

THE RISE AND FALL OF

RANCHO RAJNEESH.

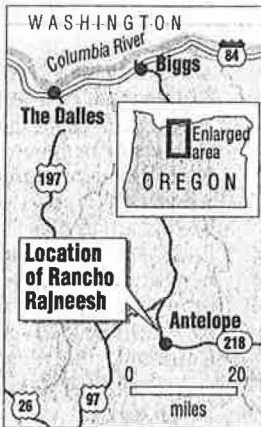
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The extradition of Sally Ann Croft, 44, and Susan Hagan, 46, from England to Oregon to stand trial may not be the final chapter in the tale of Rancho Rajneesh. Ma Anand Sheela is still a fugitive. But their arrival in Portland Thursday brings to mind the whole, wild tale.

■ MAY 1981

— Under investigation for tax evasion and immigration fraud in Poona, India, Rajneeshee leaders move their commune to the United States. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh enters the country on a medical visa to get treatment for a supposedly ailing back.

■ **JULY** — Ma Anand Sheela, Rajneesh's chief lieutenant, finds an isolated, 100-square-mile ranch near Antelope in Central Oregon, and the sect buys it for \$5.75 million. Hundreds of red-clad Rajneeshees toil around the clock to build a city.



■ AUGUST

— Rajneesh arrives at the ranch by Learjet, accompanied by Yoga Vivek, his longtime British companion. Under his and Sheela's direction, more than 400 foreign Rajneeshees apply for U.S. citizenship based on sham marriages with Americans. Most of the applicants are west Europeans on tourist visas.



Vivek

■ **OCTOBER** — The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service launches a fraud investigation.

■ **NOVEMBER** — Rajneesh applies for permanent residence as a spiritual teacher, setting off a fight with the U.S. Immigration Service.

■ **MAY 18, 1982** — Rajneeshees incorporate their own city, Rajneeshpuram, on 2,013 acres of the ranch. The purpose is to get around Oregon land-use laws.

■ **OCTOBER** — Rajneeshpuram forms an armed police force.

■ **OCT. 1983** — Oregon attorney general sues to dissolve Rajneeshpuram, saying the city violates constitution provisions for separation of church and state. Wasco County officials cause trouble by refusing building permits that are essential to the commune's growth.

■ **JAN. 1984** — Sheela, fearing law enforcement agents and dissident Rajneeshees, begins bugging the ranch. She spends \$100,000 a month to install a sophisticated system of phone-taps and hidden microphones in cabins, workplaces and hotel rooms. A secret microphone is planted in a restaurant table. At least 36 commune telephones, including public pay phones used by visitors, are monitored around the clock. Sheela claims later that Rajneesh ordered the bugging, saying he saw enemies everywhere and was stoned frequently on valium and laughing-gas.

■ **MARCH** — Rajneeshee security force buys 47 assault rifles, plus other weapons and hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition. Members fire at human silhouette targets.

■ **AUG. 24** — Two Wasco County commissioners, William Hulse and Ray Matthew, are given water tainted with salmonella germs during a visit to the ranch.

■ **SEPTEMBER** — Rajneeshees pick up more than 3,000 homeless people from streets around the country and bus them to the ranch. The "guests" are supplied with voter registration cards, and some are fed Haldol, a powerful tranquilizer, in mashed potatoes.

■ **SEPT. 12** — Plainclothes Rajneeshees sprinkle lab-cultured salmonella germs on salad bars in four restaurants in The Dalles, sickening an estimated 750 people. One perpetrator later confesses that the purpose was to test the feasibility of contaminating The Dalles' water supply to keep non-Rajneeshee voters home during the November election.

■ **OCTOBER** — Amid accusations of voter fraud, Rajneeshees begin expelling homeless people from the ranch, dumping hundreds on the street in Portland and The Dalles. Social service agencies feel the strain.

