

# SKULL

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## BOWHUNTING JOURNAL

ANDY'S  
**GIANT**  
201" TYPICAL

SEASON'S  
**END**

A SANDY HILLS HUNTING PUBLICATION  
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# ACE

ACE



WHITETAIL



As November was starting to wind down, I found myself with a couple of bonus days after tagging out early on a great 190 inch buck with a good buddy and long time client. Naturally, I used those days to scout for my next hunt which was a spot and stalk archery hunt on the notorious plains of Eastern Colorado. I got busy hoping I could find a worthy deer in the next couple of days and be able to keep tabs on it until my next hunter arrived. The first morning I went looking in an area I had neglected for a while but knew there had been a big typical and a couple other above average bucks there earlier in the year. I was sitting on a hill overlooking about 400 acres that was covered with dense 6 ft tall weeds. I was buried in my spotting scope looking for any sort of movement or anything that looked out of the ordinary. Finally, I picked up something. Doe.... Dangit, but I keep looking. I was positive there was more than one deer in the area and

with the rut winding down I knew there was a good chance of a buck hiding in the weed forest. Then, almost as if out of a Hollywood script, there he was. He emerged from the edge of the weeds, head back, sifting the air. Almost as soon as I saw him, I felt my jaw hit the floor. There was no denying that this deer was of a different caliber. Height, mass, width... absolutely everything a hunter can hope for from a smooth typical. I was in absolute awe of this deer as I watched him do his thing for several minutes before slipping back into the thick cover and completely out of sight. I stuck around for quite a while hoping to catch another glimpse although that never happened and as I would come to find out wouldn't happen again for quite some time.

The next few days caused my blood pressure to rise and my mind to wander. Never seeing him or any sign that he was even in the area still was weighing

on me heavily as well as the concern that if we were to find him again, how in the world would we get a shot or even within range in that mess. I continued to check that spot and the surrounding area consistently until my next hunter arrived. I don't have to tell you where we were sitting, waiting for the sun to come up on the first day of his hunt. Again nothing, and now I am getting nervous. That might have been my only encounter with this buck. We poked around the surrounding area that morning and couldn't come up with anything so we started to expand our search a little bit. If you would have told me what was about to happen next, I never would have believed you. In a spot I have never seen a whitetail before, stood a palmed and junked out huge 190+ inch whitetail buck with a 15 inch extra main beam pushing a single hot doe. Let me ask you this, you are on a mule deer hunt, your guide is telling you the story of a giant possible 200" typical mule deer, which

you have not yet seen, and you run into what could possibly be a 200" whitetail. What do you do?? Well, that is exactly what we did, or at least tried to do. We ended up making 4 stalks on that buck that day but just couldn't get an arrow in him. The next day we went back to the same place...where else is there to go when you know of a 200" typical muley and a bare minimum 190" freak whitetail within a very short distance of each other? Well, the next three days came and went without seeing hide nor hair of either deer. I am sure my hunter was 100% convinced at this point that the monster muley he had heard me raving about was probably manufactured to keep him interested as we drove around in circles. Fortunately, or at least somewhat fortunately, my until-that-point ghost story was about to become a reality. As kind of a last-ditch effort we ended up by the weed jungle looking for the big muley. This was probably the last place my hunter wanted to be, as every trip we had



# 201



made here, other than the 200" whitetail, had been for nothing. This day, however, was our day! There was Ace! As we both sat there staring at him through our spotting scopes I was also trying to decide how in the world we were going to make a play on this stud. We had a jungle to try to find him in...which was going to change 100% from what I was looking at through my spotting scope to what I would be seeing when we repositioned for a stalk, next to no wind, so we will probably sound like a freight train trying to sneak up on him, and this is our last day so there is no backing out and trying again tomorrow.

