

The Custom Deer Blind of Foggy Swamp

As I sat there, in our 'custom' blind, in Foggy Swamp, I reminisced.

"CLAY! Where are you? Your beer is getting warm, your hot-wings is getting cold, and wrestling's ALREADY started." Clay was the proud owner of one of those new fangled cellu-lair telly-phones.

"Jed, I'm TRYING to get Bubby outta Foggy Swamp!" Clay sounded quite perturbed.

"Well, what in the heck is Bubby doin' in Foggy Swamp?" I had to ask, knowing I probably didn't REALLY want to know the answer.

Foggy Swamp is just a might down stream of and past the state route bridge. It's not a REAL swamp now. It ain't like those ones ya used to see on Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom. You know, the ones where ole Jim would be givin' a 20 foot gator a warm water enema while Marlin was in an air-boat 50 yards away narratin' away about how much danger HE was in. I sure hope ole Jim got paid good in those days. Nope, Foggy Swamp is really just a mud hole with trees, 'bout the size of Cletus Johnson's dairy pasture, I'd say mebbly, 300 acres. Cletus's got a whole bunch of dairy cows.

It all started last spring. Bubby had got himself a clean as a whistle, new car. Ok, it was new to him. He got himself a 1973 AMC Pacer with a souped up engine. I know, your thinking, "that there is a oxio-morono, a Pacer with a souped up engine", but it was so true. I don't know how he did it but Burt Sanderlund out ta Catfish Bend, 'bout twenty miles from here, took that Pacer and shoe-horned a 100% true-blue big-block Hemi betwixt the front suspension.

Well, Bubby had a blast with that there car all spring and most of the summer, out runnin' Merl Dozard, the County Deputy, running a little 'shine 'cross the county line for the Dix Brothers and the such. Problem was, he was burning up his profits from runnin' 'shine puttin' gas in the tank and rubber on the rims of that gol danged rot-rod Pacer. So, when it came near to thinking 'bout the fall deer season, it was quite apparent that one hopped up, hot-rod Pacer, (I know, it still sounds funny to me too), was just about as useful in the timber as tits on a boar. Long about late July, me and Clay FINALLY talked Bubby in ta trading that Pacer off for a REAL vehicle...a 4X4!

The vehicle he acquired was a real, what would you call it, project vehicle. I know, your asking yourself, If'n the Pacer was so dad gummed 'clean as a whistle' why didn't he get a better trade?" Remember, your talking 'bout Bubby! First off, all the out running Deputy Dozard took a little, might we say, "toll" on that Pacer. The shiny clear-coat finish that it had when Bubby first took possession was nye what it was when he decided to part with ole Pace-zilla, as Bubby got to callin' it. There was one or two other little problems too though. That fine finish of a paint job weren't exactly adhered to the best of metal in some places. In other words, you could just 'bout push that Pacer through the metal detector at the Huntsville International Airport and nary set the dang thing off. That Pacer had a skin that was nearly replaced by an all-time favorite of rookie body men, (if'n you want to call them men) around the country, BONDO! It didn't take a whole lot of bouncing and bangin' in the first few weeks after Bubby started making his "runs" for the first chunk, the size of a Pizza Hut Personal Pan Pizza, to pop out and announce to the

whole county that Bubby'd been had. That was the whole reason Bubby had to drive that dang thing all the way ta Bumminham to sell the darn thing.

Like I said now, Bubby ain't the sharpest knife in the drawer. Where do you thing he went to go a lookin' for a 4X4 with a wad of cash hangin' outta his pocket? Yup, he went right back to Burt Sanderlund's, "Pawn, Gun and Car Emporium and Tanning Salon". What line of B.S. Burt gave Bubby, one will never know, but Bubby came home with a real work-horse of a 4x4. It was a well used and 'carefully driven' 1989 Geo Tracker. Now when I say 'carefully driven' I'm being a little, shall we say, sarcastic. I'd say, if'n that Traker was a horse, I'd a put that sorry looking thing outta its misery when I first set eyes on it. Every single body panel on the durn thing had SOME kinda hole in it that wasn't suppose ta be there! I mean some idiot decided to make a homemade 'sun roof' for it and looked like they used a double bit axe to accomplish the job. It's got a sunroof, for sure. The first thunderstorm we had, Bubby found out that sunroof was also useful as a 'rain roof' just in case you wanted you head wet.

