



My quest to hunt a Mountain Goat started 3 years ago. I have a friend in Canada who is a throwback to the time of Grizzly Adams. He is college educated and gets along with city folk just fine but, he really thrives in the mountains, his name is Abe Dougan. He guides/outfits for hunters in search of Trophy Sheep, Goats, Bear, Moose, and Cougar and excels at difficult hunts. He and others told me that hunting a mountain goat with a bow and arrow was the most difficult hunt in North America if not the world. So of course I was hooked, now I had to prepare. First I read everything and talked to anyone that had ever hunted goats (bow or rifle); I broke the preparation down to 4 categories: (1) Physical (2) Mental (3) Skill (4) Material (equipment and supplies). Physical: One guy I spoke with said he runs marathons in the off season to prepare for mountain hunting, so at the age of 45 and having never run more than 5 miles in my life I trained and completed a marathon in Pocatello, Idaho in Sept. of 07. I chose Pocatello because the altitude and hills would provide an extra challenge, also to get out of the heat and humidity of south Louisiana. I kept my running up, lifted weights 4x a week, and road a mountain bike on the weekends, adding a loaded pack on my runs a 2 months before leaving. Mental; Well the marathon also helped in this category and generally I'm a very positive person, also have been a small business owner most of my adult life so I've seen lots of ups and downs. I also didn't set my expectations too high, survival was goal #1. Skill: I was always a fair hunter, but most of my hunting experience was stand hunting of whitetail and to tell the truth I still get rather shook-up. So I started looking at "western" hunts, got lucky and drew a couple of Elk tags in New Mexico, these hunts required me to increase my comfort shoot zone out to 60yards, I did and shot 2 nice elk. Also my stalking skills were greatly enhanced by a buddy of mine Jack Fleming, he does archery hunt for Nilgia on the King ranch, he guided me and taught the meaning of the word patience! That and the 3-D range I set up in my yard gave me confidence I had the skill required. Now Material: Several e-mails from Abe, shopping via the internet, I was soon outfitted with the proper gear. Abe and I discussed the where and the when. Abe had made hunting arrangements with Greg Williams and Golden Bear Outfitting in NW British Columbia. We decided on August of 2008, early before the snow because the area we choose is difficult in good weather and impossible in bad! As the time neared I kept my running up and was shooting my bow 4 to 5 x a week out to distances of 100 yards.

In April Abe called me and told me because of the cost of fuel and the weak dollar we needed another hunter to offset the costs and keep within the budget we had discussed. In true Abe fashion he knew such a person and his name was Bob Schemer, a Midwestern rifle hunter who had hunted with Abe before and was in excellent physical shape. So now it became a threesome! I spoke to Bob on the phone a couple of times and we hit it off, we were to meet in Vancouver on the flight to Smithers on August 5th, all was set or at least I thought it was. I awoke on the 4th, thinking of all the last minute things I needed to take care of but soon I learned a tropical storm was headed to Houston (my 1st connecting flight ) and would delay all travel on the 5th! So 2 hours on the phone with the airlines and a very understanding wife I left a day early for my



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adventure, besides a night in Vancouver wouldn't be so bad. I met up with Bob on the afternoon of the fifth and we headed out to Smithers, Abe met us there and informs Bob and me that we have a 10 hour drive ahead of us to Telegraph Creek. If you have never been to Telegraph Creek (via road) words don't describe the adventure, let's just say I was ill the last 2+ hours of the drive. We arrive and head to the float plane, only to be told the weather is too nice to fly, seems that hot windless days are a no fly day, but the pilot has a fishing shack we can use for the night and even invites us to join him for some moose stew. So we fly in the morning!

