

## Hunters do cry Transcript

*[Driving ambi fades in]  
[ringtone]*

*Taylor Quimby: Is it on speaker?*

*Felix Poon: Yeah.*

*Nate Hegyi: Hey.*

*Felix Poon: Hey, Nate Hegyi.*

*Nate Hegyi: How are you?*

*Felix Poon: I'm good. I'm in the car with Taylor. He's driving.*

**NH: So a couple months ago, producer Felix Poon called me on his way to upstate New York.**

*Felix Poon: I've been getting flashes of nervousness, like, over the past couple of weeks. And then a flash of excitement last night*

*Felix Poon: part of me wishes that we don't see any deer this weekend.*

*Nate Hegyi: I get that man, because I've had that feeling before.*

**[MUX IN]**

**NH: Felix is 41. He's never killed an animal. Never shot a gun. But here he was, headed upstate... to go on his first, ever, hunting trip.**

**But picking up hunting isn't like picking up jogging. It's a commitment – there's gear, licenses, safety courses.**

**And there's a *culture* to hunting – 97 percent of people who hunt in America are white. That's according to the US Fish and Wildlife service.**

**That can be enough for Felix, or any person of color, to see hunting and think... “eh...no thanks.”**

**This hunting trip Felix is going on? It's put together by a non-profit called Hunters of Color – to teach people of color who are new to hunting, how to hunt.**

**And it's no joke – three full days, in the Catskill mountains... crammed into an Airbnb with dozens of strangers.**

*Taylor Quimby: Yeah, I kind of feel like I'm dropping you off at, like, the weirdest summer camp ever.*

*Nate Hegyi: Well, guys, drive safe. Felix, have fun hunting.*

*Felix Poon: Uh, is it fun? I don't know, am I gonna have fun?*

**<<NUTGRAPH>>**

**NH: Today on Outside/In, we follow Felix into the woods...**

**... To see whether a weekend in the Catskills can convert a long time city dweller**

*Felix Poon: You're just holding that duck by its head, how do you feel?*

*Dorothy: Like a baller (laughter)*

**...into a dedicated deer hunter.**

*[SKINNING AMBI]*

*Erica: Alright who's going to bite into the heart when they get their first deer? The raw heart?*

**Felix will take it from here.**

**[THEME MUX FADE OUT]**

**<<FIRST HALF>>**

*Taylor Quimby: 11...309...*

*Felix Poon: It's supposed to be a big house, so I think you're...this looks like it, like right here.*

**Felix Poon: We roll up to the AirBnB, and we see a bunch of guys on the back porch. White dudes. with big beards, wearing camo, and drinking beer.**

*[short pause]*

**We're in the middle of *nowhere* — like, it *seems* like we're in the right place...but It's not *what I* was expecting for a group called the Hunters of Color.**

*Brandon Dale: Hey!*

*Felix Poon:Hi!*

*Brandon Dale: Are you Felix?*

*Felix Poon: Yes I'm Felix.*

*Brandon Dale: Cool, good to meet you, Brandon.*

**Turns out, the people of color are inside the house. There's Brandon Dale, he's the New York ambassador for the Hunters of Color organization. He's Black, from Louisiana, and he's the head honcho for the weekend.**

*Felix Poon: So should I find a place and claim it?  
Basically is what you're saying?*

*Brandon Dale: There are no beds to claim left, I suppose,  
but find a space maybe that you like...*

**Felix Poon: Brandon is the kind of guy who seems like he's comfortable talking to literally anybody. He also talks like he's on a podcast that's sped up at like, one point five times the speed.**

[MUX IN]

*Brandon Dale: it's kind of a free for all, we'll figure it all out!*

*Felix Poon:Yeah, thanks Brandon!*

*Brandon Dale: Thanks for coming!*

**So the Airbnb is *listed* as 8 bedrooms, but it's not like you can count them, because this is a labyrinth of hallways and stairs.**

**And I go off trying to look for a place to set up my air mattress... and then I head outside.**

[MUX SWELL AND UNDER]

[FADE IN CHIT CHAT AMBI ON BACK PORCH]

