

Bowsite.com Presents

# How to Video Your Hunt



**BOWSITE.COM**



By Pat Lefemine

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## Introduction

The single most recurring question we receive at Bowsite.com is about video taping your bow hunt. I don't know why that is. Maybe people relate to my video taping skills more than my bowhunting abilities. Whatever the reason, there is a lot of interest in this area and with the explosive growth of email, websites and home-created DVD's, this interest will only grow over time.

Lots of sites put a quick and shallow article together on how to video your hunt. But we wanted to do something special for our visitors by creating an in-depth online guide, which covers everything from equipment, to tricks and techniques.

We hope you enjoy our updated and comprehensive series on videotaping your hunt!

### Do you want to hunt? Or Video?

The first question I ask any budding bowhunting videographer is: Do you really want to do this? Videoing your hunts adds a tremendous bonus to your hunting experience but it's not without a price.



*Still photo taken from a single video frame of my Sony VX2100 camera. This deer had one antler snapped off during a late winter Kansas Bowhunt.*

The benefits to videoing your hunts are tremendous, like the ability to share your hunts with family and friends. You will be able to relive the excitement of that big buck heading toward your stand –

even if you never get a shot – you bring home the trophy footage. And a side benefit of being able to see the exact location of your shot placement – on most cameras; in slow motion to boot! This greatly aids in your recovery decisions.

But, it is not without its downside. You will have to cough up some cash to get started. You also have to decide for yourself – IS IT REALLY WORTH IT??

The first thing you must understand, and answer honestly before you ever spend a dime is; are you prepared to blow a shot at a deer in order to video it? If your answer is no, then read no further and spend your money on a new Bowtech or Ross Compound Bow. But if you are serious about capturing memories to last a lifetime, then this comprehensive feature is for you – so Read On!

### Goals for your footage?

The second question I ask is: what do you want to do with your footage? If your objective is to do nothing more than play your shot back to your buddies at hunting camp, then you probably want a low-end camera. However, if you may potentially create a marketable DVD like [Beyond Adrenaline](#), or use the footage on a website, or TV program sometime down the road? Then your choices will change dramatically.



*Beyond Adrenaline, Our First DVD has sold over 6000 copies the first year, and is now in its' 5th printing*

Let's use myself as an example. Several years ago I never thought I would do anything with my footage other than stream videos from Bowsite.com. So I purchased a cheap, 1-chip camera, and a makeshift video-arm that did nothing more than clamp the camera to the tree. During my first hunt in Kansas, I witnessed (and captured) a spectacular scene on tape. Due to the limitations on the camera, it was jerky, grainy and far away. I will always regret not having a quality camera and video arm for that scene since it was probably the one and only time I will ever see anything like it in my lifetime. I'm not rich. Money is important, but the footage will never happen again. Imagine being the person who videos the next world record whitetail on a \$400 camera? If you

did what I did (buy low, then buy a better camera later) you throw the money away on the first camera. Think about that before you buy inexpensive gear.

### **How much do you want to spend?**

Unlike your hunting setup, camera gear can range from \$500 for a camera and arm, to \$25,000 or more. The amount you spend is directly relational to your objectives for the footage. If you are creating a documentary for IMAX, you would use different gear than if you were creating a DVD to send to your cousin in Pittsburgh.

Generally speaking, I always suggest cameras referred to as “Prosumer” camcorders. They are in-between the cheap cameras that you get at Wal-Mart and the big professional cameras that require a separate insurance policy. The following Gear list is approximate but relatively accurate:

- **Prosumer Video Camera - \$1500-2500**
- **Camera Arm - \$300-500**
- **Shotgun Microphone - \$200**
- **Remote Control device - \$100**



## Essential Gear for Videoing



*Essential Gear – Top: Sony VX2100 with attached Sennheiser Shotgun Mic and LANC remote control device.  
Bottom: HunterCam Cradle HD video arm.*

## The Camera

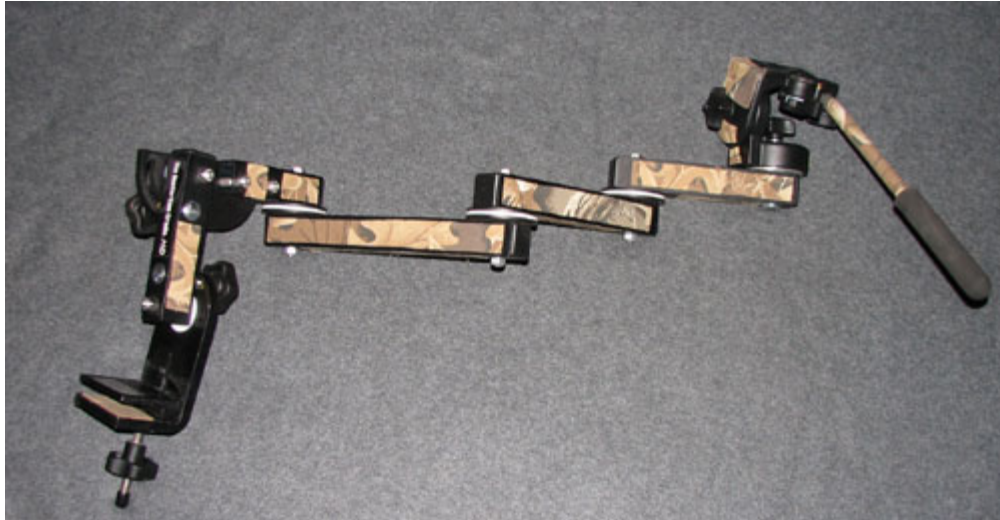


*Cameras: Top: Sony VX2100, Canon GL1, JVC cheap 1-chip.*

My general advice to people starting out is simple: get a new, 3-CCD camera (explained later) that is nearing the end of its life cycle. For instance, the Canon GL2 is still for sale; however it is due for a major upgrade. So you can find a new GL2 for about 1/3 what the pros paid for them 3 years ago. Since I am writing this article in 2006, and you may be reading it later than that – the same concept would apply only with a different model. A 3-chip camera will provide footage that is good enough for standard definition television. It is also well suited for a marketable DVD. Our first video, [Beyond Adrenaline](#) was shot entirely on a Canon GL1 & GL2, along with a Sony VX2100 Standard Definition Camera. They are relatively small, portable, and versatile. They have features that I find essential and not typically found on the cheaper \$400 cams. The essential features are:

- LANC Connection port – used for remote control devices
- Manual Focus – absolutely critical for preventing auto-focus Hell
- White Balance – the remarkable feature nobody but pros know about
- Optical Zoom – the only zoom setting you should use
- Remote Mic Ports – allows for use of a shotgun microphone

## Video Arm Bracket



*HunterCam Cradle HD Video Arm – My all-time favorite.*

For those of you who recall my first bracket, and perhaps went out and purchased that setup, I must apologize up front for leading you down a path to eternal frustration. There were only a few brackets around several years ago but they basically all sucked, and my inexpensive setup worked fine for stationary use. But technology, driven by consumer demand, has created some awesome new brackets for small and medium cameras like the ones I've recommended above. And those are the ones you should use now.

