

Bio & Terror Bible

EXPOSING THE COMING BIO-TERROR PANDEMIC

BIOTERRORBIBLE.COM: Despite the number of high-profile bio-terror plots and patsies, the historical record indicates that 99% of all bio-terror plots, attacks, "tests", "accidents" and drills are conducted by the government who has the means, the motive and the opportunity.

Title: 1984 Rajneeshee Bioterror Attack

Date: 2012

Source: [Wikipedia](#)

Abstract: The 1984 Rajneeshee [bioterror](#) attack was the [food poisoning](#) of 751 individuals in [The Dalles, Oregon](#), United States, through the deliberate contamination of [salad bars](#) at ten local restaurants with [salmonella](#). A leading group of followers of [Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh](#) (now known as Osho) had hoped to incapacitate the voting population of the city so that their own candidates would win the 1984 [Wasco County](#) elections. The incident was the first, and single largest [bioterrorist](#) attack in United States history. The attack is one of only two confirmed terrorist uses of [biological weapons](#) to harm humans.

Having previously gained political control of [Antelope, Oregon](#), Rajneesh's followers based in nearby [Rajneeshpuram](#), Oregon, sought election to two of the three seats on the Wasco County Circuit Court that were up for election in November 1984. Fearing they would not gain enough votes, Rajneeshpuram officials decided to incapacitate voters in The Dalles, the largest population center in Wasco County. The chosen biological agent was [Salmonella enterica](#) Typhimurium, which was first delivered through glasses of water to two County Commissioners and then, on a larger scale, at salad bars and in salad dressing.

751 people contracted [salmonellosis](#) as a result of the attack; 45 of whom were hospitalized. There were no fatalities. Although an initial investigation by the [Oregon Public Health Division](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control](#) did not rule out deliberate contamination, the actual source of the contamination was only discovered a year later. On February 28, 1985, Congressman [James H. Weaver](#) gave a speech in the [United States House of Representatives](#) in which he "accused the Rajneeshees of sprinkling salmonella culture on salad bar ingredients in eight restaurants". At a press conference in September 1985, Rajneesh accused several of his followers of involvement in this and other crimes, including an [aborted plan](#) to [assassinate](#) a [United States Attorney](#); and he asked State and Federal authorities to investigate. [Oregon Attorney General David B. Frohn](#) set up an Interagency Task Force, composed of [Oregon State Police](#) and the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), and executed [search warrants](#) in [Rajneeshpuram](#). A sample of [bacteria](#) matching the contaminant that had sickened the town residents was found in a Rajneeshpuram medical laboratory. Two leading Rajneeshpuram officials were [indicted](#) and served 29 months in a minimum-security [federal prison](#).

Planning

Several thousand of Rajneesh's followers had moved onto the "Big Muddy Ranch" in rural [Wasco County](#), and established a city called [Rajneeshpuram](#). They had taken political control of the small nearby town of

[Antelope](#), Oregon (population: 75), whose name they changed to "Rajneesh". The group had started on friendly terms with the local population, but relations soon turned negative because of the unenthusiastic response from locals to the commune's expansion. After being denied building permits for Rajneeshpuram, the commune leadership sought to gain political control over the rest of the County by influencing the November 1984 County election. Their aim was to win two of three seats on the Wasco County Circuit Court, and the Sheriff's Office. Their attempts to influence the election included the "Share-a-Home" program, in which thousands of homeless people were transported to Rajneeshpuram to inflate the constituency of voters for the group's candidates. The Wasco County Clerk countered this attempt by enforcing a regulation that required all new voters to submit their qualifications when registering to vote.

The commune leadership planned to sicken and incapacitate voters in [The Dalles](#), where most of the voters resided, in continuation of their efforts to rig the election. Approximately twelve people were involved in the plots to employ biological agents, and at least eleven were involved in the planning process. No more than four appear to have been involved in development at the Rajneeshpuram medical laboratory, although not all of them were necessarily aware of the objectives their work served. At least eight individuals were involved with the actual distribution of the bacteria. The main planners of the attack included [Sheela Silverman](#) (Ma Anand Sheela), Rajneesh's chief lieutenant, and Diane Yvonne Onang (Ma Anand Puja), a nurse practitioner and secretary-treasurer of the Rajneesh Medical Corporation. Salmonella bacteria were purchased from a medical supply company in [Seattle, Washington](#), and cultured in labs located inside the commune. Contamination of the salad bars was considered a "trial run". The group also attempted to introduce [pathogens](#) into The Dalles' water system. If successful, the same techniques were to be used closer to [Election Day](#). This second part of the plan was never implemented because the commune decided to boycott the election when it became clear that those brought in through the "Share-a-Home" program would not be allowed to vote.