■ **JAN. 1985** — Sheela gathers a group of zealots and allegedly draws them into a plot to kill several enemies of the sect including then-U.S. Attorney Charles H. Turner and then-Oregon Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer. Sheela's group includes, allegedly, Prem Savita, the former Sally Ann Croft, a British accountant who managed the ranch's financial affairs; Anand Puja, the former Diane Ivonne Onang, a Filipino-born nurse practitioner who conducted medical experiments; Shanti Bhadra, formerly Catherine Jane Paul Elsea, Australian-born treasurer of Rajneesh Foundation International, Rajneesh's church; Yoga Vidya, also known as Ann P. McCarthy, a dual German and South African citizen; Anand Su, an English citizen also known then as Susan Lissanevitch, president of Rajneesh Investment Corp.; Dhyan Yogini, an Arizonan

who also used the name Alma Peralta Potter, Sheela's bodyguard; Ava, a Californian whose true name was Ava Kay Avalos, a member of the commune security force; Prem Samadhi, also known as Carol Matthews, who allegedly helped with the wiretapping and voter fraud plots; and Anugiten, a New Yorker formerly known as Richard Kevin Langford, who also had a hand in the wiretapping plot, allegedly, and the capture of field mice for Puja's research.

■ **JAN. 14** — On Sheela's orders, members of the zealot squad burglarize the Wasco County courthouse and set fire to the planning office.

■ **FEB. 13** — Jefferson County District Attorney Michael C. Sullivan suffers a near-fatal illness that is later thought to be arsenic poisoning.

■ **Spring** — Two women in janitorial uniforms are confronted inside The Oregonian building without proper identification; later, authorities learn that they were Ava and another Rajneeshee sent to sabotage computers used by reporters investigating the sect.

■ **JUNE** — Sheela watches jealously as a clique of wealthy disciples gains favor with Rajneesh. Sheela is especially frightened of Prem Hasya, a former Beverly Hills socialite who is married to Devaraj, Rajneesh's trusted physician. Fearing that Devaraj will use his access to the guru to promote Hasya to replace her, Sheela plots with cronies to poison Devaraj.

■ **JULY 6** — Shanti Bhadra, an Australian sannyasin allied with Sheela, stabs Devaraj with a poison syringe during a commune celebration, sending him into near-fatal convulsions. Devaraj spends 10 days in a Bend hospital.

■ **AUGUST** — Sect members who are enemies of Sheela are sent to the ranch's medical clinic for heavily drugged "rest cures." Some are declared falsely to have AIDS, and are sent to an isolation camp. The ranch falls into disarray; several high-level members slip away.

■ **SEP. 13-15** — Sheela resigns as Rajneesh's secretary and departs for Europe. Three of the Dowager Duchesses go with her. This is followed by a quickening exodus of other Rajneeshee officials including Shanti Bhadra, who had wielded the poison needle, and Rajneeshpuram's "mayor," Krishna Deva.

■ **SEP. 16** — In an extraordinary public meeting with his disciples, Rajneesh publicly accuses Sheela and her companions of a mind-boggling list of crimes. He invites outside authorities to investigate, and the ranch soon swarms with FBI agents and state police. They pull microphones out of walls and discover two clandestine laboratories where biological and chemical agents were tested.

■ **OCT. 23-25** — A federal grand jury secretly indicts Rajneesh and seven others on 35 counts of immigration fraud. A Wasco County grand jury secretly indicts Sheela, Shanti Bhadra and Anand Puja for trying to murder Rajneesh's physician, Devaraj.

■ **OCT. 27** — Rajneesh, tipped off that he's about to be arrested, flees the ranch in a chartered jet. He is arrested in Charlotte, N.C., as the jet stops to refuel en route to Bermuda. Federal agents seize nearly \$1 million worth of jewelry, two bank bags stuffed with \$58,522 in currency, and a .38-caliber Smith & Wesson revolver loaded with Teflon-coated bullets. They dismantle Rajneesh's throne-like chair looking for further loot, but find nothing.

■ **OCT. 28** — West German police arrest Sheela, Shanti Bhadra and Puja on the Wasco County charges. Back in Oregon, Krishna Deva, the former Rajneeshpuram mayor, secretly signs a plea deal in which he agrees to become a prosecution witness against Sheela and the others.

■ **NOV. 14** — Rajneesh pleads guilty to two immigration felonies, pays \$400,000 in fines and costs, and leaves for India.

