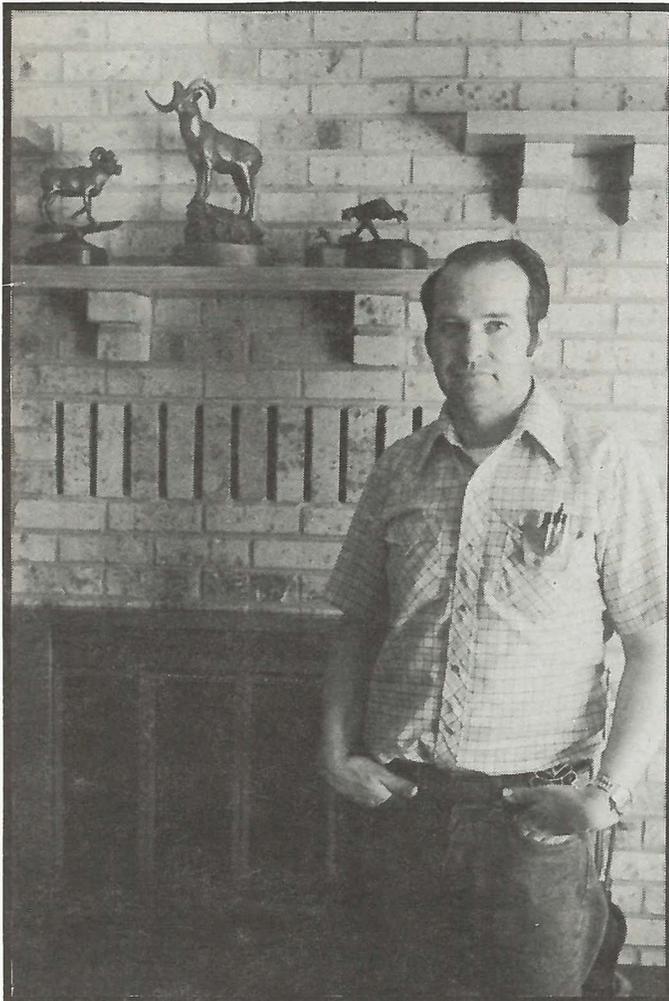


**"IN MY BOOK, THE TROPHY HUNTER IS A REAL SPORTSMAN."**

# FLOYD MONTGOMERY

**BY: DAN SCHMITT**



**FLOYD PROUDLY NEXT TO HIS ARTWORK.**

Floyd Montgomery, a local Yampa store owner, has spent his life striving and reaching personal artistic goals. As an adventuresome outdoorsman, hunter, and wildlife enthusiast, he has endeavored to achieve mastery in photography, sculpting, and taxidermy. Mark McCoy, Tanna Brock, and I, Dan Schmitt, traveled to Yampa to talk to Floyd about his vocations and talents. We found an energetic,

honest, dedicated, and self-challenged man. He told us his story, of his interests and hobbies.

"Sunday is my day off. Six days a week I work, and the seventh day I'm out there with the wildlife. While I was growing up and in early grade school, I spent a lot of time out in the country and on ranches until I got out of high school. I worked on ranches all around the country. I also spent a little time working at The Colorado Spruce Saw Mill. When I met with a timber accident, I decided there was a safer way to make a living. That was when I went into the family, Montgomery, store.

"I was born in Oak Creek in 1938, but was raised in Yampa. I call Yampa Valley home, and that's where I claim to be a native. I graduated in 1955 from Yampa Union High School. Then Oak Creek and Yampa each had a high school, until a few years later when it consolidated and became Soroco. After graduation, I attended A and M which is now CSU at Fort Collins for one year.

"I went into the service in 1962, but it wasn't a career that I wanted to pursue. Shortly after I got through basic, Treba Dorr and I were married and started our family. While in the service I was in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I was a clerk for artillery and missile training.

"After I got through with the military, we came home to the beautiful Yampa Valley. I had been working in the store since 1958, only taking time out for the service. My dad retired eight years ago, and my brother and I bought it and have been running it ever since.

"My parents bought the store in the early 40's during the Second World War. The store itself is probably the oldest operating store built in Routt County that is still going. My folks bought it from a man named Carmichael, who was the superintendent of the school, if I remember right. When we first started, there were three other stores, then there were two, and now

there's one. The main part of the store was built in 1896, I believe. My brother and I doubled the size of the store six years ago. And I've been here 23 years.

