

# Anatomy of a Standoff

## The Occupiers of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters

On January 2, a loosely organized group of armed anti-government extremists led by Ammon Bundy seized control of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge headquarters buildings located near the town of Burns in remote southeastern Oregon. They did it because two local ranchers, Dwight and Steven Hammond, had been ordered to report to federal prison to serve a sentence for arson. This was a punishment the extremists deemed unjust, as the Hammonds had already served sentences handed down during a prior (but subsequently overturned) sentencing.

Since seizing the headquarters—empty at the time—the extremists have refused to leave and have instead used social media extensively in an effort to gather support from other right-wing extremist groups and individuals. Mainstream media outlets have also flocked to the scene, interviewing many of the participants in the takeover.

After several days, the extremists finally gave themselves a name: Citizens for Constitutional Freedom. But who are these “Citizens” and what are their beliefs and backgrounds? Experts with the Anti-Defamation League’s Center on Extremism have attempted to identify as many of the participants in the takeover as possible, watching and reading many interviews and scouring hundreds of profiles and videos on social media.

This identification is not an easy task, as some participants have avoided attention or used pseudonyms, while other people who have been at the headquarters were only visitors and not participating in the takeover itself. Moreover, some have left—not always announcing their departure—while new arrivals continue to appear on the scene from time to time. So this analysis must be considered a “best effort” to shed light on a constantly evolving situation.

## PORTRAIT OF THE OCCUPIERS

The Center on Extremism has identified 30 different adult individuals as apparent participants in the initial takeover, later arrivals who joined the first occupiers, or on-scene allies/spokespersons for Ammon Bundy and the Citizens for Constitutional Freedom. Not all of these people are full-time occupiers; some, for example, have stayed in hotels while spending a lot of time in the refuge. Others have taken “time outs” from being occupiers to deal with personal issues such as family and employment.

Individuals known to be curiosity-seekers or mere visitors were not counted here (although it is possible that one or more of the marginal figures in the below list may inadvertently fall into this category). Also not included here are individuals or groups who tried to insert themselves into the Oregon standoff in one way or another, as various extremist groups and individuals have. Children of extremists present at the refuge are not included here. Supporters and allies of the occupiers based outside of the refuge and the Burns, Oregon, area, are also not included here.

Examining the backgrounds of the refuge headquarters occupiers allows several key aspects of the occupiers to come into much sharper focus.

**The importance of the 2014 Bundy Ranch standoff.** Before Ammon Bundy engaged in the standoff over the Malheur refuge, he was involved with an even larger—and more hostile—standoff with the government sparked by his own father, Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy. Cliven Bundy had a long-running feud with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) over his refusal to pay grazing fees for grazing his cattle on federal land—activities he has engaged in for over 20 years. In 2014, the BLM began to round up the illegally grazing cattle to remove them from federally administered land. However, members of the Bundy family, accompanied by a coterie of anti-government extremists, confronted the officials and officers of the BLM and other agencies with weapons, precipitating an armed standoff that lasted about two weeks. In the end, the BLM backed down and released the cattle, apparently in order to avoid bloodshed.

Cliven Bundy and other participants in the standoff believed that they had achieved a considerable victory over the hated federal government. In the year and a half since the end of the standoff, various Bundy supporters have looked for other flashpoints and potential confrontational situations into which they could inject themselves and, in a sense, replicate the Bundy standoff elsewhere. Many of these prospective confrontations were located in the Pacific Northwest, giving the region a high probability of experiencing some sort of showdown or confrontation. According to an investigation by *The Oregonian* newspaper, Ammon Bundy and Ryan Payne, the latter a key figure in the 2014 standoff as well, selected the Hammonds as the cause around which they would plan an action. When the Hammonds declined to cooperate, Bundy and Payne settled upon seizing the nearby wildlife refuge headquarters.

