

*So, here it is Big Buck Nation! Lincoln Garton's southern Saskatchewan, freak-daddy buck! This whitetail truly defines what the term "beast" should conjure up in a deer hunter's mind. At over a mind-boggling 253 inches, Lincoln's deer ranks very high in the top whitetails of all time. Enjoy the story as this young hunter shares his incredible experience with us....*

Everyone seems to have their "Thing". Mine has always been hunting. So, there is no doubt that hunting season is my favourite time of year. Preparations for the Fall always start early. I like to get my trail cameras out in June. For 2021, I had eight cameras out and loved spending time checking each one. As of the beginning of October, I didn't have too many bucks worth getting very excited about, but I was keeping an eye on a nice, even 5x5 that showed up a few times on camera.

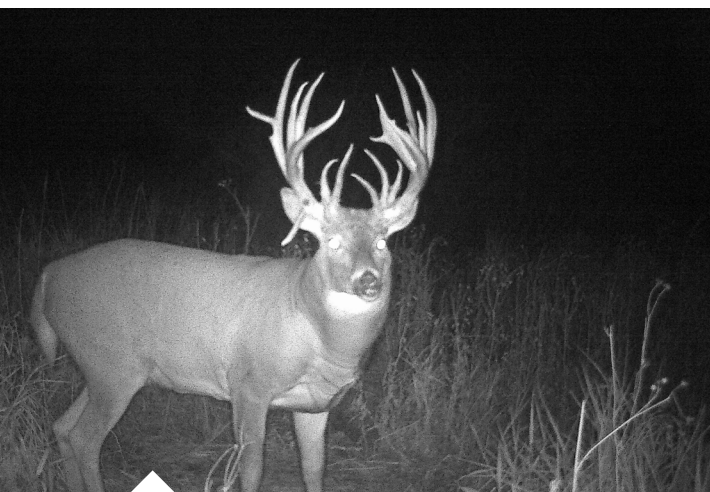
2021 was a particularly good year for me because I was fortunate enough to have been drawn for either-sex mule deer. Muzzleloader season for mulies started October 1st so my friends, Brantly Carson, Rylan and Bryden Erdelyan and I headed to mulie country. We had a great time there, but had no success. I spent every weekend in October chasing mule deer across the hills and deep valleys of southern Saskatchewan. I was so concentrated on my quest that checking my cameras at home had fallen to the wayside.

# “MY THING”

by Lincoln Garton



All mount pictures by Jody Ruskowski



*This is the image that started it all for Lincoln. We can only imagine what it must have been like to flip through images from a trail camera, and have a picture like this pop up!*

On November 4th I had a chance to finally visit my cameras again. One spot I had set was a location that I didn't have particularly high hopes for. I felt it was in a good area, but I hadn't had anything impressive on that camera for five years. Things changed when I checked the memory card this time though! I couldn't believe what I was looking at! My hands were shaking so hard that it was difficult to focus on the rest of the photos. A non-typical monster whitetail was in on October 22nd during the night, then again on October 26th during the day. I was instantly kicking myself, thinking that I should have been at home hunting whitetails through the muzzleloader season instead of chasing mulies. But now that season was already over, and I could only hope that this beast was still around in rifle season.

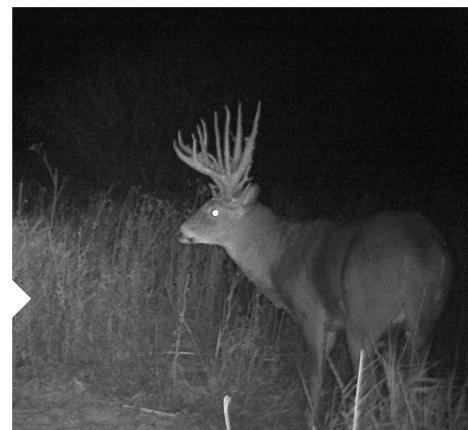
Once I knew what I had at home for a whitetail, I figured I better get back to mule deer country one last time. On November 6th I managed to get a beautiful buck that had a gross score of 178 7/8 inches. I couldn't have been happier because I got a great trophy animal while enjoying the company of my good friends while doing it!

Then it was time to buckle down for the incredible whitetail. The last picture I had of it was



*It is one thing to have nighttime pictures of a buck such as this one, but when a daylight image is captured, it brings the possibilities of success more in to focus.*

*The question in Lincoln's mind was, 'Would this buck stay around during the mid-November rifle season?'*



a night picture on November 8th. With November 15th being the first day of rifle season I was worried that the buck could be anywhere after a week, and I may not see him again. I knew that even having a small possibility of crossing paths with him was worth it, so I decided to book the whole first week of the season off from work.

Obviously, I focused solely on the non-typical, hunting the area and its surroundings hard all day. Four days passed and I was unable to see any sign of my dream buck.

