



# CONCRETE JUNGLE

A GREEN BERET'S GUIDE TO URBAN SURVIVAL

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CLAY MARTIN

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**A Green Beret's Guide**  
**to Urban Survival**

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For my son Raiden.

I don't know exactly what kind of world you will inherit. But I do know you will be prepared for it.

And to my boy Pitchfork, thanks for the edits. This was a mess without you.

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# Introduction

Our nation seems divided today in a way that it hasn't since the 1860s (though they did try pretty hard in the 1960s). We are sitting on a powder keg with half of the involved parties chain smoking and the other half asking for a light. Things have the potential to get really ugly, really fast and after that happens is not the time to open this book. To borrow a proverb from the Chinese: the best time to learn how to survive is five years ago and the second best time is right now.

We have a unique problem in the United States and us veterans have lamented it many times as our hands were tied by clueless bureaucratic masters. We have protected our civilian population so well since 1941 that most of them have no idea how the world actually works. Often might does make right. Sometimes you have no good options. Most importantly, not only do bad things happen to good people, they happen to them on an alarmingly regular basis. We haven't had actual dark times here since the last of the Indian Wars, which still didn't affect anyone outside of the Frontier. It has made our population soft and weak and will cause a cascading effect of systems failure at the first sign of real trouble.

As a retired Green Beret, I feel a certain moral obligation to help those that want to help themselves, which is what this book is about. Think of it like a return on investment for your tax dollars. I don't have all the answers but I can at least say my opinion is tempered by real world experience both spotting unrest and surviving it to tell the tale.

Speaking collectively for my brethren, we (the royal we) have a unique insight gifted to us by the GWOT (Global War on Terrorism) conflict. Fighting in both theaters involved shifting alliances between

multiple factions, even among the alleged “government troops.” Not dying in your sleep was often a matter of reading the tea leaves correctly. Running our own intelligence networks for two decades has also given us an uncanny ability to smell the fire coming long before you can see the flames. On a personal note, I have seen more than a few cities burn. Some of those times I was holding the matches, one I had nothing to do with, but they all yielded lessons.

Aside from correctly predicting when things are about to go pear shaped, we have learned some very important things about staying alive, which I am sharing with you in this volume. The concrete jungle is an unforgiving environment with its own unique problems and solutions. It is best to enter that arena as prepared as you can be. If we call this book the diamond stone, all I need you to do is be the steel.

I would also like to add a caveat up front—I hope I’m wrong. Nobody in this world appreciates the little things more than us veterans, like air conditioning, having our garbage picked up on Tuesday and not catching random sniper fire. For those of us that have seen the horrors of war, we don’t ever wish to see them here.

We also aren’t stupid and we’ve already proven we don’t back down from a fight—not ever. So strap in and hold on to your ass. Time to go for a ride.

# 1 Not the Guns

It is a uniquely American problem to think first that we can buy our way out of trouble. Every prepper forum or survival site in the country has a section devoted to hardware that is twice the size of its nearest competition. For many people, a survival plan begins and ends at a mountain of guns and ammo. A few then branch out to big ticket escape vehicles and elaborately stocked provisions. The truly big baller class endlessly prattles on about bug out locations, usually a cabin/fortress in the mountains, self-contained and off the grid. But I have bad news: your Visa card isn't going to save you. You are going to actually need to do hard stuff, not just go on a camo clad multi-year Black Friday shopping spree.

Now maybe I made a classic mistake in grabbing an audience's attention and this book is now a permanent resident of your bottom shelf. Maybe I should have started with how to use a CARVER matrix (Criticality, Accessibility, Recuperability, Vulnerability, Effect and Recognizability) for blowing up bridges or 37 recipes for dragon's breath shotgun shells. Hell, maybe I'm just mad I didn't start selling water filters in the '90s instead of enlisting. But if you stop and think for a second you're going to realize that I'm right.

I'll give you two competing examples. First is the army of Saudi Arabia, especially the commando high speed units. They have more whiz-bang toys than you or I have ever had. From the ultra Gucci uniforms, to the finest German scopes, no expense is spared—yet they couldn't fight their way out of a wet paper bag. Example two are our own Vietnam-era MACV/SOG troops. The equipment they used is laughable by modern standards, from radios to rifles. Yet they carved a path of destruction and bodies across that green hell



battlefield completely out of proportion to their numbers. Even in their 80s now I wouldn't want to tangle with them. I'm betting it hurts to get a walker shoved up your ass sideways and would prefer to skip first hand experience.

If step number one isn't a trip to the gun shop with all your money, gold coins and silverware, what is? Glad you asked. You already completed step one by recognizing trouble is brewing, which is probably why you bought this book. Even if you are only here as an apocalypse voyeur, some part of you knows mayhem is in the forecast.

Now on to step two, which is arguably the most important thing you are going to do to ensure your survival. It runs counter to the common wisdom for a variety of reasons but it is what actually matters. You need to engage with your neighbors and start building an alliance of local help.

Whoa, hold the phone! You mean actually talk to real life human beings? Yes, I do. You are going to need to engage in some of that old-fashioned, face-to-face conversation stuff we did back in the old days. For many of you, this is going to be the most difficult phase. We have all been conditioned to use our smart phones for everything; it isn't uncommon to see people texting each other at the same table anymore. For you young people, it is entirely possible you don't even know how to have an "in real life" conversation. Other flavors of preppers are going to have a different issue with this—sticking the paranoia genie back in the bottle.

For reasons I can't fathom, many in the survival movements will have an intimate conversation with internet strangers about every detail of their plan but will clam up like a mafia courier the second it comes to real people. It makes absolutely no sense. You have no idea who you are talking to on the internet, no matter how carefully you check. The like-minded person you are talking to about "how to shoot down dem gubmint black helicopters with a deer rifle" may very well be a federal agent recording it all in a chat log. You don't

know who anyone actually is in digital land. Even if they are a famous member of “the movement,” you have no idea what their real motivation is. Alex Jones could have his own FBI badge for all you know. Now I am not saying to divulge all your secrets to the UPS guy and post up a list of your supplies in the town square. We will talk about OPSEC a little further on, but let’s just say, in short, that would be an invitation to get killed and robbed. You are going to need other people for a variety of reasons.

Lots of the prepper-minded like to live a fantasy of them against the world; one extremely well-armed man prevailing against all odds. That is Walter Mitty delusion at its finest; real life doesn’t work that way. I lay the blame for this at the feet of ‘80s action movies, followed closely by the popular fiction class I call “Navy SEAL turned Secret Service guy and Calvin Klein model saves the day because he is smarter than the entire US Government put together.” The problem with the lone action hero trope is that it is no way rooted in the realm of possibilities. Yes, one man can overcome incredible odds and it does occasionally happen (Alvin York, for instance), but the baddest war hero to ever walk the earth would succumb to sufficient numbers. The reason we recognize with medals and awe the occasional lopsided win by one guy is because it is so rare. Let me put an image in your mind, to illustrate the point. In a fight to the death, we have pitted Chuck Liddel in his prime against a number of rabid toddlers (closed room, so escape isn’t an option). Can Chuck prevail against one? Of course, without breaking a sweat. How about twenty? Sure, the odds are still on his side. How about 10,000? Not a chance. Not only is that 300,000 pounds of rabid toddler, the sheer mass of which would crush any human, but I doubt even a professional fighter has the cardio endurance to throw 10,000 punches or kicks in a row. So numbers help. They aren’t all important but at a certain tipping point they do make the difference. As Stalin was fond of saying, “quantity has a quality all its own.” But that isn’t the only reason to need friends in the fight.

I’m a pretty well qualified soldier and I have seen some of that

fancy combat all the kids are getting into these days, but how well can even someone with my *r é sum é* do all the tasks necessary for combat? Keep in mind, I did this full time for twenty years and was paid very well to do so. Part of the weekly task on a SF team is cross training: dedicated time for the team specialist to teach other team members his job skills. After a decade and a half, the Medic is still a better medic than me and the Engineer is still better at being an engineer. Just because I can slap on a tourniquet and stick in a chest tube does not mean I can take the Medic's place, at least by choice. He spent time not only at a specialized school learning medicine but practicing his craft for years and years.

At the heart of this is another Hollywood trope: the super ninja that can do everything. James Bond speaks nine languages, gunfights like Wyatt Earp, beats down professional fighters and drives like Mario Andretti after a bump of coke. How long, in real terms, would it take one human being to master all those skills? There are just not enough hours in the day. You can find some humans with incredibly diverse skill sets but they are beyond rare. At the level you might expect from movies, they don't exist.

Don't feel bad. Growing up in the military, I expected CIA dudes to be Jason Bourne come to life. Turns out, not so much. In fact, they suck so bad at gunfighter skills that they outsource that to... Army dudes (or ex-Army dudes, same thing). Real life experience shows over and over again that none of us have the cranial capacity to be everything at once. So you are going to need other people to help provide the skills you don't have, for a start. It isn't the only reason but it is a damn good one. This is so high on the list that we actually cover it in detail in another chapter called "Building Your ODA from Scratch."

The biggest motivator for you to engage your neighbors is a bit more subversive. This involves a little bit of a tangent into story time, but it is relevant to the subject at hand. Part of the reason I wrote this book has to do directly with my background in Army Special Forces, i.e.: my time as a Green Beret. On this particular subject, it pays to

listen to a Green Beret over any other supposed expert in the field. I specify the actual US Army Special Forces Group (Airborne), not the broadly stated, any-service “Special Force” unit, commonly known now as SOF (Special Operations Forces). Special Forces in colloquial terms can mean Rangers, Force Recon, Omega Force, the SAS/SBS, SEAL Team 11.5 or whatever the Air Force calls its guys this week. In technical terms, and not to take anything away from those other ninjas, the Army has units actually named Special Forces. We wear a funny green hat, hence our unit nickname: Green Berets. Of the five primary missions of the SF (Special Forces), two are absolutely unique to us across the US Military. Those are UW (Unconventional Warfare) and FID (Foreign Internal Defense).

UW, in layman’s terms, means how to start an insurgency and manage a guerrilla war. FID, the opposite side of the coin, is how to assist a friendly government and keep it from being toppled by an insurgency while destroying a guerrilla army someone else built. FID and UW skills are not sexy—they are never going to make a movie about them. That’s probably most of the reason they aren’t part of the SEAL mission set (pronounced *squeal*, for the noise they make when they run out of tanning lotion). But these skills do work and in most cases they work better than some ill-conceived commando raid bullshit.

Now I am not just trying to talk smack here—the inter-service rivalry, the ‘my guys are cool and everyone else sucks’ bit. Far from it. In fact, if I had to place a wager on who I think is the best in the US military on average, I would pick the Air Force SOF. Hat tip TACP/JTAC’s, you win this round. That would be if I was selecting the most well rounded force, and judging them across the spectrum of combat missions. Hat tip TACP/JTAC’s, you win this round. They do have weaknesses. At certain tasks, like CQB, they would be last on the list of choices. The Army, Navy, and USMC all make better gunfighters, in terms of personal weapons skills. And they should, that is among their primary missions. You aren’t going to let the TACP be number one man through the smoking hole after breach. That isn’t

his job. But pound for pound, I stand by them as the best all around at real combat skills. Most of which don't apply to surviving the type of conflict this book was written to address.

UW simplified goes a little something like this: aforementioned non-gunfighter Agency dude, using the skills he has, identifies an enemy nation ripe for overthrowing (this usually means factions already exist and are trying to do just that). He phones the appropriate people to have a SF team or teams give it a push. SF shows up by whatever means: HALO drop, scuba insert or, more likely, the regional equivalent of a Greyhound bus—the less sexy, the better. SF guys assess the factions, talk over grievances, break bread and hand out bags of money as needed. It takes time and a lot of running of the mouth, but they are looking for specific things. What motivates this opposition faction or that one? Who is both most likely to win and then likely to be a good long term ally for our national interests? What is the acceptable balance of those two things if one faction isn't best at both criteria? What do they need to succeed and are we willing to pay it? Then, and only then, do you get down to the work of teaching illiterate peasants how to zero a rifle and conduct a combined arms assault. Ground work first, then you build an army, then you use that army and hope your own government doesn't pull the rug out from under you mid-stroke.

Reaching back to the formation of Special Forces in the '50s, this has proven to be an extremely successful model. Across decades, it has worked from one side of the planet to the other, often in places and conflicts Americans have never heard of. That is another bit of the beauty. Done properly, the entire enterprise is deniable. The newly crowned Emperor of Kerflakistan isn't going to publicly credit the Great Satan any more than we are going to admit that we did the heavy lifting. Job done; everyone goes their separate ways and sweeps any messy bits under the carpet.

While the job is unique in the US military to SF, that doesn't mean other countries haven't created similar units. The British and the

Russians are good at it and have been for a long time. The whole bit with Crimea's annexation by Russia is a good example. If that was organic, so is a burger from McDonalds. The Quds force from Iran is fantastic at this method. The Chinese are actively perfecting the craft as we speak.

What does this have to do with your survival strategy? A lot. In fact, most of your survival strategy should be modeled from FID unless you think the government is the bad guy, in which case it should be modeled on UW. Aside from the part about being overwhelmed by sheer numbers, it also helps you understand what is going on.

Generally speaking, survival is a regional issue. That's not to say the causes of the crisis can't start far away because they can. It does pay to at least observe national and global news looking for potential cataclysms. But your actual day to day concerns are local and that doesn't change as a national or international crisis unfolds. I live in the Pacific Northwest. There is literally not one thing that could happen in New York City tomorrow that directly affects me right now. Do I want to know if they have an Ebola outbreak or get nuked off the planet? Yes I do. That will dictate some of the steps I need to take in the near future, but whatever ripples their problems create, I will still need to deal with them on the local level.

So, much like a SF guy would do in a foreign nation, you need to work on building your own intelligence network. Let's throw in a caveat, as we live in the digital age. Can't you just read the local news or use the internet? I don't recommend it—not as a sole source of information—not even a little. I'm not a conspiracy theorist and I don't think you should be either, but while I don't wear a tinfoil hat everyday I do keep one in the closet for special occasions. I would ask you this: what major news scoop in the last thirty years was picked up by a news station first? Not one. In a major crisis, how hard do you think it would be to censor all the media outlets that exist? Not very. More importantly, signs slip through the cracks with media outlets. They are looking for the big story because that gets

the big reads. To properly gauge any situation, you need to look at a great deal of factors, not just the big ones.

Who would know about local travel habits? Has there been an influx of people coming in or leaving? How about the local gas station attendant or the manager of a local motel. Who would know if shipping is on time and the supply chain is unbroken? How about a manager of a local grocery store or Wal-Mart. Who has on-the-ground eyes at a regional level and might have seen anomalies close enough to affect you soon? How about your local truck driver, especially if he runs the same route daily or weekly. A wealth of information exists but it rarely falls into the hands of someone that can use all of it. That is among the first things you need to change.

All these bits of knowledge are available; you just have to find a way to get them. This leads us to the idea of actually talking to human beings. Internet chat boards, news sites and the like can best be equated to SIGINT (signals intelligence). Signals intelligence can be faked and it can be drowned out with white noise. Talking to people is HUMINT (human intelligence) and it requires some skills to sift through as well. Some HUMINT skills can't be taught; they can only be gained through experience. Humans sometimes lie and they sometimes exaggerate. This can be intentional for deception but more often it is merely to impress you or tell a better story. How can you tell? First, life experience: the more you talk to humans while trying to sift for facts, the more you will pick up on these trends. If you don't know how to spot bullshit you need to start learning. Obvious tells include inconsistency in facts when asked about details, changes in speech pattern at relevant points that should be seared in memory and entirely too much badassery on the part of the storyteller. This isn't to say exaggerators should be cut from your network, but their information should always be suspect. One good way to start learning these skills is to read up on police interrogation methods and practice before you need it.

The absolute best method for sifting information is having multiple sources in the same arena and comparing the data they give

you. I'm not going to dive deep on handling assets because Uncle Sugar might decide to smack my pee-pee if I do. However, much of what are alleged to be "deep, dark, espionage secrets" are actually just common sense. If you have three truck drivers that work in a similar area and the information one of them is feeding you is way off track of the others, what can you discern? First, one of them might be feeding you horse pucky. Second, the other two may be plants working against you and feeding you misinformation—welcome to the forest of mirrors. All well and good if you already have a network but I'm assuming you don't. How are you going to fix that? Very carefully and very slowly.

Things like this aren't built overnight and if you push hard you are just going to draw attention to yourself. To correctly build a network of informants you need to understand it is a long haul. Some of your best informants won't even realize they are giving you the goods. As previously mentioned, talking to strangers with the intent of gleaning information is an unnatural act for most of us. It also goes against the grain if you have been prepping in secret, hiding canned beans in floor boards and the like. But there is a right and a wrong way. Let's look at the wrong way first:

Starbucks Barista: *"Welcome to Starbucks, may I help you?"*

You (palms sweating, whispering conspiratorially): *"Yes, I will have a caramel macchiato. Also, would you like to act as an informant for my militia, keeping us posted on the comings and goings of shifty eyed new arrivals? We can't afford to pay you, but you will be remembered when the revolution starts. Play your cards right and you may even become concubine to his Holiness: The Warlord Steve, Master and Commander of the Plains of Nebraska."*

Starbucks Barista: [stares in horror while simultaneously pressing the 911 panic button under the counter]

Obviously there are a lot of things wrong with that scenario but which one should have stuck out first? Starbucks. Have you ever seen a slow one? You have zero chance of recruiting a source in a fast



paced environment so save the sales pitch for someone that isn't busy, at least while they are at work. A UPS driver, for example, would be a great asset if you land him off the clock.

I suggest you start with one that is easy to land—what the military calls a “confidence target.” Two examples are a gas station attendant at a non-busy hour or a clerk at a local corner store. In the example of the gas station attendant, how do you break the ice?

You: *“Good Morning, Jimmy.”*

(You know his name because you come here all the time. You learned his name from his name tag on visit one and called him by his name on the five subsequent visits, establishing a layer of familiarity.)

~~Gas Station Attendant~~ Jimmy: *“Good Morning, Bill. Coffee and the usual scratch ticket?”*

You: *“Coffee for sure—by the way, you’re low on Irish cream—and about that usual, I’m not so sure. I think the new folks in town are buying up all the winners.”*

(You have spent a couple bucks establishing a routine for exactly this moment. Now one of two things is true: either you know the area is having an influx of new people and are confirming that data, setting Jimmy up for the pitch, or you are fishing in the dark to see if Jimmy will tell you lots of new people are around. Jimmy will have one of two answers, both of which you should be prepared to handle by rehearsing both bits, just in case.)

Jimmy: *“New people, that’s rich. All I see are people leaving town. Half my normal customers tanked up last week, headed for the hills. Weird, right?”*

(This takes you to the first decision tree.)

You, feigning light laughter: *“I know, right? Hell, I’m starting to feel like this is an episode of the Twilight Zone. Ya know, a fella could really start to wonder at times like this. I don’t scare easy but things are getting down right spooky. A man can’t be too careful these*

*days. Actually, I wonder if you wouldn't mind keeping some tabs, just between us..."*

(What if Jimmy has a different answer? Glad you asked.)

*Jimmy: "Crazy isn't it? People fleeing California and probably bringing their problems with them. I don't like the way they show up here, flush with cash from selling that McMansion in the hills, pushing us all to the side...."*

(Oh man, bingo! Not only have you confirmed data but you have learned Jimmy's disdain for the new people. That sets him up for an entirely different pitch. But just like a deal the Devil would make, not too much up front now.)

What if neither of those things happen and Jimmy just acts indifferent to your lack of a scratch ticket purchase? Then you leave and try again another day. If a couple of reels don't work, move on to a new gas station. Keep going until you have your network filled out. You might end up with five coffees and a dozen \$1 scratch tickets every Tuesday morning but that is the price of doing business.

Networking, for lack of a better term, is also good for a great many things besides just intelligence. In survival terms, it is also important for supplies. That doesn't matter much right now while the economy is still humming and the American Express still works, but what about when things fall apart? Would you rather be friends with the local grocer, guarding his delivery trucks against the howling mob for a can of baked beans, or trying to elbow to the front through the howling mob, desperate to trade your last remaining items of value for that same can of baked beans? When things get tough, people turn tribal and they do it fast. Much better to be someone they knew from the previous life than a strange face showing up asking for favors.

I want to interject a few guiding principles for dealing with humans in general here at the end. Number one, don't be a user. You need to have something to barter with in most of these situations

(with the possible exception of the people that just like to talk; you are still giving them a sounding board, which is what most of them want anyway). All I'm saying is don't start washing the local grocer's car every Sunday hoping he will remember you when the trouble starts. You are always going to get further with a genuine relationship and those are hard to fake. Number two, don't promise something you can't deliver. This was a principle we always tried to stick to even overseas with dirt-worshipping heathens. It is bad for business and should only be done as an absolute last resort. Not only will you permanently lose an ally but you might go far enough to make a bitter enemy. If things go pear shaped, you will have plenty of enemies without unnecessarily making extras. Number three relates directly to number two, don't think short term. It is easy to cut all kinds of deals, back stab as needed and flee into the sunset with your week's rations, but what happens when the sun comes up on day eight? You should be laying the ground work for a sustainable relationship because you never know how long a crisis will last. Don't burn bridges with anyone if you can avoid it and at least try and leave the pylons if you can't. Crow may be on the menu because you can never fully anticipate who will have a resource you need to survive the night.

In closing this chapter out, I want to leave you with a story. It's not a cool war story but it's a lot more relevant to where you sit today. A few years ago I was driving across the country with my soon-to-be wife. I lived on the East Coast at the time. Skipping over the mushy stuff, I had made a snap decision to move to Idaho. The last day of that road trip, one of my soon-to-be stepdaughters decided to run away from her father's house, which greatly upset my soon-to-be wife. So I did what people like me do: I set out to solve the problem. Two weeks later, with many trailer parks kicked over, I had her back in custody. It was no small feat—the kid can run. There were a lot of strange looks from the extended family and no small amount of pats on the back, but only one person asked the right question: how, exactly, did I run this teenager down in a city where the number of people I knew I could count on one hand? I didn't have the knowledge available to find Red Lobster, much less a runaway

with a deep network. For good measure, I was still pretty recently retired from the Army and I looked like an absolute psycho: 6'2" with a ten-inch mohawk and built like a linebacker—not exactly subtle.

I succeeded because I know not only how to build networks but to infiltrate and destroy them. Within a few days I had informants in every neighborhood on the bad side of town. I used a lot of carrot and a little bit of stick when needed. At a total price of a six-pack of Rolling Rock and a few packs of smokes, I bought all the information necessary to piece it together. I succeeded where many natives had failed in the past. The lesson here is directly tied to your survival strategy. The scary guy isn't the one that is willing to shoot you. Those are a dime a dozen in any conflict or criminal element. The actual scary guy is the one that can find you no matter where you try to hide. Information is power.

## **2 Common Sense Planning**

### **The Sky Isn't Falling. Yet.**

There is a reason you picked up this book and I doubt it was idle curiosity. Maybe you started seeing glitches in the Matrix and you are questioning the future stability of our nation. Maybe you had a bad experience recently—like owning a pharmacy in Ferguson, Missouri. Maybe you have seen a natural disaster strike and the feral humans that come after. Whatever that reason is, it is time to start taking control of your life. I wrote this book because I foresee more political violence on our horizon, which tends to be centralized to major cities. You may disagree with that hypothesis and have one of your own, but regardless of complete economic collapse, foreign invasion or zombie apocalypse, I have good news: the planning is the same for all of them.

The military teaches all kinds of whiz-bang planning methods, most famously MDMP (Military Decision Making Process). It has dozens of steps, dozens more sub-steps, a matrix of weighted values, ending with a mathematical certainty of the right choices. I could write an entire 600 page book on the subject and it would join the tomes of others covering the same material. But I have bad news: the entire process is nonsense and a waste of your time. The worst thing the Army ever did was attempt the “cookbook” method for WWII and stick with it afterward. This institutional cancer has slowly eaten its way into all the military branches, turning what should be a simple process into a time consuming, paper work intensive nightmare. It was first applied to training and the concept is this: if you build a step-by-step process and force all the steps to be taken, then the end result is always the same. For bumping up the huge numbers needed for WWII, it didn't do a horrible job at tasks like ‘set up a mortar’ or ‘assemble an anti-tank gun,’ but the same process

applied to planning is foolish. Let me put it this way, when it comes to military planning as it has “evolved,” the operations order for the invasion of Normandy, the largest amphibious landing the world has ever seen, was fourteen pages long. For a modern soldier late in the GWOT, raiding a purse-snatcher’s house required 120 Power Point slides. I’m going to go on the record as saying that is not an improvement.

So we will be putting aside any talk of consulting DOD publications. Besides, your planning needs to be a bit more vague anyway (at least your overall strategic plan). Later we will get to some more specific planning, but for now you need to be thinking big picture. Neither you nor I have an exact template for how a crisis is going to unfold. Therefore, a more generalized plan is in order. One thing to always remember as it relates to planning is, as we say in the business, “no plan survives contact intact.” You should never be so married to your plan that you can’t adapt. If conditions change so much that your initial plan is useless, only a fool would stick to it.

