

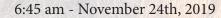
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success isn't found alongside any one particular skill, learned to bowhunt. but instead, a combination of skills linked to one's ability to endure seemingly endless discomfort and At the time, I didn't know anyone who had filled an manifest.

traditional thoughts of men tethered to trees along in your quest and instead forces a more deliberate that might make anyone question their sanity.

t times bowhunting is inherently beautiful style of hunting. This is the land of spot and stalk; and feels effortless, yet at others, it's a lead a love affair of raw elbows, awkward positions, light weight that comes to settle less than gently movements, pure intention, and total awareness. on your chest. As a bowhunter, I have found that This is the land of the mule deer. This is where I

boredom just long enough for the desired result to archery tag in this country. I was born in eastern Colorado to a rifle hunting family, and while I appreciate their hunting style and everything they Western bowhunting is all of that, but here, the taught me, I was just simply born a bowhunter. It's clear to me, however, why the plains lend themselves cornfields hoping the buck of their dreams sticks to riflemen. This land is long and drawn out, and to script and passes below them drift into a vast by no means is it suited for archery equipment. openness and are swallowed by this stark land. Even today, I step out of the truck, bow in hand, It is here that successful bowhunters are sorted and wonder if what I'm about to attempt is indeed from would-be archers; where luck seems to hang possible. The task of sneaking up on a mature deer in somewhere off in the distance refusing to join you this country, or any deer for that matter, is something



and over. "He's just a deer, man." While I find absolute truth in his statement, it doesn't remove the hollow fluttering feeling in my gut. Jeremy is nothing short with a bow. When everything is on the line, he's the guy I call believing that in some strange way I might a way of reeling in the massive emotional monster before it devours your confidence, and instead keeps you present in the moment.

gotten sloppy, made an assumption, and misjudged the location of the buck and his does ending my you'll never ask for anything again...yep, I was at stalk before it began. Just moments earlier, I clearly that point in my hunt. remember thinking - "You've got one shot at this

deer...use your head and don't rush." As quickly as the thought came to me, it seemed to follow the I utter the words of good friend Jeremy Fiscus over buck up and over the horizon as if it had never truly settled in my mind. I had broken my own golden rule of spot and stalk: never assume anything.

of unique when it comes to killing giant mule deer 11:30 am - I stand, eyes pressed into my binoculars, searching for the best route to an already spooked buck and his does; especially the lead doe who had inherit some magical powers. If nothing else, he has now positioned herself on top of a terrace in an old, derelict CRP field. In my mind, she might as well have been laying on top of one of the pyramids of Giza. For a moment, I sat praying that some natural disaster might take her out...a meteor, lightening, 8:30 am - "Son of a bitch!" No, not Nancy Pelosi. I had T-Rex...anything. You know the moment where you sit and plead with God to grant you one wish and





even finer, more deliberate movements. I'm 62 yards from the buck and can go no further. Movements once measured in seconds are now measured in minutes and I position myself simply by rolling from my stomach to my back. I nock an arrow and I wait. It is here, in this moment, that I find success and survival somehow related. It's a moment not much different than it was thousands of years ago; I lie silent, flat on my back with my bow extended to my side. It's 25 degrees and a 15-20 mph wind slides painfully across my body - I'm miserable but ready.

2:15 pm - A doe stands and thoroughly examines her surroundings. What seems like hours takes only minutes. Satisfied, she wanders the terrace in his direction and catches his eye. She slides slowly past much like a woman in a long red dress. Slowly, his antlers turn as if she's a magnet and experience tells me he's moments from finding his feet. The hollow fluttering feeling in my gut returns. Eventually, his head tips forward and I rise to a sitting position as he begins to find his feet. And, although I'm possibly only a second ahead, he's a second behind.

This deer possesses two things I may never see again in my hunting career, much less on the same buck - 30"+ main beams and 46 7/8" of mass. The buck grosses 214 7/8" with a point broken off his right side and has a 27 1/8" inside spread at the main beams.