

Original Journal Sept 4-40

## Shooting a Mountain Lion

by  
William L. Finley and Ed F. Averill

There are really wild lions in America, mountain lions, cougars, pumas, panthers, painters, catamounts, brown tigers, varmints, Indian devils, mountain screamers, king-cats, or whatever the story teller chooses to call them. Some of the lion stories are true, but the live material to make stories about is rapidly disappearing. The mountain lion, like a sportsman, hunts for deer. Sometimes he kills a domestic animal, so the general opinion is to exterminate him.

We were hunting for mountain lions in the Galiuro Mountains of Arizona, and for some days our ill-fed cayuses had climbed up and down through the rough underbrush with no success. From the Galiuros we went on east into New Mexico and then back-trailed into Arizona, following the canyon of Blue River. We picked up another outfit and packed over to MJ Bar trap on Stray Horse Creek where we met a man by the name of Miller and his dogs. This was April 22. No luck for the next couple of days. On the 26th Miller started out with the dogs and swung around to the south up toward Red Mountain. Here they finally treed a lion. He left a boy and the dogs at the tree and returned for us. The lion was some five or six miles from where we were in camp. To carry the cameras up to the place would take till near five o'clock in the afternoon, and with the fading light the time would be short for



photographing. The best thing to do was to keep the quarry up the tree all night.

We tried to follow Miller, but he had a knack of climbing on his horse where an ordinary cayuse had difficulty, and he also set a pace that was impossible to follow when carrying a motion picture camera. So we adopted the plan of following along the higher ridges and keeping the general direction toward where the hounds were baying. The horses we rode were small, yet they were as tough as mountain mahogany. For a living they ranged these dry mountains, picking up what they could find, and it was surprising to see what they could do on such short fodder. My horse would put his head down and start through the rocks and brush. If I could dodge and hold on, he would get me there. My shirt and coat were likely to be torn off, and I should have been minus trousers if I hadn't worn chaps.

Red Mountain had a wide flat top, and all around a high wall of rock. In a few places this was broken down so one could reach the top. Hanging to the horses' manes, we were jerked and pulled up through one of these steep notches and worked our way through the manzanita brush to the south side. Here we heard the baying of the dogs about a hundred yards below the rim. On the steep rock and brush-covered slope, a lion sat among the top branches of a pine tree. A few stunted trees grew around the edge, but a little lower down in the canyon the pines grew from fifty to a hundred



feet in height. We had the best view of the lion from the mountain side looking across, yet the limbs were fairly thick, so he was only outlined for a picture. From the base of the tree looking up, the view was no clearer.

Upon our approach, the dogs were baying excitedly. For a lion dog, the excitement is when the hunter approaches, and with a loud report of a rifle the lion comes tumbling to the ground to be pounced upon. The kill is generally speedy, for as a rule it is a long way back to feed, water and camp. Miller's dogs had treed many lions and knew exactly what to expect. The four stood around the base of the tree with heads up, eyes wide, and throats pouring out a volley of deep-throated dog music that roared and echoed across the mountain. As far as the dogs were concerned, the events that followed were most unusual. They bayed and waited. They saw a man climbing through the brush and pointing with a stubby looking black gun that merely buzzed instead of making a sharp report. Still they waited while we cleared away a little space on the steep slope and built up the rocks in a circle to make a little fire. It had to be walled in to keep from catching the dry leaves and brush.

Miller had sneaked away, leaving me with the dogs at the base of the tree. After an hour passed and there was no shot, the dogs seemed rather mystified. They began looking around, and old Blue got a sniff of Miller's trail and started off to see why he had gone away without shooting the lion.



He responded, however, to my sharp command to return to the base of the tree. Sandy, a red-haired hound, had been standing all the time with his nose pointed, never taking his eyes from the big cat in the tree-top. The other dogs were troubled. The lion above was watching our movements. The dogs were hungry and thirsty, but still they had faith that eventually we would wake up and shoot the lion.

Six o'clock came, and six-thirty. We were gathering wood for the night watch and arranged space above the fire to sit and rest. Finally old Blue seemed to sense the situation. A few feet from the base of the tree he dug into the mass of sticks and dry leaves and made himself a bed. As darkness began to settle and we sat about the fire, the other dogs ceased even an occasional long-drawn-out wail and settled down for the night.

Our horses were tied about fifty feet up. There was not even a level place for them to lie down. One of the men loosened the saddles and said they would sleep as comfortably standing up as we would. The little fire had a cheerful warmth on one side, but the contrast from the warmth to the cold was anything but comfortable. The best we could do was to take turns toasting one side and freezing the other. This became a mechanical operation during the night, and resting on the rocks was like roosting on a picket fence. The old lion above us was not having his usual night of comfort either, for while he could straddle the limbs and sprawl out, his feet got tired and he occasionally had to change positions.



