

There are Good People Out There.

By Dan Biely

...it isn't all about the kill.

There are several ways I could start this story and it wouldn't change the ending at all. If you are a sportsman or simply someone that treats others like you would like to be treated you'll finish this story and tell yourself that there are good people out there.

Since I need someplace to start I will go back 8 years and tell you something I have rarely told. Truth is most family and friends don't know it. I was never looking for a pat on the back. I have explained what happened one November day to more people that "don't care for hunting" in the hopes of getting them to see it isn't all about the kill.

To be part of that father/son moment was worth everything to me. It was the right thing to do. It is how you treat people. It was closing day for Wisconsin's gun deer season. I had worked my midnight - noon shift and was too tired to go out for an afternoon hunt. I figured a drive by my favorite spot and a stop by my brother to see how the gang did would be about all I could handle. I noticed an unfamiliar truck by my hunting spot. That is not a big deal as the landowner is awesome about letting people hunt as long as they ask. I was scanning the fields and fencerows looking for orange when a buck caught my attention. He appeared to be slipping along a fencerow and then disappeared. I knew he had to have bedded down. Tired or not I pulled over and put on my gear. As I snuck up to the tree I had marked, the buck jumped up and one shot dropped him back down. Something wasn't right when I got to the deer though. My shot was in the front shoulder but there was also a liver area shot. I followed a blood trail from where the buck had been. A father/son team was on the trail. "Did you get him?" the dad asked. I said I finished off a deer that was hit hard. I asked if they had shot it and the dad said that his boy had shot at his first buck. I told the young hunter that his deer was lying on the other side of the fence. His dad seemed confused so I told them about how I had watched the buck from the road and had I not come along they would have tracked the deer right to its bed. The young hunter put the first fatal shot into that deer and I felt he deserved to tag it. To be part of that father/son moment was worth everything to me. It was the right thing to do. It is how you treat people.

Fast-forward to a 2008 moose hunt at Black Bear Camp in Webbwood, Ontario. I had been preparing for this outfitted but unguided hunt for a full year and had packed everything I could possibly need to help myself get a big bull out of the bush. I knew there were two things I could not control and they were the weather and hunting pressure. I tolerated the weather all right but the grouse and moose-hunting pressure was heavy. Limited to the wildlife management unit my tag was for meant there was some scouting and planning to be done if I was to find that "moosey" spot. One evening back at camp my outfitter said he had done a little scouting for me and found some large moose tracks. I was at that cut the next day and knew this was the area I would spend the remainder of my hunt.

In a matter of 45 minutes I had met the rudest SOB and the most polite young hunter. Life is funny.

In long before daylight on Saturday the bush was quiet. My long sweet cow calls went unanswered. The sun came up and lit up a hillside just as a cow appeared and began to soak up the cool morning sun. She bedded on that hillside and I burned my binoculars through the area looking for a bull. A pickup truck snapped me back to reality. Another road hunter I figured looking for the plentiful grouse. The cow moose, now up and alert, turned to the North and headed off for a quieter spot. So much for my decoy I thought. Saturday afternoon started out slow and got worse. After a tough sit it was getting to be prime time but instead of moose it was another truck. I didn't mind until I could see through the binoculars that he had stopped 30 feet from my truck. I could easily hear and see him grabbing logs and tossing them into his truck box with a bang while his two young boys played and screamed. I walked to within earshot and barked "can't you do that another day, I am trying to moose hunt" to that the guy said "I am making wood eh!" I almost lost it. I shook my head and sat down and wondered if I was jinxed. Two friends of mine were now at camp and I could have easily headed back there for a warm meal and a cocktail. Duke

had his bear already and Lum was in the bush hoping to score his first. "You can't shoot your moose at camp" I told myself and put the idiot out of my mind. A half hour passed since my "friend" left and an ATV was coming down the logging road and stopped near me. "Are you moose hunting" the young voice called out. I said yes and told him I had a bull tag to fill. "Really?" came his excited response. "My family has a cow tag and some calve tags. Do you mind if I park my ATV by your truck and walk up the bluff to the South? I told him I did not mind at all and thanked him for asking. I mentioned I saw the cow in the morning and that she had gone up to the Northwest. The young hunter decided to see if he could find her tracks and I said he was welcome to come back if he did not catch up with her. With thanks and good lucks all around he was off. I stopped to think about what had just happened. In a matter of 45 minutes I had met the rudest SOB and the most polite young hunter. Life is funny.

Seven men and a lot of lifting got the moose into the back of the Black Bear Camp truck.

Sunday morning was dedicated to moving bear stands with Duke and Lum. It was chilly and windy and my motivation was a little low. After lunch, and with a little push from my friends I was back in the bush. An odd noise caught my attention and I turned to see a hunter on the logging road with his hands in the air. I hiked over to him and he asked if I was the American that had told his brother about the cow the day before. I said I was and he began to tell me about a nice bull that had bedded down in the hollow he was overlooking. He said he ran the idea of coming to get me by his dad and his dad said sure. I was trying to remain calm as we walked to where the bull was. I was thinking that this hunter just came 500-600 yards to help me out, likely ruining his own hunt for the afternoon. As we snuck onto the rocky bluff the bedded bull was easy to spot. I found my spot to sit and settled the rifle onto my knee and completely lost it. A lot of breathing and talking to myself allowed me to settle down. I held the crosshairs steady as the gun barked. The bull stood, staggered and immediately took a round from my new friend. The bull immediately dropped and wasn't going anywhere. After a slow cautious walk down the rock bluff we were at the bull. I realized we hadn't exchanged names so I introduced myself to "Robert". He explained that as soon as his family shows up his dad would have the moose field dressed in no time. I explained that it wasn't necessary, that I had everything I needed to help myself but he wasn't hearing me. After assembling the group his dad (Bill) jumped in and said he would have the dirty work done in no time. He didn't lie and he didn't stop. Bill then backed up his ATV and hooked on to drag my bull out. When the bull didn't budge he had his boy back another ATV up and when locked together the bull lurched and started to slide right out of the bush. Night was coming fast as was the rain. I can't say the bull came out easy but it came out. These men had done this before. Seven men and a lot of lifting got the moose into the back of the Black Bear Camp truck.

Back at camp that evening Bill, Robert and Ollie stopped in to see the bull. I had a chance to tell Bill about meeting his boy the day before. I wanted him to know what a pleasure it was to meet such a polite person and also wanted him to know how grateful I was to him and Robert for basically handing me my dream moose. Bill seemed as happy for me as if he'd shot the bull himself.

The real story is far from that and truth be told I like the way it happened even better. Good people help good people. That is life...the way it should be.

A day hasn't gone by that I haven't thought about Bill, Robert, Ollie and Nick and that moose hunt. What was supposed to be an unguided hunt was anything but. Tom and Karen Ellin from Black Bear Camp spent a lot of time scouting areas and asking others about moose sightings and then did an awesome job helping with skinning and quartering. My moose story was supposed to be about me calling a big bull out of the bush with some sweet call calls. The real story is far from that and truth be told I like the way it happened even better. Good people help good people. That is life...the way it should be.

Side note: My 48-inch bull weighed in at over 1200lbs