Of the 30 participants in the 2016 Oregon occupation identified by the Center on Extremism, more than half (17 out of 30) appear to have actually participated in the 2014 Bundy Ranch standoff in Nevada, a surprisingly high percentage. The proportion was even higher for those taking part in the initial takeover. In other words, the Oregon takeover was a deliberate and direct sequel to the Bundy Ranch standoff, a consequence of the federal government having quickly backed down during that confrontation and not taking action since. In a sense, Ammon Bundy “got the old gang together” for a new confrontation, one that would theoretically build upon the success of his father’s confrontation.

**The ideological backgrounds of the extremists.** The participants in the takeover have never been from just one extremist group or even extremist movement. Collectively, most major segments of the extreme right are represented among the occupiers in some form or fashion to at least some degree. Moreover, extremists may sometimes adopt the beliefs of more than one right-wing extremist movement, as long as they are not incompatible.

Still, the occupiers are not a random collection of right-wing extremists. There was insufficient information on seven of the 30 people identified to be able to draw any conclusions about their ideology or affiliations. However, when one examines the primary ideology of the

remaining 23, it becomes quite clear that they tend to fall into one of two types of right-wing anti-government movements: the so-called “Patriot” movement and the Sagebrush Rebellion/Wise Use movement.

About two-thirds (15 of 23) of the extremists seem to have the “Patriot” movement as their primary orientation. The “Patriot” movement is a collective term for a group of anti-government extremist movements and groups who share a belief that some sort of conspiracy has infiltrated all or part of the government and turned it into an illegitimate, tyrannical government. The “Patriot” movement has three main segments—the militia movement, the sovereign citizen movement, and the tax protest movement—each of which has a different version of the conspiracy and its effects.

The segment into which virtually all of the “Patriot” occupiers fall is the militia movement. The militia movement consists of a number of groups and individuals who believe in “New World Order” conspiracy theories: that the United States government is collaborating with a shadowy globalist conspiracy known as the New World Order to slowly strip Americans of their rights—starting with their right to bear arms—in order to disarm Americans and absorb them into the tyrannical New World Order. Americans, whether by forming paramilitary militia groups or by joining other related groups such as the Oath Keepers or the Three Percenters, need to rise up against this tyranny like the American revolutionaries rose up against the British.

Some media reports have referred to the occupiers as sovereign citizens rather than militia, but the Center on Extremism has been able to document only one occupier who clearly subscribes to the beliefs of the sovereign citizen movement—and even then, it was not his primary ideology. Calling the occupiers a “militia” is somewhat more accurate, in that most participants have the ideology of the militia movement. However, many have never been involved with an actual militia group and the Citizens for Constitutional Freedom is not itself a militia group.

The remaining third (eight of 23) of the occupiers appear to have the Sagebrush Rebellion/Wise Use movement as their primary ideological focus. Both terms (one arising in the 1970s, the other in the 1990s) refer to an anti-government ideology that arose primarily in the

western United States over the issue of federal stewardship of public land. In all the western states, the federal government, rather than the state or individual citizens or businesses, has always had ownership of much (or even most) of the land in the state. The government allows considerable commercial use and exploitation of this public land, such as ranching and mining, with regulations to protect the environment, balance different business interests, and so forth. Many westerners are resentful of the way this federal stewardship is handled, or the fact that the land is in the hands of the federal government to begin with, or both. Often, they feel that a distant bureaucracy that knows or cares nothing about the local situation or economy is making decisions that adversely affect them. The most extreme proponents of this ideology believe that the federal government deliberately tries to negatively impact ranchers and miners and is engaged in attempts at “land grabbing” to take even more land for the federal government. Such convictions have resulted in everything from tense confrontations out in the wild between federal officials and locals to acts of violence such as offices being bombed.

