

00:00:00 Welcome back to the hair of the dog podcast. I'm your host, Nicole Begley. And today, if you're an animal lover, which you're listening to the hair of the dog podcast, so chances are you are, you're definitely going to want to stick around for this interview. I'm chatting with Jesse Villemaire and he is from follow me North and follow me North pets.

00:00:21 And he is first and foremost, a wildlife photographer and not any wildlife photographer, a pretty incredible wildlife photographer. So we are talking about all things, wildlife photography, how to get started, what that looks like, what the differences and similarities between those wildlife and dogs are and all sorts of great stuff. So stay tuned. Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast.

00:00:45 If you're a pet photographer, ready to make more money and start living a life by your design, you've come to the right place. And now your host, pet photographer, travel addict, chocolate martini connoisseur, Nicole Begley. Hey everybody. Welcome to the hair of the dog podcast. I'm your host, Nicole Begley. And today I'm so excited to have with us a pet photographer of another.

00:01:11 genre, another species, another breed. Oh no, he's still human. Jesse. Villemaire welcome to the podcast. So excited to have you here. Thank you. Thank you for inviting me on Of course, of course. Super excited to have you, your business is follow me North and you are up in, let me see if I get this right.

00:01:31 Or if I butcher it Algonquin park or a national Park. Okay. Excellent. North of Toronto. Yeah. It's a couple hours north of Toronto. So not too, too far from the big city, but very remote up here. Nice. Yeah. I keep on getting confused. We were in Boston last summer and we went up to a gun quit Maine,

00:01:53 which I'm like similar, not the same As well, right? Yeah. Not quite down that far south. I don't think so. Cute little tourist town on the, on the coast, but anyway. Yes, Yes. Yeah. It's spelled differently. It's the, it's the U S versus the Canadian side. But anyway, anyway, so yeah,

00:02:14 I had the pleasure of kind of, excuse me, meeting you and how vision last month we had a blast photographing dogs. And when your application came through for hound vision, I was like, oh my gosh, who is this guy? This work is beautiful because it was mostly when I went to your website, you know, you have the moose and the beaver and the loons and all the things.

00:02:36 So I know I love it. So, yeah. So you've had this whole wildlife photography brand. How long have you been having your following north Maine photography, wildlife brand? I think that started in 2014 when I bought a cottage up here near Algonquin park. Cause I was traveling in from Cambridge, Ontario, which is about three hours to drive up north.

00:02:59 And I was always in the back of my head. I was like, I'm going to get a place up here. It's so beautiful. It was that place to escape. But for those people that have a cottage and they escaped to the cottage, you find that it's usually a lot of work because you get up to the cottage, then you have to cut the grass.

00:03:14 You got to fix the deck, you got to, you know, the roof's leaking, whatever the case. But I was like, I'm going to finally find a way to move up here one day. And I think that was well back in 2014 when I bought the property, that's when I was thinking about it and fast forward quite a few years,

00:03:30 I think it was, it's been about three years that I've lived up here full-time now. And that's when I think the photography push really started to happen up here. And I was already dabbling in wildlife photography and it just so happened that were the following North mundane came from actually was when people back home in Cambridge were like, I'd love to see a moose.

00:03:51 I've never seen a moose in my life. I would love to get out there and explore the wilderness. And I'm like, well, just follow me North. And we'll go do that right now. And it was, it was just one of those things I just kept saying. And I'm like, well, that's sounds like a brand. I could probably work off of it.

00:04:05 I think that started in 2015 actually. Yeah. Oh, that's fantastic. So have you always had an interest in photography? Yeah, I think I started, I was always the guy that was carrying around the camera if it was even a car show back in my teen days with pets, even my dogs, like I just, I still remember the first dog photo that I got,

00:04:27 where it looked like all four limbs were lifted off the ground and my dog was floating. I'm like, oh, this is national geographic stuff here. This is amazing. So I still remember those moments. Like those key moments that stick in your head and you're like, I can do this, but I wasn't thinking I was going to become a pet photographer or a wildlife photographer per se.