I have tried lots of brackets in the last few years. However one bracket has remained my all time favorite and it's basically all that I use to this day. I swear by this bracket and have yet to find a better one. It is called the **HunterCam Cradle** available at [huntercamcradle.com](http://huntercamcradle.com).

The thing I like about this arm is that I can mount a fluid head (for smooth motion) and I can attach the bracket several different ways to the stand. It also has a tree-mounting system, which extends the arm further if you need it, and does not require any mounting to the treestand. It is not cheap, but it is as important to your setup as the camera itself.

## Tripod



This is one piece of equipment where you can probably save some money. While I use a very expensive, and professional video tripod, you can get away with a less expensive tripod if you wish. Again, it depends on your objectives. If you do all of your hunting from the ground, then you will probably want a good quality tripod. If you are only going to use the tripod to film stationary shots like hero footage or edits, then you can go cheap. My basic rule applies – buy the best you can afford.

For my setup I use a Bogen/Manfrotto Carbon Fiber tripod with a Bogen Fluid Head. Incidentally, you can use the same Fluid head for both your tripod and your Video arm to save money. Just don't forget to bring the fluid head when you grab your tripod to go turkey hunting (I know from experience ☺).

## Remote Control Device



If there is one thing I learned after hundreds of videotaped hunts, it's to learn how to use a remote control device, also called a LANC remote.

The LANC remote clips onto your tripod arm, pant leg, Summit SOP harness, etc. and connects to the LANC port on your camera with a 3-4' black wire. With this device you can do the following functions on your "Prosumer" camera:

- Turn On / Turn Off*
- Pause / Record*
- Zoom in and Zoom out*
- Take a Digital Photo*
- Operate your Manual Focus\**
- Operate your Iris / Gain settings\**



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\*Limited cameras and remotes have this capability

The reason the remote is so vital is because you significantly reduce movement in the presence of game. I never have to touch my camera for any reason other than to frame the shot. So as that big buck approaches, I simply touch buttons that are strategically placed close to my resting hand. It is a Godsend for anyone who has ever had to fumble with those little tiny buttons when that trophy buck is approaching.

## Shotgun Mic



Even the best footage sucks without quality audio. And even the best cameras on the market include Mics, which were never designed for hunting or outdoor use. A shotgun microphone targets the sound in the direction it is pointing. So mine is always mounted on the camera facing the action. It magnifies the downrange sound and all but eliminates sounds from behind, or to the sides of the mic. The shot impact is loud and dramatic, and you will hear every grunt, gobble or footstep you capturing on film.

Shotgun Mics are not huge money. I use a Sennheiser MKE300, which retails around \$170.



## PC with Editing Software



I know it's not used in the field but it's important nonetheless. After you've captured that awesome shot on film, filmed some edits, and now wish to create your final work – it's time for editing and burning. The good news is that for almost all-standard definition video, the PC you are reading this feature on is very likely capable of editing and producing the final media. We will save the details for a later part of this feature, but for now all you need is a PC, a DVD burner which may very well be part of your PC, and editing software. I have listed what I consider a minimum PC configuration:

*PC with a Pentium Processor of at least 1.5 GHZ.  
500mb of RAM (memory)  
80GB Hard Drive*



## The Field Setup

### Treestand Setups

When setting up for a treestand shot (video, not bow) there are a number of things to keep in mind:

- Open terrain is best. It gives you time to see them coming and get ready. Extremely thick terrain is very difficult to shoot video in.
- Closer shots are better, it allows you to set the wide angle on your camera and that will give you more time to shoot.
- Frame the scene, picking out landmarks for shots. Understand where the edges of your shot are. For example see this photo:
- Right handed shooters should always have the camera off their right leg.
- The Bracket arm should be as close to your hand as possible. Try not to reach for the arm, it should be right there.
- Plan for a seated shot, or a standing shot. I position the camera much differently based on each possible scenario.
- If you are fortunate enough to be able to use a remote device, clip it to your right thigh (left thigh for left handed shooters).

### Groundblind Setups

Groundblind setups are much easier to video during most scenarios. For a turkey hunt you will likely know where the birds will come from, or you can help direct the action with decoys. This gives you time to move the tripod or camera inside the blind just remember to practice that move quietly.

For groundblind setups I always use a small tripod that can be placed underneath me. If your blind has low video windows you are golden, otherwise don't be afraid to cut flaps. I prefer to make my bowshot, and video from the same hole. This gives a more dramatic effect of following the arrow. However, on some blinds this is not possible.

### Stalking Setups

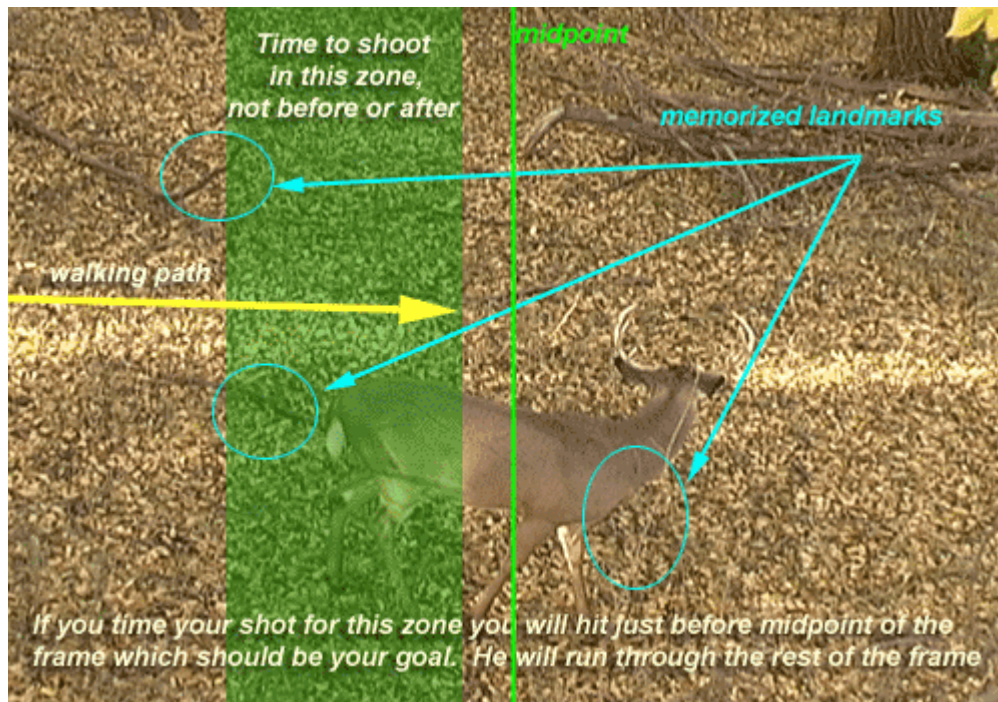
While there are some options available for bow-mounted cams, helmet cams, etc. I have never used them and the footage I've seen from them have been cheesy at best – in my opinion. So we need to assume that you will be attempting to video yourself using a tripod, or more than likely, using a guide or a cameraman.

