

Bison Hunt

by Clarence Ellis

Bison hunts are not supposed to be challenging, right? Bison hunts are not supposed to be challenging, right? They are a big dumb brute that you drive up to and shoot with your favorite toy. Right?

Maybe.

I booked a hunt with P Cross Bar so I could try out my newest rifle, get a large quantity of tasty meat, and get in another hunt. All perfectly valid reasons on their own.

When Marion Scott and I checked in to the ranch we learned from the ranch manager that our bull, the last one of the year, had not been seen since the last hunt. The manager hadn't even seen him while flying over the ranch. How do you hide a 2,000 lb critter in short grass prairie and low sage brush? Apparently, said bull had seen his last buddy hit the ground and decided there was a message there and found a way.

We headed out onto ranch roads and put the binoculars into use. A ranch worker we met had also been looking with no results. A couple of Marion's guides also showed up and contributed more sets of eyes.

Nada.

Along about 11:00, we noted a Cessna circling one spot. Aha! As we approached the bull decided the jig was up and broke cover. Cover had been a gully knee deep at most. We had driven by him about 200 yd away not long ago! Well, we had him now. Oh, really?

The bull trotted by us just out of range, loped up another hill until for sure out of range; slowed to a walk until over the hill. He then turned 90 degrees, and ran behind the next hill. He did not know he was being watched by our guides a mile away. We cheated.

A couple hills later he calmed down, and I exited the truck and did a fast walk up to the crest of the hill and saw him at about a hundred yards. Dropped to kneeling and couldn't see him. As I scuttled over the crest he saw me, and was about to split when I knelt and put a bullet through his lungs from kneeling. Game over. Work begins.

As a point of information, we got the entire quartered bison into my Jeep Liberty. I even managed to drive it over the Bighorns with this load; although if I'd needed to come to an abrupt screeching halt there'd have been a lot more screeching than halting. 🦌