00:04:48 Cause I like all genres to be honest, you know, shoot tons of different things except weddings. We all, we all have limits like about babies. We do babies. No, that's not the same Bloody and send newborns are my too hard nose. Absolutely not. Yeah. Oh, that's fantastic. So have you been, you've been doing this full-time for quite some time too,

00:05:17 right? Yeah. So I'd say about three years ago, it was a year prior to COVID happening. And I met Susan, Susan's my fiance. She's also my partner in follow me North photography. So, so when I met Susan, I met her online through the hashtag Algonquin park, believe it or not on Instagram. And I think I sent her a message,

00:05:42 something like her and her friends were camping and I'm like, oh, I noticed

you're a photographer. Would you like to meet up? And we'll go look for moose together or something that did that slide into the inbox or the DMS. And she ignored me because it went into that hidden folder. I'm going to think it did. Or maybe she did ignore me.

00:06:00 That's the story. She's telling me What she's telling me. So then anyway, you know, I think a month went by and she finally responded to me and I picked her up in Toronto cause she was living in Toronto at the time as a photographer. And she was doing a lot of still photography. Like she was doing like art, a lot of like studio work and stuff like that.

00:06:21 And she just loved the outdoors and I was like, well, let's get together and we'll hang out and we'll maybe go to Algonquin. We both have a passion for photography. We both have a passion for outdoors. Let's do it. And I feel like seriously, like from that weekend that we met, she hasn't left. You know? So we've basically decided at that point,

00:06:42 like, I mean, this is kind of, this is working, you know, why don't we try to move up north? Well, I have a cottage, you know, and she wanted to get out of the city. And at that time she was, I think she was working for Shutterstock at the time. And she couldn't, there was no such thing as remote work back then.

00:07:01 Right. So she kind of pleaded with them to give her some remote time and they're like, well, we don't do that per se. So she was going to quit and as she was going to quit, that's when they came back and said, okay, okay, we'll let you do some remote. And that was like literally a year before COVID.

00:07:19 And so we started, we started the business kind of full time. We kind of dove in headfirst, both of us into this, even though I was doing some workshops up here for wildlife photography, it wasn't something that I dove into kind of like 100% into it. And then she came into the picture and we both tag team that end of it.

00:07:38 And we have a good dynamic together. Cause she's very, she's more of that introvert. I'm more of that extrovert. She's got a lot of that studio background in that business sense and I've got the just squirrel mind and, and, and go shoot and just have a great time. Right. So, I mean, there's, you need to have that balance of those checks and balances.

00:07:59 So yeah, I think that all worked out. So it's been about three, four years now. I think that follow me North has been running. That's fantastic. And then, you know, for the wildlife photography brand, what's the kind of different income streams there. You know, you're taking images and selling, you know, framed final art pieces.

00:08:17 You're leading workshops. Is there, are those kind of the main two pieces or is there anything else? I say the main piece is the workshops, because I think a lot of people reach out. I'm ver I'm very prevalent on the Algonquin park Facebook group. So all up here in the

Muskoka area, I'm in a lot of the groups, they're sharing photos.

00:08:35 And then on our social media, on our follow me North Instagram account, that seems to be our biggest one. So we get a lot of pull or a lot of people from there. And I think a lot of people will reach out and just be like, you know, where do you find moose? Are those common questions? Like when do I see most?

00:08:52 It's not like I know exactly where they are. It's not like They gather at 4:00 PM down at the moose Starbucks, moose bus. Well, it's funny. It's so true. It's I think a lot of people think that like a lot of people will ask, like how do you see so many wildlife? And so how do you get these shots? And it's like,

00:09:10 well, persistence and patience when you're going out constantly, that's the only way you're going to get it. And I live 40 minutes from the park. So it's not far for me to go for, you know, morning drive and go for a cruise through the park and go for a couple of hikes and come back the same day. So the more you do that,

00:09:26 the more opportunities you get, obviously for capturing these wild moments. But I think everybody wants that. Right? So I think everybody wants that for one day. So I've had people actually contact me and they're like, listen, I'm coming up to Algonquin. Could I hire you for the day? I want to see a Wolf. I want to see a bear.

00:09:41 I want to see a Lynx. And I want to see, you know, a moose, how you make that happen. You get, you get, you know, sunrise to sunset. Let's make this happen. And I'm like, we're not, I give them a link to the Toronto zoo and One day that's your best bet. That's Exactly it.

00:09:59 Send them there. But it is funny how people think like that wildlife isn't wild for some reason. Like why it's, I think we all have this lens on when we see other people creating these things online, that it's an a, in an abundance, like there's so much of it because we're only sharing our highlight reel. Obviously we're only showing I'm not sharing the days that I don't see things like I'm not sharing a blank,

00:10:24 you know, lake with nothing in it. You know, there has to be maybe a loon in it, unless it's a beautiful landscape or something obviously. But yeah, there has to be some sort of dynamic to the photo that we're posting. We're not showing the days that we didn't capture anything. And it was a waste of a day. I literally just had one of my best friends up here for the last two days.