Salmonella Poisoning

Two visiting Wasco County commissioners were poisoned with glasses of water containing salmonella bacteria during a visit to Rajneeshpuram on August 29, 1984. Both men fell ill as a result, and one was hospitalized. Afterward, members of Sheela's team spread salmonella on [produce](#) in grocery stores and on doorknobs and urinal handles in the county courthouse, but this did not produce the desired effects. In September and October 1984, they contaminated the salad bars of 10 local restaurants with salmonella, infecting 751 people. Forty-five people received hospital treatment; all survived.

The primary delivery tactic involved one member concealing a plastic bag containing a light brown liquid with the salmonella bacteria, and either spreading it over the food at a salad bar, or pouring its contents into salad dressing. The perpetrators referred to the contaminated liquid as "salsa". By September 24, 1984, more than 150 people were violently ill. By the end of September, 751 cases of acute [gastroenteritis](#) were documented; lab results showed that all of the victims were infected with Salmonella enterica Typhimurium. Symptoms included diarrhea, fever, chills, nausea, vomiting, headaches, abdominal pain, and bloody stools. Victims ranged in age from an infant, born two days after his mother's infection and initially given a five-percent chance of survival, to an 87-year-old.

Local residents suspected that Rajneesh's followers were behind the poisonings, and turned out in droves on election day to prevent the organization from winning any county positions, thus rendering the terrorist plot unsuccessful. The Rajneeshes eventually withdrew their candidate from the November 1984 ballot. Only 239 of the commune's 7,000 residents voted. The outbreak cost local restaurants hundreds of thousands of dollars and health officials shut down the salad bars of the affected establishments. Some residents would not go out alone out of fear of further attacks. One resident stated: "People were so horrified and scared. People wouldn't go out, they wouldn't go out alone. People were becoming

prisoners."

Investigation

Officials and investigators from a number of different agencies were dispatched to The Dalles to investigate the cause of the outbreak. Dr. Michael Skeels, Director of the Oregon State Public Health Laboratory at the time, explained that the incident provoked such a large public health investigation because "it was the largest food-related outbreak in the U.S. in 1984". The investigation identified the bacteria responsible as [Salmonella enterica](#) Typhimurium and concluded that the outbreak had been due to food handlers' poor personal hygiene, as workers preparing food at the affected restaurants had fallen ill before most patrons had.

Oregon [Democratic](#) Congressman [James H. Weaver](#) continued to investigate because he felt the officials' conclusion did not adequately explain the facts. He contacted physicians at the [CDC](#) and other agencies and urged them to investigate Rajneeshpuram. According to Lewis F. Carter's *Charisma and Control in Rajneeshpuram*, "many treated his concern" as paranoid or as an example of "Rajneeshee bashing". On February 28, 1985, Weaver gave a speech on the floor of the [United States House of Representatives](#) in which he accused the Rajneeshees of sprinkling salmonella culture on salad bar ingredients in eight restaurants. As events later showed, Weaver had presented a well-reasoned, if only circumstantial, case, whose circumstantial elements were confirmed by evidence when investigators gained access to Rajneeshpuram several months later.

In the week starting Monday, September 16, 1985, Rajneesh, who had recently emerged from a four-year period of public silence and self-imposed isolation at the commune, convened press conferences where he stated that Sheela and 19 other commune leaders, including Puja, had left Rajneeshpuram over the weekend and gone to Europe. Following their departure, he said, he had received information from residents that Sheela and her team had committed a number of serious crimes. Calling them a "gang of fascists", he said they had attempted to poison his doctor and his female companion, as well as the [Jefferson County](#) district attorney and the water system in The Dalles. He added that he believed they had poisoned a county commissioner and Judge William Hulse, that they may have been responsible for the salmonella outbreak in The Dalles, and invited state and federal law enforcement officials to come to the Ranch and investigate. His allegations were initially greeted with skepticism by outside observers.