We have established that your urban dwelling environment is going to face crisis so what do you need to do first? The conventional wisdom is that you need to purchase a bug out location stocked to the ceiling with provisions and armaments. It needs to be off the grid, large enough to accommodate you and 25 friends, complete with thousands of gallons of fuel storage, spare parts for your car and horses for when those run out. It needs to be far from population centers, in an environment that supports sustainable farming, yet cold enough to keep refugees from beating down your door. At least one of those friends should live in the location full time to keep bandits from taking over in your absence. And if you have that, dear readers, you are doing awesome. But it is outside the realm of possibility for most of us, myself included. I am in fact writing this while living in the city and my bug out location consists of my quarter-acre backyard. Just in raw monetary terms, given most of our disposable income, you might as well add surplus F-15 fighter jets to the above list. It isn’t going to happen.

It would also be cool to max out your Visa card on ammo and night-vision goggles the week before the crisis hits, catching that last UPS delivery, sticking Citi Bank with the bill as we descend into Mad Max world and laughing all the way at any thought about your credit score. That is a lot like saying it would be cool to buy Apple stock in 1986. If you think you are going to get that lucky, just go buy a lottery ticket and be done. The reality is all of us need to live like the sky isn't falling in case it doesn't. By the time you are willing to go all in with whatever credit you have that credit is likely to already be worthless. You might also want to think about the price of generators on January 1st, 2000 after the Y2K scare. More than one person bet the farm on that one and was sad to see the sun come up.

You need to prepare in a sustainable manner not only for your financial health but for your sanity. If you get all spun up and start fortifying the house with sandbags you run the risk of ending up in an asylum. So let's all take a deep breath and think this through.

In a side-step from the usual prepping manuals, the first thing you need to look at is money. This is the equivalent of looking at logistics from a military view, since you are effectively buying your own logistics train. As Napoleon said, "Amateurs discuss tactics. Rank amateurs discuss grand strategy. The professionals discuss logistics." Money directly affects what you can lay in for bad times and that is the way the cards fall. The first thing you need to figure out is what kind of dollars you can drop on your survival. It is easy to get all emotional and say, *"All of them! Nothing is more important!"* immediately followed by a second mortgage on your house. Don't do that. Just like in Finance 101, you need to add up your bills then see what is left over. That is your operational budget. Maybe you can increase it by cutting excess spending on frivolous crap—I recommend you do. Dining out and beers with the boys all add up and you may wish you spent that on bullets later. At the end of the day, you have a finite amount of money to spend.

Once you have your budget in order, it is time to decide what you need to have on hand when the natives turn restless. The

categories go something like this:

- Weapons
- Training
- Equipment
- Food
- Water
- Medical
- Escape Hatch

So which one is most important? It really depends on you. A mountain of ammo in your living room is useless when there isn't a can of Spaghetti-O's within fifty miles. A similar mountain of beans and rice is useless if you can't defend it from the Mongolian horde tearing down your front door. The truth is you need a balanced approach. You need all those things but the order is situation dependent.

Weapons get their own chapter later so I won't get too much into it here. To my mind, priority one is a gun (provided you live in a nation where that is possible. I guess a pike or a sword if you can't). Whatever gun that may be, if you own just one right now it is enough. I would sleep very well in any city having a single-shot 20-gauge shotgun and a box of shells. It wouldn't be my ideal but it would be enough to rest easy and prioritize other needs.

If I have been so negative about hardware up till now, why am I preaching having one gun so hard? Simple. Survival types like to talk about how long you can survive without this or that in an extreme case; you can go weeks without food, days without water, etc. Well there is a time for how long you can go in a gun fight without a gun and the answer is zero seconds. If you can't defend yourself the rest of the stuff is a moot point. Defense first, always.

Okay, so you have your grandfather's pocket derringer; consider yourself held over. How do you fill in the rest of your needs? I suggest a list with incremental milestones in each category. Again, much of it depends on your specific needs. Do you live in Seattle and



own a mop bucket? Cool, water storage is way down the list for you. Oh, you live in Phoenix and it's July? Water is probably number one. You're diabetic? Screw food and water, your first priority is an extra month's supply of insulin!

With the incremental plan, you at least end up with something in each category. We all have an ideal load out—like the castle surrounded by a Ranger Company and staffed with bikini girls we mentioned at the beginning of the chapter—but odds are that's a long way off. Best to have a little of everything than the best-in-class of one with none of the others. Lets say you have \$200 to spend per month on your list. That is laughable to some and a high bar for others. Work with what you have. How do you spend it?

First you need to think about how much stuff you need balanced with how much space you have. As a city dweller, space might mean a tiny apartment or it might mean a house with two car garage. If you have very little storage space you are either going to have to get creative or make do with less. Let's look at the ideal numbers first.

### Weapons

Ah ha! This gets its own chapter later.

### Training

Training is the one box that is never fully filled. I was a professional soldier and mercenary for two decades and I'm still learning. This might be a very high priority depending on your skill set. Let's say you have a decent weapon but you have no idea how to use it. A \$100 class at your local indoor range will do wonders for you. It won't make you a gunfighter but it will make you capable of hitting the broadside of a barn (at least if you are standing inside the barn when called upon to do so). If you are already weapons capable, this training could be a primitive cooking class or a six month paramedic course. The sky is the limit. The inherent problem, however, is that the better the training the more it costs in both time and money.

Speaking for the gunfighter skills at least, good training will cost you \$350-\$500 a day. Figure a minimum of seven days to become competent and this adds up. For now, take the \$100 local class and worry about the rest later.

### Equipment

It is easy to go down the rabbit hole on this one because equipment is a broad category. For your initial stages it mostly doesn't matter. If you have a hand cannon, all you need is a holster for now and that's just in case you need to run tomorrow. All you need is a sling if you have a long gun. Throw in a decent pocket knife and you are good enough for the moment.

### Food

Obviously, this one is really important. If you are a young, healthy, single person, yes, you can survive for weeks without food. It won't be fun but you will make it. That is not true of small children. They might survive but the damage done to their brains and bodies by malnutrition is terrifying to contemplate. So food needs to be on the list regardless of your status. For urban dwellers, I suggest a three month supply, all of it non-perishable. The internet and other survival books are chock-full of excellent storage ideas and low cost calorie solutions. It isn't my area of expertise so I can't do it better than them, but I do stand by three months. If the supply trucks to your city aren't running again by then it is time to leave. And three months, supplemented by even occasional resupply, can easily stretch to six months or a year.

### Water

Water is hugely important for both hygiene and drinking. I cannot stress the importance of water enough. It is, however, one of the last things I would expect to lose in a city. If the water is cut off for even a short period in a modern city it will be time to leave. While unorthodox

water sources do exist in any urban environment, they don't exist in most places in sufficient quantity to prevent a complete catastrophe.

If a metro area lost water completely and unexpectedly I don't expect most people have thought through the worst case scenario. This isn't like LA going on water rationing or Johannesburg saying they will be out of water in two months. Both of those scenarios imply forethought and at least some government countermeasures. If the tap just shut off and stayed off that is an entirely different ball of wax. Figure the stores would run out of bottles on day one and most people have zero in storage. Let's also assume that if the water is out, the power being out is a pretty safe bet. How long before people start dropping dead in a Southern city if it's summer time? How many people in St. Louis would try and drink the river water and how many would have the sense to boil it first? How many people citywide would know how to dig a slit trench or at least use a bucket for waste? How long before those same people started just dumping waste in the streets? A water crisis, at the extreme, could rapidly lead to a body crisis beyond the ability of any government to fix. That would lead to a disease epidemic and a cascading spiral of sickness and pestilence. Time to get out by any means necessary. That takes things from a minor survival hassle to an abandon ship moment.

Given all that, I recommend seven days of water on hand at a gallon per person per day. If you live in an extremely hot environment, double that.

### Medical

This category is hugely important but often forgotten. No one likes to think about getting chewed up—it doesn't fit with our hero fantasy. We are going to gun down all the bad guys without a scratch on us. Maybe a flesh wound that heals itself in the third act, but certainly nothing serious. Well more wet blanket time; if you are in any kind of combat, people are going to get hurt. You are going to get hurt. You or your people are going to get shot. Having spent time engaged in urban combat, it isn't a question of if, it's a question of

when. You have to be prepared to deal with this as part of the plan. We will detail medical more in depth in a later chapter, but it needs to start with two tourniquets per person. One is for you and only you—your emergency lifeline—the other is for patching up friends. From a place like Activity Group, these are going to be about \$36 apiece. This adds up quick if you have a family. The second medical thing you can start doing right now is thinking about small items. Hand sanitizer and soap are huge. Prior to WWII, disease and infection did more killing than anything else in wars from ancient Greece to Gettysburg. Neosporin is cheap and very helpful at keeping small wounds from becoming a serious problem. Medical tape and gauze solve a wide variety of problems. Don't go crazy but allocate some funds for certain.

### Escape Hatch

Your city may not be survivable—another dose of harsh reality. The disaster you are issued may be so bad that Bear Grylls and a team of SAS commandos wouldn't have a chance. If that is the case, you need to do the only logical thing: get the hell out of Dodge! If you are just now considering the possibility of unrest, you need to figure out an exit strategy. It can be simple. Do you have a car? If you do, what from your residence is both actually important and will fit in that car? The next question applies if you have a car or not: do you have a backpack, sturdy enough to hold at least bits from all of the above categories? If not, you need to find a second hand sporting goods store, stat. Anything with a name brand and not threadbare will do for the moment. Chuck some food and water inside along with a sweater and socks. Keep it under thirty pounds. Cool, problem solved...mostly (we will cover this in more depth later). Last but not least, you need paper maps with a copy for each adult, an extra in the car and a lensatic compass to match. Your base plan should cover an exit route in at least two different cardinal directions by car and by foot. Get to work.

That was down and dirty but it does cover your bases. Let's call

that one the 3000 word survival plan. It isn't perfect but it will hold you for a short while. Now we can get down to the serious thinking. Grown-up decisions and long term planning take time and extra brain power. No one expects you to enact a full conversion to the Cult of Survival overnight, but we do expect you to attend regular meetings.

### **3 Building Your ODA from Scratch**

Hopefully we have dispelled any notion of one ruggedly handsome, ludicrously well-armed man fending off the hordes single-handedly while also finding time to get the girl and probably learn something about himself in the process. If that is still your primary survival plan, best of luck. I hope you bought nice weapons that I will enjoy when I find them later. For everybody else, get ready to do some more hard work and digging. See how that is becoming a theme? It's almost like this isn't going to be easy and you are really going to have to apply yourself if you want to succeed.

The most flexible formation on the modern battlefield, hands down, is the ODA (Operational Detachment Alpha). Unique to Special Forces, the ODA, or A-Team, has built in redundancies and a wide spectrum of capabilities. It can conduct a MEDCAP (Medical Civic Action Program) for a village one minute, divide into three man sniper cells the next, function as a conventional infantry platoon after lunch and find time to build an intelligence network before dinner. While it might not be the absolute best choice at most jobs it can do any job competently. It is like the crew cab pickup of military units (with leather seats and a truck topper as options). What, then, do I think you should do with your own people? Mimic it to the best of your ability.

This is not without precedent—we do it all the time. Whenever US Special Forces is tasked with training another country's special forces this is often the model we choose. Now, it isn't always

appropriate. When we are dealing with some clowns that can barely read, much less problem solve, ODA structure is bit much. In those cases we usually try to mimic Ranger companies instead. That's not a slight on Rangers (this time), we are talking about diversity of skills and hitting shit with a hammer is in fact a Ranger specialty that generally translates across the board. A company-sized element of commandos trained in breaking things and shooting people is in fact a handy thing to have—it just isn't the most useful in all situations. In fact, the most successful story of the GWOT, in terms of host nation forces, didn't see Special Forces making ODAs or Rangers. It saw ODAs creating the ICTF (Iraqi Counter Terrorism Forces), modeled off of something different entirely.

This goes back to the point of modeling your organization off of the A-Team structure. Done correctly, it will allow you to build all the other battlefield formations later should the need arise. That may be looking a long way down the road but it isn't outside the realm of possibility. For now, let's look at how an ODA is put together with suggestions on how you can cut and paste to make yours.

An ODA is formed of twelve men each holding one of eight jobs. Four jobs are actually filled by two men in ideal circumstances. These are looked at as the base jobs for an ODA; a single specialty every enlisted member leaves the qualification course with. The relationship is always a junior/senior position (like the Sith Order with a master and apprentice). Though the senior is rarely assassinated by the junior for a promotion, he is instead levied to SWCS as an instructor. SWCS is the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, the teaching apparatus for not only minting new Green Berets but home to all the advanced skills instruction. Like death and taxes, a SWCS rotation is absolutely certain if you stay in the force long enough. Being forced to leave your team is the ultimate green weenie and most members are dragged kicking and screaming from the team room. For you, rounding out even these base four jobs is going to take a lot. And like a real ODA, you probably aren't going to be lucky enough to double fill all of them. You should try, it is part of the

redundancy and capability to have it, but if you can't at least one per job can get it done.

One point that I cannot stress here enough: look for capable people, not just like-minded people. SF selects for intelligence in addition to physical ability; brains matter, a lot. In training civilians after I retired, I saw this firsthand with shooting and tactics. Doctors and other high functioning people do better not just at book work but at *everything*. If I had a choice in raw material between 80 IQ triathletes or 100 IQ video gamers, I would take the gamers. As we will discuss later, physical toughness can be learned, to an extent at least, but raw intelligence is hard to improve if not impossible.

### 18 Bravo, Weapons Sergeant

Also known as SF regular, this is the job we give to our IQ waivers. Being the weapons guy sounds cool but in reality this is the easiest job to fill. One thing 18Bs have to master that you don't need to worry about is exotic and heavy weapons. Odds are pretty good you aren't going to find recoilless rifles and foreign machine guns littering the streets. Next on the list is small arms repair, which may or may not be a handy side job for your team. If you happen to have a gunsmith on hand or if one of your friends is already a gun tinkerer (building ARs in the garage) this would be a good place to stick him. In a short term conflict this is probably not something to worry too much about, but if a conflict drags on this may even become a good bartering skill. For allies, my guy will repair your broken trigger group for seven cans of beans, for example.

The best job of an 18B for you is one that I always found laughable on an actual team. By doctrine, the Bravo is also supposed to be in charge of tactics. Usually that translates to a new Bravo showing up on a team and attempting to run the house on tactics and ranges. Guys with ten years on the team and multiple combat deployments smack him in the mouth and tell him to go get his shinebox. Bravo sulks as he counts pistols back into the arms room until he has ten years on the team or the Carl Gustav breaks a firing



pin. But for you, this is a secondary job worth filling. If you are lucky enough to have a former Infantryman in your crew this is an excellent place for him. Same goes down the hierarchy of any prior combat arms veteran, Cavalry Scout, Tanker, MP, whatever. While few are going to have actual matching skills to a full up Infantryman, this war has at least given them some skills. In an era where MPs have done urban patrols and gone on raids, they will have picked up at least limited tactical knowledge.

If you don't have a military veteran, LE (Law Enforcement) is next best. Barring that, you may just have to pick someone. Your Bravo should then spend his study time on tactics and if possible, take some classes directly related to such. Aaron Barruga at Guerrilla Approach is an excellent choice but be warned: classes on tactics that are actually good are few and far between. Do your homework and don't be blinded by bullshit r é sum é s.

If you are running on a shoestring budget, free or cheap resources are available. Don't bother with military manuals outside of the Ranger Handbook because most of them suck. The information is fine but it tends to be written in such a way as to be generally useless. An FMF 6-5 USMC Infantry manual does a piss-poor job of explaining why you do things, though it does tell you what to do. A better choice is something like "The Last Hundred Yards: The NCO's Contribution to Warfare" by H.J. Poole.

### 18 Charlie, Engineer Sergeant

This is the job that every SF guy secretly wants because it sounds the coolest on paper. The 18C job most advertised is demolitions (as in, you get to blow shit up) which is awesome, but the secondary job is building things and the most frequent tertiary job is as Team Supply Sergeant (which is just desserts). Every 18C thinks he is the coolest guy in the world until he realizes exactly how much serialized nonsense an ODA actually has and that he is responsible for inventory on every bit of it. While I am not bitter in the slightest that I didn't get this MOS (Military Occupational Specialty), all my

18C friends can still suck it. I'm a Master Breacher and a radio guy so go check the serial number on our toilet seats, Cherry. Anyway, now that I am over my rant...

A makeshift 18C is probably going to be one of the easier jobs for you to fill. Let's leave aside demolitions, at least in terms of explosive demolitions, lest we all get put on a List... and I do mean a capital L *List*. Your Charlie should have skills at building fortifications for a start, which we will cover in depth later. You don't exactly need a finish carpenter—a competent general construction worker will get the job done. In this case, a jack of all trades is actually more useful than a specialist. Your Charlie may also be needed to create makeshift plumbing, increase your comfort by building bunks or storage lockers or designing airflow ducts for your hideout.

While I did skip over explosive demolitions, a competent builder can also be a destroyer. I just doubt you are going to be at a point that briefcases full of Semtex are available. If you are, the same knowledge is helpful. Barring that, what else can a construction worker use to break things? How about the same tools he uses everyday. Provided he can be protected long enough to do it, just about anything can be destroyed with heavy equipment. It does require training to do well and best to have that before you need it. With the right tools available your Charlie could dig up a water main, clear fields of fire, knock out a bridge—sky is the limit.

This job set doesn't have to be limited to construction workers either. Someone from the city water works department would have in-depth knowledge of how those systems work and could learn the other skills. An actual structural engineer would have mastery of bringing things down that would be invaluable. Even aside from the extreme cases listed above, this is a valuable job to fill. Someone from any of these trades would have a better understanding of what is safe and not safe than a layman. How do you identify a load bearing wall? Is this burned out building still structurally safe? A Charlie may prove worth his weight in gold depending on how bad things get.

## 18 Echo, Communications Sergeant

Obviously, only the most capable and ruggedly handsome amongst us can become 18 Echos but don't let the good looks fool you. An Echo must also be smart, extremely fit and well endowed. I don't create the selection criteria, I just live by it. On a team, an 18E has many jobs that won't directly translate to you. The Comms Sergeant has about fifteen different radios, capable of HF, VHF and UHF spectrums as well as SATCOM, plus encryption for all that stuff and the responsibility of making the overall communications plans. He constantly has to fix the Bravo's radio after he spills crayon soup in it or loses all his crypto cause he takes fifteen minutes to switch the batteries out...

On the real, communications are an often-overlooked aspect of survival. Going back to our 'one man against the world' fantasy, nobody thinks about communicating with anything besides their 40 cal (except maybe to say tough guy words on the enemy's radio net). In the real world, reliable communication devices have done as much for making modern warfare possible as anything. If Napoleon had shortwave, we might all be speaking French right now. Communications (henceforth abbreviated to *comms* because that's what the cool kids say) is vital not only for tactical control but for intelligence. On the tactical side, might you want to know that the Mongolian horde has engaged one of your pickets while your main force is five blocks away facing the wrong direction? Yes, yes, you would. On the intelligence side, do you want to know what is happening across the city or that relief trucks from the National Guard are in Central Park and taking refugees for the next twelve hours? For that matter, do you want to know if Detroit is the only city on fire or if the revolution has spread to Nashville? All of these are handy things to have in your pocket.

I also want to briefly interject a bit more on the tactical front related to the Battle of Grozny in 1994. The extremely abbreviated version of events went like this: the Russians decided to crush Grozny by sending four large armored columns into the city along four

different axis to meet at the Presidential Palace in the center—big show of force, enemies driven before us, Chechen resistance folds like a cheap suitcase, medals for everyone. But the Russians badly underestimated the resistance in place. The Chechens, being devious little bastards, coordinated to actually let the armored columns string out inside the city. Then all at once, they rained RPG fire from elevated positions and anti-tank missiles from basement windows. Pandemonium ensued and the first assault was actually driven from the city. The Russians only finally succeeded, months later, with incredibly high casualties and a decisive change in tactics. They finally made it by driving up to a building, pounding it flat with tank main guns and self-propelled anti-aircraft guns and then moving on to the next one. Not exactly great economy of force! What allowed the Chechen force to coordinate a huge surprise counter-attack across the entire city? Cheap, handheld Chinese radios. They stopped a first world military's armored forces in its tracks with \$5 in off-the-shelf technology and some '60s era munitions.

For you, the best option here is a HAM radio nerd. He is already going to understand the finer points of antenna theory and the equipment needed. As a bonus, he may already be skilled at making hidden antennas if your city frowns on slapping things on the roof (you can find some remarkable attic antenna setups just by perusing HAM forums). If you can't find someone already into the hobby, it can be learned. Just don't assign this task to a knuckle-dragger—it isn't going to work out. Like anything else, your start up cost will be higher if it is a completely new skill.

Secondary to learning how to use the equipment, your homegrown Echo has a bit of overlap with the Intelligence sector. He needs to learn how to use and plan at least very basic cryptographic and brevity systems. Relatively simple cyphers will still protect you from the average bear, especially if you have the ability to change them face-to-face at intervals. Encrypting and decrypting messages takes time, so that should be part of the consideration. Also understand that neither cyphers nor off-the-shelf electronically

encrypted radio sets will protect you from a Nation State enemy. If you are fighting one of those, things have slid further downhill than I anticipated. A cypher might still buy you time but don't think you are going to beat the NSA with some skills you learned on Reddit.

As to the off-the-shelf encrypted radios, I wouldn't bother. They have a few faults for what we are discussing. First, they limit you to only those radios you bought before things went bad. If you later on link up with allied forces, you have to all have the same encryption to talk. Electronic encryption is a funny thing. With some of it you can hear, but can't talk to others on the same wave without it. With others you can't even hear them. Two, if your own device merely drops encryption, that device is now useless. Third, it promotes sloppiness. If you think you are secure you are more likely to skip all the other steps. Bad day out if the opposing forces happened to buy the same Taiwanese Junior Woodchuck set you did. I would never trust something that anyone else could have bought a duplicate of.

You can learn cyphers from a variety of places on the internet. They are useful, though they take time as mentioned above for receiving. Obviously, that is not the best for tactical level use. For things like moving about the city or a street fight, a brevity matrix is a much better option. A set of brevity codes is essentially a set of words with predesignated meanings. Not only does it keep the radio chatter down to a minimum, it provides a degree of protection if you are transmitting in the open (meaning no encryption). It is fast and in addition can relay a long message without missing important words.

For a simple example, let's use car names. *Lexus* means we are departing friendly lines. *Mercedes* means we arrived at checkpoint #1 on our quest to get water from the local river or whatever. *Toyota* means we are getting the water. *Nissan* means we made contact. *Dodge* means we need help. *Ford* means we didn't make contact and are headed home. *Chevy*, we are ready to re-enter friendly lines. It can save a lot of headaches but you can also see why they need to change from time to time. If someone is watching you and has a radio, in a relatively short period they will

learn your entire code. That helps their intelligence picture. Rolling codes help blunt the ability to collect data on you.

### 18 Delta, Medical Sergeant

I think extremely highly of all 18 Deltas, as does anyone else that has ever seen them at work. Medics are notorious weirdos but they are amazing in the field. On a real team, the 18D has been force fed most of medical school in a one year course with some veterinary medicine tossed in for good measure. If I got mangled in an IED on the way to my truck tomorrow morning I would rather have an 18D package me for transport than a trauma surgeon—they are that good. This is going to be by far the hardest billet for you to fill. Even on a real ODA, we usually only have one. To show you how seriously SOCOM takes the job, factor in this: a team without a Medic is non-deployable. Do not pass GO, do not collect \$200.

Just like the comms, this is an aspect often overlooked by those preparing for catastrophe. Not only does it once again darken the lone wolf fantasy, people are unwilling to consider getting hurt. I hate to burst your bubble but people are going to get hurt. Even without enemy action, our bodies are not evolved to live in a world of concrete and rebar. People fall off things. People get hit by cars. And I promise you this: if you sling guns long enough, you will get shot. Your people will get shot. The best soldiers in the world, facing untrained chuckleheads, can and do get shot and killed. You need to plan right now on dealing with casualties. It will happen.

The best options you have to fill this spot come from the medical world, no surprise. My choice would be a trauma surgeon, then a paramedic, then an ER nurse, then a general practice doctor, in that order. Any one of those four would be an excellent option but the reality is your social circle might not include any. In that case, you may just have to pick someone to learn the skills.

Medicine is not an easy path to take. It takes brains and, more so than any other skill, real world training is hard to get. If you do

have an untrained candidate, it would be worth your team's collective money to send him to EMS school. Follow on could be something like Wilderness Medicine and even volunteering at your local fire department. One other training avenue to consider is from several former 18 Deltas that are offering combat medicine courses. If I was going to learn from scratch that is something I would absolutely consider.

Even without a real medic, everyone needs to spend some time learning the basics of first aid. Just like with equipment, this can also get very expensive. Lots of shady dealers will sell you a “does everything” kit that is actually knock-off Band-Aids and hope. Do your homework and buy from trusted sources. One of my recent favorites is Solatac, a company founded by a twenty-year paramedic. Everything in his kit is worth the dollar—no frills, no junk.