00:10:43 And he's come up here 10 times over the past three years that I've been here and he has not seen a moose yet. And I'm like, this is the time we're going to see it. And we went everywhere. I couldn't find them a moose over the last few days. I felt terrible. So, and

literally just two days before that I was in the park and I saw four moose on the same day.

00:11:02 So it's hit and miss it's really hit and miss Gosh, especially a big elusive animal, like a moose or links. Oh my gosh. Thanks. Links encounters are our favorite. Anything cat related that way links are so elusive and Susan and I saw one of our, one of our, our common things that we'd like to do now is on Christmas day,

00:11:23 we go into Algonquin park. So nice. So we were driving through Algonquin park, Christmas day, 2019, and we come around this corner and we're like, oh my God, there's a Wolf on the road straight ahead. Like, wow, we never get to see wolves that you know that easily. Right. And we got a little bit closer as we're driving and I'm like,

00:11:41 holy shit, that's a, that's a Lynx. That's not a, that's not a Wolf. And Susan's picked up her camera right away, shooting through the windshield of the car. It's snowy, it's got salt all over the windshield and I'm driving. So, you know, and of course, you know, shutter speeds way off, ISO's too low,

00:11:59 but she captured a shot of it as it was running. It was a good thing. There was a cliff on both sides, kind of like a rock face on both sides of the roads. So the links couldn't go anywhere. It tried to run up this IC rock face and it slid back down and it ran up the road a little bit further and jumped up a smaller rock face,

00:12:18 grabbed onto this tree and then just pulled itself up. And the whole encounter was probably 20 seconds, but Susan was able to capture that while I was driving. And I mean, it's slightly it's to hurt to this day. It still bugs her because it was slightly blurry. I'm like, oh God, like that's what T that's what Topaz is for.

00:12:39 It's capturing that moment, right? Not the technical side. I'd rather capture that moment any day versus the technical sharpness of a, of an image. Yeah. And you can't really ask the links. Hey, can, can you hold on, can you do that again? We've asked so many times and they're stubborn. You know, they don't listen very well.

00:13:01 Sometimes you get those magical moments and some, and then, you know, there was, I think prior to that, there was maybe three photos that we've seen of a links in Algonquin park. So there's been sightings of them, but not too many people had documented proof and like seeing them other than their prints, we were happy like when we showed the,

00:13:22 you know, the naturalists and Algonquin park and some of the staff that, you know, it was just exciting for everybody to capture one. And one was just seen in the park and capture that on photo, I think two, three weeks ago too. So they're getting to be a little bit more prevalent in this area, which I'm happy about. That's fantastic.

00:13:40 I love it. So when you do your circling back a little bit to the photo tours, who

are your main, who's your main avatar that, that comes through those? Are they people that are just interested in photography? Do you have professionals come kind of who likes to do those? It's funny because I've had a few professionals they'll email in though,

00:14:01 and it, you know, it's hard to define professional, right? But I had some people that it will be like, Hey, listen, I am from the city. I have a gallery. I know how to do photography. I don't need help with the settings on my camera, anything like that, but I still want to photograph wildlife. And I'd love you to show me kind of like the ins and outs of the area and stuff.

00:14:19 And that's what it turns out to be. It's a lot of this is, you know, maybe we don't find any moose, but I'm going to take you through the whole park and kind of like our roots and our favorite locations and what to look for, how to track and finding prints and knowing what animal was here. So all those things help that person for the next time that they come up.

00:14:40 So for example, I think last fall, there was a gentleman. He came up and he only wanted to see a moose. It was his biggest thing in his life to see the most and the whole day went by and we didn't see one, but I told them based on these tracks that we're looking at right now today, there's a moose within this two kilometer radius.

00:14:56 I said, go down this trail tomorrow morning at like 5:00 AM, as the sun's rising and hope for the best. And he texted me at 6:00 AM, I think the next day. And he was like, I found him he's right here. And there's another one with him. And it was like the bull and the cow and the bull. Cause it was the rut.