[Oregon Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer](#) established a task force among local and [Oregon State Police](#), the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#), the Sheriff's office, the [Immigration and Naturalization Service](#) and the [National Guard](#) that set up headquarters on the Ranch to investigate the allegations. Feeling they would need greater authority to perform an effective search, and fearing that evidence might be destroyed, they obtained [search warrants](#) and subpoenas; 50 investigators entered the Ranch on October 2, 1985. Dr. Skeels found glass vials containing salmonella "bactrol disks" in the laboratory of a Rajneeshpuram medical clinic. Analysis by the CDC lab in Atlanta confirmed that the bacteria at the Rajneesh laboratory were an exact match to those that sickened individuals who had eaten at local restaurants. The investigation also revealed prior experimentation at Rajneeshpuram with poisons, chemicals and bacteria, in 1984 and 1985. Dr. Skeels described the scene at the Rajneesh laboratory as "a bacteriological freezer-dryer for large-scale production" of microbes. Investigators found a copy of [The Anarchist Cookbook](#), and literature on the manufacture and usage of explosives and military biowarfare. Investigators also believed that similar attacks had previously been carried out in [Salem](#), [Portland](#), and other cities in Oregon. According to testimony, the plotters boasted that they had attacked a nursing home and a salad bar at the [Mid-Columbia Medical Center](#), but no such attempts were ever proven in court. As a result of the bioterrorism investigation, law enforcement officials discovered that there had been an [aborted plot](#) by Rajneeshees to murder [Charles Turner](#), a former [United States Attorney](#) for

Oregon.

Prosecution

The mayor of Rajneeshpuram, David Berry Knapp (known as Swami Krishna Deva or KD), [turned state's evidence](#) and gave an account of his knowledge of the salmonella attack to the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#). He claimed that Sheela said "she had talked with [Rajneesh] about the plot to decrease voter turnout in The Dalles by making people sick. Sheela said that [Rajneesh] commented that it was best not to hurt people, but if a few died not to worry." In Miller's [Germs: Biological Weapons and America's Secret War](#), this statement is attributed to Sheela: According to KD's testimony, she played doubters a muffled tape of Rajneesh's voice saying that "if it was necessary to do things to preserve [his] vision, then do it" and interpreted this to mean that killing people in his name was fine, telling doubters "not to worry" if a few people had to die. The investigation uncovered a September 25, 1984, invoice from the [American Type Culture Collection](#) of microbes, showing an order received by the Rajneeshpuram laboratory for Salmonella Typhi, the bacterium that causes the life-threatening illness [typhoid fever](#).

According to a 1994 study published in the journal Sociology of Religion, "[m]ost sannyasins indicated that they believed that [Rajneesh] knew about Ma Anand Sheela's illegal activities." [Frances FitzGerald](#) writes in *Cities on a Hill* that most of Rajneesh's followers "believed [him] incapable of doing, or willing, violence against another person", and that almost all of them thought the responsibility for the criminality was Sheela's – according to FitzGerald they believed he had not known anything about it. Carus writes in *Toxic Terror* that "There is no way to know to what extent [Rajneesh] participated in actual decision-making. His followers believed he was involved in every important decision that Sheela made, but those allegations were never proven." Rajneesh insisted that Sheela, who he said was his only source of information during his period of isolation, used her position to impose "a fascist state" on the commune. He acknowledged that the key to her actions was his silence.

Rajneesh left Oregon by plane on October 27, 1985, and was [arrested](#) when he landed in [Charlotte](#), North Carolina, and charged with 35 counts of deliberate [violations of immigration laws](#). As part of a plea bargain arrangement, he pled guilty to two counts of [making false statements](#) to immigration officials. He received a 10-year suspended sentence and a fine of US\$400,000, and was deported and barred from reentering the United States for a period of five years. He was never prosecuted for crimes related to the salmonella poisoning.

Sheela and Puja were arrested in Germany on October 28, 1985. After protracted negotiations, they were extradited to the United States and arrived in Portland on February 6, 1986. They were charged with attempting to murder Rajneesh's personal physician, first-degree assault for poisoning Judge William Hulse, second-degree assault for poisoning The Dalles Commissioner Raymond Matthews, and product tampering for the poisonings in The Dalles, as well as wiretapping and immigration offenses. The U.S. Attorney's office handled the prosecution of the poisoning cases related to the 10 restaurants, and the Oregon Attorney General's office prosecuted the poisoning cases of Commissioner Matthews and Judge Hulse.

