



**A normal part of an elephant's demonstration is to use feet and trunk to throw dust at an intruder. As long as the ears remain spread there is no serious danger here.**

phies, but providing an experience that will yield a lifetime of memories. In southern Africa in the new millennium, Carter understands that he cannot show his clients the 100-pound tusks of yesterday, and the reality is that in some areas at certain times of the year even a fifty-pounder may be unlikely. While he can't guarantee heavy ivory, he can work overtime to provide a memorable experience. *Oh, yeah.*

### Getting Close

So, with me thinking I had a perfect shot at ten or maybe eleven yards suddenly I was being propelled down the elephant trail toward our old tuskleless cow. We stopped at four yards and I raised the rifle. At this range the elephant seemed to tower above us, and it was the first time I have been so close that I was aware of having the rifle at a steep uphill angle.

The elephant was apparently more horrified than I was, because she threw her head up and backed up a step

before I took the shot. We had already proven Carter's third premise: I will never forget our little charge down that elephant path! Now we would prove the first: No matter how close, you can still screw it up. I failed to take into account the elephant's upraised head, and my first shot was too high.

You know about old Pondoro Taylor's Knock-Out Values, right? A near miss to the brain will still drop an elephant, at least for a moment? I haven't seen that very often, and although this elephant took a 500-grain solid—fully 5,000 foot-pounds of energy—squarely between the eyes, I didn't see it this time. The good news is that when a brain shot fails, you recognize it instantly, even while still in recoil, and your own brain flashes that you must do something very quickly.

And so it was now my job (before it became Carter's job) to exercise his second premise and try to clean things up with my second barrel. The elephant was instantly in motion, head back



**Only a brain-shot elephant falls in this position, so it sounds great when the author says his tuskleless elephant was brained at four yards. Except it was the second shot that did the trick, a side-on shot after a flubbed frontal shot. When you're that close you have better odds for a second chance.**

down, turning to our right, but the Rigby .450 was in motion as well, and at five yards it really was quite simple. As the head came around, the front bead found the ear hole, and the elephant was down.

A couple of days later we found the kind of track we'd been seeking for Jim Hall, a single big-footed bull apparently trailing a small herd of cows. We followed on tough ground for a couple of hours, and we were getting close when the trackers lost the spoor. They spread out and cast, and one of them glimpsed the bull feeding along ahead of us, confirming good ivory.

Carter circled a bit to get the wind exactly right, and they moved in cautiously on the elephant's flank. I saw it not as bravado or derring-do, but efficiency and certainty. At ten yards they stopped, and it was obvious the elephant had heard or sensed something. He had been feeding, but now he was dead still. He might have turned to face them, or he might have run. He did neither, because Hall shot him precisely at the base of his ear hole, and the elephant collapsed without hearing the shot.

I will be doing more elephant hunting with Ivan Carter because I now realize I have so much more to learn. **E**