### 18 Fox, Intelligence Sergeant

Hey, I was one of these too. See the perquisites previously mentioned that are in no way just an ego stroke I included in my book. This is the first specialty that is not available straight from the SFQC (Special Forces Qualification Course). It requires time on a team first and then a follow-on specialty course to learn the trade.

On a real team, the 18 Fox has a few duties. The first is, duh, inteller-gence. For a Fox, this is generally related to analysis. HUMINT (Human Intelligence) is everyone's responsibility and an ODA is too small for a real SIGINT (Signals Intelligence) capability. The best description of the 18F job is probably as an all-source analyst, vague as that sounds at the moment. The secondary job of the Fox is that he is the assistant Team Sergeant, which doesn't apply much to your needs, as we will soon see with the Team Sergeant description. The third job of the Fox is to assist the Warrant in Red Cell planning, which sounds more high speed than it is. Being the Red Cell basically means thinking like the enemy during planning and presenting likely enemy course of action to the team's plan.

For you, I suggest you modify the 18F job. It isn't like you have access to a SIPRNet and all the published reports of various intelligence agencies. There is only so much you can glean from 4chan and The Drudge Report. Picking up data from the internet and news sources is important but it isn't all important. Besides, if things turn really bad you won't even have those as resources. I would suggest instead that you make your Fox focused on HUMINT. Remember all that "talking to real people" stuff I mentioned in the first chapter? Good. It is a unique skill and not one every human can perfect. It definitely helps to start with some aptitude. So who, in normal life, is a good candidate?

Have you ever met a very talented car salesman? Not some scumbag you wanted to kick in the teeth four seconds after meeting him but a scumbag that actually walked you so far into the process that you wonder how you got there? Good sales people have already perfected what we would call elicitation technique. Elicitation, simplified, is an ability to get people to open up and tell you things often without even realizing it is happening. Every bit of data they get from you shapes their approach so that after five minutes you feel like you have been lifelong friends. Some of the best HUMINT guys I have ever met were in car sales before the Army, which is why I bring it up. Same with how some of the best Recce guys I ever met were previously drug dealers. Skills are skills, no matter how you acquired them. If I was recruiting HUMINT specialists off the street, I would look to anyone in sales. Very good journalists have a similar skill set, as do older police officers. Anyone could fit the bill for you.

Your Fox should not only be in charge of the intelligence networks but should act as a clearing house for your team. It is a lot easier to have one guy take reports and paint a picture with it than try to have everyone know everything. It also allows your crew to pass on possibly pertinent information a little at a time rather than trying to remember it until your next meet up.

18A, Detachment Commander, 180 Alpha, Warrant Officer and 18



## Zulu, Team Sergeant

We are going to talk about these three positions together because they most likely aren't going to apply to you. Kudos if you make it work, but it is unlikely because all three of these are the senior leadership positions on a team. The 18 Alpha is the Captain, also known as summer help, since they rotate out every two to three years. The 180 Alpha previously held an enlisted job, decided he wanted to sham the rest of his career and went to a course to pretend to be an officer. The 18 Zulu is the highest ranking enlisted member, Team Sergeant and the boss of the team. It is by far the place of honor, so much so that if a team is referred to by anything except its number its often the Team Sergeant's name.

Leadership is all cool and important and what not, so why am I telling you to disregard these positions? Simple. If you expect military discipline outside of an actual military hierarchy you are going to be sorely disappointed. Unless you are actually willing to start executing people for insubordination this model isn't going to work. Especially with Americans—Hell, it barely works on a real team! If you go trying to make someone in charge things will fall apart with very few exceptions. If your crew happens to be a group of people that have already been friends for decades, you may have already sorted out who the leader is. Or if one person is just so over the top qualified for it and has the charisma to hold it together regardless of circumstances, maybe. Like one of you is a twenty-year USMC veteran and the rest of you came from Starbucks; yes, in that case, he is probably clearly in charge. But by and large, trying to fill these positions is just going to create conflict. Besides, a leader always emerges. If you can put together the five jobs listed and you all spend some time training together, one of you is almost assured to pop out as the de facto boss.

To my point about military discipline, don't expect miracles; it is a pipe dream for any militia type force. Rather than try and force it, you need to learn to function without it. Any shooting match in this country is much more likely to fit the Boer Commando type of

structure than the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne type of structure.

## **4 With Our Powers Combined**

### **Assembling Your Tactical Voltron**

Captain Planet, Voltron, whatever your flavor. In this chapter, we are going to be talking about people, how to find them, how to use them, the works. But first, we are going to talk a little bit about how your cobbled together A-Team is actually used as a force multiplier. We touched on it in the first chapter, then we talked about how to build it in the third chapter. Now we need to take a minute and talk about how it is used as opposed to other formations you could have built instead.

Imagine for a moment that you are in the third month of widescale unrest. Things have declined well past Wild West and into Mad Max world. If you could still find a travel agent you would be looking at Beirut circa 1981 as a great location to relax and unwind. For the purposes of this example, any worry about criminal prosecution left on the last train out of Dodge. Until Judge Dredd shows up, you are the law.

A prominent member of your side, big in distribution in the previous life, approaches you with a problem. His daughter was wounded and captured by one of the opposing factions while helping his outfit distribute supplies. In the best Soviet fashion, she is being treated at the city hospital so that she will be well enough to torture later. The hospital was taken by Antifa in the early stages of the conflict; mostly because no one wanted to destroy it in an attempt to take it back.

Your distributor friend is sitting on warehouses full of rations, which is how he maintains his grip on power. You don't actually need anything he has at the moment because you planned ahead but you may very well in the future. More importantly, you see this as an

opportunity to garner some good will and raise morale in general among your block of allies. It's always a good policy to show you will do what it takes to rescue captives—if you can pull it off.

The senior Delta (Sr. Delta) has working knowledge of the layout of the hospital. He actually has a doctor inside, an informant, that he has been trying to get out. He communicates with him by pretending to be one of his nurses; making the rounds every other week like any other worker bee. Nurses count among the proletariat in this new order and as such are permitted to leave when their shift is over. Doctors and surgeons are counted as part of the 1% (filthy bourgeoisie) and are confined to the hospital to pay a penance.

Having built target packets on critical infrastructure already, the Fox dusts off the folder for the hospital. Along with Sr. Delta, he updates likely enemy forces and defensive positions. Your team sets aside a few hours of planning and then sets it into motion.

On the night of the raid, your forces are divided into two-man teams. Across town, your Sr. Bravo and Jr. Echo prepare an ambush for an opposition convoy. Sr. Bravo has tactical control; Jr. Echo is along since he has the skills to use the radio so far away. Inside their own lines, the enemy has gotten complacent and lazy. A shopkeeper, whose only son was executed for overzealously spurning the advances of a tranny, has been reporting timetables and vehicle numbers to you for weeks. Like clockwork, soy and granola are trucked out at 2230 on this day.

On the ambush line with your two troops are a of collection of sport shooters from one of the local competition clubs. Sr. Bravo met and befriended some of them months before the crisis. As part of his skill training, he often went to matches. Now it is about to pay off in spades. The sport shooters lack desperately in tactics but man, can they shoot straight! While the local club was for pistol shooters, leading to a decisive lack of long guns at hand, it is compensated in other ways. Thanks to the high demands of the sport, most of these shooters have skill at reloading and bought in bulk. It is one of the few

factions around that has never been wanting for ammo. Between that and an incredible amount of high capacity magazines, the mismatch in weapons is effectively neutralized. Besides, all they need to do is fill the air with lead; the convoy ambush is merely a diversion.

Around the north and west sides of the hospital, a local III% militia moves into place. Led by Jr Bravo and Mr. Fox—this was not an easy sell. The militia is headed by a former 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Infantryman and has at least a smattering of other veterans but it is dangerously green—something not lost on its leaders. After a debacle early in the conflict, a rout saved only by its veteran core, the militia has been licking its wounds. Any fool could see a direct assault on the hospital would be suicide. Too much open space and too many dug in positions. But your plan calls for something else. It doesn't need to be a frontal assault, it just has to be believable as a frontal assault.

Tracing the water mains very carefully, Sr. Charlie and Sr. Delta lead a handpicked group of ten. Getting the militia commander to give up his best for a risky mission took some convincing but he relented in the end. Without Sr. Charlie's decades spent as an underground utility worker this wouldn't even be possible. Lugging an electronic jackhammer and generator through a maze of subterranean tunnels has been taxing, but without explosives it was the only option. As long as the militia does its part lighting up the hospital's defenders, the noise of return fire should cover the real assault through the floor.

As predicted, the ambush on the convoy kicks over a hornet nest. Sr. Bravo and Jr. Echo hit hard and fast, withdrawing under heavy fire. Convinced a massive strike force is in their midst, the enemy draws all available forces into the area. The hospital's reserve takes off into the night, anxious to repel the invaders. Thirty-five minutes later, at the predesignated time of 2305, the militia opens up on the defensive positions. Already in a state of high alert, the return fire is withering. No one notices the fifteen minutes of jackhammering needed to gain a toe hold on the basement. Catching the internal security forces by complete surprise, Sr. Charlie and Sr. Delta cut

through minimal resistance like a chainsaw through hot butter. Inside of twenty minutes they have secured the objectives and are back out the hole. Sr. Charlie kicks open a sewage relief valve as he walks past it to discourage pursuit.

Two blocks away, from an elevated position, Sr. Echo keeps tabs on various elements at work. Jr. Echo calls in *Red Sox* (the internal brevity code that means the convoy ambush team has broken contact); the boys are headed home. But what is this? A string of headlights fills the sky to the south as a QRF (quick reaction force) screams toward the hospital. The inside team is gone but a force this size could pin down and overrun the militia providing the cover. Withdrawing such a large force takes time even when well rehearsed. Sr. Echo hands the mic to the Commander as he rolls onto a gifted Barrett 50 cal. The semi-auto Barret 50 was a gift from a local gun shop owner who was thankful for the team's help with a catastrophic theft right before the jack boot came down. With an all-out ban already enacted, the owner tragically lost his entire inventory the night before the authorities came to collect it. It was risky doing such a brazen robbery in broad daylight and making sure to get the bound books and 4473 files. It was even more risky helping the owner move his products onto the black market. Do good and good will come to you, as they say.

The Team Commander is a former Harrier pilot which means he knows jack and shit about ground operations, but he knows command presence and he certainly knows how to time things from an elevated position. The latter skill is about to pay off. As the QRF passes Kung Pao Steve's Dim Sum Restaurant, the only active neon sign on the street, Sr. Echo starts pounding the rearmost vehicles with 50 caliber hate. The Commander, watching with binoculars, waits until the first vehicle's tires obscure a nearly unnoticeable green chem-lite laying in the street. Then he says over the radio net, "*Execute.*"

Jr. Delta slams the gas on his garbage truck, already in reverse, wedging it into a building and blocking the street in front of the QRF. A Honda Civic buckles against its massive weight as he bails out the

drivers side door. With Barrett rounds still punishing the rear of the column, a ten car pile up wedges the force into a kill box. From an alley behind, a diesel engine roars to life. Jr. Charlie turns the corner in a D-10 bulldozer with a sheet of steel welded over the front of the cab.

Jr. Delta has taken a firing position on the second story now and is cleaning off any squinters while drawing fire. The trapped QRF alternates shooting at him and the dozer. The hydraulics on the D-10 take some damage, but not enough to stop it. Jr Charlie puts the pedal to the floor as he shoves twisted metal forward into the anvil of the garbage truck. He jams the accelerator down with a brick and bails out.

Jr. Delta, alternating between two windows, is now taking so much incoming fire he has to hit the floor. He hopes he has bought Jr. Charlie enough time as he reaches into his pack. With the flick of a zippo, he hurls a Molotov into the street and makes his departure. The firebomb hits the crumpled mass of cars with ruptured fuel tanks and bursts into an inferno. Any survivors won't soon shake off the psychological damage five minutes work has wrought.

Back at the safe house, you take stock of the evening's festivities. The sport shooters have lost two killed—guys just wouldn't take off the damn bright pink jerseys—but they also recovered several rifles. With a bit of training in tactics they will soon be a first rate assault force. The III<sup>rd</sup>er militia crew has hit a much needed confidence target and morale is soaring. You have put a favor in the bank with a local warlord and secured a full time surgeon. One more mouth to feed is a small price to pay for his skills.

Okay, fiction time is over but story time does illustrate the point: the base concept of an ODA is that it is a force multiplier. We build our own army anywhere we go. By doctrine, every member of a team is capable of leading a company-sized element of eighty or so goombahs. Compared to a conventional force, that is usually the job of a Captain. Now US Special Forces are helped on our way by the

fact that we usually show up with a bag of money in one hand and a bag of guns in the other. Normally we have the sky power of the US Air Force in our back pocket, which also helps with negotiation. Without that, you are going to have to rely on your ability to lead, the skills you bring for trade and the supplies you can manage to hoard or acquire. So how do you get there? If your experience so far only consists of playing Call of Duty and shooting a shotgun once on a camping trip, it is going to be a tough road but it can be done. If you are committed to being a survivor, you can make it.

One of the first questions that I always get in real life is one you should be asking too: where, exactly, do you find capable people of the right mindset? The answer is pretty complex but nothing worth doing is ever easy (at least if it involves still having your pants on). A fact you need to understand going in is that there is no surefire group that is going to yield results, but we can narrow down the field a bit.

The first thing we need to think about is what I call the exceptional people policy. Talent is not evenly distributed and that is just a fact of life. Many high functioning people can't do just one thing better than the average Joe, they can do *everything* better. If a Wall Street trader was forced to work at 7-11, how long do you think it would take them to be the best in the store at every task? Would it matter, even a little bit, if the counter guy had been in that position for a decade? No, it would not. This applies to obvious professions like doctors and also to trades like good fabricators, machinists and builders. A lot of this stems from IQ and work ethic—only one of which you can really improve.

The second thing to consider is the absolutely true proverb, “birds of a feather, flock together.” If your social circle entirely consists of dumbasses huffing paint behind the woodshed and trying to light farts on fire into their 20s, you need to reevaluate your life. People like that just aren't going to make it. Nothing you can do is going to boot strap them up. If you want to be a gangster, you are going to have to be around gangsters. Iron sharpens Iron. Prior military guys have a huge built-in advantage here. We already have a



common bond, we often notice each other in any situation and we have a built-in hierarchy. If I find a grunt, an MP and a cook, I already know their capabilities for the most part and they know mine. We also have a plethora of authenticators that are extremely hard to fake. If you are a prior service guy, you can probably find a couple of other vets to serve as your base. From there, most of the rest of who you need will fall into place from the remaining civilian talent pool. For everyone else, you just have to keep your ears open the same way you would find out who shares your affinity for "My Little Pony" comics or anything else remotely edgy. Oftentimes small clues will provide the answer while searching. Maybe you are having lunch at the office and Bill from accounting mentions he is worried about a devalued dollar or one of your couple friends mentions buying a gun due to rising crime. A little prodding along any of the axis points may reveal a fellow traveler. Barring that, it may allow you to start them on the path.

Does that mean everyone that reads Zero Hedge is a potential candidate? No, not even close. It is going to take a little bread crumbing to feel anyone out. Take the aforementioned military guy circle. When I was still on active duty, I didn't know a lot of people storing rice and beans in the garage. Most people just wanted to do their job and hope their sports ball team won the American Universe Championship or whatever. But I did know some. Even ten years ago "prepping" was a bit of a taboo subject. People would look at you like you were nuts if you told them the country might split up. That may be one thing that is actually more off limits *in* the military. In fact, that may be one of the things you are supposed to report about hearing. So any time I started getting the vibe from a potential ally, I proceeded with caution. Step one, in this case, is don't show all your cards. If the other party has any sense they won't either. Think of this like probing around to see if a potential date is in a relationship or not. As it goes along, you can get a feel for how worried this person actually is. Step two is talking to that person alone where you can both be a lot more frank. If you were at dinner with the spouses when the gun and crime thing came up, spilling the beans that you just

bought a plate carrier and 10,000 rounds of 5.56 is a bit much. If you and the male half of the couple go out to smoke cigars on the porch after dinner, now you have an opening.

Alas, you may also be the only person in your current social circle that thinks along these lines. Efforts at conversion are probably going to be met with indifference or worse. The closer we get to something actually kicking off, the less that will be true but the point is to plan way ahead, not cobble something together the night before the revolution starts. If you don't already have close friends of the correct mindset, you are going to need to start looking elsewhere. A fact you need to understand going in is that there is no surefire group that is going to yield results.

The first place I personally would look is in the sport shooting community. I mentioned competitive shooters in the fictional introduction to this chapter for a reason. I'm not the first person to think of them as a ready-made militia and I assure you I won't be the last. The sporting world is always going to have a percentage of people that think of it just as a game—a diversion akin to golf or racing cars—but it also has a percentage thinking just like you, I promise. Factor in a very high skill with weapons, dedication and a deep understanding of guns that do and do not work and you find yourself with excellent raw material. I can also guarantee that anyone shooting cardboard has at least thought about how it works on people. We will cover this more in the training chapter but I do highly recommend you spend some time in one of the pistol or rifle sports. Not only does it sharpen your skills but it gives you a chance to build relationships.

Similar to sport shooters, a percentage of people at your local martial arts dojo are in it for the title belt and another percentage is there to learn how to survive a street fight. The next logical step after you learn to use your fists is to learn to use a gun and the step after that is to be prepared for large scale unrest—another prime hunting ground for candidates.

The third place is a little more unorthodox but the principle is sound. If I was looking at a tertiary group of people to recruit I would do it from the Tuff Mudder or Spartan Race crowd. They might lack tactical skills but they do have fitness and mental toughness in spades. Those two things also tend to steer a mind toward worst case survival and I would gamble you can find friends if you look long enough in this category.

As you improve your own skills, you are going to be taking courses. If you happen to be doing that locally, chat up the other participants. This is an excellent opportunity not only to network but to possibly fill out your team.

The final place is a last resort, for a variety of reasons: of course, the internet. On the one hand, various survival blogs and forums are handy for finding like-minded people, but you are going to need to do some serious separating of wheat from chaff. For starters, you have to narrow things down to your specific city. I have a gaggle of Twitter friends but the ones on the Eastern Seaboard are of no value to me in a crisis. For that matter, the ones in the next state over are equally useless. The only people I can count on in a real scenario are the ones I can talk to in meat space (not a typo). Another serious problem with the digital crew is that a lot of them are just LARPing (Live Action Role Playing, e.g.: Dungeons and Dragons with foam swords in the park). A large percentage of the users in any survival board are just making it up between bags of Cheetos and Fortnite games. The final reason is the most serious one: the online arena is like moths to a flame for both outright crazy people and Feds trying to bust said crazy people. It was just this week, as I was writing, that the FBI was caught trolling 4chan boards. I would have a very hard time trusting anyone I first met online as their backstory could be easily fabricated. If you didn't know someone two months ago before the subject was broached, you will probably never know them for real.

Let me go ahead and interject a little shit house lawyer into this narrative for real life people and digital friends. If you're visiting a

forum you frequent online or an existing real life group and anyone, at any time, starts talking about making explosives, suppressors or machine guns—run. That person is either there to arrest you or is going to get you arrested. An old joke is that a guy goes to his first militia meeting and sits quietly in the back. A different guy stands up and says they should make a bomb and he agrees. All of a sudden, the leader rips off his costume and holds up his FBI badge. “You are all under arrest,” he says. The guy who wanted to make the bomb pulls out his ATF badge and says, “Goddamn it, this is my arrest! You just ruined six months of undercover work!” One by one, everyone else pops out tin to represent the US Marshals, DEA, City Dog Catcher, etc. until only the guy at his first meeting is left. They all decide to make it a joint investigation and send him to jail for fifty years. This isn’t far off from reality.

One last bit of insight to pass on has a lot to do with timing. The Zombie Apocalypse fad of the late 2000s was the best thing that ever happened to the prepper movement. Between the movies, shows and literature, it took on a life of its own. While it was very tongue in cheek for a lot of people, it provided the perfect cover. For once, you could talk about all the crazy stuff rattling around in your head; if you started with a *Dawn of the Dead* reference, it was all cool. It was so nuts that Hornady was selling Zombie Max ammunition to guys that didn’t even own guns (Zombie Max was actually A-Max ammo with a green polymer tip instead of red—it had cool packaging). So if another popular trend like this happens, use it as a chance to gather your forces.

On that same note, don’t demand a rigid acceptance of your particular version of “unrest.” If you think political violence but your neighbor thinks terrorism and the guys from work think economic collapse, does it really matter? No. One of the great things about the zombie craze was that it was silly but prepping for it actually covered almost every other scenario too. For that matter, look up ZERT Nation which was founded by SOF guys; not a bad option either.

You have a lot of work to do putting a team together, but making

yourself into someone that people want on their team is important too. If you wouldn't recruit you, no one else is going to want to either. If you want a crew of hitters you had better be able to hold your own. The next three chapters will look at all important individual skills.

## 5 Greenhorn to Wyatt Earp

Of the individual skills you are going to need to learn to survive, any one may be the most important in a given scenario. But if things actually descend to open fighting in the streets then knowing how to shoot is king. As Colonel Jeff Cooper once said, “Bushido is all very well in its own way but it is no match for a 30-06.”

I feel like I need to preface this chapter a bit and I hope you will consider this paragraph again later when we talk about buying guns. Not that I need to brag in my own book but shooting is absolutely my strong suit. If you take everything else I say with a grain of salt, please consider the level of expertise I am dropping in here. I am a former USMC Scout Sniper and Special Forces Sniper who was in a sniper billet for multiple combat tours. I was a sniper *and* assaulter in a Direct Action unit and I taught both in my schoolhouse time. I have instructed shooting to every branch of US military SOF through my service and retired time, in addition to other nations. I also shot very high level competitive 3 gun and USPSA pistol for quite some time. Mrs. Off-The-Reservation-6 and I have wedding rings cut from a .308 barrel blank. I am a goddamn gangster with a gun. If there is one thing on God’s green Earth I know how to do it is shoot. You may also be Hell on wheels with a gun but it is unlikely. If you are, awesome, but we have to start this chapter assuming you are not. You may have never even held a real gun before. There are some big steps you need to take, so once again, please don’t whip out the Visa card before you finish the book.

We will discuss all manner of weapons and what to get later but a bit of simplification is in order right now. A pistol is the hardest gun to master but also the most important for the urban dweller. A rifle is

always a better choice if you are planning on being in a gunfight, which we will elaborate on, but that only matters if you wake up in the LA Riots tomorrow morning. If we believe in the more plausible slow slide towards chaos, which I do, a pistol is your friend because you can conceal it. As things go pear shaped, you may stop caring if you have a CCW (Carry Concealed Weapon) permit or not but slapping a rifle on your back for the commute to work is still going to be off the table. So in an ironic twist, the less useful and harder to learn gun is the one you need first. A fair bit of the training discussion will lean that way.

What if, God forbid, you live in a city where owning a handgun is not an option? Well, my legal team won't let me tell you to break the law but if it was me, I would go ahead and have one anyway. Free men don't ask. If that isn't a road you are prepared to go down just yet then substitute a lever action rifle or pump shotgun whenever I say pistol. The end result is roughly the same.

Let's say you are now a proud owner of an M-53 Dirty Harry Manslayer (we will discuss specific handguns to buy in the hardware chapter). You got the obligatory box of ammo from the gun shop so you don't own a very expensive brick (correct terminology; that's what us gun guys call a gun with no bullets to go with it). What now? Training, obviously. Unfortunately for you not all training is created equally. This is absolutely not a skill you can learn from a book or video. Those two things can help you if you already have a limited skill base, but *nothing* can take the place of hands-on training at this stage. Good training is going to cost between \$350 and \$750 per day with three to ten days required to get what you need out of it, depending on your personal level of paint chip ingestion over the years and your baseline athleticism. That three to ten days is just the instruction part; you are also going to have to practice your ass off to retain it.

The big sticking point here is money because you probably don't have it after you just dropped \$650 on a gun and have all this other stuff on a list you need to survive. If you are a total rookie, this is one

of the few times I would ever recommend a beginner's class at your local range. If you did so much as a familiarization fire with an M-9 back in the Navy, skip this step. No, the instructor is not very good at the skill part but you will get the safety part down e.g.: how to load and unload your pistol. As far as marksmanship, you will be better than when you started. Maybe not a lot but some. Most times, as we will see later in equipment, I encourage you to save your hard earned pennies for at least mid-tier widgets. Why am I telling you to settle on this one thing and this one thing only? Because any number, even .001, is infinity more than zero. You don't get to choose when the balloon goes up and you could be caught unaware. Having even a little bit of knowledge with a deadly weapon could be the difference between dying instantly or having the chance to live long enough to get better. A basic pistol course at your local indoor range will cost you about \$100 and burn up another \$40 or so in ammo. Factor it into the price of your initial investment; it is that important.