## How to shoot and film simultaneously

Before you ever see your first animal you need to identify a few critical components of the shot composition.

- **Shot Timing**
- **How close to zoom**
- **Distance to game trail, waterhole, bait, etc.**
- **Which direction the animal will approach from**
- **Whether you wish to capture the approaching footage or just the shot**
- **Exit Routes**

**Shot Timing** – I always plan for a quartering away bowshot on video. I prefer to have the animal walk past me before I shoot. In Lesson 3 you learned how to predict the shot scene and ways to set up your camera for that. In this lesson we need to focus on the actual scene and ways to capture properly framed footage. On tight shots, this is not always possible. In most cases, you need to identify far left and far right landmarks within the composed frame – then choose a mid-point. From there, you will time your shot so the animal is just about approaching the midpoint of your frame when you smoke him.



**Zooming** – There is a direct, inverse relationship between quality of shot and ability to capture the shot. A tightly zoomed animal is much more compelling

footage. However, the breathing room for making the actual bowshot will decrease the closer you zoom in. This is covered in depth below in framing the shot.

**Distance to Game Trail and Other Clues** – One of the most important aspects of your video is to visualize your video shot, and bowshot scenario before anything shows up. I do this every time I am in a new area by talking with the outfitter, other hunters, or simply by identifying sign like game trails, rubs and scrapes. On some hunts this is simple, like if you are hunting over bait, or hunting a waterhole. If you know exactly where the animal will be, put your camera on MANUAL FOCUS and focus on an object, like a stick or bush, next to the spot the animal will be standing.

**Approaching Direction** – if you know the animal approaches from the west, you may want to pick your stand location to video the approach. I try to put a tree between my camera and the approaching animal. This cuts down on its ability to detect necessary movements. This is critical if you are not experienced or you do not have a remote unit. Deciding to capture the approaching footage is up to you. Capturing the bowshot is certainly the objective, but if you want a compelling footage (which tells a story) you will need to get more than the kill.

**Exit Routes** – Identifying exit routes ahead of time is helpful. After you've shot, try to film the animal running off. Film his last moments if possible. A lot of hunting videos pan back to the shooter to catch the reaction. This is great if you have a dedicated cameraman, but most people won't so just film the drop scene if you can get it. This can all be edited out later if you choose and you can even edit in a reaction shot later if you wish to.

## When you see the animal approaching

As the animal approaches, I go through the following sequence:

1. Camera On (use remote if you have one)
2. RECORD
3. Confirm RECORD on viewfinder
4. Fine Tune Zoom Setup (using a remote)  
(Focus – optional and advanced)
5. Identify movement opportunities (did the animal walk behind something)
6. Smooth motion panning
7. Moving the frame to the likely shot area and leaving it there
8. Reaching for my bow
9. Final fine tune of camera
10. Drawing and shooting animal

### 11. Moving camera onto animal to capture fleeing or final moments

The key to successful filming is understanding what you can get away with, and when, then timing the sequence of events. This is not easy. It will come with experience and you will mess up lots of opportunities before you get comfortable with it.

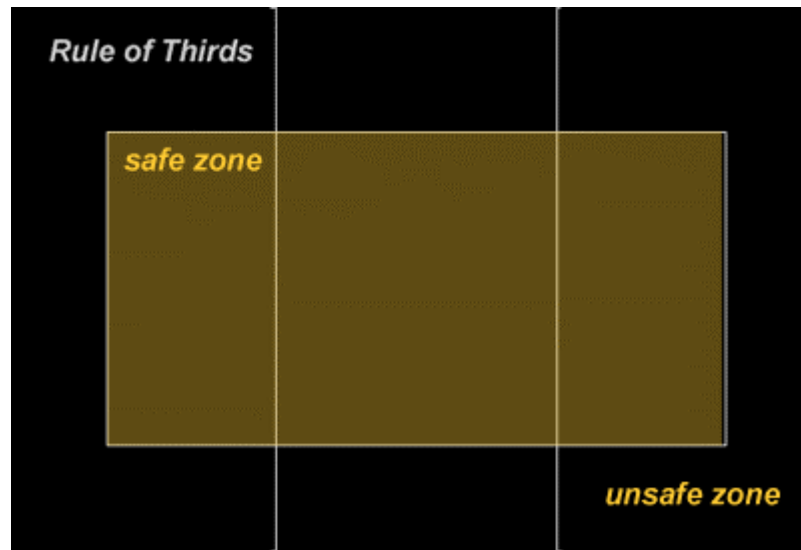
**Practice on Does.** Unless you are in a hot spot during the peak of the rut, you might try practicing the sequence on does or dink bucks you have no intention of shooting. This includes actually filming the sequence readying your bow, and drawing on the animal. When you are ready to shoot, make an urp sound. That will be captured by your camera's mic and allows you to review your timing and framing later. If the deer is perfectly framed and zoomed, and you hear an URP when she is just approaching midpoint - you are ready to shoot for real. This allows you to practice your timing – which is critical. The goal is to get to the point where you can tell yourself “shoot” when the deer is at midpoint, all the while keeping 100% focused on making a clean, deadly shot.

*Note: None of the footage is useable if you wound the animal. I consider it irresponsible to be so focused on videoing that you shoot poorly because of the distraction. A clean kill is always the top priority – everything else is secondary.*

#### How to frame the shot

*balancing the highest probability of capture with the best quality of footage*

**Safe Zone and Rule of Thirds** - One of the most basic principles in all photography (including print and video) is the rule of thirds. A subject within a photograph is not nearly as compelling when it is dead center. For hunting video I use a combination of thirds and a safe zone to capture my shot. See the diagram below.



