

Mistletoe Ranch, exit 121 heading North on I5, 2 May 2009 about 11 AM.

here is a true story. i was driving back from santa clara last saturday and got off of exit 121 on I5 to take a piss. At the top of the exit road there was an isolated gate, a fence, and a lot of signs. the lowest one said KEEP OUT, and the top one said 'Mistletoe Ranch', and I thought that is odd --- and also this looks like some nutty religious compound and maybe I should get out of here quick. Then I noticed a sign that said 12 MHP, and I thought, that is odd.

biology won out over caution and i decided to take a piss by the side of the road, and in the middle of it a very beat up camper pulled up and i thought, ah ****, now i've done it. I bet that is some wack job that lives here, and he is and going to get out and yell at me and maybe shot me.

the camper stopped across the entrance to the 'Ranch,' maybe 20 feet away, and i saw an old guy motioning me with his hand, in an imploring manner, to come over to him. and i thought --- i can try to get out of here, or I can walk over to him and get yelled at. If I get out of here, he will probably stay angry. If i go over to talk to him, i can apologize and by being calm about it i might be able to help him get rid of his anger.

I walked over to him. Out of the camper window he said "Can you help me?" He got out of the camper and I could see he was pretty old and confused. He said something like he took this exit because it said it was the 'Roseburg cutoff' and he thought he had already passed Roseburg. I said we where just coming out of the mountains and I thought Roseburg was a few exits a head.

He said "I'm lost." I said I'd look for a map. I went to my car, and looked for a map and did not find one. I went back to talk to him and he said he still thought he had passed Roseburg. He said: "I've never been here before." I asked where he was from and he said "Utah," and he asked where I was going, and I lied --- not wanting a drawn out conversation about where Corvallis was --- and I said 'Portland'. I went back to my car a second time to look for a map. I found it this time and I looked at the map to find exit 121.

On the map I noticed there where no markings for exits 120 to about 125, so I was not absolutely sure that Roseburg was a head, but it looked like it would be at about exit 123 or so. When I showed the old man the map he said "I'm blind" -- but now he seemed to believe me that he should go forward.

I said I was going to get back on the highway at an entrance ramp that should be further down the road, and I said he should go that way too. He touched me on the shoulder, twice, to thank me, and I felt much better than I had in a long time.

I went on my way thinking maybe I should of offered to go slow so he could follow me to Roseburg, but then I thought more about it and decided it was his choice to go forward or back. And if he choose to go forward he would find Roseburg in two exits, and he might feel good about having made the choice himself.