"My wife was born in Denver and lived just west of Yampa since she was four years old. Her father was born in Steamboat and was killed during the Second World War. Her mother then married again to a local Yampa rancher, and they moved back up here. She feels that most of our family is outdoor-oriented. She has several pictures which she's painted with some art supplies she received one Christmas. She sets her mind to do it, and then does it. Besides being a housewife, artist, and store clerk, she also like to decorate cakes and just be with our family.

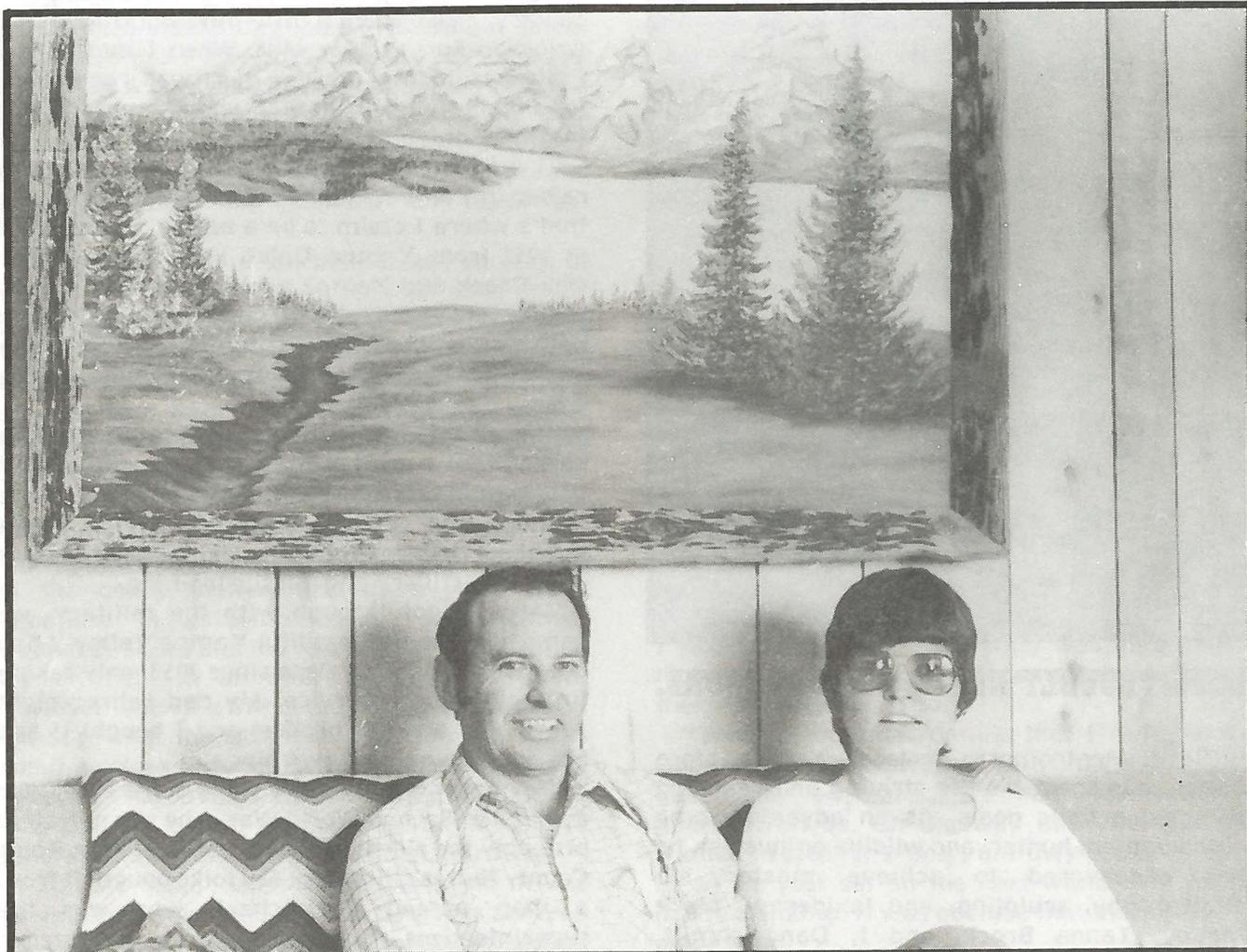
"Our boys, Morgan, a freshman at CU, and Mark, a sophomore at Soroco, are fifth generation Montgomerys to live in South Routt County. My great-grandparents came here from Breckenridge; they worked in the mining communities. Things got tough in the mining towns like old Breckenridge and Cripple Creek, so those pioneers would leave and see what was over that next mountain. Mainly they came here for agriculture. They were into livestock in the

