



'Wild, Wild Country': Meet the Holocaust Survivor and Archnemesis of Ma Anand Sheela

She survived the Holocaust, lived on a kibbutz, helped to produce 'The Godfather,' and finally found satisfaction as a follower of the guru Osho. Her role in the hit Netflix documentary is merely a cameo, but Françoise Ruddy lived a life worthy of its own miniseries

By [Ofer Aderet](#) and [Omer Shubert](#) | May 17, 2018

Twelve minutes into episode four of the Netflix series "Wild, Wild Country," a pretty woman named Hasya, bearing expensive jewelry and an undefined accent, makes an appearance. The series doesn't dwell on her, and her character doesn't get much screen time. Presumably, there's a reason for that. Events in the new documentary show – which tells the story of "Osho" (also known as Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh), the controversial spiritual leader who immigrated with his followers in 1981 from Pune, India, to a godforsaken farm in Oregon and turned it into a flourishing town called Rajneeshpuram – come thick and fast, and Hasya's female character is swallowed up in the sea of dramatic events.

The six-part series follows the story of the establishment of what was meant to be an innocent, utopian spiritual center, a temple of free love and meditation, but which became a scene of crime, terror and a religious war, and was full of lies and conspiracies. It also describes how the earliest arrivals at the Oregon farm were not received with open arms by their conservative surroundings, and soon were transformed from peace-on-earth advocates to armed fighters.

Hasya showered Osho with expensive gifts. 'That's how she and her Hollywood friends advanced themselves. She bought him expensive gifts, a Rolls-Royce and another Rolls-Royce'

Their fight against the hostile environment included attempted murder, mass biological poisoning, financial fraud, wiretapping – all of which were masterminded by Osho's loyal secretary, Ma Anand Sheela, with the help of a small group of supporters. Osho himself – who was worshiped by his followers as though he were a deity, but never preached ascetism and enjoyed receiving expensive gifts – took on himself a vow of silence

during those years. And still, when the skeletons started emerging from the closet, and when Sheela unexpectedly fled with her group, he started talking again, and exposed her crimes.



Hasya-Françoise Ruddy. "Hasya," which means "laughter" in Sanskrit, was her Sanyasi name, which is given to ashram disciples in India. Credit: Steve Nehl / Oregonian

The close relationship between Hasya and the guru – according to both Getter and Andrews – was what eroded the peace of mind of the exclusive ruler of Rajeeshpuram, Sheela, making her very jealous

This hope was not fulfilled. Ruddy’s kingdom lasted for only a short time. In 1985 the FBI raided the town and it was dismantled. Thus ended that particular chapter in the life of Hasya-Françoise Ruddy. (“Hasya,” which means “laughter” in Sanskrit, was her Sanyasi name, which is given to ashram disciples in India.) It turns out, though, that this was just one chapter in an unusual and tortuous life story – the tale of a Jewish Holocaust survivor who became an Israeli kibbutznik, then a Hollywood multimillionaire, and for a short time was the strongest woman in the cult of the Indian master.

Françoise Wizenberg was born in Paris on April 4, 1937, the daughter of Icek/Izak (Yitzhak) Wizenberg, an industrialist, and his wife, the former Maria Wilczuk, both of whom were Polish-born Jews. Icek was murdered in 1942 by the Nazis, but there’s no way of knowing where and under what circumstances. A close friend of Hasya’s who today lives in Australia under her Sanyasi name, “Mystica,” heard from Hasya that he was shot to death before her eyes.

In an interview with The Washington Post in 1985, Hasya said that her father died in a concentration camp. Whatever the case, Hasya survived World War II under a false identity with a Christian family with which her mother placed her. According to several testimonies, Maria instructed her daughter not to forget her past or deny her Jewish origin.

No details are known about her adoptive family, or even about where she was during the war. According to one account, at a certain point, Hasya was forced to survive on her own, in a forest, by eating nuts. According to another version, she fled at some point accompanied by one of her uncles. “I spent my youth dodging around Europe hiding from the Nazis,” she said in 1985 to Anand Subhuti, a disciple of Osho who met Hasya at the farm in Oregon and interviewed her for the local newspaper, The Ragneesh Times.

