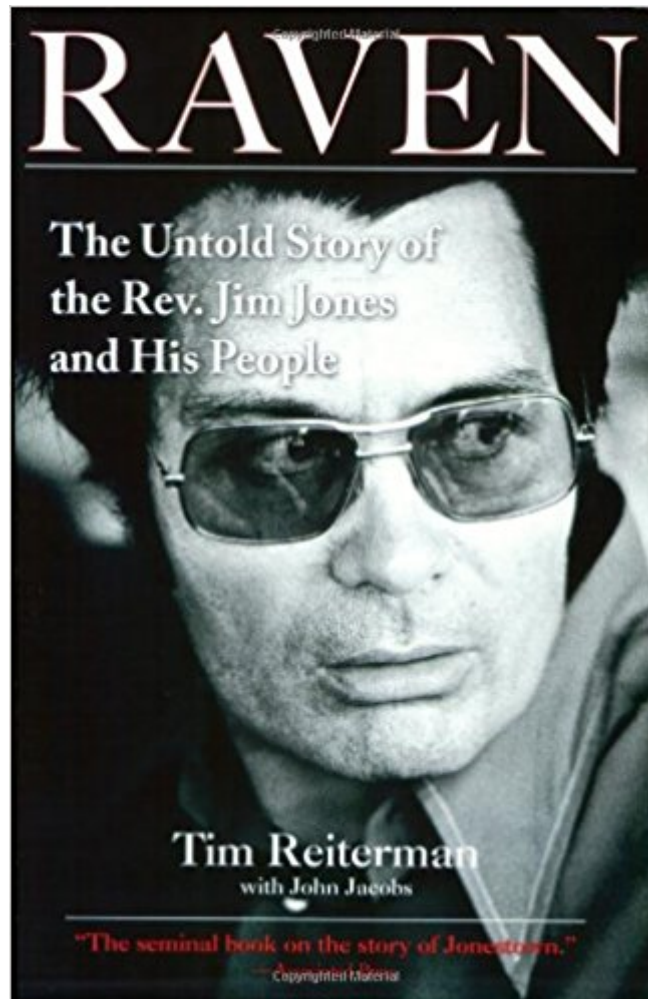


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Raven: The Untold Story Of The Rev. Jim Jones And His People



Synopsis

For the first time in paperback, Tim Reiterman's *Raven* provides the definitive history of the Rev. Jim Jones, the Peoples Temple, and the murderous ordeal at Jonestown three decades ago. 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.

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Customer Reviews

I first read *Raven* in 1988 as one of the resources for my Master's Thesis in Speech Communication. I was focusing on the rhetoric of survivors in an unspeakable event. This year, after reading Barbara Olson's *Hell to Pay*, I needed to reference *Raven* again because of a connection. So many times since I finished my thesis I had needed to reference it and gaining access was always problematic. I therefore asked to find a copy and they were able to accommodate me. The one thing about *Raven* and the story of Jim Jones is that, once you have been so deeply involved in the story, it is impossible to let it go. Events continue to occur which force you back to the original. Events such as the Waco incident. *Raven* is an excellent resource for people trying to understand how one man can hold sway over so many people and lead them to such an unbelievable disaster. Watching

as Jones molds and manipulates his congregants is a fascinating experience. Seeing people so willing to forsake home and family for a little security is a startling realization. But it explains a great deal about how easily people will give over their lives to such a leader in order not to have to manage their own affairs. Reiterman and Jacobs give us a wonderful essay on the inner workings and the secrets which allowed Peoples Temple to flourish. The detail of their investigations into the cleverness and deceit of Jones is extraordinary. This book is, in my estimation the primary read for anyone trying to understand the times and events which allowed Peoples Temple to become a lure for so many people. A warning is in order. Once you read *Raven*, you will never be able to let go of the story. But if you learn one thing from it, it should be that there are deceivers in the world who, if allowed, will take your home, your money and your life.

"*Raven*" is, without a doubt, the seminal work on Jim Jones and Jonestown. Written by Tim Reiterman, who was injured during the massacre that killed Sen Ryan, this book is researched, factual, and fair. Anyone wanting to understand the workings of Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple need only to pick up a copy of this book. One warning. It is approximately 600 pages, and impossible to put down once you pick it up. So make sure to clear your calendar for a few days before starting it. Once read, this book will remain with you for a lifetime. Bravo, Mr. Reiterman.

I don't have the words to express all that I'd like to about this work, but can hopefully convey what a superb job Reiterman did in his research and writing. It goes in depth on who Jim Jones was and how he was able to target, manipulate and swindle so many people. I was caught up in the story immediately and it just kept getting better, even though I knew the outcome. How sad that he was able to isolate and imprison his followers out of the reach of the law and rational people who might have eventually saved those poor souls who wanted to leave his "church". This tragic story is extremely well told. I highly, highly recommend this book.

Reporter Tim Reiterman was one of the people who managed to survive the Port Kaituma shootings that claimed the life of Congressman Leo Ryan and so many others. It is perhaps understandable why he wished to write about the man who connived at his murder in his own search for "understanding" Jim Jones and his People's Temple Agricultural Project, the location of what would come to be called "The Jonestown Massacre." Reiterman barely knew Jones, only introduced to him the one time the day prior to the dreadful slaughter. So, everything he writes about Jones is second-hand information, but second hand information expertly corroborated by the

extensive "paper trail" the People's Temple left behind in the many years of its existence from California to the middle of "God's Own Nowhere" in western Guyana. Further, with Jones' death, still something of a mystery after all of these years, former members of the People's Temple and the handful of Jonestown survivors, including Jim Jones' own son, talked. And while there is no universal agreement on minor details as will always be the case with such events, the broad outlines of the story are firmly grounded by Reiterman's completely professional and praiseworthy detached fact and cross-checking. Had I been in Reiterman's shoes, I am not sure I could have achieved the calm dispassion that makes "Raven" such a credible analysis. And the picture that emerges in the six-hundred terrifying pages of this book is a story of sociopathic, narcissistic madness ensnaring not only Jones but the poor people he resolved to take with him on his macabre odyssey, his "death trip." But, Reiterman's dispassionate reporting does not obscure in the slightest the men, women, and children of the PTAP. They come across as human beings who, in search of a better life for themselves, followed a man they trusted into the green hell of the jungles. And through Jones' systemic terror and ham-handed - but effective - "brainwashing" techniques, they became shadows of what they were, but in far too many instances hardly the "brainless zombies" described in mass media. Reiterman's humanization of these lost souls so easily dismissed as zany, addled fools is a work of redemptive power. Plain and simple, they were victims undeserving of their horrid and outre endings, an ending Reiterman almost shared. This is not a lurid, red-covered "true crime" penny dreadful, but a serious work of investigative journalism. It is likely the closest we will ever come to comprehending the "why" of Jonestown, assuming for a moment that such a thing is even possible. Recommended, but on the understanding that this work is distressing and profoundly sad. Not for the faint of heart.

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