

Marina Rondelli's story – Part 2

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In part 1 of my story, I told you about my sexual relationship with Guru Dev Singh and how my underaged daughter was sexually abused by him. In this part I will tell you how I ended up in Espanola, about my first experiences living in the inner circle and how my daughter would come there to get married.

During the period in Italy which I talked about in part 1, Yogi Bhanjan came to visit Rome several times. He was always hosted at GD's house together with the whole circus that traveled with him from the United States. On such occasions, I was always a loyal *sevadar*. We were the privileged students who through our service became part of YB's golden chain. In the Holy Pyramid of enlightenment, we, those who were allowed to serve him, were privileged by our ignorance. We were told we would climb the spiritual ladder through our labour.

During these international events, in between the very busy service hours, GD always made sure we could share some private moments. He used them to inform me, or rather to threaten me, with how YB knew everything and saw everything. GD was nervous about the fact that YB would be able to see in my aura that we had an affair.

In fact, it is true that YB often interacted with me. He would call me out of the kitchen to chat with me. He told me that I had been a great healer in former lives. Sometimes he would honour me with one of his much-desired individual screeching moments that shocked my conscience and opened my mind. During these interactions, without knowing how they got there, I saw how healing movements being revealed in front of my eyes, or I found out about intuitive ways to manipulate the body. Those teachings were extraordinarily direct. I felt the intimacy of the privilege it granted me to heal the psychic suffering that I carried within. It felt good that he recognised my healing skills and gave me so much attention. Something I had missed during my upbringing. It brought clarification to the confusion that existed in my life. That is how I perceived it there and then.

In the dynamics and the quality of the relationships in my life, however, nothing changed. I was still in that unhappy space. Petrified. I could only turn myself around within my own unhappiness, because still nothing could be said, silence and secrecy were demanded. Everything remained the same.

That is, until the last time YB came to Italy, in 1999. I believe it was the week between Italy's Liberation Day on April 25 and May 1, Workers' Day.

As usual, I was doing seva at GD's new home in *Campagnano di Roma*. It had been bought and renovated specifically to house YB and his court. GD said YB wanted to move to Italy because he could no longer bear the Americans. As always, when I went to prepare the reception in that house, I discovered that it seemed as if the cleaning had not been done for 6 months. So, it was necessary to clean from the roof to the cellars until everything shone like new. The usual 3 or 4 people were blessed and exploited in delivering this service. I felt the way I felt and resigned myself to the role that seemed to stick to me.

After 3 days of hard labour to get the house ready Yogi Bhanjan arrived. I still stayed a further 2 days to work in the kitchen and prepare what was needed. At a certain moment, I was sent to YB's room to massage him. He was struggling to walk because of his hips. When I treated him, every time the same thing would happen. It was like a symbiotic space that opened up. A space in which I could no longer distinguish between his or my movements. As is commonly known, the result of a massage depends on the harmony that arises between the two beings. Anyway, it was a fact that he began to walk better and that I felt happier, or at least less unhappy.

Since the first time I saw him in Barcelona, YB asked me each time we met, or rather he said to me that I should come with him to the United States. I had always skilfully pulled back. This time he asked me how my love life was going. I answered 'crap' and 'how do you know?' He said: 'What do you have to lose? Come to the US and marry me'. And I said: 'yes, but what will we do at night with your wife?' He had a big laugh and he promised me that he would do with someone else that what he had proposed to me.

During this week of seva, my daughter and her boyfriend arrived in Campagnano from Holland. During a public session, my daughter was asked by YB to commit to getting married to her boyfriend as soon as possible. As usual, Guru Dev Kaur translated for me from English to Italian, so I could follow this conversation between YB and my daughter. She was reticent about what YB was asking her. Her boyfriend was more willing. In the end YB declared them officially engaged. I was happy for her. I saw this as a very good thing. She accused me of having pushed her into a direction she did not want to go. That she was now forced into something she did not want.

