

Hunting with Big Power and Teaching Kids: Interview with Ben Hubbard of Powell, WY

The following is an interview between Big Horn Armory and Ben Hubbard of Powell, WY regarding a hunting experience with his children using a BHA Model 89.

Big Horn Armory (BHA): What's the story behind the deer you took?

Ben Hubbard: I hunt for meat and the experiences, especially to see what bullets do. Now having kids who are old enough to go along or participate, I love to share those experiences with them. Midafternoon, we went to a local farm and waited along a fence line for the deer to arrive. After passing on a couple of smaller does, an adult whitetail showed up. She fed toward us, closing to about 80 yards. I was using a hand-cast 440-grain flat nose gas check bullet and a max load of H110 for about 1830 fps through a Bowers Vers50 suppressor on my [Model 89](#). Neither of the adults with us nor my two boys were wearing ear protection; nobody was directly next to me. All present were amazed at how quiet the shot was and how loud the bullet impact was. The other deer in the field were alarmed but didn't completely leave the field. The doe was double lung hit and dropped on the spot. I usually see a deer hit this way run between 10 and 50 yards or so; not with the big flat-nose bullets. Those hit like the Hammer of Thor, but don't cause much, if any, meat damage, as they are slower than the velocities necessary to bloodshot meat.

BHA: Why'd you pick the M89?

Ben: I read all of the internet reviews about it for a few years. I already have a Marlin Guide Gun, but I am a 50BMG shooter, so I'm pre-disposed to always wanting more power. I love lever guns. I love nice guns. The 89 seemed to cover both. As Col. Whelen said, "Only accurate guns are interesting." Turns out the 89 is interesting. Maybe not by benchrest standards, but mine can put three rounds in less than 2" at 100 yards through a 2.75x scout scope whenever I shoot.

BHA: How does the M89 compare to other big bores you have shot?

Ben: My previous big bore was a Marlin 1895 Guide Gun. No porting. Threaded for a silencer. 2.75x scout scope and XS backup sights. It is murder, with anything from Trapdoor loads and 450s or with 350 cast flat noses at 2200. The 500 is more. It audibly hits harder at any distance. It penetrates water jugs deeper and it blows up water jugs more. The 500 is not a 45/70. Nothing else is. But the 500 is more.

BHA: How close were you?

Ben: WT #1 (2016 season) was five feet. She was spine hit with a smaller caliber and down, unable to move, but still alive. I shot her in the chest broadside, double lung hit with the M89. Upon field dressing, I was astounded at the damage to the lungs from such a slow bullet. The lungs were in worse shape, including red, bruised lung tissue than if she had been hit with a .28 or .30 bullet between 2600 and 2800 fps. But there was no meat bruising like faster bullets leave. The deer mentioned earlier was WT #2. She was about 80 yards. Almost identical bullet impact through both lungs, broadside. Lots of lung bruising, no meat damage, even around the bullet hole. No tracking. Missed the autonomic plexus, but she dropped on the spot anyway. There is something to Veral Smith's displacement velocity.

BHA: Did you have to track the deer after your shot?

Ben: Ha. Nope.

BHA: Why is it important that your kids were with you and learn how to hunt?

Ben: I'm not an antler hunter. I hunt for meat and the experience. Being out there doing it is what matters to me. I got to hunt with my grandfather when I first started hunting and with my family, including my mom, while I was growing up. I have many great memories of those adventures and experiences; even the hard lessons. I want my kids to get those opportunities. I want them to have fun, but also to learn. I know I learned the value of life through hunting and killing/eating what I hunted. I have made bad shots; they stick in my mind as to what not to do at any cost. Becoming an ethical hunter opened my mind to being an ethical person, to value all life. I want to teach those values to my kids and I hope experiencing these things with them will help teach them the same way I learned.