

Hunting and Other Reasons Why Lawyers are Best Off Indoors

by Evan Loeffler

Several attorneys I work with strongly believe in the positive effects of hunting on the psyche, the environment, and society at large. Besides being fun, they argue, it rids the woods of deer that would otherwise have to suffer through a brutal winter.

"Deer get very sad at the prospect of another winter," I was told by one lawyer. "Hunters are just putting them out of their misery. This is a humane function. If it weren't for hunters the woods would be full of melancholy deer."

I was somewhat skeptical of this argument, which prompted them to invite me along for one of their humanistic deer-hunting forays. Always willing to do my part to improve the environment, I accepted their invitation.

I admit that part of the reason for my acceptance was just to annoy them. These were, after all, the same people who believed that I, as a liberal, east coast "city slicker," thought that hunting involved looking for the nearest deli.

To hunt correctly, it is necessary to wear safety orange so hunters won't mistake you for a deer. Deer apparently have excellent taste in clothing and never wear safety orange. Other essential hunting gear includes a hunting license, hiking boots, a gun, and beer. I was able to procure most of these items on my own. One of the attorneys lent me the use of a medium-sized cannon to fill out my equipment.

The sport of hunting can best be described as hiking with a big stick. The sense of excitement comes from the knowledge that your stick could blow your foot off at any moment. There are, naturally, many rules that must be followed to hunt correctly. One is not allowed to hunt female deer as this is a males-only sport. One may not hunt in an area where male deer have ever been seen. Finally, and most importantly, one is not allowed to shoot a deer wearing safety orange.

I lugged my rifle through the woods for several hours until I finally saw some deer. They were all females. Fully aware that the rules made them off-limits, they amused themselves by eating the peanuts I had in my pockets, piddling on my boots and nuzzling the end of my gun. I noted that none of them seemed particularly melancholy.

Seeing as I had run out of peanuts, I decided to return to camp where I could replenish my supply and get a head start on drinking my mandatory allotment of beer. Just as I emerged from the woods, a large male deer appeared, saw me, and started running perpendicularly to my position, giving me a perfect profile at which to aim. It was about 100 yards away, which I calculated I could reach with my 8-iron. I figured, therefore, it was probably within range of my rifle.

As I aimed the gun at the running figure before, a change came over me. Suddenly, I wasn't a young lawyer blundering through the woods but a hunter. Waves of testosterone coursed through my body as I took aim at this obviously distraught, defenseless, fuzzy animal. The fact that I had not shot a gun for 13 years, when I used to shoot BB guns at stationary paper targets from fifty feet, did not bother me at all. I pulled the trigger.

The gun's backlash threw me a good ten feet into a strategically placed patch of mud. While I am not sure where my shot went, there can be little doubt that I had missed the deer. In fact, the deer seemed remarkably less distraught as he regarded the mud-and-safety-orange spectacle writhing in the mud, covered with empty peanut shells and shouting obscenities. The last I saw of the deer it was laughing so hard it had to lean against a tree. It is safe to say I permanently cured him of his depression.

Thus, my big hunting adventure came to an end. I do not consider the weekend a total loss, however. I had apparently cheered up all the suicidal deer in the immediate area, a service for which my fellow hunters have yet to forgive me, but one in which I take some pride. Also, I learned that while I am duly licensed to practice law, I have no competence in the law of the jungle in the State of Washington. I am willing, however, to challenge anyone to a deli-hunt.

Knishes are in season.