### Preparing for the shot

Before you ever see your first animal you need to identify a few critical components of the shot composition.

- Angle of the video shot
- How close to zoom
- Distance to game trail, waterhole, bait, etc.
- Which direction the animal will approach from
- Whether you wish to capture the approaching footage or just the shot
- Exit Routes

**Angle of the Video Shot** – I always plan for a quartering away bowshot on video. I prefer to have the animal walk past me before I am at full draw and pan the camera with him. On tight shots, this is not always possible. In most cases, you need to identify far left and far right landmarks within the composed frame – then choose a mid-point. From there, you will time your shot so the animal is just about approaching the midpoint of your frame when you smoke him.

**Zooming** – There is a direct, inverse relationship between quality of shot and ability to capture the shot. A tightly zoomed animal is much more compelling footage. However, the breathing room for making the actual bowshot will decrease the closer you zoom in. This will be covered in depth during the section on framing the shot.





I prefer the animal to be 20-25% of the frame. Anything higher than that is very risky for all but bait, or waterhole shots and probably unnecessary. Anything less than that and the footage suffers because the animal appears small, lacks detail, and gets lost in the frame.

Here is a simple table to illustrate recommended compositions:

Shot Scene	Animal in % of Frame	Scene
Passing Shots	10-15%	
Baited & Waterhole Setups	25%	
Stalking Shots	20%	

## Ways to optimize your chances

Where legal, and appropriate, these scenarios greatly increase your ability to film your bowhunts.

**Baiting** – personal ethical considerations aside, there is no better way to film a game animal being shot than over bait. Unlike any other method including waterholes, you can predict the action and get everything set up ahead of time to capture your shot. A bait pile allows you to set your focus, zoom and position of your camera prior to the action. You know exactly where the actual shot will be and you can prepare for it. The downside to a baiting scene – in my opinion – is the bait pile itself. Many feel that shooting an animal with its head down feeding in one spot lacks a truly wild feel for the footage. Still others may feel that the footage is a turn-off because they are philosophically opposed to baiting. All of these factors need to be weighed against the objectives

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for the footage. For example, if I am filming something for TV or for a DVD, I will not include a bait pile in the footage. If I am filming for a Bowsite.com Interactive blood trail during a cull hunt, I don't give it a second thought.

**Waterholes** – Next to baiting, a waterhole is the 2<sup>nd</sup> best scenario for videoing. It is also less controversial than baiting so it makes a terrific video setup. While you may not be able to pinpoint the action like you can on a bait pile, the area where the action will be is still pre-determined. This allows you to get close enough with your setup to capture the shot. The animal should also give you enough time to get everything framed correctly before you shoot.

**Ground blinds** – I like filming from ground blinds better than tree stands - simply because you can get away with a lot more movement in a ground blind than you could in a tree stand. It also allows you to make dramatic movements, like moving your entire tripod/camera behind the protection of the inside of the blind. You can't make dramatic movements like that from a tree stand without significant risk of getting busted.

**Decoys** – I have had poor results with deer decoys but in areas where they work well, they can assist with influencing where the action will occur. It is not nearly as effective as baiting and waterholes, but it does help. If you are hunting turkey from a blind, they are a big help.



## Hero Shot and optional Post Shot Edits

In a perfect world, the scenario goes like this: With a cameraman posed slightly above and over the shoulder of the shooter. The shooter is out of focus and the deer (or target animal) is in sharp focus. Just before the shot, the cameraman zooms in to a 50% frame size deer and the impact is clearly seen. The deer runs off and then the cameraman zooms out and films the reaction of the shooter.

But for most of us, this is not practical. I very rarely hunt with a cameraman so the shot I get on tape are all self-filmed. If you've ever seen a homemade video of a deer being shot, chances are you saw the deer approaching – sometimes for a painfully long time and then you see an arrow going through it. If you are lucky, there's a hero shot at the end with the shooter holding the deer up and saying a few words about his trophy. But on a well-done video, you see the hunter spot the deer, then you see the deer approach, the hunter draws, the video cuts back to the deer and the arrow impact is filmed. The last frame is of the hunter before he climbs down and collects his trophy.



*This is the money shot, but by itself it's not enough*

Breaking up the deer approach and shot with human interaction makes the video more compelling. It also gets the viewer ready for the impending shot. If you've ever seen a video of a deer moving closer and then you see the hunter draw, you simply can't turn away. You are captured and will remain glued to the set until the animal busts out. Getting that shot is very simple but you need to do a bit of re-enactment in order for it to work. Another method I have used is a 2-camera setup. I have a camera on the shooter and a camera on the animal. While I've not tried that from a stand, I have done it several times from a blind.



*On shoots including blinds, I will often use a 2<sup>nd</sup> camera to capture the shooter too!*

Here's how to do a basic pre-shot, drawing, and post shot sequence: Immediately after the actual kill shot. Swing your video arm as far away from you as you can get it. On most video cameras

you can flip the viewfinder 180 degrees so it is facing the same way as the lens. This allows you to see, and frame yourself correctly. Now, recreate the exact sequence that you just performed right up to you releasing an arrow. If the deer approached from the east, look to the east, then reach for your bow, follow the (memory of the deer) with your eyes, and then draw back and hold it there. This entire sequence should take about 1-2 minutes. It will then be cut into the deer footage during editing. The resulting footage looks like this:

1. (Hunter) sees something approaching
2. (Deer) moving in toward the stand
3. (Hunter) watches intently
4. (Deer) getting closer
5. (Hunter) reaches for bow
6. (Deer) getting closer
7. (Hunter) tracking deer with bow (moving bow with deer)
8. (Deer) in range
9. (Hunter) draws his bow
10. (Deer) in range
11. (Hunter) at full draw
12. (Deer) arrow is shot, passes through deer, deer runs away
13. (Hunter) watches deer in the direction it ran (smile, wink, happy dance optional)



*This draw was recreated 5 minutes after the deer was shot.*

I can't stress enough how important it is to capture this footage immediately after the kill. Besides, you probably have 15-60 minute wait on your hands anyway so what better way to kill it then filming edits. By doing it immediately after the kill, everything is accurate like lighting, weather conditions, setting, equipment, etc. Trying to recreate this sequence later is difficult and almost always perceptible.

*A word about re-enactment: Some people find this tacky. I don't. I feel as long as it was done relatively quick after the shot it's perfectly acceptable. Again, without a cameraman,*



*or a difficult two-camera setup, you really have no choice other than to omit it altogether – which I do not recommend.*

Take a look at both of these clips that illustrate the difference between interesting footage and boring footage. We had a blooper on the draw but left it in for its comic value...