After the event in Italy, the whole caravan of YB left for Hamburg. YB told me he was going to find a husband for me. I returned home. In my mind, it would take some time before he would get back to me. But barely had I arrived in the house when the phone rang. I heard YB's voice ordering me to fly to Hamburg immediately. His spiritual son, one of the men who was always close to him, was there. YB wanted to marry us. GDK was going to join YB in Hamburg. She called me to repeat everything YB had said to me in Italian. It was a 'take it or leave it' option. GD would pay for my air ticket.

On May 1st, I arrived at the Hamburg ashram. In the room where everyone was smiling and curious about what was about to happen, YB sat in an armchair. Crouched at his feet sat a skinny gentleman who was at least as embarrassed as I was. As soon as I entered the room, YB got up and in 30 seconds flat he declared us husband and wife. Everyone applauded and congratulated us. At that point, I didn't know if I understood it all correctly or not.

After the ceremony, Dharma (my new husband) took me to the second- or third-class hotel where he had stayed before as a single guest. If I had had to pay for it, with my own finances, I would probably have settled there too. Once we arrived, he said that for our honeymoon it would be better to go to a more elegant place, after all, we were newly married. And so it was that we went to one of the coolest hotels in Hamburg - a bit extravagant. It costed a fortune per night. Our wedding night was consumed without fireworks, but we were adults and there is always room for improvement. Dharma talked a lot: about a terrible ex-wife, a wonderful daughter, one business partner who was a good man and another business partner who was a bad man, about wonderful friends and a supportive sangat. In short, he got drunk on words that I didn't understand. He complimented me for being very open and natural, not like the ex-wife. In the morning I consumed a sumptuous breakfast in this extra luxury hotel while he, my skinny new husband nibbled on 2 potatoes and a tomato. He drank litres of coffee to remedy the headache from jet leg he said, while he looked at me with questions in his eyes. I guess he was wondering what had happened to him the day before.

The ashram in Hamburg was run by Satya Singh. He was one of the chiefs of the 3HO Kundalini Yoga festival in Europe. YB and his company were guests of his ashram. They needed a large seva team to take care of everything. Despite the benefits that seva so easily brings with it, only a few people showed up to make use of this privilege.

During a pause in the celebrations of my wedding, Satya took me aside. Using a mellifluous tone which implied at the same time that no reply was expected, this Kundalini chief urged me to adhere to my tasks and take my place in the kitchen to adequately serve the Master and his court. I protested highly that those 4 days were my honeymoon. He replied that I would have my whole life to enjoy my husband. 'My service in the kitchen was required now.' I decided to stay within the ranks and to take my position, socially and spiritually within this group.

The next day, the group would go and visit a 'bio salad' factory, where they also gave treatments to remove 'parasites' from the body. Everyone here in Hamburg had followed this treatment. The YB group had come to Hamburg specially to have this treatment. Satya wanted me to stay at the ashram to do seva for him. Satya was a dickhead, but he was hierarchically above me. I informed YB about Satya's injunction. I told him I wanted to come along as this was my marriage celebration. YB told Satya I was not here to serve in the kitchen. At least for a while, I would not have superiors and that felt good.

And so, I joined the group to visit the factory where they packaged organic salads into mono-portions with sauce included. During our visit the cries of '*amazing*' and '*delicious*' uttered by the YB entourage rang in my ears. After the factory we visited the place where the treatments took place. There was a scanner that could identify and dry out all parasites from your body. The whole group wanted this treatment that cost USD 4,000 or maybe 4 million lire, it escapes me right now. I refused because I am not a big fan of mass extermination. If my parasites and I had lived together this far, we could go on like this for the rest of my life. I said I might feel lonely without them. I believe that my taking of a position which went against the group current, at that moment in time, had already cast a shadow over my future.

