

Jim's Perspective...

Hunting and Halloween

The Nebraska pheasant hunting season starts on Halloween, October 31. This reminds me of a time many years ago when I went with my three hunting buddies to hunt upland game on the opening day of duck and pheasant season in 1969. Halloween was on Friday, October 31, and opening day for hunting season was Saturday November 1. We were all sophomores in college. We had been hunting together since 1966 when we all turned 16 and were able to take a car and head off into pheasant and duck hunting territory on our own. We liked to hunt south of Interstate 80 in the area of Exeter, Shickley and Geneva, Nebraska. This area provided a broad range of habitat for birds. There were excellent roost fields, plenty of corn and milo fields, thick shelter belts and areas of wetlands. The wetlands were an added bonus because this provided good habitat for ducks and geese.

When we hunted in this area we often stayed at a motel on the edge of Exeter. However, for this Halloween trip we decided to stay at the Geneva Hotel. We had seen it before, but never stayed there. Since we were all in college and had no money, we booked one room for all four of us. As I recall, the hotel was located on the east side of the Geneva town square which consisted of two city blocks with the county courthouse in the middle. After checking in, we headed out to explore the town square. As evening arrived, the town square began to fill with people and cars. Everyone was dressed in Halloween costumes. The square became a traffic jam full of cars with people honking their horns, laughing, dressed in costumes and everyone waving at other people. Even though we were only 19 and the drinking age was 21, we visited all of the bars and taverns around the square, drank beer, ate bar food and played poker. The two hunters that won the most money got to sleep in the two single beds in the hotel room. The losers were relegated to the floor! No one bothered to check our ID's. As I have mentioned before, this period of time was unique since it was the middle of the Vietnam War and young men were sent off to war at age 18. If you were old enough to go to war, you were old enough to have a beer and no one took issue with it. So here we were, four city boys celebrating Halloween in the small town of Geneva, Nebraska. We were shocked at all the people, cars, costumes and fun that was going on in the town square. We loved it. We have never forgotten it. We were expecting a sleepy little town, but instead, it was better than Lincoln! The only troublesome moment that night was that one of my hunting friends was struck by a car in the town square. We were crossing the street in the cross-walk, and a car came through the intersection and hit him. It was a glancing blow, so he was not run over by the car, but he was knocked down. The car didn't stop. Probably an uninsured motorist! He was an offensive tackle on our high school football team (all four of us played football), so he took the car collision pretty well, but he was a little sore the next day.

The other funny thing I remember about this hunting trip is that the hotel did not have bathrooms in the hotel rooms. Instead, there were community bathrooms at each end of the main hallway on each floor of the hotel. The hotel was booked full of hunters. At 5 a.m. the next morning after Halloween night, I remember seeing a bunch of men dressed in hunting gear, waiting to use the bathroom. The four of us just dressed and left the hotel to hunt.

We started hunting that day at a roost field that was usually full of pheasants. For those that don't hunt game birds, pheasants make their nests in the grass of a field that is usually otherwise not suitable for planting crops. Hunters call this a roost field. We entered the field a half-hour before sunrise. The pheasants were still in their nests. Three of us walked the field, while the fourth took the car to the other end of the field and posted that end of the field. As we walked the field, many of the roosters (you could not hunt the hens) would run in front of us and refuse to fly thereby avoiding a shotgun shell. However, as they reached the end of the field and saw the hunter who posted the end of the field, they panicked and would then suddenly bolt up into the sky which gave us a chance to hit the bird. After a few roost fields, we might walk a shelter belt (a long stretch of trees and bushes much of which was planted in the late 30's and early 40's by the Civilian Conservation Corp) which is where we hunted quail. In mid-afternoon we hunted the wetlands for Canadian geese, mallards and teal.

