

Apollo Project 3
Reasoning

Rajneeshpuram (Topic)

- City in Oregon

Leader

- Formally known as Chandra Mohan Jain (nicknamed Rajneesh) and then changed name to Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh (meaning God)
- He was a professor of philosophy in the 1960's but later lost his job because of the meditation camps that he ran.
- Losing his job wasn't a big deal because the meditation camps brought in quite a lot of money.
- He openly discussed controversial topics like capitalism and birth control.

About the cult In India-

- By the end of the 1970's, there were over 600 permanent residents (this is still in India)
- Meditation sessions were meant to release emotion. Many sessions became violent and resulted in the injury of multiple different people.
- Std's were spread due to the casual sex occurring.
- White westerners outnumbered the Indians. They took to selling drugs on the streets of India to be able to afford the housing the Rajneesh was providing.
- People with weaker emotional health, would often end up in a mental hospital.
- The cult in India was torn down because Rajneesh was not paying taxes.

The move to Oregon in chronological order

(Notes from a documentary)

Rajneesh's original assistant was named Ma Yoga Laxmi. After Rajneesh's huts were torn down, they needed to find a new place to set up. Sheela was to fill the role of secretary while Yoga was looking for a new place. Sheela found a new place before Ma Yoga and basically shoved her out of the way and became Rajneesh's new assistant. Sheela found The Big Muddy Ranch in the state of Oregon but before they were able to move they needed bureaucratic authority.

After gaining bureaucratic authority, to live there, every structure on the land had to be for farming. But the Rajneeshie people wanted to become an incorporated city. They

wanted this so they could create their own oversight council. To do this they needed only 150 people, which they had plenty.

To insure that they would gain bureaucratic authority, Sheela lied to The 1000 Friends of Oregon saying that their intent was to preserve the land.

Rajneesh and Sheela were telling the members to sell their belongings back home.

Having their own city wasn't enough and they wanted to start using the town a few miles over land (Antelope. Pop 40)

They wanted to build a printing factory and an administration office in Antelope.

The people living in Antelope were becoming angry because Antelope was a quiet and extremely small town, mainly housing retired people

The Rajneesh people sued Antelope.

The Rajneeshie people and the citizens of Antelope agreed to have a special election on April 15, 1982

Rajneesh began to want materials like fancy cars and expensive jewelry

Rajneesh was denied a permanent citizenship

The Rajneeshie people continued to lie about the structures in Rajneeshpuram being for farming

They started the Peace Force (their law enforcement) by sending the Rajneeshie people through the police academy

On July 29, 1983 a bomb was launched by Stephen Paul Pastor on Hotel Rajneesh in Portland. He injured himself while trying to plant the bombs, so his goal of blowing up the entire hotel was not successful. He was part of an Islamic cult.

Rajneesh and Sheela began to instruct the Westerners to start marrying foreigners to help them obtain a permanent citizenship.

After the bombing, Rajneesh was always guarded.

Sheela began to tranquilize members who would ask to leave until they wanted to stay.

A Rajneeshpuram member named Sonya attempted to write a letter to Rajneesh complaining about Sheela. Sheela got ahold of the letter before Rajneesh did and Sheela ordered to have Sonya's uterus removed.

They began to tell problematic people they contracted aids and quarantine away from the others. To continue the lie, the cults nurse Ma Anand Puja, injected the problematic members with drugs to keep them ill.

Sick members weren't able to go see a doctor outside of Rajneeshpuram and were forced to do manual labor through their illness.

The Hollywood people began to join.

Sheela began to tap the pay phones at the hotel, the Hollywood people's houses, and Rajneesh's house.

Ma Anand Puja began to give Sheela sedatives which began to make her paranoid.

Rajneesh also began to take drugs but he began to take Valium (depressant)

Sheela and Ma Anand Puja set up a hidden lab to create biological weapons that wouldn't trace back to the commune.

They settled on salmonella.

Next, 3 county inspectors came to inspect the construction. Sheela sabotaged their car. While they were waiting for repairs, Sheela gave them each a glass of water contaminated with salmonella.

One of the men was rushed to the hospital and would have died without treatment.

The Rajneeshie people were being sent into the town Dalles to try and sicken county workers but their plan failed.

Sheela began going to grocery stores to smear salmonella onto the lettuce at the store. Rajneesh kept pushing Sheela to get rid of the people trying to stop him from building his commune.

The election in Wasco County (November 1984)

Sheela set up a plan to become commissioner.

Sheela proposed the Share a Home project where she would house the homeless.