*Tim: Yo! [whistle]*

*Brandon Dale: Thank you Tim. Alright, so, hello everyone, welcome, really really pumped to meet everyone...*

[MUX FADE OUT]

**Felix Poon: So, there's maybe thirty folks here. We're outside on the back porch. There's a covered hot tub, and laid across the top of it are about a dozen crossbows.**

[FADE CLAPPING IN]

*Brandon Dale: Seriously, thank you all so much. Yeah I really can't wait to hear more about all of you individually.*

*Seriously thanks for trusting us, I think like there's a lot of trust involved in showing up to a random house in the middle of nowhere, with strangers.*

*[laughter]*

*Yeah with strangers, and with lots and lots of weapons...*

*But I think that is the thing we're trying to do, to create that space where people can feel that trust and feel that community, and like, grow in that hunting journey, and it takes a family.*

*With that, I think we'll jump right into it, and so maybe if you're interested in getting right on the crossbows.*

*Tim: I can take them over there.*

*Brandon Dale: Sweet, go with Tim, maybe we can get three or four.*

*[FADE OUT]*

**Felix Poon: Before getting my hunting license, I had to take an online hunter safety course that was like 6 or 7 hours total. It was one of those fake-friendly corporate voices that reads out the text.**

*[Video]*

**It had videos of hunters, mostly white guys, shooting guns, killing deer, and ducks.**

**It was the sort of thing you might see in an online like cybersecurity training for work... only we weren't learning about phishing scams, we were learning about muzzle-loaders.**

*[Video]*

**But Watching videos about firearms is one thing...actually holding and firing one, is a whole 'nother thing.**

*[Shooting range ambi fade in]*

*Tim: This is a bolt. You can see it just looks like a short arrow. It's got this very very sharp point on the front.*

**The group is made up of mentors and mentees. Most of the bearded guys I saw on the porch when I first got here - they're mentors.**

*Tim: Anytime you're using a weapon, you basically want to always regard it as though it's loaded at all times. Don't point it at anybody or anything you don't want to shoot, so always....[fade out]*

**After the safety talk, we take turns shooting at these styrofoam boxes the size of milk crates.**

**One of the mentees steps up to the line, and takes aims...**

*Tim: Range is hot.*

*[flying crossbow release and hit]  
[mentors' applause]*

*Mentors: Yeah! That's a kill! That's a kill! Get your skinning knife out (laughter)*

*Tim: Take that finger off the trigger*

**Felix Poon: Behind the crossbow is Dorothy Ren. Dorothy's Asian, from New York City. And she's always got a serious look on her face. But that changes when you talk to her.**

*Felix Poon: What was that like for you by the way?*

*Dorothy: It felt really good.*

*Felix Poon: Yeah?*

*Dorothy: I was just thinking it's gonna be very different shooting...*

*Felix Poon: An animal?*

*Dorothy: An animal, and not a styrofoam box. Yeah it was cool. Yeah it felt really nice.*

*[dinner ambi bed fade in]*

*[clanging glass]*

*Mentee: there's rabbit, like there's so many different avenues man, there's the big game, there's deer, there's elk, ya know?*

*Brandon Dale: Okay, dinner is ready, we're just gonna form a line...*

*[FADE AMBI DOWN, KEEP UNDER]*

*[[photos of the airbnb](#) for description]*

**Felix Poon: The sun sets. And we're all gathered in the living room to eat a dinner of venison ragu pasta.**

**The living room is huge, with big lofted ceilings. And it can't seem to make up its mind if it's a rustic log cabin, or if it's a venue for a bachelorette party. There's even a**



**couple of leftover balloon letters still taped to an accent wall.**

*[Brandon yells to get attention]*

**We all go around the circle and introduce ourselves, almost like a support group.**

*Stephanie: I am so excited to be here and I'm so nervous for tomorrow, but I'm very, very excited. Anyway, my name is Stephanie*

**There's about an even number of men and women among the mentees. Most are in their twenties and thirties. Some are older, and some have hunted a few times before at other events.**

*Eric Travis: I'm glad to be here. My family says that I'm not an animal lover, you know? But, uh, I'm really enjoying it, and, uh. Really glad to be here. Good to meet everybody.*

