes and families to live in a dense, predator-infested Guyanese jungle which he had told them was “Paradise.” The swath torn out of the thick brush and trees was done by the members of Jones' People's Temple movement, primarily a group of people not accustomed to such labours. In fact, they had moved from Indiana and California in search of a better life, of some peace and racial tolerance.

But by 1978, they were harassed, harangued, and almost entirely beaten down by their leader, whom some saw as God himself. Jim Jones could, after all, “cure” cancers of all sorts, physical disabilities that had baffled the medical community, and cause the blind to see once again. Jones was a hard man to know, and his behaviours often seemed incongruous for one who was so godlike – but he was the charismatic leader of so many who had felt unloved, unlucky... who could feel comfortable in openly questioning the will of God?

It was the lack of candid exposure which had helped boost Jones to his highest levels. Without the validation of other people's fears being expressed, lone souls held their tongues, thus perpetuating the cycle. Too, a free exchange of ideas was encouraged only during specific times during Church meetings: during so-called catharsis sessions. Members – the loyal “inner circle” of Jones' aides, assistants, and family included – were required to step up and publicly criticize specific persons, often to the point of gross exaggeration or even outright fabrication. Criminal activities were announced, suspicious behaviours revealed, and sexual proclivities discussed. Of course, the one being verbally eviscerated was often unable to disprove the allegations, and was therefore cajoled into acceptance, else risk the wrath of Father Jones and his people.

For its brilliant and peaceable socialistic exterior, with free homes for member senior citizens and schooling for the Temple children, the People's Temple amounted into organized bullying. Jim Jones effectively became a god to his people because of his master deception, and manipulation.

Raven: The Untold Story of the Rev. Jim Jones and His People delves far beyond any of the television docudramas, or the films, or the rushed-to-publication books regarding the People's Temple in the day. Author Tim Reiterman was not only a journalist deeply involved in the People's Temple story – he was shot and wounded along with several others when visiting congressman Leo Ryan (along with four others, all unarmed, primarily members of the press) was assassinated by Jonestown residents. Reiterman saw first hand many of the things that the majority of visitors to Jonestown did not live to reveal. He was one of the handful of people who got away on that last day, when Jones ordered the deaths of so many unprotected innocents.

The book, at over 600 pages, begins with the circumstances of Jones' birth and childhood, looking at his familial relations between his outspoken mother Lynetta and his war-weakened father, James Thurber Jones. Jones' introduction to the Pentecostal Church, along with his juvenile attempts to take charge of his peers through religious ceremony and indoctrination, through to his college years and introduction to lifelong wife Marceline – Reiterman provides his sources to back up all of his biographical information, right through to Jones' birth in 1931. He also acknowledges any personal interpretation proffered from audio or visual records of Jones and the People's Temple (in particular, one surviving film document portraying a typical People's Temple gathering, complete with roiling “sermon” and healing session, is related to the reader as the images struck the author).

Raven is comprehensive, and provides much background information on some of the Church members themselves, both prominent and lesser-known. The People's Temple truly was a Church of all colours and ages, which included people from derelicts to doctors. So, how did a gathering of so many fall under the

persuasion of what seemed to be an obvious madman? Reiterman, through virtue of his research and story-telling abilities, reveals this surprising element throughout the pages of his book without needing to explicitly provide a moral, or one-line answer. For a wondering world, the biography of the People's Temple is the answer.

The single most important aspect of *Raven* is that Reiterman never loses sight of his subjects' humanity. The people involved never become simply the infamous "913 bodies," but a living group of individuals who had their personalities entirely removed and replaced with commands and dictation. People are introduced – by name and by background – and are treated with the dignity and respect which had been stripped from them during their too-short lives. Upon reading the final chapters of the book, though the reader understands what the final ending will be due to history itself, the tension created elicits a visceral reaction from the audience. A tragedy on such a tremendous scale suddenly becomes somewhat more tangible to one who had never experienced such a thing, and the horror becomes vivid and alive.

In this, the 2008 reissue of the 1981 book of the same name, the Epilogue reads a little awkwardly. Reiterman provides the reader with a number of updates on some of the surviving key players in the Jonestown tragedy which was (presumably) current as of the time of its original release, but one cannot help but be burdened somewhat by the fact that the information does not "feel" duly updated for a release some twenty-seven years later.

Though thick and dense with information, *Raven* does not drag nor burden a reader with superfluous information. It flows logically, and retains as much of a clear and open picture of Jim Jones and the People's Temple as possible, especially in light of the injuries sustained by the author, and the murder of his acquaintances by a handful of Temple fanatics. Most other books on the subject are predictable and weak by comparison.

Marissa says

Yes this book is long, but it is oh-so-worth the investment. I've always had a tremendous interest in cult leadership, and Jim Jones is probably the sickest and one of the most evil of them all. Reading this book, you really come to understand how one man, who clearly resides somewhere well outside of his right mind and is strung out on drugs (Hitler, anyone?) can get hundreds and hundreds of people to follow him not only to a remote island, but to willingly sacrifice their lives and the lives of their children (some in the most gruesome ways) all in the name of his belief system. Chilling yes, heart breaking definitely, but a great literary achievement by a man who lived through it all.

