

## Jonathan Christenberry, Young Man with a Bow and Arrows

Article by John Carawan and Linda Ingalls



*John Carawan, Jonathan Christenberry, Linda Ingalls*

### Introduction:

**By Linda Ingalls**

You've just spent the last eight hours trudging through the woods along trails barely wide enough for a tractor. In the month of December, late into deer season, we managed to get a first-hand on-site interview with Jonathan Christenberry, an avid bowman. We met Jonathan at his home in Pinetown, North Carolina, where we began his detailed and descriptive tour of the local hunting range near

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his home and the time-consuming task of hunting deer with bow and arrow.

He led us through step-by-step procedures: how to pick your spot, set-up you watch area, lead the deer in for the kill, and a few tips (I had no idea that hunters had to cover their human scent with animal aroma) he used to improve his hunting skills.

Talking to Jonathan gave me an insight into the matchless excitement of hunting deer with a bow. Your spirit and strength have been exhausted after your journey. You say to yourself, "What the hell, might as well relax for a while." You place yourself between two tall-reaching pines and behind a prickly bush and take out a sandwich wrapped in cellophane.

Just as you proceed to take a bite, you're startled by crackling leaves and branches. You sit motionless, staring at a bush that seems to be alive. Your heart is pounding against your chest, causing both pain and excitement. Your imagination pushes the limits of reality. Just what is behind that veil of bushes? As you feel that your heart will explode, he lunges from the shadows. Your mouth falls open, for standing before you is a huge mass of tan hair, hooves, and horns. It's a six-pointer, probably around a hundred and forty pounds.

At first you lose control, but, if you've mastered the craft of hunting as Jonathan has, you quickly regain composure. You know what to do. You set your sight, aim, and let her go! But there's no sound of an exploding bullet, only a little "whisp." You've just made a direct hit with a slender arrow

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through the shoulder of this large animal, and this magnificent animal, object of the utmost respect from hunters like Jonathan, falls as surely as if he'd been hit with a bullet. The buck never even had time to flinch, let alone charge off out of range. The challenge of the hunt you have conquered this time. Next time? Well, that might be another story.

As we go through life, we find that every step along the way is impeded with challenges, accomplishments, and stress. But there is also the addition of things that bring pride and joy to our somewhat ordinary existence. For Jonathan Christenberry, a student at Beaufort County Community College, bow-hunting is his passion. The thrill of the hunt, the chase, and the skill required for achieving his goal is very tedious and time-consuming and requires the utmost patience.

Some people do not agree with the killing of wild animals, but as Jonathan pointed out to us, if people didn't hunt wildlife, the population would multiply too rapidly. The sport of bow hunting is also a more humane way. The hunter with a rifle might shoot a deer in the wood and that deer might wander the area wounded and suffer a painful death. But the close range of the bow hunter makes this possibility unlikely. More and more hunters of today are reverting to this earlier and more sporting way of hunting because of the challenge and also because a deer killed with an arrow makes a better stew because the meat has not been run to death.

*Life: Say, John, how far have we come off [highway] 32?*

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*Jonathan:* A straight shot to 32 is about three fourths of a mile. We've driven about three.

*Life:* And there are some places you have to use four-wheel drive. This is private land, right?

*Jonathan:* Yes.

*Life:* How long have you been hunting in here?

*Jonathan:* About three years.

*Life:* You think this is the best hunting area for deer?

*Jonathan:* It's some of the best because nobody ever comes back here. It's a good concentration of deer going to the fields.

*Life:* These woods border the farm fields?

*Jonathan:* Yes.

*Life:* John, did you make this little path [along which we were walking]?

*Jonathan:* Yes.

*Life:* What did you use?

*Jonathan:* I came in here with a tractor and a bush hog and mowed it out, and I started coming back here with a three-wheeler.

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*Life:* What are those dirt mounds over there?

*Jonathan:* Those are wind rows. When they cleared the land with bulldozers, they pushed everything up into big piles called wind rows.

*Life:* It's a fairly young forest.

*Jonathan:* Deer tracks [pointing].

*Life:* You've got a good eye.

*Life:* Whooh! It sure is slippery here! These shoes are so slick on the bottom. They can put all the fancy labels on them they want, but it doesn't help!

*Life:* I need football cleats.

*Life:* [When we reached the hunting stand, John pointed out deer trails.]