Everyone was being disinfected, including YB, my husband and even GDK. Only 2 persons could be treated at the same time and each treatment took a long time. The waiting was extremely boring. Everyone praised the spectacular treatment. Everyone, except me. I was happy there was some salad to eat and wondered if maybe I would not have had more fun in the kitchen after all. While waiting I reflected on the way Satya was treating me. I felt ashamed that I needed YB to say 'fuck you' to Satya.

The 4 honeymoon days were over. I returned to Italy to tell everyone about my marriage and the decision to move to America. I started to think about how that could be arranged. YB called me from Hamburg to make sure that I wasn't going to change my mind. He passed the phone to Dharma who spoke to me again in his very rapid manner, using tons of words and incomprehensible outbursts that made me feel dizzy. I understood maybe half of it, but I said, 'yes' and 'wow'.

For the next 15 to 20 days many of YB's inner circle, my husband included, would stay in Hamburg to continue their parasite treatment. YB returned to the States. He called me before he left to set an appointment at Espanola for Solstice in June.

While Dharma was still in Hamburg, I visited him another time so we could see each other for another 2 or 3 days. He was a strange man to me, but all together I felt privileged that I had been thrown into the middle of this fairy tale inner circle. I felt like a Cinderella who had been promoted from the cellar to the floor of nobility. So even if these people were weird to me, including this new husband, I felt like I had won the social redemption lottery within the YB community.

In Hamburg, Dharma and I went out for dinner every evening together with the members of YB's company who were still there. We would go to a pretty hotel, typically German. The staff members wore traditional clothes. They were patient and efficient as only Germans can be. I saw how my husband paid the full bill every night.

Among the group was a particularly important Indian man. He was the secretary (or something similar) to the future guru of the Namdari (a Sikh sect that believes that the lineage of Sikh Gurus did not end with Gobind Singh). The hotel staff that served our dinner were friendly with us, but at the same time I sensed in their looks some disgust. Nobody seemed to notice it, except me. I felt confused and even a bit ashamed to be in the company of this unusual group. While I considered it being a privilege, I also wondered what I was doing there? What was my role?

I did not realise it then, but in Hamburg I got a first taste of what the future would be like. This desire to belong whilst also experiencing a feeling of non-belonging, would accompany me as from these days in Hamburg and included the whole period I lived in Espanola with Dharma and close to YB.

knew how I was feeling. When I was suspicious or surprised, he pointed towards me and asked if I was aware of the movement around him and around me. He pushed me to be part of the community but at the same time he wanted me to remain vigilant. He kept me tied in and bound to the community and at whilst knowing I would remain apart from it.

When I arrived back home from Hamburg, I did what was needed to be able to leave for good. I informed my family. With the father of my youngest daughter, I negotiated her departure to the States. YB and GD suggested I dropped the request for child support. And so, he allowed her to travel with me. But she would only come with me the end of the year. I would be leaving in June, to be on time for my appointment with YB. My ex-husband and I arranged the sale of the house that we owned together and our divorce. I said goodbye to my yoga students and shortly before solstice I left for Espanola on my first intercontinental flight.

When I arrived at the airport of Albuquerque, I was exhausted. Dharma was there to pick me up. I discovered that my suitcases were not with me. I was tired and upset. Despite this, Dharma insisted that we pass by his ex-wife's house in Santa Fe to introduce me to his daughter. The encounter with his ex-wife was an embarrassing and painful for me, for her and for her friends who were there with her. The only ones who were not uncomfortable were Dharma and his little girl. She looked beautiful and was delighted to see her daddy.

As soon as we left their place, Dharma started off on another of his long tirades. The fact that I was wearing a low-cut-t-shirt bothered him like hell. I loved this t-shirt. It was beautiful and handmade by my auntie. Dharma told me that he was sure that his wife was convinced now that YB had given him a prostitute as a wife, because of the t-shirt I was wearing and because I was much younger than she was. It was clear that he had the intention to start educating me. The rest of the trip to Espanola he gave me detailed overviews of all the ladies and gentlemen who sat in the main hall with YB. I was instructed on who to be and how to behave.