We head out at 8am and must make 2 flights in the Cessna, Abe takes our gear first Bob and I follow with our pack dog Silver. The pilot informs us he has never put anyone on this lake before and cannot pick us up because the lake is small and in a box canyon making coming off the lake with a load impossible. So we will walk out, at the time it sounded like no big deal. We gather our gear at the lake, watch the plane leave, and start formulating a plan. We fill our water bladders and start our ascent, we are all packing in excess of 80#'s even Silver has a load of about 30#'s. We can't hunt today but we sure can try to find them. All the training I did and the hike is still kicking my butt, but we keep a good pace. We reach the ridge and begin to glass the next set of peaks soon we spot goats and they seem to be Billy's! We hike for the remainder of the day hit a few nasty spots but Abe seems to always find a way around the worst of them. We set up camp in a saddle close enough to reach the Goats tomorrow, but not too close to spook them. When I wake in the morning it's an Advil moment, we shake it off and head towards the last ridge we saw the Billy's the day before. We spot several more goats on the way but choose to go after the ones we first saw; when we reach the top we drop all our camping gear to lighten up our packs, time to move quick and quiet! We search the area we glassed the day before, but no goats so we continue across the ridge, Bob grabs me and pulls me down while whispering goats! We drop our packs and I ease up to see 3 or 4 Billy's! The wind is in our favor and the goats have no idea we are there, when we get 150 yards from them Bob and Abe get into position (Bob with his rifle and Abe with the video camera). Off I go to close the distance for a bow shot, crawling on my hands and knees, then on my belly I circle left closing the distance to 85 yards still too far and the goat I want is bedded. I move slowly but soon find myself "cliffed out" not able to move forward, I move towards a boulder, but have no cover and the Billy's pick me up, they get up off their beds. That's when I notice 5 more goats below the ones I am stalking, and then I hear a shot and see a Billy to my right go down, Bob made a text book shot! The 5 other goats run towards me and then I see him, the largest goat of the bunch with yellowing hair and thick horns. I range him 70 yards I nock an arrow draw and shoot right over his back! He moves towards me, I can't believe it, I nock another arrow draw pick a spot and let the arrow fly, and he bolts as I release but I see the arrow go thru him! I know I hit a little back but am sure I got a least one lung! He monarch runs to the cliff edge and disappears, the remainder of the goats cross a ridge and I count 7 leaving. Wow what happened, it takes a minute to take it all in but I am sure I have just completed my Quest. I walk to the edge where I last



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saw my goat but I don't see my goat, but I know I must give him time and not push him as the shoot was not perfect. We recover Bob's goat and see that he is an absolute Monster with horns over 11 inches, we celebrate and take pictures, and then the work begins. We skin and de-bone for a couple of hours all the while I am thinking about my goat, in another hour we finish up and start to look for him. We find the arrow it's covered with sign (hair, blood and some gut), we get on his track until we reach a vertical cliff, we back track and make a huge loop so we can see the face of the cliff we were just on. Three hours of hiking we reach a vantage where we can see the cliff and at first we see nothing, then Bob says "there he is" at the base of the cliff some 500 feet below. We realize it's too late in the day to recover my goat so we leave him and head back to camp for what proves to be a sleepless night.

We wake to another absolutely beautiful sunrise; I am tired yet full of excitement, like a 9 year old waiting to unwrap a Christmas gift. We break camp and head out, Abe finds a shortcut be we must cross a snow bridge and Bob doesn't like it, but Abe wins. When we reach the cliff we must descend to my goat again Bob says "I don't see a way down" in true Abe fashion he looks Bob square in the eye and says "There's always a way down", so down we go and an hour later and a few grey hairs we reach him. He's belly up so at first I can't see his horns, we flip him over and I'm speechless, he's an absolute giant, beat up, tipped off but still the most awesome trophy I have ever seen, and he's mine. We take a few pics, do a little camera interview, then begin the butchering process, most of the meat was ruined in the fall which was a blessing in disguise as our packs were already overloaded. We finish and climb back up in about 4 hours and only then did we measure my horns, it's then we realize we might have shot the new archery record. We celebrate with a meal of fresh goat meat and glacier water.

Now we prepare to hike out, in mine and Bob's mind it's over, we only have to walk down hill to the river approx. 20 miles and drop 7000 feet how bad can that be? We dump most of our food and Silver's too so we can handle the extra weight of the meat, horn and hides, repack and begin our descent. We hike the remainder of the day, hitting some very steep places but are getting the hang of it. We set up camp in a saddle, completely exhausted, but we can see the river and the lights of Telegraph Creek. That night we heard wolves howling they must have found our goats, that should feed them for a while so they won't bother us. We sleep well thinking we will be down the mountain tomorrow. Up at dawn back on the trail, as we enter the tree line I see a little concern on Abe's face, doesn't look that bad to me, boy was I wrong! As soon as we hit the trees I realize why Abe was concerned, the forest looks like it was hit by a hurricane with all the deadfall and as steep as the slides we have been hiking! The vegetation is so thick you can't see where to put your foot down, and it seems every bush is grabbing your ankles trying to throw you down the mountain. Going under trees is an exercise in futility as my pack and bow strapped to it hang on every branch, our pace slows considerably. Now we have no mountain breeze to cool us and the temperature has risen considerably, we are sweating profusely and must increase our water intake so we don't cramp. Four hours of breaking bush we have covered slightly