[Raw Deer Clip](#)

[Edited Hunt Sequence](#)

## List of Edits

The above section discusses shooting edits that complete the kill shot. But edits go much further than just that sequence. If you want to produce a DVD that shows just one kill after another, then you are complete after following the above steps. But most people want to see more of the hunt. That includes the scenery, the treestand setup, getting to and from the stand, scouting, etc. These can be re-enactments or the real thing. If they are the real thing, then you will be impacting your hunt by carrying around gear while you still have a tag in your pocket. What I recommend is to film some of these edits before, during, and after the hunt. Here's my recommendation for edits:

- Sunrise and Sunsets (at least 6)
- Scenery shots on tripod (count 15 seconds for each) shoot a minimum of 10 scenery shots
- Deer Scenes – Wide Angle (as many as you can get)
- Deer Scenes – Zoomed close (as many as you can get)
- Walking to and from the stand
- Climbing the treestand (downward angle, upward angle, from some distance – I like 50 yard shot with a 25% frame)
- Putting on safety harness
- Checking the wind (close up on feather, powder bottle, dust, etc)
- Pulling up bow (downward angle)
- Sitting down and settling in
- Shot Sequence Above
- Climbing down from stand
- Finding arrow (you in frame)
- Finding blood (you in frame)
- Close-up of blood
- Close-up of blood with your fingers picking up leave, etc.
- You Looking on ground for blood
- Another Close-up of blood
- Seeing the deer
- Pointing at the deer

- Putting your hands on the deer for the first time
- Looking proud

All of these edits help to portray the story around your kill. It will create a lasting memory of your hunt and a watchable video. If you watched our DVD, [Beyond Adrenaline](#) and click on our [Kansas Whitetail Hunt](#), you will see examples of everything above. The result is a fast-moving synopsis of our entire hunt in 15 minutes.

### Tacky Shots to avoid (opinion)

Reverse-Angle Recovery - In the '80's and early 90's the rage with hunting video producers was to put the video camera on a tripod in front of the deer with the hunter approaching behind and acting like he just found it for the first time. Now, I am not opposed to re-enactments whatsoever, but this shot is too transparent for it to be considered for your video. The public has pretty much soured on this shot and so have most respectable videographers. Avoid the temptation and either hand your buddy the video camera or put the camera on a tripod and film yourself walking up to the deer from behind you, not the deer.



Spine Shots – Spine shots happen. And you can continue filming them. But don't use the animal writhing on the ground for your edited video. Cut away to a clip of the shooter or a fade to the shooter climbing down the stand and recovering the now dead deer. If you must record the coup-de'-grace shot for your own memories that's fine, but leave it out of the edited version.

Poor Shots – Unless there is a compelling reason to display a poor shot, I would recommend omitting them completely from your final video. They happen to all of us on occasion but there's nothing worse than seeing a poor shot on video and no hero footage. You can only assume the worst and most of the time your assumption is correct – the animal was not recovered. In addition, do not film a poor shot and then try to pawn it off as a good shot. People aren't stupid, a hunter can immediately tell a good shot from bad. Be honest about it.

Excessive Acting – on re-enactments, my motto is simple: less is more. Some guys go over the top when they film their re-enactments. I don't care for this much. Now, if you have a cameraman and he films an honest moment that includes pure elation, I think that's great and completely acceptable. But on edits, it appears contrived. Keep the reaction to a minimum. A quick fist pump or a thumbs' up is about all I'd recommend even if you did cartwheels in real-life.

## Hero Clip

The “Hero Clip” is where you are touching your Deer for the first time. You've all seen them on TV and videos, some of them are more painful than watching Dancing with the Stars. My rule of thumb is simple. The time limit for the Static motion portion of the Hero Shot, that means the camera is on the tripod, should be 1 minute or less. Please read that again – 1 minute or less.

Unless you have the next World Record Whitetail, nobody really cares to listen to you drone on for 10 minutes about how great your shot was while holding your dead animal. When I see bowhunters experienced with videoing going on and on with their hero shot, I can only think of two possible reasons for them to subject us to this torture: First, they are trying to eat up time because they did not have enough wild footage to make up a show. But more than likely, it is because their EGO will not allow them to stop talking. Believe it or not, lots of guys who do hunting videos really do fancy themselves as hunting's version of Russell Crowe.

The Hero clip is nothing more than the final segment, which concludes your hunt journey. By keeping it short you maintain viewer interest and wrap up the hunt successfully at the same time.

This clip is vitally important. Without it, you never close the loop between shot and recovery. But some of the most successful hero clip's I've seen were also the shortest. Walking up to your deer and running your fingers across it is a great way to end your segment. You need not say a word.

I've made this mistake too. On my Grizzly hunt (the one where I got charged) I filmed one hero segment that went on for 4 minutes. I was not in a good state of mind at the time and failed to film a short narration. When the smoke cleared and my Grizz was skinned out, it hit me like a blunt in the back of the head. Luckily, instead of just talking about my shot, I narrated the sequence all over again and gave myself an out. I simply ran clips over the narration, which actually made a nice summation of a difficult hunt and saved me from ruining a fast-paced, compelling story.

**Here's a quick list of Edits to film for your HERO segment.**

- 1. Walking up to your dead critter*
- 2. Kneeling down behind it and pulling up the head*
- 3. Saying a sentence or two*
- 4. Cut in close to the deer's head from several angles*