Arriving in Espanola, I was eager to visit my new home. But instead of that, I was immediately taken to greet YB at the ranch. He was resting. I was ushered into a bare side room. As soon as I entered, he turned around and told me to come closer to him. With a huge gesture he hugged me in such a way that I had no other choice than to roll on the bed with him. "Finally, you are here", he said. I was surprised, happy and felt embarrassed by this strange welcome. I didn't know how to 'hold' myself. YB told me that he was going to show me America. He kept repeating that I should not worry about anything. My karma was over. In fact, the fact that I had arrived here without any belongings was a good omen. He had also arrived in America with nothing, and I could see where he stood now. It would happen to me too.

When we arrived at "my house", I found out that had been colonised by 2 Indian Jettadar families and a bunch of their relatives. Dharma and I would live in the room in which he lived with his wife and daughter, with a bathroom and a closet. He was relating to these people as if we were all visitors of the same hotel. It seemed to me that he was just polite to them because they were YB's guests. So, in addition to a glimpse of America that was not America but a community of white Sikhs, in one fell swoop I found myself also in India. I sensed political tensions that were stirring under a surface of "so-called friendly relations".

Soon members from the inner circle started to overload me with instructions on how I should behave in YB's presence and with respect to his "court". That court was strictly organised according to complicated ranks and merits. Before leaving Italy, GD had strongly advised me to be kind to everyone, but to mingle only with the first class.

Not knowing the language was a huge handicap. Sometimes I had the impression that they were using gross words but that could not be. I blamed my poor understanding. It was just impossible that such words were used by the master or by the people from his inner circle or by Dharma. I was the one who

misunderstood. Moreover, I was not able to ask questions or to react to what was being said, at least not in the beginning.

My self-esteem was low. When it came to choosing the right point of view, mine was always different from that of the others. I was always criticised. I came from a childhood where I was criticized and now, I wanted to be accepted. So, I was willing to learn. And what I needed to learn was to be like the others, become like the ones who were there, close to YB.

Dharma would tell me again and again: "I love you". It seemed far-fetched to me, but totally admirable from his part to open his heart so quickly to me. I wanted to learn and please him and YB. Dharma never ever listened to what I had to say. Throughout my stay in Espanola, he kept presenting me as "Guru Meher Kaur, 40 years old, never been in the US before". It was embarrassing. I could say a maximum of 3 words and then he would intervene, claiming that his fast mind already knew through intuition what I was about to say.

Every time I saw YB, he would urge me to listen to Dharma, to learn from him, to trust him in an unconditional way because he was my husband. Dharma loved me and he knew everything I needed to know. Everyone told me how lovable, outstanding and intelligent I was and what a great healer I was. I had no clue what to think about all this: I had married an asshole, but obviously I was urged not to reflect on that. Everything and everyone in this new environment amazed me. Nobody knew me or knew anything about me, but everyone praised me. I couldn't understand how things worked around here.

My husband and I were no sadhana freaks. I cannot remember anyone complaining about that. Dharma was a Yogi of a special kind. Every morning he would do 'his kriya' that consisted of 4 or 5 exercises that were, according to what he said, each 3 minutes long. To my perception his 3 minutes lasted 3 breaths. As a groupie, like most people of the inner circle, I went to YB's lectures and yoga classes participating in all the exercises. That was almost every night at 7 in the evening. When he was 'home', mostly in the afternoon, we spent time at the ranch sitting with YB to keep him 'company'. People who came to see the master, had to put up with us as spectators. YB was fond of watching TV, Doris Day or Bollywood movies. Actually, often I was alone with him to watch these films as the others did not like these old-style movies. From my childhood I had loved to watch junk. YB and I enjoyed these moments. Later I found out that the most viewed programme in the community, also my husband's favourite, was the Howard Stern Show. Many people say YB watched porn. It is possible, but for sure he would not do that in my presence. Maybe at night, or when I was not around. After all, I was just a fresher.