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over one mile and only dropped 400 feet, at this rate we calculate 3 ½ days to get off the mountain 2 days longer than our food supply! Well we have plenty of goat meat! We continue an area where we are paralleling a creek, by this time Bob and I are running low on water and feel we should drop into the creek bed and follow it out, the creek runs to the river.....Right? Abe thinks otherwise and we continue our course until we are out of water and Bob begins to cramp, now we must head down into the creek. The banks of the creek are so steep we have to take our packs off and rope them down then slide on our rears to the bottom. The creek is like an oasis, cool water and a nice breeze, we drink and refill our water supplies, and it's then when I notice I have dropped my water bottle. No problem I have my bladder, I'll fill it up drink as much as I can and that should hold me, besides we have made the decision to walk the creek out (isn't that what they say on survivor man?). After a few yards walking on slippery rocks we notice some bear sign, seems we share the creek bed with a mamma grizzly and her cubs, no problem Abe and Bob have rifles although strapped to their packs. We continue down the creek entering an area of Devils club, a plant rightly named it is as thick as briars and has thorns as long as toothpicks which happen to be poisonous. We carefully move thru it as the creek seems to be getting louder, soon we see why, the creek turns into a 100 foot waterfall which takes our breath away, not for the beauty but we realize we must backtrack the Devils club and climb the steep banks to get out of the creek (stupid TV. show). An hour later we get out of the creek we try to pick up the pace but the heinous terrain has other plans for us, every time we find a clear route we come upon a bluff that would require climbing gear to get down. So we continue blazing a trail thru the thick brush, it's getting late now we are out of water and realize we must make camp soon. We come to a spot that is open just enough for the tent and set up, we have decided we will eat a dry dinner and search for water in the morning, not a good mood in camp. Bob takes his boots off and the bottoms of his feet look like one giant blister also both of his big toenails are black and beginning to fall off, I'm afraid to take mine off. As I am lying there I notice ferns growing on a shelf below us, ferns need water right, I head down to investigate and follow moose tracks to a "swamp" pond, I fill all water bottles we begin to boil, drinking but not looking at the water. The mood of the camp is greatly improved; we feast on mountain house and goat. We make a pact to get off the mountain tomorrow. As it begins to drizzle we climb into the tent, I can't explain the odor inside 3 men who have not showered in 5 days, wet socks and insoles drying overhead and Silver who has been eating fresh goat that doesn't seem to agree with him, sleep can't come fast enough. We sleep well in spite of the aroma, but it seems during the night we had a visitor who stole one of our meat bags, Abe say's it's a fox but? We break camp, Bob wraps his feet with moleskin and duct tape and off we go, we continue our decent hike 2 hours break 5 min, don't know if the breaks help as it is getting harder to get up after the breaks. We hit a few more cliffs and reroute always avoiding the creek beds, Bob informs us he also has lost his water bottle and is out of water. We stop and divide the last of the "swamp" water, but are very close to the river now so we decide to tough it out and double time it down, soon we are out of water.



We are so close to the river we can hear it, teasing us as we are beginning to dehydrate, we come across an old hunters cabin surely must be water hear, no luck we continue. We press forward with a sense of urgency, 2 hours later I hear Abe shout out he has a road in sight, it runs parallel to the river! We have arrived, although we cannot get to the river (banks way too steep and loose), we fill great, until we realize we are still 7 miles from Telegraph Creek! Oh well, packs are off and we have a river breeze! Finally we catch a break, a jeep comes down the road and we catch a ride into town. We are back! I won't bore you with the story of trying to rearrange flights and weather delays, but I am home now dreaming of my next adventure.

Tim Metcalfe Lafayette LA