*Jonathan:* I got a pile right here [corn]. I've got my tree stand maybe 18 to 20 feet off the ground, setting up there in that pine tree. We've got deer coming in off that trail right there, that trail right behind you. We've got deer coming in, and right along the back side of that opening there's a trail coming in there. And in between the two pines back there, there's one coming in right beside that other tree right there. Right over here by this pine tree is where a bear was sitting.

*Life:* Just sitting there having a snack?

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*Jonathan points out deer trail, with "Lion Heart."*

*Jonathan:* Sitting right there having a snack. I came back home to put more corn out and saw where he had been sitting there. If I'd been up there [tree stand] with my bow, that'd been easy pickings. You can see where a couple of animals have been tearing everything up.

*Life:* What have you got, raccoon and opossums coming down here visiting? What kind of tracks have you got here?

*Jonathan:* I got deer right here. There's been a lot of squirrels too.

*Life:* You've got trails coming in from everywhere.

*Jonathan:* Yes. I know it's been a real good set-up; I've killed one doe out of it. You can see where they've been tearing in here.

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*Life:* How much corn did you put out originally?

*Jonathan:* A hundred pound bag, just scattered it everywhere.

*Life:* You just kind of cast it here and yonder around the base of the tree? And the corn attracts deer?

*Jonathan:* It attracts everything in here.

*Life:* Is this the area where you hunt from?

*Jonathan:* Yes. You see right up there in that pine tree behind you, you look up there, you'll see my stand.

*Life:* How do you get up there?

*Jonathan:* I've got tree steps.

*Life:* You've got spikes to climb the tree, don't you?

*Jonathan:* Yes.

*Life:* John, why don't you tell us how far we've come in here and about your procedures on a hunt.

*Jonathan:* On a normal hunt, when I come in by myself, I leave my house on my three-wheeler and come through the worst trail I got. I park my three-wheeler, and I walk, maybe, two hundred yards and come to my stand and get set up.

*Life:* Is that morning or afternoon?

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*Jonathan:* Most times, I hunt in the afternoons because I have to go to school in the mornings. So between school and work, I'm back here hunting, and at night I'm at my girlfriend's house, naturally.

*Life:* You park your three wheeler about how far away?

*Jonathan:* About two hundred yards back down the trail, and I come up here and set up in here.

*Jonathan:* Man, have they been tearing this place up!

*Life:* Yes, you can see lots of signs down there. Do you always go up there [tree stand] when you get back here?

*Jonathan:* Yes, normally I do. I took my girlfriend back here once, and we set up right behind those trees and sat on the ground. Here's prime evidence why you don't shoot broadheads [arrows] at squirrels: you bury them in trees. You lose them, and they're gone forever.

*Life:* Thought you'd try one, huh?

*Jonathan:* Oh, yes.

*Jonathan:* I drilled one sitting over there underneath that tree.

*Life:* Have you got any small game [arrow] heads?

*Jonathan:* Yes. Right there is a judo point to shoot squirrels with. I shot a nutria with it. I shot him right square in the

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middle of his nose, and he fell right over in the bottom of the canal.

*Life:* A what?

*Jonathan:* A nutria. It's like an over-sized musk rat. They're not good for anything. I hit it, and I buried it right dead on the center of his nose.

*Life:* What damage, if any, would that do to a deer?

*Jonathan:* Bounce off of it.

*Life:* That doesn't kill by penetration, does it?

*Jonathan:* By shocking power. Right now, I am shooting a 75 grain WASP Broadhead, on this 2219 shaft through a PSE Fire Flight set at 72 pounds. I shoot completely through most deer. I don't have any problems finding a blood trail.

*Life:* John, this one you've got right there [arrow] is the one you use on the deer, right?

*Jonathan:* Yes. Seventy-two pounds is enough to take down any North American big game animal.

*Life:* You mentioned this thing is called a silencer.

*Jonathan:* A string silencer. Listen. Hear that? Without it [silencer], it goes "twang," just like a rubber band popping.

*Life:* And the deer can hear that?

*Jonathan:* The deer can hear that. Say you set up in the tree stand. When you release your bow, a deer hears that little pop and can drop its full body length in about three tenths of a second. And the arrow will go over it. I've had a deer feeding right here with his head buried right here in the corn. I was sitting up in the stand and it ducked and the arrow hit right on the other side of it. It just literally ducks the arrow. A demonstration right here. Say you got a deer sitting right here. You want to hit dead on the middle, right.

*Life:* Yes.

