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Vernon (Hunt Location)

14 Years old- Brattleboro Union High School

### My First Day

12/20/11

The first time I ever went hunting is probably the most important time of my life. It was the most important part of my life because it showed me what my uncle died doing, what his life's passion was, how admirable the woods are; the smell of the dirt and leaves, the dew on the ground just enough to polish my boots. The walk up a hill with my cousin on our way to our spot, quiet as possible, slowly moving while it is still dark. We have made the adventure up the hill, now sweating after our two mile walk. The sun is starting to rise, my cousin tells me its time to load my 30/30, and I put in four cartridges, cold brass in my hand, the barrel of my gun pointed at the ground "clink, clink, clink, clink" all four cartridges are in. I pull back the lever I see the bullet go into the chamber. I am ready to go, my vest is bright my "heat-a-seat" is hot my heart's pumping, I'm ready to see a deer. It's eight in the morning I can see my breath, I put my coat on, it's cold. We sit there feels like it has been hours, I'm tired and cold, but my adrenaline is flowing and it keeps me wide awake. It's finally ten in the morning, I open my backpack take out my water and a power bar, I'm thinking "this is amazing. I can't believe

people don't like hunting, being in the woods, seeing the most beautiful animals you can see in Vermont, now I know why my uncle John, loved hunting."

John was my hero he is the reason I hunt, he died hunting in Whitingham, Vermont when he accidentally shot himself. He spotted the bear it was coming near him he took a couple steps back, tripped on a mossy log, then the gun fired hitting him in the back of his leg hitting arteries, and a minute later he died in the woods leaving behind a wife and two kids along with many loving family members and friends. It took several resources including the Air National Guard to find him after two days.

Every time I pick up a weapon, whether it's my bow or a gun I remember that day; the day my uncle, now my idol, died from an easy day of hunting. I remember what our family went through and it was very hard, its something no other family should go through, every one should be careful in the woods. This accident should be a reminder of what you learned about ethics, and laws in your hunter safety class, how to carry your rifle or shotgun while walking through the woods, remember to keep your safety on, to walk slow and carefully.

I remember him every time I'm in the woods and that chattering red squirrel that is in the tree is him, saying good luck I hope you get that trophy buck. That first day I was in the woods I could tell I'm going to forever love hunting, I'm going to be just like my uncle, respect wildlife, and others property that let us hunt with permission. He showed me how to be an ethical hunter, maybe not by the words he spoke but by the memories he has left, the stories that are still told about him.

On that first day I ever went out I thought of him and how I wanted to be an ethical, smart, and respectful hunter. I want to have a freezer full of meat in the winter. I want to be a proud hunter of Vermont. Today three years after my first time hunting I am all those things John has left me to be. I am now a determined, ethical, young, Vermont hunter. I get the same rush that he did when deer season comes around. You can't get a better feeling than that, knowing when you wake up in the morning you can come home with a nice deer. Even if you don't get a deer, you've fulfilled your day just by being in the woods. I have the time of my life hunting and it's a lifelong passion that I hope my kids will enjoy. I hope they will admire the woods and respect the animals that live in them. I hope everyone can grow to respect the wildlife. I hope everyone gets a chance to hunt because once you do, you'll do it the rest of your life.