Without my suitcases I missed my clothes. I wandered around uncomfortably in these living rooms full of icy women in silk dresses, perfect turbans and fluttering veils and proud and severe long-bearded men. All with emotionless looks, a martial arts allure, and with ceremonious and pompous manners, regardless of sex, and overloaded with jewellery. As I understood very little about what they said, I used my healer skills to keep my eyes and ears open and contemplate the perceptions that came to me. I listened from another level and what I felt was not reassuring. I smelled risk and danger, saw lots of tight-lipped smiles and sensed mistrust, plots and malice. A den full of vipers.

After a while I started to prefer contacts with the Indian people in my house over spending time with the others. They became my friends. Dharma did not appreciate my behaviour and immediately reported it to YB, in public. YB had a big laugh with it. He decided that from then on, my house would be a place of reference for visiting Indian guests. And indeed, that was the case, that summer and also afterwards. Meanwhile we filled our days sitting in the living room with YB, attending chaotic meetings with or without the Indian neighbours or watching TV at the volume of premature deafness. It frequently happened that, all of a sudden, everyone would rush out to get into the car with YB and drive to a restaurant even though the cook had just prepared lunch for everyone. Everything always

happened in a great hurry, always to satisfy the will of the Master that could drop down like a sword of Damocles unexpectedly and at any time.

These were the appointed places in the car: Dharma would be driving with YB sitting next to him, Hari Nam K, the secretary by day, would be behind YB, I would be in the middle and Peraim K, the night-time secretary, behind Dharma. All the others would be following in a parade of other cars, pushing and pulling to be in the second or third position or at least as close to YB as possible.

After 4 or 5 days of this it was pointed out to me in sometimes less than polite words, depending on which lady was speaking to me, that it would be good for me if I would understand what my place was. The fifth place in the car was not reserved for me, even if I was the driver's new wife.

And so, I switched to the second car in the procession. At the same time, I was still considered as privileged because YB often asked me how I was. He inquired about my new home, my relationship with the Indian neighbours and with the "new daughter" who visited us every day, how it was going with this wonderful new family, meaning the community and above all the 'inner circle'. He gave me a list of tips about places and luxury hotels I could visit, because I was now the wife of this very rich and very intelligent son of his, and..., and.... And at the same time, he continued to educate me because I was considered to be kind of wild. He made sure I understood that, since the first wife had wickedly taken everything away from the house that was now my home, he and all the brothers had brought in furniture and accessories for the devoted son and brother who was my new husband, so that I would feel welcome and could enjoy all the comforts.

The little girl, my new daughter, so it was said, was now badly influenced by her mother. Dharma's ex-wife was a lousy Sikh because she had cut her hair. And she had begun to eat meat. For her health she said, but actually because she was evil and probably a lesbian too. Soon the little girl would see in me the real mother. She would return home to her father and her real family, the Sikh family, the family of her soul. I still get goosebumps thinking about this episode.

The construction of the lesbian image of Dharma's ex-wife is an interesting process to explain. I saw it happening with her and saw it repeated on many other occasions. But in this case, I was on top of it, so I can tell you exactly how it went. Because I was very new to everything, Hari Nam K, the day-time secretary, was always requested to repeat to me in simple and slow words, what was being said. They wanted to make sure I fully understood what was being discussed. It was extremely confusing to me, as I was still under the impression that YB was a good person. Often I thought: 'This is not possible. I probably still misunderstand.' But no, the terrible thing they did to Dharma's ex-wife was true. Little did I know then, that on one day "the drama of infamy and expulsion" would be about me.

When someone had fallen from grace or had left the community, events and circumstances that had never occurred in real life were invented and shaped out of nothing. It was an established and habitual practice in that living room of YB. The same thing happened during the witch hunts in the time of the Inquisition. When such scenarios were being created, most of the time I thought I had misunderstood what was being said as it was so weird, so far-fetched. There was always someone, sometimes YB himself, who would repeat the concept to me again in more and other words, to make sure I got it. On such occasions, YB would nail me down with his eyes to seal my assent and my silence.