On July 22, 1986, both women entered no-contest ("[Alford](#)") pleas for the salmonella poisoning and the other charges, and received sentences ranging from three to 20 years, to be served concurrently. Sheela received 20 years for the attempted murder of Rajneesh's physician, 20 years for first-degree assault in the poisoning of Judge Hulse, 10 years for second-degree assault in the poisoning of Commissioner Matthews, four and a half years for her role in the salmonella poisoning, four and a half years for the wiretapping conspiracy, and five years' probation for immigration fraud; Puja received 15, 15, seven and a half, and four and a half years, respectively, for her role in the first four of these crimes, as well as three

years' probation for the wiretapping conspiracy. Both Sheela and Puja were released early for good behavior, after serving 29 months of their sentences in a minimum-security [federal prison](#). Sheela was deported, and went on to run two [nursing homes](#) in Switzerland.

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Aftermath

[The Oregonian](#) ran a 20-part series on Rajneesh's movement, beginning in June 1985, which included an investigation into the salmonella incident. As a result of a follow-up investigation, The Oregonian learned that Leslie L. Zaitz, one of their [investigative journalists](#), had been placed as number three on a top-ten hit list by Sheela's group. Then [Oregon Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer](#) commented on the poisoning incident and other acts perpetrated by the group, stating: "The Rajneeshees committed the most significant crimes of their kind in the history of the United States ... The largest single incident of fraudulent marriages, the most massive scheme of wiretapping and bugging, and the largest mass poisoning." Looking back on the incident, Skeels stated, "We lost our innocence over this ... We really learned to be more suspicious ... The first significant biological attack on a U.S. community was not carried out by foreign terrorists smuggled into New York, but by legal residents of a U.S. community. The next time it happens it could be with more lethal agents ... We in public health are really not ready to deal with that."

Milton Leitenberg noted in the 2005 work *Assessing the Biological Weapons and Bioterrorism Threat*, "there is apparently no other 'terrorist' group that is known to have successfully cultured any pathogen." Federal and state investigators requested that details of the incident not be published in the [Journal of the American Medical Association](#) (JAMA) for 12 years, for they feared a description of the events could spark [copycat crimes](#), and JAMA complied. No repeat attacks or [hoaxes](#) subsequently occurred, and a detailed account of the incident and investigation was published in JAMA in 1997. A 1999 empirical analysis in the journal *Emerging Infectious Diseases* published by the [CDC](#) described six motivational factors associated with bioterrorism, including: charismatic leadership, no outside constituency, apocalyptic ideology, loner or splinter group, sense of paranoia and grandiosity, and defensive aggression. According to the article, the "Rajneesh Cult" satisfied all motivational factors except for an "apocalyptic ideology". An analysis in the book *Cults, Religion and Violence* disputes the link to [charismatic leadership](#), pointing out that in this and other cases, it was organizational lieutenants who played a pivotal role in the initiation of violence. Arguing for a contextual rather than decisive view of charisma, the authors state that the attribution of outcomes to the personality of a single individual, even a charismatic leader, usually camouflages a far more complex field of social relationships.

The media revisited the incident during the [2001 anthrax attacks](#) in the United States. The 2001 publication of [Judith Miller's](#) *Germs: Biological Weapons and America's Secret War*, which contained an analysis and detailed description of the events, also brought discussion of the incident back into the news. Residents of The Dalles commented that they have an understanding of how bioterrorism can occur in the United States. The incident had spread fear in the community, and drained the local economy. All but one of the restaurants affected went out of business. In 2005, the [Oregon State Land Board](#) agreed to sell 480 acres (1.9 km²) of Wasco County, including Rajneeshpuram, to the Colorado-based youth ministry [Young Life](#). On February 18, 2005, [Court TV](#) aired an episode of [Forensic Files](#) about the incident, entitled: "'Bio-Attack' – Oregon Cult Poisonings". The salmonellosis outbreak was also discussed in the media within the context of the [2006 North American E. coli outbreak](#).

The book *Emerging Infectious Diseases: Trends and Issues* cites the 1984 Rajneeshee bioterror attack, along with the [Aum Shinrikyo](#) group's attempts to use anthrax and other agents, as exceptions to the belief "that only foreign-state supported groups have the resources to execute a credible bioterrorism event". According to *Deadly Cultures: Biological Weapons Since 1945*, these are the only two confirmed uses of [biological weapons](#) for terrorist purposes to harm humans. The incident was the single largest bioterrorist attack in United States history. In the chapter titled: "Influencing An Election: America's First Modern Bioterrorist Attack" in his 2006 book *Terrorism on American Soil: A Concise History of Plots and Perpetrators from the Famous to the Forgotten*, author Joseph T. McCann concludes: "In every respect, the salmonella poisoning carried out by the cult members was a major bioterrorist attack that fortunately failed to achieve its ultimate goal and resulted in no fatalities" ([Wikipedia, 2012](#)).