

The Elk Hunt

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It was September 7, 2015, three days before the opening day of the six point elk season. Brian and his good friend Jack who lived in Revelstoke, BC were packing their bags for their five day hunting trip up Mount Revelstoke. Brian and Jack had known each other for many years and were both very enthusiastic hunters. They knew that if they were going to be going after this amazing trophy animal they would need to work very hard to get ready. They did this so that when they were presented with the opportunity to take the shot they hit their mark. They both had the same rifles which were Sako Finlights in 338 Winchester Magnum. They had their rifles finished off with a Swarovski Z5 3.5-18 power scope. They knew what they were capable of with these guns and had been practicing shooting out to five-hundred yards. They were almost ready, all they had to do was pack their tent, food, and other supplies and they would be ready for opening day.

The days that followed went by very slow as they were so excited for opening day. It was now finally the day before and they were ready to start their hike in. They loaded up their truck and started up the dirt road to the beginning for their trail. When they got there they parked their truck in its normal spot which was a small treed in area which would hide their truck so no one knew where their trail started.



They put their bags on, grabbed their guns and started up their trail. They knew how long it would take them to get into their spot and accounted for the time it would take to setup their camp and cook some food before darkness fell upon the sky. On their way in they would be going through some prime area to spot deer, moose, bears, and the trophy elk they were looking for, so they both were ready to chamber a round at any second when an opportunity presented itself.

It was about a half-hour into their three hours hike that they saw their first sign of life, it was a nice four point muledeer. They both identified it with their binoculars but decided after looking it over carefully they would hold off and wait for their opportunity for the trophy they were looking for.

Brian said to Jack "that was a pretty nice mulie hey."

"ya, he had great forks, good mass, and was a legal four point, but I think it was smart to hold out for the real trophy we are looking for." Jack responded. "And besides it is still very early in our hunting trip to settle for an average muledeer."

The two of them carried on down the trail, pushing their training to its limits but moving at a very good pace. The trail that they had cut took them a lot of work. It had taken them two years of cutting and grooming to get it perfect but still not very easy for others to find. This eighteen kilometer winding trail led through an old burned forest that was now flourishing with small jack pines and other small shrubbery. While this hike may not sound very hard it went through some of the rockiest and steepest terrain in British Columbia.

It was just after 5:30 pm when they arrived at the spot they had planned out for their base camp. The two of them dropped their bags and took a few minutes to rest, have some water, and eat some food. They did this so they would have energy to get camp setup and their bags ready for the next day. They both packed in two litres of water which they had already gone through, but their camp was positioned near a small flowing stream that they would be able to filter out of and have plenty of water for the rest of their trip. While Brian went to filter some water, Jack got the tent out and started laying all the parts and the footprint out very neatly. They still had about an hour and a half till the sun set, but this was plenty of time to get their camp ready and plan for the next day. When Brian got back from filtering water Jack had the tent all setup and pegged down. Brian dropped the two ten litre sacks of water in a flat, rocky spot on the ground near where they would be cooking. They had their cooking area strategically placed about thirty yards away from their tent so that if they spilled food the bears and coyotes would not smell the food in their tent and destroy it. To cook their food they had a special stove system called a Jetboil, which was designed specifically for light weight backpacking trips and weighed only fourteen ounces with the pot, fuel tank, and stove. For food they had dehydrated meals that all they had to do was add boiling water and they were ready to eat. They used these meals to cut down on weight, but each meal still contained enough calories for how many calories they would be burning during the trip.

After they finished their meal they started going through their bag so that it would be ready for the next day. They needed to make sure they had everything that was necessary but also they needed to make their bags as light as possible in case they shot an animal. The sun slowly sunk over the crest of the mountains and soon the darkness of night spread across the sky. Brian and Jack got their headlamps out and hung their food in a tree. They then walked back to their tent and went to sleep dreaming about big bull elk.

