

Hi guys...over the past few weeks I have been braggadociosly mentioning efforts my son, Nick, has been going through with me in developing and training on a method through which I am able to accomplish a task for the first time in my life. Most of you have been updated on the progress and others of you I felt may simply be interested in the story. Nevertheless, again, my 19 year old son, Nick, an Eagle Scout since the age of 14, has been very involved in outdoor activities and sports throughout his life, but even more intently in the past year or so. Each time he has gone hunting, I have expressed a great interest in what he has done and how excited it has made me to see him engaged in such enjoyment.

Several months ago I was sharing my joy of his activities with him at which time he responded that he knew one day there would be a way to get me out there hunting as well. Long story short, and unbeknownst to me, this past summer Nick, along with the help of his girlfriend's father, purchased the necessary materials, and after heating, bending, cutting, drilling, and alterations, he surprised me with a device he fabricated which would allow me the possibility of hunting. Prior to October of 2013, I had never fired a rifle in my life. But it was at around that time this past October that Nick and I teamed up and began training with a Remington 270 practicing for a possible upcoming deer hunt. The beginning was challenging, but with patience and experience, Nick and I, over the brief period of 4 to 5 weeks, became proficiently accurate enough to make us believe that I would be able to accomplish a feat that being blind and in total darkness I never thought possible.

During the weekend of November 15 through 17, 2013, my wife, Mignon and I made a trip to the property of the family of Nick's girlfriend. On Friday morning we left for Many, Louisiana at the border of Texas arriving mid-afternoon. My partner, Nick, and I had one more brief practice before we suited up in camouflage from head to toe heading out to a 160 acre plot of land on my very first experience hunting deer. We climbed into our stand 12 feet up in the tree at approximately 4:00 p.m. Friday evening, and after going over our routine and feeling confident, we sat quietly listening and waiting for an opportunity to practice our teamship, hoping for the best. At 4:45 p.m., a doe was approaching at about 70 yards from us. We waited a short time hoping that a buck would soon follow, but eventually we felt this may be our best target. As the doe meandered, I, along with Nick, got into our well-rehearsed position and began sighting in on this now moving target. Remember, Nick's fabrication has a cell phone camera now affixed at the butt of the scope peering through the cross-hairs. As Nick visualizes the scenery through this camera, I am in 100% full possession of the weapon with Nick sitting behind me. Nick then uses a single finger on the back of my neck somewhat as a joy-stick guiding me to my target, the whole while never making contact with the rifle. There are no words spoken, and the only direction from my partner is through all non-verbal commands with Nick using a single fingertip on the skin of the back of my neck. The beginning was more challenging due to the movement of the doe, but at that exact time, Nick double-tapped as was practiced, and at that split moment, I successfully fired. At that point, from my sting, the deer leaped about another 15 feet closer in, and was extremely disoriented. It was at that point, with another bullet in the chamber for another possible hit, we quickly sighted once again and this time striking the deer perfectly where desired, just behind her shoulder penetrating her left side exiting the right. She then took off, spasming momentarily, then running deep into the woods.

I must tell you that through all the adrenalin rush we both experienced, the most reward that I gained through this exercise was when my 19-year old son, Nick, immediately turned to me and as we hugged,

shed tears of joyful success with me while stating, “Dad, you did it! You really did it!”. At this time, I replied, “No, son. We did it”, followed by Nick’s exclamation, “No, but Dad, you really did it! You really did it!” Every aspect we trained for was implemented perfectly. Unfortunately, with the approximate 8 hunters on our trip, this was our only engagement with a deer, and as fate has it, she was mine.

A couple of weeks later, my partner, Nick and I, made a second trip to St. Francisville, Louisiana. While there, there were many sightings of deer, however, no opportunities availed themselves to us for shooting.

Finally, on Sunday, January 12, 2014, my son and partner, Nick, and I made a day trip to St. Francisville once again. The morning hunt was uneventful, and after having taken a lunch break, we again suited up and headed back into the woods. By 3:30 p.m., we were mounted in place sitting and patiently waiting, listening, all the while Nick was watching intently. At approximately 4:45 p.m., Nick signaled to me as rehearsed indicating to me an approaching deer. I grabbed the rifle and through Nick’s single fingertip, began sighting on what turned out to be an 8-point buck 60 yards away. It proved to be a difficult shot, nevertheless, thought to be successful. The buck promptly ran deeply into the woods at which time Nick believed he saw where he ultimately laid down. Our protocol is to wait approximately 30 minutes before harvesting the deer. However, surprisingly within 20 to 25 minutes of our wait, Nick again signaled me. At this point, I put another round into the chamber and, with my heart pounding, again began sighting. When Nick double-tapped on my spine, I quickly fired with another successful strike. As this deer ran off, Nick explained that although he thought there may have been two or three, he was certain that he saw where the fatally struck deer hurried into the woods. We, again, began waiting for another 30 minutes before searching for our two strikes. Eventually, Nick discovered the second of the two hits and yelled back to me indicating where she was. As he had yet to find the 8-point buck and with ants in my pants, I asked him to come get me so that both of us could do a search even if I could only accidentally come upon the buck in the deep, thick brush by simply kicking or tripping over it myself. By the end of hunting time that evening, we had still not yet discovered the buck. We then texted to a friend who was with us at another location and had him bring the Polaris 4-wheeler to us. Upon his arrival, I asked my friend to pull the Polaris into the woods with the headlights to enable him and Nick to give a final search for the 8-point. As they went deeper into the brush, they finally discovered the trail which ultimately would lead to the deer. Upon exclaiming that they found the deer, they pulled it out of the brush only to find that it was not my 8-point that I initially hunted. Rather, it was a different deer. It turned out that with my second sighting and shot, I successfully hit and killed two deer with a single bullet. Being in complete shock and awe, it was a surprisingly successful afternoon hunting with my teammate and son, Nick.

I have attached herein a video of the same camera we used in our exercise to enable you to see the method we have used to accomplish the desired success. My son, Nick, throughout all his love and compassion for his father, has enabled me, in total darkness, to share in some of life’s challenging enjoyment that I otherwise would not be able to do. As you view this brief video, you will see that on Saturday afternoon, November 16, 2013, between our morning hunt and evening hunt, Nick and I wanted to take a single warm-up shot. What you are viewing is our one and only shot at a cantaloup size watermelon. You will hear other hunters voices in the background which is not part of our hunting routine. As I mentioned, when Nick and I hunt, it is 100% through non-verbal commands with him

simply viewing the cross-hairs through the cell phone camera and with 1 fingertip gently on my neck directing me to the target.

I can't express deeply enough the warm feeling I get from knowing Nick has devoted his efforts and thoughts toward my satisfaction. Enthusiasm, excitement, and ultimate success coming from a 19-year old boy loving his father....

How can one man be blessed any more?

Zip (Mike)