Beata says

I came across the story many years ago but in fact it's the first time I've read a book on this tragedy. One can treat it as a warning on how easy it's to manipulate people who can't find their place on this planet and thus are terribly vulnerable. A very detailed research into the mind of a real monster and ordinary people's tragedy ...

Jaidee says

5 "unfathomable, horrifying, despondent" stars !!!

2017 Silver Award (Tie) (2nd Favorite Read)

I sit here and am uncertain on how to proceed. I feel numb, terrified, bewildered and yes shell-shocked. Since the end of March I carefully read this book with dark fascination and within the last week experienced nightmares, day terrors and profound disillusionment. My mood was dropping, my sleep suffered and at times I experienced heart palpitations. This morning my partner asked me to "please stop reading this book" as he noticed these changes in me as well. I talked incessantly to him about what I was reading and searching for meaning and understanding around these historical events.

I decided I must finish this book today as this demon had to be expelled. I look over what I have written and am a bit ashamed for what happened in this book is not my history, my fate, my demise. This is the story of the deaths of 912 or so people at the hands of the most despicable of monsters the Rev. Jim Jones. Many of these people had difficult enough lives before meeting this dark savior but afterwards experienced a kind of hell that is unimaginable to most of us. Many of these people suffered this torment for many years before submitting to, of all things, killer kool-aid.

I, initially was going to write a brief piece on how the malignant narcissist is much more dangerous to society than a brilliant sociopath and then realized I was distancing myself from the horrendous suffering that took place to my fellow human beings. These events occurred before my birth up until I reached third grade where I vaguely recall hearing on the news about these atrocities. Luckily, for me, my parents and family shielded me from this and yet the story permeated society for a number of years and friends used to joke about poisoned fruit juices not really understanding what transpired.

I went into this book wanting comprehension of the personality make-up of Jim Jones and how events could transpire to a type of massacre. Alas, this did not occur, instead I am more perplexed and frightened of the world at large.

Tim Reiterman is a journalist that was in Guyana at the time of the mass suicide and in fact was shot and hurt by some of Jones' henchmen. He had been following this religious group for a number of years. His experience in Guyana is harrowing and yet he lived not only to tell the tale but to tell the story in a coherent, balanced and yes, believe it or not, an immensely respectful way. His writing is clear, logical, exhaustive. He starts with Jim's developmental and family history and moves forward to starting an important religious and social movement, to his incarnation as a self-made messiah to a tyrannical dictator to finally a deluded annihilator. We start in Indiana, move to California and ultimately end up in Guyana. I was at the edge of my seat for the entire time and although often wanting to escape I knew I had to stay for the ride out of respect for the many hundreds of victims. Jim Jones is one of the most complex and sadistic men I have ever read about. He humiliated, raped and ultimately murdered many hundreds of women, men and children. A bisexual monster so evil that a human mind could not have created him in the most twisted of fictions.

Mr. Reiterman writes:

But despite any culpability of government bureaucrats, investigators or politicians, blame for the Jonestown tragedy must ultimately come to rest in the deranged person of Jim Jones. His ends-justifies-the-means philosophy, paranoia, megalomania and charismatic personality must weigh much more heavily in the balance than any oversight, ineptitude, weakness or political exploitation by those outside the church. It was not the Temple's enemies that brought down the Temple, but Jones's destructive personality. The prophecy of doom had become an end in itself.

This will be among the very best books I read this year but unlike the others where I will have much desire to revisit them....this story will hopefully lay dormant deep within my psyche.

You lovely and poor people of Jonestown I sincerely hope that wherever you are after death that you have everlasting peace.

Greg Fanoë says

Probably a bit more 'exhaustive' (boring) than it needed to be, but overall it gave me a good understanding of the People's Temple. Fun fact, it was actually poisoned Flavor-aid they drank, not Kool Aid.

Shelly Deluigi Coburn says

one of the best history of jim jones and the story os jonestown

Will Ludwigsen says

Even without the fascinating subject matter, this book is a staggering work of journalism, digging into the life and church of a sick and secretive man with the help of terrified witnesses. As one of the victims wounded on the Port Kaituma airstrip, Reiterman also brings his own perspectives to the work as well -- perspectives that are unusually fair for someone almost murdered by the subject of his writing.

It's easy -- as any reader or viewer can discover in many of the other works "covering" the Jonestown tragedy -- to go one of two ways: either full-bore into the lurid violence of it or timidly into how Jones was a tragic idealist driven to do terrible things by paranoia and drugs. Reiterman takes neither path, reminding us that Jim Jones was deranged from a very early age, and he wasn't driven over the edge by fighting the establishment for socialism -- he was all but fulfilling a set of conditions with a single horrifying conclusion.

Of course, the many failures of government and law enforcement to stop Jim Jones were not as inevitable as his own murderous destruction.
