

July 17, 1983

To whom it may concern:

I work as a front page columnist for the Los Angeles Herald Examiner. I'm the author of a book of short stories, "The Dividing Line and Other Tales," and received a Master of Fine Arts degree from Columbia University. During the past three years I have signed movie contracts with Universal Studios, Time-Life Television, Warner Bros., NBC Television and Columbia Pictures. Also during this period I have contributed to a variety of national publications, including Rolling Stone magazine, on whose behalf I visited Rajneeshpuram for six days in September of 1982.

I was profoundly moved by my experience there. My time among the sannyasins of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and within the city they are building evoked levels of thought and feeling that have rendered articulation a far more challenging task than I had imagined. I don't think I could confine myself to anything shorter than a book on the subject.

I am of course in no position to pass a judgement on the Rajneeshees' belief that Bhagwan is a fully evolved being. Perhaps only a perfect disciple can recognize a perfect master. I have, though, made a rather extensive reading of Rajneesh's published discourses. In them, I encountered an uninterrupted flow of poetic logic, which Keats described as the beauty that draws its power from truth.

Perhaps Rajneesh is simply a very smart man -- his intelligence certainly overmatches my own -- but his assimilation of religious texts, secular education and inner experience has a fluency that seems to me more an organic profusion than an intellectual construction.

The personal credentials I listed at the beginning of this letter represent, I suppose, a considerable investment in the cultural apparatus. Rajneesh, the Rajneeshees and Rajneeshpuram have all confronted me at various levels with the futility of my own ambition. Writing as I am from the captial of greed, I should perhaps resent this, but in fact I am strangely grateful. This may be Un-American, but I don't think so. This country's highest ideal, possibly its only one, has always been a kind of amorphous belief in freedom. Perhaps a liberation from the endless cycles of competition, success and failure is the greatest possibility Rajneesh suggests. I don't know what this leads to, but it has to be more interesting than the self-destruction we are presently headed toward.

I've heard that the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service has argued that Rajneesh cannot be a "religious teacher" because he is publicly silent. Perhaps they should consider the possibility that he has already said everything there is to say. Maybe he's giving people time to listen.

EXHIBIT "A-751"

2

The message, if I could take the liberty of reducing it to an equation, seems to be that power is truth is beauty is love is surrender. Whether surrender is enslavement or liberation apparently remains the issue of contention. All I know is that while I was among the Rajneeshees, men and women wearing clothes of an almost uniform color, carrying pictures of the same man around their necks, living communally and working long hours without wages and within a structure that could easily be described as regimented, I had the distinct feeling they felt freer than they had ever been. I also appreciated that they have a sense of humor about themselves, though I would like to test that further.

Rajneeshpuram, in my understanding, means "Expression of Rajneesh." Perhaps this answers the silence issue; by its fruit you shall know the tree.

It should be unnecessary to point out that the Rajneeshees are developing their land with measures of both reverence and realism that this plot of land has not been treated to since the white man first arrived in the area. As a native Oregonian, I regard this as powerful evidence of an informing intelligence; I only wish more people on this planet (particularly in Los Angeles) were in touch with it.

I notice with amusement, and a small measure of embarrassment, that some people continue to refer to the Rajneeshees as a "free sex cult," and that this has been used against them by the most neurotic wing of their opposition. Reading Rajneesh, I've come across a lot more references to love than I have to sex, and the latter has always been subordinate to the former. This is hardly the ethos one encounters in an L.A. singles bar. I wish it was, because I'd much prefer to have free sex than to be charged for it.

Perhaps the most telling defense of Rajneesh that one could make is that his critics continually resort to arguments rooted in fear, ignorance and avarice. Intellectuals, of course, defend themselves with theories.

Finally, I would like to say that in a society where the ultimate form of oppression has become an insistence that the most a human being can aspire to is contentment, the disciples of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh are aiming at ecstasy. Why would anyone with a heart still beating want to oppose that?

-Randall Sullivan

