

BULL ELK

at 10 Steps

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #12 —

Some people say that elk hunting is like spring turkey hunting in Missouri – make a sound like a female; the male responds, comes to the call and you shoot him – simple as that. From personal experience I can confirm that this is a good strategy and sometimes it works – for turkey and also for elk.

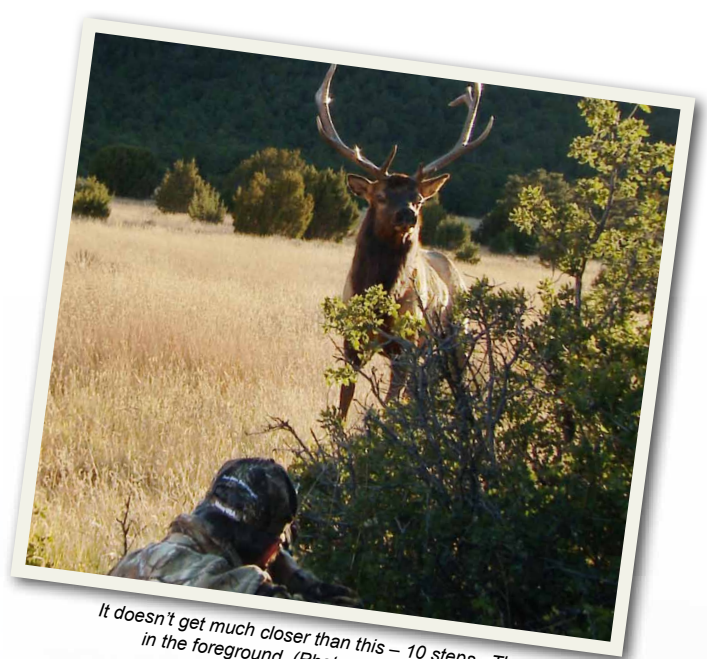
This bull responded to our cow call from across the valley at the base of the mountain – about 1500 yards away.

For 20 minutes we communicated back and forth in elk language, but he never came closer. Then all of a sudden something must have tripped his switch, as he began moving in our direction.

We got a glimpse as he came down out of the dark pines and stepped into a small clearing; he was definitely a mature bull, but at that distance we couldn't tell much. The valley floor

was pasture, broken by scattered clumps of pinion trees and we could see the bull from time to time as he slowly made his way toward us. He was about 350 yards out when another switch tripped in his brain and he began to trot. But, he didn't come straight in; he was on a line that would take him about 60 yards to our right, out of sight behind a large clump of trees. What was this elk thinking?

I was crouched behind a pinion at the corner of the trees with my guide, David Allen of RMEF, and a camera crew to the rear. Then I heard him running and presumed he



It doesn't get much closer than this – 10 steps. That's my head in the foreground. (Photo courtesy Ken Sciacca & RMEF)

had caught our wind, and was outta there. But in the next instant I realized he was coming toward us – and coming fast. I went to a kneeling position, with my rifle at the ready. He came into sight at a full run and David gave a cow call. The bull stopped on a dime and turned to face us – at 10 steps. Now, what was he thinking?

“What was this elk thinking?”

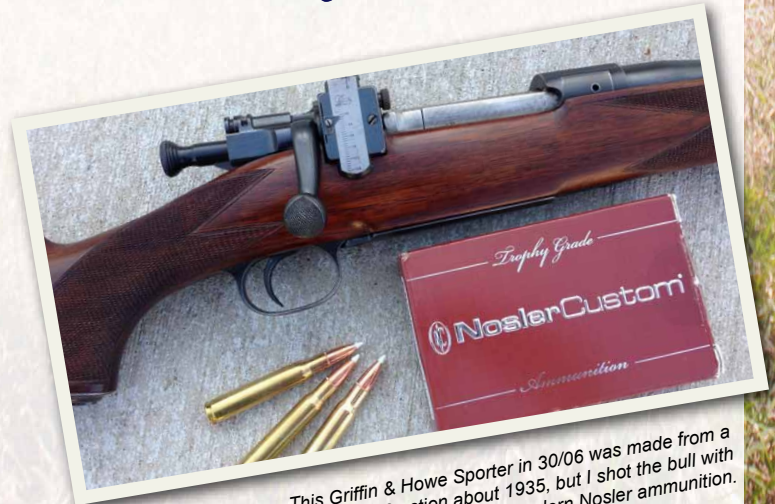
I put a Nosler 165 grain Partition Gold into his chest – a bit high and through the top of his lungs. He turned and ran casually to my left as if nothing had happened; so I bolted in another round and shot him behind the shoulder at 45 yards – and it was over, except for taking pictures and this memory.



His horns are quite broken up, but he offered a shot I couldn't refuse.

USA
Midway

Larry Potterfield
Hunting with David Allen of RMEF
UU Bar Ranch
Cimarron, New Mexico
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This Griffin & Howe Sporter in 30/06 was made from a Springfield 1903 action about 1935, but I shot the bull with modern Nosler ammunition.