



Rat Turds and Deadbeat Ranchers

Latest in an ongoing series of near-life experiences as recounted by Slim Volume, Desert Rat.

Tonight I loaded up GoogleMaps, set it to satellite view, and zoomed in on the Malheur Preserve. I found the now-occupied buildings and the staff residences behind the main office. I zoomed all the way in and recognized the mobile homes on their concrete pads, used by visiting wildlife biologists doing field work on the preserve grounds.

In the off season, you could at one time rent one of those trailers for a few bucks a night. I spent a chilly, drafty night there in a Nashua single-wide in September of 1983 after camping out on Steens Mountain. Upon pulling open the hide-a-bed couch in the living room of that trailer, out poured several pounds of dried-up rat turds. On the coffee table in front of it were a stack of GQ magazines. The magazines seemed oddly out-of-place there.

Slim Volume would like to return and hike around those marshes and the adjoining hills again; it's a very beautiful area- in a sparse, big-sky sort of way- but he will not consider a trip there until such time as all the deadbeat ranchers and Rambo wanna-bes who have taken it over have been arrested and found guilty of felonies so they can never carry guns again.

As near as I can tell from the Oregonian's extensive reporting on this event, for a normal person (i.e., someone who is not wearing a great big gun and a great big cowboy hat, and believes that the constitution does not bar the federal government from owning land outside of Washington, D.C.), reasoning with the Bundy Bunch looks a lot like trying to play chess with a pigeon.

Because the pigeon knocks the pieces off the board, craps all over it, and then struts proudly around like he won.

That's Slim Volume's story for a Friday night, and he's sticking to it.