These two anti-government ideologies are not incompatible with each other and many who were at the Bundy Ranch standoff in 2014 shared their ideological beliefs with each other. In addition to anti-government movements, adherence or sympathy to other right-wing extremists movements or beliefs can be found among many of the occupiers. A handful have had affiliations with the anti-immigrant movement, with some having even taken part in vigilante border patrols along the Arizona-Mexico border or elsewhere. Almost a quarter of the participants have expressed some sort of racism, anti-Semitism, or anti-Muslim bigotry, with the latter being the most common. Anti-Muslim bigotry has been increasing in the “Patriot” movement in recent years, so it is not surprising to find its presence here.

**The lack of local participation.** The residents of Harney County, where the standoff is occurring, have largely been hostile to the occupiers. Even many people sympathetic to the Hammonds have nevertheless disapproved of the seizure of the Malheur headquarters. One of the reasons for this is that locals were quick to perceive that the occupiers—some of whom had been active in the town in support of the Hammonds before engaging in the seizure—were outsiders.

The locals were right. An analysis of where the occupiers come from shows that only a small minority (5 out of 30) were even from Oregon, much less the local area. The vast majority of occupiers were from Arizona, Utah, and Nevada, with a sprinkling from other states, mostly western. A few came from as far away as Georgia and Ohio.

**The relative lack of leadership and experience.** The final point that needs to be made about the occupiers is the fact that they have—from an extremist perspective—a general lack of experience and leadership. Prior to the occupation, none of the occupiers would have been known to the general public, and many would not have been recognized as significant or leadership figures even by the extreme right. Though the occupiers come from a wide range of ages, many of them have been involved in extremist causes for only a few years—they are for the most part relatively newly radicalized. Few have any leadership experience with extremist groups or causes. This fact may account for the general indecisiveness and uncertainty that seems to have characterized the occupiers in the days since the initial seizure of the refuge headquarters. It may also explain why they embarked upon the seizure in the first place—a type of action that is quite rare among right-wing extremist groups (historically, it has been a tactic used by the left).

## TAKEOVER/OCCUPATION PARTICIPANTS

*Note: **(BR)** appearing after a person's name indicates someone who participated, or seems to have participated, in the 2014 Bundy Ranch standoff in Nevada.*

**Dylan Anderson.** When interviewed by reporters, Utahn Anderson has generally given his name only as “Captain Moroni,” a reference to a figure in Mormon scripture. Anderson supported the Bundys during their 2014 standoff with the federal government, but does not seem to have been present at the time. In May 2014, he gave \$5 to the Bundy’s legal fund, writing, “Sorry it’s not more, I spent all my money on [an] AR-15 and ammo.” On January 1, 2016, Anderson praised Ammon Bundy as a leader in Burns and said, “We must never hand victory to the New World Order conspirators and political criminals without opposition.”

**Joe Biggs.** Based in Texas, Biggs is a “reporter” for the right-wing conspiracy website Infowars, run by Alex Jones. Biggs first achieved notoriety in 2013 following the death of journalist and war correspondent Michael Hastings in an automobile accident in California. Biggs, a former Army veteran, came forward to claim that he had been a close friend of Hastings and to imply that Hastings’ death was a murder at the hands of the government. While publicizing these beliefs, Biggs made several appearances with conspiracy theorist and talk show host Alex Jones. This led to Biggs becoming a “reporter” for Alex Jones by 2014. Biggs seems to have missed the 2014 Bundy Ranch standoff but spent time in 2014 and 2015 on the border with Mexico “investigating” reports of secret bases belonging to the Islamic terrorist group ISIS. In 2015, he covered an anti-Muslim rally in Phoenix organized by Jon Ritzheimer (see below). Accompanied by armed members of the anti-government Oath Keepers, he was also at Ferguson, Missouri, in August 2015. In December 2015, Biggs and Alex Jones alleged that the San Bernardino shootings were a “false flag” operation (i.e., staged by the U.S. government) designed to “demonize the Second Amendment.” Biggs arrived in Oregon on January 3 to cover the standoff for Infowars and has spent much of his time at the refuge headquarters, though does not seem to be spending the nights there.