It is difficult to explain why a big carnivore the size of the mountain lion is so afraid of dogs and men. If he was inclined, he could easily kill a pack of four dogs and perhaps do the same with two men alone, for the only weapon we had to shoot with was a camera. There was a possibility of the lion getting tired and climbing down during the night, so it was just as well that we could not rest comfortably. When night really settled down, we could not distinguish him in the tree above us. The flames of the little fire lit up only the base of the tree. The spirit of the whole scene kept me wide awake until long toward midnight. While I could not see, I felt the presence of the old lion above me. One of the dogs snored in peace. Sandy, however, was alert and often sniffed and turned about. Toward morning I heard a crunch in the bushes above and the rush of something that made me think the lion had departed. There was another crunch coming directly toward me from above. My heart stood still for a moment as some object swung past my foot just below the fire. It was a boulder loosened by the hoofs of the horses that took its way on down the mountain. Often times in traveling steep and rocky slopes, a loosened boulder is more dangerous than a wild animal.

In the hurry to leave camp we had taken half a dozen sandwiches, a gallon jar of water, and a small canteen. It was a good two or three miles to another drink. About dark I began looking for something to eat. I discovered that from



our supply of six sandwiches Miller had given one to each of the dogs, also he had let them lap a gallon of water, and a part of what was in the small canteen was gone. This left one sandwich and a quart of water for two of us for supper and breakfast. This, I presume, was a fair adjustment, as good dogs are more effective in treeing cougar than men. They are, as it were, front rank troops, and while Miller said his dogs would not leave a lion treed, yet there was the possibility of their turning over the night watch to us and going back six miles to camp. Of course, the dogs were always hungry. I laid down my sandwich and turned to open a little jar of jam. When I looked around the sandwich had disappeared, and Blue had a wistful but thankful expression on his face. In camp everything edible had to be kept above the dogs' reach. Carl, the cook, had discovered this. One day he had cooked up a big mess of beans. They were in a Dutch oven with a heavy iron top and were left on the ground to cool. The next morning the top was off, the beans were all gone, and old Blue was so sick the following day that he could not go off on the hunt.

At last sunrise came. Now, able to see my way, I climbed a little way up the steep slope, revelling in the warmth of surplus effort. I turned to look at the tree-top. "He's still there!" I shouted. The big cat lay sprawled out on a limb with one fore paw doubled beneath him, and one fore



foot and one hind foot dangling. He raised his head and looked at me with rather a bored expression. At my shout, however, two of the younger dogs began to bark. The lion turned his head to look at them and snarled, whereupon the other dogs joined in the chorus.

One of the hunters arrived from camp. We were eating bread and jam with hot coffee when the lion took a notion there were too many people about and decided to change trees. He came down head first, spiraling about the trunk. He made a forty-foot leap and was away, followed by the dogs. When he was safely up the second tree a little way off, the question arose as to how to photograph him. Marvelous luck! About twenty feet away was a twin tree standing close enough to shoot from. A rope was thrown up over a limb and with this aid I climbed the twin lookout and hauled up my camera. As I climbed, so did the lion. At last we were seated opposite each other on the last strong branches. It was about nineteen feet between us. I pointed my camera at him. He laid his ears back and snarled. The camera kept on buzzing and the lion kept on snarling. Once the big fellow came out on his limb as far toward me as he could. "What shall I do if he leaps over in my tree?" I called down. "You jump over in his tree," yelled one of the cowboys.

I snapped pictures<sup>5</sup> until the lion got tired and seemed bored to death and about to go to sleep.

It was near noon and the men and dogs were getting restless. I climbed slowly down and left the lion yawning on his high perch. The hunter said it would be unusual for a lion to change trees more than once or twice, and it would be hard to rout him out. So the question arose as to what to do with the tired cougar. Should he be killed? Or should he be allowed to have his freedom? We knew he had caught a deer. We had no evidence, however, that he had killed any calves<sup>s</sup> recently, and besides he had performed splendidly for the movies. So we left him with a fairly sure premonition of what his fate was.



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The mountain lion seems to be a cougar or a panther or a puma, depending upon the part of the country in which it happens to be found, but by any name it is considered rather fearsome. Maybe some of the stories told about the beast are rather far-fetched.

No matter—the cougar seems to be fading from the wildlife picture.

