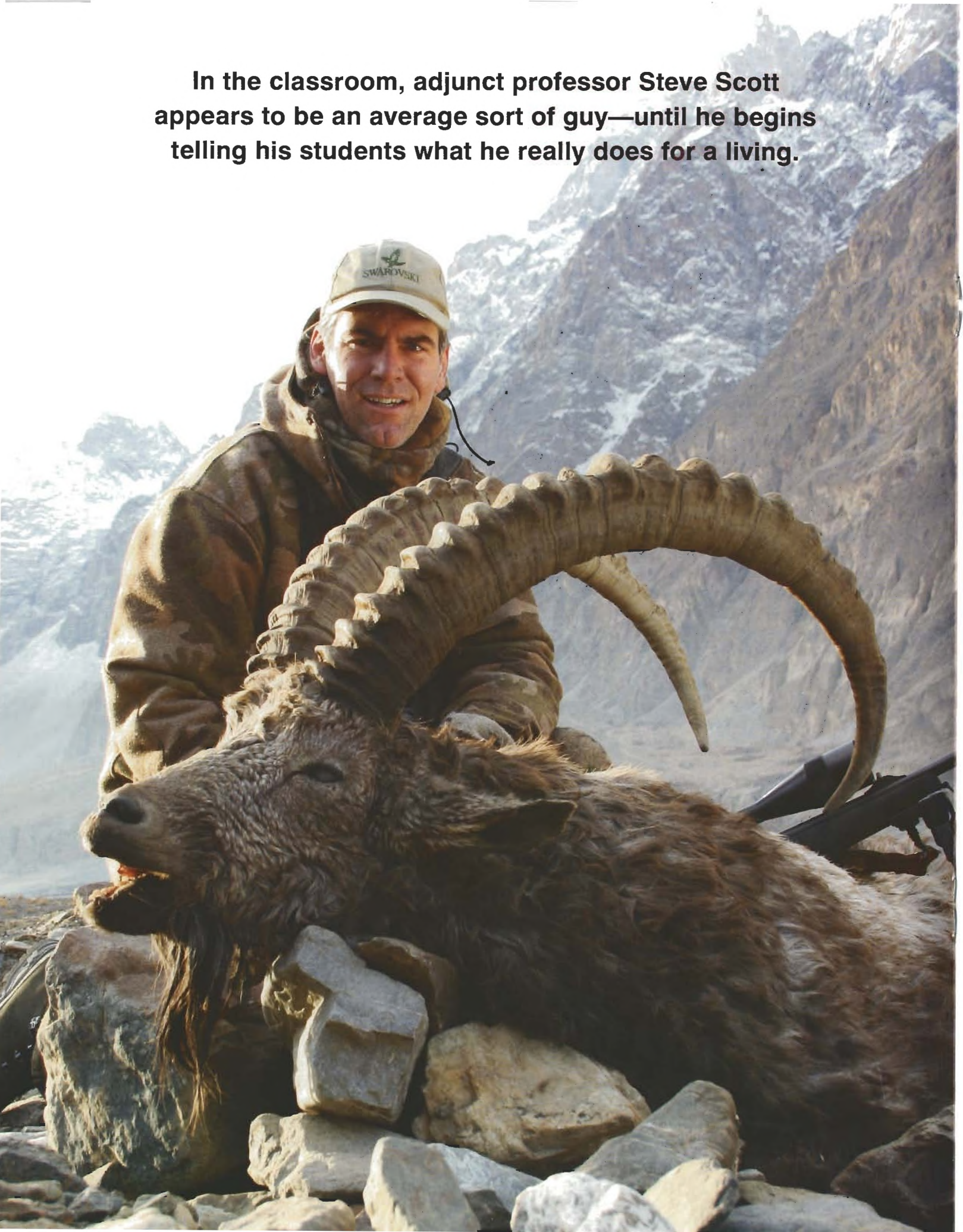


In the classroom, adjunct professor Steve Scott appears to be an average sort of guy—until he begins telling his students what he really does for a living.