**Ammon Bundy (BR).** The leader of the refuge occupiers, Arizona resident Ammon Bundy, owner of a small truck maintenance company, is one of the sons of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy and played a prominent role in the elder Bundy's April 2014 standoff with the federal government—even getting tased by law enforcement officers at one point. Ammon Bundy's ideological views also mirror those of his father, denying that the federal government has any legitimate rights to the public lands that it controls. Like his father, Ammon also believes that the role of the county sheriff is to keep “foreign forces” such as the federal government out of the county. This is a notion that originally emanated from the sovereign citizen movement, though Ammon Bundy does not appear to be a sovereign citizen (extremists other than sovereign citizens now also promote this theory).

Following the 2014 standoff, Ammon Bundy cooperated with his father in trying to convince the Nevada legislature to prohibit the federal government from owning land in Nevada. Ammon Bundy allegedly worked closely with the legislators sponsoring the bill. He also began speaking at various right-wing events. In late 2015, Ammon Bundy began publicizing the plight of Dwight and Steven Hammond, the Oregon ranchers at the center of the Burns, Oregon, controversy. Bundy and Ron Payne (see below) even travelled to Oregon to visit them; they returned in late December to take part in a protest over the Hammonds and to engage in what would become the Malheur takeover. After the protest, Bundy and others took over the wildlife refuge. The primary spokesperson for the occupiers, Bundy has made various demands in exchange for their leaving, ranging from releasing the Hammonds from prison to the federal government surrendering all of the land in the wildlife refuge to the “citizens.”

**Mel Bundy (BR).** One of three Bundy brothers taking part in the seizure of the wildlife refuge, Mel Bundy has also been the most reticent, shunning interviews with the media. A Nevadan who works at gold mining, Bundy took time off in April 2014 to participate in the standoff between his father and the federal government. According to militia figure Ryan Payne (see below), it was he



and Mel Bundy who orchestrated a “plan for the cohesion between the Bundys and the militia” during the standoff. Bundy’s beliefs echo those of his brothers, including his view of the role of the county sheriff “to defend our rights to these lands” against the federal government. Mel Bundy accompanied Cliven and Ammon in March 2015 to the Nevada legislature to support a bill to attempt to prohibit federal land ownership in the state.

**Ryan Bundy (BR).** The eldest of Cliven Bundy’s sons, Ryan Bundy has lived in Nevada and Utah, where he has been involved with various businesses. In 2014, he participated in the Bundy Ranch standoff, but he has had at least some connections with right-wing extremism that date back years before the standoff. As early as 2006, Bundy ran for county commissioner on the ticket of the extreme right-wing Constitution Party, urging people to “stop this federal monster.” In 2008, Bundy ran on the Constitution Party ticket for a state house seat. In both instances he was unsuccessful, as he was in 2010 in again running for county commissioner. In 2012, Bundy sought the Republican nomination for a state house seat—unsuccessfully—but his message was no different. He vowed to eliminate intrusive laws and to stop “interference” by the federal government. In 2014, Bundy took a leading role in his father’s standoff in Nevada, frequently speaking to supporters or the media.

Shortly after the standoff, Ryan took part in another act of defiance against the federal government, participating in an organized all-terrain-vehicle (ATV) ride on federal land to protest the closure of an ATV trail located too close to ancient Indian ruins. According to the *Durango Herald*, Ryan Bundy “was egging the crowd on.” Though the organizer of the ATV ride urged participants to stay within legal areas, Ryan Bundy, according to the *Deseret News*, chose to ride in prohibited areas, saying that staying within legal areas “shows cowardice to the federal government.”