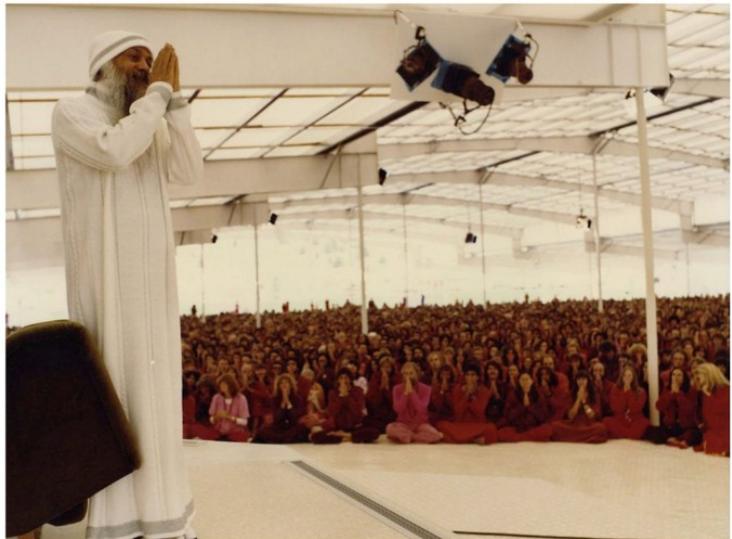
When the war ended, her mother asked to have her daughter returned to her, and Hasya, who was then 8, was asked to identify her in a “lineup.” “Totally confused and afraid, she somehow managed to point at her real mother and promptly burst into tears,” says Subhuti today, recalling what Hasya had told him.

From a perusal of various archival documents, located by genealogists [Nili Goldman](#) and [Gidi Poraz](#) – “historical detectives” who specialize in deciphering such mysteries – we learn that in the summer of 1948, an 11-year-old Hasya began her journey from Europe to Israel, via Germany and France. Here she lived in an immigrant refugee camp in Netanya, and according to acquaintances, she later moved to a kibbutz. The acquaintances heard from her several times that she grew up in a kibbutz, but she didn’t know its name; as is the case with many chapters in her life, little is known about her time in Israel.

That was the moment when that same female figure that flickers throughout the series – Hasya, whose real name was Françoise Ruddy – came to the fore. It was she whom Osho chose to replace the deceptive Sheela as his right-hand woman, and that’s how she suddenly became the strongest figure in the city, the woman on whom the esteemed leader pinned his hopes for saving his disintegrating life’s work.



Rajeeshpuram, Oregon. When you put thousands of young people together, anywhere on the face of the earth, there’s going to be sexual activity. Credit: Nimrod (Nimi)



Osho in Rajeeshpuram, Oregon. Credit: Nimrod (Nimi) Getty



Osho’s loyal secretary, Ma Anand Sheela. Stood trial for attempted murder, and was convicted and sentenced to three terms of 20 years imprisonment.

Credit: Netflix



A frame from Netflix’s ‘Wild, Wild Country’

Credit: Netflix

Maria Wizenberg also made her way to Israel during the same months, though it is not known whether she came with her daughter or separately.

The next dramatic event in her life took place in about 1955. Shortly after Hasya was drafted into the Israel Defense Forces, her mother was afflicted with an anxiety attack, fearing she would lose her daughter as she had lost her husband. “I didn’t save you from the Germans in order to lose you to the Arabs,” she told her daughter, according to several sources. According to Subhuti, that was what led the mother to “begin preparation to emigrate to North

America.” After a brief sojourn in Canada, mother and daughter later moved to the United States and settled in New York. Apparently Hasya never returned to Israel.

“Hasya always had many suitors,” says her close friend Mystica. “She was one of the most beautiful women in New York, but not only did she have good looks, she also had a lovely personality. A woman that any Jewish mother would be happy to have her son marry.”