■ **NOV. 22** — Krishna Deva pleads guilty to a state racketeering charge and a federal immigration conspiracy charge. He gives Frohnmayer a detailed statement describing how Rajneesh and Sheela controlled the ranch. Prem Niren, the sect's chief lawyer and the last important leader left at the ranch, announces that the commune will be closed and the ranch sold.

■ **DEC. 5** — Frohnmayer files a civil racketeering suit against 26 Rajneeshee organizations.

■ **DEC. 10** — U.S. District Judge Helen Frye strikes down the incorporation of Rajneeshpuram, saying it violated constitutional separation of church and state.

■ **DEC. 13** — In federal court in Portland, five Rajneeshees plead guilty to immigration charges. One admits conspiracy to commit electronic eavesdropping. Non-Rajneeshees are sworn in as city officials of Antelope, ending Rajneeshee rule of the village near the ranch.

■ **DEC. 19** — Two more Rajneeshees plead guilty to conspiracy to commit electronic eavesdropping

■ **DEC. 20** — A federal grand jury in Portland indicts Sheela and 20 other Rajneeshees on electronic eavesdropping conspiracy charges. Another pleads guilty although not named in the indictment. This makes a total of 25 who are either under indictment or who have pleaded guilty on this particular charge.

■ **JULY 1986** — Rajneesh returns to India after unsuccessful efforts to enter Nepal, Greece, Britain, the West Indies, Fiji, Spain and Uruguay, among others.

■ **NOV. 1986** — Texas car dealer Robert L. Roethlisberger buys Rajneesh's 85 remaining Rolls Royces for an undisclosed sum.

■ **JAN. 1987** — Indian government gives Rajneesh permission to live at his old commune in Poona.

■ **OCT. 27** — The Oregon attorney general's office begins distributing \$295,458 in compensation to victims of The Dalles salmonella outbreak.

■ **DEC. 22, 1988** — Connecticut General Life Insurance Co. forecloses the mortgage on Rancho Rajneesh and buys it back for \$4.5 million.

■ **DEC. 11, 1989** — Yoga Vivek, Rajneesh's former longtime companion, dies of an overdose of sleeping pills at the commune in India. The day is Rajneesh's birthday

■ **DEC. 1988** — Rajneesh announces from Poona that he will be known henceforth as Rajneesh Guatama the Buddha.

■ **APRIL 17, 1989** — Diva Rikta, formerly Phyllis Caldwell, pleads guilty to a wiretap conspiracy charge in federal court in Portland. She gets probation.

■ **DEC. 13** — Sheela is released from federal prison and deported to Germany, still owing Oregon \$200,000 in fines and \$69,353 to Wasco County for arson damage to the planning office.

■ **NOV.** — Yogini contacts federal authorities from exile in West Germany. She provides key information about the Turner murder plot in exchange for a light sentence. In September 1980 she gets two years in federal prison. She is released May 20, 1992, from a Seattle halfway house.

■ **JUNE 19, 1990** — Rajneesh, who has changed his name again — to Osho — dies in Poona of "heart failure," his disciples say. His death comes after he names a medium to receive his messages from the beyond, says Devaraj, who signs the death certificate.

■ **MAY 25, 1990** – A federal grand jury in Portland indicts Sheela and six other Rajneeshees for allegedly plotting to murder U.S. Attorney Turner and Devaraj, Rajneesh's doctor who now calls himself Amrito. The indictment also names Savita, Shanti Bhadra, Yoga Vidya, Anand Su, Prem Samadhi and Anugiten. All but Sheela are also charged with illegal transportation of firearms.

■ **APRIL 26, 1991** – Anugiten, Puja's former mouse-catcher, admits conspiring to kill Turner. His plea bargain in federal court is for a five-year prison term, with dismissal of the wiretapping and firearms charges.



Who was who at Rancho Rajneesh. And how a community of free-love became the scene of some fantastic criminal plots.

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh:

The guru. Formerly Mohan Chandra Rajneesh, ex-philosophy teacher and newspaper copy editor. He drove from village to village in northeast India in the late 1960s, giving lectures and hawking books of his writings out of the trunk of his car. Then he discovered a golden talent: selling enlightenment to rich ladies in Bombay.

Renaming himself Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh – roughly "Sir God" – Rajneesh donned robes and organized a commune in Poona that drew hundreds of eager seekers, mostly from Germany, Holland and England. Rajneesh's spiritual trips were a popular mixture of eastern mysticism, western human-potential psychology and sexual free-for-alls.