In January 2015, Bundy was charged with resisting arrest during an attempt by local sheriff’s deputies to serve him with a warrant for interfering with an animal control officer in 2014. The alleged resisting occurred while Bundy was at the county courthouse being arraigned

on yet a third criminal charge, a trespassing charge. These were simply the latest in a series of minor criminal entanglements on Bundy's part; he has pleaded guilty or not contest to, or been convicted of, a number of other minor crimes, ranging from misdemeanor theft to interfering with an arrest to burning without a permit. In dealing with a nuisance charge in September 2015, Ryan Bundy said of local officials, "I'm not their serf, and I'm not their slave."

**Brian Cavalier (BR).** Cavalier arrived in Oregon with the Bundy brothers; he has an association with the Bundys that goes back to the 2014 standoff, where he explained to one reporter that he is a former Marine who worked in Arizona for a parts manufacturer for off-road vehicles. Cavalier became one of the Bundy brothers' "security" detail and has also referred to himself as a bodyguard. After the standoff was over, Cavalier remained at the Bundy ranch, living in a trailer. In Oregon, Cavalier—who often would only identify himself as "Sunshine Unicorn" or "Fluffy Unicorn"—said that he was in charge of "operations" at the refuge. This past week, the British newspaper *Daily Mail* published a story revealing that Cavalier had never served in the Marine Corps, much less, as he had alleged, been in Afghanistan and Iraq. According to news sources, he has since left the refuge.

**Blaine Cooper/Stanley Blaine Hicks (BR).** Cooper, also known as Stanley Blaine Hicks, is an anti-government extremist and militia activist from Arizona and an associate of Jon Ritzheimer (see below). Like Ritzheimer, he is also an Islamophobe who has posted videos engaging in actions such as smearing a Koran with bacon, then setting fire to it. In Oregon, he and Ritzheimer have used the Internet to solicit donations of food, supplies, and money from other right-wing extremists. Shortly before arriving in Oregon, Cooper and Ritzheimer were in Seattle, Washington, for a protest at the federal courthouse to support Schuyler Barbeau, a militia movement adherent and Bundy ranch veteran who was arrested in 2015 on weapons charges. Cooper too was present at the Bundy Ranch standoff in 2014, where he served with Brian Cavalier as personal security to the Bundy family. According to the website RawStory, Cooper may have participated in vigilante

border patrols. In 2013, Cooper confronted Arizona Senator John McCain at a town hall meeting, accusing the senator of treason. According to *The Oregonian*, Cooper/Hicks was convicted of aggravated assault in 2009. Husband of Melissa Cooper (see below).

**Melissa Cooper (BR).** Wife of Blaine Cooper (see above), Melissa is an extremist in her own right as well. She told *The Oregonian* that she too was at the Bundy Ranch in 2014. In November 2015 she joined Blaine in an anti-immigrant vigilante patrol, dubbed “Operation Big Bird,” along Arizona’s border with Mexico. The patrol was conducted by Arizona Border Recon, one of the currently most active border vigilante groups.

**Shawna Cox (BR).** Cox, from Kanab, Utah, is a close associate of the Bundy brothers, having been a Bundy ranch standoff veteran. During the standoff, she served as “personal secretary” to Cliven Bundy. When the standoff was over, she wrote a short book on the confrontation: *Last Rancher Standing: The Cliven Bundy Story, a Close-Up View*. Like the Bundy family, her anti-government ideology stems primarily from anger at federal regulation of public lands. In 2009 she organized an ATV-related protest ride in southern Utah (similar to the one Ryan Bundy participated in; see above). She was also involved in a local Wise Use-type group. At the Oregon standoff, Cox read to reporters a list of grievances and demanded that an “independent evidential hearing board” be assembled to investigate the criminal case against the Hammonds. She has also worked with Ammon Bundy in the refuge headquarters as well as being involved in the effort to solicit food and supplies donations from other extremists through an address in Princeton, Oregon.

