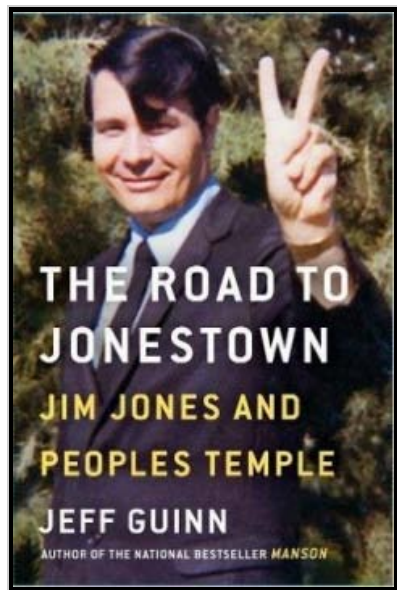


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## The Road to Jonestown

Jim Jones and Peoples Temple

by Jeff Guinn

Price: \$28.00(Hardcover)

Published: April 11, 2017

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Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

**From the Publisher:** By the New York Times bestselling author of *Manson*, 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's life, from his extramarital affairs, drug use, and fraudulent faith healing to the fraught decision to move almost a thousand of his followers to a settlement in the jungles of Guyana in South...

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### About The Author

Jeff Guinn

Jeff Guinn is a former award-winning investigative journalist and the bestselling author of numerous books, including *Go Down Together: The True Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Last Gunfight: The Real Story of the Shootout at the O.K. Corral and How It Changed the West*, and *Manson: The....* Guinn lives in Fort Worth, Texas.

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### Release Info

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### What We Say

Like most people, my knowledge of cult leader Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple begins and ends with Kool-Aid and a mass suicide in Guyana in the 1970s. This fascinating biography tells the story of his entire life and it makes for a quietly gripping read. I can't speak to what's new here compared to earlier books and I've never seen any of the films or documentaries about that bizarre episode. But this is a convincing, matter-of-fact work that presents Jones in as objective a light as one could ask for, no small task given the terrible end he brought to his followers. Even more interestingly to me, author Jeff Guinn helped me understand how someone could be involved with the Peoples Temple without being the

gullible or foolish prey for a charlatan that outsiders might imagine. My empathy for those ensnared in a cult for whatever reason is greater. It begins simply with the story of Jim's mother, a woman prone to grandiose lies and determined to make a notable life for herself. When that doesn't happen, she settles for being the mother of a boy who is sure to become a great man. According to Guinn, Jim Jones had a gift for winning over people from an early age, an easy way with a lie and an even easier way with the half-truth that pulls others onto your side. Intriguingly, much of his early life and ministry is weirdly compelling and in a way admirable. Jim Jones had a lifelong devotion to racial and economic justice that was real, if complicated. His work in Indianapolis was progressive, helping to integrate many of the city's businesses in a way that made him appealing to those on every side of the issue. But also from the start we see duplicity, such as his willingness to preach the Bible while privately disdaining a belief in a "Sky God" and really wanting to lure people towards Marxism. While Jones duped folks with fake mind readings and fake miracles, he also delivered a genuinely progressive and positive message. Jones put it into practice with soup kitchens and integration of his ministry and college scholarships -- real and palpable changes in the world around him. The Peoples Temple was a place that didn't just promise a better life in the hereafter but helped anyone with the problems of today, whether it was navigating red tape at City Hall or helping elect like-minded politicians. He appealed to Bible thumpers and Marxists, to disillusioned people of faith and atheists and somehow held it all together. His methods always contained the original sin of lies and deceit, but you can see why so many people felt drawn to the tangible work the Peoples Temple accomplished. That makes it all the creepier as Jones becomes more and more megalomaniacal, as he veers from mocking the idea of God to claiming divinity for himself. Jones became a drug-addled fool and at the same time a detail-oriented leader of a vast enterprise generating millions of dollars. He toyed with running for office or fleeing the country to establish a base in Brazil or the Soviet Union or Cuba or ultimately Guyana. He went from a faithful and happy marriage to running a virtual harem of female (and male) followers. The contradictions and confusions build and build until the only surprise is that it didn't all end even sooner in disaster. For anyone with the slightest interest in cults or Jones in particular, this is a revealing work. -- Michael Giltz

## What Others Say

"I have to say that it is weird to find out the background of things that I grew up hearing about around the dinner table. The level of research and detail in *The Road to Jonestown* is the best ever, and really lets readers understand not only what happened, but how and why. This book tells the Jim Jones story better than anything I have read to date." - Jim Jones, Jr.

"Magisterial. . . . Guinn's exhaustive research, shrewd analysis, and engaging prose illuminate a monstrous yet tragic figure--and the motives of those who lost their souls to him." - Publishers Weekly

"A vivid, fascinating revisitation of a time and series of episodes fast receding into history even as their forgotten survivors still walk among us." - Kirkus Reviews

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