Sheela took a group of trusted members to drive around to 10 different restaurants to dump the salmonella cultures into the salad bar to lesson the turn out at the voting polls.

751 people were affected, 45 were hospitalized, and a pregnant woman nearly lost her baby.

Then they attempted to poison the Wasco county water. They dumped raw sewage into the water tanks in Wasco county.

Rajneeshpuram needed to pick someone to go onto the ballot. The woman chosen was proven guilty of voter fraud for trying to get votes under her Rajneesh name and her birth name.

The people in Rajneeshpuram began to lace the homeless beer with antipsychotics to stop fights because of unfair treatment.

Later at a trial for improper electrical wiring in Rajneeshpuram, Sheela laced the drinking water (the commune lost the case).

A city council member was in the hospital recovering from an ear surgery. Sheela entered the hospital, planning to inject a poison through his iv. When she arrived to his room she say he didn't have an IV so she left.

Sheela tried to have the man investigating the sham marriages in Rajneeshpuram killed (not a success)

Sheela found out that Rajneesh was going to kill himself by lethal injection.

She attempted to have the nurse that was going to inject him killed (not a success)

Sheela left Rajneeshpuram because the grand jury decided to indict Rajneesh, Sheela, and the leadership council for invading immigration laws but Rajneesh wasn't aware of this yet.

Rajneesh lifted most of Sheela's rules.

Rajneesh found out.

Rajneesh tried to flee to Bermuda, but only made it to North Carolina when he was found and deported to India.

Sheela was found in Germany and extradited to America. She was given 20 years in prison but was let out after two years on parole.

Mr. Wards ? 's

What constitutes a cult vs. a religion?

A cult doesn't let you leave

A religion wants you to stay but they're not going to come after you if stop believing.

A cult only lets you associate with other cult members.

Cult leaders think that they are the road to salvation. Take a catholic priest for instance.

He or she might love the spotlight but do not consider themselves the god.

A cult requires you to live with other cult members. In a religion, you leave the church, you associate with people who have differing faiths, and then you reconvene at the church every so often to worship.

Cults are secretive. Only certain people know important info. Religions aren't

Why does one get a bad rap but not the other?

Cults are often very extreme. Rajneeshpuram wouldn't let people leave and when they tried to, Sheela would tranquilize them. In a traditional religion like Christianity you can leave whenever you want to. In most churches, it is okay to challenge the faith and ask questions. But that is not okay in a cult and questioning often puts the members in a

Are cult members victims?

This is subjective but I do think that cult members are victims. A lot of people who end up joining cults are seeking clarity in their own life. They often find themselves falling under a leader's control. Most of the Rajneeshpuram members joined thinking they were doing no harm. They thought that this was a good thing and they joined because they had a mutual love for Rajneesh. When things in the commune started to go wrong most of the members weren't aware. The people who know the financial information

were high up. People were also told to sell their possessions on the move to Oregon, so most members were kinda stuck because their whole life was in Rajneeshpuram. Parents dragged their children to Oregon and other children were born into the cult.

Mind control can change the brain and people's core beliefs (psychological abuse)

Why does the general public frown upon cults while also glorify them?

Cults often entails bad things, like murder and chaos. Being extreme on either side of the spectrum is normally frowned upon.

Cult members stories before cults are often similar to our own. They had a normal life. Maybe a typical job, college educated, maybe with children. It is hard to look away from things that we relate to. People are intrigued by the idea that they could be susceptible to mind control. Most people would like to think that we are independent minded and wouldn't fall victim to manipulation, but that's not always true.

MI Krishna Deva, former mayor of Rajneeshpuram, told the FBI in his testimony that “Sheela told him during a trip to India which they took in 1985, that she had injected her first husband [Marc Harris Silverman] with an injection that caused his death.” After prison, Sheela married Urs Birnstiel, a Swiss citizen, who died of AIDS shortly after their marriage.) [Look more into](#)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_ZEE1b133k

Sheela Interviews

Timeline Notes-
Oregon-

Drugs in Rajneeshpuram

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Weapons in Rajneeshpuram

After a Rajneesh hotel was bombed, the sannyasins acquired a large cache of approximately 100 semiautomatic weapons—more than the entire Oregon police force combined—and a million rounds of AK-47 ammunition.

Salmonella

1000 Friends of Oregon

Rajneeshpuram Taxes

Rajneesh's name does not appear on any known document of ownership of a single enterprise or piece of property anywhere in the world.

The Rajneesh Foundation in India, whose tax-exempt status as a charitable institution had been revoked, was effectively disbanded when seven of its eleven officers resigned their positions just as they and Rajneesh were leaving for the United States.