The next morning their alarm went off at 5:00 am, it was still dark but this would give them time to get their packs ready and have some breakfast. Throughout the night Brian and Jack could hear bugling elk screaming back and forth between each other. After scarfing down a small cup of oatmeal they threw their packs on and started out the ridge they were going to hunt as the sun was slowly cresting the top ridges above. They had been seeing elk in this area all summer long and knew they would be there, but it was not just a simple task to be able to spot and be able to shoot a six point bull elk. They reached a small clearing where they had a vantage point to spot a large open hillside where the elk had trails crossing. They put down their pack and sat down near a tree so they could not be seen. Brian pulled out his diaphragm and bugle tube and let out a bellowing elk bugle. They listened to it echo across the valley and awaited the response of a big bull elk. A few seconds passed and when they heard the response it was like music to their ears. Brian quickly responded to the elk and before he knew it he was in a back and forth competition with this beautiful bull elk. Jack grabbed their spotting scope and started looking for this bull, just as Brian let out another bugle Jack couldn't believe his eyes. This bull that they had been bugling to finally stepped out into the opening and exposed itself. Jack identified it as an eight by seven with huge mass and lots of blading which gave him great character. Brian and Jack both flipped out their bipods and setup for the shot. Brian ranged the elk at five-hundred, a shot they had practiced time and time again. They both loaded a bullet into their gun, accommodated for the drop on their scope and flicked the safety off. They were both going to shoot at this elk to ensure they put it down and did not wound it. They had it all planned out, Brian would shoot first and Jack would do a follow up shot to make sure it was hit. Brian said he was going to shoot, just as he was squeezing off the trigger another shot spread through the valley. This shot was from another hunter who had been stalking this same elk. The elk stood still for a second but soon bolted and left Brian with no clean shot. He was very disappointed, this was an elk of a life time and he could not harvest it.

Jack and Brian waited and hoped that the same elk would come back out of the dense jack pines, but as dusk fell they never got another glimpse of that giant bull elk. They worked their way back to their camp disappointed about the event that had happened earlier that day. They were very worn out so they made a quick meal and went to bed just as the darkness fell over the mountains.

Their alarm went off at 5:00 am again and they were eager to see what they could accomplish on the second day of the elk season. They had decided that they would try the same look out spot again where they had seen the giant the day before. They made it to the spot just



as the sun crested and made sure they were ready to shoot as soon as they saw another six point elk. The day slowly got hotter and hotter reaching a temperature of twenty-seven degrees Celsius, which meant that almost all the animals would be bedded down in the thick cover out of the sun. With this in mind Brian and Jack knew they would have to be patient if they were wanting to get another chance at a bull elk. Brian once again let out a bugle and awaited for the response of an elk. He waited in silence for five minutes with no response. He decided to try some cow elk calls and then follow them up with a bugle. With these calls followed complete silence. The valley was almost lifeless, and animals were almost impossible to spot. The day dragged on and they saw nothing but a few white tail does and some chipmunks. They were very determined to stick it out till they saw an elk.



Hours passed and the sun was starting its way down. They knew it would be dark in about an hour so were hoping that with the temperature dropping that the animals would start to move. Their prediction was right, a group of cow elk walked into the opening in a string. Brian and Jack's hearts were racing, they were hoping for a nice bull elk to be following them. They waited for the cows to cross the opening and when the last elk came it was not a bull. They watched them slowly work their way across the opening and out of sight. Their hearts dropped, but Brian, eager to get an elk grabbed his call and tried one last bugle before last shooting light. His bugle echoes throughout the valley and almost before he could finish the moment they were waiting for had finally come. The bellowing call of a beautiful elk came blasting towards them, and before they knew it the elk was working its way through the opening. Brian and Jack dropped to a prone shooting position and prepared for the shot.

Brian quickly told Jack “he’s at five-hundred-fifty yards, moving fast. We need to take the shot.”

Jack replied “he’s the eight by seven, shoot him!”

They quickly adjusted for the drop of the bullet and before the elk could make it to the end of the opening Brian let off a shot. Boom! the muzzle blast could be felt by both of them and time almost went in slow motion. They watched the vapor trail of the bullet slowly move towards its target and as Jack let off a second shot, they both saw the beautiful bull elk cripple and drop in its tracks. They could not believe their eyes, they had finally shot the trophy elk that they had been searching for and all their hard work had finally been paid off.

They gathered their stuff and started to hike over to the elk. They got to the elk just as the sun was on the crest of the ridge, which gave them time to take pictures and enjoy this great achievement for a moment before they had to start butchering their trophy. After all butchering was done and the meat was hung they loaded their packs and started their first trip out with their meat. The feeling of carrying out an elk of this class sent a great sense of achievement through both their bodies. They would be packing this elk out throughout the whole night, but they would enjoy the hard work that it would take to get their trophy out.