Now you have a gun and a tiny bit of training. That training is like a seed: it is miniscule at the moment but it has the potential to become a mighty oak. If you just sit back down on the couch and play some Xbox, confident you'll get to it in a couple weeks, it is going to die. I promise you this 100%. At the early stage of learning, even waiting a single day means you will lose a percentage of what you were taught. Your new skill seed needs to be nurtured. It has to have water every morning and kumbaya songs every night. Eventually it will get to a stage where you can let it ride for a few days, but the roots have to get strong first. Living in a large metropolis like you do, it is a safe bet live fire ranges are not easy to access. It likely involves a significant investment of time just to get to and the expense will stack up between range fees and ammo. Fortunately, very cheap alternatives do exist. They aren't a full on replacement for live fire but they will be enough to hold what you have learned.

At this point, you are going to need just a couple more things. One is a holster. For now, let's just say you have one. Several guns actually come with one in the box these days and it would be good



enough for a start. If it doesn't, a legit one is about another \$50. Skip Starbucks tomorrow because you also need some dummy rounds. A ten-pack is about \$5 so no excuses on that one. Dummy rounds are inert replicas of bullets in the appropriate size and shape to fit your gun. A 9mm dummy round looks exactly like a real 9mm round except usually the color. I prefer the ones that are bright orange or yellow so it is very obvious it is a fake. That matters a lot because the next thing you are going to learn how to do is dry fire.

Dry fire is basically practicing shooting with everything except the bang and a bullet slamming into something. It is very important and not only for a noob; it will remain so as long as you carry a gun. To put this in perspective, every pro at every shooting sport does dry fire. When I was shooting over 1000 rounds per day as a CQB instructor I still did an hour of dry fire every night. It is hugely important with the side benefit of costing nothing but time.

Going into dry fire, I cannot stress safety enough. Many a mirror or filing cabinet has gained a new hole from an "unloaded" gun. I have multiple times witnessed a ten-year-plus no shit war hero blast one out of a weapon he thought was empty. This happens to be grounds for immediate dismissal from any door kicker unit no matter your time or skills. Don't ever get complacent with a weapon; that is the day it will bite you.

When setting up your dry fire, the first thing you do is unload your gun, then unload all your magazines and put the real bullets in a different room. Then check your pockets, magazines and the floor for bullets. Check your magazine holders; sometimes rounds pop out into them. Is it improbable that a loose round in a mag holder jams back into the magazine, you load it, then pull the trigger? Yes, but it isn't *impossible*. Then check all that stuff again. Next, get out your dummy rounds. No shit, I check every one to be sure it isn't a real bullet. Things can get mixed up in a range bag. I also work with small numbers of dummies at once (like five) to reduce chances of shenanigans.

You don't even necessarily have to work with dummy rounds. I dry fire all the time without them depending on the skill I am honing. On a much older generation of guns (and rimfires to this day!) dry firing without something in the chamber for the firing pin to hit was bad. That's not the case anymore; any modern pistol will take hundreds of thousands of dry hammer drops—trust me, I know. But as a beginner, I recommend that you use dummy rounds because a lot of your initial work should focus simply on loading, unloading and manipulating your weapon.

At this stage, your practice sessions do not have to be high-speed uber sexy drills. Put one round in each of your spare magazines and practice loading and unloading. Getting to a level of confidence at this one thing is worth the price of the dummies. There is no shame in being a little skittish about letting the slide go on a bullet when you are new. Repetitively doing so in practice will help normalize it immensely.

Next, you are going to practice pulling the trigger. Once again, nothing fancy required. Pick a small object across the room. I often use a light switch; it's a good size for across-the-room work. Aim at it like you were taught and pull the trigger like you were taught. The objective is to keep the sights steady through the tiny vibration of the firing pin going forward. This sounds like a simple thing on paper but it actually sums up pistol shooting completely. If you can put the sights on something and pull the trigger without moving those sights, you can hit anything you choose. Simple as that.

One thing to watch out for is your grip. One of the only drawbacks to dry fire is the lack of recoil impulse. It is very easy to get lazy with the grip since the gun isn't trying to jump every time you pull the trigger. I'm guilty of it myself and I do this for a living. Every third dry shot or so, freeze after the trigger pull. Evaluate how you have the gun held: are you still focused on the sights, was that a good shot? None of this has to be fast. Your dry fire will only help you if you are honest in your practice. High level shooters usually know when they shanked a real shot without seeing the paper to prove it. A

lot of the learned ability to call a bad shot comes from dry fire.

Next, move on through all the things you learned in your class. If you learned reloads, practice that. If you learned how to draw, draw and shoot. Practice strong hand and weak hand only, whether you learned it at class or not. Develop this into your own little Gun Kata (go watch *Equilibrium* if you don't get the reference—you're welcome). This doesn't have to take all night. After you work out a system, you can get some seriously good practice done in about fifteen minutes a day. If you have fifteen minutes to watch cat videos online, you have fifteen minutes to work on a lifesaving skill.

There is actually a lot you can do to become proficient with a gun and no ammo budget. You still need to shoot real bullets but that isn't always in the cards. One of the oldest tricks in the book is straight from the USMC, home of the zero budget training. This one is for smoothing out your trigger pull. Get a #2 pencil, sharpen it and stick it down your barrel eraser end first (on a clear gun. In fact, mentally add 'clear gun' to everything else we say in this chapter). Draw a little aiming dot on the wall. Stand with the end of the pencil about  $\frac{1}{2}$  an inch away from the wall and aim at your dot. Pull the trigger and voila: the pencil pops out and makes a little mark. Reset and do it again. After a few minutes, look at your work. A small set of marks is a good trigger pull. A big set of marks is a crappy trigger pull.

Another overlooked training tool is an Airsoft gun. Yes, I am completely serious. The tactical guys are rolling their eyes right now; beard and camo pants dude from the front of the class just got up and walked out in disgust. Well, fuck them. Airsoft beats nothing and every pro on the circuit has one. Even with sponsorships and free range access, live ammunition is a finite resource. The exception is a very few places in the military and the price then is additional demand of your time (like exiting aircraft while in flight and living in third world hell holes for months at a time).

An Airsoft gun has drawbacks but it also has a lot of strengths.

You want the model with the blowback slide at a minimum to at least replicate the movement of the sights under cycling. This gives you a feel for reacquiring sight picture. The good thing about an Airsoft is that the trigger and mechanics are exactly like a real gun. Not only do they give you feedback through visible hits and misses, Airsoft guns are accurate enough at room range to be very realistic. After your initial investment of gun, pellets and gas, the training is measured in the hundreds of shots per dollar. Now the bad. A decent model similar in feel to your real gun will set you back between \$100 and \$200. I like the slide moving models but you have to watch out for a false sense of security. The recoil on an Airsoft gun is so light as to be laughable, which can make you once again sloppy with the grip. The biggest downside, for me at least, has to do with the speed of the pellets. Because you can actually see the pellet in the air, I have a bad tendency to start looking at the bullets and not the sights. Big no-no in pistol shooting but a habit that takes time to get over. Due to the weak recoil impulse, I tend to train Airsoft only at one-shot target arrays. This means I set up a group of targets and hit them all with one shot each instead of the normal two. You can hammer the trigger so fast on an Airsoft gun that I don't want my brain thinking I can shoot that speed with a centerfire pistol. Training with your Airsoft gun also takes a little bit more investment in infrastructure. You can't just slap a target up with a wall for a backstop unless you happen to be in a hotel room you bought by the hour. The pellets will actually dimple sheetrock, chip paint and, with enough repetition, break glass. I recommend an oversized chunk of carpet hung as your backstop. The pellets also make quite a mess so factor in ten minutes of clean up every time you train. Final point (and this goes for dry fire as well): for God's sake, close the blinds. If you start blazing a Tokyo Maru with the windows open eventually the SWAT team is going to show up.

One last bit on the Airsoft as a training tool, for the naysayers you will encounter. They will be coming out the woodwork early in your training, especially the ones with a ware to peddle. "You should only train with full power combat rounds" and "that toy training will get

you killed on the street” are common lines. Back in 2004, a Japanese kid wanted to come to the United States and shoot the Steel Challenge. Steel Challenge is a speed shooting event put on every year in California and it brings the world’s best to the party. Now a quick Google search will tell you that only the Yakuza has handguns in Japan and even they are in short supply. Our boy had only trained with an Airsoft gun until one month before the match and he won the damn thing. Tatsuya Sakai edged out K.C. Eusebio for the title belt that year with a single month of live fire under his belt. I’ve been doing this my entire life and I’m not sure I’ve ever even beat K.C. Eusebio on a single stage. That is roughly the equivalent of playing *Gran Turismo* with a steering wheel controller, then driving a real car for thirty days before winning a Formula One race.

That should be enough to get you going. Now what about follow on training? Yes, you need some of that. But rather than a building process, I recommend you skip right over the middle steps and go straight to a very high end trainer. It is a lot more value for your dollar. The slow build process would take you back to your local range for shooting part 2, then part 3, then on to a mid-tier trainer, then finally much later to a superstar trainer. It would be very expensive, take a long time and in my opinion be a waste of both. Here is a dirty little secret: 99% of the people that make a living teaching pistol shooting have no idea what they are doing. They might be a little better than your scrub-tier local guy but not enough to matter. They are going to regurgitate the same tired bullshit, then just do demonstration drills a little faster with probably one cool trick they invented in the garage that in no way has combat merit. Would you gain a little by going to the nine-step process your local place provides? Yes, you would. But that money would be better stashed away for one day with a real pro. At a low skill level everyone looks like an oracle. I am here to tell you this absolute truth: ‘better than you’ does not necessarily mean ‘expert.’

Let me head another one off at the pass while we are nuking training myths. Some people are going to swear to you that you

should do no training so as to be a blank slate when you can afford ninja-tier training. I've trained a lot of people and I would rather have a bad shooter with good gun handling habits than a total noob. Familiarity with a weapon matters. You are also going to get more from a high end training class if the instructor doesn't need to start by showing you how to load your gun. Lastly, time is not on your side. Something now is likely a better choice than top end next year.

Who is an actual expert then and how do you find them? For shooting, especially pistol shooting, you have two options: you can either pick a sport shooter or a tactical guy, provided you do your homework. I just committed another heresy: saying anything positive about a pistol game player! Oh, the humanity! Somebody call SOCOM and see if this guy is a fraud or not! Relax, we are talking about the skill of shooting not the tactics needed for a hostage rescue on a bus that can't go below 55 MPH or else it explodes. If we drew a Venn diagram of a SOF operator on the left and a sport shooter on the right we would see a lot that doesn't jive. The SOF guy would have things like 'pack a parachute,' 'drive under night-vision goggles,' 'habla Arabic/Farsi/Korean,' 'be willing to hit the King of Jordan in the face with a folding chair if ordered to' and 'file an exorbitant travel claim while hungover.' Over on the right, the sport shooter would have things like 'rehearse a stage mentally,' 'picking a quiet hotel room,' 'exotic colors for a jersey' and 'how to bilk more sponsors out of more money.' But right there in the middle, the overlap portion, would be 'put bullet on target as fast as humanly possible.' As my friend The Panda is fond of saying, "fast and accurate is fast and accurate."

A lot of alleged tactical guys hate sport shooters and think what they do is not applicable. Which is pretty funny because I have hired several pro shooters to come teach my guys when I was in the Army. If someone has been in SOF more than a couple of years I guarantee they have spent some time learning from a competition nerd. My personal belief is that those same "tactical" instructors are covering their own behinds because they know, without question, they would get their ass spanked in a competitive environment and they are

afraid to do it because it would cost them money and prestige. I will go ahead and issue a waiver on that for any combat veteran that chooses to instruct. A fair number of SOF ninjas also never liked to compete, for whatever reason. If you have ridden a hot breach into a room full of suicidal jihadis, well... you have nothing to prove to me or anyone else.

Diatribes over, how do you pick? Well the first thing you should do is a little research. That is actually a lot easier for the competition guys because it is all public knowledge. If “Lob Reatham” is hosting a whiz-bang guaranteed improvement pistol fighter class for the low price of \$1000 per day with limited availability, you start with his name in DuckDuckGo with the modifier ‘shooting.’ Skip over any fluff you see and look at match results. Command+F is your friend, though you may not need it. If he isn’t near the top of the list it’s probably time to move on. Be sure to look at regional and national matches; local matches don’t count. A local match might be full of champions or it might be seven hobos chucking rocks at a steel plate.

The second way to check a competition guy is to get his USPSA/IDPA number. Those same match results often show a strange number next to the name (mine is A71318). All you have to do is go to the relevant organization’s webpage, put in the number and you can see his or her shooting record. One of the first things I always do with gun reviewers I don’t know personally is, if they mention sport shooting, to look them up. USPSA has rankings in ascending order from D, C, B, A, Master and finally Grand Master. No offense but if you have been doing this for ten years with a C rating I don’t need your opinion on a pistol.

For you, the same applies. If hard earned money is going to be plunked down you deserve to learn from someone with a résumé. If the cost is going to be over about \$200 per day you want to see words like ‘National Champion,’ ‘World Champion’ and at least (pistol specific) ‘Master.’ A champion might not necessarily be able to teach, this is true, and exceptions do exist to the above rules. But at the very least, look long and hard before you send a check. I can also blanket

recommend a few. Len Baxley of TDSA in Dallas is outstanding. I can say that most of my skill with a pistol he gave me. Rob Leatham, if you can get a slot, has been winning National Championships since before I was born. I know him personally and this would be money extremely well spent. Patrick E. Kelley, also a walking legend, is on the short list. He is an amazing all around shooter and has decades of teaching experience.

If you go with a tactical wizard things get a bit murkier. For starters, I would avoid those with law enforcement as a background. No offense to the 1% of cops that can shoot but the rest can't. All too often civilians get sucked in by the belief that cops are absolute surgeons with a gun just like on NCIS/SWAT/Miami Vice. The truth tends to be far from it. Are there exceptions? Absolutely. Greg Jordan is a cop. He also happens to be a former National 3 Gun Champion and NRA World Shooting Champion. I would take a class from Greg Jordan but the point remains. If my instructor was law enforcement only, I want to see some other goodness on the résumé. The second thing to watch out for on the tactical side is the vaguely worded action hero résumé. If somebody only lists things like "Dept of Homeland Security but not really Dept of Homeland Security," "other government agencies," "classified unit" or any other Tom Clancy sounding tripe, they are full of shit. They either never had a job or they were a glorified gate guard. At one point in the war Blackwater was hiring armored car level security goons to protect chow halls. The same guys that most US states specify are only allowed to carry a .38 Special revolver. "Worked for the State Dept" over in "the sand box" sounds sexy but may literally mean "escorted Pakistani trash trucks around the FOB." Don't buy into it.

Honestly, for my money, the tactical side only offers one choice. If you aren't picking a SOF veteran—*from this war*—you are choosing poorly. No offense to my Cold War and '90s era brothers, but we learned a lot in twenty years. Shooting and tactics evolved more from 2001 to 2006 than they did from 1971 to 1996. You learn a lot about how to do things in a two-way live fire that can be learned no other



way. Those lessons are written in blood the same way our Vietnam forefathers were educated in reconnaissance.

When you select a trainer from the SOF pile you still have to be careful. For starters, the world is full of fakers. A handwritten note at the local range is different than a website and offers one advantage: if it is public enough, a fraud is generally found out quick. The SOF community then rains fire on them from above. We don't catch them all but we do stay pretty well on top of it. You should still do a little background digging yourself to be sure; check the forums, hell, post on Facebook. "Has anyone heard of this doofus? Is he real?" Someone that checks out will usually be pretty easy to verify. You should even consider emailing the instructor and ask him pointed questions. What is your BUD/S class number? What team or teams where you on? A real guy, asking for your money, should have no problem answering those questions. Please, ask the right ones though. The Navy is big on class numbers; the Army not so much. I have no idea what my class number is, I would have to go look, but I was on ODAs 942, 356 and 355—a relevant question to a Beret.

Last but not least, run like the wind from anybody pulling the "it's classified but we shot Bin Laden's body double in Kuala Lumpur. Very hush hush unit" card. Robert O'Neill is on Twitter and Kyle Lamb has talked about being in Delta Force on TV. I respect people's privacy right up until they want my money. In that case, they have opened themselves to scrutiny. If some dude wants \$500 but can't tell you the name of his John Wayne Memorial Commando Unit—tell him to pound sand.

Solid recommendations in this category are Northern Red (ex-teammates), FieldCraft Survival (ex-teammates) and Guerrilla Approach. The other added benefit to using these guys (or any other SOF vet) is economy of training. I have taught many combined rifle and handgun classes and all of these guys have too. Usually that is half day handgun, half day carbine. If you save up long enough to have both guns you can get a lot out of a two or three-day class. Arguably, it's all you will ever need on the training front.

So you bought a gun, got your feet wet with a basic course and then got trained up for reals by an ex-Commando or Galaxy Champion, what now? Well, a mountain of bullets is a good start but I do have one last training suggestion for the firearms chapter—some of you aren't going to like it. If I was going to do one thing and one thing only for my monthly training, it would be shooting my local USPSA match. If you live in a city your range access probably sucks. Even in Texas, I've often had to drive an hour to shoot and they love guns. Not exactly a trip you can make everyday after work. You also have a lot of skills to fill and bullets get expensive. Shooting one match a month isn't going to get you on the podium at nationals or in the stack to rescue the President's daughter but it is going to help.

Going to a match has several built-in benefits regardless of what conventional wisdom might tell you. It may be one of the only places you can shoot and move, which is a very valuable skill to have. Not a lot of indoor ranges approve of that. You will get to see other good shooters run stages and you can learn a lot from that. The biggest benefit is being forced outside your comfort zone. When you go to a match, someone else designed all the stages so they probably don't all play to your strengths. If you can only do accurate slow fire they will force you into things that are done fast. If you only like blazing at three meters during your personal training you will find fifteen meter targets half obscured by cover. I see no downside to shooting matches and only positives. This is usually where someone tells me it will build bad habits for combat—horse pucky. I could not disagree more. Now, don't confuse match shooting for combat shooting, it isn't, but I have yet to see *any* training that accurately simulates combat shooting. Even hitting a kill house with live explosives and paint rounds against human role players isn't a perfect combat simulation. How about those bad habits? Well, you will be fast, accurate and capable of moving. No one ever had to tell me to get down when live rounds were incoming and I would gamble it would be the same for you.

## 6 Ninja Fighting 101

### Nunchucks and Throwing Stars

Welcome to the chapter that is guaranteed to rustle some jimmies. When we talk about learning to throw hands, we run up against two primary problems. The first are the four things every man on Earth, in spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, believes he can do better than every other man: shoot, drive, fight and... well, we might have a young audience, so use your imagination for #4. It also starts with F... (flirt, you pervert—get your mind out of the gutter). We all want to think that we have some intrinsic talent for fisticuffs that is just waiting to manifest itself. We have the Kung Fu touch foretold by the white lotus the day we were born. Well, bad news. That is about as real as the tooth fairy riding Santa Claus over to deliver the fortune your long lost Uncle Bill Gates left you. Others have a worse problem in that we believe we know a street fighting trick guaranteed to neutralize any attacker in three seconds flat. We think we could beat Chuck Liddell in his prime 'cause he only knows how to fight in a cage *with rules*. We would just kick him in the nuts, then knee him in the face when he bent over. Someone has tried to kick Chuck Liddell in the nuts and I promise you that didn't go the way they hoped.

Look, there are no secret, forbidden techniques that will actually turn the tide of a fight if you suck at fighting. There are no shortcuts and no tricks you can learn to be absolutely lethal thirty minutes from now; I don't care what the ad says in *Soldier of Fiction*. You can have good skills learned over a long period of time and practiced for thousands of reps or occasionally you can get by with bad skills backed up by a sufficient amount of muscle and cardio. Any other combination is going to get your ass kicked. The second primary problem is that styles or systems of fighting are endlessly debated.

What is popular might not actually be any good. The internet will feed you mountains of bad information and this arena is just as rife with charlatans and snake oil salesmen.

Now that the bubbles are burst you may be wondering why we even have a chapter on hand-to-hand. Didn't we get a gun the previous chapter? Why do you need bare knuckle skills when you can have a fist full of Sam Colt? Excellent questions and I am 100% with you. I've lived a long time on this planet and been in some hairy situations. I would prefer to solve any equation requiring use of force with a gun. It just isn't always an option.

Right now, you probably don't live in Dodge City (residents of Chicago, your objection is noted) and it will remain true for quite some time even as your metropolis descends into chaos. We will talk about this at length later but a slide is more likely than just waking up in a post-apocalyptic wasteland. We did cover the gun first in case I'm wrong (best \$800 insurance policy you will ever buy), but while things are semi normal, the reasons not to start shooting at the first sign of trouble are many. Even if you have a carry permit in a place that allows it, what do you think happens to your gun if you shoot someone? Even if it is a totally righteous shoot, odds are your gun is going into evidence until it gets sorted out. Depending on the state of the slide, as well as any charges levied, you may not be able to replace it. Shooting a single mugger in the face, while rewarding, is not worth losing your only tool. Not when you could have stuffed him in a trash can instead.

What if you don't live in a free city and you are riding dirty with your ill-gotten heater? Again, you may have to make a tactical decision on the cost. It pains me to say it but handing over your wallet may be better than losing your only weapon to the State. From a moral standpoint, that one hurts to contemplate but it may be the cost. If I was on a covert mission to surveil a high value target, would I blow that entire mission to blast a purse snatcher or would I hand over my fake wallet and watch so that I could do my job? I'd no doubt catch a ration of shit about it from the boys later. Nothing in life is

free.

That brings up the point that in your real life, you may have to be disarmed. Either your job doesn't allow weapons, you have it stashed at home for when things get really ugly or a myriad of other reasons. Not carrying your gun is sometimes the best tactical decision, backwards as that sounds. Let me put that in a little perspective for you. When I was stationed on the East Coast, I went to D.C. all the time. It was a short drive, had friends there, all that jazz. Even with it being super illegal to even own a handgun at the time in the District, did I ever enter that city without one? Not a chance. Have you seen the crime stats for that hell hole? It was usually strapped on me unless I was going to a place with metal detectors (that is hyperbole, Agent Johnson, I made the whole thing up for my book. Besides, I had a Total Earth Carry license—it's classified). Now at this time I also worked on Fort Bragg which very much frowns on concealed weapons and is subject to random gate searches for any or no reason. Even with the threat of a Major Hasan "workplace violence" event happening, did I roll strapped on Bragg? Very, very rarely. The risk far outweighed the threat.

And for you, you may have to make that assessment every day. More bad news: none of us guess correctly 100% of the time. Bad luck may put you in a bad situation and you must still have the capability of dealing with it. Learning to fight has many benefits, but it has one directly related to the previous weapons discussion. If you know what you are doing, you are never truly disarmed. You would have to be hurt pretty bad to be entirely defenseless. If you're hurt that bad, a weapon is probably irrelevant anyway. Be it locked up as a prisoner, stripped and tossed in a refugee camp or simply out of ammo—at least you have some cards left in the deck.

Now onto the upside. First, piece of mind. Having fist skills is a huge confidence boost even in normal life. That flex in the board room has a lot less bite when you know you could choke the life out of anyone at the table without breaking a sweat. Second, unlike the weapons we mentioned earlier, they can't take fighting skills away,

whatever else happens. Third, the right training program will cover a lot of your cardio and strength needs. Fitness is a follow on chapter but get into the mindset now. Strength matters, even in gunfights. Fourth, it builds warrior spirit; that actually means something. The term gets thrown around a lot but it is important. Practicing violence starts the inoculation so you aren't overwhelmed by events later. Finally, it is comparatively cheap. 500 rounds of 9mm, easily burned in an afternoon, is about \$100. For that same \$100 per month, you can train twice a day, six days a week in most martial arts gyms—well worth the investment.

This chapter is a bit shorter than the firearms training because once again you can't learn this from a book or video. We can talk about the relative merits of a system but that is about it. Also, I am less of an expert in this field. If I had to put them on a similar grading scale, I would consider myself about a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree Black Belt with guns. In the world of martial arts, my belts are considerably closer to the white end of the spectrum. That isn't to say you should skip over my thoughts on the matter. While I would not profess mastery of any of them, I have trained in boxing, kickboxing, Chinese Kenpo, Escrima stick fighting, Taijitsu, Hapkido, Japanese jujitsu, Brazilian jujitsu, Judo and a handful of others. I fought in Tough Man contests as a younger man, made the news once for a street fight and triangle choked a cab driver on the strip in Vegas, no kidding. In combat zones I have handed out some ass whippings as well, which is part and parcel of the job. I'm completely comfortable saying this is not my area of expertise but I'm not exactly a rookie either.

On this particular line of training, you ultimately have to make your own choice. I have my recommendations based on my experience, but I will at least try to open your mind about the strengths and weaknesses of a system, as I see them.

## **The Good**

Bando/Lethwei/Burmese Kickboxing

Some of the recommended systems will be in no particular order, but this one occupies the number one spot for a reason. So stating upfront that I have relatively little exposure to Lethwei, why am I recommending it so much? Because what I have seen is phenomenal. I was lucky enough to have a National Champion as a teammate and another very good friend later became National Champion in his weight class (trained by the first guy, do that math on that one).

