

An ice-cold tale of trickery...

The bobcat hunt that never ended

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In a South Texas rural community lived two brothers-in-law who hunted together for a number of years.

They enjoyed a closeness that only men of the woods can know and understand. Occasionally they would get competitive in their hunting. The following story is based on an incident that occurred when they were competing with one another.

Frankie Caddell used to be a bobcat and raccoon hunter, but as the years passed he became a straight bobcat hunter.

Jack DuBose, on the other hand, liked to hunt anything with his dogs. Sometimes he would have a pair of coon hounds; other times he would have 'cat hounds or he might even have hog dogs. It just depended on what he wanted to hunt that day. Other times he would not have a hunting dog of any kind.

One year, Frankie and Jack both had packs of good 'cat hounds and they hunted together frequently without letting their competitive spirits get the best of them.

In the fall of that year, dry weather conditions and a scarcity of bobcats caused a little change in their relationship.

Bobcats were harder to find and even harder to run. One night Jack and Frankie made a friendly wager of \$5 as to whose dogs would be the first to put a 'cat up a tree.

Neither pack found a trail that night.

They planned a hunt for the next night, but when the time came to leave for the woods both of them made excuses for not wanting to go hunting that night. As soon as they got



Frankie Caddell was an avid bobcat hunter and prankster; his favorite person to taunt was his brother-in-law, Jack DuBose.

out of each other's sight they rushed home, loaded their dogs and went hunting in their favorite locations.

Jack didn't have any luck finding a track.

Frankie did. After a long race, his dogs caught up with a very large tomcat on the ground and killed it.

Naturally this made Frankie quite happy.

He loaded his dogs, threw the 'cat carcass on top of the dog box and headed home. He left his dogs loaded for the rest of the night in preparation for a visit with Jack the next morning.

At seven o'clock the next morning, Frankie drove up to Jack's place of business as if he had been hunting all night and just got in. Naturally, Jack saw the 'cat and handed Frankie a five-dollar bill.

"I thought that you weren't going hunting," Jack said to

his brother-in-law.

"I wasn't, till I had a feeling," Frankie responded.

Jack didn't admit until months later that he had gone hunting that night.

Jack demanded all the details of the chase and the kill. Frankie got away as quick as he could and rushed home to put the 'cat in the deep freezer.

Early the next morning, Frankie took the bobcat out of the freezer and let the frost melt off the fur. He loaded up his dogs and put the cat on top of the dog box. Then he drove down to Jack's place of business as if he had just come in from another successful hunt.

Jack was duly impressed by the big 'cat.

But he didn't realize it was the same bobcat that Frankie had caught from the night before. Jack insisted again on getting all the details.

Frankie used his imagination and described the ideal race, fight and kill. As soon as Frankie could get away, he rushed the dead bobcat back to the deep freezer.

The next morning, Frankie repeated the deception of the day before and Jack still did not recognize the 'cat. The display and the description of the imaginary race almost became a ritual.

Every few days, Frank would thaw out the bobcat and take him by to show Jack and then describe another imaginary race.

If Jack had ever taken time to examine the 'cat carcass after the first few times he would have recognized the deception because the hair had begun to slip from the animal that had been thawed and refrozen so often.

The fun came to an end one day when Frankie got in a hurry and forgot to refreeze the bobcat.

That day, Frankie took the 'cat by to show Jack and a customer of Frankie's came by and wanted him to do a quick job for him. Frankie got busy and forgot to put the bobcat back on ice. The animal lay out in the sun all day and became thoroughly thawed.

Frankie didn't notice the odor as he got into his pickup later that day. He happened to go by Jack's, who immediately noticed the odor and hair and realized what had been happening for the last several weeks.

It took the men several years to be on good terms again and they remained reluctant to believe any bobcat hunting tales told by either one.