late 1800's. My dad was born in a stagecoach stop cabin just south of town. In the early 1900's the Carnahan's, on my mother's side, moved here from Kansas. They were livestock people who lived up in the Toponas area, around Sunny Side, between here and Burns. Granddad Carnahan was a hunter. He was the one who got me hunting when I was small. Why, we could go any place on horseback. We would go off riding and hunting and never see anyone.

"I think we've got better hunting today than we had back then, because we have more wildlife. Our greatest renewable resource in Colorado is wildlife. We've got more elk now than we had a few years back. A trophy elk is probably the biggest challenge we've got today in Colorado. I have two boys who hunt with me now, and they enjoy hunting as much as I do.

"Hunting gets us a little bit more together when we're out like that. When raising a family, sometimes we don't have much time to spend with them like we'd like to, yet when hunting season comes along, we make it a point to spend time hunting together.

After Floyd talked about his love for hunting, he then told me about another hobby he



**FLOYD AND HIS WIFE TREBA UNDER HER PAINTING.**



**"SIX DAY A WEEK I WORK,  
AND THE SEVENTH DAY  
I'M OUT THERE WITH THE WILDLIFE."**

developed from being in the outdoors. "A fellow by the name of Ed Wilson worked as a W.C.O. for the Colorado Division of Wildlife here and in Cold Springs Mountains in Moffat County until he retired. He had done a lot of wildlife photography, and he was the one who got me interested in it. I still take color slides, and for what film I've burned up, I don't have anything spectacular to show. I do have one or two pictures at the store, one of a ptarmigan and a little baby chick, which is good. I was within ten feet of the ptarmigan, and I was lucky, because a lot of people never see a ptarmigan, since they stay in the high country. I also have good equipment and a telephoto lens, which helps. Winter time is a good time to take pictures, because most animals come down out of the high country. In the summertime the color is good and the young animals make photography interesting. It's a great challenge!"

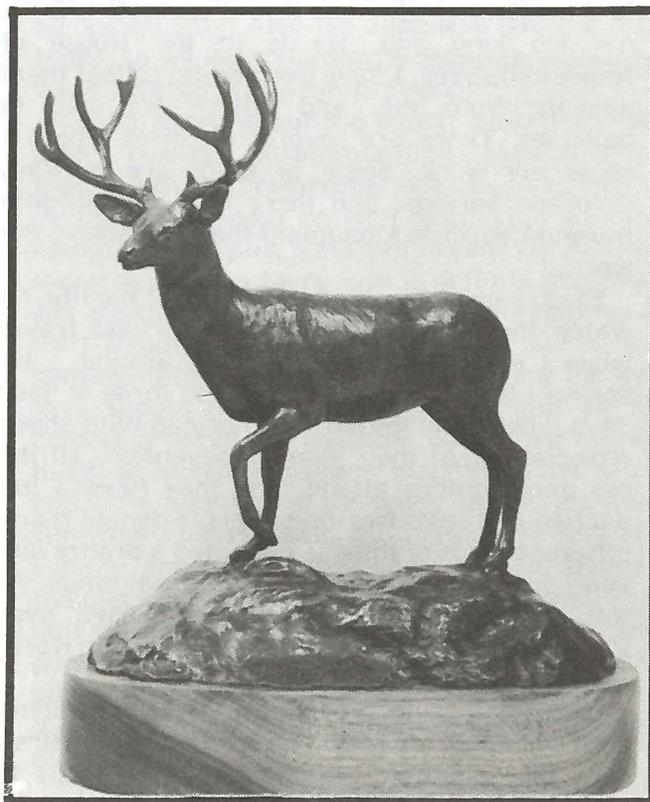
In 1975, Floyd went to an art show at the Steamboat Plaza, where he saw some of Curt Zabel's bronze sculptures. "I then got acquainted with Curtis and he got me started with sculpture. I normally do one sculpture a year. I always sculpt my originals out of wax, but some people use clay. I make an original wax, then take it to a foundry where they make the molds. The mold maker cuts the model apart to make his mold. When I get the mold back I pour all my own waxes. For every one of these sculptures, I have to have a wax model.

