

The NO-SHEEP HUNT

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #202 —

It all started at that year's Safari Club Show in Reno, where Russell and I booked a Dall sheep hunt for that August. Sheep hunting begins in mid-summer and is all over by fall. We were on the second hunt of that season.

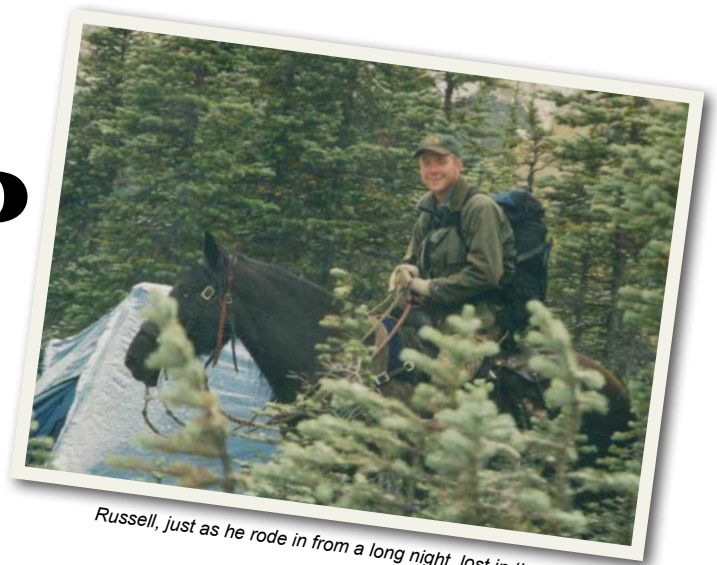
A chartered de Havilland Otter landed us on the river at base camp in good order and with great anticipation; only for us to discover that the sheep hunting gods had already been working against us. It had been raining all summer and the trails were very muddy, causing slow going for the horses. During the first hunt, Pete Koser, the outfitter and head guide, was seriously injured. He was pulling a packhorse out of the mud and when she finally came out, it was very quick. Pete could not get out of the way and took a shod front foot in the middle of his thigh. Our other

planned guide developed a health problem during that same hunt and had to return to civilization for treatment.

Pete wasn't able to take us out,

but he had lined up two young guides, who unfortunately had never hunted the area. Off we went to spike camp. But the hunting gods were still angry and bad weather was the norm for the entire hunt; we saw no sheep, just one grizzly bear at a distance.

To be sure, there were highlights of the trip, but not the kind that go on trophy room walls. On the second day, Russell's horse went rogue. Rather than following the guide's horse around a deep hole of water during a creek crossing,



Russell, just as he rode in from a long night, lost in the mountains.

Russell's horse took a shortcut and literally jumped into the deep hole. Fortunately, they had just left camp and dry clothes weren't far away.

Another day, his guide simply got lost. Being an Eagle Scout, Russell had a good sense of direction and made the comment "shouldn't that creek be running the other way?" They finally got headed in the right direction, a long way from camp.

"...bad weather was the norm for the entire hunt"

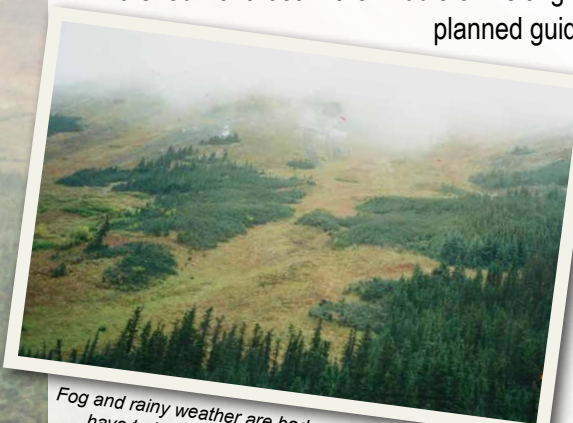
It was 33 degrees and spitting rain and snow. The darkest part of the night they spent in the timber, under a small tarp that Russell had thoughtfully brought along. At 9:00 the next morning they rode into camp; quite a relief for all!

It was a no-sheep hunt; but an adventure that Russell and I will never forget.



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Fog and rainy weather are bad news for sheep hunters; you have to be able to see the mountain tops to hunt sheep.



There can be a lot of walking on a sheep hunt; up hill, down hill and side hill. It can take a toll on your feet, even with well broken-in boots. Mole skin and duck tape are staples of the hunt.