



By Margaret Botha

My name is Margaret Botha. I am 40 years old and a mother of three from South Africa. I have been hunting since I was a little girl, when I joined my father on his hunting trips. I decided to pursue my hunting career and to encourage women of all ages to join a sport that was predominantly a man's sport. I completed a Professional Hunter's course at the Sutherland's Hunting Academy with David Sutherland, my mentor at the time. This encouraged me to take on the challenge of a life time – The Extreme Huntress competition.

The Journey Begins

My awesome Extreme Huntress journey started on 5 July 2014, when I boarded the Delta Airlines flight to the U.S.A. As much as the excitement overwhelmed me, the tension was just a tad too much for me to bear. This was my first flight so far and all alone. Texas has always been a place I have wanted to visit, and now, one of my dreams was to become reality.

After flying all night, we landed in San Antonio, Texas, a small airport with the friendliest people, who knew just how to make a stranger feel at home.

I went to the Posana Inn Airport Hotel where I stayed the night before my adventure was to begin at the 777 Ranch. Sunday morning, I took to sight seeing in San Antonio, at the River Walk. One thing I was set on doing, was to get myself a pair of cowboy boots, and a Stetson hat, an absolute must to remind me of this exciting trip for years to come.

Monday morning, the big day—the start of the Extreme Huntress competition. I went to the hotel dining room for breakfast and chatted with the lady chef, who was quite intrigued with what I do as a huntress.

The moment of truth was upon me as a minivan pulled up and two guys got out, one with a camera. My stomach was tied in knots, the tension was just too much. What do I do in this situation? Do I stand up? Do I sit waiting for them? Do I make as if I am used to all of the attention? Nothing can prepare you for a moment like this! There were cameras all around me, focussing on me, around me, in my face! I just wanted the earth to swallow me at that moment. I was not used to all this attention.

On the bus, with the director of the Extreme Huntress competition and camera crew, the cameras on my face all of the time, they started questioning me, where I'm from, what I do, how was my trip, they wanted to know everything about me. I was so nervous, I couldn't sit still, couldn't keep my hands still, I was shivering. I didn't know how to sit, who to look at. My mouth was dry and my English was failing me, my words just would not come out right.

Relieved does not begin to describe how I felt when we stopped to pick up Nikita Dalke from British Columbia. At least now, all the attention was focussed on Nikita. We picked up the rest of the contestants and the tension relaxed more and more.

On our arrival at the 777 Ranch, we received the most wonderful welcome from the judges and 777 Ranch staff. We were handed our clothes, equipment and