## Common Mistakes

1. **Lack of a tripod** – treat your camera like it is covered with anthrax. Your goal should be to never touch the camera. It's unrealistic – I know – but it's a good rule to keep in mind. The exception to this is when you need to shoot handheld, like following a blood trail or filming your buddy over his shoulder on a stalk. In these cases always brace the camera to minimize movement. If your camera is like most it has a stabilizing feature – USE IT! The most compelling footage in the world is worthless if it gives your viewers a headache.
2. **Zoom Fever** – Zooming is only necessary for the original composition of the scene, or when the scene drastically changes location. Other than that, treat your zoom button like it is covered with maggots. Frame the scene so the animal is 25-33% then leave it be. Zooming distracts the viewer, and it is impossible to cut edits into a scene while it is zooming. Edits can only be spliced in from dead-stop motion. If it were up to me, I'd remove the zoom button from outdoor cameramen until they understand how and when to zoom.
3. **Auto Focus** – You've all seen clips of a great deer walking by trees and the camera focuses on the tree and the deer goes fuzzy. This is the autofocus adapting to the most prominent object in the frame. What's more, if the deer keeps moving, it's hard to get the camera to focus back on that deer after the tree moves out of the frame. This is where predicting the game trail comes in very handy. It allows you to pre-set your manual focus so when the animal appears, you can pan on him and the closer objects will appear fuzzy. This creates a professional scene with compelling footage. The viewer stays focused on the animal the entire time.
4. **Dawn and Dusk Shots** – If deer were actors they would all be unemployed. They rarely show up during prime video lighting – opting instead to appear when the video camera can barely expose them. I can't tell you how many huge bucks I've passed up in Kansas because they came in too early or late for video. This is where our very first question comes to play. Do you want to hunt? Or do you want to video? Sometimes you have to choose one or the other. If you consistently choose to shoot in low light, you will likely never get a decent video of your shot on film.
5. **Cheezy Shots and Sayings** – Maybe it's my Northern upbringing but one thing which bothers me on hunting videos is what I consider "gooberisms." It's like anything, the first couple of times you hear them they are cute, but after the same cliché is used 400 times it really starts to be silly. I don't know where some of these sayings originated from but in my opinion they need to be retired. Here's a short list of common gooberisms.
  - "Now, THAT'S WHAT I'M TALK'N BOUT"
  - Any laugh that sounds like "He He He"
  - "He's Down for the Count!"
  - "I *SMOKED* Him"
6. **Sucky Audio** – Lots of people spend a lot of time thinking about getting the video composition and shot just perfect – then completely forget about audio. Audio is not as important as the video – but it's a close second. The only reason I say audio is not as important is because you can always

dub over the video with narration or music if you need to. But it greatly diminishes your footage. The most important thing to remember about capturing audio while shooting hunting footage is to use a shotgun mic. I never shoot anything, be it a kill scene, approach footage, edits or hero footage without my shotgun mic. You don't have to have a \$2000 mic, most of my stuff is shot using a sennheiser shotgun mic which runs under \$200.

7. **Cursing** - I've been known to let out a few expletives in my day, but I am Mother Theresa on camera. Leave the expletives out of your footage. This way you can show it to kids without cringing, or feeling guilty and apologizing for your indiscretion. It also becomes absolutely necessary when shooting for TV, Internet, or DVDs.
8. **Redneck Habits** – Let's face it, some of us are not exactly Robin Leach when it comes to style, manners and grace. Many of us are downright rednecks and proud of it. But that doesn't mean those habits should be displayed 'in your face' on a video. I can't tell you how many video's I've seen where guys were chewing tobacco and spitting it on TV. Also, if you're following your bear guide to a bait site ask him to pull up his pants or avoid the angle altogether. Nobody wants to see anyone's coin slot on a Video.



## Editing – Displaying your video

So here we are back from the field. You have your deer footage, your kill shot, and your edits perfectly recorded with outstanding audio. Your tag is filled and you find yourself with days on end of free time. Well kiss that free time goodbye because we are about to begin what some people consider the fun part of the journey, while others consider it more painful than watching Oprah - and that is editing.

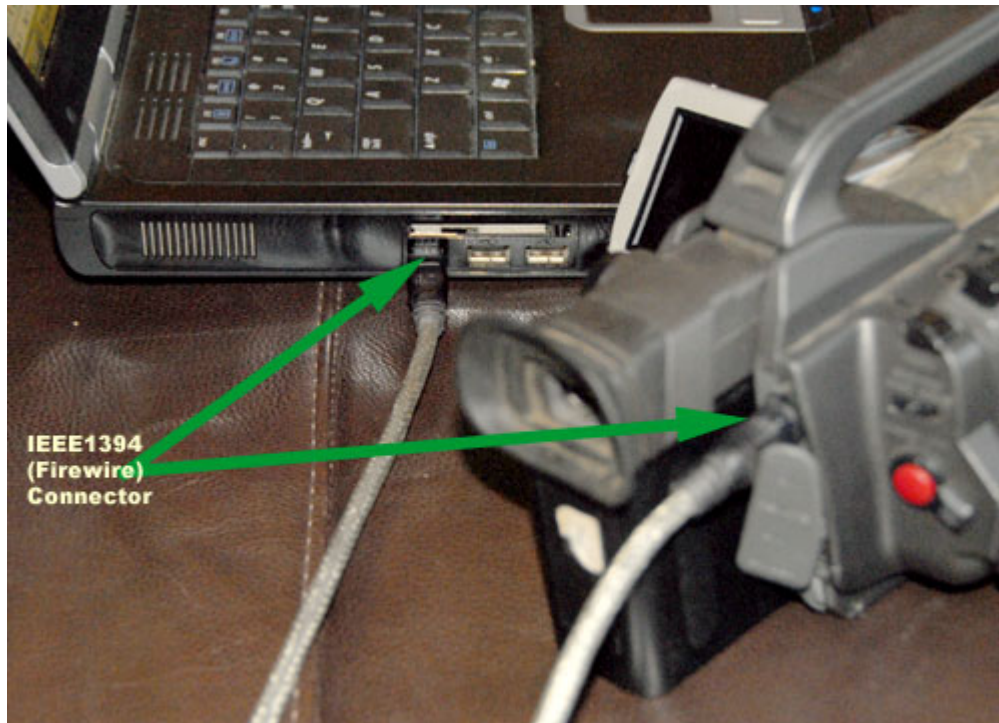
Now I must write this disclaimer up front. Unlike the previous lessons on how to shoot, focus, tips, hero shots, etc. – which are basically universal and generic. Editing is the opposite. There are dozens of editing programs available. Some of them are complex and designed for the guys who brought you Lord of the Rings. Others are geared more for “prosumers” while others come free with your PC and will automatically create a mix of music and video clips which are great if you are showing your 8pt kill shot on MTV. My point is, there is a huge range of editing programs available and the decision on which one you use is a function of how much you want to spend and what you are trying to accomplish.

Since there is such a disparity among editing programs (and DVD burners), it is impossible for me to step you through the programs itself. I could spend days writing instructions on a program that nobody has installed on their PC. So for the purposes of this final lesson, I will be discussing the more universal aspects of these programs at a high level. I will also be using my favorite programs only because that is what I have available to me at this time.

## Capturing – Getting your footage into the PC

When I first started out the most difficult thing for me to figure out was how to get the footage out of the camera and into the PC. Now, that was eight years ago before Windows XP, plug and play, and mature standards. Today, it is much easier but still confusing for many people. So let’s take a moment to discuss the basic process of getting your footage into the PC. Note, some cameras and software packages may be different so always read the manual or ask for technical assistance from your cam manufacturer or a local teenager.