On November 19th, after an unsuccessful morning hunt, I went home to regroup and make a gameplan for that afternoon. I picked up a buddy of mine before going back to that same area I had been searching. Time was running out once again as daylight started to fade. I decided we should make a scouting loop around the area I had my camera set up in. As I went by, two deer in the stubble field caught my eye. One





*After what had to be some of the most anxious moments a deer hunter could possibly have, the giant non-typical was on the ground. The fairy tale had come true....*

was obviously a doe, but I needed a better look at the other deer. I grabbed my binoculars and as soon as I focused, I knew it was the buck I had been looking for. I had to make a move....

Adrenaline was through the roof as I started sneaking along the ditch of the lease road into the field. It was really a bad spot for me because I couldn't stalk the deer like I wanted. My camera had been set right in the middle of a full section of cropland, and the only slough with trees and brush on the entire 640 acres was where I had my set up. This road and ditch were the only cover leading to my camera area surrounded by wide-open country.

I didn't take my eyes off of the giant buck as I

continued to sneak along the shallow ditch. As I crept my way into the field, I knew I was getting close to being in range. I took out my rangefinder....The buck was 300 yards away. I decided, under the circumstances, I better take my shot.

As soon as I got my Buck Fever under control, I took a deep breath before looking through my scope. I could see a clear shot right behind the front shoulder. Feeling confident, I settled in and squeezed the trigger. I immediately saw the buck hunch up. He seemed to have been hit well. Even so, he did take off running with the doe, back towards the slough. I was excited to go see if I had been successful right away, but after calming down a bit, I decided to give the deer a few minutes before I went in after him.

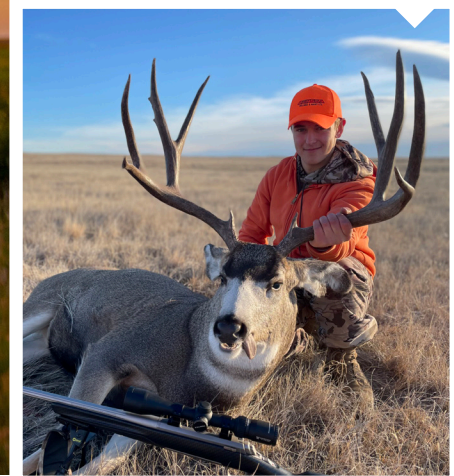
*Breathtaking from any angle, the buck is an outlier indeed. The scoring of this whitetail took more than one measurer to conclude a total tally. With over 101 inches of non-typical points (over 50 per side!) the score adds up fast, even with a base 4x4 frame of only 151 inches. Inside spread is narrow at 12 2/8, but that just contributes to the mystique and character of this deer. On a side-note, the buck had busted off close to 4 inches from one brow tine which would've jumped the total to nearly 258 inches, and really bumped the net score to almost 250 inches!*





*Lincoln will be able to admire this incredible animal for many more years to come, reliving the moment he was able to steady the crosshairs on the “beast”.*

*Lincoln was able to down this great mulie before settling in to chase his dream whitetail.*



When I did get to the spot where the deer had been standing when I shot, I instantly found a blood trail which I began to follow. The trail went on for nearly 200 yards, but before I could get too nervous, I spotted antlers sticking out of some cattails. My excitement was through the roof, and I had to hold myself back from screaming. I knew this was the buck of a lifetime! As I looked at the whitetail's magnificent rack up close, I was still in shock at what I had my hands on. I knew this was something very special.

I called up Brantly. I told him I needed him to come and take some pictures. I said I wasn't sure what I had, but I knew it was massive! When he arrived at the field he was surprised, as I had kept the fact that I had this monster on camera a secret since the day I had that first photo. By the time we snapped a few pictures it was getting pretty dark, so we loaded my trophy up then headed to town.

Once I got my buck hung up in my garage, I started to call my friends and family to come take a

look. Because I knew I had such a rare specimen, I called up a good family friend of mine, Myles Robblee, and asked him to cape my deer out. I wanted everything to be done right as I knew this was one to be mounted and I trusted him to do a good job. It was a great night of celebrating!

The next day I woke up, still in disbelief that the dreams I had as a little kid had come true! In the following days I talked to an official Boone and Crockett scorer that we know personally, and he decided to come with two more scorers. The buck ended up measuring a mind-blowing 253 inches, with a net score of 244 1/8. It is still hard to imagine a whitetail scoring that high.

This amazing animal truly is the trophy of a lifetime. I would like to thank Orion Taxidermy for the awesome mount that will solidify this memory forever.

So many people have told me that I will never top this buck. That may very well be true, but that will not stop me from trying as I continue to enjoy my favorite time of the year in upcoming seasons!