Predictably, Rajneesh and his red-garbed followers came into serious conflict with conservative Indians and the Indian government. Amid charges of tax evasion and immigration fraud, Rajneesh in 1981 fled to the United States with key disciples and set up a commune in Oregon. He was deported in 1985 for immigration fraud, and eventually returned to Poona where he changed his name to Gautama the Buddha and, finally, to Osho.

Present status: reportedly deceased. His followers announced he died of "heart failure" Jan. 19, 1990, in the Poona commune.



Ma Anand Sheela:

Rajneesh's chief of staff. The former Sheela Ambalal Patel of Baroda, India.

Sheela deposed her predecessor and engineered the Rajneeshees' move to the United States. Shrewd and ruthless, Sheela kept a grip on power by going to extremes to fight opponents inside and outside Rancho Rajneesh.

She orchestrated a plan to seize political power in

Wasco County by poisoning non-Rajneeshee voters. She spent more than \$1 million installing the largest illegal electronic eavesdropping and wiretapping system ever discovered in the United States. She allegedly schemed to murder then-U.S. Attorney Charles H. Turner in hopes of derailing an immigration investigation that threatened to deport Rajneeshee leaders.

Cult members also felt her wrath. For instance, during an internal power struggle at the ranch, Sheela sent a crony to stab Rajneesh's doctor, Devaraj, with a poison syringe, out of fear that Devaraj was using his access to the guru to undermine her in favor of Devaraj's wife, Prem Hasya.

Present status: Sheela remains a federal fugitive and is believed to be tending bar in Switzerland. Although she was deported after serving 29 months in prison for crimes including poisoning of some 750 people with salmonella in The Dalles, she was indicted again in November 1990 for allegedly conspiring to kill Turner. However, U.S. authorities have been unable to extradite her because conspiracy isn't covered in U.S.-Swiss extradition treaties. Sheela gained Swiss citizenship by marrying Urs Birnstiel, a Zurich businessman formerly known as Dhyana Dipo. Birnstiel, who has since died of AIDS, also was wanted in Oregon on federal wiretapping charges, but couldn't be extradited, either, because of the treaty limitations.

**Ma Prem Savita:**

Rancho Rajneesh's main financial brain. Probably the most powerful of the Dowager Duchesses next to Sheela.

Savita – true name Sally Ann Croft – was the English equivalent of a certified public accountant. She joined Rajneesh in India in the 1970s and became his chief financial adviser. At Rancho Rajneesh she was listed as

an officer or director of nearly all of the Rajneeshees' multitude of business enterprises.

Savita allegedly handed out cash to finance the mammoth telephone tapping project and to buy cars and guns for the alleged assassination plot against Turner.

Present status: has been extradited to Portland; will appear in federal court Friday.

Ma Anand Su

Also known as Susan Strock, Susan Lissanevitch, and, most recently, as Susan Hagan. Another British citizen and a Dowager Duchess.

Anand Su, who once ran a hotel in Nepal, supervised Rancho Rajneesh's heavy equipment department and later became president of Rajneesh Investment Corp., the legal entity that owned the ranch

She had a role in the commune's "security force" that armed itself with assault rifles and practiced on human silhouette targets. She was one of 25 Rajneeshees indicted in the wiretapping case.

Present status: has been extradited to Portland; will appear in federal court Friday.

Prem Hasya

Hasya, formerly Françoise Ruddy of Beverly Hills, Calif., was a leader of the Rajneeshee "jet set" that won a power struggle against Sheela and the Dowager Duchesses in 1985.

Shanti Bhadra, a Sheela crony, plunged a hypodermic of poison into Hasya's husband, Devaraj, during a ranch celebration, almost killing him. Devaraj was Rajneesh's personal physician, and Sheela feared his influence with the guru.

Authorities now suspect that Sheela's preoccupation with cult rivals may have saved Turner's life by distracting her from following through on the alleged plot.

Present status: Hasya replaced Sheela as Rajneesh's secretary in the fall of 1985. She was never implicated in a crime. She remains a leader of the deceased guru's commune in Poona.