*Jonathan:* You aim dead on. He hears it; he's going to duck, and it's going like that [missing high].

*Life:* He can do that just from hearing it?

*Jonathan:* Just from hearing it. A deer's first reaction is straight down.

*Life:* A built in self-defense mechanism?

*Jonathan:* Exactly. But with the silencer, it doesn't hear anything.

*Life:* Your longest shot in this area is, what, thirty yards?

*Jonathan:* Yes, about thirty yards is my longest shot. The longest shot I've ever taken here with my bow is thirty-five yards. I broke its neck.

*Life:* That's a good shot. Is that the max you can do with a bow and arrow?

*Jonathan:* There's been deer killed at two yards; I killed one that was sitting right underneath that tree two yards away. There's been deer killed at 110 yards with a bow.

*Life:* Is that right?

*Jonathan:* That was just a luck shot. The guy, all he did was draw his bow back, raise it up in the air, and the arrow just fell in on it; it split him right in the backbone. That was luck.

*Life:* What's the farthest distance that you've killed one?

*Jonathan:* Thirty-five yards. That's the farthest I've killed one. You've got target archers where they shoot three-D tournaments. Three-D tournaments use life-like three-D targets: deer, elk, bear, turkeys, and so on. They sit back and drill a target sixty yards away, no problem. Put it in groups like that [showing] about the size of a baseball. That's how good they are. But I shoot instinctive myself because it's a better challenge for me. I used to shoot sights and drill everything I shot at. It got old. I started shooting instinctive; I just draw back and shoot.

*Life:* You wrote a paper on this for me [in English] on sight shooting, and what's the other?

*Jonathan:* Instinctive shooting.

*Life:* That's where you just aim with your eyes not using a sight, and you like that better?

*Jonathan:* Oh, yes!

*Life:* Why do you like it better?

*Jonathan:* I like it better because I'm not tied to my sights. I can just draw my bow and say, all right, this feels good, and let it go. Using sights the way I was cost me a deer one day. I drew back [sighted] just about thirty-five or forty yards. Which pin? Which pin? I used the wrong pin, and I missed him. With instinctive aiming, like this, I just draw back and just shoot. [He shoots.]

*Life:* You get the feeling like you are mechanical with that [sight] don't you.

*Jonathan:* Yes.

*Life:* That was a good paper you wrote. I had never thought about that.

*Jonathan:* These things [arrowheads] are indestructible. I shot that stump and it didn't tear it up or anything.

*Life:* Why don't we get a close-up of that [arrowheads] and the arrow you use for deer. I guess all the rest of them are the same?

*Jonathan:* Yes. I carry two of these around for squirrel hunting, and the rest are for deer hunting. These little Judo points in my right hand; you pay five dollars for a pack of two.

*Life:* Five dollars for two?

*Jonathan:* Yes. You get twelve field points that you shoot targets with for a dollar ninety-eight. But a good pack of broad heads ranges from twenty to twenty-five dollars.

*Life:* Do you have to true your arrows when you get them?

*Jonathan:* When I order my arrows, they come from the factory nice and straight. Some people will take it, and they'll just spin it [demonstrates]. You see how it spins straight like that?

*Life:* Yes.

*Jonathan:* All right, some arrows, if you get them cheap, they'll wobble. If you get a lot of wobble on it, it will not shoot straight; they will dip and bob, flying off course.

*Life:* That's a quick test, isn't it?

*Jonathan:* Yes, that's a real quick test. You can get one that's straight and draw back and it's right there.

*Life:* How much do these arrows cost?

*Jonathan:* These arrows right here were thirty-six dollars a dozen.

*Life:* How much is the bow?

*Jonathan:* My bow is \$269.

*Life:* They're not cheap.



*Jonathan:* No. You can get some compound bows that you can hunt with for \$129. They are cheaper bows, but they're good bows. A lot of people use them and kill deer with them, but it depends on what your budget's like, what you like to shoot, and what feels comfortable to you. I just like this PSE bow because it fits my hand good; it's nice and light weight!

*Life:* Deer season opens when?

*Jonathan:* Bow season comes in about the second week of September and ends a month before rifle season begins. Once rifle season kicks back in, that week in between bow season and rifle season is muzzle-loading season. During the third season, you can use muzzle loaders--bows, pistols, shotguns, sling-shots, if you wanted to [laughter].

*Life:* The whole thing ends January 1?

*Jonathan:* The first Monday in January is the last day.