00:15:13 And it's just, it's so cool to hear when people have these little victories. So even though I might not be in that moment for that victory, I think sharing, you know, the ethical side of tracking or, or photographing wildlife as well as sharing the, the locations, but not sharing the locations to the masses online. Like a lot of people will say,

00:15:35 it's scary, right? Like as soon as you post something on social media, if I was taking a picture of a Fox den right now and posted a photo number, one question is where is that Fox den? You know, where are those babies right here? Is it? And it's unfortunate that people will kind of share that kind of stuff. And then the next day,

00:15:54 there's 12 photographers after that there's 24 photographers and then they're feeding that animal. And so a lot of our workshops is based on teaching people, the ethical side of wildlife photography. That's so important. Important. Yeah, Yeah, absolutely. There's some people. Yeah, it does. You know, I'm sure a lot of people just don't even have any background in that sort of thing where they just don't even realize that the impacts that it can have behaved really on that animal and the long-term impacts of it.

00:16:28 So that's super important to share 100%. I think we all kind of think of any

animals kind of like our domestic dog or pets and this animal that walks up to me looks kind of cute and it looks hungry. How do we know? It looks hungry. It's just because it's looking at us with that tilted head and the wide eyes is like, feed me Animals doing okay in the woods.

00:16:52 He can he go find himself some rodents that Fox and such and you know, there's that whole debate online. You always hear it. You know, while that Fox is still, you know, hunting and it's still bringing food home, what's wrong. If I feed it a Dorito or a hot dog or something. Right. And you're habituating that animal.

00:17:14 So it's going to come up to cars and it's going to come up to people. It's going to come up to the side of the road and potentially get hit by another car. We've seen it, unfortunately in the park happened quite a bit. Yeah. That happens a lot, you know, with the bears too, you guys have black bears up by you.

00:17:30 Yup. Yup. Yeah, Yeah, yeah. And you know, black bears are not quite as dangerous as the Grizzlies, but I mean any of those bears, if they get too habituated to people, it's a death sentence for the pair because it's just becomes a dangerous nuisance to people. And so they have to relocate them and sometimes they, and yeah.

00:17:49 So don't be the wildlife, everybody. Yes. This is your public service announcement for the day. Don't feed the wildlife. But speaking of dogs and wildlife, what are some of the cause you have now you have your following North, still your wildlife brand and your new follow me North pets brand, which is super exciting. What are some of the similarities and differences between photographing wildlife and dogs?

00:18:17 Oh wow. That's exciting. It's exciting to talk about because you sometimes don't realize the kind of crossover it's funny. Cause a lot of times I bet you, people are more like, Hey, let's say I'm a dog photographer, a pet photographer. And then they kind of want to do dabbling of wildlife on the side, whereas wildlife, wildlife, wildlife,

00:18:36 and now dabbling with pet photography on the side. Right. But I was always doing a little bit of pet photography, but never really branding it. So what I had the issue with was my following North brand was so wildlife like together, like to put wildlife and pets together on the same website, it just kinda seemed weird. So because follow me North was doing well.

00:19:00 I just continued another website called follow me North pets.com. And it seemed to be the right fit so far. Cause it was, we just launched it this week. So I'm so excited. So we have somewhere where we can actually put that stuff, but the differences between it not so much because what you're doing with wildlife is you're looking for those key moments.

00:19:20 You're looking for those, those stories, the storytelling within a photo as well. I'm looking at the environment, I love doing environmental portraiture. So putting a wildlife

animal in the scene of whatever's going on, right? So when we were in lake Tahoe at hound vision, like that was my jam. I love that, you know, there was just a gorgeous backdrop and you have this magical specimen of an animal,

00:19:43 which is the dogs that were just beautiful, the dog models, all of them. And they have this epic scene behind them, you know, with the water, the turquoise water and the mountains and the trees and everything. So I love doing environmental portraits with wildlife. And I just kind of brought that over to pet photography as well. And then creating that eye contact and the,

00:20:03 you know, building like shooting with different lenses, shooting tight shooting wide. The best thing about dog photography is I get to, you know, put it on a leash. I can tell it to sit and stay. And sometimes they do, I can feed it a treat and not like yelled at. Right, right. The whole terrible about it.

00:20:26 So there's some bonuses that way. I wouldn't say it's easier by any means anybody that's out there listening to this, doing pet photography knows there's some definite challenges. Some people think is easy and it's like, wow, what do I do with this dog is won't calm down. It won't sit still, won't make eye contact with me. So, and I look at that and I'm like,

00:20:45 well, that's still better than that moose, that Fox on that Wolf that won't look at me or that link half of the time. So The baby that's just crying and you want me to photograph it? How, what, Yeah, well, what are we going to do now? Come back another day, Come back when they're like five, Five's the magic answer.