*Brandon Dale: And Eric on his first year got*

*a beautiful buck that you should ask him to see the picture.*

*AJ: Oh, wow.*

*Eric Travis: Lucky shot. Yes, sir. Right. Here.*

**Everyone's reasons for learning how to hunt are different.**

*Vivian: I completely learned all about how hunters are true environmentalists.*

*AJ: And I met these people of color from all over the US. I was like, wait, POC traveling with firearms? You did what?*

*Erica Braxton: So then, you know, right. I guess maybe a little bit before Covid, you know, nobody's asking me, do I want to go half for the deer? Now they're telling me, oh no, we keeping the meat for our family now because, you know, just to make ends meet. Mhm. And one guy said if you want it so bad, you better get out there and get your own. All right. I'm gonna have to do this if I want to eat it. And that's what brought me here.*

**There's a total of 14 mentees, and 20-something mentors. One of them is Brant.**

*Brant MacDuff: Uh, I got into hunting because I was really into animals. I always wanted to study animals. Uh, and history. I studied history of conservation, history of taxidermy. And studying all that through the lens of hunting.*

**Brant started hunting as an adult - which makes him an outlier among the mentors because most of them learned as teens, with their dads and uncles.**

*Brant MacDuff: I was like, well, I guess I maybe I'll start hunting. And that was, uh, 6 or 7 years ago now.*

**Felix Poon: Colleen is the only mentor who's a woman. [Only about 10% of hunters in the US are women.](#)**

*Colleen: Why do I hunt? Why do I drag myself out of my nice, warm bed at 3:00 in the morning to go sit in a tree in*

*the dark? Well, um. I love watching the woods wake up. Mhm. I love the smell of sun warmed pine needles. I love hearing the tch...tch...tch. Is it a deer? No, it's a squirrel.*

*[laughs]*

*And I love the excitement and the pounding of my heart. Oh, here it comes. Oh, it's close enough.*

*[MUX IN]*

*Colleen: Can I shoot this? Am I going to shoot this?*

**What Colleen's describing is exactly what I imagine hunting will be. The calm of nature, buried under nervous anticipation of a kill. And then, the visceral connection to the death of the animal you're going to eat.**

*Colleen: And I love following the blood trail to the deer. And I love putting my hands on that deer that gave me its life so I can eat.*

**This is why I'm here. This is what I want to experience.**

**I just...don't know how I'm gonna feel when the moment comes.**

**[MUX OUT]**

*Felix Poon: You know, I'm really contemplating some of the stuff I was saying before, like*

*Like, how do you respectfully take a life to sustain your own? I think that's a really interesting question. Um, so I'm like, glad to be here with everyone to, like, see how*

*people manage that and how they think about that for themselves. Um, so I'm really glad to be here.*

**[CROSSFADE]**

*Brandon Dale: And so we wanted to give a huge round of applause to everyone for opening up, just being honest, being vulnerable and, uh, hopefully killing some deer this week.*

**[APPLAUSE – AMBI OUT]**

**[MUX IN]**

**[AUDIO DIARY]**

*Felix Poon: Alright it's Friday night, 11:45pm, just lying down to go to bed. And we have to be up in a little over 4 hours so we're not gonna get a ton of sleep. And I'm already exhausted from the day*

*So yeah, we'll see if I see any deer tomorrow morning, and if I can get any shots off.*

**[MUX SWELL AND FADE OUT]**

**<<MIDROLL – SECOND HALF>>**

**[Ambi – getting in trucks]**

*Jeff: We're gonna have to do like a 12-point turn to get out of here...*

**It's 5am in the morning, we get into a bunch of trucks and head off to hunt. The spot we're going to is 45 minutes**

**away. And right away we're already seeing deer... everywhere.**

*Jeff: There's another one.*

*Brant MacDuff: Wait there's one.*

*Jeff: Sometimes three.*

*Felix Poon: One just crossed the road.*

*Brant MacDuff: See they do exist.*

*Felix Poon: Jeez, they're everywhere.*

*Jeff: See at least you can't say you didn't see any deer.*

**[MUX IN]**

**A guy named Jeff is driving the truck, and in the front passenger seat is Brant, my mentor. He's the one who said he got into hunting because he loves animals.**