By William L. Finley and  
Ed F. Averill

# Kept Cougar Up a Tree All Night

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The lion was some five or six miles from our camp. To carry the cameras up to the place would have taken until nearly five o'clock in the afternoon, and with the fading light the time would be short for photographing. The best thing to do we decided, was to keep the quarry up the tree all night, and with that end in view we proceeded.

As we approached the place where the lion was treed, the dogs were baying excitedly. For a lion dog, the excitement is when the hunter approaches, and when with a report of a rifle, the lion comes tumbling to the ground to be pounced upon. The kill is generally speedy, for as a rule it is a long way back to feed, water and camp. Miller's dogs had treed



Cougar, mountain lion, puma, panther—what you will, in a tree-top.

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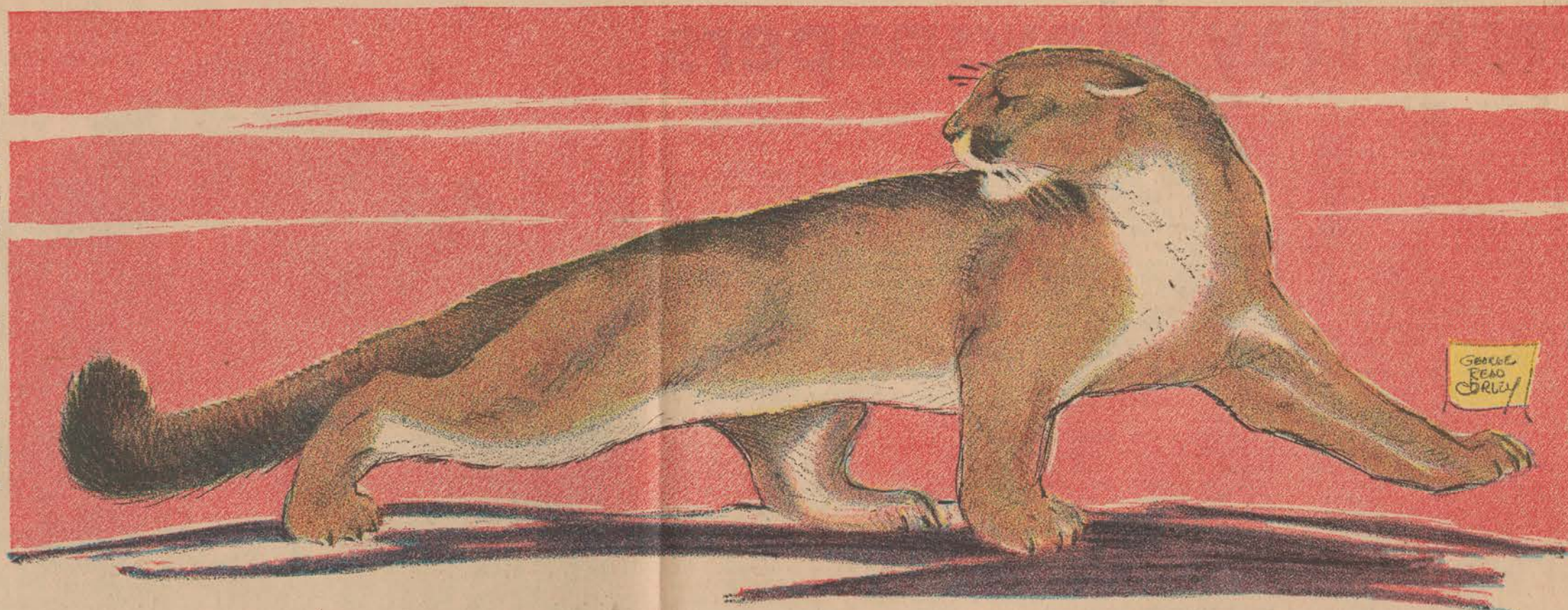
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Here is the author up a tree to photograph a mountain lion in a nearby tree.

## BETTER PHOTOS

A YOUNG friend of the writer has just begun to take pictures. Yesterday he brought me a number of his outdoor snapshots, together with a beautiful pictorial view from a newspaper section.

"Look at this newspaper shot," he said. "The sky is dark—darker than the bluest sky I've ever seen. Now, in all my pictures, the sky is white, white as paper. What I want to know is, how did this chap get such a dark sky, and why can't I get the same effect in my pictures?"

"You can," I told him, "if you'll use a filter when you make the picture."

I showed him the picture reproduced here, explaining that it was taken on "pan" film with a deep yellow "G" filter. The deep yellow filter was chosen in order to get more contrast between the subject's white costume and the blue spring-time sky. A medium yellow filter could have been used, for a somewhat lighter sky tone, but I would not have used the red filter on this subject. As a matter of fact, the red filter is useful chiefly for dramatic, spectacular scenic shots, and views in which distant objects must be shown clearly. I avoid it for closeups of persons, because it gives a very strong, contrasty effect.