00:21:06 That's the, I don't know. It could be some days like too, because you know, either it to the really fun to photograph or it's just a total nightmare. It just, it just depends on the day, you know? Totally true, totally fair crossovers between them. And I think what's kind of unique obviously, but the pet photography side of things is you're not just learning the behaviors of the animal.

00:21:30 You're also learning the behaviors of the human cause. That's a fine balance too. And I find when we're photographing a lot of dogs or whatever, it's easy to kind of forget that there's a human there. Like there's the owner of that dog is there too. And I think we're all taught like behave with the dog, like know the dog's behavior and know that.

00:21:54 But what about the human? What about, what about the person with a wallet that's next to you? If you give that person a bad experience, you might've given that dog the best experience, but if that person Who's Steve's, it is like, what, you know, what about me too? Like, they're a part of the whole thing as well.

00:22:10 So I think our biggest thing is with pet photography is making that bond with the human as well. If that's starting with a consultation over the phone and then kind of

building it from there as well as the day of the shoot is not to forget about the owner, not to forget about that person. That's there with them not to forget about the husband that's maybe watching nearby or the kid as well.

00:22:32 Like they're all a part of this experience. So not giving just the dog they experienced, but giving the whole family the experience. So Yeah, that's a great point. Yeah. I think that's a big thing we all need to do. Yeah. And I think as you know, pet photographers in general tend to classify themselves more as introvert. And they're like,

00:22:51 why photograph dogs? Because I don't like dealing with people, but it's such an important piece. If we're going to do this for a business, you know, I haven't met too many dogs that have their own checkbook or their own credit cards. Even the, like the famous dogs that maybe have their own income stream, they're still human, the controls that said income stream.

00:23:13 So right. So we have to, we have to connect with people and you know, thankfully we're connecting with other dog people. So we have in common that we can talk about the dog. So if you guys are out there and you're like, oh my gosh, I don't even know how to connect with this other human talk about the dog. Like,

00:23:30 just talk about the dog I consult for my, I think my question is let's schedule a zoom call or a Fatah or a phone call. And we're just going to talk about your dog. Let's just talk about your dog. And I think, I think my button is, let's talk about your dog and it's just simple. And people love just chatting about their dogs and Yeah.

00:23:50 I mean, how quickly are we all to pull out our phones? Like, oh, you want to see a picture of my dog? Yeah. Like it's just, yeah. I think I, well actually it's funny, true story. When my husband and I travel, we send more pictures of the animals in the house back and forth to each other.

00:24:04 And then we do the children That's right Now. They can't hear this. They don't, they don't listen to my podcast. Sorry, kids. I love you anyway. So yeah. So I love those differences and the similarities. What about the gear? Is there, you know, cause for dog photography that 7,200 is our workhorse like go-to lens. But I imagine that is not quite enough for most situations and a wildlife situation.

00:24:30 True enough. I, I mainly shoot with my 100 to 500 mil and Susan's shooting with a one 50 to 600 Sigma sport a lot of the times. So when it comes to dog photography, we do kind of go back down to the 70 to 200. That's my go-to lens as well. But it's funny. Cause that hound vision, I was shooting a lot with the 100 to 500,

00:24:52 you know? And I think maybe that was just the technique of hijacking some other people's shoots to be honest because I can get this picture from way back here Over your

shoulder and you won't even know I'm here and I'm just waiting for that moment where that dog just turns slightly looks at me in the background, like way far away and then I can get a shot.

00:25:14 So it's just playing with the different lenses. And I think what I, how I envision, what I, what my big takeaway was just taking off certain lenses, trying new lenses and just playing a little bit. Right. I think we get stuck into, we hear what other people do. We all get stuck into everything. What we're always looking at,

00:25:32 what other people do while everybody else is shooting with a 70 to 200, why should be shooting with a 70 to 200? Well, I love going out to, let's say I wasn't at lake Louise for example, and everybody was on this little boardwalk taking picture of the giant mountains. Everybody had a tripod out, everybody had this wide angle lens and I walk up and I'm like,

00:25:52 what's everybody doing here? Let's do the opposite. So let's take out a telephoto lens and try to do a telephoto landscape shot. And it's just fun, like challenging yourself in those situations to pull out something completely different that you wouldn't even think of. So most people get to a big Vista. They're going to pull up their wide angle while I pull up the telephoto and kind of see what we can create there.

