

## The Land of the Giants

### Mistaking the Seasons, Learning the Seasons

Usually I can tell if my hunt is going to end with a successful kill by how the travel portion goes.

The airplane ride was uneventful which was the beginning of what I thought was good things to come. All would change once we arrived in Regina Canada. My cameraman was denied access into Canada because he had gotten a DUI when he was a teenager. The Canadian authorities sent he and his bags back to the USA on the same plane he had just flown up on. Not only was I now without a cameraman, but he had packed some of my gear in his bags so I could carry all the camera equipment. So part of my hunting gear was being shipped back home.

When the customs authorities found out I was going to film my hunt, they wanted to see my workers visa, permit and my business license. I am now on a hunt that I had hoped to film but no longer have a cameraman, but can't get into the country because they deemed my trip a business trip and I didn't have the appropriate paperwork. After being on the phone for 2 hours I had received a fax at the Enterprise rental counter it was everything I needed, except a letter from the Canadian Tourism granting me permission to film. The man who was needed to sign the letter was now on vacation, for an additional week. I'm really not sure what I said that got their attention but somehow, 2 hours later I received my letter. With all paperwork in hand and \$150 later customs finally cleared me.

When I got to the baggage carousel, my bow case was there but no duffle bag. Great! Part of my gear went back home with my cameraman and the rest is in never land. After filing out the necessary paperwork at the lost baggage claim area, I finally got my rental car. Now that there is just me with my bow and camera equipment it was ok. But how am I going to get back to the airport once they found my bag, and I find a new cameraman?

I spent my other cameraman until finally I convinced Pro-staff guy Dayna Masters to make the trip. Not that he really minded, but last minute with all the work he had going on it was a major sacrifice and he couldn't leave for another 3 days. Spent those 3 days finding my bag, scouting, setting up tree stands, putting out Crème Deer 3 day harvest.

I had a 3 phase secret weapon plan that I had success, used numerous times before and I was going to use it on this trip.

Ace Card #1 – Get 3 day harvest on the ground .Cmere Deer has come out, with a new product that works like no other scent. It's called 3 day harvest and it's guaranteed to work within 3 days, and it's exactly how much time I have before Ill have a carmeraman to film my hunt .

Ace card #2 –Bag a deer decoy.(B.A.D. Decoy) This thing is like an accordion when packed up. It is the most life like decoy on the market. They have a bedded buck and a bedded doe. Now think about this, the only time a doe will bed with a buck is when he is tending to her. The only time a buck tends a doe is when she is in heat . Don't you think other bucks know when they see a buck bedded down with a doe that she must be ready to stand still for him? So what are they going to do especially if they are much bigger than the bedded buck? I use B.A.D. decoys because they are so compact and so realistic.

Ace card #3 –I make a couple of mock scraps around my hunt area within bow range using Mrs .Doe Pee doe in estras urine. Then I squirt the Estras urine all over the back of the bedded doe. I use Mrs. Doe Pee because it is collected fresh then frozen until your ready to use it. No preservatives are added to distort the natural aroma.

Mind you I don't use Ace card 2 until the moment I start hunting you probably wont fool the same buck more than twice a season with a decoy. While waiting for Dayna my number 1 cameraman to get to camp and between phone calls tracking down my bags, I began to implement 3 phase plan.

On the second day 90% of all the 3 day harvest and Cmere Deer was gone and a buck had defecated in my mock scrape. I replenished both the Cmere Deer and the Mrs. .Doe Pee and went back to camp .On the third day every morsel of the 3 day harvest & Cmere Deer was gone .My mock scrape was now twice the size of what I had originally made it .

I replenished both again drooling for the day Dayna would arrive and tonight was that day. I couldn't wait to see what size bucks were falling for my plan.

I picked Dayna up at the airport at 11:30 pm; with a 2.5 hour drive to get back to camp .Dayna had been traveling all day, since before daylight. After 4 flights he was exhausted to hear that we had to drive 2.5 hours and get up at 4:00AM. Thirty minutes into our drive a terrible thunder storm blew in .It was thundering and lighting, the rain was so hard at times I couldn't see to drive.

The weather turned the 2.5 hour drive into a 3 hour drive .When 4 am rolled around it was still raining cats & dogs, Dayna was beat and I didn't want to get the camera equipment out in this kind of weather. I went back to bed and we both caught up on our sleep.

The next day at noon all the C'mere Deer and 3 day harvest was gone and the mock scrape had been refreshed .There were even more droppings in it. We put out more 3 day harvest and Mrs. .Doe Pee .We set up the B.A.D. decoys and put Mrs. Doe Pee all over the does back and tail .We climb I not our equalizer tree stand and adjusted them to the top of the tree .Dayna was at the very top filming and I was just under him .This Aspen tree was very large at the base and much smaller at the top. We were in for a long sit with conventional tree stand we would have been very uncomfortable leaning away from the tree. But with the equalizer you can crank the adjustment to the level the stand to what ever comfort you desire. Once our stands were in place we settled in for a 7 hour sit.