"What about exposure?" my friend asked. "Does it have to be increased the same amount for each filter?"

"No," I told him. It's different for each one, and the film used plays a large part. But that needn't worry you, for you can use a pocket exposure guide that covers all the popular filters and films. With that, it's as easy to find the correct exposure for a filtered shot as for any other shot."

So that's about the story. A medium yellow filter for "natural" effects, a deep yellow for more dramatic rendering, a red filter for spectacular scenic subjects—and a pocket guide to make exposure simple. And you'll find that filters add new, interesting quality to your outdoor pictures.

### Questions and Answers

Q. In taking some close-up shots of a map, I centered the map very carefully in the finder, but all the pictures are a couple of inches "off." Would this mean my finder is wrongly adjusted?—L. M.

A. No; the finder is probably all right. You centered the map in the finder, but failed to allow for the distance from finder to camera lens, which is one to two inches in most models. This difference (known as "parallax") is of no great importance

in medium and distant shots, but must be allowed for in extreme close-up work. After centering your material in the finder, move it the necessary inch or so to center it in front of the lens; then check the finder image, to see how much margin you should allow on future shots. Most camera finders are designed with a slight "margin of safety," so that you photograph a trifle more than you see; apparently yours is not so arranged.



A deep yellow filter was used to darken the sky here. A medium yellow filter might have been used, for a somewhat lighter sky tone, but a red filter would give too contrasty a rendering.

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eyes from the big cat in the tree-top. The other dogs were troubled. The lion above was watching our movements. The dogs were hungry and thirsty, but still they had faith that eventually we would shoot the lion.

Six o'clock came, and six-thirty. We were gathering wood for the night watch and arranged space above the fire to sit and rest. Finally old Blue, smart hound, seemed to sense the situation. A few feet from the base of the tree he dug into the sticks and dry leaves and made himself a bed. As darkness settled and we sat about the fire, the other dogs ceased even an occasional long-drawn-out wail and settled down for the night.

Our horses were tied about 50 feet up the hill. There was not even a level place for them to lie down. One of the men loosened the saddles, and said they would sleep as comfortably standing up as we would. The little fire had a cheerful warmth on one side, but the contrast from the warmth to the cold was anything but comfortable. The best we could do was to take turns toasting one side and freezing the other. This became a mechanical operation during the night, and resting on the rocks was like roosting on a picket fence. The old lion above us was not having his usual night of comfort either, for while he could straddle the limbs and sprawl out, his feet got tired and he occasionally had to change positions.

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This old fellow has treed his quarry and seems to be wondering what to do next.

## Antelope Club Goes 'One Shot'

By Robert E. Geiger

ANTELOPE Bob MacKenzie used to say that if an antelope saw a cowboy's red bandana handkerchief fluttering a mile away he'd come a-running to see what he could see.

"They are that curious," says Ed Hunter, Colorado sportsman and student of the old plainsman who knew all about antelope. "It's murder to go out with a fully loaded, modern, high-powered rifle and knock one of 'em over. It's just like going out in your barnyard and bagging a pet calf."

That's why the One-Shot Antelope club came into being. Hunter explains:

"Thinking this thing over the other day a bunch of the boys—and girls—decided we'd give the 'lopes a real chance this September in the Wyoming hunting season."

"Here's what we're going to do. We're each going to take one cartridge along and we're each going to take no more than one shot. If we hit we get an antelope. If we miss we go back home without antelope steaks."

Hunter says response to the scheme demonstrates that there are still many real sportsmen in the hunting ranks.

"And this is why," says Hunter. "Each of these Wyoming antelope permits costs 20 bucks each."

"Some of the hunters are coming from as far away as Chicago, like Earl Zimmerman, the out-of-doors enthusiast. He'll get just one shot—that is, if he has the good luck to even see an antelope."

"Just consider that these boys will be traveling distances of from several hundred miles to a couple of thousand for the privilege of slipping one cartridge into their rifles to take one shot at a nimble legged 'lope streaking it across the Wyoming plains. It takes a pretty good sport to snap up a proposition of that kind."

"The club has been divided into two teams. Some of the native Wyoming boys who think they are pretty good shots will make up one team, headed by Governor Nels Smith. A bunch of other shooters from outside the state will make up another team. The team that makes the greatest kill, of course, will be the winner."

"The Wyoming highway patrol is going to send along a cop to search all the hunters when they set out across the range, just to make sure nobody has more than one cartridge."

"We ought to see some shooting up Wyoming way that would make Dan'l Boone bat an eye."