**I'm sitting in the back.**

**[MUX OUT]**

*Felix Poon: So I feel like this might be a little awkward, but what are the options for taking a dump if I need to?*

**Felix Poon: Here I am, this public radio reporter, and I'm either about to shit my pants like a little kid... or barf all over the back seat**

*Felix Poon: I wonder if uh...sorry I'm just making a request for my motion sickness, if it's possible to drive, a little slower and smoother*

*Jeff: Uh, I can try.*

*[Country mux under]*

**Felix Poon: I'm pretty relieved when we finally pull up to the edge of the woods. Thank God I've held it together....**

*Felix Poon: Whooo boy [loud grunt/sigh]*

**Felix Poon: This place is dark...pitch black if it wasn't for our headlamps. All the mentor/mentee pairs fan out into the woods looking for our blinds, which are these little tents that the organizers came out a couple weeks ago and setup.**

*[footsteps]*

*Felix Poon: Hello*

*Neena: Hi. Are you recording?*

*Felix Poon: I've got a lav mic on right now, which, you know...*

**A freelance producer we hired for the day joins me and Brant, so I don't have to hold onto a mic and a crossbow at the same time.**

**We put on our headlamps and a couple of small foldable chairs, and make our way into the woods to find our blind.**

*[footsteps]*

*Brant: we just have to follow the coordinates to find it. So I'm just trying to follow the compass.*

*[footsteps]*

**Brant is using an app on his phone to try and navigate.**

**We're off to a bad start.**

*Brant: I took us to the wrong side of the ravine, so that's my bad. We're just gonna, we're gonna cross to the other side. I'll stay here, I'll hold your stuff if you wanna cross first.*

**Felix Poon: Ideally we want to be in the blind before it gets light out. And, now... it's getting light out.**

*It's just turning us around, it's trying to figure out where we are*

*Brant MacDuff: See now it wants us to cross the small ravine again.*

*[loud footsteps – folding chairs clanging]*

[MUX IN]

**Felix Poon: After we cross the ravine, again, we finally see it.**

*MacDuff: Do you see it?*

*Felix Poon: Yeah.*

**Except, we're on the wrong side of the ravine.**

*Brant MacDuff: So, we just need to cross again...[laughter]*

**[MUX SWELL]**

*[zipper / getting into the blind ambi]*

**Felix Poon: The blind is all camo colors. A little bigger than a porta-potty.**

**[MUX OUT]**

**The three of us get set up on our foldable chairs inside. Brant pulls a zipper to open a small window to the outside, that I'll be shooting through hopefully.**

**And then I arm my bow.**

*[CLICK - arming the bow]*

*Brant MacDuff: So leave your safety on.*

**And we wait.**

*[long silence]*

*Felix Poon [whispering]: So how likely do you think it is? We'll see. Deer.*

*Brant MacDuff [whispering] : You truly, truly, truly never know. They really appear out of nowhere. As much as you can understand, deer biology and deer movement, they really move through the forest like ghosts. And all of a*



*sudden they'll just be right there. And it's the most shocking thing. Um, so you really never know.*

*[quiet ambi]*

*Felix Poon [whispering] : My gut has settled down. I had... this may be TMI, but I had two issues going on. The motion sickness. And then I was like, I think I need to poop too.*

*Brant MacDuff [whispering] : Managing your BMs in the woods is a legit thing. Like, I am normally like clockwork, but it's just too early. So it's like, I can't be. I can't be messing around with that.*

*Felix Poon [whispering] : I think I made a mistake too this morning. I was like, I think I'll, I'll drink some coffee. That'll stimulate me. But then it didn't come. Anyways...*

*Brant MacDuff [whispering]: sometimes it's too early.*

*Felix Poon: Now I've got coffee in my system. Yeah, it's pretty quiet.*

*Neena Pathak [whispering]: It's like a ghost, you know like it doesn't come. And then all of a sudden it comes and it's like, really? It's invigorating. And. I'm talking about BMs.*

[MUX IN]

**I've always imagined hunting from the perspective of a stalker. Slowly stepping through the woods, crouched low like a tiger, or a wolf.**