The first time the ex-wife of my husband was mentioned was in the car. YB threw it out there: "This woman is a lesbian". Hari Nam K or Peraim K downplayed it: "Come on Sir, what are you saying?" YB insisted: "So what do you think is the reason that she left him?" And Dharma said: "You're possibly right Sir". When I heard this, I told myself that for sure I had misunderstood, because these were assumptions and YB would never go so low to speak ill of someone.

The lesbian story got a sequel in the living room of the ranch. There it became the official truth. YB threw the question to the group again. What could possibly be the reason why that woman (he didn't call her by her name) had left a husband like Dharma? Why would she leave a house like that, a

prosperous life like Dharma had offered her, and such a high social position? Now, she had nothing. And lucky for me, I had everything now. At that point YB remained silent. Someone said that she was indeed a strange woman. Someone else said she was childish. Another person intervened to say that she always and almost exclusively saw her with other women, with this or that girl. You know, she had had the impression that the ex-wife of Dharma was or had become a lesbian. But you could also see that she was a slut. Maybe she was not a lesbian, but she was a slut. 'No,' Dharma intervened, she was not very interested in sex, at least not with him. Hari Jiwan confirmed the thesis of the lesbian. He had always known. Some of the ladies tried to minimise what was being said, saying that they were exaggerating. Anyway: "good for you", they said while they turned to me, "you got the guy". I was the lucky one who won the lottery.

So, this is how my husband's ex became a lesbian. She was called ugly, old and fat. Nobody ever considered that Dharma was a bad fuck, an arid, unaffectionate and selfish man. When my turn came, three years later, I would be called a filthy, lousy, dirty, farting, nymphomaniac slut.

Meanwhile, the days passed by. It was all very tiring with all those formalities and contradictory messages in a language that I never liked. The date of the Solstice and Tantra in Ramdas Puri was approaching. In addition to the Indian visitors who came to my house, the celebrities began to arrive. Among them also Guru Dev. He came with his family. My oldest daughter came along too. As was promised in Rome, she would get married in Ramdas Puri. I was happy that she was there, Dharma not really. Her presence distracted me from my daily duties. My attention should be with him and YB and I still needed to learn a lot about how to become a good Sikh. Instead, I wanted to be with my daughter, taking care of her and the wedding. Dharma made it clear that I should not forget that that was not my real task.

Now, as I write all this down, I feel a big heartache because I was so confused and unsure about myself, for not putting forward what was important to me. I wanted to be with her, she was my first daughter, and she was getting married. She was getting married!!! She had to have a wedding dress and rings and a party and ... and ... and ... all that a girl who gets married needs. I was excited and proud, and I wanted to be excited and proud.

Every evening Dharma gave me a "lecture" about Sikh dharma, about attachment and non-attachment. My daughter and her marriage were an obstacle to me behaving like a good Sikh. I listened to him and stayed silent. I tried to understand. In my head I translated every word that he said into Italian. And then, when I had translated it, I thought: 'it can't be like this'.

YB came to my aid. He urged Dharma to take care of the marriage of my daughter. So, finally all was good. My husband used his renowned "practical sense" in the negotiations with the parents of the boyfriend concerning the division of the wedding expenses. My daughter's future parents in law were prominent members of the San Diego community and loyal followers of GD. Like a real gentleman, Dharma advanced the money. To establish the final peace, GD offered to officiate the marriage.

YB was often asking me: 'What do you think?' I told him: 'I am watching.' I watched the relationships, how the secretaries hated each other, how there was no friendship around, the lies, the theatre, ... It was a dangerous place. I captured all that and wondered if one day I would get better in being able to cope with it. Often, I wanted to run away from it all, but I had just got married, I had just sold my house, settled everything with my ex-husband, ... I was a proud woman. I was not ready to tell everyone I had made a huge mistake. If I only had been humbler ...

In part 3 I will tell you more about the wedding and about other experiences of life in the inner circle.