*Life:* What got you hooked doing the bow hunting instead of with rifles?

*Jonathan:* Watching hunting videos. What got me started on bow hunting, I watched a hunting video, "Down for the Count," produced by Dan Fitzgerald Productions. That's the one that mainly got me started in bow hunting. Once I got out and started shooting my bow, I started liking it. You get more close in on the deer. You get to be within fifty yards, and I just liked it better. Rifle hunting now for me, if I go out and I see a deer, it's like boom, it's over, it's dead, that's it.

*Life:* No challenge?

*Jonathan:* Bow hunting is just more of a challenge.

*Life:* Plus there's less risk; you don't have to worry about busted ear drums when you bow hunt [laughter].

*Jonathan:* Exactly.

*Life:* When you're doing this with your stand, you don't use any dogs?

*Jonathan:* No. Just sit right here. Bow hunting is patience. You sit, take your time, watch the deer come walking through the woods, get you a good shot, drive one right on through him. Wait about one half hour and start tracking. Unless you've got a real good hit and you see him go down, you can go ahead and go get it. You take this [arrow] right here; you put it behind that shoulder. He'll go down just as quick as if you shot him with a rifle.

*Life:* Is that what spot you go for, right behind the shoulder?

*Jonathan:* Right behind the shoulder. You got your shoulder and you've got your heart and lungs and then you got the liver. The heart and lungs are what you want. The liver's okay, but you don't want to go any further back than that because you hit gut. Then you're going to sit in that tree stand three or four hours and wait for him. Then you go down and, most likely, have to finish him off.

*Life:* Have you used fox urine?

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*Jonathan:* Yes. When I come up to an area, sometimes I use fox cover scent. That covers up [human] scent.

*Life:* What do you do, just spread it around?

*Jonathan:* Just drip it around this tree, or you can take Q-tips and dip the end into it and stick the end you haven't dipped in the ground. That way it's like a wick, and there's fox scent all over the area.

*Life:* They can smell fumes, huh?

*Jonathan:* Yes, most definitely. I was sitting in that tree stand, and the wind was drifting over that way. I pulled out my grunt call to give out a couple of grunts on it. I'd hear them coming towards me, and they stopped. So I'd blow again. I blew a couple more times. After about ten minutes of doing that, they came in, and that's the one I killed. That's [pointing] how close she came. I shot her right beside the spine and it came out the bottom; she spun and went around over in the woods over there. She went about, maybe, a hundred yards.

*Life:* You shot right down on top of her?

*Jonathan:* Right down on top of her. That's the second one I've killed like that.

*Life:* Are deer better with sense of smell than sight?

*Jonathan:* Sight. You can fool a deer by sight only if you stay still; he can catch any glimpse of movement. A deer can spot you--it depends on how good you're camouflaged. If

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*John's Tree Stand*

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you sit out in the middle of a field, they'll spot you half a mile away. If you have a good camouflage and sit back against a tree, like sitting right up in here with a bow, you sit right up in here like that [pointing]; that's how close they'll come to you.

*Life:* When they see you, they take off?

*Jonathan:* Sometimes they take off; sometimes they stand there and start stomping and bobbing their heads every which a way and start blowing at you.

*Life:* You ever had one charge you?

*Jonathan:* No, not yet. They start dipping that head and picking it up in the air to catch a whiff of you. They spin around on a dime just like that [clicks fingers].

*Life:* If you shoot from up in your stand, miss, can they figure out exactly where it came from right quick?

*Jonathan:* Most of the time they don't; sometimes they'll just make a couple of steps and jump and start looking around and see what happened.

*Life:* So you might get a second shot?

*Jonathan:* Oh, yes. I've doubled up, shot one deer before, right underneath my stand across the highway. It went on and charged through the woods. The other one hopped over about fifteen yards and just stopped there and started looking around. I just drew back and drilled it right through the center.

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*Life:* What's the biggest one you ever shot?

*Jonathan:* With a bow, this year a nice cow horn. I've been bow hunting for four years now, and I've had one chance at a nice one but I blew it. He had about an eight-point rack, a set of horns, maybe about sixteen, eighteen inches wide. This is where I had this set up, with this bow. I knocked an the arrow, and I put it on here. I heard something rattle. I knew my broad head was loose. I reached up, tightened my broad head, and I snapped my lock off; [laughter] and he just hopped on down the field. I'm telling you, I was a sick little boy [more laughter].

