

The First Encounter



Western KY Hunter, WVwhitetail, Gutshot

Here it is Wednesday evening with excitement and anticipation filling my mind as I prepare for another road trip to West Virginia and Kentucky to conduct a couple of days of sales calls, this is how I feed the family, and support my hunting and fishing addiction, which I intend to over the weekend. This is where excitement and anticipation part comes in, not the sales calls.

The work stuff is already in the truck, you know, the usual product catalogs, sales material and the trusty computer. With the business stuff out of the way, I am digging around in the gun safe for the appropriate weapon and ammunition to harvest a big western Kentucky wild boar. This was agonizing at best and I couldn't decide which rifle to use, so I call up my best hunting buddy and colleague Harry, for some advice. He said "if it were me, he would use a .300 Short Action Ultra Mag." This would have been a very good choice, but I don't own one, to which Harry said I should use his. I was excited to take him up on the offer, as I have reloaded all the ammunition he shoots with it and I have shot it many times on the range. Now that the weapon had been picked, there were many other items to get packed up, like the binoculars, range finder, GPS, (didn't want to get lost) warm hunting clothes, it was February and extremely cold. I had my list and checked it twice or three times, I can't remember, but anyway I check off everything and loaded up the truck for my journey.

It was a very long and restless night as I couldn't believe I still had two days of work and driving before my first encounter with a western Kentucky boar. I could no longer wait for the alarm to go off at 5:00 am, so I got out of bed and took a shower, ate a little breakfast with my coffee, gave my wife a kiss goodbye and let her know that

I would return sometime late Sunday night. With the morning routine completed, I was in the truck and on the road anticipation a couple good days of sales calls.

Thursday was an uneventful day of travel and sales call in West Virginia which led me to Ashland, KY for the night and the location for my first call in the morning. I checked into a hotel for the evening, fired up the computer and jumped on Talk Hunting.com for my daily fix to this addiction. I also wanted to PM my hunting host, Western KY Hunter and inform him of the progress I made for the day and give him an estimated time of arrival in Madisonville on Friday. Now that I had accomplished everything I needed to do, it was time to try and get some sleep again.

Well the sleep thing didn't go very well, so once again I was out early for breakfast and had to kill some time as my first meeting wasn't until 8:30 am, so back on Talk Hunting.com to start the day off. Once I completed my call in Ashland, it was off to Lexington for an early afternoon meeting. As I was traveling across I-64, my customer called and said he had to cancel our appointment, something came up and he had to leave. I told him, I understood and we would reschedule for another time. I hung up the phone and kicked up the cruise control another 5 miles per hour and reset the GPS to Madisonville. I gave Ron a call to inform him that I would be there a couple hours earlier than expected. We were both excited about the fortunate turn of events.

I arrived in Madisonville at 2:00 pm and checked into my hotel, called Ron and made arrangements to meet up in White Plains at his property. This is another first encounter, as I had never personally met Ron before, just talked with him on Talk Hunting.com and on the phone a lot.

We met up and we talked and talked, and talked. Well I listened, and did I mention that he talked. I think that's how this web site got its name. After the introductions were over Ron took me around the property and showed me some of the food plots that we would be hunting in the morning. What an awesome place he has there. Ron took me to his friend's home and they showed me all the pictures of the hogs at the food plot over the past several days. This really got me excited about getting out there to hunt. We picked which location I would hunt in the morning and where I would meet up with Ron and his beautiful family for Mexican dinner, yes Mexican dinner in Kentucky.

After a pleasant dinner, I headed back to my room and, yes you guessed it, I tried to get some sleep after a little time on Talk Hunting.com and a phone call to Mike, aka wvwhitetail who was going to join the hunt on Saturday and a little chat with my wife.

I was up at 4:00 am and on the road to my first boar hunt, I was pumped. I parked the truck, loaded up my gear headed into my stand by 5:00 am. I saw that Ron had already been there and loaded up the feed barrel and gone. I was at the tree stand and hunting by 5:30, I was so excited about being there and the anticipation of seeing my first hog, I didn't realize that it was only 24 degrees until about 6:30 or so. Soon after that I heard the rustling of the leaves and the chill was gone. I strained my eyes

to see what was approaching in the early dawn as daylight was approaching and visibility was really limited. The answer came soon as some deer, a nice 4 point and two doe walked right under the stand and into the food plot to munch on the fresh load of corn. With no other activity except for a couple of squirrels I decided to head back to the hotel around 9:30 to check out, as I would be spending Saturday evening with wvwhitetail in his motor home closer to where we were going to that evening and the following morning.