**And then - BAM - I'm kneeling over the kill, feeling a bittersweet sense of gratitude.**

***This... isn't that kind of hunting.***

**It's more like those nature videos you see of trap-door spiders, or sea creatures that hide, until the right time to ambush their prey.**

**And stillness feels like it has a static charge in the air. I turn my head at the slightest tch tch tch of the sound of leaves...**

**[MUX OUT]**

*[squirrel sighting]*

*Felix Poon [whispering] :It was just a squirrel*

*Brant [whispering] : It always is.*

**Felix Poon: This isn't what I thought hunting would be like.**

*[yawn]*

**Felix Poon: Hunting is slow. There's a lot of waiting around, doing nothing. Trying to stay in the present is like meditating with a crossbow in your hand.**

*[bird call]*

**Felix Poon: To pass the time, I pepper Brant with questions – about deer behavior, wildlife conservation, the ethics of *trophy* hunting...and Brant's first kill.**

*Brant MacDuff [whispering]: The first deer I ever shot was a trophy, to me, he was just a scraggly button buck with a bunch of warts by his eyes. He was ugly as hell. But I will never forget him ever.*

*Felix Poon [whispering]: Was that your first animal that you killed?*

*Brant MacDuff [whispering]: Yeah, that was my first big game animal. Um, you know, aside from, like, fishing and stuff like that. Um*

*Felix Poon [whispering]: What was that like for you?*

*Brant [whispering]: Oh, man, I really thought that I was just going to be bawling my eyes out, like just crying like a baby. I was very much prepared for that. But in the moment you become so laser-focused.*

*There was absolutely nothing else that I was thinking about. And I did give myself a few excuses not to take the shot. I said, oh, you know, I don't really like the angle where he's standing. Or maybe that branch is in the way. And then he just kept getting closer and closer, and the angle kept getting better and better. And I said, okay, I this is the opportunity. It is perfect.*

[MUX IN]

*At that point, I wasn't thinking too much. I just knew that that was the right moment.*

*And I squeezed the trigger.*

*And then following, the blood trail, and then seeing him there in the grass. I mean, I was mostly in shock. And then and then it is sort of a bizarre feeling when you like, kneel down and you get close to him and you put your hands on him and, you know, you feel a soft body, it's still warm.*

*Brant MacDuff [whispering]: he was young and that was the that was the tag that I had for him. So yeah, I definitely I felt bad for him. You know, you sit there and you're like sorry little guy.*

**He felt bad... but, he mostly felt proud, and...something deeper...**

*Brant MacDuff [whispering]: You can't believe you're so connected to every human who's ever done it before. Uh, you know, we're here with hunters of color, and it. Because we're so used to thinking of hunters, as, you know, old white guys. You kind of forget that hunting is integral to absolutely every person on planet Earth, no matter where they came from, what background they have. Like, that's how we became us., it was feeding ourselves through hunting and foraging*

[MUX FADE OUT]

*[zipper ambi]*

**Felix Poon: We don't see anything in the morning, so we go back to the Airbnb for lunch, and come back to try again in the afternoon.**

**Brant says he's always more anxious hunting at the end of the day, because the clock is ticking to sundown.**

**Hunting essentially becomes illegal after dark, so it's a hard stop.**

*[quiet ambi]*

**We're not talking as much – because we're just quietly waiting.**

*[ambi]*

**And waiting.**

*[ambi]*

**And waiting.**

*Felix Poon [whispering]: I feel like I actually slept... Wait, what was that? What was that?*

*Brant MacDuff [whispering]: Branches.*

*Felix Poon [whispering]: Jesus Christ. Branches... like they just fall off?*

*Brant MacDuff [whispering]: But we know that they make a sound.*

*Felix Poon [whispering]: We were here to hear it.*

**Until dusk is just minutes away, and I think, “how wild would it be if this was the moment a deer slowly crept into view.”**

**You can hear us almost trying to manifest a deer, the way you stare at a red light willing it to be green.**

*Brant MacDuff [whispering]: right now is the time they are moving. So uh, I mean that's, that's what happens often is you're just sitting here, nothing happens all day. And then it's really in like the last four minutes of legal light that a big group of deer starts moving through and you're like, ahhh.*