*Life:* That even happened to Hiawatha. Don't worry about it.

*Jonathan:* Oh, yes!

*Life:* Here comes a dog.

*Jonathan:* That's another thing; sometimes you have dogs come through the woods. Remember, I told you the puppies were around the house somewhere; they're out hunting, that's them. That's my puppies.

*Life:* Those are your dogs?

*Jonathan:* Yes. Sometimes they stay around the house, but more times than not I've come up here to sit, and I see them coming, running by my tree stand or something.

*Life:* He's pretty, man. I love those floppy ears.

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*Jonathan:* The biggest one right there, she's maybe about three years old, but this is my little buddy right here. He's already been running a bear.

*Life:* Is that right? Be careful, bud; you might catch him [laughter].

*Jonathan:* Yes, be careful, boy!

*Life:* Are they trained to hunt?

*Jonathan:* Yes, I can go turn them out over there, and they'll come through the fields.

*Life:* You ever put them on a deer trail that you couldn't find?

*Jonathan:* I've done that with him.

*Life:* Is that your biggest puppy?

*Jonathan:* Yes. He was smaller than the other ones right there.

*Life:* What's his name?

*Jonathan:* Lion Heart. I got it off a Van Damme movie.

*Life:* Yea, yea [laughter]!

*Jonathan:* I'm a big Jean Claude fan. I've seen every movie he's got out.

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*Life:* What all's in that big dog, basset?

*Jonathan:* No, Lion Heart is a cross between a blue tick, a black and tan, and a Walker; but he's only a puppy.

*Life:* He's going to get big.

*Jonathan:* He'll get, maybe, this high [two to three feet] and weigh about, maybe, close to a hundred pounds. That's Hunter, and I don't even know what the other one's name is, and that's the truth.

*Life:* They got some beagle in them somewhere, don't they?

*Jonathan:* No. Full-blooded Walker, only a couple of months old.

*Life:* I'm not familiar with dog breeds. What do you mean by Walkers?

*Jonathan:* That's your hunting hounds. When they get up full size, they're about this tall, 36 inches to the top of their backs.

*Life:* Are they primarily for hunting deer?

*Jonathan:* Yes. I was hoping they would go on off through the woods.

*Life:* If they're not, you're not going to find a lot of deer around here [laughter].

*Jonathan:* That's right.

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*Life:* How about your horns? Let's see them.

*Jonathan:* My horns are right here. You can buy sets of them

*Life:* It's probably better to go ahead and have the real thing if you're going to be rattling them, isn't it?

*Jonathan:* These are real horns.

*Life:* Right, but you said some people buy them.

*Jonathan:* You can buy them made out of synthetic material; you can't tell that much difference. These right here, that was a little six pointer I killed and sawed off the brow tines right here; that way I can get a good hand hold and cut the tips of them off. Just rattle them just like that [rattles horns].

*Life:* There's no system to it; you just do it?

*Jonathan:* Most of the time what I do, I pull out my grunt call, and I give a couple of grunts. That way if the deer are real close to me, I don't scare them when I clash the horns together. They'll come right on in. I wait a couple of minutes after I give out a couple of grunts. If I don't get anything in, I'll start rattling. I rattle about forty-five seconds to a minute and I'll stop and wait about fifteen minutes and I rattle again.

*Life:* Does that work pretty well?

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*Jonathan:* I've only rattled one deer in. Sometimes you can rattle twelve to fifteen times a day and not get a deer; sometimes you can rattle twelve and get twelve in a row. It's just a game of chance.

*Life:* You don't have the grunt thing you're talking about with you, do you? I've never heard one.

*Jonathan:* Here's a grunt call for mainly bucks. [Blows call.] Then you got a doe call. This doe call is like a doe grunt. [Blows doe grunt.] Or you can adjust it. This one right here, you can adjust it and get a fawn bleat out of it. Use a fawn bleat in the early season, early bow season, and bring a doe right in close to you like, "Where's my little fawn, where's my baby?" See. [Blows fawn call.]

*Life:* Does that work?

*Jonathan:* Yes. I have grunted deer with my voice, but I've got this cold. I can't do it now. I've grunted a deer in. It came about two hundred to two hundred and fifty yards away, and I was sitting with my bow. I started grunting with my voice; she turned her head and just looked. I grunted again, and she just came on down the road. I brought that deer twenty yards from me, and I drilled her right in the shoulder.