**Duane Ehmer.** Ehmer, a welder from Irrigon, Oregon, showed up at the wildlife refuge on January 3, saying, “My axe is sharp. I believe in supporting the Hammond family.” However, he only seems to have stayed for a day or so before returning back to Oregon, explaining that “I have to work a few days before I go back.” He also said that he had “come back to get my horse and more guns.” On January 7, he posted a photograph to his Facebook profile of himself posing with an assault

rifle and an American flag in front of his truck, writing “I love my family,” which some of his Facebook followers took to mean that he was on his way back to the refuge. He has since been confirmed, with his horse, back at the headquarters.

**LaVoy Finicum (BR).** Finicum is an Arizona rancher, which ironically makes him one of the few actual ranchers involved in the refuge takeover. He is an ally and associate of Cliven Bundy and took part in Bundy’s 2014 standoff. In November 2015, Finicum claimed that he would no longer pay grazing fees to the Bureau of Land Management because it was an illegitimate agency that he would not recognize. In 2015 Finicum also published a novel, *Only by Blood and Suffering: Regaining Lost Freedom*, a work of post-apocalyptic survivalist fiction. At the wildlife refuge, he has been one of the occupiers most willing to talk to the media.

**Rance Harris.** Harris, who has allegedly joined the occupiers, is an anti-government extremist from Oregon who also sports at least five different white supremacist tattoos. In April 2015, Harris was one of a number of anti-government extremists who mobilized to support the Sugar Pine Mine, near Merlin, Oregon, in its conflict with the federal government.

**Wes Kjar.** A Utah occupier who has become Ammon Bundy’s bodyguard, Kjar told a Reuters reporter that he quit his job at an oil rig to come to the standoff. Kjar has declared that he is “standing for all the oppressed ranchers [and land users] across the country.”

**Corey Lequieu (BR).** Lequieu is an anti-government extremist from Nevada, where he has held various jobs and undergone lengthy stints of unemployment. In 2013 he and his wife, Debra Carter Pope (see below), joined the anti-government Watchmen of America. He may also have ties to Nevada militia groups. Lequieu has made a number of racist comments on Facebook, including a reference to “typical n\_\_\_ behavior.” He has called for a new American revolution several times,

one phrased thusly: “Time for a new revolution to begin in America to take this country back from the Muslim porch monkey traitor.” He may have been a Bundy Ranch standoff veteran.

**Todd MacFarlane.** McFarlane is a Utah attorney who came to Burns, Oregon, to support the occupiers, allegedly at the request of LaVoy Finicum. He subsequently acted as a spokesperson for the people at the Oregon standoff, though he does not appear to have stayed with them at the refuge. In 2014, MacFarlane, a rancher as well as an attorney, supported Cliven Bundy during his standoff with the federal government, but was not present on the scene. In one 2014 editorial supporting Bundy, MacFarlane quoted Stephen Pratt, father of Oregon occupier Jon Pratt (see below). MacFarlane has represented fringe groups or figures in the past; in 2003, he was the attorney for a member of a Mormon polygamous group charged with conspiracy and sexual assault—until the man engaged with a standoff with police, following which MacFarlane dropped him as a client. In 2000, MacFarlane represented a group of ranchers who “liberated” cattle that had been seized by the BLM and placed at an auction house .

**Joe O’Shaughnessy (BR).** O’Shaughnessy, an Arizona militia and Oath Keepers member, has been active for several years with right-wing extremist causes, including vigilante border patrols with anti-immigration groups along the Mexican border. In 2015, following the shootings at military buildings in Chattanooga, Tennessee, O’Shaughnessy also called for militia members and other anti-government extremists to block the entrances of any local mosques in their area. He often refers to himself as “Captain” O’Shaughnessy and in a “press release” he issued in Oregon he described himself as being associated with the “North American Coalition of Constitutional Militias.” After a week of the standoff, O’Shaughnessy began to have some suspicions about the occupation, asking “has anyone stopped to think how did they get some of the greatest men in the Patriot movement to go out in the middle of nowhere to [occupy] a small building...at the coldest time of the year at a time where everybody is broke because of the [holidays]. I don’t know about you but this is all starting to look fishy to me.” Was the electricity left on, he asked, “because the

place was already pre-bugged...There is a lot more going on here than meets the eye.” In other words, O’Shaughnessy actually began to think that somehow the government lured the occupiers out to the Malheur Wildlife Refuge. O’Shaughnessy has spent time at the refuge but now seems to be staying at a nearby motel, allegedly because of arguments he had with others at the refuge. He has tried to raise donations for the occupiers and to form what he dubbed a “Constitutional Security Team.”