About 2 hours into our hunt the wind kicked up. There was a constant wind out of the west which was perfect for our set up but there were gust of over 40 miles per hour, which is not good at all if you are bow hunting. Trying to hold a bow steady at arms length with 40 mph is impossible. About 5:30 pm we saw our first deer .It was very young 7 pointers. It actually was an 8 pointer but part of his right main beam had been broken off .At about 6 pm a doe and a fawn came in .At 6:45 a nice main frame 10 pt with 2 kickers about 5 inches each came in .One on his RT 6-2 and 1 in his LT G3.I took several minutes slowly shifting my feet around on my stand to get my body into position to take a shot .I finally got into position when the deer turned and faced straight at me .His head was down in the Cmere Deer and taking it in like candy. This was not the angle for a fatal shot. The wind picked up and nearly blew me off my stand. The only way my arrow was able to stay in place was due to the fact that I use a whisker biscust rest.

The wind alone was plenty enough to blow the arrow to the ground but put that with my off balance shifting and without the biscust it would have been disastrous. While I was waiting for a broadside shot and for the wind to let up ,Dayna tapped me on the shoulder .My fixation on the 12 pointer coupled with trying to stay in the stand, prevented me from seeing the brute in the alfalfa field. Dayna pointed to the field careful as not to be seen by the 12 pointer. I couldn't believe what I was seeing .This deer made my 12 pt look like a fawn and he was coming straight toward us .The field was 200 yards wide and he had come all the way across and then 30 yards into our head of trees. My heart steadily beat faster and faster as he slowly came our way. By the time he reached our side of the woods my heart was in my throat & beating 90 beats per second .My 12 pt looked up and saw (The Giant) coming straight to the Cmere Deer . I'm not sure if he was scared off by (The Giant) or the noise my heart was making but in

any case, he got out of there like he was shot out of a cannon. The Giant worked his way straight toward the Cmere Deer but as he past the low hanging tree limbs that I had squirted with Mrs. Doe Pee he stopped. He sniffed leaves and licked them. He then rubbed his forehead on the limbs. This lasted all of 2 seconds then he finished his march to the Cmere Deer.

The moment I had been waiting for was finally about to arrive. Just one more step and hid head would be smothered with 3 day harvest mixed with Cmere Deer. As he lowered his head and took his first nibble he caught the decoy out of the corner of his eye. His head jerked up to alert and position with his ears forward. My first thought was I was about to see the B.A.D. decoy get destroyed. To my surprise ( The Giant ) drew his head down and began to walk backwards retracing his steps .It was as though I were watching a video in slow motion in reverse .Once (The Giant ) reached the Alf alpha field he spun 180 and vanished.

My heart sank to the bottom of the tree I was standing in .After it got too dark to shoot my bow, I climbed down from the tree .I gathered my decoys & went back to the camp .I learned a valuable lesson that night, It was early September and although all the bucks had rubbed most of their velvet off their antlers over half of them still had strips hanging from them. There had been no fighting not even any sparring at this stage of the season. No pecking order had been established .It was a good month maybe more before the season would be right for using a decoy .I have successfully used decoys on many hunts over the last 35 years, and I know they work. However I have never used them so early in the season, and I will never will again.

I hunted the same tree for two more days without seeing (The Giant) again. On the evening of the second day ,I hung motion detector cameras in the areas where I had put 3 day harvest & Mrs. .Doe Pee .On the third day I hunted the same location , where I had seen ( The Giant ). Although in 3 days I had not seen a deer in this area each morning the mock scrape was refreshed, and all the Cmere Deer was gone. All of this activity was taking place during the middle of the night. The fact that I was not seeing any bucks lead me to believe that the activity was being caused by (The Giant). I was contemplating trying a new location and decided to let the cameras have the final say so .After reviewing the pictures that evening (The Giant) had not shown himself in any other area. I did see a 170 class using the area I had named Mrs. Doe Pee .On the fourth morning it was my last day to hunt .I decided to hunt the same location that I had been hunting all along. I got to my equalizer tree stand one hour before daylight. All of the 3 day harvest was gone so I poured more on the ground & climbed in the tree. At 7 am I caught a glimpse of ( The Giant ) as he stepped into the woods, in the SW corner of the Alf alpha field 250 yards away.