"I have some of my originals that are sent

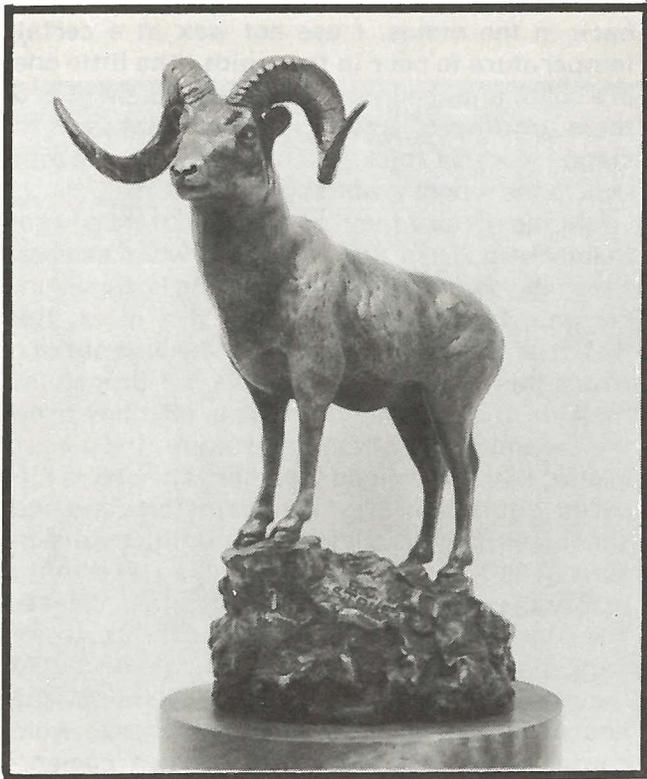
back in the molds. I use hot wax at a certain temperature to pour in the molds. The little ones are solid, and the large waxes are hollow. I pour them in stages, and normally it takes three stages to get a thickness of 1/8 inch. I take the wax to the foundry, and they process it.

"At the factory they take it and cut it up to suit themselves. Then they take it to what they call the shell room. There the wax mold is dipped in a ceramic type shell, and when this dries, they take that to an oven. They melt the wax out of it. From this mold, they pour the hot bronze into their mold, and when that cools off, they break the ceramic shell off and that leaves the pieces of bronze that are welded together. They have high speed bits to work all the welds off, and they sandblast it to smoothen it up until it suits the artist. This is the bronze. I okay everything before they put the finish on it. It's then cleaned. They then put patina on, which is the color, and they've got variations of different shades. When the artist has picked out what he wants, they heat it up and then spray on the bronze which causes a fast ageing process. When cooled, I have the finished piece of sculpture. The foundry work is the tough part of the bronzing business today. It costs money to get it done, and at some places it takes a lot of time.

"One mold will make as many sculptures as you want. So far all my sculptures are an edition of twenty five. My initial cost is nothing; it's from there on that really costs. When I take things to foundry, their prices are constantly



**"ONE LAST LOOK"**



**"B.C. STONE RAM"**

increasing. The bronze metal itself isn't expensive; it's the labor and time that is expensive. My own labor doesn't make much difference; I work for nothing.

"The next step is the sale. I've sold bronzes from the East Coast to the West Coast. I sold one to a gentleman who took it to Washington, D.C., not too long ago. He is in the House of Representatives. I have people who collect them directly from me, and others are sold in galleries. There are several galleries where I show my work. Some of them are in Vail, Colorado Springs, and there is a new wildlife museum down in Monument that also shows my work."