LIVING ON THE WILD SIDE

BY LAURIE DERNICK
PHOTOS PROVIDED

With his heart pounding and his adrenaline rushing, Steve Scott was running for his life from a charging elephant when things got even worse—he pulled a hamstring and collapsed to the ground. The earth shaking with each thundering step of gigantic feet, Scott lay motionless in the tall grass as the trumpeting elephant drew nearer. He had only seconds to decide what to do before the enraged beast trampled him. Suddenly Scott reached up and threw his hat as hard as he could, desperately hoping it would distract his would-be assailant.

Risky and often life-threatening situations, like nearly being trampled to death by an elephant or stomped by an ostrich, are not daily occurrences for most University of Oklahoma faculty members. For Steve Scott, adjunct professor in the Michael F. Price College of Business, living on the edge is routine.

Scott constantly tests himself against nature—often without meaning to—while hosting two nationally syndicated outdoor television shows, *Safari Hunter's Journal* and *The Outdoor Guide*. On a personal level, Scott's true passion is hunting; professionally he balances time between television and teaching an upper-division finance class at OU.

He did not plan to become a college professor; rather he fell into it. On his way to earning a BBA in finance from OU in 1983 and a juris doctorate in 1986, he sold insurance to put himself through school. Then his former finance teacher, the late Don Childress, approached Scott about teaching. Childress had accepted a position as an assistant to OU's new president, Frank Horton, and asked Scott to take over his life insurance class.

Scott accepted Childress' invitation and began teaching finance in the fall of 1987. He has been teaching the class ever since.

Finance majors at OU identify Scott as the sun-weathered and sharply dressed professor who teaches FIN 4123, Financial

Planning. They are aware, however, that that is not what he does for a living.

Safari Hunter's Journal airs on The Men's Channel Mondays at 9 p.m. CST and Saturdays at 2 p.m. CST, January through June. *The Outdoor Guide* is scheduled on Outdoor Life Network Saturdays at 8:30 a.m.

Scott says his shows differ from mainstream outdoor programs that tend to focus on hunting white-tail deer and turkeys. "We don't do turkeys," Scott says. Instead, his shows feature big-game hunting in exotic locales such as Mongolia, Pakistan, New Zealand and Africa. *Safari Hunter's Journal* features Scott in Africa, and *The Outdoor Guide* features Scott in "the rest of the world."

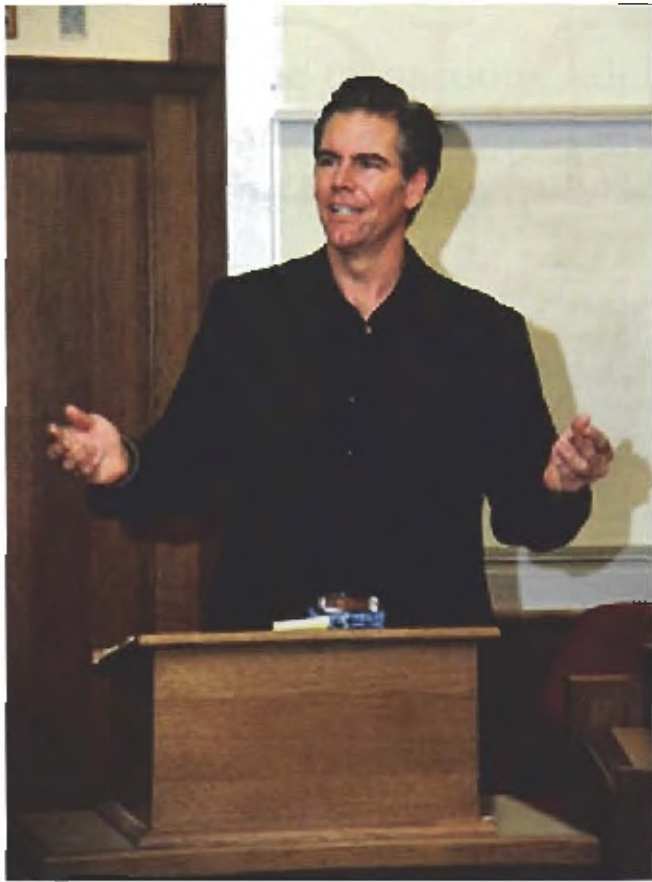
"My mission is to promote hunting as an ethical and economic sport," Scott contends. "My message is 'Hunters don't take; hunters put back.'"

