

HUNTER: NICK ERWAY

NEW YORK



Forced to Hunt That HELLISH HILL

New York's No. 1 Semi by rifle

By Nick Erway

Before I moved to Pennsylvania in the early 1990s, I purchased a lifetime license so I could return to my native New York to hunt.

The first year I went back home, I didn't really know where to hunt. Because I had no place to lay my head, I wound up at a motel. My

son, Brian, and I hunted on the hillside behind the lodge. I didn't like it. Not only was it steep, but it also was nearly impenetrable.

I wound up calling the folks who purchased my home to ask if I could park in the driveway to access the nearby patch of private land I had

permission to hunt. The owners, Russ and Paula McGlynn, said I was welcome to park there anytime I wanted. Russ hunted deer, too, but not in that area.

During the 2004 season's opening days, after I took a nice doe, some

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folks came up and asked what I was doing there. I explained that I'd had permission for many years to hunt that little corner.

I was informed the landowner had gone into a nursing home, and the boyfriend of his granddaughter had taken charge of the farm. My permission was rescinded.

Since I also had permission to hunt the adjacent property, I just moved. I wound up taking a great buck there.

The following year, I arrived before daylight and started walking to my favorite spot. I hadn't gone too far when I heard a voice telling me to turn around and get out of the woods.

The property, alas, had changed hands. So ended 20-something years of hunting there. I had one more place to go. My son wound up living on that gnarly hill behind the motel I'd slept in during my initial trip back to New York as a nonresident. And that's where I headed.

I didn't shoot anything, but at least I learned a little more about the place and saw some deer sign.

I took my grandson, Brenden, with me to the hill in 2006. We sat in

a portable blind. Around 11:00, a large buck came right in front of us. I got excited, rushed the shot and missed the deer completely with my open-sighted shotgun.

The experience was humbling. But at least it taught Brenden that hunters — even all-knowing grandfathers — don't always get the deer they shoot at, even if it's a mere 30 yards away and standing still.

On opening day of the 2007 season — the first time centerfire rifles were legal — Brenden and I carried the ground blind, chairs, lunch, coffee and water down the power line in the dark. I'd also brought a small propane tank and single burner to knock off the chill.

It was about 34 degrees that morning and clear, despite a forecast for rain. I lit the propane burner about 8:45. The little bit of heat felt good.

About 10 minutes past 9:00, we heard something behind us. A large doe was barreling down the edge of the power line right-of-way, followed by a buck. They passed within 10 yards of us, but they were running too fast for me to get off a shot.

I took out my grunt tube and

bleat can and made some calls, but my pleas fell on deaf ears.

A little while later, we heard something else coming. Another buck ran right past us on the same trail. It never slowed either, despite my grunting and bleating.

I told Brenden that since the rut was on, the doe might bring those two bucks back our way. Several minutes later, we heard yet another deer on the power line. Its rack was enormous, and it was in much less of a hurry than the other deer had been.

We never actually saw much of the deer, just the antlers moving down the hill. At about 35 yards in front of us, it stopped past the area I had cleared several weeks earlier. I pulled the rifle up, but I couldn't see the deer in the scope.

I could not see the entire deer, but there was a clear path to the buck's boiler room. My bullet found it.

"Ya got him, Grandpa. Ya got him!" Brenden yelled, going for the blind's zipper.

I stopped him. I wanted to watch and make sure the buck didn't get up and run. If it did, I wanted to be

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BTR SCORESHEET

TAKEN BY: **NICK ERWAY**
 DATE: **11/17/07**
 PLACE: **CHEMUNG CO., NY**
 HARVESTED WITH: **CENTERFIRE RIFLE**
 ANTLER CLASSIFICATION: **SEMI-IRREGULAR**
 SCORER(S): **RICK J. LOWE**

TROPHY MEASUREMENT DATA

	RIGHT	LEFT
TOTAL POINTS PER ANTLER	7	9
NO. OF IRREGULAR POINTS	1	3
TOTAL IRREGULAR INCHES	1 2/8	8 6/8
LENGTH OF MAIN BEAMS	24 2/8	24 3/8
LENGTH OF 1ST POINT	6 4/8	6 2/8
LENGTH OF 2ND POINT	9 1/8	10 3/8
LENGTH OF 3RD POINT	8 2/8	9 2/8
LENGTH OF 4TH POINT	8 2/8	6 3/8
LENGTH OF 5TH POINT	2 2/8	3 4/8
LENGTH OF 6TH POINT	-	-
LENGTH OF 7TH POINT	-	-
1ST CIRCUMFERENCE (C1)	5 4/8	5
2ND CIRCUMFERENCE (C2)	4 4/8	4 4/8
3RD CIRCUMFERENCE (C3)	6 4/8	6 4/8
4TH CIRCUMFERENCE (C4)	4 6/8	5
SCORE PER SIDE	81 1/8	89 7/8
INSIDE SPREAD	19 4/8	
PERCENTAGE OF IRREGULARITY	5.8	

OFFICIAL SCORE **171**

COMPOSITE SCORE 190 4/8
(INCLUDES INSIDE SPREAD)

Since Nick's grandson, Brenden, shared the experience of taking this state-record semi-irregular buck, nothing less than a full body mount would do.

the cut limbs and fallen trees. Once we got past the last of the brush and the goldenrod, I saw the deer lying on the ground.

I trembled with excitement and said to Brenden, slowly, "Oh ... my ... god. Look ... at ... that ... buck!"

I never thought I'd take a deer like this.

I called Brian and told him I'd shot a monster. He came and helped. After calming down a little bit, I tagged and field-dressed the deer.

We had to drag the buck maybe 100 feet up a steep bank to Brian's four-wheeler. That was the first time in my life I was glad to have use for an ATV. I'd always said, "If you can't drag out your deer, you shouldn't be in the woods hunting."

The '07 season was sure one to

remember. Brian took a nice irregular 8-pointer the second day of the season, his biggest to date. The following week in Pennsylvania, Brenden took his first buck, a 6-pointer. And I harvested an 8-pointer there on the second day of the season.

It just doesn't get any better than that! ♦



in the best position for another shot.

After maybe 30 seconds to a minute of trying to hold my grandson back, he said to me in a sort of disgusted-sounding voice, "He's lying right there!"

I asked if he could see it, and he said he could. Well, off we went — out the door and down the hill. I fell right over while trying to negotiate