Floyd talked about other phases of his life. "I watch the store, do my taxidermy and travel when I can. I do show my work around. Last spring I was down in Phoenix for three or four days. I belong to the North American Wild Sheep Association. At their yearly convention, all the big game guides attend, and they have a big auction that lasts two days. People donate many different kinds of things; I donated a bronze last year, and others donated wildlife paintings. At this particular convention, they raised over \$200,000.00 just to put into sheep projects in North America and Old Mexico.

"If I didn't sculpt, I probably wouldn't be doing a lot of things I do now. The hunting comes first, then the sculpting, and the sculpting leads to more hunting. It's just my interest."

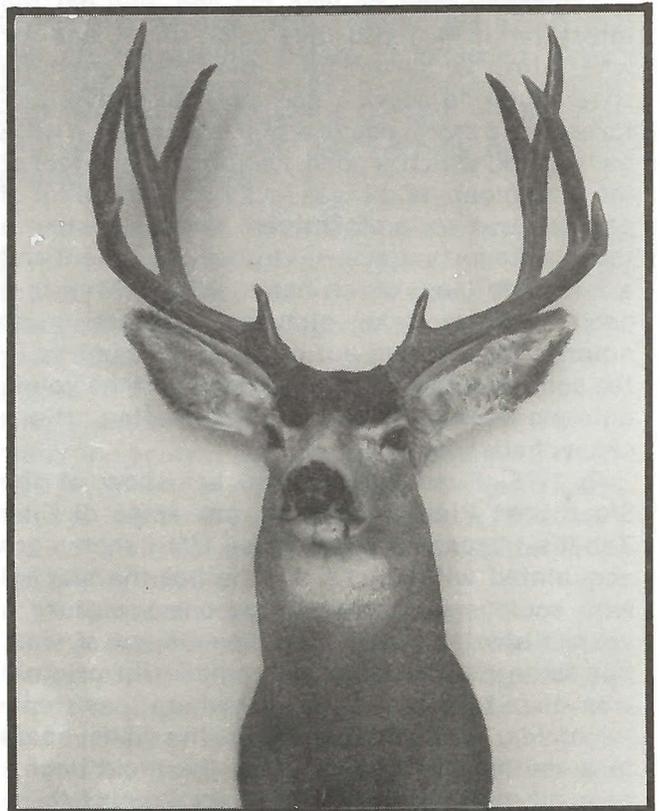
Then I questioned Floyd about his other in-

terests and hobbies. He told me of his love of anything having to do with wildlife. "Wildlife photography is probably my most challenging hobby, but sculpting takes work, too. First I research; anything I can get my hands on as a model or reference, I use.

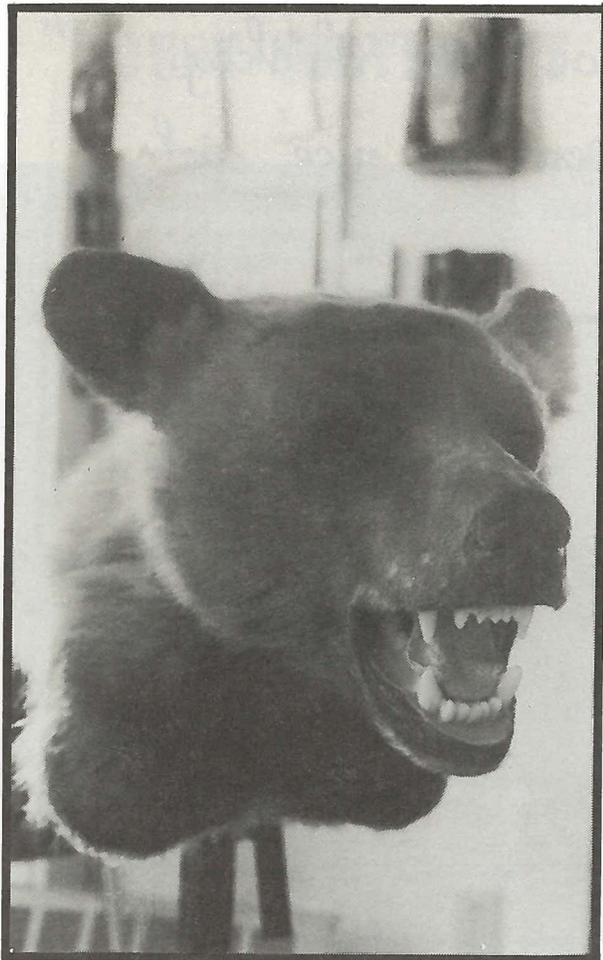
Then, naturally, what comes along but taxidermy. There are measurements that won't quit, everything from A-Z on wildlife. I took a taxidermy magazine for photographs, and the next thing I knew I began doing taxidermy.

