

# 'Center of the Cyclone'

*Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, 54, is the Indian guru who founded a controversial commune in Oregon with 4,000 members, eventually taking political control of a nearby town. Last November he was deported from the United States on charges of immigration fraud. After brief stays in India and Nepal, the bhagwan flew to Greece in February and settled on the island of Crete. Last week the Greek government expelled him, and after Britain denied him entry, he headed toward the Caribbean. Just before he left Greece, the bhagwan met with NEWSWEEK's Carol Reed at a luxurious Cretan villa. Excerpts from the interview:*

**REED:** In the course of your world tour, are you hoping to find a place to stay more or less permanently, a place to establish another ashram or commune?

**BHAGWAN:** In my heart of hearts, I have found the place. That is my place, my home. I'm not thinking about establishing another commune. Communes will be established more and more around the world. I would love to be a visitor to my people around the world. I don't want to stay in one place. The few days that existence will allow to me will be my days of wandering amongst all my people.

**Is your organization (with current assets of \$40 million) financially sound enough to found another commune?**

In the first place, I don't want to establish another commune. And in the second place, I'm sorry to say I don't understand anything about finance. I don't have any bank account. I have not even touched money for 30 years. I have been in America for five years; I have not seen the dollar bill. I live totally trusting in existence. If existence

wants me to be, it will manage. If it does not want me to be here, it will not manage. The people who don't trust in existence trust in money, trust in God and trust in all kinds of idiotic things.

**Do you think your people around the world understand what happened to you in the United States?**

Except me, nobody understands it. For the simple reason that the United States has been so cunning, so fascist, and forced me to do things. I

judge to release me with only one condition—that I would not be able to enter America for five years. But once I had accepted the guilt, they [also] fined me \$400,000, [which was] not part of the negotiations. All these liars. Cunning people.

No, my people do not know the whole story. I am going to tell them. That is one of the purposes of my world trip. So everybody becomes aware of the ugly face of the American government. It is a fascist gov-

change in my inner consciousness. It is utterly silent and utterly rejoicing. Even the American jailer said, "Thousands of people have been in the prison. You are the only one who is getting out of the prison looking better, healthier than when you entered. What is the secret?" I said the secret is simple. I enjoyed the whole scene. It was a great learning [experience]. They tried to harass me: they did not allow me to sleep. They put my cell between two television sets and the sets were going as loud as possible from early morning until midnight. They made arrangements that after the television sets were silent, then inmates would start talking from one cell to another.

I rested and my rest is something that you cannot disturb. I am the center of the cyclone. And I am looking better because [they] refused me vegetarian food. [They said] "There are no special arrangements, you have to eat whatever is available." I asked just for milk, fruits or vegetables. [They] said, "No, whatever is available and is given to every prisoner is given to you." So I was not eating and I saw that the prisoners were more human than the bureaucrats. Seeing the situation, they started bringing their milk, their fruits to me.

I lost eight pounds, which my physician wanted. That's why I'm looking good. And a tremendous feeling has arisen in me. Even if you throw me into hell, you cannot disturb my paradise. Wherever I am, my paradise will be with me. You can kill me, but you cannot kill my spirit.

**Do you sometimes fantasize about the future?**

It is impossible for me to fantasize.

## Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh



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will give you one example. They arrested me without any warrant. They did not tell me why I was arrested. Their answer was the points of their guns. Whenever a government goes mentally bankrupt, this happens. Then they forced me into jail to sign under a false name, David Washington. I refused. Because they had nothing against me, before the trial, the government attorneys came to my attorneys, which is a rare thing. Always the weaker party goes to the stronger party for negotiations. They came to negotiate the case before the trial began. The negotiation was that if I accepted that on two small grounds that I was guilty, then I would be allowed to leave the jail. They would allow the

ernment. It tried to kill me. They had put a bomb in the room where I was to come back from the court to take my clothes. Something went wrong and it did not go off. Immediately after my release, the bomb was found exactly under my chair. I am not against the American people; I love them but I am against the bureaucracy and the politicians. They are the most dangerous people in the world today, with the greatest power, and I don't think they have any brains.

**How do you feel personally after being forced out of the United States?**

As far as I'm concerned, I simply feel great, just as great as I was in the midst of the commotion. There is no