Sheela Before and During Rajneeshpuram

In 1981, Rajneesh appointed India-born Sheela as his secretary and she was tasked with finding a new location for the commune in order to expand their commune after losing the one in Pune

Sheela After Rajneeshpuram

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/bollywood/osho-s-controversial-aide-ma-anand-sheela-recounts-how-the-guru-loved-her-explained-umrao-jaan-s-poetry-to-her/story-yvcrzoiroQYQ7F7rsfxIRJ.html> **18**

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Sheela addresses Rajneesh as “my lover”.

Sheela Biernstiel - aka Ma Anand Sheela – has created a new life for herself in Switzerland as a carer for the mentally disabled, leaving behind her notoriety as the suspected mastermind behind a bioterror plot in the United States.

Sheela had acquired Swiss nationality through her marriage in 1984 to a Swiss national who was in charge of the Zurich Rajneesh commune. Her husband died while she was serving her prison term in the US, leaving her with nobody to depend on. A German lawyer, who she had an affair with, refused to leave his wife and start a new life with her.

Later on, she rented a house and took in six elderly disabled patients in 1990. She built up her reputation as a competent carer and five years later she moved to a bigger place and was responsible for 16 patients.

A law on caring for the disabled was eventually introduced and Sheela says she worked hard to meet the requirements. In 2008, her home received government accreditation.

Her work today is all consuming with a total of 29 patients in the two homes under her care.

Rajneesh before Rajneeshpuram

In the 1960s he traveled throughout India as a public speaker and was a vocal critic of socialism, arguing that India was not ready for socialism and that socialism, communism, and anarchism could evolve only when capitalism had reached its maturity. Rajneesh also criticised Mahatma Gandhi, and the orthodoxy of mainstream religions. Rajneesh emphasized the importance of meditation, mindfulness, love, celebration, courage, creativity, and humour—qualities that he viewed as being suppressed by adherence to static belief systems, religious traditions, and socialisation.

Meditation

Immigration Fraud in Rajneeshpuram

<https://www.upi.com/Archives/1985/12/13/Five-Rajneeshees-plead-guilty-to-immigration-fraud/9486503298000/> 20

(article from 1985)

“Federal prosecutors moved a step closer Friday to wrapping up what they called the largest recorded marriage fraud case in U.S. history when five disciples of guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh pleaded guilty to conspiracy to arrange sham marriages.”

5 female members of Rajneeshpuram changed their innocent plea to a guilty plea on a plea bargain and placed on probation for 5 years.

A federal judge ordered for 2 of the women who were in the USA without a visa to leave the country within 30 days.

Rajneesh plead guilty to two counts of immigration fraud and paid a \$400,000 fine. He returned to his native India.

Sheela plead guilty to attempted murder, grievous bodily harm, wiretapping, and immigration fraud. Sheela was sentenced to 20 years in prison, and fined \$470,000. (Sheela was let out after 2 years on parole)

Attempted murders in Rajneeshpuram

(David Berry Knapp, aka Swami Krishna Deva, former mayor of Rajneeshpuram, told the FBI in his testimony that “Sheela told him during a trip to India which they took in 1985, that she had injected her first husband [Marc Harris Silverman] with an injection that caused his death.” After prison, Sheela married Urs Birnstiel, a Swiss citizen, who died of AIDS shortly after their marriage.) [Look more into](#)

Almost immediately the movement ran into conflict with county residents and the state government, and a succession of legal battles concerning the ashram's construction and continued development curtailed its success. In 1985, in the wake of a series of serious crimes by his followers, including a mass food poisoning attack with salmonella bacteria and an aborted assassination plot to murder U.S. Attorney Charles H. Turner, Rajneesh alleged that his personal secretary Ma Anand Sheela and her close supporters had been responsible. He was later deported from the United States

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_ZEE1b133k 22

Sheela Interviews

<https://www.newsweek.com/wild-wild-country-sex-cult-member-reveals-truth-about-orgies-sterilizations-876747>

Rajneeshpuram member interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UDMjBdHjLBo>

Rajneesh interview

Monologue Research

Monologue definition-

a long speech by one actor in a play or movie, or as part of a theatrical or broadcast program.

Monologue comes from the Greek words *monos*, which means “alone,” and *logos*, which means “speech.” It is a literary device that is the speech or verbal presentation given by a single character in order to express his or her collection of thoughts and ideas aloud.

Often such a character speaks directly to the audience, or to another character.

Monologues are found in dramatic medium like films and plays, and also in non-dramatic medium like poetry.