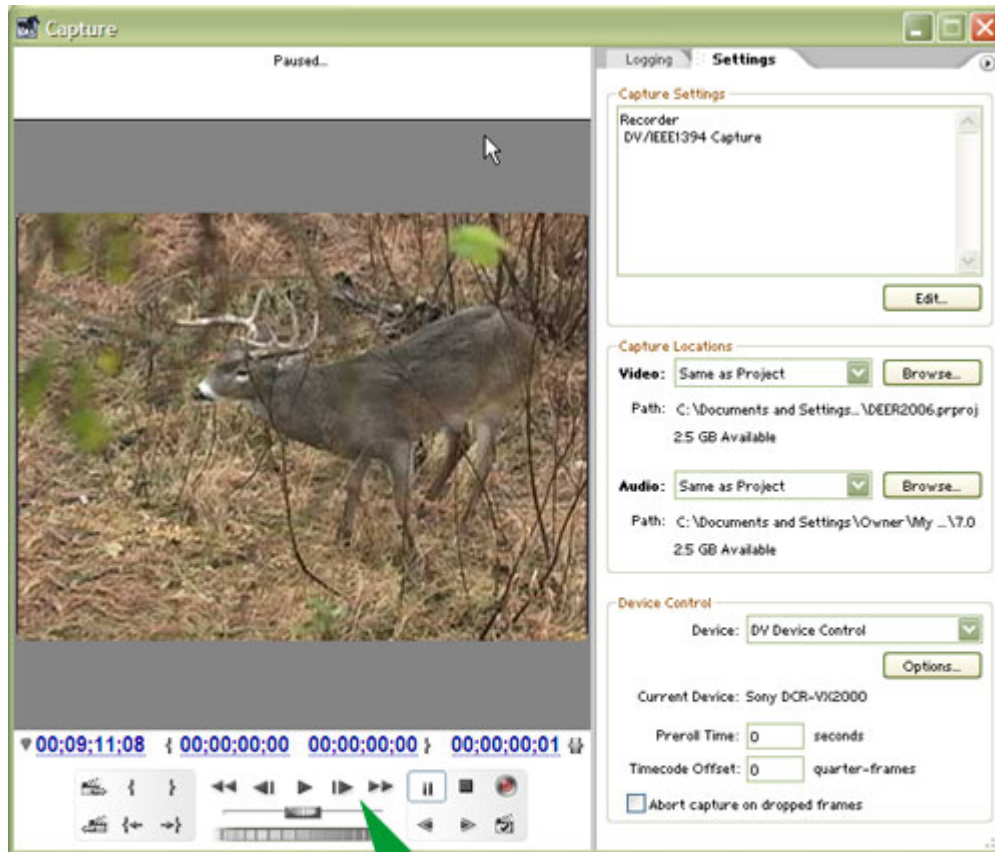
### Capture Components:



- Video Camera
- PC
- IEEE1394 Cable (also called Firewire)

### Sequence for Editing

1. Turn on your Video Camera and place in VCR (or VTR) mode.
2. Turn on your Editing Software
3. Plug in your Firewire Cable to the Camera and the PC (XP should display a prompt that your cam has been connected)
4. Start your capture software within the Editing program
5. Use the VCR-Like Controls to play, record, pause, FF and RW. This should control your video camera at the same time.
6. Get to the spot on the tape you wish to capture, then hit Record (Play then record on some packages).



**Capture Window  
on ADOBE Premiere Pro**

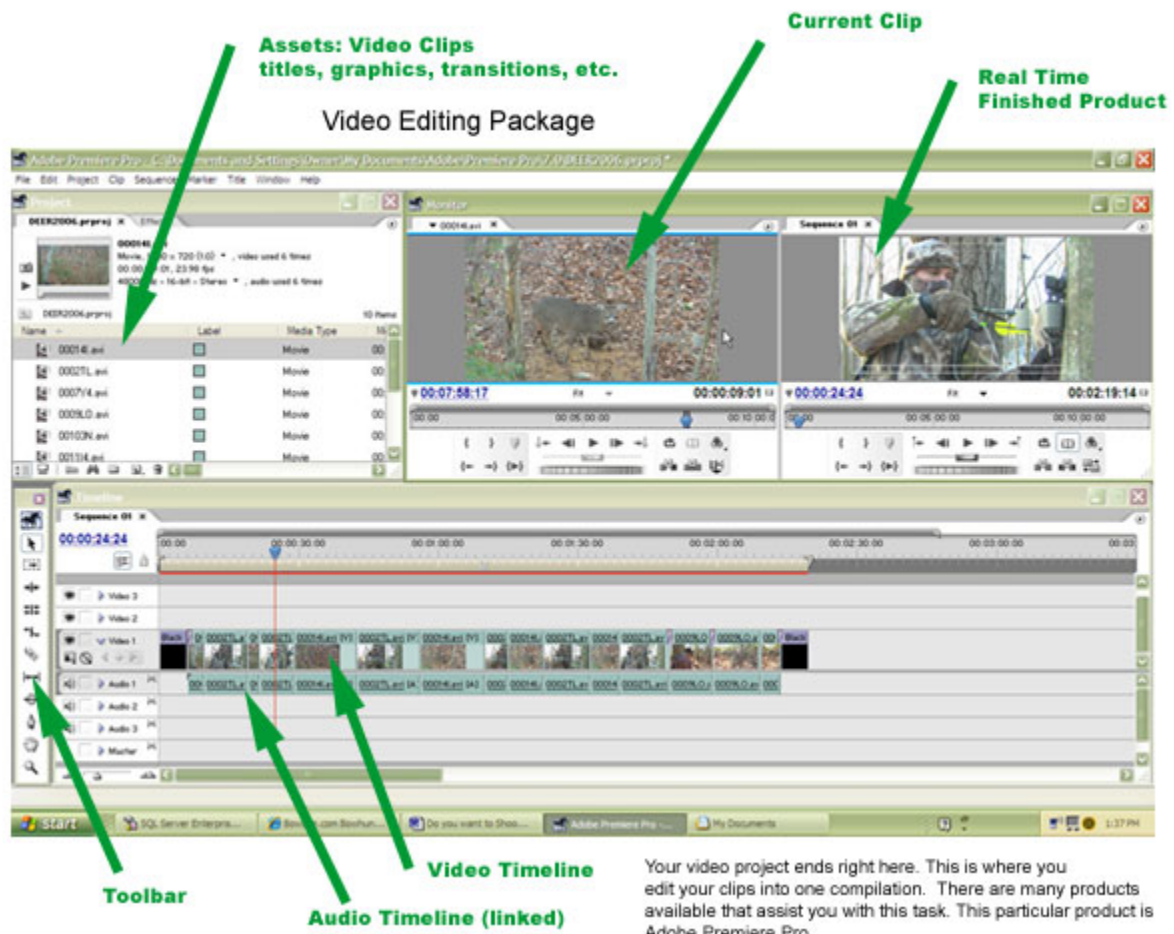
**VCR like buttons control your camera  
The Red button Records (captures)  
the footage**

*This will create either an .AVI file, a .MOV file, or a .MPG file on your hard drive. This clip should be named to reflect the footage, like Novemberbuck1.avi and that file is what you will import into your asset folder on your editing program.*

## Editing Programs

If you've bought a PC in the last 3 years, chances are it has come with some kind of video editing 'lite' version on it. If not, then you might be in the market for one.