Well, that day that Clay called me, it seems that Bubby had shot a whopper of a buck back in Foggy Swamp and decided to use his ever lovin' Tracker 4X4 to go in there and fetch it. Don't ferget , Bubby ain't too smart now. Bubby had parked not to far off the state route bridge and plodded back into Foggy Swamp and plopped himself down next to an Oak. I hear he wasn't there too long when what appeared to be the Grand-pa of Ole Drop-tine himself presented himself out 'bout 200 yards cross a little channel from where Bubby was sitting. Apparently Bubby did everything right. He done found his self a rest on an old stump and ever so slowly slipped over to it and kneeled down and put his Sears Model 53 rifle down on the stump, squeezed the trigger and something quite unusual for Bubby happened. He dropped the buck with one shot! That buck was truly a monster. Problem was, Bubby had to git that bruiser outta there. Well, It didn't take long for Bubby to put two and two together and come up with five! He sloshed back to the road and fired up that beast of a deer hauling vehicle and took to near flight haulin' ass into Foggy Swamp to fetch his monster buck to show the world, much less Foggy Bottom Township.

Now, it does appear that at one time somewhere back in the history of history, there might have been a road through Foggy Swamp so, Bubby decided to just see ifin' he could follow that route. From the sound of it he got quite a ways back into ole Foggy Swamp before he came across his first of many, shall we say 'hang-ups'. Various downfalls, stumps and cyprus knees riddled what Bubby perceived to be a 'road' through the swamp. For months the path was well marked where Bubby forged ahead going where no Geo had gone before, (and by the way, never went again, in either direction). It appears, from what Clay tells, that as Bubby neared the channel that stood betwixt his Geo and the goal of his adventure, Bubby came up with a not so bright idea.

I guess I should now mention, Bubby had, as a kid, and favorite TV show in no other than the all-time, best ever...The Duke's of Hazzard, 'nuff said. It was from that show, I swear, where Bubby molded and perfected his unique philosophy of driving. "If it looks like it might be tough to get through...get a run for it and go faster!" Bubby's driving philosophy got him outta many tight spot in the short career he had as a 'shine runner but there was a fatal flaw, in this particular situation that Bubby hadn't taken into account. He was in a SWAMP! It appeared, from the looks of the various broken branches, pieces of sheet metal and sporatic yet very discernable tire tracks that Bubby built up quite a head of steam as he approached and, shall we say, skied across that channel. As you might have figured, the real problem was, Bubby never figureded how he'd get his Tracker turned around and outta there!

By the time Clay had showed up, it seems Bubby was on his fourth and what was to be his final attempt to traverse the channel with his monster buck in tow as that Geo nary had enough room in the back to carry a couple of bags of groceries. That monster buck of his, which it truly was, was at that moment, according to Clay, nothing more that a huge ball of mud with antlers as Bubby had simply tied a rope to the antlers and was attempting to drag his trophy out via what some claim to be a trailer hitch on the back of that Geo. Apparently, on this, his finally attempt as Clay showed up, that Geo began to react in a most unfamiliar way to Bubby so far. I got some serious traction. That Geo flew across the channel after seemingly being catapulted from the slight rise on the far side and, successfully 'skied' back across to virtual safety. Only

problem was Bubby had another flaw in his ever so incomplete ability to drive. Bubby often forgot what the brake pedal was actually there for. You see, as he was going in, Bubby had to make a slight turn to the right to line up with his perceived 'road' to the channel. It seems that in his haste to exit the swamp, with the failing light, Bubby proceeded to forget about the slight turn. In his vision quest of touring Foggy Bottom Township displaying his just reward, Bubby hopelessly hung up that Geo on a slight rise covered in Cypress knees and that, is where Bubby's Geo is to this day.

It began to rain as I sat in our 'custom' deer blind in Foggy Swamp. With the rain brought the realization that our 'custom' blind had a sunroof that looked like it had been cut out with a double bit axe and the now present drips of rain water trickling down my back made me shudder.

By Ed "Illinoisdeerhunter" Smith

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