*Life:* Let me get a picture. Hold you horns out and I'll--

*Jonathan:* Do the grunt call [laughter]. See, I'll just pull out this buck grunt first. All right, right here is the H. S. Calls Pro buck grunt. If a deer is over there, you can just turn it to the side [blows call], and it sounds like it's over there

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*Antlers for "Rattling In" Deer*

farther. Just keep turning it and turning it and bring him up here.

*Life:* Is that the volume you use?

*Jonathan:* Yes. You don't want a real loud grunt; you want it nice and soft because deer, they can hear, like, thirty times better than we can. Something we can't hear at fifty yards, they can hear at three hundred and fifty yards, something like that. I mean, they can hear way off; it's unreal!

*Life:* How do you develop the calls?

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*Jonathan:* That's something I'd love to do. The experts go out, and they just work on the calls. They just listen to the deer, and they can invent calls.

*Life:* That's their job?

*Jonathan:* There's this guy, Dan Fitzgerald; I'd love to do what he does. He makes hunting videos. He goes out and does hunting seminars and does hunting videos.

*Life:* You can't beat making a living doing what you love.

*Jonathan:* Exactly. She's [puppy] got left behind. She doesn't know where the other two went.

*Life:* They all piled off through the woods somewhere. They came from you trailer?

*Jonathan:* They just left the house, went right into the wood, and started hunting.

*Life:* So you said they went three fourths of a mile to this spot?

*Jonathan:* Yes.

*Life:* But we went three miles, right?

*Jonathan:* Yes. What it is, we took a long way around and went through the hunting club and came from the other road; we've walked five hundred yards. All right, do you want me to do a little demonstration on the horns?



*Life:* Yes.

*Jonathan:* [Rattling horns] When you rattle the horns, you want to make it sound like you got two big bucks going at it. These are two deer going to it, and they tear all the bushes up and all the leaves up, and they pound the ground. They just keep going to it just like this for 45 seconds to a minute, and you just keep going and just break them away. You wait about maybe 15 minutes between rattling sequences. You just want to sit there and wait. You get your bow ready, sit up on your stand or the ground, wherever you are, and just wait. You'll have deer charge right up to you, to the tree that close, or you can have deer circling come about fifty yards down wind and just wait you out and see what happens. But the deer I had come in to me, it charged right in and stopped twenty-five yards from me. A lot of times you get a deer's attention, especially late season like it is, rattling real hard like I was just doing, that's right in the middle of a rut where you got the bucks following the does for breeding purposes.

*Life:* What period of time is that?

*Jonathan:* Right about the second week in November.

*Life:* So we're late now?

*Jonathan:* Yes. Right now this is what we call the late season; it's hard to get any deer. A lot of times we just take the horns [rattle horns] real light; tickling the horns is what they call it, just tickling.

*Life:* That works?

*Jonathan:* Yes. Just bring the deer on in with it. That's another reason I brought this little doe call. This late in the year, you don't have big bucks grunting, going at each other, but with the doe call, it's like there's a doe over there; I'm going to see what she's up to. Just like guys, you see a good looking girl walk past you; man, I'm going to check her out. You go over there.

*Life:* [Laughter.]

*Jonathan:* That's all it is.

*Life:* Just checking her out, huh?

*Jonathan:* Yes, just goes over there, and if she's interested, he's going to stick around and go off and do his business, but this time of year--

*Life:* I bet a buck is disappointed when he sees you, huh [laughter]? Do deer mark their spots like bears do? I know bears scratch trees.

*Jonathan:* Come over here; I'll show you right here.

*Life:* Yes, I think we passed a couple of those spots.

*Jonathan:* Right here is what is called a "buck rub." Primarily, you could tell this was a little deer who did this because of the size of the tree. All he does is he comes in; on this deer trail. See how the ground is packed down here. He followed this trail and came right up here and rubbed his horns all up and down. They've got a gland that's right up

on the head between the eyes, and they rub over the tree after they rub some bark off with their horns.

*Life:* A scent gland?