All editing programs perform basically the same way. They contain these general characteristics:



### Universal Features

- Asset Folder – Assets are just that. All of the clips, music, audio tracks, titles, still photos, and effects which when put together create your final video production. You typically import these assets into the folder by dragging and dropping, doing a direct capture from the camera, or some other method used by your editing program.
- Timeline – this is where clips are spliced together. The timeline represents a continuous horizontal plane, which runs from left to right. Moving to the right represents the progression of time on the video. Also, the timeline typically has multiple rows also called “layers.” You can edit everything on a single layer but if you wanted to display a title on top of the original clip it is much easier to add it to a layer above the base track and make it transparent. Timelines (layers) are grouped by priority. The higher highest layer displays on top of all the lower layers. So for most editing programs, timelines are 3-Dimensional. On many programs, the timeline contains both a video timeline and an audio timeline. On my particular program, the audio timeline is automatically linked to it’s video timeline. I then have the option of unlinking them when I need to omit audio for whatever reason.

- Toolbar – This is where you find basic editing tools. For instance, the RAZOR tool allows you to cut (divide) a clip on the timeline down to an individual frame level. The ARROW allows me to grab and move the timeline and the MAGNIFYING GLASS allows me to zoom a portion of the timeline. I use the ARROW and RAZOR 99% of the time.
- Monitor or Viewer - On my program this is divided into two windows side by side. One plays the current clip and the other shows a real-time version of my timeline. On my editing program I can actually see the finished product as it is evolving on my right viewer window. Without this ability, I would be lost.

### *Price of Editing Programs*

Generally speaking, most worthwhile editing programs run between \$400-\$800 dollars. The \$50-\$200 programs are geared for kids and people looking to play around with video editing but they should not be discounted if you are just starting out. Just about everyone (including me) started with a low cost editing program and then upgraded. The \$1000+ programs are for the pros and typically contain such a steep learning curve that they are frustrating for all but the guys who do this stuff for a living.

### **Laying Audio Tracks**

Laying your hunting video to audio tracks is a fun way to familiarize yourself to the editing process. One of the first things I did before I got seriously into video was to pick one of my favorite all time songs, lay it down as a soundtrack, and then lay video clips which were timed to that song. It was fun to show to my friends and family and it led to the creation of Beyond Adrenaline which is styled much the same way with soundtrack which moves the entire DVD along. How to lay tracks to music is an advanced technique outside of the scope of this lesson. However with practice it can dramatically improve your video footage. Imagine what the movie Forrest Gump would be like without the soundtrack? Download a cool song from ITUNES and use it to create a 4-minute compilation of your hunting footage from the year. You'll be surprised how neat this project is.

### **Burning to DVD**

Ok. We've got the clips, captured them to our editing program, and produced a finished product that looks great on the PC and your girlfriend now looks at you like Jude Law. It's time to get that puppy on your Television set and thanks to modern technology; this last step is pretty easy.

There are probably more DVD burner software packages out there than there are video editing packages. Every PC shipping with a DVD burner now comes with a burning package installed. For the novice, there is little reason to go out and purchase one unless your PC did not include it – but that is rare. If you must buy one, determine what your needs are first before spending a lot of

money. The package I use is Adobe Encore, however that is an advanced package and since I sell DVDs it was a worthwhile investment. However, for most people, it is overkill.

In my opinion, there are two types of DVD burner packages. The kind that will create a menu, and the kind that does not. For the purposes of this article let's just keep it simple and create a DVD that has no menus and just auto-starts when you put it in your DVD player. But first, there are some things you need to know.

**DVD Formats** Thanks to our Free Enterprise system when DVD burners were first introduced to the market the manufacturers all decided to create their own standard. What that meant to us is that instead of having to keep track of one media type you now get to choose from several including DVD-R, DVD-RW, DVD+R, DVD-RAM, etc. Just match up your PC's burner with the media and you'll be fine.



### **Here's what you'll need to Get your creation on TV.**

1. A final produced video file (typically an AVI file, however it could be .MOV or .MPG file)
2. A blank 'writable' DVD
3. A DVD burner package

Depending on your software package, you simply import your final video file to your DVD burner package and then follow the instructions to create the DVD. This BURN process can take from a few moments to several hours depending on how large your video file is. For a 2 hour video, expect to let it sit overnight and keep your fingers crossed, lots of things can go wrong in those few hours but more than likely it will be that your PC runs out of resources like memory or disk space during the process. I learned the hard way in the beginning and threw out a lot of incomplete DVD's before finding the right PC, software and burner which worked every time. Since then, I treat the burning process like going to the dentist. It's rarely pleasant but always necessary.

## Conclusion

I often tell people that carrying a video camera during my hunts is like having 10 buck tags in my pocket. The same thrill you experience by killing that big buck is found when you capture that incredible buck on film. I've filmed things that I will watch with my great grandkids long after those hunts are a distant memory. Far greater than any mount on your wall, the video footage you shoot will put you, your kids and your friends there with you to experience over and over again.

Video has dramatically changed bowhunting – much of it for the better. Imagine where Fred Bear would be if nobody ever brought his feats to the screen? Imagine how many of us were inspired by those short films forty years ago? But unlike the seventies, the ability to capture great footage and bring it to others is cheap and readily available to everyone now thanks to digital cameras, computers and digital media like DVDs. Now you are limited only by your imagination and desire to put the extra effort and hassle of dealing with a video camera in the field. To me, it's only been a minor inconvenience and that is quickly forgotten when I have my buddies over to show them footage of a lion, caribou, or trophy whitetail.

We hope you enjoyed this presentation on Video Editing. It was a lot of work but something we enjoyed bringing to you.

*Good Hunting !*



*This photo was taken after filming what many people consider the best hunting video ever captured. It is called the World's Greatest Tracker and is featured on Beyond Adrenaline !*