*Felix Poon [whispering]: It all comes down to this...*

*[quiet ambi – a couple seconds]*

**Felix Poon: And then... the sun sets. Legal light is over. No deer today. In fact, I wouldn't see a single deer for the whole weekend. Not in the woods anyway.**

**[MUX IN – SWELL – DUCK UNDER]**

*Dorothy: That's where it got shot?*

*Bryan: Yes, and as I take the skin off we'll be able to see even better. Yeah.*

**Felix Poon: Back at the AirBnB, on the back porch, one of the mentors, Brian, is about to give a butchering demo. The porch is covered with tarp, and there's a dead deer lying on its side.**

**Brian's a TANK of a guy, probably 6 foot 4, [bald, long white beard](#).**

**To be clear, nobody else saw deer today either. This one was brought in for demonstration purposes.**

**And, just a warning, I'll be playing sounds of skinning and butchering a deer. If you don't want to hear this, you can skip forward 1 minute and 15 seconds.**

**[MUX OUT]**

*Bryan: So I'm gonna start with taking the legs off*

*[sawing sound]*

*This is just a normal meat saw. You can do it without a saw.*

*[fade under]*

**Felix Poon: I came here because I wanted to be more connected with the food I eat. But this is the closest I'm gonna get this weekend.**

**About a dozen of us, mostly mentees gather around, and lean in to get a good look.**

*Bryan: Now this was a doe, you can tell. So here would be the udder. If it was old enough there might be some milk in here. And you wanna avoid that because milk will taint the meat. As a matter of fact...*

*AJ: Is that white stuff the milk?*

*Bryan: Uh, that's just the whole mammary gland. I don't think there's any milk, she seems a little young.*

**Felix Poon: I find this detail fascinating, and sad at the same time.**

*Felix Poon: Oh, there goes the head.*

*Bryan: this can get a little...gory for some.*

*[HEAD SNAP]*

*Mentor: The chiropractor!*

*[laughter]*

[MUX IN - SCENE FADES OUT]

**Felix Poon: At the end of the weekend, Brandon - the lead organizer - pulls up a chair to talk.**

*[ chairs dragging on floor]*

**I'm trying to figure something out with him. If you don't see deer in the woods - did you really go hunting?**

*Brandon Dale: as someone who'd been hunting for over 20 years now, uh, most times I don't see deer. So this is actually a pretty common experience.*

*like, no one was here just because they wanted to like, kill a deer like that wasn't the end goal.*

**I mean... it kind of was the goal.**

*Brandon Dale: Uh, like, of course that was the goal, but it wasn't like the end all be all. It was part of the process. And I think really everyone appreciated that process.*

*Animals are incredible, and like they rule this world. And we too are becoming part of that natural system when we*



*hunt, which I really appreciate because I think it puts people in perspective. As you said, you've like hiked before, you've like moved through nature, but like moving through something, uh, and sort of observing it versus like being part of it or like pretty distinct. And so I really appreciate that. I think people like kind of got that experience. And for those who did see deer, it's like, I mean, they're on cloud nine,*

**As a producer, I feel pretty disappointed. How am I gonna leave this place without tape of even seeing a deer?**

**But I do think the other mentees were pretty psyched about everything this weekend. And maybe that's the point.**

*Brandon Dale: I think the big piece of this is really like establishing community with people who can continue their hunting journey. And I think that that has been 100% done, which has been really great and always a highlight in my book.*

**[MUX SWELL AND OUT]**

**[FADE IN LIVING ROOM CHAT AMBI]**

**Felix Poon: Before we all leave and go our separate ways, we gather once more in the living room. The one with the big letter-balloons still clinging to wall.**

*Brandon: So, I think for me, it's always hard because there were so many highlights...*

**This is cell phone tape of our closing circle, so the audio quality isn't great.**

*Tracy: So I'll start with my thorn, because that's easy. Um, I was just cold, even though I thought I was prepared.*

*[DUCK UNDER]*

**We're doing an exercise that you might do at the end of a group retreat. It's called "rose, bud, thorn."**

**The rose is a highlight you want to share. The thorn is a challenge - and the bud is something you're looking forward to.**

