

Working with the Hunter[®]



Don't Move!"

A big buck is spotted by the hunter: *"Don't move!"* he urges with wild eyes. I freeze like no one's frozen before. An awkward pose, fingers still pressed along side my nose, utterly loyal to the hunter's demand. A long 30 seconds of me staring at the ground, desperate not to be seen. The hunter breaks the silence: *"Did you get that?!!"*

This illustrates the catch-22 we as cameramen are in: the need to allow the hunter to be the hunter, yet remain independent, as ultimately, success rests in our hands. So, the "moral" of this story is: if you are told, "Don't move!" you better move.

The theory of it all: A note to both cameraman & hunter-

Creating a quality production means before the hunt there is something that must be established between hunter and field producer (cameraman). This hunt is for a TV show. This is about creating TV. TV is about education & entertainment & product. This is not about the hunter being burdened with a cameraman. Time must be taken for reversals and cut-aways and second angles, audio checks, battery changes... In the heat of the hunt, taking time for second angles, dialogue, and sound checks is difficult at best, but that is our job.

The reality is most hunters are in hunting mode, focused on "hunter things" like concealment, noise, and pursuit, but the professional TV hunter needs to consistently work with the camera.

A hunter and cameraman working in unison and understanding these rules can quickly gather reversals and re-creates while hunting. Taking the time to grab a reversal or dialogue of the hunter immediately after an encounter is extremely important and will benefit the cameraman, the hunter, the editors, the sponsors, and the viewing audience. Of course, rules are meant to be broken. Just break 'em good.

Who's in charge? Who is in charge--the hunter or the cameraman? Can this be answered? The hunter needs to control the hunt. The cameraman, or field producer, needs to control content. Both need to help each other. The best situation is when both hunter and cameraman understand that the goal is not just to kill, but educate, entertain, and highlight product. If both understand these rules, then the answer to, *"Who's in Charge?"* is simple: the TV show is in charge. Problem solved. **Of course if the hunter owns the TV show ... then he's in charge.

The Hunter's Clothing: Bring 3 sets of the same exact thing--3 of the same exact shirts, 3 same sweat shirts, 3 identical pants, 3 identical gloves, 3 same face-masks. The point is to always look the same. This can, and will, pay off huge.

The Cameraman's Cloths: Hunters always seem to hear your noise more than their own. Fleece is excellent. Also wear non-aggressive-soled boots. They are much more quiet than heavy soled boots.

A Bloody Mess: Always pack a boat load of paper towels ready to clean the animal. I'll go out on a limb and say this is our job. Remove the blood!

Real Situation: Light is falling and you have just killed. Instead of re-creates, the hunter wants to immediately go after the kill (there will be all sorts of reasons). Compromise: get 1 minute of re-creates and go. **YOU MUST GET RE-CREATES NOW!** At a minimum, film the hunter preparing to shoot the animal (drawing bow back or raising rifle). Get more if possible. A simple post reaction ("Yes! Yes! It's getting dark. Let's go after him.") and ten seconds of hunter getting ready, then go.