*Jonathan:* Yes a scent gland that puts their personal scent on it right there. They'll come freshen up and rub their scent on it some more and go off and do their business. I can show you a scrape real quick, over here another. The deer, he'll come in, he'll clean off an area about two feet wide, he'll lick overhanging branches, he'll twist them off with his antlers and break them. You'll find little limbs hanging over, broken off like that. They'll rub their face all in it and have their scent all on it. He'll urinate down his back legs; he's got glands back there called "tarsal glands." He'll urinate down them into the scrape and lay droppings in the scrape and he'll go off. That's his calling card to does. Then the receptive doe in estrus [the period in which the doe is ready to breed] comes in. She'll urinate in the same scrape, and she'll go off leaving a trail of her own scent through the woods to her bedding area. The buck will come back, check the scrape, find where she's been, smell it; he'll put his nose right in the ground and trail right up to her and find her.

*Life:* That's the way they court?

*Jonathan:* Yes.

*Life:* Not much different from most animal rituals, I guess you could say. I know you picked this spot because you wanted an open spot, but are there any other considerations on the area itself?

*Jonathan:* You want to get where you know there's a lot of deer in the area, over that way I'd say, what, one half to three quarter miles from the highway. You got fields all around the highway. The deer, they're in this woods back here. You've got deer all around on every side. They're walking through the woods going toward food. They're just going over to the fields to eat. You pick your ambush spot. A lot of deer will browse on their way going to the fields to feed for the night. You put food out here, and they'll come along, stop for a snack here, maybe around four o'clock in the afternoon. And they'll feed, come up here, stop, and grab a snack on the way. Say, like, if you're going to Washington [N. C.], you'll like stop somewhere along the way to get a drink or a snack. There they get their snack, go out into the fields, feed heavy for the night, and come back in.

*Life:* So how many of these trails did you find coming through here before you set up? Did you already see some before you baited?

*Jonathan:* Yes, there's oodles of trails; you can go right through here and see trails, one after another. You get a place out here and bait it. I have one bait pile for the area, because you'll have deer coming in from a mile or two to just this one spot to eat, especially late season when there's not too much feed out there for them to eat on anymore. They come out here. There's plenty to eat if you don't mess them up.

*Life:* Do you actually use your kills? I mean, a lot of people don't. They just do it for the pleasure or a trophy.

*Jonathan:* Yes, I take the meat home and dress it out. If it's real cold, I'll let it hang in the cold air like a meat locker, let it age a while. Then I'll take it, debone it and put it in my freezer.

*Life:* How do you get the wild taste out of it?

*Jonathan:* Most of the time, I take a cooler, soak it in water, first just ice water. You keep changing the water until you get all the blood out of it. Then you add vinegar in there, enough vinegar until it smells really strong. Let the meat soak for about three to four days. Just keep adding ice to it till it's good and cold. You pull it out, and it's just like eating beef.

*Life:* That's supposed to be another good thing about bow hunting.

*Jonathan:* Right. It's not got all that wild taste in it.

*Life:* Yes, he's not been run to death. Well, I'll tell you, Jonathan; this has really been informative. Bow hunting really has a lot of advantages, like the meat doesn't taste as wild because they haven't run.

*Jonathan:* And most people now if they did bow hunt, they'd bow hunt at the first of the season. Then they hang the bows up and hunt with guns. I've got friends I hunt with, they bow hunt during the regular season [early bow season]; then when rifle season comes around, they say, "I hang up the bow. I don't like bow hunting anymore. I'll get my high-powered rifle and go after them." But the early bow season you've got undisturbed deer. Undisturbed deer are a lot

easier to harvest than one that's been dogged after and hunted hard for two months. You take an undisturbed deer, he's used to just doing what he's been doing all year long with nobody messing with him. You go in and find out where he's been crossing and sit. With a bow a good shot is twenty yards. You get a deer going cross down a trail at twenty yards, you'll drill him.

*Life:* When did you say the first of deer season is?

*Jonathan:* The month of September.

*Life:* Man, there's still some snakes out then, aren't there?

*Jonathan:* You got that right!

*Life:* Do you have snake leggings and all that?

*Jonathan:* No.

*Life:* You just watch where you're going [laughter]!

*Jonathan:* Exactly. Stump shooting is another form of practice I do. During the summertime, I go along shooting stumps. I have a cow pasture right behind my house. I was going through there stump shooting one day. I took a step, and there was a snake about two to three inches in front of me. All you do is back away from them. What I do--and I hate snakes!--is draw back on him and shoot him right back of the head.

*Life:* With your bow? That's a pretty tough shot isn't it?

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*Jonathan:* Well, if you are right on top of them, it's kind of hard to miss them.

*Life:* Well, I've done it!

*Life:* What? Missed one or got one [laughter]?