The terminology gets a bit confusing with the Myanmar Special here so let's shorten it to Bando and Burmese kickboxing. The naming conventions get a bit confusing and this is my best way of not butchering it. Bando is basically the martial arts portion of the system, anchored by Burmese Kickboxing as the sport version. In a theme I will repeat often, I really like the concept of having a full contact sport segment to keep things honest. Street rules purists, please stick with me through this. I am a convert myself.

The martial art version is kickboxing based but extremely well balanced. They hit for real with strikes that are proven to work in the ring. They address knives as part of the system, albeit largely with kukris, which are not exactly common street weapons, but they do at least address them. Crossed kukris adorn the American Bando Association's logo, that is how much it is part of the culture. Despite having a striking based sport, they do have grappling in the martial art. That grappling isn't just window dressing; it's pretty solid. Maybe not 'win a gi match against your local Gracie affiliate' solid but on balance, it is impressive.

On the sport side, Burmese kickboxing is absolutely brutal. It has all the strengths of Muay Thai with the addition of headbutts being both legal and encouraged. This is one of those things I wish I had learned more of. I did train as much as I could with my expert teammate, but it wasn't exactly high on the priority list. He was a substitution onto my team in country and we did have a war to fight.

The primary weakness of Bando is its scarcity. They list

instructors in only fifteen states and they're primarily centered in the Northeast. Despite having been in the US since just after WWII, it never really caught on.

### Muay Thai Kickboxing

There is some overlap here with Burmese kickboxing so you can apply most of this section to it as well. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that kickboxing works well in the real world. If nothing else, just take a look at the large number of UFC Champions that came from a kickboxing background. There are bits of it that are mandatory to learn for any MMA fighter lest you get KO'd with a quickness.

Kickboxing opens up your tool chest, which gives it something of an advantage over Western boxing. To be fair, most high-end kickboxers also have a dedicated Western boxing coach; hands are still lethal. Kickboxing teaches you to use not just punches but knees, elbows, shins and feet. The kicks are absolutely devastating. One other thing I really like about Muay Thai is common to all striking arts: you get better instantly. If you know nothing right now and go spend an hour with a kickboxing coach, you will have improved. Barring lactic acid build up, you will be able to hit harder and better from day one.

This would be higher up on my list of options but it does have weak points. For starters, trained alone, it gives you no ground game. Most kickboxers are very good at staying on their feet but the street is unpredictable. Some street punk might also be an all-state wrestler or you might slip on some gravel. Off your feet, strikes lose most of their power, which is a real problem if you only know how to strike. Second, kickboxing is extremely cardio intensive and is hard on the body. If you are older, this may not even be an option for you. My shoulders are so bad that I can't even hit a bag anymore. This one is definitely a young man's game. The third thing I bring up, not to take this back to a weapons discussion, but to interject some clarity about the reality of combat and martial arts. I want to paraphrase an



anecdote from the book *Angry White Pyjamas* by Robert Twigger. In his opening, he talks about how an Australian Kickboxing Champion was stabbed to death by a street punk and how that influenced him to take the Tokyo Riot Police Yoshinkan Aikido course. I went looking for the story of this murder and that was when the surprise happened: I couldn't find this particular murder from the early '90s because so *many* kickboxers have been stabbed to death in Europe in recent years. A staggering number of news stories actually.

I'm not going to talk smack on kickboxing due to all this stabbing, but let's just say that weapons are a huge advantage. This is a fact that cannot be overstated. Despite what we see in movies, they are highly likely to change an outcome no matter your level of ninja training. But what we should take from this is a particular weakness of any empty hand martial art against blades. Be it a false sense of security from ring fighting, lack of awareness of what edged weapons can do or just lack of training to deal with them, I don't know, but keep this in mind when we discuss knives later.

### Western Boxing

The old American standby; our pugilist pastime. In my opinion, boxing is a vastly underrated martial art. It has produced its share of MMA Champions including my personal favorite, Don "The Predator" Frye. Boxing brings the benefits of outstanding conditioning and a real world proven track record. If you've ever fought a boxer you know what I'm talking about. When I fought in my first Tough Man contest I learned a valuable lesson in the finale. I made it all the way up one side of the card; the title was within my grasp. Unfortunately for me, a real boxer who had decided to give up his amateur card was on the other side. Tough Man contests are for money, so amateur boxers couldn't play back then. Fighting for cash turned them pro, which many of them did not want to do. I got my ass absolutely handed to me. It was a lesson I have not forgotten about the breed. Boxing also has the benefit of availability. It is still a hugely popular sport all across the United States. If you can't find a local gym, it is still trained

at many YMCAs. The cost barrier to entry is low and most places will loan you everything but a mouthguard.

Boxing does come at a cost though. First, no ground game. It's the age old dispute: who wins between a boxer and a wrestler? It depends on whether that wrestler gets a takedown or an uppercut. Not worth rehashing here, but something to consider. Second, hands are fragile outside of boxing gloves. Not only does boxing only use fists but it teaches you technique to hit harder with them. Boxers are notorious for breaking knuckles in street fights. There is even a medical term called "boxer's fracture" to describe it. Now I've broken a knuckle, beating a tango into submission in Baghdad, and it did hurt. But it wasn't a show stopper; I was still running missions all night and the next day. Maybe I got extremely lucky. I have also seen broken hands swell up so bad the owner can't use them. Like its Thai counterpart, this one is also hard on the body. Maybe even more so because you get hit in the head on a more regular basis. Kickboxing has targets from shin to temple and lots of specific conditioning for that. That takes time away from getting rocked in the dome. Boxing is waist up, which means more bell ringings even in training. Not for older people and not for anyone that has been blown up a lot. But if you are young this is worth spending some time on.

### Traditional Jujitsu

This one aligns very closely with Brazilian jujitsu so most of what applies to one applies to the other. As we will discuss the Brazilian flavor in just a minute, this entry will skip over the major strengths, but it does have a few very unique properties.

Japanese jujitsu is actually the mother art to both judo and Brazilian jujitsu, which actually leads us to point one, both a strength and a weakness. In most places I have seen Japanese jujitsu taught, judo was taught in the same school. Since judo is basically sporterized jujitsu, jujitsu remains a more combat or self-defense oriented system. That is good, in that it is more likely to teach from a place of trying to hurt other human beings. They maybe even toss in

some weapons counters and what not for good measure. It is also bad because it means it hasn't evolved. The Brazilians have been grafting new skills onto the system for over 100 years now and it makes a night and day difference in grappling contests.

Traditional jujitsu systems also focus on small joint manipulations that have long been illegal in the ring. Does that make them better? In this case, not necessarily. Not to go down a rabbit hole of lore and legend but it is relevant in this discussion. When judo was developed, it was from jujitsu but became its own animal. Jigoro Kano, having studied at various Japanese jujitsu schools, actually wanted to tone it down a little by making it something you could practice hard but also teach to children. The word "judo" actually translates to "the gentle way." The local jujitsu schools didn't take kindly to this. If you know the Japanese, culturally they are kind of sticklers for tradition. They challenged his school to a not-so-friendly contest using rules that allowed all the dirty bits of jujitsu. Kano's judo crew won every match. They stomped the balls off the competition using what could be termed a weaker version of the art. So maybe those small joint things aren't all they are cracked up to be.

Other weaknesses of traditional jujitsu include its relative rarity. Some places in the US you can find it, others it's as rare as hen's teeth. It is slowly being displaced either by Brazilian jujitsu or MMA in general. Outside a very strong hub of traditional jujitsu, like Hawaii, it actually has one other thing working against it: based purely on popularity, it may lack for good students. If a BJJ gym is in the same neighborhood, odds are the good fighters gravitated that way. Who you train against matters.

Overall, I have nothing bad to say about traditional jujitsu. If one is local, by all means, it's a winner. However, if you end up training for a long time, check out a reputable Brazilian gym too.

## Judo

Hey, look where we are; flowed right into Judo. I feel it's

another very underrated martial art. Judo packs an advantage over both traditional and Brazilian jujitsu in that it has a very strong stand up game. Judo contests can be won with a single throw, hence they train starting from the feet—a lot. Let me tell you something: on the street, throws are absolutely lethal. On TV, when people get bounced off a curb they get right back up. It was a segue for the hero to pop a quippy insult or to look heroic with a little dribble of blood from his lip. Not so real life. I've personally broken multiple ribs in an opponent from a single throw. Arms, collarbones and even neck breaks are not out of the question. Even if no bones break, a throw on asphalt from a judoka is not something you are going to slough off. Judo also has a relatively strong ground game covering most of the chokes and joint locks of jujitsu.

But with the good must come the bad. First, judo has changed a lot—not only in the last fifty years but the last twenty. Arguably the worst thing to ever happen to judo was that it became an Olympic sport in 1964. Over the years, the Olympic flavor has mostly taken over with lots of changes. When judo started it didn't even have weight classes. The Olympics did help spread the popularity, no question of that. You can find a judo dojo in almost every nation on Earth. No kidding, one of my Iraqi Commandos was on Saddam's Olympic team. But it came at a cost. Judo needed to look better on TV so the rules were slowly revised to that end. Then they wanted to be more distinguishable from wrestling, so leg-oriented take downs were removed. Refining it as a sport is slowly bleeding the use out.

Now take heart because some good judo still exists. If you can find a school run by a mean-assed old Jap, you are in good hands (one of my judo instructors was a mean-assed old Korean but same principle). Not so long ago, judo was hardcore. They started nose-to-nose, closer to street fighting distance. Every class included live sparring. You left five pounds lighter than you started from sweating out every pore. Now things are a bit more unpredictable. Your instructor might be an Olympic qualifier himself, which means he will be capable of throwing a rhinoceros, he might be a vicious old school

judoka with the scars to tell the story or he might be a Black Belt that got his black belt for showing up at the YMCA enough times. It really is a weakness of the art and means you have to pay attention to who you train with.

Let me end on this note: while I have taken some ass whippings from good judo Black Belts, I have also choked out not-so-good judo Black Belts multiple times. I've never so much as made a Brazilian jujitsu Black Belt muss his hair... and I've tried!

### Brazilian Jujitsu

The upstart from South America that took the American martial arts scene by storm! This is my current hobby so we may spend a little more time here. Now I want to be clear up front, my belt is still white while I write this which means I am not a BJJ expert by any means. However, I have been around this one for a long time and have been involved enough to at least see it grow and change. For perspective, I had my first BJJ class in Federal Way, Washington in 1998.

BJJ has a lot of things going right for it. It has a strong governing body that does a pretty amazing job of keeping the art pure. It is a sport, which also keeps things very honest. If you allege to have the magic sauce but show up at a tournament and get man handled, guess what? You didn't have the magic sauce. It has real world application and has been proven over the last twenty years. One thing BJJ has done better than any other, in my opinion, is continue to evolve. A lot of this undoubtedly has to do with not only the sport of BJJ but that it is a fairly common base for Mixed Martial Arts fighters. Even the best of MMA strikers has to have some ground game. It might be Brazilian jujitsu or it might be wrestling but he's going to have one. Back in the '90s, BJJ did have one glaring weakness: they sucked at standup and almost never trained that way. Kind of a problem for you since nearly 100% of the fights you might need to be in will start on your feet. Starting I don't know when, most places have really been fixing this. The last two BJJ gyms I

have been to are more respectful of judo than modern judo is (ironically, Brazilian jujitsu evolved from Misuyo Maeda who was sent to Brazil to spread the art of... judo). A BJJ class is likely to start with at least some throwing mechanics as warmups and many of them have an actual dedicated takedowns class at least weekly. It isn't universal but to my eye the gap is being eliminated.

Strengths of Brazilian jujitsu abound. It is pretty well agreed to be the king of ground fighting. All the chokes can be lethal if needed. The joint locks, just like traditional jujitsu and judo, can be joint breaks instead—that was the original intent. Practicing against an experienced BJJ athlete is eye opening to the point of being scary. A quote by Carlos Machado sums it up best, “The ground is my ocean, I'm the shark and most people don't even know how to swim.” BJJ is one of the few things you can do full strength and pretty much full speed in training, which is a huge bonus. It's not full speed as you sink a submission, at least not when you are new, but getting there, yes. Getting hit at even less than full contact sparring does damage but a choke or a joint lock you can get right back up from. Provided you have the cardio, this means you can get in a lot near full force training in a day.

Now it does have weaknesses just like everything else. Same as judo, it has no striking involved. This means the first punch you deal with may be a real one. Second, it takes longer to learn. Remember when I said boxing improves your ability right from the first minute? Grappling arts take longer to see improvement. Trying a throw or joint lock that you haven't trained extensively may actually put you in a worse position in a street fight. Lastly, ground fighting is particularly not good against edged weapons. If you can get a hold of the knife arm, great, but if you don't you're in big trouble. Grappling range is a bad place to be when the steel comes out.

## Wrestling

Arguably the American martial art, freestyle or collegiate style wrestling is another great base. Unfortunately it is extremely rare

outside of High School or College. If you opt for an MMA gym however, it may be wrestling based. So we will hit the highlights.

On the strong side, in my opinion wrestlers are the best at takedowns. The throws might not be as flashy, but I would always put money on the wrestler to be able to take it to the ground. Wrestling is also an absolutely excellent background for controlling your opponent.

But it does have holes. Wrestling has several takedowns that should never be attempted on anything but mats. I have actually seen a man take himself out in a street fight by busting a knee cap as he shot in to grab an opponent's leg. Not good. Wrestling also tends to have submissions that are not optionally damaging. They may be painful but they were not designed to break things. Submission by pain does nothing for you in actual mortal combat.

### MMA/Shoot Fighting

This seems good on balance and it may be in your case. Mixed Martial Arts gyms train exactly that: full contact ground and striking rolled into one. But (and there is always a but)...

Most of the MMA gyms I have seen actually segregate into two classes. They teach either wrestling or BJJ in one and then kickboxing in the other. Which takes you back to the training efficiency problem unless you have time for both. Your coach also may or may not be legit. I have seen some sketchy MMA credentials so do your homework.

## **The Bad**

### Krav Maga

I hate to call out one specific system by name here but it must be done if, for no other reason, because it promotes itself as *the* street answer. Complete with TV commercials and "expert" endorsements, Krav Maga is the pyramid scheme of fist fighting.

What is Krav Maga, exactly? It bills itself as a super hybrid martial art developed by the Israeli military. It has all the good things taken from other systems with all the fluff cut away; a distilled, purified, combat art. No rings and gloves here, just prison rules brutality. Which briefs well. Reality, however, is a much different story.

To be 100% fair, I have seen some good Krav Maga. The Polish Special Forces were all into this and I did see them hand out some beatings both on missions and on base. I even got a chance to train with their Master Trainer on one occasion. He was legit; not someone I would want to fight for reals. But on balance is this a reflection on Krav Maga as a system or because it was being used by superhumanly fit, hyper-violent young men practicing hours per day with the added benefit of a strong military tradition of hand-to-hand? Some of this same unit was old enough to have actually been prior Spetsnaz (side note: most Eastern European and Asian militaries take hand-to-hand a lot more seriously than we do. We can afford bullets so we tend to err in that direction). Curious about this later, I checked it out stateside and tried it on multiple times, always with the same result. Krav Maga, from what I have seen in the US, is a bad joke. It focuses almost exclusively on unrealistic weapons counters from extremely unlikely attack angles. Check YouTube for “Jim Carrey Karate Instructor,” a skit from the old *In Living Color* show, for clarity. Even when not focused on weapons, what it presents is still likely to get you killed.

### Traditional Martial Arts/Aikido/General Purpose Strip Mall Dojo

It's kind of a broad stroke to lump all of these together, as there are differences, but for my money they're not enough to matter. There are some good things that can be learned here but pretty much all of them come at a cost. Before we write them off completely, yes, multiple UFC Champions started here; George St. Pierre has a background in Kyokushin Karate and Chuck Liddell started in Kempo Karate, but they both trained extensively in other things before getting



into the octagon. Joe Rogan, a four times consecutive full contact Taekwondo Champion, sums it up best. Speaking about moving from Taekwondo to kickboxing, he says he was “alarmed at how easy it was for people to punch me in the face.” This was an elite level player at a martial art and he has a very good point.

So yes, you could pick up some things from a traditional art but mostly, in my opinion, you are going to pick up a false sense of security and waste your time. Have you ever seen a boxer or MMA fighter use an inner or outer forearm block? Have you ever seen them punch from the waist? I’ve seen this in personal experience too. When I was training in Hapkido (Korean Aikido), I came back from a breacher symposium to, surprise, belt test day. For Hapkido that meant a double length class, followed by full contact fights. Running off a hangover and no cardio for a week, I was sucking wind. When they started the full contact matches my internal dialogue was “danger, Will Robinson, danger!” These dudes were going at it straight *Fists of Fury* style. Finally, I got called up. As soon as they said go I reverted straight back to something I knew. My opening salvo was the best Thai leg kick I have ever thrown, helped immensely by the fact my opponent was completely unprepared for it. My shin hit his thigh like a car crash and he crumpled to the floor. I was then informed that leg kicks were illegal in Hapkido. My opponent stood back up but the damage was already done. His spirit was broken and I choked him out a few seconds later.

This lesson has never left me. One of the first things you learn in kickboxing is how to condition your thighs and shins. You have to or else you can’t even train full contact. It was the first time I had ever used that kick on somebody that had probably never seen one and the result was devastating. If you aren’t training with at least *some* regular contact, you are training for a fantasy. If your training teaches a fifteen-step response to a specific stimulus, it isn’t going to work. When the bad guy grabs your neck, pin his hands with your left, elbow strike with your right, stretch his arms out, palm heel the balls, leopard paw the temple, spin kick the liver, all while singing “I’m a

little tea pot...” Real opponents get a vote in how fights go and you would be a fool not to train for that. The same goes for anything that teaches martial arts specific weapons with the exception of knives. Knives are still very common in real life, unlike say, a kama or nunchucks. Why would you spend your time learning an ancient weapon when guns and knives are on every street?

I mentioned a few times my preference of a martial art that has a sport version and why I am a convert to it. This is something we need to address in detail now that we have talked about systems in general. As a younger man, I was a big believer in street only for a hand-to-hand system. Everything should be dirty. That has a little bit of merit, on its face. For example, modern Army combatives are jujitsu based. One time I walked into an absolute shit show directly stemming from that. Two of my teammates were on the ground in a narrow kitchen trying to flex-cuff a resistant hadj. They were working against each other and the narrow confines were not helping. Fortunately I had the presence of mind to grab a skillet off the stove and beat Hadj into submission. Problem solved. I blamed this on the sport based approach when in fact it was an incomplete training approach that was the problem. I like jujitsu because you can go full strength all the time. I like kickboxing because you can usually go pretty hard and see if something actually works. I don't like “if, then” light contact training we can't do at full speed because you will never know if it actually produces the response the book says it does. Full contact has a way of sorting out make-believe very quickly.

Here is the polar opposite of the previous story. I know that a really good way to end a fight is to pull somebody back by the hair while simultaneously chopping them viciously in the throat. My gym has one professional fighter very experienced in both Muay Thai and jujitsu. If I walked in today and tried to hit him with that, would it work? Not from anything but a complete ambush and maybe not even then. Even if he has never seen that technique before, his sport training is sufficient to keep it from landing. Could I land that in a street fight? Sure, but only if my boxing and grappling skills let me

last long enough to set it up. Humans react and not always in the way you expect. Much better to have some skills you have tested than some “probably work” trash you’ve done at quarter speed a few times.

We have talked a lot about hand-to-hand in this chapter because it is so important. Bottom line: get some training. Do six months of striking, then focus on grappling. Do six months of grappling, then focus on striking. Whatever. Find a balance that works for you and plays to your strengths. As long as you have at least a little of both you’re going to be okay.

## **7 ~~Edged Weapons Secrets of~~ ~~the~~ ~~Navajo Mossad Spetznaz~~ ~~Peshmerga Orient Middle~~ ~~Ages~~ Stabby Things**

Knives have their own chapter due to the fact that they are so misunderstood. Of all the weapons available, this one has the most nonsense applied to it. To start, I have bad news: there is no such thing as a professional on this one, but plenty of amateurs get it right every day.

The critical weakness of knife training is that we have no way to test it. With hand-to-hand, those things exist. If you think your 37<sup>th</sup> level chain belt in Kung Fu means you are unbeatable, drop by your local MMA gym. They will indulge you; just take a mouth guard and know you may get your feelings hurt. With gunfight stuff, we can also test the technique. Cops shoot people everyday even if they don't always shoot well. Over the last twenty years, we on the military side have shot tens of thousands of people. We can also use a clock and targets. If some magic to do otherwise existed we would have adopted it by now. I would challenge you to show me one modern knife instructor that has killed a man with a blade. If we are going to talk about being an actual subject matter authority, it shouldn't be virgins talking about sex. For that matter, I only personally know two SOF guys with knife kills and I asked every time I taught a class. Of those two, neither had any real background in knife training. One guy stabbed him through the top of the head and the other "buried the knife in his chest to the hilt."

Into this arena come the charlatans, filling the vacuum with

garbage. The more exotic sounding, the better. Without some method of sorting diamonds from bullshit it is quite difficult to say who is legit. So why are we even bothering with a knife?

In my opinion, knives are drastically underrated. We haven't seen a lot of them used in the GWOT for two primary reasons. First, SOF really lost its knife culture around the mid '80s when we transitioned to a pistol culture. For our Vietnam veteran forefathers, knives were a commonly used weapon. Men like "Bull" Simons had literally dozens of knife kills, some of which are even mentioned sporadically in medal citations. Second, rifles really improved in reliability in the '90s, which means using any kind of secondary weapon is abnormal nowadays. Knives actually made quite a comeback around 2007 as the CQB fight heated up in Iraq. The SOCP (Special Operations Combatives Program) dagger is a shining example. Mostly intended as a "get off me weapon" to get to your pistol, it is a knife nonetheless.

For you, a street fight needing lethal force is unlikely to see you with a rifle and pistol, at least in the early stages of a conflict. Your pistol may jam, run out of ammo or just be inaccessible. You may encounter places you can carry a blade but not a gun. Should that happen, a knife can tilt the odds in your favor. Due to TV fights again, most people do not grasp the lethality an edged weapon holds.

So with all the bad stuff I said about knife dorks, is any good training available? Yes. It is a little less certain but we can safely say some are better than others. In my opinion, you can get by with a lot less for training in this category. If I were starting today, pistol would still be my primary focus. From the standpoint of the law, using a knife is the same as using a gun. Murder is murder and a legal killing is a legal killing. Hand-to-hand would be next, as it is most likely to happen. You can get by with only some blade training though. Most of what you need to know you can learn from seminars and weekend long classes. I learned knife first in an Escrima system which teaches knife and stick. Mostly stick but it is knife oriented as well. This is not a bad way to go though I think a lot less of the stick part these days.

Still, as pick up weapons go, a stick isn't out of the question be it a mop handle or a hammer. A knife will do more damage with less effort but clubs beat the pants off of fists.

My preferred choice, if it was available, would be instruction from the Tactical Sayoc Group. Sayoc is a Filipino martial art that is all about knives and one must say they really seem to have their poop in one bag. I have some limited exposure to Sayoc Kali from my military time. The Tactical Sayoc Group recommendation comes from a friend still on active duty who speaks very highly of them. Knife training might be rare in this era for military folks, but if it happens at all it is likely to be some flavor of sayoc. If you play your cards right you can even sometimes find TSG combined with a pistol course. Kyle Defoor, one of the few SEALs I would recommend for a shooting course, hosts these quite frequently.

So why is a weekend course good enough for knives? Since you can't train live, a lot of it is theory. I can see a huge benefit in learning the basic strikes and slashes along with deployment, but things can go down a deep rabbit hole if you choose this as your primary focus. Take for instance the concept of a knife duel. That would mean you have a knife, I have a knife, we both know we have knives, we are five meters apart and then we decide to kill each other. Briefs well, right? But in my experience, this is the least likely of all scenarios to happen. A knife is best used as an ambush weapon, meaning against someone who isn't ready. Its second best use is against someone who has decided to attack you but doesn't know you have one. This isn't *Westside Story* with well planned gang fights in the alley. It can also be used as a stepping stone to get to your pistol if someone gets a hold of your gun hand.

Becoming an actual knife wizard would take up a lot of time that you should have spent learning the gun. It also presents the age old problem that if all you have is a hammer, everything starts looking like a nail. At a knife seminar in Georgia one time, I saw this play out in person. The knife bit started well enough until we got into the knife versus gun section. Knife guys, in my experience, have a bad habit of

underestimating the gun. It is a lot different going slash 'em up Steve against a knife guy than against a high level gunfighter. A dedicated knife dude might barely know which end of the gun the bullets come out of. Drawing a gun is its own skill and like a punch, it doesn't get fast without thousands of reps. There is a range at which the blade will win but it isn't nearly as cut and dry as it is often briefed.