**And...it's surprisingly emotional.**

*Tracy: Oh, jeez. Okay.*

*Vivian: Hunters do cry.*

*Tracy: I never cry. Um, no but...*

**There's lots of genuine gratitude going around, for the program itself, and for each other**

*Dorothy: I got to go squirrel hunting, and I got to shoot a shotgun...*

**Felix Poon: This is Dorothy, she's the one I talked to at the shooting range, who wondered what it'd be like to shoot animals instead of boxes.**

**The whole weekend Dorothy was really active. Like, she *jumped* at the chance to gut a duck.**

**She was one of the few mentees who stuck around *after* the butchering demo to finish carving the rest of it. Her**

mentor was Brian, the guy who did the demo, aka the “chiropractor”.

**He’s the kind of guy that looks really intimidating if you saw him on the street, because he just towers above you.**

*Dorothy: It was one of those things that’s like... I got to go on a walk with my mentor...who is my rose.*

**She called him her “rose”.**

*[laughter, “awww”, someone’s gonna cry]*

*Dorothy: Um. I just felt like all weekend he really listened and responded to, like, all of the ramblings, all of the questions.*

*We’re gonna grab tea like in the city and talk weird plant shit after, like I just. Like, I just I just can’t imagine having opportunities like this. It’s not even a dream because I never thought that I would be having an experience like this.*

**And then it’s my turn...**

*Felix Poon: The roses were kind of like all those kind of like learnings, you know, that felt like like a private lesson, uh, delivered in ASMR in the, in the blind.*

**Felix Poon: And, on top of rose-bud-thorn we’re also doing watering cans – which is when you share an appreciation of someone else in the group.**

**And I don’t expect *this*...**

*Felix Poon: and then watering can. Um, you know, I guess this is related to my my, uh, my rose, but, like, I learned a lot, I think from from Brent.*

**Felix Poon: But, I cry too! I don't expect it because I'm like, what is there to cry about? In fact, I've been mispronouncing Brant's name the whole time, calling him Brent. And he's never corrected me. How can I be crying for this man when I can't even get his name right?**

**[MUX SWELL]**

**When I tell people about my experience, the number one thing they wanna know is: will I go hunting again?**

**I like the idea of hunting, as a way of connecting to my distant ancestors who hunted, as a way of connecting to the natural world.**

**I've felt that connection from foraging in the woods, when I've stumbled on a flush of maitake mushrooms, or picked wild paw-paws from the forest floor.**

**But if I hunt again, it's not gonna be because my ancestors pushed me to pick up a gun and go out into the woods. It'll be because of the people I meet, at places like this.**

**Because I don't have family that hunts. None of my friends in Boston are going crossbow hunting on the weekends.**

**So I'll have to *make* friends with hunters, and build my *own* community.**

**And this crew here? We've already got a whatsapp chat. People are posting memes, planning their next hunting trips. Posting pictures of venison steaks.**

**And I gotta say.... It all looks pretty good.**

**[MUX SWELL]**

**NH: If you wanna see photos from Felix's hunting trip, be sure to follow us on social media. We're AT Outside In Radio on X and Instagram.**

**And sign up for our newsletter for a behind the scenes look at the making of this episode – You can do that on our website, at [OutsideinRadio.Org](http://OutsideinRadio.Org).**

**NH: And...we wanna hear from you. Are you new to hunting? What was your first time hunting like? You can send us an email at [OutsideIn@NHPR.ORG](mailto:OutsideIn@NHPR.ORG).**

**<<CREDITS>>**

**Nate Hegyi: This episode was reported, produced, and mixed by Felix Poon.**

**It was edited by Taylor Quimby with help from Rebecca Lavoie, director of podcasts.**

**I'm your host, Nate Hegyi. Our team also includes Justine Paradise.**

**Felix Poon: Special thanks to our freelance producer for this episode, Neena Pathak, and to all the mentors, mentees, and everyone else who was part of my first hunting experience.**

**Music in this episode was by Blue Dot sessions, Hanna Lindgren, and Walt Adams.**

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