The episode of *Safari Hunter's Journal* featuring Scott dodging the charging elephant is the direct result of helping a team of professional hunters and a veterinarian locate an elephant whose tracking collar no longer worked.

His mission was to find the elephant and dart it with a tranquilizer while a helicopter tracked the animal from above. A helicopter was necessary because the elephant could run for several miles before the tranquilizer kicked in, Scott explains. Once the elephant was down, the veterinarian could repair the broken collar.

Scott recalls the day as bad all around, starting with the helicopter arriving several hours late. When it finally showed, the team had to scramble to find the elephant herd before daylight was lost.

Upon finding the herd, team members carefully positioned themselves about 20 yards from the target. Little did they know



When he is not hunting wild game in exotic locations around the globe, Scott can be found teaching FIN 4123, Financial Planning, in the Michael F. Price College of Business.

that their planning was about to turn disastrous.

As Scott slowly and quietly prepared to dart the elephant, a loud noise suddenly erupted, instantly grabbing the elephants' attention—a guide's cell phone rang!

Hoping to distract the herd away from the team, the veterinarian quickly bellowed like a trumpeting elephant. His effort failed—one of the animals already had spotted the men.

With everyone frozen in position, the elephant quickly turned and stared directly at them. As he relates his tale, Scott stands with his body hunched, as if he were the wary elephant, using his arms to mimic the animal's trunk.

"Prrraahhhh!" Scott wails as he becomes the pachyderm furiously raising its trunk, ready to charge.

"One of the hunters yelled, 'Run!' and that's what we did," Scott says.

Scott's only thought was to get away from the charging beast as fast as he could—when a searing pain shot through his leg as a hamstring pulled, and he fell.

Fearing for his life with only seconds before the elephant reached him, Scott gave his hat a "Hail Mary" pass, hoping to divert the animal and send it off course. His flying miracle caught the elephant's eye in the nick of time.

"The elephant ran to my hat and stomped the hell out of it," Scott says. His life spared, Scott painfully crawled to safety.

In the classroom, the hunter-turned-professor often incorporates these escapades into his lectures. "After he threw his hat, he

rubbed his leg until he could crawl behind a tree," says Adrienne Myers, accounting graduate student and a former student of Scott's. "He was like, 'Yeah, I should have died that day.'"

Melissa Sinnott, finance and economics graduate, agrees that Scott's experiences enliven classroom discussions. "He always shares a lot of personal information with the class," Sinnott says. "He adds humorous anecdotes like movie quotes and stories about his trips."

Scott would not add teaching to his more adventurous schedule if he did not like doing it.

"There is not as much practical information taught as there should be," Scott says. "When I teach someone something and they get it, that's very rewarding."

Chris Bearrow, finance and energy management senior, realizes Scott does not have to teach but appreciates that he does. "He gives me the feeling he *wants* to be [in class], not that he *has* to be there," Bearrow says. "He shows an interest in the subject, and that comes across in his mannerisms and teaching style."

Scott insists that his shows depict him accurately. He does not want only "his good shots" used because, realistically, that is not how hunting is. *Safari Hunter's Journal* even featured a run-in Scott had with an ostrich in the Kalahari Desert.



Scott is one of a small group of hunters worldwide who have successfully vanquished a cape buffalo with a bow and arrow. The animal is legendary in Zimbabwe for its bad temper and double rib cage, both of which make it difficult to hunt and kill.

"I was kicked in the head by an ostrich, and it beat the crap out of me," Scott says. "When I can make fun of myself, like put the ostrich [incident] on, people relate to that and appreciate seeing me as I am."

Another mishap featured Scott and a water buffalo in Florida. Scott says that he was in a tree with bow and arrow poised to shoot the water buffalo on the ground below. He had perfect aim.

Releasing the bowstring, Scott was absolutely sure he would hit his target, but the arrow plunged straight down, penetrating the ground below, not remotely close to the unconcerned buffalo. Scott could not believe what had happened.

