

thus the chances of spotting hungry pachyderms gorging themselves on the abundant flora were pretty good.

It wasn't an hour after we loaded-up our big boy that, while crossing a small wet riverbed, (unusual for this time of year), Ivan spotted two Dugga boys beating it up the bank and into the bush.

He exclaimed...“Two Dugga Boys to the right.” I caught their rumps as they disappeared into the thick cover a couple of hundred yards away. Off we went again. But this time the circumstances were quite different. We knew we had two bulls on the move and they were in some really thick riverine cover – some sort of Combretum. I call the stuff “velvet thorny bush.” It looks harmless enough but those of you who have been around the stuff know of its pesky nature. The trees grow to 20 feet and bush out like a bouquet of flowers, making a large overhang that animals (read: buffalo), love to get into and hide. The terrain was

flat going, but completely covered in dried grass and leaf litter. That combined with the thick cover made for some difficult and very interesting tracking. Having just busted these bulls we knew they were near, but how near? How close? We couldn't tell in this stuff. We had to just get busy looking for any sign of recent activity and keep our ears tuned for any sounds of animals moving through the bush.

What had appeared was going to be an easy stalk suddenly became a tenuous ordeal. We were separated from the trackers several times only to rejoin with everybody shrugging their shoulders in a “I don't see any sign of them — you?” As we moved along looking to cut some sort of trail, Ivan froze and motioned to me, pointing just ahead in a tiny opening in the jess. There they were, at just about 20 yards, standing side by side, quartering away. They were on alert and I sensed the urgency of getting a shot off and now! Problem was that

I was smack in the middle of crawling under some brush and had to painstakingly creep around Ivan for a shot. Once in position, which took just a few seconds, I was faced with another challenge. All I could see of the shootable buff was the tip of his right horn and his right hindquarter. The rest of him was obscured by thick cover. As I raised up I sighted forward from his hindquarter to his horn boss, dropped back and down to where I figured his mid-shoulder was and let fly – BOOM! The result of an 8,000-foot pound muzzle blast kicked up a cloud of leaves, dust and debris inside this little world of opportunity among the tangle.

The buffs bolted off back towards the river. We were again in hot pursuit. We hadn't gone 20 yards when we started seeing huge amounts of blood spoor – we knew he was near. Twenty more yards and around the corner of a thick bush he stood. As before, I ran in and dispatched him with a single shot to the frontal neck. I was again inside five yards. He was nearly down, unable to come forward. As much as he wanted to, the initial wound was just too substantial and robbed his ability to fight. But I'll tell you this; he had a look to him like that of a fallen fighter when told that the fight is over even after he had regained his composure. This animal wanted a piece of whatever had gotten hold of him...boy was he ticked!

I wanted to give him a textbook frontal brain shot just under the bosses, but his head was bobbing wildly in his attempt to come for me. Just as I put the bead on his forehead, he ducked and the shot struck his neck just behind the head... Whoomph! Down he went! No frontal brain shot for him, but an equally effective spine dislocator to the neck! Man that .600 really hits with authority when correctly placed.

“It's not about the inches, its about the hunt...the failed stalks, the hours of tracking and when all said and done, do it enough times and suddenly it will all come together,”

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