My hunter and I came up with the best plan we could, and off we went. I knew it would be thick and nasty, but I had no idea it was going to be that bad. As it turned out we were able to get within 46 yards, however, the mess of vegetation would save the bucks life at that moment as his arrow clipped a weed and careened off to who knows where. The deer took off but I was able to catch glimpses of him running through the jungle that surrounded us. He didn't know what happened which caused him to settle fairly quickly and I was able to get a good idea of where he laid back down. We got what little more wind and decided to try again. We started slowly sneaking through the weeds, but this time Ace was much more on





edge and way ahead of us. We eventually snuck into his bed however, he had snuck off without us even knowing he had left. We never were able to turn him up again and unfortunately, after a near miss, my client was going home with his tag in his pocket. However, he had seen the potential of the area and had booked a spot for the following year before he left.

My next hunt was going to be in different units than I had been hunting, so I would have to put the search for the big typical on pause for a while. I had a few guys from Texas coming in, one of which had hunted with us the year before. Sean filled his tag on a good 180+ deer in 2018. We both had a blast on that hunt. Sean brought some buddies with him this year and all of them were great. I know I say this a lot, but we had a ton of fun and most days at some point my sides or jaw would be aching from laughing so much. At the end of their rifle hunt the boys were headed back to Texas with a couple of great deer and a bunch of memories.

I was now down to my final hunt of the year with Andy Petisch. Andy was coming in for an archery deer hunt and he had a tag in the same unit that I had

been chasing the giant typical and whitetail a couple of weeks earlier. Unfortunately, I was unable to do any scouting prior to Andy arriving so I had no idea if either deer were still in the area, let alone the same zip code. I told Andy the night before his hunt about both of the deer but made it very clear that I couldn't promise that we would ever lay eyes on either of the bucks, however with deer of that quality we needed to at least go look. Andy told me he wanted to focus on the monster muley as he has already shot several giant whitetails which was perfectly fine with me. On the first day we found ourselves overlooking the weed jungle and even though we were able to turn up some deer, Ace was not one of them. We spent all day looking over that area and the surrounding areas hoping that the buck had not gone too far, but by nightfall I couldn't be convinced he was anywhere close.

The second day started a little better for us as we found a really good 190 inch deer with some junk, but he was still a little on the younger side and with it being early in the hunt and still having hope that the big typical was still in the area we decided to hold off on him. I think we both secretly hoped that decision wouldn't come back to bite us, but young deer just

aren't our target bucks no matter the score.

About an hour into the hunt on day three, our decision to wait had paid off. We found Ace about a mile north of the weed jungle heading south like he knew exactly where he was going. Luckily, I had just enough experience with him to know where he was heading as well. An ambush wasn't going to work with the wind direction and the severe lack of cover between him and his destination, so we decided to hold back and keep an eye on him to determine where he would bed. He had finally made it to the weed jungle and although I would lose him from time to time, I was able to keep up with him enough to follow him to a little area where the weeds weren't quite so thick and watch him lay down. Things were starting to look up, but for anyone who has done an archery spot and stalk hunt, you know that there are still a lot of factors that have to go right before you can punch your tag. We surveyed the area the best we could and came up with a plan that would hopefully allow us to get within 50 yards which Andy assured me was within his effective range. We had a good wind that allowed us to sneak through the incredibly tall weeds undetected. The closer we got, the slower we went until I was able to finally pick

out his antlers through an opening in the weeds. We moved to 34 yards and repositioned where we would have a clear shooting lane when he decided he was ready to stand. Andy got ready and we would only have to wait about 5 minutes before the buck decided he wasn't comfortable and stood to reposition. That would never happen as Andy zipped what appeared to be a perfectly placed arrow clean through him. Even though we lost sight of him immediately after the shot, I was pretty confident we would find the buck relatively close. However, I know how hunting goes so we gave him some time and sat quietly, both of us extremely anxious. We both knew not to count chickens before they hatch, so we waited. We finally decided it was time and made our way to his bed. We immediately picked up a great blood trail and started to follow it. Once we found out that Ace had only made it about 50 yards before expiring all the emotions we had been suppressing had finally exploded as we walked up to one of the biggest typical mule deer either of us had ever hunted!

I couldn't have scripted a better way to end the year and we send a huge congrats to Andy on his stud Eastern Colorado Muley!





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