One of the ways of figuring out the distance at which a knife guy becomes really dangerous is to run a Tueller drill. This is also commonly called the 21 foot drill and gave rise to the magic distance of 21 feet to draw and fire. A cop named Dennis Tueller wondered how close a knife guy could get before he could draw and fire to prevent being stabbed. The most basic way of doing this drill is the following set up: a shooter, gun holstered, stands facing a paper target. I like them to be very close (like three meters). It gives a more realistic range to the distance being closed. A "knife wielder" stands beside him, facing up range, touching his shoulder. When the knife guy is ready, he pulls his hand off the shooter's shoulder and runs up range away from the shooting (running and shooting happen in completely opposite directions). The shooter, now having been provided a stimulus, draws and shoots a chest shot. When the runner hears the shot, he looks at the ground or a third person marks the spot. The distance he traveled is how close this particular knife is dangerous to this gun. Keeping in mind that while it isn't a 100% solution, this is a good drill to do. First, in this case the shooter *knows* something is going to happen. Being ready to shoot and having to make a decision to shoot are very different things. Second, people run at different speeds and draw at different speeds. The original Tueller drill was premised on a 1.5 second draw speed. I can draw and fire faster than that, but what if the runner is Carl Lewis? Still, it is a good one to try once in a while just to give you an idea. With some paint or Airsoft guns you can actually do this at each other. It will also give you a good idea of why moving and shooting at the same time is a winner.

Once you get even a rough idea of how to use a knife you can

make up your own training. Dummy knives are cheap; some are less than \$10. Go ahead and factor in some racquetball goggles too because even a rubber knife can do eye damage. The sky is the limit if you have a buddy that also wants to train.

One of the most enlightening things I ever did was attend a knife course that specifically talked about using them at grappling range. Do you know what the best guard pass in the universe is? Four inches of razor sharp steel in the femoral artery, it turns out. The set up for jujitsu against blades is simple. Pick a grappling position (mount, guard, side mount, or north south) while you or your training partner has a trainer blade stashed. On the go, try to get your knife out and use it or prevent it from happening if you are the one empty handed. This is excellent for both parties. It teaches the knifer to get to his tools under dire circumstances, such as a 200 pound man sitting on his chest. It teaches the disarmed man just how dangerous blades are and how to quickly get a hold of one if it comes out.

This is one of the reasons I preach some grappling experience and jujitsu or judo in particular. Sport jujitsu might not be great against a blade out of the box but it has all the tools needed if you think a little. The only knife disarm I have seen consistently work is a figure four armbar, which happens to come from that system. If all you have are striking skills, you are in a more difficult spot. It will help you not get cut, for sure. Dodging a punch is the same as dodging a knife, mostly, but you have to inflict blunt force trauma after that long enough to escape or disable your attacker without getting cut. Humans can take more punishment than you would think and this can sometimes be a tall order. While I did preach against the knife duel mentality, it is something worth trying out for yourself. A simple solution is to use either lipstick on the fake blade edge or just use magic markers; the motion is the same. If you want to be extra high speed, get a couple of dollar store white long sleeve t shirts for practice. This is also useful for learning unarmed defense against the blade.

The only real challenge left with knife training is maintaining a



proper attitude. It takes a mature mind to stick to realistic solutions in the face of a magic marker. I am guilty of doing things against a simulated bullet or a fake knife that I would never try in a real situation. It happens, but try to correct yourself when you do. The other thing to deal with is frustration. A knife wielder is going to get you 70% of the time if he is even remotely athletic. Even against a rank amateur, your odds of success are never going to be much over 50/50. This is not a movie and they call them weapons for a reason. The final thing training should really instill in you is exactly how much you never want to face an edged weapon in real life.

When it comes to choosing a knife of your own, you need to know a couple of things. For starters, fixed blades always trump folding knives. I taught a course in SF that had a real name but its nickname was better: internally we called it "Steak Knife and a Makarov," as a real operative should be able to accomplish almost any mission with just those tools. It was extremely labor intensive but rewarding in a huge way. One of the best things about the course was that every scenario the student was in was a surprise by design. We taught the skills first outside in the grass, then they were tried in an extremely unfair test that we didn't tell them was a test. The relevant point to fixed versus folders was that before going into a meeting, the student had a choice in armament: he could have a pistol and three magazines with a folding knife or a pistol with two magazines and a fixed blade. What he didn't know was that the problem could be solved with two bullets and I was never going to let him get his gun out. The student was led into a shoot house hallway blindfolded and pushed face first into a corner. As the blindfold came off, another instructor and I in Blauer suits commence to whipping his ass from behind. My first task every time was to dive on his gun and keep it jammed in the holster. The point of the exercise was really to see if the student would remember he had a knife, since we just taught him how to use it, but something else became an ongoing pattern. If he remembered and had a fixed blade, he usually won. But if he had a folder it invariably failed to open and was lost in the fray. We had very good training folders: Spyderco Enduras with the

Emerson Wave feature. The Wave is a patented hook of metal that catches your pocket as you pull the knife, snapping the blade open. It opens like clockwork if you are standing in your living room. In the tussle of actually being in a fight, I can't remember it working even once. So if you have a choice: fixed blade all the way.

That really depends on your local jurisdiction and how dirty you want to ride. Fixed blades are a felony to carry concealed in many places, so know what you are dealing with. Aside from that? My thought on blade shape is that it really doesn't matter. I like kerambits but that is more personal taste than anything. People get stabbed everyday with kitchen knives, screwdrivers and scissors, any one of which will work. As long as it is small enough to conceal, get whatever you like. Punch daggers are actually great for CCW since they are shorter than other knives by design. The real thing to look at when you buy a knife is the sheath. Most of them are afterthoughts and not really useful for daily carry.

If you are stuck with a folder, any reputable brand is fine. I like Spyderco a lot; they are excellent designs and easy on the wallet compared to other high end brands. If you do go with a folder, I would still recommend the Wave feature. Available on the Emerson brand and some Spydercos, it at least ups your odds. To be fair, despite what I saw in training, my single student that has used his knife for real did get it out via Wave.

A third option is available if you want to push the envelope a little. Living in a non-free state now, I have adopted a compromise. I have a folder (Spyderco Dragonfly) that is in a sheath on my belt. It just happens to be carried locked-open in a kydex sheath I got on eBay. It doesn't violate the letter of the law but it violates the hell out of the spirit of the law—just the way I like it.

Do you need anything else outside of concealed carry? Sure. If it comes to wearing gun belts in the streets, it makes sense to me to step up to a bigger knife. Blades small enough to hide are often too short to reach any vital organs, which is a much faster show stopper.

That is part of the tradeoff of concealability. If hiding it is no longer a problem, get something more robust. A bigger knife is more useful for field tasks as well, which is what it will do the majority of the time. No need to get fancy; the same WWII era Ka-Bar is still carried today and will set you back about \$70. Other good options abound from brands like Cold Steel, Ontario and Spartan Blades. Consider the weight before you buy the Rambo knife though. A fifteen inch Bowie might look good in the store but it will be a pain in the ass to carry.

## **8 Fitness, Food and Water**

### **Don't Be Fat, Take Some Fruit Snacks, Avoid Getting Parched**

These might sound like three odd things to combine into a single chapter but that is because I have very little to say on them. A bit of specific fitness is in order but it doesn't take twenty pages to share. Better people exist to teach you how to skin and flambé a rat, as well as procuring water from car batteries (please don't do this). We need to cover just a few things on each subject. Fitness isn't why you bought my book though; you bought my book to learn how not to get killed by bipeds! But I do have a couple of pointers since you are your own logistics train in this one.

First, fitness is important. Nothing chaps my ass more than hearing civilians talk about how easy the GWOT was. I've even had one or two tell me it was a "push button" affair. Absolutely not true! Fighting in the city sucks, carrying around a metric-gaggle-ton of equipment sucks and doing it in the broiling heat *really* sucks. Some targets can only be reached by walking a really long ways. Try an all-night hike across rubble-strewn streets and chest deep drainage ditches, followed by an extended gunfight for an endurance check. If your guys get all shot up, you might have to carry them miles through the city because nobody is risking a multi-million dollar airframe for a couple of mangled grunts. Since you don't have helicopters to start with, you'd better get accustomed to the Reebok Expressway.

It is also true that strong people are harder to kill. Be it falling off something, explosive concussion or even getting shot, your body is more likely to stay alive if you are fit and strong, all other things being equal. You can go longer without sleep if you are in shape and you

can fight a lot longer when things get bad.

This is usually where someone rolls their eyes and says, “I’ll be a totally different person on adrenaline bro! Women pick up cars to save their kids ‘n’ stuff, LOL!” No, actually, you won’t be a different person. Adrenaline is great but it isn’t magic and it wears off eventually. Even in the worst of scenarios it runs out; you are then left with fitness and will. I have been in firefights for so long that I had to switch hands on the trigger because my dominant hand was so cramped up it wouldn’t work anymore. I have shot so long in so many directions out of a gun truck that I was running out of ab muscles. My core was so toasted that it was hard to turn the other way. I’ve been so exhausted that I passed out on asphalt after a mission. And all that was with a base of near superhuman fitness! If your PT plan consists of eating Cheetos and playing Xbox, you aren’t going to make it.

One of the skills you need to acquire is how to carry a heavy load over a distance. While I will be helping you with equipment selection to not get overloaded, gear still isn’t light. Magazine pouches and bandoleers look cool in pictures but they weigh on you in real life. Water weighs eight pounds per gallon and you will have to carry some on any kind of extended adventure. Even just a six pound rifle in your hands will kick your ass over enough time.

If carrying a ruck (backpack, knapsack... grownups call them a ruck) was an Olympic sport, a soldier would win the event every time—guaranteed. A ruck is a house for a Grunt. It has his dry socks, extra bullets and pantry in it. It is the third most important thing in the world after a rifle and belt kit. It actually trumps boots because it often has a spare pair of those in it. A ruck is important if your survival plan includes any kind of operations. If you have a ‘get home from work’ plan, it probably has a ruck. If your plan is to escape the city, it absolutely includes a ruck. Unless you have Bugs Bunny pockets that can hold everything from an anvil to a picnic table, you must learn to carry one.

Predictably, it's not going to be fun. I have had some giggles in recent years directly related to the backpack. One of my nephews, about half my age, had a child at the same time I did. We both got the baby backpacks because that is what dads do. I can carry a thirty pound child literally all day and I have worn the carpet out keeping him asleep at night. My twenty-ish year old nephew got his ass handed to him for months despite the advantages of youth and strength. The reason is simple: strapping on a ruck is an unused muscle group for most people. A carpenter can drive nails all day because his body has grown accustomed to the motion, but if you or I tried to keep up we wouldn't be able to hold a coffee cup tomorrow morning. Carpenters, feel free to use 'ditch digger' and 'shovel' in that analogy. You are going to have to build up this muscle group and preferably before the shooting starts.

So one part of your physical training needs to be simply carrying a backpack with a realistic weight in it for an escalating amount of distance. Remember back in the first chapter when I told you to get backpack? Here it comes! Now you, being a city dweller, may have to compromise a little bit on this one. I much prefer a backpack with a waist belt, which helps distribute the load from your shoulders to your hips. I also prefer packs from Eberlestock and Mystery Ranch, which are going to look a bit out of place in Baltimore. Looking like a fruit loop draws attention, especially in urban environments. You may want to stick with something a little more plain from your local sporting goods store. This is your training or home pack. The day you are walking out of the burning hellscape previously known as the Wharf District, hopefully you have a more robust pack, optics be damned. For now, I also recommend you keep the weight a little lighter. It will be less effective but some training is better than none in this case.

Learning to ruck is labor intensive and also carries a significant risk of injury. That sounds silly but it is 100% true. Our bodies don't adjust rapidly to carrying extra weight—ask any woman who has been pregnant. Carrying a "tick" on your back, as we say in the business, can be extremely stressful on the feet, ankles, knees and

hips. The big keys here are to put a toe in the pool and keep it sane. By toe in the pool, I mean don't tee off on eighty pounds in a bag for twelve miles on day one. Young, fit soldiers and Marines start at three miles and 35 pounds—the learning curve is that steep. I recommend you start at about fifteen pounds, go one to two miles and ruck no more than once per week. You can gradually increase the weight and mileage but no more than 10% per week, max. As for keeping it sane, the services are notorious for overloading ground-pounders though their own doctrine says your ruck should never weigh more than 25% of your body weight (that class is always good for a laugh, especially at places like Special Forces Selection). I have personally stepped off with 120 pounds in a real world mission, which was insane. Most of this is by necessity though. Soldiers have all kinds of radios, water needs, spare mortar rounds, etc. that sometimes just have to be carried. You should be able to keep it below fifty pounds with ease.

In my opinion, you should build up to a maximum distance of twelve miles in training then never go above eight again. Twelve miles is a long ways and, like a marathon runner, twelve training miles will actually net you 25 in a pinch. I would also not worry about time. Soldiers have time standards so they learn techniques to walk faster. However, this is mostly just a method to cover ground faster in friendly territory, like moving a battalion from a rear area to fill a gap in the lines. Nobody tries to speed walk in a combat zone because it will generally get you killed. Much better to move a little slower but see the ambush coming.

What else for fitness? While some will disagree with me on this, I would say: not a lot else. If you followed my advice from Chapter Six, you are training in some flavor of ninja fighting as well. That alone will keep you in pretty decent shape. To be fair, all the guys at the ninja fight gym that are super serious about it are also lifting and doing sport specific conditioning. I get that—if you have time. All of that will generally translate well to combat conditioning, but if you are trying to cram in all the skills from this book from scratch then time is

not on your side. Time is a resource just like money—spend it wisely.

If I was going to add just one more thing to the fitness pile—a luxury, not a necessity—it would be the wonder known as the Bulgarian Bag. Invented by Olympic Wrestler Ivan Ivanov, this is a very handy total fitness tool. A Bulgarian Bag is a weighted leather bag that simulates the size and shape of a lamb. Yes, I'm serious. Holding live animals on the shoulders is a traditional demonstration in Bulgarian Folk Style wrestling festivals. Thinking of this, Ivan had an epiphany: by simulating the weight distribution and shape, one could train movements that would be dangerous as hell with metal weights. Ivan refined this device to develop wrestling-specific strength and conditioning exercises. For any of you that have wrestled, you know that also means cardio intensity. A Bulgarian Bag in a space large enough to fit a coffee table will absolutely wear your ass out. It has a side benefit of building incredible grip strength, which is great for pistol shooting. Also, in the opinion of a guy that is beat to pieces from the war, it has near magical properties of shoulder rehabilitation and further injury prevention. I cannot recommend this highly enough. The best ones are the leather models from [suples.com](http://suples.com). Start lighter than you think. I'm a pretty strong dude and the 26 pound model was plenty to keep me in check for the first year I used one.

Moving on to calories, I could write another 200 pages on food and turn this into a multi-volume set (in fact, my book agent recommends that). But like I said in Chapter 2, my expertise is the fighting part. Others have spent the thousands of hours comparing the caloric content of Aunt Jemima syrup versus Purina Dog Food with a cost analysis and mineral matrix. I suggest you lean on those resources, but I do have a few things to say on the matter from a soldier's perspective.

First, starvation has been a weapon used against the city dweller since Adam and Eve moved out of the Garden and established the first high rise apartment building. The basic strategy of a siege has *a/ways* been to surround a city, starve them and mop up when they are too weak to resist. If an outside force is at play,



expect this move.

The next ray of sunshine is the fragility of the US food supply in general and a large city in particular. Despite having a cheap and plentiful food supply for most of our lifetimes, that is not the norm in human history. Given how much we export, consume and feed to animals, you may be amazed at just how close those margins actually are. It has been said in the recent past that we are one bad harvest away from famine in this nation and I don't doubt it for a second. As I type this, something like 50% of the Midwest is underwater. Expected soy, corn and wheat for the year is already being talked about at 30% of normal and many miles away from the Heartland, we are already seeing an effect. My local grocery stores have started posting signs on the empty canned goods aisles saying supply is short due to a weak harvest. A couple of bad rain storms and the effect is real.

For you urbanites, things are even worse. The normal grocery store carries approximately a three day supply on the shelves at any given moment. That is a three day normal supply, not a three day panic buying supply. If the traffic stops to your metropolis for any reason, the available food is burned in 72 hours tops. If the rest of the country's food supply is equivalent to a skinny kid with asthma, your local food supply is the old man on a walker with AIDS and black lung (he isn't tough from coal mining either, he got the black lung from blowing miners—or something like that). Point is, your shit is weak sauce from a logistics perspective. Your food is sold or looted in three days in the best of scenarios. If blood is flowing in the streets, how likely is the truck coming to resupply? Even if some brave trucker decides to risk it all and resupply your local Piggly Wiggly, what are the odds of him not being looted at the first blocked intersection? Feral humans might not be smart but they can figure out what a Safeway semi-trailer is likely to have in it.

It is also worth acknowledging that food becomes a weapon in a famine. Starvation is a pretty good way of killing lots of your enemies at once, on the cheap. From the Ukraine to Somalia, this has been

used with great effect. Food becomes just one more currency of power; the big players will use it without a missed wink of sleep.

So what are you going to do about it? Oh, I know, learn 37 ways to harvest city calories, right? Those options will go away quick too. Baltimore might be rat infested now but they would be wiped out in a matter of weeks if people were actually starving to death. Humans have pushed tigers and bears to the brink of extinction for trophies; trapping every rat in a city is not beyond us. Despite feel good ideas to the contrary, any urban environment will absolutely run out of things to eat in short order. At Stalingrad, Russians ate boot leather, tree bark and even boiled the wallpaper to consume the glue. You think they didn't eat all the rats? I promise you, nothing with a heartbeat evaded consumption in that city as the siege wore on. So thinking you are going to snag some sweet cat meat and others won't do the same is foolish. Another truth of any modern famine is the propensity towards cannibalism. This isn't some made up junk from a horror movie, it is very real. In the Ukraine during the Holodomor, signs were posted in public urging people not to eat their children. In China during the "Great Leap Forward" it is credibly reported that families would trade children so as not to eat their own. That is horrifying but it illustrates the point. The human desire to not starve to death cannot be overstated. You don't have any magic skills that will let you trap rodents better than the next guy. The supply will run out.

So what are you going to do about it? FEMA recommends a two week supply of food on hand. I think that is drastically underestimating the potential problem. There are also some tactical benefits to having more. First, two weeks isn't really enough time to see if a crisis is going to resolve or if it is going to escalate. The Los Angeles Riots in 1992 lasted five days. It is entirely possible for a similar riot to go twice as long then fizzle out to nothing. We'll talk about escape hatches later, but walking out of a city turned into a war zone is no small undertaking. Your best course of action may be to wait it out. Secondly, fourteen days isn't enough time for people to really start feeling the effects of hunger. Estimates range from 35 to

40 days before humans start to feel the severe symptoms of starvation. At two weeks, the natives still have plenty of energy to stay up all night waiting on a well supplied victim to cross into their turf.

There is likely to be a magic window for escape, which hopefully you time right. That would be after the natives tire themselves out a little from the initial looting rampage but before Tactical Darwinism starts making them smart about defense. Tactical Darwinism, so far as I know, is a term coined in the Iraq War. It means that if you kill enough of the dumb ones, only the smart ones will remain and they will have seen enough to adapt. Therefore, the longer the conflict goes on, the harder it is to kill your opponents. Never forget that even your enemies are human beings too: crafty and adaptable. That magic window for escape may take a short while to appear or the situation may take a lot longer to slide downhill, necessitating your escape later than expected. I find a three month supply of food to be ideal without being so much of a burden that you can't achieve it.

Stored food falls into two basic categories: dry goods and ready to eat goods. Note that nothing in your refrigerator counts because the power is likely to go out or become intermittent, which is the same thing with perishable goods. Dry goods are usually billed as the prepper's friend for a couple of reasons. First, they are cheap: 25 pounds of rice will set you back about \$10. Second, they keep forever. Properly sealed and temperature controlled, rice and beans will hold for thirty years. For our purposes, dry goods are the usual rice and beans, freeze-dried meals, flour, oatmeal or anything else that requires water to eat.

This brings us right into the problems with dry goods. The obvious one is that they require copious amounts of water to become edible. Even if you could force dry rice down your throat, it still requires water to digest. It will pull water from your body, if it must, that you must then replace. Do I have some food from this category in my plan? Damn right I do. I also live one block away from an irrigation canal (thank you, medium-sized city in an agricultural

region). I basically have infinity water but that is not the norm. You have to plan water accordingly if you choose to go this route. The bigger problem of dry goods is that you usually need to cook them. This presents an entire host of problems. First, where are you going to get fire? Most urban domiciles lack a fireplace or even ventilation for a fire. Even if you have one, burnable resources are going to be in short supply. If it is winter, fuel will be gone in very short order. Worse, the human body reacts in predictable ways to starvation. Your sense of smell becomes an *X-Men* type of super power. If you have ever been really hungry you may have experienced this. You can smell food cooking for literally miles. Firing up even something like a Jet Boil for a cup o' soup is going to be like blood in the water to a shark. Grilling up some rats on the balcony with the old grill will be absolutely out of the question if you want to survive. I'm not saying you can't cook in the apocalypse, but I am saying you want to take every precaution to mask it if you do.

The second category is ready to eat goods, which mostly means canned goods and peanut butter. The tradeoff here is higher expense and a higher weight. The weight isn't a huge issue if you are riding out the storm with a stockpile intact, but it does become an issue if you have to move. You can only fit so many cans of SPAM in a rucksack.

Most cans say to heat before eating but that is only a suggestion. In the military, we never ate things hot in a tactical situation. I wouldn't say that most canned meats or veggies taste great cold but it is a lot better than getting shot. Go ahead and resign yourself to this now. Even with cold food, the smell can travel a long ways. The days of luxurious meals will be over if starvation becomes a threat. Eat fast and then cram the garbage in a zip lock bag. The longer an open container sits, the greater your chance of having to fight over it.

Aside from the usual fare, I have a couple of suggestions to add to the party that I haven't seen covered anywhere else. I mentioned children in the opening to this book. I thought a lot more about food

preparation after I had kids than I ever did before and I imagine many of you are in the same boat. Kids present a couple of problems. Number one, starvation is going to do a lot more damage to them than it will to you. My cardiologist would probably love it if I skipped meals for thirty days, but the results to the development of my child's brain from the same could be catastrophic. Number two, kids are weird eaters. It doesn't hurt anyone right now if Junior refuses his mac and cheese and we toss it out. However, this is not a game you can afford to play in the early stages of rationing your food. If your stash of buckets needs to last three months, every bean and grain of rice counts. You simply cannot risk making food, having it refused and then needing to do it again later. So what do kids like? What are they almost guaranteed to eat? How about chocolate shakes. Looking at Amazon right now, I can buy weight gainer chocolate shakes for dirt cheap. As a bonus, they have lots of protein, fat and vitamins to boot. At 360 calories per ounce, this is survival gold. Calories may be cheaper in another form but this has a lot going for it. A high-calorie, relatively tasty dry good that I can make cold? Yes sir, I'll take two. I have no idea what the long term consequences are of a steady diet of bodybuilder shakes but I imagine it isn't good. Balanced against starvation, this is a gamble I would gladly take. Weight gainer shake powders keep forever, are easy to transport and cheap. Even as a supplement to the other foods this is a winner.

Strange diets take us to another couple of supplements to discuss. First, get a couple of large bottles of multivitamins. The jury is out on whether these help with a normal diet, but however you prepped, the odds are you won't have a normal diet anymore. This is just the way things often shake out. You may end up down to just green beans or find out too late that nothing you stowed away has Vitamin A in it. Adding some vitamins to the mix just seems like a good idea for very little cost in storage space. Secondly, something that no one wants to consider: you also want to lay in a stash of fiber gummies. Canned goods are not even close to as healthy for you as fresh veggies. Even doing your best, it becomes difficult on a starvation diet to keep things regular or, as we say in the business,

“make a turd.” You may find yourself going weeks without a bowel movement, which is a recipe for disaster. Deal with the smell and gas and plan on adding fiber gummies as a supplement early in your survival plan. You might shake your head at this one but it’s very real. Watching the TV show *Alone*, where participants try to survive the longest by themselves, shows the results. Just in the last two seasons I have seen two people go home due to impacted bowels. This is something that can actually kill you. On that same note, throw an enema kit in your supplies. This is not fun to think about but survival isn’t a game. Do you want to stick a rubber hose up your ass? No. Is it better than dying of a ruptured bowel? All day long and twice on Sunday.

Speaking of water (okay, that is a terrible segue. Let’s all take a minute to think about puppies and rainbows and not squirting warm saline water up our rectums while we writhe in pain, followed by explosive diarrhea. All better now? Good. Me too)... Water is a critical problem. While you can go weeks without food, you have only days at best without water. Depending on the severity of the weather, that can be very short. Water is also heavy, bulky and easily contaminated. For you city dwellers, the problems don’t stop.