<https://literarydevices.net/monologue/>

The ringleader’s speech is directed to the audience. His monologue helps him build anticipation and excitement in his viewers while he foreshadows some of the thrills the performance will contain.

Video notes:

Use certain vocabulary- if the person is uneducated have speak in a fairly simple manner
If the person is educated- make them speak using a broad and wide vocabulary

Help explain a character’s motivations, plans, or crises

Set up a monologue like a story- beginning, middle, end

At the end you should lead into what happens next.

Monologue Brainstorm **(Unused info)**

2 different monologues

1 in the perspective of a Rajneeshpuram member
1 as a Wasco county citizen

Wasco county person is angry that their town is being taken over by what they think is a cult. They believe that they were there first and they are more worthy of the land. They just wanted a quiet retirement in a small town. They are scared for their lives and homes. They think Rajneeshies are crazy hippies.

The Rajneeshpuram member is also angry. They are trying to live as their genuinely selves and think that Antelope is a dying town anyway so it doesn't matter what they do with they land.

Wasco county citizen:

Male
Old
Married
Angry
Uneducated
Catholic

Rajneeshee:

Female
Younger- 30-35ish
Not married, very sexually active with other people
Angry
Deep love for Rajneesh
Overworked but unaware
Educated
Brainwashed and manipulated

Oregon citizen:

Quite frankly I think it's ridiculous
Those hippies think that they can march over here and steal what we've all worked so hard for

A peaceful place to settle down and retire with our wives
Alone
Without liberals shoving their leftist thought process down our throats
Just last night, one of them was shining a flashlight right into my bedroom window
My wife screamed bloody murder and I reached down for my shot gun
With my gun in my hand I stompt towards the window and tore the curtains open
There stood a small girl in red
As if this was some type of idiotic test
Begging to see if they pushed us far enough to shoot a child
My wife and neighbors have said for weeks that they fear being killed in their sleep by
one of them
I've watched from my front porch as they laugh and stumble down the road just ready to
tear down another part of Antelope
Day in and day out more destruction has been brought on by this mess
They must leave before someone gets seriously hurt
Whether that be one of us
Or one of them

Rajneeshee:

He's so beautiful
I think I will never see such a sight as Bagwan
As he speaks, his words lift me
Pouring into my ears and down my limbs
Everytime I hear him speak, I feel brighter
He is as enlightened as they come

The people of Antelope think we are intruding
We are building
We are reviving a deceased town
We are bring Antelope back to life

Trying again: Take two-

Rajneeshee:

(Jane Stork telling the story of when she attempted to kill Bagwans nurse)

I must protect him
He must be safe
Sheela's instructions repeat over and over in my head
Kill him
I am unsettlingly calm
Unfazed
I am doing what is best for everyone
Kill him
I approach the

I was calm
I truly believed I was going the right thing
Standing up for my people
Keeping someone who was so important to me safe
It was crowded
Everyone was cheering and shouting
Winning the election was proper cause to start our celebrations early
I walked into the crowd
All my anxiety was gone
I was unfazed
I stepped even deeper into the crowd of Rajneeshees
Then I saw him
Swami Devaraj
I smile kindly
When I approach him I leaned in
As if I was ready to tell him something
And then I take the syringe out of my pocket and push it into the back of his leg
He steps back
I drop the syringe to the floor and kick it away

His eyes fill with panic and fear
And I turn around and walk out of the commune

Wasco County:

Quite frankly, I think it is ridiculous. Those hippies think that they can march over here and steal what we've all worked so hard for- a peaceful place to settle down and retire with our wives. Alone. Without those liberals shoving their leftist thought process down our throats. Just last night, one of them was shining a flashlight right into my bedroom window. My wife screamed bloody murder and I reached down for my shot gun. With my gun in my hand I stomped towards the window and tore the curtains open. There stood a small girl in red. As if this was some type of idiotic test, begging to see if they pushed us far enough to shoot a child. My wife and neighbors have said for weeks that they fear being killed in their sleep by one of them. I've watched from my front porch as they laugh and stumble down the road just ready to tear down another part of Antelope. Day in and day out more destruction has been brought on by this mess. They must leave before someone gets seriously hurt. Whether that be one of us. Or one of them.

Concept #1: Sheela is writing a letter to Rajneesh after she left, asking him questions and telling him how much she loves him. She is talking about the lengths that she goes to to protect him and keep people happy.

Dear Bagwan,
I hope this message makes it to you
It's been 3 days since I left Oregon
I am sure you are quite resentful of me at the moment
Forgive me
But I only left to

The Rajneeshees often played games with the people in Oregon. Many Antelope citizens reported Rajneeshees shining flashlights into their windows in the middle of the night. Many people became fearful for their lives after the Rajneeshee people lost the last election.