**Jason Patrick (BR).** Patrick is an anti-government extremist and Three Percenter from Georgia who participated in the Cliven Bundy standoff in 2014. He achieved some local notoriety in Georgia for run-ins with law enforcement and court personnel, often for trying to bring video cameras into courtrooms. Patrick described the run-ins as having “been caged multiple times for failing to exhibit an appropriate amount of fear when facing a terrorist.” In November, Patrick told his Facebook friends that he was heading up to the Burns, Oregon, area. However, he took a detour to Seattle, Washington, in December, where he joined other soon-to-be refuge occupiers in protesting the arrest of anti-government extremist Schuyler Barbeau on weapons charges.

**Ryan Payne (BR).** Payne, an electrician from Montana, was the founder of the tiny West Mountain Rangers militia who became involved in the Bundy Ranch standoff in 2014, claiming the need “to be the barrier between the oppressed and the tyrants.” An early arrival, he became one of the coordinators of the anti-government extremists who flocked to the side of the Bundy family during that standoff. Payne has also identified with the anti-government sovereign citizen movement as well as the militia movement, as well as some white supremacist views. In a 2014 interview, Payne told a reporter that slavery never really existed in the United States and that there was “an effort by some Jews to control the world.” After the Bundy Ranch standoff, Payne accompanied Ryan Bundy to Utah (see above) to engage in an anti-BLM protest over ATV restrictions.

**Daniel and John Ferrara/Pereira.** Daniel and John were interviewed by a reporter at the refuge; by their statements, they seemed to be ranchers from northern California. It is not clear if they were merely visiting the occupiers or if they have stayed on.

**Debra Carter Pope (BR).** According to her partner (Corey Lequieu; see above), Pope is from Nevada and an Air Force veteran and former deputy sheriff. A LinkedIn profile identifies her as a former dispatcher for the Nevada Highway Patrol; she currently seems to be living on military disability. In 2013 she and Lequieu joined the Watchmen of America, an anti-government extremist group. She is also a survivalist. She may have been at the 2014 Bundy Ranch standoff. At the Oregon standoff, Pope has been employed as one of the cooks for the occupiers.

**Jon Pratt.** Pratt, a Utahn, is not as well-known as was his father, Stephen Pratt, who died in 2012. The elder Pratt was a former disciple of W. Cleon Skousen, the influential right-wing extremist who combined Mormon conservatism with libertarian politics and conspiracy theories. Stephen Pratt went on to become an activist and speaker on his own, talking about subjects such as alleged federal land grabs. In recent years, Jon Pratt seems to have tried to follow in his father's footsteps, even delivering a talk in 2013 to a local meeting of the right-wing extremist Constitution Party that seems to have been a lecture his father frequently gave. Pratt was a relatively late arrival to the Oregon standoff.

**Ken Rhoades.** Ken Rhoades was identified as a 71-year-old man from Michigan in a Facebook video posted early after the occupation began, urging people to give them their support. He has since been confirmed to be present as one of the occupiers.