*Jonathan:* If I don't have anything with me and I see a snake, I'm gone! I'll get myself out of there. It doesn't take me long. Well, anything else you think we need to know?

*Life:* I'm sure we'll have other questions, but you'll be at school and very easy to locate. I've got your girlfriend in a class. She told me you won't let her hunt.

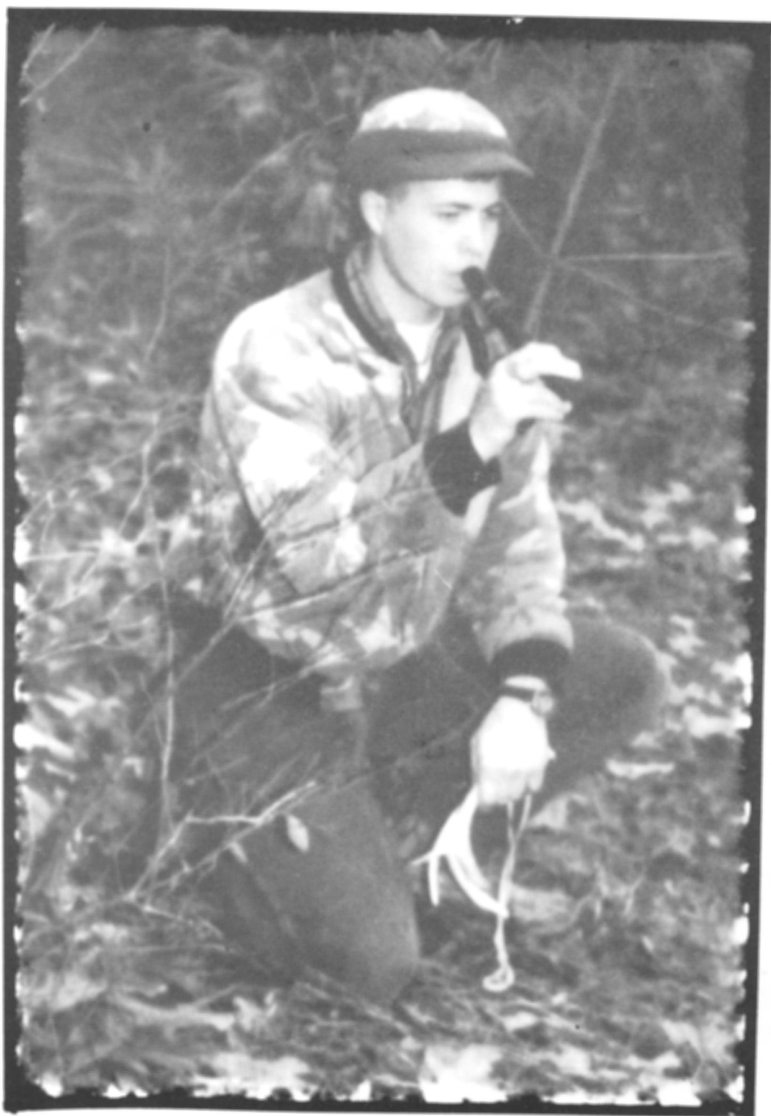
*Jonathan:* I've got squirrels coming in the area and she loves squirrels to death. She'll sit back here, bouncing, watching and grinning. She'll say, "I'm sorry." I tell her there will be no deer here when she's acting like that!

### **Conclusion**

**By John Carawan**

I felt good walking from the woods after the interview with Jonathan. Both the woods and the young man seemed to have taken part equally in the discussion. Many times Jonathan had knelt and pointed out animal "signs" hidden in the leaves that the untrained eye would surely have missed. He pointed out summer paths and winter paths that deer used to venture to and from food sources. Even Jonathan's choice of the quiet bow, rather than the rifle, was

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*Jonathan demonstrates the "grunt" call.*

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appropriate and seemed to be an extension of the older and, perhaps, more natural way.

The small clearing where Jonathan conducted the interview was surrounded with fifty- to seventy-five-year-old pines, water oaks, and young cedars. We could tell it was a special place for Jonathan and felt fortunate to have been there with him.

It is not unusual to meet a young man with plans and hopes for the future, but it speaks well of Jonathan to have a part of himself firmly set in the traditions of a time when nature was respected.

Good-byes having been said, we reluctantly navigated the path back through the quiet forest to where we could rush to things that we have been told are important. As we drove away, Roy Armstrong summed up our feelings perfectly with the simple statement, "He's a fine young man."