As we discussed a bit in the opening, water also brings other significant problems depending on your regional population density. Water is critical to our hygiene and the average human is dumb. Like, really dumb. When we talk about lowest common denominator, the bar is pretty low. For the sake of argument, let’s assume a high population density, like New York City, and let us also say the crisis hits in the dead of summer. You have just a couple of days before old people start dropping like flies. The tap is off, so how long before your local rocket scientists try to drink out of the East River? Don’t think it won’t happen; thirst is a powerful need. People trapped in lifeboats quite often start drinking seawater even knowing the consequences. How many of the river drinkers would even think about needing to boil it first? Now you have a cholera outbreak. Plus, people have filled up their toilets and are now shitting in the streets.

The toilet filled with poop 100% happens in lower income areas when the water is off. Often, it is a known problem (see above, where I said people are stupid). More people die. Bodies are left in the street for lack of a place to dispose of them. Hey, congratulations, you now live in a disease incubator and it is open for business.

This is not an exaggeration. You may counter that people live in squalor the world over and seem to do just fine. True, but they were born into it. One of the side effects of us having the greatest public water system the world has ever known is an intolerance to living without it (residents of Flint, Michigan are excluded from above 'greatest public water' statement—you guys are on your own). It's the same reason the locals can drink tap water in Mexico but it will likely send you to the ER. If the water goes down here and FEMA can't reach you, your city just got in the express lane to extinction and it is time for you to go.

Because of that, I don't believe you need to stock as much water as food. If the water goes down permanently, you'd best be making tracks. I would be comfortable at seven days of stored water, which takes up quite a bit of space. If you are quick enough to fill your bathtub and sinks, combined with drinking the water from the back of your toilets and hot water heater, you are closer to a fourteen day supply. As a safety precaution, I would have a couple of LifeStraw filters on hand. But think about it long and hard: if the water shuts off, how long do you expect it will last before complete bedlam?

## 9 Rumble in the Bronx

Now that we have covered the basics of supplies, let's move on to the meat of the book. There is still the topic of equipment to worry about, but it makes more sense to me to talk about the specifics of it after the tactics. The worst case scenario that I am preparing you for is all out Civil War Redux (Millennial Edition). In all historical cases, that doesn't just happen overnight. After the fact, we might be able to pinpoint the moment it started, but a lot of things had to happen to get to the powder keg explosion that sparked the fight. I will divide those things into phases and different phases require a different response.

The phase concept is frequently used in both conventional warfare and guerrilla warfare and there can be a varying number of phases depending on your model. I'm stealing the term because none of the models directly apply to our situation. The phases of our slide toward Civil War are not the same as the US doctrinal phases of war.

Phase 1 includes the normal political disputes common to a two or three-party system. One side is mad about abortion being legal, the other side is mad about the minimum wage, but nothing really gets done. More importantly, people leave it at voting and maybe donating a couple bucks to a PAC. Your neighbors vote for the other team but you still go golfing together on Sunday.

Phase 2 includes a broader spectrum of events. On the lower end, people will steal your yard signs and try to get you fired for holding certain political beliefs. Maybe the Black Panthers practice a little voter intimidation but it is extremely localized. In the middle, we have small scale riots such as Berkeley in 2017 and escalating violence in the streets, like people throwing milkshakes full of concrete at



political enemies. Towards the further reaches, we have low grade bombings such as the '70s Weather Underground and bigger riots like Chicago in 1968. Phase 2 events may be quelled by police or a National Guard deployment.

Phase 3 would be multifaceted guerrilla war on a large scale. The government loses control, at least temporarily, of entire sections of the country. Law and order disappear in affected areas. The Federal Government may restore order on occasion but it is more like a temporary victory. The Frontier during the Indian Wars and life in any of the Western territories before statehood are good examples of this.

Phase 4 would be actual uniformed armies controlling territory and fighting on battlefields with heavy weaponry. 1861 all over again, though I suppose the uniforms this time would be blue and red instead of blue and grey.

Phase 5 is phase 4 plus the injection of a foreign power or powers on either side. The 4<sup>th</sup> Maine Division reinforced by the 16<sup>th</sup> French Cheese Eating Surrender Monkeys. I mean this as either blatant material support (ships full of guns and tanks) or actual fighting forces, not just the covert financial support that I guarantee you is happening right now in Phase 2.

Phase 2 and 3 are so different that we must talk about them as completely separate events. After all, the difference between a murder rap and an act of heroism is sometimes who was watching. To keep things clean, I will present these as distinct sections. What about phases 4 and 5? Well, if things go that far, I have nothing for you. When the day comes that you are manning a pill box on the south end of the Golden Gate bridge, praying a South Korean air drop brings rice and flares before the teeming hordes overrun you in the dark of night, we'll have gone past what I imagined was possible. I hope we are on the same team then, I guess, and I will see you at the reunion in New Washington.

We are already in Phase 2. The correct survival strategy for this

phase requires a bit of philosophical change and some thought that is borderline Un-American, but please, hear me out. If you truly believe things are accelerating and we are on the path to a real civil war, this is the only way to operate. The first bit is for those that are politically motivated. Some of you don't give a damn about politics and just want to raise your kids in peace. I get that—you can safely skip the next couple of paragraphs. It doesn't change your overall strategy and we are all going to end up at that place very soon.

For the politically minded, this is the time to start keeping a low profile: no political slogan hats, no bumper stickers and no activism. If we were going to win this in the streets, we would have done so by now. Instead, the last three years have taught us that counter-protests are a waste of time. This is especially true if you are a minority in your city. Should you happen to be the only small bit of red in a sea of blue, or vice versa, you stand to gain nothing by getting in a pissing match downtown. Now this does run counter to American ideals that I am 100% with. I'm not disputing your First Amendment rights to assembly or speech. I am telling you it is a bad idea tactically. Let me break this down a little bit with my own analogy from 2016. That was the first year that I thought about putting a bumper sticker on my ride and then didn't. At the time, I was actually a little bit embarrassed about that. I am normally a shit-stirring devious little bastard and I will poke people in the chest just for fun. Ten years ago, I would have put on a sticker supporting my guy just because it pissed people off, even if I didn't really like him. But 2016 was different. For starters, I had a really nice truck at the time. 2016 was the first time I have seen people so rabid that they were vandalizing anything with a particular name on it. Even in a city with a voting majority for my team, the minority was so crazed they would target anything sporting that logo. So for economically tactical reasons, I didn't do it because I didn't want my stuff to get spray painted or keyed. That was also when I had the light bulb moment that things are really different this time.

Counter-protests are in the same vein. I get it. Going out for a

guaranteed brawl and maybe getting to knock some Commie teeth out in a free-for-all sounds like a lot of fun. Particularly so for young men that need an outlet for the rage brewing inside them as degenerates corrupt our nation like a cancer. Ceding the streets feels like a coward's move. Four years ago, I would have thought the same thing but strategically, it is the right move. Sometimes doing the correct thing doesn't feel good. In fact, sometimes it feels like ashes in your mouth and this is one of those times.

In a functioning society, the State has a monopoly on violence. That is part of the bargain we make for having a State. Redress is handled in a civilized manner and the police ensure that we all get to exercise our rights without abuse. In short, we are either a nation of laws or we are not. It is quite obvious now that we are not. Domestic terrorists are free to destroy property, block traffic, hit people with bike locks, pepper spray with impunity, shut down any speech they deem offensive and this only goes one way. One team has impunity to organize on social media, hold rallies and always have the charges dropped if they get caught going over the line. The other team faces RICO statutes any time they attempt to create a united front. You do the math on that one.

The protest and counter-protest dance reminds me of a High School fight. You've all seen it play out. Two combatants talk smack all week then finally show up at the spot. This guy shoves that guy, he shoves back, the dick dance goes back and forth for a bit, somebody finally gets hit and the show's over. It's weak and it shows the lowest form of the human psyche as it relates to combat. It might as well be the National Geographic channel showing tribal warfare customs on the savanna. Elaborate costumes are employed to make your team look frightening. Headdress is employed so you look bigger, complete with a drawn-on scary face. Elaborate dance rituals are used to get the blood riled up and get your team psyched to do something. Some projectile weapons are exchanged, maybe a little shield pounding and some false rushes. At the end of it, both sides declare victory and go home. Deaths are rare and injuries are generally not even serious.

Unless one side breaks and runs, then watch out—massacre time!

That is not the way of our people. In fact, it is kind of embarrassing to watch. Imagine the High School fight guy but in his 40s now. Across the last twenty years, he has learned nothing. He hasn't evolved (he's probably still wearing his letter jacket) and tries that same style of fighting; only this time, his opponent is different. His opponent has spent the last twenty years living in truly dangerous places. He is an old man from a job where men die young. High School Man puts his hand out to shove. The opponent, having none of that nonsense, grips his fingers and turns his hand aside while pulling him closer and off-balance. The other hand produces a hidden blade with which he stabs High School Man in rapid succession in the perineum, lung and soft palate. As High School Man falls, chest cavity filling with blood, his opponent wipes the blade on his shirt and disappears into the crowd. Time to grow up. It's rapidly becoming time to be that new opponent instead. A bully will put you in traction but a professional will put you in a pine box—don't forget that.

The larger point here is that it does you no good to advertise your affiliations, especially if you think we are on the way to a real fight. Not only does it make you a target in the immediate sense (like getting sucker punched over your hat), it makes you a potential target for assassination when things get worse. If you think the other side isn't collecting information right now, you are dead wrong. Only a fool wouldn't use this time to stockpile data on enemy forces, which is why you are going to start.

How does Phase 2 manifest if we have opted to skip the step where we end up in jail while the revolution starts? The first thing you should be worried about is an uptick in general street crime, for a couple of reasons. If LE (Law Enforcement) is tied up dealing with riots, you can bet your bottom dollar that run of the mill bad guys will notice. Resources are finite and an increased presence in one area usually costs coverage in others. You may also be more likely to be targeted depending on your race if the locals are upset over a perceived grievance particular to it. Last but certainly not least, there

is something that we now call the Baltimore Effect.

A relatively recent phenomenon, and more proof positive we are on the road to Hell, the Baltimore Effect is essentially a decision made by police to not to do their jobs anymore because the cost is too high. The name comes from a study done in Baltimore after a crackhead died in police custody. The city, faced with public outcry over the loss of this fine citizen, opted to bring charges against the six police officers involved. A statistical analysis afterwards showed that the Baltimore PD just... stopped enforcing the law. The number of arrests went down to nothing. It was like the entire PD collectively understood that busting a pick-pocket might land *them* in jail, so they just started coasting through shifts. I can't really blame them. So what happened right after that? A fucking bloodbath. The murder rate spiked as Baltimore became the deadliest large city in the US. Shooting rates in some neighborhoods tripled. Shocking—who could have predicted that?

Your local PD may not have suffered a similar castration yet but my prediction is it won't matter. The more police are demonized, the more good officers will find other work. As the consequences of enforcing the law grow, the fewer people will sign up to do it. If you live in the type of city that is prone to civil unrest in the first place, the best and the brightest in LE have likely already left. The other good ones will too, eventually.

The best defense is to learn to be aware. So many people walk through life looking at a phone or otherwise distracted, it's scary. Training your brain to recognize threats before they appear is a skill you need. Start right now. Can you spot the undercover cops? What are the tells? How about who is displaying aggressive behavior? There is an entire science to precursor fight cues. You can even tell a lot about how someone will react just by how they carry themselves. Awareness is also a two way street. You see them, they see you. But it isn't a negative the way you might think. Criminals, like wild animals, seek the weak prey. Just having your head in the game and your shoulders up will deter more aggression than you might think.

And if it doesn't? This goes back to the initial talk about carrying a gun. You need to get comfortable with carrying and using it, now. The time to learn isn't when the streets are on fire. This is a skill set you want to have well in advance of needing it.

# 10 Dealing with Rioters

## Savages on the Warpath

One of the major problems an urban survivalist can face is a riot. Riots are springing up with increasing frequency and causing more violence and destruction as cities adopt new softer policies towards them. More so than at any other time in our history, you may find yourself very much all alone as politicians choose to tell the police to stand down. It is already not without precedent to have mob violence so widespread that all the cops are already tied up. Unfortunately for you, the City Fathers probably care more about Wells Fargo than they do about your apartment.

If you took the previous advice about building a network of allies, this is going to be a lot easier to deal with. Plug in your people where they fit as outlined in this chapter. For overall defensive strategy, we will still build out the plan as if you don't have a network of allies. A storm of mob violence can take you by surprise and you maybe haven't had time to organize yet. As Rummy said, "You go to war with the army you've got."

So lets say the Orcs are streaming out of Mordor and your only friends are Becky and Bob, who were focused on brunch until nine seconds ago. What are you going to do? Step one, go find out who is willing to help you defend the neighborhood. You aren't going to stop a wave of locusts alone. Go door-to-door and get a crew together. Bring everyone to a central meeting spot and figure out what you have for weapons. Unlike a lot of what I have preached, this defensive plan is very weapons-centric. If you don't have firearms, I absolutely do not recommend a defense in the streets. Melee weapons, in this context, are absolutely no substitute. Riot cops can and do push around a much larger force using only clubs and shields,

but only because they have trained to act as a single organism, like a phalanx of old, and they are still backed up by guns, something worth noting. If as a smaller and untrained force you attempt the same, you are likely to get routed. If you have introduced weapons to the fight and your side breaks and runs, you are very likely to die. The howling mob will tear you limb from limb, their bloodlust fueled by the sight of your retreat. So guns are important. If you have none, you are in deep shit. In this case, I highly recommend that you and your team collapse to one house or apartment. You could also conceivably hold the entrance to your building if construction favors the defender. In certain cases, melee weapons could actually carry the day. How?

With edged weapons, one man can in fact hold a doorway. If you are in a solid building and have nothing but a spear or sword, you may be able to do enough damage to turn the crowd back. Ten or so of you could conceivably protect a single house if you use the proper tactics.

We just saw in a shop owner in Dallas with a sword get beat to death by a crowd. May he rest in peace, and I mean this in no way to speak ill of the dead, but he made two massive mistakes despite his heart being in the right place. First, he waded into the mob and met it head on. That's how he got hit in the back of the head, knocked to the ground and stomped to death. Don't do that unless you happen to be a Peloponnesian War re-enactor and are backed up by a shield wall. The second thing he did wrong was how he employed his weapon: he swung it. That's a mistake that any of us could easily make. Humans are hardwired to slash and hack, as that is our most common usage of the blade.

Think about how you use a knife in the kitchen or even butchering an animal. You cut and slice but rarely if ever do you stab. However, a stab or thrust is the preferred offense of spear or sword for a number of reasons. This is why Roman Legions worked so hard to drill stabbing motions into their soldiers. First, a stab is harder to dodge. The arc required for a swing means you have a chance to get out of the way. A straight line attack is not only faster but harder to



step out of the way of. Not to mention it offers very little chance of being disarmed. You can step inside of a swing or let it pass by you and counter-strike. Two feet of razor sharp steel offers almost nothing to grab in a linear attack. Second, a stabbing attack is more lethal. Slash wounds can look horrific but even being opened up neck to hip is something you can survive, especially if it is shallow. Stabbing wounds that hit vital areas, not so much. Have you ever wondered why European sword technology went from broad slashing sabers to thin, pointy rapiers? It's because against unarmored opponents, the rapier is actually more deadly. Something the size of your pinky finger stabbed into your chest wall is very likely to kill you. Three inches of penetration is usually enough to hit something vital. It might not look like much but it is absolutely deadly.

The weapon of choice? Basically any sword made for stabbing would be my preferred option. Ironically enough, a Roman Gladius or a katana would work. A spear with a three to four foot handle would be my next choice. In a pinch, a sharpened shovel or broomstick is fine. If you are making things up, the ideal is a small, deep penetration. A smaller pointy end usually means lighter weight, better balance and therefore will be faster in movement. A boar spear is fine but a stabby bit closer to a javelin is better.

So while I don't recommend holding a doorway alone as option one, it will work. It can be done if you have absolutely no other choice. Thrusting weapons, preferably with a good reach, can get it done. It's situation dependent but you may be able to get multiple stabbing implements to work, like from both sides of a gate or door. Not a lot of people are willingly going to try to push through a wall of blades.

Other than that, what can you do? Think siege tactics. If a ground force is attacking, your house or building is holding the high ground. Bricks and Molotovs work better with gravity assisting you. Not to mention it allows you to get more of your people in the fight. Mobs don't generally bring guns either, which levels the playing field significantly. Construction once again favors the defender. Can your

spearman hold the lobby? Sure, but what would really help them? How about providing assistance five floors above them with boiling oil from the stove. Anything that would have worked in the Middle Ages is fair game here.

Now how about if you do have some firearms? That changes the calculus significantly. With some guns and the will, you may very well be able to defend your entire block. Once again, we must admit that just one firearm isn't going to turn the tide. You need some help, but the odds do go up in your favor with modern weaponry. This is going to allow you to build an in-depth defense in a manner that favors your survival.

Projecting strength is a big part of how you are going to play this. Riots are basically a version of tribal warfare. It mostly consists of a lot of noise and posturing while razing easy targets. To combat this, you have to not look like an easy target. Fortify the entry points to your selected area of defense. Cars aren't great for actually stopping entry but they can be used to look serious. I recommend a V-shaped barrier at the front and rear of your block. This is easier to emplace and remove than a straight line and offers better protection from ramming. The top of the V should be nearly engine block to engine block with a three foot gap in between. The gap gives you somewhere to stand and funnels the opposing forces into a predictable spot. If you let them, they will start jumping over the barrier, but humans tend to follow the path of least resistance and they will generally flow the way you want to start.

Up front, you want some strength. A gun or two if you have it, though at least one needs to be back. Showing the capability to deal damage is important. With a bit of luck, this will act as deterrent enough, but don't gamble on that alone.

The most important person in this plan isn't at the front of the line. He is back, preferably elevated and with a very clear view of the defensive position. This man needs to have a heart of stone. He is what is going to save you if things go south. A designated marksman

in the rear is essentially German sniper doctrine from the Great War. While other nations employed snipers primarily in the space between opposing forces, the Germans held them in the rear. This gave them a free hand to protect forward German forces. It works the same for you.

We live in an age of cameras and the legality of when you can open fire is extremely murky. Not to mention that for many of you, this is going to be your first time being put to the test. It is entirely possible that you will let the mob get too close and they will make a grab for the hardware. In such a situation, especially without training and experience, you are probably going to lose. Even getting a few rounds off isn't going to be enough to turn the tide back. If this happens, your rear deployed marksman absolutely must save you. If he doesn't, all is lost and you will die. If you bring a gun to the fight and it gets taken from you, I absolutely assure you that they will kill you. Your friendly sniper must be capable of cleaning the locusts off you so you can get your tools back in the fight.

If it does turn into a firefight, you need to be over the top with violence of action. A mob could more than likely overpower even a trained and equipped infantry squad *if* (and *only if*) it could single-mindedly decide to do so. Fortunately, it can't. Rioters aren't disciplined soldiers. They are full of fight chemicals and may rush into the breach even against stupid odds. You have to turn those into fear chemicals as fast as you can. Break the mob's will on the anvil of superior firepower and it will disintegrate. Hurt them bad enough, quickly enough, and they will be incapable of reforming.

A gun or two on the rooftops also helps you cover all the avenues of approach. What is to prevent the mob from just bypassing your street and coming through your backyards? Eyes in the sky. It isn't foolproof but it helps with economy of force.

What else? Razor wire, if you can find it, and lots and lots of fire extinguishers. A riot is like a force of nature; it will eventually blow itself out. You just have to be prepared to stand fast long enough for

that to happen.

# 11 **Balkanize Before They Rise**

Throughout the history of modern urban combat, one clear pattern emerges: groups end up living together in enclaves. That can either be by choice before things get spicy or via refugee movement after. It is an obvious benefit to lump up before the need rises.

Look, moving sucks. It isn't going to be easy to find available housing next door to one another if you recruit from across the city, but the closer you can get, the easier this is going to be. It's also another reason why building your team locally is a huge advantage.

At the end of the day, urban survival is going to require you to adopt a barbarian mindset. Anything you can't sling over one shoulder and walk off with doesn't matter. Protecting your family likely means that your rifle and a backpack are all of your possessions if push actually comes to shove. However, in the short term, balkanizing will also allow you a greater degree of protecting any material wealth. Moving a coin collection five blocks over is much easier than moving plasma screens and couches across the city as war clouds gather.

Mutual defense is the order of the day. The only way to survive when things get ugly is to bring your people together. As the old rules for gunfighting say, "if you have a choice, bring a long gun—and all your friends with long guns."

# 12 Weapons

## Opposable Thumbs for the Win

A caveat to this chapter: you don't need a pile of guns. In fact, a big pile of guns can be a detriment. You need enough guns to arm you, your family and perhaps your kids if they are old enough. Maybe add a couple of uber cheap spares, like a hi point carbine, to toss to allies. Don't try to buy a victory with material stockpiles—invest wisely. Money spent on excess weaponry could have gone to training and ammunition.

If we are talking about someone starting to prep, in this case preparing for a Mongolian horde event, the easy answer for ammunition is to tell them to snag *one million rounds!* (preferably in a Dr. Evil voice). The reality is that is too much, especially when we are talking solely about the amount one will need. I have a massive stockpile, as I am sure many of you do too, but that is more a hedge against inflation than an insurance policy for Antifa. I have the storage space so no harm, no foul. If you could go back ten years and buy Facebook stock or .22 LR that you had to keep until today, which one would you prefer? The one thing I see over and over again in prepping circles is a belief that a mountain of ammo is all you need. Absolutely not true! In fact, I believe that most people would be better off with 300 rounds and the skills of having shot 20,000 as opposed to 20,000 stockpiled and the skills of having shot 300.

### Rifles

Rifles are the greatest tyranny-stopping tool that has ever been devised. In terms of man-portable combat power, nothing is more flexible or deadly than a modern rifle. You are going to absolutely want at least one of these, preferably multiple.

In terms of reach, no other firearm even comes close. Under normal circumstances, rifles don't have much of an appeal to city dwellers, but in a situation where you might also be receiving rifle fire, nothing else will do. The rifle platform also has the shortest learning curve if you need to arm someone besides yourself. Think about a new shooter with absolutely zero experience. Are they more likely to hit a 25 meter target with a pistol or a rifle?

The two great debates in terms of a rifle for urban defense are its caliber and its style. As it relates to caliber, I feel it is best to narrow the field to common and affordable options: 5.56, 7.62×39 and .308. No surprises there. For the style of rifle, semi-auto is the best choice—hands down—but depending on your area's pre-collapse gun regulations, you may not have the same choices I do. So, for our options packages, we will break it down into two categories: free city (e.g.: Dallas, Atlanta) and non-free city (e.g.: New York, Baltimore).

For a free city, a military-style modern sporting rifle is exactly what you want. Depending on your caliber, an AR-15, an AK-47 and an M1A are all excellent choices. I am not a huge fan of AKs, but they are relatively inexpensive. For me, it really comes down to the other two. So, which one do you want? The one you can afford. Most AR pattern rifles today are pretty good at any price but the more expensive models are downright astounding. On the cheap end, Springfield Armory's SAINT Victor is amazing, as is the SIG Tread. My personal favorites are Barnes Precisions Machine, Daniel Defense and LWRC. While I generally prefer the 16-inch rifle size, don't rule out AR pistols completely. What they lack in killing power, they do kinda make up for in ease of storage and concealment. They fit in a backpack easier and are lighter. One trade off: they recoil harder. Ironical, but true. The longer gas system of a rifle length allows for less pressure being used to cycle the bolt. When you shorten the barrel, you shorten the gas system so the recoil goes up. Not a huge amount but it's something to consider.

Among my peer group, we have had the 5.56 versus .308

caliber debate for urban combat within the last six months. To be clear, this peer group consists solely of multi-tour Iraq SOF veterans that have had an opportunity to use both. Unlike a discussion you are likely to find on a forum among strangers, it was serious and without references to anyone's appendage size or racial heritage. The actual question put up was for caliber in a sniper rifle, but that is easily transferred to a battle rifle. You get a little more lethality out of a 20-inch SPR-style barrel than a normal 16-inch 5.56 barrel but not a huge figure. I would like to tell you we solved the world's problems and came to a consensus but we didn't. It was about a 50/50 split and both calibers have merits. I feel the same way; I've shot people with 5.56 and 7.62×51 and they both work.

All things being equal, I prefer the 7.62×51 but I don't feel naked with a 5.56 gun. The benefits of 5.56 are mostly weight and volume. The gun weighs less, so it is easier to carry. It recoils less, so you can shoot it faster. The ammo weighs less, so you can carry more of it. Weighing two popular loads from Hornady, 5.56 is about half the weight of .308 in ounces. This means you can pack literally twice the ammo in go-bang terms and since you are your own logistics train, the ammo also costs less—significantly less.