"Taxidermy has a meaning. Taxi means to arrange, and dermy is to arrange the skin on a mannequin. To begin, I skin out what they call the cape. It must be skinned in a certain way so it can be mounted later. I don't cut the throat. It's normally cut up the back of his neck. After I skin the animal out, the hide must be fleshed and salted down. Then I send the hide to a tannery, because the tanning process is one of its own. Tanners use chemicals and machinery to flesh down capes. They use a knife-type instrument to shave it all down so it's real pliable. When I get the hide back, I've got the mannequin ready to attach the horns and set in the eyes. Horns are always left on the skull, and I take big long wooden screws to set them into the block.

"There are three simple measurements which tell how big the animal is. Nose to eye, length of head and how large the neck is. A mannequin is either small, medium, large or extra large. After sculpting the mannequin I put the cape back on.



**ANOTHER WORK OF TAXIDERM.**



## **A LARGE BEAR THAT IS STILL BEING WORKED ON.**

In order to do so I soak it and sew up any tears or bullet holes. I put it on with a certain glue, which takes several days to dry. Then I paint around the eyes and nose to complete the touch up. Eventually the animal looks alive again.

"Denver has one of the biggest taxidermy studios in the world, Jonas Brothers. I select mannequins by looking up the requirements in a catalog first. Most forms used now are made of ejected foam and are highly detailed. But there's still lots of sculpting which must be performed for it to satisfy the end requirements for the trophy.

"I also love to hunt sheep. There are four types of big horn sheep. There's the Rocky Mountain Big Horn Sheep, which we have in Colorado, the Desert Sheep in Old Mexico, Nevada, Arizona and California, and in Canada Stone Sheep, and British Columbia, Alaska, the Yukon and Northwest Territory have Dall Sheep there. But there's something I like about all of them.

"I could go to Canada with a big outfitter and probably bring home a good trophy caribou or bear. But the thing that a lot of people don't understand about trophy hunting is that they think people hunt strictly for the horns. The real

trophy hunter will pass a lot of game without shooting it. They want something they've got their sights on; a bigger trophy. In my book, the trophy hunter is a real sportsman.

"I went hunting for Stone Sheep in British Columbia a couple of years ago. I flew to Washington and spent the night, while my luggage went to Alberta and not to Watson Lake. The next day I met three other fellows who were going to the same hunting camp. We flew from Watson Lake for two hours to the south. It was a good camp, a good outfit, and they had good horses.

"Before I went I talked on the phone to the man who was heading the hunt. The outfitter asked me how big a ram I wanted. I told him that weekend I would be forty years old, so I would like a 40 inch ram. He said it wouldn't be easy, but that we would try.

"The first day it was snowing until three o'clock, and then the sun finally came out. We were 500 yards from camp in a big basin when we saw a ram with a broken horn; I passed it by. The next day we went out again, and we had only gone two miles when these two rams ran across the valley floor in front of us. We passed them by because we thought we could do better. Two miles later we spotted another one. We couldn't see it too well, and it took us four hours to get to where we could really see it good, passed it by. Then we saw a couple more, but passed them too. It was getting late, so we set up a spike camp to continue the next day. That night it snowed six or eight inches, and that made the next day slick going.

"The next day we saw some sheep on the side of the hill, and the guide said the one in back was the best one. I laid down and fired, but missed on the first shot, but not second. Down the hill the sheep rolled and all I could do was hope that the horns didn't break. As it turned out, his horns were forty inches, the trophy most hunters dream about when hunting for sheep."

I, Dan Schmitt, recently moved from Brazil and really have enjoyed working on Three Wire Winter, especially with my first story. I found Floyd is a very dedicated man who takes his works seriously. In Brazil there aren't any serious hunters or anyone so involved and interested in wildlife. I was really impressed with his art works. His bronzes are fantastic, and his taxidermy is almost perfect. Every country needs such hunters and artists.

