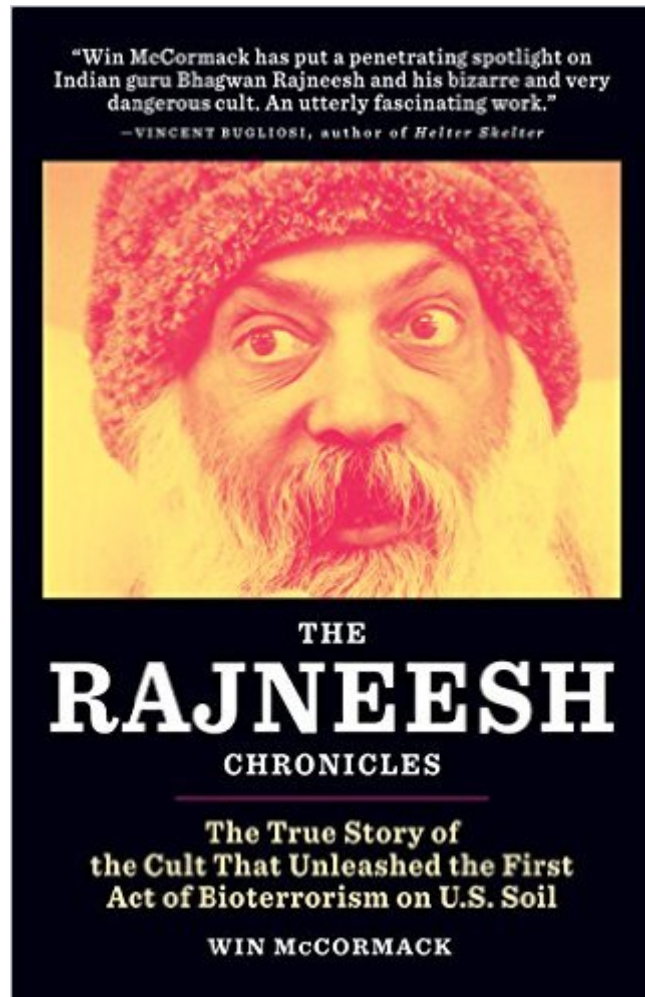


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The Rajneesh Chronicles: The True Story Of The Cult That Unleashed The First Act Of Bioterrorism On U.S. Soil



Synopsis

The Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and his followers were involved in nefarious activities including prostitution, drug smuggling, sexual abuse of children, and murder conspiracy. The Rajneesh Chronicles explains this behavior--and why the cult that committed the first act of bioterrorism in the U.S. was trying to cultivate a live AIDS virus. Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, widely known as the "sex guru," fled India in 1981 and came to settle on a ranch in central Oregon, where he and his followers established the illegal city of Rajneeshpuram. In their effort to preserve the city, the Rajneeshees attempted during the 1984 election to take control of the Wasco County government by poisoning two county commissioners and over 700 potential voters in The Dalles, the county seat, with salmonella—the first act of bio-terrorism in U.S. history. Armed to the teeth with semiautomatic weapons, they threatened to defend the city to the death against any governmental intrusion, and hatched a plot to assassinate a U.S attorney. When the commune finally imploded and authorities arrived on the scene, they discovered that the Rajneesh nurse who had cultivated salmonella bacteria in the commune's biological warfare laboratory was also trying to cultivate a live AIDS virus—which deranged group leaders clearly hoped to unleash on the rest of the world. The Rajneesh Chronicles is a collection of in-depth investigative and analytical articles published in Oregon Magazine covering the entire period from the time of the cult's arrival in Oregon in mid-1981 to its dramatic disintegration at the end of 1985 (with an introductory chronology that extends the story up to the present). While most press treated the cult's antics as a humorous sideshow typified by the Bhagwan's dozens of Rolls-Royces, editor in chief Win McCormack and other of the magazine's writers systematically exposed the full range of the Rajneeshees' depraved behavior, including their involvement in prostitution and international drug smuggling, sexual exploitation of children, abuse of homeless people they imported into Rajneeshpuram to register as voters, and the use of brainwashing techniques bordering on torture. The tale of the Rajneesh has become an amorphous legend few inside or outside of Oregon actually understand. The Rajneesh Chronicles fully illuminates the shocking reality behind that legend.

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Customer Reviews

This gets a bit heavy handed and repetitive towards the end, but there are some really interesting aspects to what was going on, and there is a lot of information collected in one book. Worth the read. One could also get into philosophical discussions about power and corruption, cults and group process, escalation from perceived threats and paranoia, etc.....

I haven't read the whole book, partly because, as a former, short-term disciple, I already know the stories. But I can see that the book is, as the subtitle promises, a series of investigative articles already published elsewhere in various contexts. The book focuses on the infamous scandals and other aspects of the notorious "cult" and the "hypnotist" who was its leader. The problem with this format is that it reduces the various participants into types and colors the entire experience, from the apartment in Bombay in the late 60's to the commune that finally imploded mid 80's, in gradations of "evil." If we were to take the same journalistic lens and turn it on American society, we would also see miscreants and manipulation everywhere: propaganda on a grand scale to justify two unnecessary wars; a recent president who was the product of a powerful political family, a gullible public, and professional image makers; massive greed and deception in the guise of deregulation that has caused many to lose their homes, their pension plans, and their jobs; torture authorized from the highest levels of government; and so on. And yet, we also know that the same society provides rights, a standard of living, opportunities, and freedoms not available in many other countries. The Catholic Church, for all the good it has done, has its own history of abuse, corruption, etc., but that does not invalidate the very real acts of compassion and generosity by people serving the poor and destitute. Books like "The Rajneesh Chronicles" can't be all things to all people, and so we have to turn to other books to fill in the picture. But still, a book of this length, with so many contributors, should acknowledge that the "cult" was not always so, that the abuses of power happen in many organizations, not to mention Shakespearean tragedies; and that human beings

seem to have this need, perhaps an instinct, to seek spiritual fulfillment by following one who seems to have attained it. Also, the vast majority of people living on the commune did not participate in crimes and were committed to a communal existence. They should be held responsible for their complicity, denial, or ignorance, but that does not mean that their actions were criminal. Many, many others left the "organization" at various points in its life cycle after it left Poona. Likewise, Bhagwan himself, for better or worse, changed, proving that, for all his talent, he was also human. One wrong doesn't justify another; I don't mean to be arguing that. But, again, a book like this should take responsibility for sending the message that "evil" is out there, apart from self, when the Rajneesh experiment was a mirror for all of us.

Living in Portland during the time the Rajneesh came to Oregon was an interesting time. Then the longer they were here the weirder it got. I just had no idea it was as bad as it was. This book really pulled the curtains back on what was really going on. To this day I still want to punch Ma Anand Sheela in the face

This book is big, long and quite thorough and detailed. Seems so weird people would be drawn to things like this and even more weird that a town could be overtaken by someone with many Rolls Royce automobiles (doesn't that give you a clue something is wrong??) - and that such bad stuff could go on, including poisoning. Not pleasant but I think truthful.

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