The .308 has some things going for it too. You will notice I left 6.5 CM, .300 Win Mag and some of my other mountain favorites off the list, even though they will outrange the .308. The .308, in turn, will also outrange 5.56, but it is a discussion hardly worth having in an urban environment. In a city you will be hard pressed to find a shot past 400m and past 800m is almost impossible. Even straight down a long road the terrain and refuse will mask an opponent at that distance. So in terms of reach, the two are basically a draw. What the .308 does, in my opinion at least, is put people down harder. Yes, I have had a bad guy walk off a .308 round; there is no magic bullet. But cumulatively, I have liked the results better from .308 than 5.56. This is usually about the time someone chimes in with, "shot placement, blah, blah, blah," to which I say this: snap shoot a sprinting bad guy with a one-second exposure between alleys 300m



away, then tell me about aiming for the heart or whatever. Arguably the most dangerous man this nation has ever produced blasted a jihadi in the butt cheek with a .308, causing him to flee into the night. An unhappy jihadi, for sure, but very much a live one. What .308 absolutely does better is penetrate barriers, which is worth considering. Even with my SR-25, one of my favorite rounds was de-linked 147-grain machine gun ammo. Match-grade 175 grain will start to outpace it around 600 meters but as mentioned above, that is rarely a concern in the street fight. The 147 grain with its thick copper jacket proved very adept at defeating barriers that smaller bullets wouldn't. Be it brick, thinner concrete, mailboxes or cars, it is a winner for certain. For an extra dose of the good stuff, remember this: machine gunners in the European theater of WWII generally preferred belts of armor piercing rounds for urban fights. It won't expand in people, for certain, but it still leaves a 30-caliber hole, which is nothing to sneeze at. It also chews right through brick buildings to devastating effect for anyone on the inside.

Now for those of you in a non-free city, your options are severely limited. You are still going to want a rifle, semi-auto if you can. My first choice would be the SKS, cheap little bastard that it is. I remember when you could still buy one with a spam can of ammo for \$90. Prices are closer to \$500 now, without the bullets. The SKS is at least very reliable and easy to shoot. The biggest reason I like it for you non-free city guys is it loads fast. Using stripper clips to feed as opposed to "detachable magazines" circumvents most nanny-state red tape. Its 7.62×39 ammo is nothing if not cheap. My second choice would be an M1 Garand though they are a bit more expensive. They also load from a stripper clip, a relatively quick affair. Lastly, don't rule out the lever action. If semi-auto is off the table, this is an excellent choice. Normally I recommend them in pistol calibers but for this exercise .30-30 is the choice. .30-30 rounds are nearly identical ballistically to 7.62×39, which is reach enough. Lever actions are light, fast handling and they pack some teeth. The original cowboy rifle can't be ruled out.

Now how many rifles? One for you, one for your significant other and one for any household member old enough to use it. Twelve to thirteen years old is considered a fighting age male in most of the world.

What about a sight? I do highly recommend a red dot optic in this scenario. Iron sights are awesome, don't get me wrong, but we call them the stick shift of the gun world. They take longer to learn and be proficient with. A modern red dot is simple once zeroed: dot on target, pull trigger without moving dot, problem solved. A red dot also allows you to "soft focus" on both the dot and target, which is a huge advance in combat sighting. A few recommended options include anything made by Aimpoint, the industry leader in durability, and Trijicon MRO, reasonably priced and tough as nails. If you have the means, don't cheap out here but if you must, I have had good luck with SIG and Primary Arms.

### Rifle Ammo

For my personal TEOTWAWKI (Total End Of The World As We Know It) stash, I only count 500 rounds of 77-grain 5.56 and an additional 300 rounds of 6.5 Creedmoor. My pistol isn't even coming with me unless I am taking my truck and half of that Creedmoor is to cache in short order. Everything else, including all the extra boomsticks, is for barter, to bury or expendable. In my experience, mobility is a lot more important than firepower. If my skills won't get a resupply as needed with that loadout I'm not going to make it anyway.

If I was planning an urban defense, like we are right now, I would actually upscale those numbers a bit. You still have to keep it sane because apartments are small and bullets are heavy, not to mention expensive when you buy them in quantity. It changes a little bit if you're in a defensive position or in the concrete jungle. For your centerfire rifle, I feel like 1,000 rounds is enough. Have I used more than that in a day of urban combat? Absolutely; by a factor of three on some really nasty occasions. But that was mostly in a street fight

where cover was sometimes scarce and the enemy had mountains of ammo to throw back. If someone starts chucking basketball-sized Dishka rounds past you, you do whatever is needed to shut that thing down. On normal types of combat operations, two to three magazines was more likely, so 60-90 rounds. It turns out that experience and hitting what you are aiming at are important things. If you ask most guys from assault-type units what they took with them by the end of the war, 'four magazines' is the most common answer. If you splay out 300 bad guys in front of your building, I'm betting your problems will stop. If you think my suggestion is light, the cost and space requirements aren't that high to double it.

Rimfire punches well above its weight and is incredibly light to store and carry. I recommend a full case of 5000 rounds. That allows plenty of go-bang for recon by fire, probing attacks and shows of force.

## Pistols

Pistols are so impotent as to be classified mostly as decoration on the battlefield, but for an urban dweller having one is important. Before things go truly pear shaped you can't exactly walk around with a machine gun slung around your neck. You need something concealable for the build up.

There is a new class of pistols that I highly recommend for this role. Before just a couple of years ago, you had two choices in pistol: something easy to shoot (therefore big) or something easy to conceal (therefore difficult to shoot). But a new breed of weapon has really changed the game. At the time of this writing, the only two options to consider in this class are the SIG P365 and the Springfield Armory Hellcat. Both are absolutely magnificent weapons and are very similar in design. They conceal easy, have a very high capacity for their size and shoot like a bigger gun. If I had to have a single do everything pistol I would be very happy to have either of those.

If that isn't an option and you still want to be on the concealable

side, the Glock 43 and S&W Shield are also great. They lack the capacity of the previous two, usually by half, but they do get the job done. You'll have to get over the difficulty in concealment if you want something bigger. The Glock 19 is the most prolific handgun on Earth for a reason. In this day and age, almost any plastic gun is excellent and will be more than enough for your needs. Which brand? Pick one. It really doesn't matter as much as it once did, as long as holsters and spare magazines are available.

### Pistol Ammo

Pistol ammo is far less lethal than rifle ammo and has far less reach. Therefore, I suggest less of it. This isn't counting your training stash, of course, but if things get really ugly you will be leaning on your rifle. A pistol is a back up or a last ditch defense in a real fight. However, it is easier to carry in normal life. If you already have it, you may as well feed it. I recommend 100 premium defensive rounds like Federal HSTs, maybe another 200 ball laying around and anything after that is a luxury.

### Shotgun

I'm not a huge shotgun guy, due to their range limits and difficulty in reloading. You can argue with me about payload lethality in a normal home defense situation, though I still prefer a rifle, but this isn't a normal home defense situation. Even in the hands of a pro, a shotgun is going to be slower to reload, the ammo is heavy and the recoil means it isn't great for smaller statures *or* less experienced shooters.

But I won't deny that a shotgun is like a handheld claymore until it goes empty. If you insist, already have one or that is all you can find, so be it. Bear in mind though, a shotgun is the least reliable weapon in the inventory. Even a pump is easy to short stroke unless you have spent a lot of time using it.

If you buy an auto, I recommend a Benelli M-2/4 or a Beretta

1301. I wouldn't even consider anything else. If you buy a pump, Mossberg is the king.

### Shotgun Ammo

Shotgun ammo is heavy, which is something to factor in for mobility. You are going to be able to carry far less of it. If a gun has to get left behind, this is probably the one. If it is an auxiliary arm for you then 150 buckshot and 50 slugs is a solid count. If it is your primary weapon then that's a different story. In that case, I would recommend 500 to 600 Buckshot and 100 slugs.

## 13 **Becoming a Harder Target**

Having traveled the world, I can generally break all construction into two categories: American and everyone else. For cities this is definitely true; Prague looks like Okinawa, looks like Cairo, etc. in terms of things built in the last fifty years. Maybe I lack the artist's eye but that's how I see it. No one on Earth has American-like home ownership, which owes at least partially to our ability to build them relatively cheap but structurally sound. While American homes have proven capable of lasting against the elements for 100 plus years, they do have a weakness: they don't stop bullets worth a damn! Maybe that is also because we always play away games... The first part of this chapter will focus on the suburbs and a normal American house built of 2x4s and drywall. The second will focus on the concrete and stone structures we introduced previously. There is obviously some overlap of what can be done and those things I will put in the second part.

Unless you have something a little different, like a log cabin with foot-thick walls, your house is largely indefensible against rifles. It is even worse against fire, which is a concern I often see ignored in prepper circles. Your back fence will burn, your shingles will burn and the outside of your house will burn with very little effort. We have largely mitigated this problem in civilized society by having good fire departments and enforcing suburban burn bans, but it is a different animal when Mad Max rules are in play. In short, you would never want to try and defend your house from teeming hordes equipped with Molotov cocktails and long guns but you might not have a choice. You can still do some things to tilt the odds in your favor.

## Sandbags And Fighting Positions

A lot of home defense is construction specific, which also varies from region to region. One thing that people mention on the subject is sandbags. It's a plausible option and it would help stop bullets at least. The downside here is the number of sandbags you would need to secure a perimeter around your home and the labor required to fill them. Having done some sandbag filling, it is not a fun chore. Some suggest sandbags in the context of hardening only one room but that has downsides too. Even to protect an interior room it's going to require a lot of sandbags and if you can only defend that one room, you are ceding enough ground to attacking forces to get within four feet of you before you have a clear shot.

If your house is built on a concrete foundation, you can actually take a shortcut. It's extreme but we are talking about extreme circumstances. If you cut holes in your floor for fighting positions, you would lower your needed sandbag count by a lot. Because you have walls to hold the dirt up, you could actually get by without any sandbags at all. You will still want a wheelbarrow but you could actually build "range berms" three feet high the entire way around your house, inside or outside, depending on the direness of the situation.

I have a full basement, so my options are more complex. The smartest thing I could do is build parapets to my needed perimeter positions and then cut firing ports in the walls to the outside. That cedes my entire first floor but the surprise to any attackers would be nasty. Imagine running up the driveway for an easy score then taking rifle fire at knee height. Ouch!

While we are talking about the typical neighborhood setup, the direness of the situation directly influences how heavy-handed your response will be. For instance, have you thought about fields of fire? In most of the places I have lived my best course of action would be extreme. I would have to huddle the neighbors in my own home while I burned theirs to the ground. Otherwise, the avenues of approach

would be many. You can stop saboteurs at fifty meters, but at five meters they are likely to win or at least complete their task.

## Plywood

The next step we can take directly from our friends in hurricane country. While plywood window coverings won't stop bullets, they do stop bricks and Antifa goblins (FYI: half-inch plywood won't even stop handgun rounds, much less rifle fire). I suggest a slight variation from the full coverage of windows by leaving an eight-inch gap at the bottom. This prevents your house from being totally dark while also creating airflow. Since you bought a pile of guns after the previous chapter, it also gives you space to see and shoot back. Won't the gap make the window coverings easier to rip off? That is a valid criticism and the answer is yes, a little. But two things: one, as they said in Rhodesia, "An obstacle is only an obstacle if it's covered by fire." If someone is sticking a crowbar in your barricades, you should be sticking bullets in them. Two, trying to remove a sheet of plywood held in by a dozen three-inch deck screws is no easy feat. With your F-250 pickup truck, maybe, but not with just your hands or hand tools. Won't the gap allow snipers to shoot into your house? Possibly. Walking in front of a lit window does create a signature that could get you shot. It is also kind of the point of the gap. That ribbon of light should serve as a reminder not to walk in front of it because in terms of rifle fire, your house might as well be made of paper mache. Doesn't the plywood create a fire risk all its own? Yes, it will burn, no question, but if it keeps a Molotov cocktail from landing in your inside perimeter (or living room) it has still done its job. This brings up the next subject...

## Fire Extinguishers And Screws

Aside from all the standard prepper items like food and water, you are going to need some other things for home defense. Right up there with bullets should be fire extinguishers. A million dollars in guns and ammo is worthless to you if it burns up. When you calculate the



spots in your home that need to be covered by a sentry, calculate two fire extinguishers for each as well.

Next, you need at minimum a full contractor box of either nails or deck screws. I prefer deck screws, but only if I have a cordless drill. Nails are easier to install with manual labor but are also easier to pull out. You can make some creative barricades with just nails or deck screws and materials laying around your garage or basement. In the absence of plywood, I could barricade all my windows with fence planks.

For our suburban neighborhood defense, I will close with this: you are going to have to think outside the box. One of the other specific suggestions I have is to plant bamboo or a large bush in a spot you where have no windows about three to four feet off the wall—the thicker, the better. If I was planning to siege a suburban house and I had numbers on my side, what would my plan be? The same as any Old West movie: cover the doors and windows with guns, set it on fire and shoot anyone that comes out. It is a mistake to assume goblins have never watched an old Western or can't fathom this simplistic line of reasoning. If you find yourself in that spot, the weakness of sheetrock walls can work to your advantage for once. The bushes are to cover your emergency escape hatch that you can cut on the inside starting day one of the crisis. If you ever need it, cut the last bit of exterior wall you have left in place and the ground cover buys you precious seconds of surprise. It's the little things that often give you a tactical advantage—you have to shift your thinking.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that it is preferable to fight at a street distance as opposed to a house distance. Anyone can get lucky in a gunfight within three meters and in that scenario your odds of getting killed go up exponentially. How about a gunfight from thirty to fifty meters? Skills start to matter more for reliable hits and if you've been training, your odds of survival will skyrocket. The further the distance, the lower the odds of the bad guys getting a lucky hit. We can assume if you are reading this far you now number among the trained. I have a very simple demonstration to illustrate

this point to my CQB students. I set a full-sized target at three, seven and ten meters. Then, with ten round mags, I hip shoot a mag at each target on auto. Hip firing on auto is my nearest approximation of jihadi marksmanship. Invariably, the 3m target has ten hits in the chest, the 7m target about half that and the 10m target was lucky to have one or two. Distance matters and close fighting favors the lucky.

Therefore, keeping people out of your face and in a kill zone at a distance is imperative. This means you have to hold your ground floor as well as any below ground entrances, such as parking garages. But wait a minute—can't I shoot farther from higher floors? Yes, in theory that would work if you happen to be firing across a massive parking lot like in *Dawn of the Dead*. But against armed opponents, in most urban settings, that is going to get you killed real quick. Urban combat is a game of angles and you have to think in three dimensions for both offense and defense. Optimal locations afford you a large field of fire while also making you hard to pinpoint. Consider a theoretical apartment building where you have decided to hold the fifth floor. If you hang out the window, you can actually control the street in front for eight blocks on either side. Sounds great, right? But you are also exposed not only to those same eight blocks but to every floor of every building to your front. In the early stages of a conflict, before Tactical Darwinism has taken root, you might be okay. Eventually, someone is going to sneak within a block, crawl up the fire escape across the street, lay behind a desk on the seventh floor and put a bullet through the top of your head. If you pull back ten feet into the room, you reduce the angles of attack above and below you to almost nothing. The benefit is you can still handle threats a long way away, likely from a stable shooting position. The downside is you are blind if the enemy sneaks close and then hugs cover. For example, if they stay within about twenty meters of the walls of your building. Even if you detect them, it is very difficult to fire straight down. It can be done but it isn't easy.

The obvious solution is to also occupy the ground floor. The ground floor protects from close threats and is hard to hit from

above. In defense, it offers an advantage even at close range should the Mongolian horde try to break through. Also, consider this: how many of you have night-vision goggles? How about more than one set to defend all four directions at night? Me neither. The only way to fend off sappers in the night from breaching your perimeter is to hold that space.

If you bunker in the corners and barricade the other entrances a lot of your problems go away. Barricades aren't foolproof but covering the approaches offers excellent protection. Remember again, as they said in Rhodesia, "An obstacle is only an obstacle if it is covered by fire." Using only hand tools, any one of us could break into a bank vault with enough time. The vault is there to take up time so that a security goon can show up and shoot you. Nothing, literally nothing, is unbreakable.

### Barricades

For barricades, urbanites are likely lower on supplies than their rural and suburban peers. Storage is at a premium in cities. Again, you need to think outside the box. One of my all-time favorites for preventing entry is chainlink fence stretched tight over a window and secured by a 2×4 on each side with a "P" for *plenty* of deck screws. Expanded steel is actually better but that is hard to harvest in most urban environments. The chainlink absorbs impact by flexing, which makes it extremely difficult to break through with a brute force attack. It doesn't stop bullets but it also lets you see clearly and doesn't limit airflow. That alone is worth thinking about, should your crisis happen in the summer months. Can you imagine a city like Atlanta in August with no power for weeks? Chainlink also offers two benefits against Molotov cocktails, the urban defender's greatest enemy. First, it is difficult to get a bottle to actually break against chainlink because of the flex. Second, if it does break, it is much better to have a pool of fire on an exterior wall than inside your building.

### Death from Above

So provided you have the manpower, what is the optimal strategy? Occupy the low and high floors and act in tandem for defense. The high places have the longest shots and can keep the hordes at bay. The low places protect the entries and provide close combat in case of assault. Remember a few paragraphs ago when I said it is hard to shoot straight down? I meant with a rifle and with pinpoint accuracy. It isn't really the shooting that is hard, it's the recoil. However, if a mob is attacking your ground floor, a pistol over the window ledge is easy enough. If your team is inside concrete walls and the mob isn't, your odds of fratricide are virtually zero. Bricks, refrigerators and hand grenades also work wonders from above.

Should you occupy the roof? Only if you're in the tallest building around. If you are, great, but if not it is mostly a bad idea. You do want a sentry at the roof access point, just in case. If it is possible to bridge to your roof from a nearby building, you must protect it. It would be less than ideal to go to sleep one night and wake up with a horde pressing down your stairwell.

### Extreme Measures

Last but not least, consider extreme measures. If your occupation looks like it's going to last a while it pays to constantly improve your defense. To mitigate fire hazards, I would remove everything flammable from the first two floors including the carpet and 2x4s in the walls. Don't make it easy for them to burn you out. A single roll of barbed wire can be worth its weight in gold. Wire can be used to tie doors closed, make ankle traps at ground level or, my favorite, stairs. Wire strung in a high/low pattern can make any stairwell or hallway a death trap for an assault. Concertina wire is better but the gigantic rolls are hard to store. Regular old barbed wire can do the job in a nice compact package. Wait until the opposition is hopelessly entangled in wire and cut them to ribbons with bullets. It will also discourage any survivors from trying again.

Another longtime favorite is cutting holes in the floors above to

discourage assailants. This also gives you mobility if you block off all the stairs. While it is easier to do with shaped charges, those are hard to come by in modern America. A sledgehammer may take a while but it will do the job. Imagine the enemy's shock of finally gaining a toehold on a ground floor as his forces pour in and instead of finding the defenders cowering in a closet, he sees the last rung of a step ladder being pulled through the ceiling followed immediately by a withering fire from above with only hands and muzzles exposed. Not a good day out.

There are many other considerations. On day one of the crisis, I would scavenge all the fire extinguishers in a four block radius. Do you have a push broom to sweep the mountains of broken glass out of your position? Do you have basic hand tools or know where to find some? The survival problems are many but I hope this has helped you envision your tactical situation. The most important tool you have is your brain—don't forget to use it.

## 14 Blow the Escape Hatch

We have talked a lot about hardening your defensive position in case of urban unrest. I still believe that is your best option if you didn't get out in time. It has the highest survivability and is the least risky proposition, most of the time. But the situation might force your hand so we are going to conclude with some tips on how to get out. This is a bit more scattershot than the previous installments because the situations can be so different. Unlike a defensive perimeter, much of the escape is going to depend greatly on your specific environment. So let's think of this more as a sprinkling of good ideas rather than a hard and fast set of rules. When it comes to escaping an urban environment that's turned into a hornet's nest, my preferred option is a Blackhawk helicopter, preferably piloted by the 160<sup>th</sup> SOAR, but that probably isn't an option for you or I anymore.

That leaves us with less than stellar options, but the first thing I would do is think outside the box a little bit. Cars and trucks are probably out. If you have been in a natural disaster evacuation then you know the drill. The same applies to good old-fashioned riots to a lesser degree, but it's still not exactly normal traffic. Finally, if the streets aren't jammed, why aren't you already gone? The short answer is to get in your car and drive away! The end.

What if driving away isn't an option? Let us consider the motorcycle, bicycle, ATV and boat. The obvious first question you should have is, "Where am I keeping these in my 400 square-foot apartment?" For any extra prep materials, you probably don't have the space at home, but you may be within walking distance of a self-storage facility that you can use as a staging point for bigger hardware. Yes, it could also cover extra stuff discussed in the previous chapters but that is a risk. Every time you leave your bunker

and every time you open your storage locker you are taking a massive risk of compromising your cache. Is a roll of razor wire and an extra can of 9mm worth someone noticing your stash and absconding with your emergency escape plan? In my mind, no, not even close. If I had the financial means and the location, I would build the escape pod and then never touch it again unless I absolutely needed it.

Is a self-storage container in and of itself a risk and a possible waste of precious prepping funds? Of course. You could lose it anyway via fire or theft, completely unrelated to you blowing it. It is also an acceptable risk if your budget allows it. When it comes to theft, we should already assume the fence around U-Store-It USA is window dressing and the minimum wage employees will abandon ship in the first minutes of a crisis. Also, without a police threat, storage lockers rank among the easiest of all obstacles in terms of breaking and entering. But they do have the advantage of hiding in plain sight. Think of it this way: if you had five minutes to grab everything you could carry from either Best Buy, Zales Diamonds, Cabela's or (drum roll...) use extra labor to look behind door number four leading to a non-descript storage unit, which may or may not be a 10×12 foot box full of used diapers, which would you choose? I'm not saying the storage place won't eventually get looted, but I am saying it likely isn't on the high-value target list. It can be an option for your escape.

Urban real estate isn't exactly cheap but you can cram a lot of help into a spot that is rentable for around \$100 a month. For your needs, that may be better spent on ammo and water, but if you are serious about needing to get out of Dodge then this will do the trick. If I was using a storage place to hide my ATV or boat, I would take the extra time to build in a false wall of junk to hide it. Use your imagination; it's not that much extra work.

Boats are awesome because most people aren't going to consider a waterway as an escape avenue. That means less traffic and fewer eyes watching it. Be honest, how many of you considered the Chicago River as a way out? Your vessel can be anything from

kayaks to zodiacs, with the latter my preferred option. Four to six grown men can carry a zodiac a very long way once it is inflated. Deflated, it rolls up into a nice compact package that looks more like a gardening accessory than a boat. Seasons are obviously a factor; water plus November equals not fun. Still, I would take a wetsuit and a kayak and risk freezing to death over taking my .380 and walking through a burning downtown Ferguson, i.e: certain death.

ATVs may or may not be beneficial depending on the circumstances. They will go places a car can't because they're smaller, obviously. In fact, they will fit through the doors of most larger buildings. After the cars have all been burnt and the dumpster fires have gone cold, an ATV might still get you out. Am I suggesting you have enough of them on hand for your entire crew to vamoose? Well, it would be nice but not likely. The better option for most of us would be to use a single ATV as the mothership for supplies.

On foot is going to take some doing. Depending on your region, it may take a very long time to hoof it out. In addition to the weight of a backpack, uncertainty and tactical decision making are going to slow you down. If you calculate that you could walk ten miles per night under normal conditions, three miles is a better planning number for doing so in a crisis. Given that some cities are larger than others (Houston for example), you might need to walk forty miles to get out of the crisis area. Even at ten miles per night, that is four days.

In addition to bullets and guns, you are going to need to pack water and food at a minimum. I would salvage water with a filter in almost any environment, but in an urban environment it would be the absolute last resort. Not only is it going to be scarce with the water mains off, but what you do find may be nasty in a way nature can't match. My filter may or may not be rated for transmission fluid but I'd rather not find out. While the construction workers and delivery guys laugh at this, you should consider how not fun it is to walk miles at a time on concrete. If you haven't tried it, you should before you need to. That is also why I recommend a light load in your backpack; much lighter than the ammo stash most of us own. As far as backpacks,



this isn't the time to repurpose your kids' *Hello Kitty* special. I strongly recommend Eberlestock, CamelBak and Mystery Ranch. They aren't cheap but they are durable and comfortable in a way that is worth every penny.

If you do get mixed up in a gunfight, you are probably going to want some spare magazines close at hand. For that, I recommend a belt kit or a chest rig, with the belt being my favorite. For quality chest rigs, I like Mayflower/Velocity Systems. For a belt, G Code is an excellent choice. The Scorpion Soft Shell is absolutely outstanding.

For movement, all the same lessons from the woods apply. Don't bunch up so that one burst of fire wounds two people. Travel at night, especially in the city; the places you can be shot from are too numerous to count in the daylight. If at all possible, go to ground during the day in a spot you aren't likely to be stumbled upon, like a flooded parking garage. If you do get cornered by the Antifa horde, don't forget the most important thing: you can actually hide behind a wall of lead in the absence of anything else.

# **1 Closing thoughts-**

## **5 try not to die**

This is a lot to do, and a lot to take in if your city is currently burning around you. But it is as concise as I could possibly make it. Unlike the movies, victory is far from assured. We soon may face a win or die situation, and I'm not going to sugar coat that for you . The most important thing to do today is make your self a little better, and a little more prepared. Take the parts of this that were relevant to you, and start enacting them. While I hope you never need any of the skills we talked about, odds are good that ship has sailed. Act accordingly.