00:26:16 And it's no different with the pet photography. I was shooting with 70 to 200 most of the time. And then I put on my 15 to 35 mil and I loved it. You know, getting right up close with them and you know, just kind of creating, that's no different when we're creating these galleries for our clients is give them that variety.

00:26:35 They've never seen their dog in this kind of fisheye kind of look like that big head and tiny body, depending on how close you're getting. And then did, they might not have seen that before. Right? Because their cameras on their I-phones might not give that same look. So give me that variety taking the time. That's why I don't like mini sessions per se,

00:26:55 because I like having that time to go to different locations, try different lenses, just exploring the different options that are out there. Yeah, no, I love that. That's actually one of my favorite things about teaching the workshops is our image reviews the next day. So we shoot one night the next morning we do our image reviews and you get to see how every single person in that room saw something totally different at the same location.

00:27:21 I love that when you uploaded all the photos from how envision recently, I'm like, wow, this is so cool to see, because I remember laying in this spot while somebody else was standing in this spot and just kind of see the different perspectives. Right. And it's kinda like, man, I wish I can go back and get that angle. Right.

00:27:39 And I'm sure many of us do that. We see what somebody else has and be like, why didn't I see that? How didn't I see that? And I think that's, what's so compelling about

photography. Everybody's different views and compositions. Like I love composition, right? Cause I like to break those rules. Somebody tells me I can't do something.

00:27:59 I'm like, Nope, watch this. Let's let's do this. Let's try this. But I think one of the biggest things I've learned in composition wise, which I felt as though took the wildlife photography, one step further from for us was creating that not just the rule of thirds left to right top to bottom, but the rule of thirds depth into the photo,

00:28:20 creating a foreground middle ground background and as many layers as possible. So all of a sudden when I started doing that with pet photography and then doing it with wildlife photography, it just created like this three-dimension kind of image. How do we do that? So I'm always challenging, like Susan and I it's fun. Cause we challenge each other. We'll get back to the theater and be looking at her photos.

00:28:42 I'm looking at mine and we shoot a lot together and different lenses at the same time. So we kind of be like, oh, you got that. And then you're smart, how you went down low and you created that kind of depth to it. And it's just really fun to kind of see what each, each of us pull out from the shoot.

00:28:57 Yeah. That's great. I love it. I love it. Yeah. The it's it's so important. And I think it's important to also just talk about, you know, we get inspired by what we see other people doing and how important it is to continue to look for inspiration outside of our same genre and just test different things and mix and match everything.

00:29:18 Because so many people are trying to figure out like, how do I get my own voice as a photographer? How do I develop this style? And so they're tempted to sometimes look at, oh, well this person is successful. They're successful. Maybe I should do that style too. And it's not about that style. It's about staying true to your artistic voice.

00:29:40 And when you're like really truly digging into who you are, artistically and like mixing and matching different things and creating something uniquely yours, I think that's what causes the success more so than just being like, oh, I'm supposed to use this lens and do that thing and create this piece. And then that's what everybody wants. So that's what I must do.

00:30:01 100%. I find like if you follow your passion, the money will follow. Right? You shoot what you love. The B the business will grow more, that your people will see your passion and want to pay you for that passion. Instead, I think a lot of people will look towards exactly what you said is looking at other people. And I've learned now over the years that I'm guilty of it.

00:30:23 We all are. We look at other people's stuff and we look at how other people are doing things. And then at the end of the day, I'm like, I'm just so focused on all my competition instead of focusing on my client. So why I want to do and what do I want to serve towards my

client? And instead all of us,

00:30:41 I say, all of us, like, we're all guilty and let's take a look inside folks. Have we been guilty of this? Probably that we focus so much on our competition, what everybody else is doing. And then we get fearful more so because we think that they're doing it better than us. And then we just get this paralyzed approach, right.

00:30:59 We all get frozen in our fear. And there's nothing worse than that. I mean, they'll go through it. I still look at, you know, I try not to compare so much. It's just literally start focusing on what I want to do, how I want to create, and then kind of build it from there. I still don't know up here in my region,

00:31:18 if there's other pet photographers, because I haven't went down that path of let's compare myself to every other person that's in my area. I don't want to be that. I just want to kind of focus my own path, build my own thing and create, create magical work without the noise of everybody else. Yeah. Because when you're true to yourself with the work you're creating and also how you want to set up your business,

00:31:43 what it is you want to sell, how you want to work. If you want to do longer sessions, shorter sessions, only at certain locations, new places, all the time, whatever anything can work. But the key is to figure out what it is for you and then build that business around it. You know, for instance, I use this example all the time.