Rajneesh emphasized the importance of meditation, mindfulness, love, celebration, courage, creativity, and humour—qualities that he viewed as being suppressed by adherence to static belief systems, religious traditions, and socialisation.

I have wanted peace all my life
A quiet place to live where I can slowly reach the end of my life
My husband and I chose Antelope
We thought it would be silent for our last few years
Buying a house and creating a home was fun at first
No job to attend
Only time to waste
Our lives completely shifted when the Rajneeshees came into Oregon
Our peaceful retirement was uprooted and that idea was thrown away
At first the feeling was simply annoyance
Just a minor inconvenience that we would have to learn to work around
My husband and I soon learned that that was incorrect
The Rajneeshee people would change our lives forever

Used monologues

A Hollywood Person

I often miss the glamor

The attention

The love

Bagwan loved me

He loved when I would buy him fancy cars

And beautiful jewelry

Every once in a while I hear it

“Beverly Hills Clique”

Or “The Hollywood people”

He loved me for me

Not just my money

And not just for my name

People called him money hungry

People thought he was starved for power

I think he was a loving man

And we just enjoyed lining his wallet with cash

“Money [is] easier to get from those who have it,” instructs the confidential minutes of a coordinators’ meeting at Rajneeshpuram on November 14, 1982. “If anyone knows any people with some connection with Bhagwan who have money, give the name to Mrudula to call them.”

His 5,000 followers filled his pockets with roughly 100 million dollars. Despite spending thousands on a massive movie collection and enough nitrous oxide to put down a horse (he even bought a \$12,000 dentist chair) Rajneesh still had enough money to buy 2 Rolls Royces a month.

Published in a magazine in 1983, Laxmi (Rajneesh's 1st personal secretary) said, “The family was rich.” Sheela’s father reportedly was a relatively prosperous Indian landowner. Of herself, and her upbringing, Sheela once offered: “I was spoiled as a child, I was spoiled as I grew up, and I’m still spoiled.” Laxmi was replaced due to wealth. Sheela was wealthy and so was her family. Laxmi wasn’t nearly as wealthy as Sheela. When it came to the Hollywood people, Rajneesh heavily favored them. An Indian journalist once told the Oregonian: “He knew what the rich people want. They want to justify their guilty consciences, to justify their guilty acts.” In 1983, a group of defectors

from Rajneeshpuram calling themselves the “Wild Geese” (after the title of Rajneesh’s last lecture in India before leaving for the United States, “The Goose Is Out”) wrote regarding Rajneeshpuram: “Only those that give large donations of money to the organization and those with the needed technical skills are allowed to stay.

Rajneeshee

Before I found Bagwan, I was lost

I felt constrained by myself

My own expectations

It was almost as if I was grasping for something that wasn’t there

Holding on to nothing

Slowly falling deeper and deeper into a depression

My career was stagnant and I felt alone

I needed clarification on my path

Was I heading in the right direction?

Is it okay that I am 30 and unmarried without any children to care for

I wasn’t sure

So I sought the knowledge of someone who was brighter than me

“Enlightened”

And I found something that was much darker than where I started

Why do people join cults? Often, people are seeking enlightenment. They feel as if there is a hole in their life that needs to be filled so they follow a “leader”. Humans desire comfort, and in a fearful and uncertain world many turn to cults because they tend to promote the idea of comfort. Cult leaders often make promises that are totally unattainable, but also offered by no other group in society. Such things might include financial security, total health, constant peace of mind, and eternal life — the things every human desires at the deepest level. Cults are very secretive which can lead to people joining one without really knowing what the cult entails.

The idea of this monologue is to show the desperation that a lot of the Rajneeshees had. They felt like there was something better out there and they sought just that. Most members were kept in the dark about events that went down in Rajneeshpuram. They

saw happy people meditating when really it went a lot deeper than that. When Rajneeshpuram was put to a stop, the other members were finally able to know what was going on. The attempted murders, finances, and basic information was finally out in the open. The speaker in this monologue is talking about her life before Rajneeshpuram and how she wanted a better life for herself. She talks about being depressed and feeling stuck. But when she does find something (Rajneeshpuram) it isn't quite what she was looking for.

Final monologues and their explanations:

A Hollywood Person

I often miss the glamor
The attention
The love
Bhagwan loved me
He loved when I would buy him fancy cars
And beautiful jewelry
Every once in a while I hear it
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