**Jon Ritzheimer.** Ritzheimer is an anti-Muslim activist and anti-government extremist from Arizona who became active in right-wing extremist causes only in 2015, but did so with a big

splash, organizing controversial armed anti-Muslim rallies in Phoenix and creating an anti-Muslim website called Rogue Infidel where one can buy t-shirts sporting anti-Islamic obscenities. During these anti-Muslim actions, Ritzheimer increasingly made connections with other right-wing extremists in Arizona. By the summer of 2015, Ritzheimer had joined anti-government groups such as the Three Percenters and the Oath Keepers, but he turned out to be too extreme for the latter. Ritzheimer said in August 2015 that he was sick of the Oath Keepers' "defense" and that "We're ready for offense." A few weeks later, Ritzheimer went on the offense, threatening to "arrest" a Michigan congresswoman who had supported the Iran nuclear deal in order to charge her with treason. He would follow that up with other, similar arrests, including President Obama. After these statements, the Oath Keepers kicked him out of their group. Ritzheimer is a former Marine who was, he has admitted, discharged for violating the Corps' tattoo policies. Ritzheimer is one of the more volatile participants in the refuge standoff.

**Pete Santilli (BR).** Santilli is a right-wing Internet podcast host and conspiracy theorist from Cincinnati, Ohio. Santilli traveled to Nevada in 2014 to "cover" the Bundy Ranch standoff and has also taken part in anti-immigrant activities in California. In 2013, he said on his Internet show that Hillary Clinton needed to be tried, convicted, and then shot in the vagina, something that brought him to the attention of the Secret Service. According to Media Matters, Santilli has also said that violence against the government would be justified as "the equivalent of us going out and doing a preemptive strike on our foreign enemies. That would be justified...because of the war that has been perpetrated upon our American people." In September 2015, Santilli organized a protest outside the Arizona office of Senator John McCain to demand his arrest. Santilli has identified himself with the Three Percenters. In Oregon, Santilli has acted as one of the occupiers' many spokespersons, though he said that he did not participate in the takeover "because that is an illegal action." Santilli was recently arrested in Ohio for carrying a weapon without a permit but it is not clear if he made his court date, which was for January 4.



**Michael Stettler (BR).** Stettler, one of relatively few Oregonians to participate in the occupation, is an electrician from Christmas Valley. He showed up at the occupation after learning it had occurred, having previously been a participant in the Bundy Ranch standoff in 2014. Stettler is originally from California, where he has run for Congress as a Democratic write-in candidate.

**Brand Thornton (BR).** Thornton is a member of the Southern Nevada Militia and a 2014 Bundy Ranch standoff veteran, where he was one of a number of armed militia men who took up positions on a freeway overpass to confront BLM agents. A few days before the Oregon takeover, Brand posted to his Facebook profile that the “FEDS are doing the NEW WORLD ORDER and AGENDA 21 on us right now as we breathe! They are EVIL incarnate and unless the PEOPLE wake up and take things into their own hands ALL IS LOST!!” Thornton appears to have been one of the original occupiers. In addition to his anti-government sentiments, Thornton has made a number of anti-Semitic posts to his Facebook page, calling Jews the “synagogue of Satan” and “The DEVIL’S SPWAN from the pits of hell.”

**Flipp Todd.** Todd is an Oregon Three Percenter who showed up at the rally to support the Hammonds who was then motivated to take part in the occupation of the wildlife refuge. However, he did not stay long but went back to his home in Sherwood, saying that he would go back to the refuge but had to “work some things through first with employer and children.” However, as of January 12, he had not returned.

**Steve Turner.** Described by the *Washington Post* as “a retiree from Sandy,” Turner is an Oregonian who traveled to the wildlife refuge after it was occupied.

**Neil Wampler (BR).** Wampler, a retired woodworker from northern California is an anti-government extremist who was present at the Bundy Ranch standoff in 2012. His ideology seems

to be closest to that of the militia movement, given posts that he has made about gun confiscation conspiracies theories as well as comments he has left to Oath Keepers and Three Percenter websites. “These are excellent conditions compared to other standoffs I’ve taken part in,” Wampler, referring to the wildlife refuge occupation, told a reporter from *The Guardian*. In 2014, Wampler showed up in Olympia, Washington, to take part in a protest—the “I Will Not Comply” rally—against that state’s firearms laws, a protest in which participants deliberately openly violated those laws.