The lucky one turned out to be Guilford Glazer, a Jewish multimillionaire from Knoxville, Tennessee, who was 15 years her senior and they married in 1956. The son of Eastern European immigrants, he ran the family steel business and became a real estate developer who built industrial parks, apartment and office towers and huge shopping malls in many American cities. For years, his name appeared on Forbes’ list of the 400 richest Americans; in 2005, his fortune was estimated at \$900 million. (As a philanthropist, Glazer contributed large sums to Israel; the business school at Ben-Gurion University, for example, is named for him and his second wife, Diane.)

Life with Glazer was like something out of a fairy tale. “My life was made up of servants who did the shopping, a house with 35 rooms, and parties with \$20,000 worth of flowers,” Hasya told Subhuti in 1984. The couple had two children – a son, Emerson, born in 1957, and a daughter, Erika, born in 1959.

Motherhood, however, did not bring happiness. “I didn’t know what was wrong with me that I didn’t enjoy being a PTA mother,” she says. “I was embarrassed to admit that I wasn’t happy,” she later admitted.

'The entire U.S. administration was against us at the time, and the moment I filed a complaint against Sheela for murder, the FBI would have arrived. I didn't want to destroy Osho's work, and the city we built'

her,” says Subhuti. “Glazer wanted to cheer her up so in 1960 they moved to Los Angeles.” But the move didn’t help. The marriage foundered and they divorced in 1965. Hasya was 28 and Guil was 43.



Hasya. Was permitted, unlike others, to have her own car and showered Osho with expensive gifts. Credit: Steve Nehl / Oregonian



Guilford Glazer was a Jewish multimillionaire from Knoxville, Tennessee, who was 15 years her senior, and they married in 1956. Credit: Al Seib / LA Times via Getty Im

According to press reports, Hasya’s divorce settlement included \$1,000,000 in property, plus alimony payments of \$1,000 a month for the first five years, increasing to \$2,000 a month for the following 10 years, along with two trust funds and other property that would be worth about \$7 million in today’s terms. Before too long, she would find a purpose for her money.

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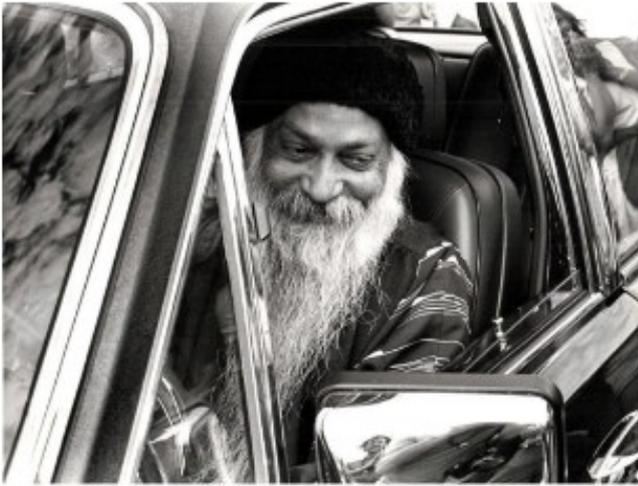
Two years later, Hasya remarried. Her second husband, Albert Ruddy, was also quite successful. Ruddy was a Jewish, Canadian-born movie producer who won his first Oscar in 1973 for “The Godfather.” (He received his second Oscar for co-producing “Million Dollar Baby,” together with Clint Eastwood, who also directed and starred in the 2004 film.) In the Washington Post

interview, Hasya claimed to have been involved in the film’s production.

Hasya and Albert lived in Hollywood, where she ran in glamorous circles, which included friends like Marlon Brando and Robert Redford. But she soon grew unhappy with this life too.

Afraid to die without answers

In the 1970s, during an organized tour of India, Hasya visited Osho’s ashram in Pune and was wholly captivated. “I was afraid to die without finding answers,” she said, explaining why she took that first trip to India. When she returned to the U.S., she took a course in Oriental studies at UCLA, fell in love with her instructor and returned with him to India. In 1978, she decided to make Pune the center of her life, and she began fundraising for the ashram.



