

BAD LUCK & GOOD LUCK with Mule Deer

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #162 —

There are many variables that can come into play on a hunting trip; they're called variables because they're unpredictable and uncontrollable. Hunters call this luck; when the variables go our way it's called good luck – and of course there's bad luck. That's hunting! Determined hunters, when they experience bad luck, just keep their spirits up and keep on hunting.

There were four of us on this five-day hunt; it was a very limited draw area and the hunters and guides were all looking for "Mr. Majestic." Mule deer are pretty territorial and this country was quite open, so unless we saw "The buck," we were all just checking things out. For the first two days we glassed till our eyes hurt and looked our respective territories over pretty well. As we were

making plans for the third day, each hunter/guide team was ready to shoot the best buck they had seen.

From our observation point, my buck was on a narrow

ridge, a few hundred feet below us and about 800 yards out – an easy stalk on the morning of day 3. We stalked to a point on the opposite side of the ridge and were just about ready to carefully crest the top and take a 250 yard shot; but someone, higher and to our left had spooked a bull elk. He came running down the opposite ridge and up ours – running right through the herd of mule deer and of course they ran for cover.

We decided to let that area rest for the afternoon but at nearly dark, a couple of miles away, we saw "Mr. Majestic"



A decent, last day, 4x4 Mule Deer, with a kicker; a trophy we worked very hard for. The other two were both bigger.

— just not long enough to pull the trigger. We scanned the area looking for him on the morning and evening of day four; no luck. On the last morning we were back – but he still wasn't there; so at 8:10 my guide and I conferred and decided that at 8:30 I would shoot a nice buck feeding about 350 yards in front of us. But, more bad luck, a ranch pickup drove between us and the buck – away he ran, game over.

Driving to another area and coming around a hill, there was a nice buck and some does crossing a ranch road. Bailing out, we scaled the near hillside and made the shot – all in about 60 seconds from site to shot – bad luck, bad luck, good luck. That's hunting!

"...ready to shoot the best buck they had seen."



Larry Potterfield
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Mule deer country in the foreground, with north edge of Salt Lake City visible on the far right and the great Salt Lake on the far left. Beautiful view!



In terrain like this, shooting sticks are nearly a requirement. I had just gotten on the buck when he started to run. With a good rest and only 110 yards distance, it was an easy decision to shoot at a running deer – which I typically wouldn't.