Foolishly, he had not brought along another arrow for a



Scott checks camera equipment with his guide, Asad, while on location in Pakistan. The upcoming episode of *The Outdoor Guide* was filmed in and around the village of Sost on the Pakistan/Chinese border for a show featuring the Himalayan ibex.

The shows' episodes regularly feature guests who hunt with Scott and share in his excitement. "What I am looking for is something that appeals to the audience and appeals to me," Scott says. "We had [former OU head coach] Barry Switzer and Tom Osborne [former Nebraska head coach and current U.S. congressman] on the same show fishing together."

A recent episode of *The Outdoor Guide* featured Scott and the U.S. Olympic shotgun team hunting pheasants on the former Dole plantation in Lanai, Hawaii. The

team's coach, Lloyd Woodhouse, offered shooting tips and techniques.

Other notable guests have been President George W. Bush, while he was governor of Texas, and Chris Harrison, host of ABC's reality show *The Bachelor*.


One episode of *Safari Hunter's Journal* featured Scott in Zimbabwe bagging his most treasured trophy, a cape buffalo. The buffalo kill brought Scott much esteem from hunters and native Africans. "They are without doubt the most dangerous animal when wounded," Scott says.

"I know he's one of only [a few] white guys to ever shoot a cape buffalo with a bow and arrow," Bearrow recalls from one of Scott's classroom anecdotes. "The reason it's amazing to shoot one with a bow is because when shot, cape buffalo are known for circling down wind and coming back to attack."

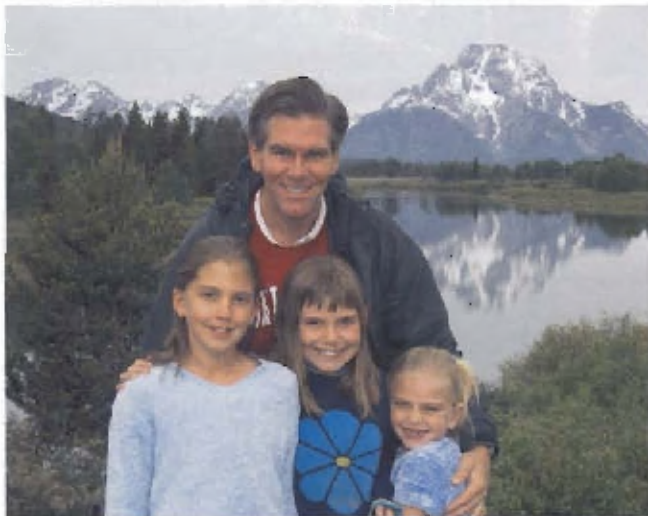
Shooting a cape buffalo is physically challenging, Scott explains. The animal has a double rib cage and to successfully kill it, the rib cage must be broken. To do this with a bow and arrow requires great accuracy and strength. The hunter must be able to draw the bow at close range without attracting the animal's attention, Scott says as he slowly and carefully pulls his arm back as if he were drawing a bow.

"I have also shot a lion at about 40 yards and darted a rhino at about 10 yards," Scott says.

Teaching finance is a significant change of pace from Scott's daring hunting expeditions and is almost therapeutic for him. "It's relaxing," Scott says.

But whatever reward teaching provides, Scott always will crave his more exotic pursuits. "For some reason, I really enjoy dangerous stuff because it really gets my adrenaline flowing," Scott says grinning. "I'm like a wild mustang." 

Laurie Dernick, who has a 2004 BA in international studies from OU, is currently a senior in the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication and a student assistant in OU Athletics Media Relations.



A love for the outdoors runs in the family. Scott and his daughters, (from left) Hayley, Madeline and Alexa, enjoy a family vacation in Yellowstone National Park.

second shot. With the cameras still rolling after the embarrassing misfire, Scott remained in the tree only to watch the water buffalo slowly and lazily approach the arrow in the ground, sniff it and just stand there, directly below Scott for what seemed to him like hours. Then, the animal scratched its back against Scott's tree, making him cling to the trunk as it swayed.

"It was right below me, and I had a perfect shot for what seemed like hours," says Scott as he snickers in disbelief. "I could have dropped an anvil on it from where I was."

Scott did not get his prey that day, but it made for an entertaining episode.