Osho in one of his tens of Rolls-Royces.

Credit: Nimrod (Nimi) Getter



Osho's private jet inside the Oregon farm.

Credit: Nimrod (Nimi) Getter

In rare archival footage used in “Wild, Wild Country,” taken from a news interview with her, she says that she brought “hundreds of thousands of dollars” to Osho. Other footage shows fundraising and recruiting events she held in the yard of her Hollywood home in those years. “However exciting and fast it used to be, I always suffered a sense of boredom. Bhagwan has shown me so many ways of discovering my inner depths,” she told the Post.

Hasya's group of rich and famous people provided Osho with designer clothes, and under her influence he replaced the very basic clothing that he used to wear with loud and glittering outfits

and met the man who that year would become her third husband – Dr. John Andrews (who at the time went by the name “Swami Deva Raj”). Andrews was Osho’s personal physician, and as one of the people closest to him for 15 years, was at the guru’s side until the very end.

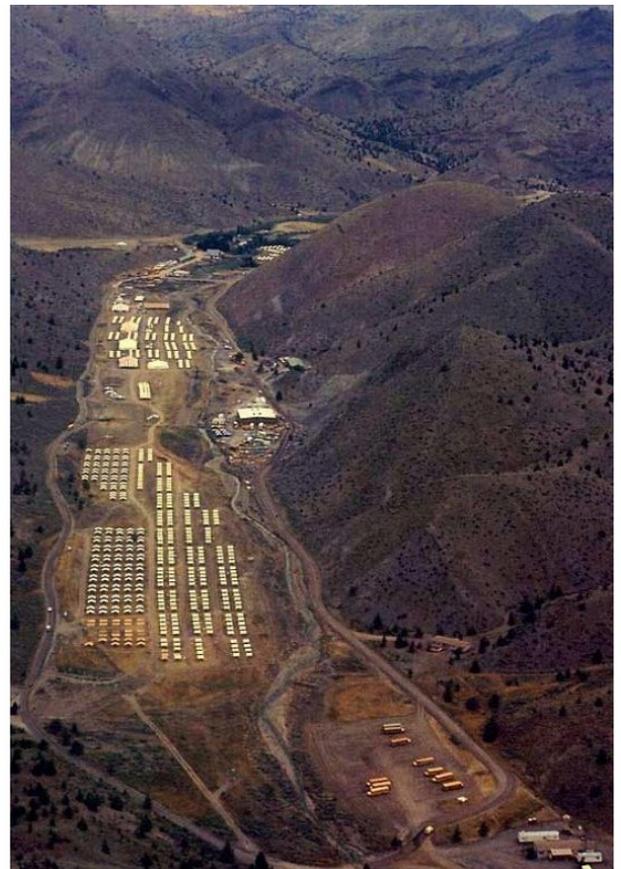
By the time Hasya arrived at his thriving community in Rajneeshpuram, Oregon, in 1984, she had been divorced from Ruddy for years. Now 47, she was a prominent figure among the “Hollywood gang” of celebrities and other wealthy types who were known for their generous contributions to the group, such as musician Mike Edwards of the band Electric Light Orchestra, actor Terence Stamp and, allegedly, media personality Arianna Stasiannopolous (later Huffington), although the latter has denied being involved.. Before long, she decided to remain in the city, was given the name Ma Prem Hasya,

Biological terror and an organic farm

Intensity” seems to be a key word in “Wild, Wild Country,” which was directed by the brothers Chapman Way and Maclain Way. Life in the Rajneeshpuram commune was a version of “sex, drugs and rock & roll” that got out of control. It happened within a short time, when tensions grew between Osho’s followers and residents of the nearby town of Antelope, Oregon, who were not pleased with their new neighbors – who wore red shirts, believed in free love and transformed an abandoned farm into a bustling town of several thousand.