From the fall of 1967, the first fall when Janie and I were boyfriend and girlfriend, until I quit hunting, she never went hunting with me and always required that when I brought game birds home, they needed to already be cleaned and then placed in the refrigerator in a Styrofoam or paper container covered by Saran Wrap with the appearance that they had come from the grocery store. The killing of any animal was just something she could not imagine. She had, and still has, a very kind heart! One time I talked her into going fishing with me. We went to a farm pond south of Lincoln that was surrounded by trees and stocked with crappie, bluegill and sunfish. We had to walk through a plowed field to get to the pond. As we walked, she carried a container of water that contained minnows for bait, while I carried the tackle box and a fishing pole (she wasn't going to fish!). At one point she tripped and fell over a clod of dirt. The water and minnows splashed up onto her. We laughed, and she was a good sport about it, but I could tell this was not her favorite activity. I started fishing and she watched. I caught a crappie. Once I landed it, I started to fillet the fish and Janie was horrified. I stopped and threw the fish back. I stopped fishing then. We stay at the pond for a while. I didn't mind not fishing!

Below is a picture of three of the Geneva hunters, each holding a wily ring-necked rooster pheasant, taken by the fourth Geneva hunter. The young man to the far left had a career as a farm underwriter with State Farm here in Lincoln. The young man in the middle was a junior high school teacher with Lincoln Public Schools. The young man taking the picture was an architect in Portland, Oregon, and me, well, I'm the lawyer! I have many fond memories of our time together. In addition to the four hunters, our circle of friends from Holy Family grade school up through Pius X high school included four more guys that didn't hunt. The girls at Pius called the eight of us "The Holies" (I don't think this is a word, but that's what they called us! We were kind of the holy "straight arrows" at the school plus the first name of our grade school was Holy). None of us smoked – many boys did. We were all altar boys at Holy Family. All eight of us made up the majority of the boys choir at Holy Family. We were the only boys choir in the Lincoln diocese. The fellowship, camaraderie, and respectfulness among the eight of us is something I will always cherish and remember.



I leave you with a classical-style song, *Vincero Perdero*, performed by Mario Frangoulis, a Greek tenor. You might think this type of music doesn't fit a hunting Halloween story, and that may be true, but my article today is also about reminiscing about the past – pondering our life's experiences – thinking about how we have, and will live our lives, and that is what *Vincero Perdero* is all about. This song is from his album released in 2002 titled, *Sometimes I Dream*. It is one of my favorite songs. Click on it below. It is sung in Italian so below I have inserted the English translation.

Finally, this evening, on Halloween-eve, I invite you to mystically, or ritually, (no zoom needed!!) join me at the cocktail hour, 6:00 pm, CST, and listen to *Vincero Perdero* while we all sipp on our favorite cocktail. Think back to your favorite Halloween experience! Maybe the

first time you went out to trick or treat without your parents, or perhaps a costume party with friends. Boo!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV0i6Tpfxm0&list=RDXF5QVKz0UEc&index=9>

Vincero Perdero

In the dreams I dreamed as a child
I lived my life as a king
My days were filled with sunshine
And there was never any pain

I'll win, I'll lose
I'll live my life
I'll have to make my own way
I'll win, I'll lose
I'll create my own path
I'll play the game of life

I've had brief moments of joy
Endless moments of boredom
I've had days full of sunshine
I know what pain is...

I'll win, I'll lose
I'll live my life
I'll know how to continue on my own
I'll win, I'll lose
Now I know my path
But I'll play the game of life on my own

A king, I'll certainly not be
And yet, I'll live...

I'll win, I'll lose
I'll have light and shadow
But alone I'll have to go on
I'll win, I'll lose
My life will be
like a long journey to take
I'll win, I'll lose
I'll live my life
I'll have to make my own way
I'll win, I'll lose
Now I know my path...
I'll win, I'll lose
I'll play the game...

Local
Agents
Serving
Main Street
AmericaSM

I'll win, I'll lose
But alone...

James B Dobler

Jim Dobler, CPCU

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Questions or Comments? Please email jbdobler@outlook.com



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AmericaSM