00:32:00 Kim Hollis is another photographer here in the Charlotte region, also very successful, great, great artist. And one of her most popular products is metals. Well, I serve the same people as she does, and I don't even offer metals. And yet we're both successful and we both have clients that love what we offer. And it just comes down to us,

00:32:19 both knowing what we love. And then that translate that like that passion that you said translate when we're talking about products to our clients, they're like, oh, you'd love that. I love that too. Right. And I don't know if you've ever experienced this with the wildlife stuff or if anybody else out there has, but I've had things on my price list before that I didn't love.

00:32:40 And coincidentally, I didn't sell them even though they were there. And even though I was told they were the popular products they didn't sell. Yeah. We have basically eliminated more than ever on our, our price lists. I think photography is about elimination because isn't it, Sorry, I have to add this. I mean, you're looking at this big scene.

00:33:01 It's like, what do I want people to see? Yeah. What do I take? It? It's all subtraction, right? It's not, what do I want in this image? What do I want to remove from this image? And we should look at our price lists and our websites and our information the same

way. Is it too much? Probably.

00:33:15 Why are we offering the world to everybody it's overload, right. And why do we have 10 different price lists? So I'm just trying to keep it simple right now. Follow me North pets. We have two packages. We have one that's including the stay at our cottage. So we have a bar. We have a Barkin stay is called. So we have a Barkin state package,

00:33:40 which is amazing because people are already signing up for it. And they, when we had our cottage for two nights and then they get to bring their pets. And then we do a big photo shoot here on the, on the grounds. And you know what, it's amazing because I know our property, it's easy. It's much easier. I can just be like,

00:33:57 oh, I know this spot has the best light at this time of day. And I know this little setting here is nice and I can do so many different shots on our property. And it looks like 10 different locations. Right. Which is really fun. So our Barkin stays is going to be, I think it's going to be pretty popular over there A hundred percent.

00:34:16 And then there's people that don't necessarily need the stay. So we have a cheaper session fee for people that just want to do, you know, shoot during the day. Maybe it might be a couple hours. I'm not one to kind of like set times for anything. Right. I'm booking you for the day. We're not going to shoot necessarily all day,

00:34:35 but we might try a different couple of different locations. Might shoot an hour here might shoot two hours. Here might be 15 minutes. Yeah. Right. We've had little dogs here that are like, Nope, 15 minutes. That's max. I'm done. I can handle. It's too cold. I'm going back inside. So, Oh, that's funny.

00:34:52 I do the same with my clients. I basically just tell them, you know, most sessions take, you know, approximately 90 minutes. Some are shorter. Some are a lot, little longer. We're just gonna see what the dog, what the dog wants us to do. Listen to the dog. Yeah. Ah, so exciting. So while we wrap up,

00:35:11 I guess the last thing I kind of want to talk about is any advice that you have for any pet photographers out there that are like, man, I would love to start doing some more with wildlife stuff. So kind of what are the first steps and how do you get started with that? I think the first best step anybody can do is find somebody to shoot with,

00:35:30 find a buddy, find a shooting, buddy, because then you're kind of accountable for that person that you know, for each other too. Cause the worst thing about wildlife photography is the hours. Because if anybody wants to see wildlife, they're like, I've been to Algonquin park for like 30 years. And I still, haven't seen a moose and I'm like,

00:35:49 well, you're going in mid August when it's 30 plus degrees and it's, you know,

three o'clock in the afternoon and there's a ton of tourists there. You're not going to see anything. Right. So you have to wake up at that crack of Dawn. Like sometimes I'm waking up here at 3 30, 4 o'clock in the morning making a little bit of breakfast meal for the road,

00:36:07 some coffee, lots of coffee, definitely lots of coffee and then get in the car and go. And you're in the park before anybody else awakes from their tents and I'll see bears and moose. And sometimes the odd Wolf will come running out of the woods. And it's just an incredible experience. And then sunrises, nobody sees sunrises anymore. Everybody sees sunsets.

00:36:29 You know how amazing sunrise is hard. It's incredible. What time is sunrise for you in the summer? Since you're so far north It'd be Like five, eight. Yeah. So 5 35 depends where I always try to think an hour ahead of the sunrise because I'm trying to get to the location right. A half hour prior to that. Some, so I'm leaving here sometimes in June.