The people of Antelope, together with other neighbors of the farm, began to put up bureaucratic obstacles to prevent the further expansion of Rajneeshpuram, and the conflict turned violent in 1983, when an explosion occurred in a hotel housing people from Osho’s commune. The settlers then formed an armed force and prepared to return fire. “Jesus said to turn the other cheek. We say: Take both their cheeks,” Ma Anand Sheela, Osho’s right-hand woman, said in a television interview at the time.

Things quickly escalated, all under Sheela’s leadership: Osho’s people gained control of the Antelope city council, and changed the face of the town. In 1984, they tried to take over the government of Wasco County, by disrupting a local election campaign. One tactic they used was to recruit thousands of homeless people from around the United States and bring them to the farm to boost their electoral power. Later, they attempted to prevent people from getting to the



Osho's Rajneeshpuram in Oregon from the air. Credit: Nimrod (Nimi) Getter

polls by poisoning the locals. This they did by spreading salmonella bacteria in salads in certain restaurants. Seven-hundred and fifty people were affected by food-poisoning, though none died, in an incident that is still considered the largest single biological terror attack to take place on American soil. Members of the commune also plotted to assassinate various public officials, including the U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon, but none of these plans came to fruition.



Nimrod (Nimi) Getter, a filmmaker and photographer who is today 66, was to the best of his knowledge the only Israeli who resided at the Oregon commune throughout its existence. A squad commander in the Nahal brigade who was discharged from the IDF due to “temporary unfitness for duty,” he traveled to India in 1975 and visited Pune, where he fell under Osho’s sway and followed him to Oregon. He met Hasya there when they were housed in the same building. “She was very nice, we would meet in the kitchen sometimes. She didn’t talk about her past, and certainly not about the years she lived in Israel, but when I think about it now, looking back, in all the conversations we had there on the farm, no one ever talked about what was. We only talked about what was happening here and

now. Though Hasya and I did have something in common from the beginning – ‘The Godfather.’ I thought it was one of the best movies ever made.”

At some point, Getter, who today lives in Tel Aviv, was assigned the task of organizing an armed security force to guard Osho and protect the town from the threats and dangers – both real and imagined – that filled Sheela’s head. “I stood beside Osho with an Uzi. It was crazy. I understood that I had to do it, but it was hard for me,” he says. One scene of the new series features archival footage of weapons training led by Getter. “Sheela invited all the press to this training drill. I wanted to die. I was so embarrassed and it seemed so crazy and stupid to me,” he says now. However, he also says it was a “brilliant” move. “It was a very successful demonstration. It worked.”

With Sheela’s departure, Hasya was chosen to be the international secretary. In a symbolic ceremony she burned her predecessor’s robe and clothing before the eyes of the entire community

How so?

Getter: “After the training drill, the harassment from the people of Antelope stopped. No one dared approach us anymore with weapons.”

In the show, it says that you amassed a huge arsenal.

“That’s utter nonsense. We had fewer weapons than any American town of that size.”

John Andrews – whose version the creators of “Wild, Wild Country” decided to omit – notes that in the series, it’s not mentioned that Antelope was a 25-minute drive, via dirt road, from Rajneeshpuram. He says that group members had no desire to frequent Antelope, but that they were “forced” to travel there because they lacked telephone service, due to all kinds of rules and regulations that were promoted by environmentalists.



Nimrod (Nimi) Getter at Rajneeshpuram, in the early 80s. Credit: Nimrod (Nimi) Getter

When asked about the fact that the series describes not-so-innocent things, he suggests that when you put thousands of young people together, anywhere on the face of the earth, there’s going to be sexual activity. He said that Osho didn’t deal with sex much. He understood that the best way to deal with the sexual tension is simply to express it, adding that Osho always said, animals have sex, why make such a big deal of it?

Aside from meditation and spiritual ceremonies, the members of the community worked on developing a shared economy, like a kibbutz, which was supposed to produce their food and to sustain them financially. But Hasya, says Getter, was not among the laborers: Thanks to her money, she purchased for herself the right not to work like the other residents of the city.

In the series, her group is presented as a group of rich and famous people who were swept up in the spiritual trend and dragged Osho with them to hedonistic realms, including consumption of consumer products and drugs. They also provided Osho with designer clothes, and under Hasya’s influence he replaced the very basic clothing that he used to wear with loud and glittering outfits.