With one more hunt left I viewed the motion detector camera one more time in hopes that (The Giant) was feeding elsewhere. No luck with the pictures forced me to make the crucial decision to hunt my same stand. At 4 pm I refreshed Mrs. .Doe Pee & climbed my tree. Five minutes before dark I found myself daydreaming of calling North West airlines and extending my stay until I got a shot at (The Giant). Movement in my peripheral vision startled me from my thoughts. I slowly turned my head to see (The Giant) standing 30 yards into the field .He was coming straight to the Cmere Deer .When he got to the tree line, he froze like a statue. Starring where the decoy had been .He was only 30 yards away, but he was facing me and there lots of trees, bushes between us .Finally he took two more steps & stopped again as ridged as a bronze sculpture. Only this time he was staring at me, after two minute, he swished his tail, took two more steps and dropped his head into the 3 day harvest. By now it's plumb dark. Luckily our video cameras have light enhancer electronics that allow us to film 5 minutes after dark. I drew my bow and waited for a broadside shot. As I stood at full draw I realized it was too dark to see through my peep. I shifted my peep to the side of my eye, could only see (The Giant) with both eyes opened. I knew at this stage I was going to have to have to shoot (The Giant) instinctively. I remained at full draw for what seemed an eternity when another deer appeared in the field. (The Giant) lifted his head and turned hard right to get a better look at the other deer. Leaving his body in the same position, turning his head exposed a shot at his vitals. The shot to make at this angle is on the point of the front left shoulder which is precisely where I was aiming. Because I don't practice enough instinctive shooting I forgot that not looking through the peep causes you to shoot to the right .With both eyes opened I was able to make out the exact location of the deer's left shoulder. I slowly began to apply pressure to the trigger of my release. The instant the release went off I saw the luminock disappear into the body of (The Giant) .( The Giant) boiled form the brush ,30 yards form the field & stood broadside as he tried to figure out what happened. I pulled another arrow from my quiver, dropped it in my whisker biscuit and knocked it in my string. I estimated the yardage at 60 yards and drew my bow. With both eyes opened I touched off the release and saw the lumniock fly just barley over his back .The second draw startled (The Giant) causing him to walk across the field to the other side. The guide drove up about the same time our feet hit the ground.

When we told what had happened he & two other hunters went looking for (The Giant ) .It had only been 15 minutes or so since I had arrowed the deer. That is way too soon to pursue him. The Giant had bedded down inside the woods yards from the field .About the time Dayna & I had caught up with the guide ,one of the other hunters jumped (The Giant) out of his bed .I decided we should leave and look for (The Giant) at daybreak, giving him plenty of time to expire. In camp we reviewed the video footage to find the arrow had hit (The Giant) just behind the shoulder, two inches right of where I had aimed.

As you can imagine I had trouble sleeping that night. Every hour I looked at the clock to see if it was time to get up .Thirty minutes before light we were sitting in the truck in the field. At first light we were standing where the deer had first bedded down the night before.

To our dismay there was not a drop of blood to be found anywhere. There were 5 of us looking and after circling for about an hour, not one drop. We spread out and began to comb the area. Since it was dark the night before when we jumped (The Giant) we hadn't had a clue as to which direction he had headed .We dissected the property on paper and took a systematic approach eliminating each section, one at a time.

The under growth was very thick and was waist high and even head high in some places. I know from experience that a mortally wounded animal will head for a pool of water and submerge himself. I suppose the cool water gives them relief from the wound .I asks our guide Ron if he knew the closet water pockets were. He told me there were one lake and three small water holes. After checking the areas I was out of ideas .Ron had a plan. He mapped out the areas on paper we took an approach of eliminating each section one at a time .After four hours we decided to eat lunch .After lunch we started all over with Ron's plan. I re combed a very thick wet marshy area that I had combed thru that morning only now I was doing with the mindset of looking for a dead deer instead of a wounded deer. There was a small head of bushes that I had walked around three times and had even walked thru it once. It was only 30 yards by 40 but very thick .This time since I was looking for a dead deer now I thrashed through every square inch. When I got to the last 10 yards of the South East corner of the bushes an eruption happened. From underneath my feet (The Giant) busted out of the bush. Same width same mass same height .It had to be my deer. No blood on either of his sides. No sign at all that he was wounded .He shot out of that bush and straight across the pasture and into a head of woods about 600 yards away. I got a good look at him and he didn't appear to be injured and there was no blood. My heart sank.

After I cleaned my underwear I thoroughly checked where he had been bedded down. Still no trace of blood. I began to second guess my thoughts. Was this my deer? Could there be two Giants in the same area? Maybe they were brothers?

I yelled for the other guys and told them about what happened. We formed a line about 30 yards apart, and stepped into the brush the deer had disappeared in. At 30 yards Bill Brown yelled "Bob I found your deer "What I said "he replied "I found your deer". I ran into Bills direction to find him standing 3 feet from a small water hole that I had inspected just 3 hours ago. 'Bob are those feet tracks? I looked and said ' yep" .Well you walked within 10 foot of your deer" Bill said and pointed to a tall stand of grass .How could I have missed this deer? He was huge

.Even bigger than he looked from the tree. No ground shrinkage here folks. This deer was truly a Giant. There he lay 10 to 12 feet from the water hole. The grass and undergrowth was so thick & high I had walked right past him.

This Giant scored 202 .Turned out to be the largest white tail I had ever seen. This hunt taught me you're never too old to learn new information about whitetail as long as you're willing to pay attention. God has blessed me with a wonderful life and with an understanding wife who allows me to enjoy my passion. The education I gain when I spend time in the field chasing whitetails will be past on to my kids for them to continue to build upon. One lifetime is not enough to learn everything about hunting whitetail deer .Thank God, for the knowledge my Dad passed down to me.

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