00:36:53 I remember June being like four o'clock in the morning, I'm leaving here three 30 depending to try to get to that location. Yeah. But sunrises are incredible. Yeah. Well we, I was just, we're just finalizing locations and sessions for our bark Lander and it's may mid-May and Scotland. And the sun sets at nine 30 and comes up at like five,

00:37:15 10:00 AM. Something like That. We will not be doing any sunrise shoots for that one. I mean, I'm teaching this with Kaylie, from dog breath and she is not a morning person as you know, has Ever seen a sunrise before. Actually. I'm sure she has, but only because she's been up all night. No, I think she has only because she's seen my Instagram feed and she's seen photos of sunrises.

00:37:42 That's what love is. Yeah. I love it. Yeah. I got, I hate getting out of bed, but I do love the rare occasions when I'm up so early. Like I had, my favorite is actually when I come home from Scotland coming home from Europe and then I'm like the time zone with the jet lag. I'm like boom in bed at like eight o'clock,

00:37:59 nine o'clock and up at five, just like ready to go. Like, oh, I love being up early. I think other than getting out of bed, It's finding that person that would hold you accountable for waking up and not pressing snooze. You know what, and I think when it comes to wildlife photography, it don't think that around your house itself doesn't have wildlife like squirrels,

00:38:23 for example, chipmunks, any rodents or birds, if you can lock, focus on a chipmunks. I then when you go into the wildlife, like into the forest and you find a moose and a, and you'll feel super confident then, because if you could track a little red squirrel running around these trees or a bird, for example, then yeah.

00:38:44 Practice with all that hard, smaller stuff. Maybe it's not as exciting as coming across a moose in the park, but it will help you feel more confident when you get out there. And

if you have a pet what's better than doing pet photography. My dog runs around our property at a hundred miles an hour and I'm trying to lock, focus on it.

00:39:01 And it just makes us feel so much more confident when we go out into the wild. Right? Yeah. Yeah. And I, you know, we all have some local parks around us that, I mean, no matter that's one of the reasons I love birds too, no matter where you are, there's always birds here in the city. You're in the country.

00:39:18 You're, you know, every continent has birds. Every neighborhood has birds. So you can go walk in any little natural area, even a city park and find all sorts of great little wildlife to practice. And you learn so much from doing that by capturing something new. And then you want to learn about it. Most of the stuff that we've photograph,

00:39:37 we might not know something about it until we get home and research that bird that we just found. Right. Love it. Wow. That's awesome. All right guys, if you're out there, go out and go practice some wildlife photography and let us know on our Instagrams at Nicole Begley official. And you should also message Jessie at follow me North and yeah.

00:40:01 Let us know what you guys are capturing out there. Yeah. Jesse, thank you so much for taking the time to chat with us about this, getting up to visit you and go see some. I want to see all the things in like two hours And just at sunset, no sunrise and you know, Canadian experience wrapped into one. I'll bring some Tim Horton's some coffee,

00:40:26 some Tim tidbits as well. We'll bring that to. Okay. Excellent. Excellent. I have to bring the maple syrup scotch. Is that, is that what you brought to hound vision? Oh no. The maple whiskey from That was delicious and it was So good. That's for the sundowner time or maybe a little one of your coffee if you need to in the morning or whatever we don't judge.

00:40:50 Perfect. All right, Jessie, again, thank you so much. Let everybody know again where they can find you online. If they want to follow along with your gorgeous wildlife photos. I think the best bet is on Instagram. Follow me North is the one account and then our new account is follow me North pets. So it's pretty easy to find.

00:41:08 And then on our website is again, follow me North dot com and follow me North pets.com as well. Perfect. Yay. Well, thanks again for having this conversation and we will talk to you soon. Thank you, Nicole. See you soon. Bye. Bye everybody. See you next week. Thanks for listening to the hair of the dog podcast.

00:41:26 This was episode number 1 4 4. If you want to check out the show notes for access to any of the resources that we mentioned, simply go to www.hairofthedogacademy.com/ 1 4 4. Thanks for listening to this episode of hair of the dog podcast. If you enjoyed this show, please take a minute to leave a review. And while you're

there, don't forget to subscribe. So you don't miss our upcoming episodes.

00:41:53 One last thing, if you are ready to dive into more resources, head over to our website@www.dothairofthedogacademy.com. Thanks for being a part of this pet photography community.