Osho and his personal physician Dr. John Andrews (who at the time went by the name "Swami Deva Raj"). Credit: © Osho International Foundation

teachings, says that he fell ill after eating in a restaurant. He went to the medical clinic, where he was hooked up to an infusion. He next found himself waking up at 6 A.M., after having apparently fainted and his condition had deteriorated.

He asked the doctor treating him to stop the infusion, but realized at that same moment that he was a marked man, having been constituted a threat by Sheela, who he concluded was trying to hurt him. And then came the second attempt, which is depicted in the series, in the middle of a huge event, Master Day, when Osho was onstage.

What did you do after you realized that they were trying to murder you? You could have filed a complaint.

"The entire U.S. administration was against us at the time, and the moment I filed a complaint against Sheela for murder, the FBI would have arrived. I didn't want to destroy Osho's work, and the city we built." He added that he didn't think that Osho knew the truth in real time, although later on he received a message from Osho indicating that he realized that Sheela and her associates "were completely crazy and not good for the place."

"What the series doesn't explain," insists Andrews, "is how far removed Sheela became from Osho, and that's the most important part of the story." He says that Sheela claimed that it was her love for Osho that granted her understanding of his vision, but he is convinced she didn't understand the vision at all. He says that in 1984, the year that Hasya and her friends arrived in Rajneeshpuram, Osho began to understand that Sheela had too much power.

"As far as chemicals are concerned, I can say that there were three dogs that sniffed anyone who came to the farm, in order to ensure that there were no drugs," says Getter. "Not out of any basic opposition, but in order not to provide any opening for the authorities to do anything against them. But I remember the designer clothes that members of the group wore after they gave up their uniform red clothes, including items that cost \$700 each."

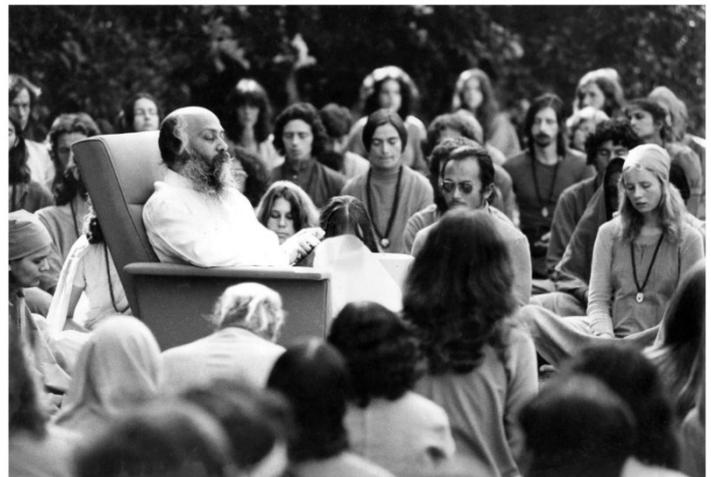
Hasya, who also was permitted, unlike others, to have her own car, showered Osho with expensive gifts. "That's how she and her Hollywood friends advanced themselves. She bought him expensive gifts, a Rolls-Royce and another Rolls-Royce, a watch and another watch," says Getter. (Eventually, Osho is said to have collected a fleet of 93 Rolls-Royces.) But he explains: "I had the impression that what motivated her was a great deal of love for Osho and an attempt to understand something about herself. Like all of us, actually."

The close relationship between Hasya and the guru – according to both Getter and Andrews – was what eroded the peace of mind of the exclusive ruler of Rajneeshpuram, Sheela, making her very jealous. In the TV show, her jealousy is depicted as causing her to justify any and all means to preserve her status on the farm, including the elimination of potential rivals from among commune members – by poison, if necessary.

Mystica claimed that one of the rivals marked for elimination by Sheela was Hasya. "At first Hasya thought that she herself was paranoid," she says. "But in the end the truth came out – that Sheela had tried to poison her."