Let the fun begin, I talked Mike on the phone as he passed me going towards White Plains and I was going back to Madisonville. I checked out of the hotel and headed back to White Plains at 11:00 and met up with a whole gang of folks that came to meet with their Talk Hunting online friends. Mike (wvwhitetail), Joe and Damon (cariעדc) both traveled from Indiana, me from Pennsylvania, and Ron (westernKYhunter), his family, Lori, Abbey and Allison, Drakeof3, KYhunter, Radar, Bossbeard1, WKhunter, Leman, Chris, Ashley and her killer chili, Dave with his massive grill. There were so many folks who came and went I hope I didn't miss anyone.

Stories were told, some were even believable, games were played, the Kentucky corn hole championship was determined, and the trophy went to Indiana, and food was cooked, lots of food, pork roasts, venison back straps, ribs, chili and soup. What a feast it was.

As the food was being prepared, the time came to put the smack down on some of the local hog population. Myself, along with Mike, Ron, Joe and Damon geared up and headed out to the food plots for a late evening hunt. I returned to where I hunted in the morning, Ron and Mike hunted a box stand at the bluff, while Joe and Damon headed to a tree stand and a tripod stand on the river bottom. Just a dusk I heard a shot come from the bluff, then another from the river bottom, all the while I was watching deer, no hogs, but an enjoyable time on stand. About 8:00 pm everyone had returned to the campfire and talked about the hunt. Mike shot a hog at the bluff and Damon shot one in the river bottom, I shot the bull.

After several hours of fun chat and stories it was time to retire for the evening so that we could get up and hunt the fresh 8 degree morning air. Some (all) slept in except for me, so I slipped out quietly and headed for my stand again. It was an uneventful morning on stand except for the bitter cold and a couple deer that passed through. I left the stand at 9:00 and headed back to the camp. We still had two hogs to go out and find.

Everyone was up and moving when I arrived back at the camp. Leman and Dave came to help out with the recovery. They headed for the bluff to track down the hog that Mike shot and the rest of us headed to the river bottom to look for Damon's hog. When we arrived at the scene of the crime at the river bottom, Damon talked us through the events of the previous night from the tripod stand and we headed out from there to find a good blood trail, and the hunt was on. We spread out with one on the trail and the others to the flanks, looking for the hog. We had no idea how big the hog was as it was dusk when Damon shot it and he really couldn't judge size. We

followed the trail for about 50 yards or so and lost the trail, this is when we started walking circles around the last sighting of blood. This is when the excitement began. Dave was behind Damon when the hog (still alive) BUSTED out of a pile of thicket..... Damon ran over Mike, I ran into a tree and Joe said, "there it is, Shoot it! Shoot it!" Well that was easier said than done, no one had a rifle. Damon left it in the QUV, had to go back and get it while the rest of us kept an eye on little piggy. When Damon returned and put a well placed shot behind the ear, the laughter could be heard everywhere, who would go into the woods to track a wounded boar without a gun, or a knife? We all did it that day, no one said you had to be smart to have fun.



We got the hog out to the QUV, loaded it up and headed out to see how the other made out tracking down Mike's hog. On the way Mike said he needed to try out on of Ron's ladder stands that he put in. We stopped, Mike climbed up into the stand (without a safety belt) and tested it out, we had a hard time getting him back down, it was just that comfortable.



Unfortunately, Leman and Dave did not have any luck tracking down the hog that Mike hit, but they gave it a valiant effort. The blood trail was sparse, and could not be picked up again after the hog crossed a stream. We all headed back to the camper, cleaned up the hog and prepared it for the ride back to Indiana, took lots of

pictures, shook hands and said our farewells until the next time. I had the most enjoyable 9 hour ride home to Pennsylvania as I reflected on the "First Encounter" of mine with Talk Hunting members.

I would like to thank Ron for inviting all of us to his property to hunt together and enjoy in fellowship with new lifelong friends.

Until Next Month
Hunt Safely

By Tom "Gutshot" Bepler

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