Andrews was also one of those poisoned, but while the series presents the attempt to poison him as a panicky reaction by Sheela to a conversation on which she eavesdropped, in which he and Osho spoke about mercy killing, he himself gives a different version. Andrews, who today lives in India and is one of the leaders of the foundation established in Osho's name to spread his

teachings, says that he fell ill after eating in a restaurant. He went to the medical clinic, where he was hooked up to an infusion. He next found himself waking up at 6 A.M., after having apparently fainted and his condition had deteriorated.



Osho and his followers in Rajneeshpuram. Credit: Nimrod (Nims) Getter

Mystica adds that Hasya exploited her close relationship with Osho in order to draw his attention to the fact that something bad was happening in his city. “And then,” says Andrews, “when everything became crazy, Osho emerged from his silence, resumed speaking, and it ended. Sheela went back to being nothing, ‘Sheela Shmeela.’”

Aside from meditation and spiritual ceremonies, the members of the community worked on developing a shared economy, like a kibbutz, which was supposed to produce their food and to sustain them financially

Hasya’s short reign

That happened in 1985, and that is when Sheela fled to Germany. With her departure, Hasya was chosen to be the international secretary, and after a symbolic ceremony in which she burned her predecessor’s robe and clothing before the eyes of the entire community, she began to manage the farm’s businesses, internally and externally. Andrews says that she had no interest in power and control, in complete contrast to Sheela.

But Hasya’s “tenure” in the commune leadership didn’t last long. At the end of 1985, shortly after she was appointed to the position, the authorities raided the farm. Sheela, who had fled earlier, was then extradited to the United States, stood trial for attempted murder, and was convicted and sentenced to three terms of 20 years’ imprisonment, to be served concurrently. Two and a half years later, she was released for good behavior, and since then she has been living in Switzerland, where she runs a hospice there for terminally ill patients. Osho also fled from the farm after the raid, but his plane was stopped on the way out of the country, and he was arrested, and in a plea bargain was deported from the country.

And Hasya? She embarked with Osho on a worldwide “performance tour,” visiting Nepal, Uruguay, Crete and Portugal, among other places. According to the 2017 book “Who Killed Osho,” by Abhay Vaidya, Hasya appealed to 21 different countries, in an effort to find a place to recreate Osho’s lost paradise, but all refused the request. In her frustration, she turned to her friend Marlon Brando, from whom she requested permission to build the new version of Rajneeshpuram on one of the islands he owned in the Pacific Ocean. According to the book, the idea was dropped due to fear of hurricanes.

Osho and Hasya returned in the end to Pune, and the guru – who spoke about the need for women to be freed from their social conditioning – instructed Hasya to begin a “workshop for women’s freedom.”

Lived, loved and laughed

The year of Osho’s death, 1990, was also the year that Hasya returned to the United States. At first she settled in the town of Sedona in the Arizona desert and started a spiritual center called the Mystery School. Afterwards she alternated between living there and in Los Angeles, where she became friendly with Mystica. “We lived together for several years in Los Angeles. We talked a lot, we drank Champagne, we laughed and celebrated life,” says Mystica. “I was very curious to hear about her life, and she, for her part, was very happy for the opportunity to share it with someone she trusted.”

It was also in Los Angeles that Hasya opened her home to the general public for meditations in the spirit of Osho. She also was involved in the establishment of a large Osho center in the city.

Hasya’s children from Guilford Glazer grew up and followed in their father’s footsteps. Emerson Glazer works in real estate, and Erika continue her father’s philanthropic efforts. Her name appears from time to time in the business and gossip columns, usually attached to a report about a sizable donation to some organization. She is also on the executive board of the Golden State Warriors basketball team. In Israel, she contributes to the Libi Fund and the Soldiers’ Welfare Association, among other causes. Both she and Emerson have children of their own, both live in Beverly Hills.

Hasya died in her daughter’s home in 2014, at the age of 77, and was buried in the Jewish cemetery Hillside Memorial Park in Los Angeles. She had suffered for the preceding seven years from Parkinson’s disease.



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