

Thoughts on Urban Survival

Some might recognize this, some not. I think it offers a differing and good view on surviving the aftermath of urban collapse. Without further ado:

My brother visited Argentina a few weeks ago. He's been living in Spain for a few years now. Within the first week, he got sick, some kind of strong flu, even though climate isn't that cold and he took care of himself. Without a doubt he got sick because there are lots of new viruses in my country that can't be found in 1st world countries. The misery and famine lead us to a situation where, even though you have food, shelter and health care, most of others don't, and therefore they get sick and spread the diseases all over the region.

What got me started on this post is the fact that I actually saw this coming, and posted on the subject here, months before the new viruses spread over the country and the news started talking about this new, health emergency, which proves that talking, thinking and sharing ideas with like minded people (you guys), does help to see things coming and prepare for them with enough time. So I started thinking about several issues, what I learned (either the hard way or thanks to this forum) after all these years of living in a collapsed country that is trying to get out an economical disaster and everything that comes along with it. Though my English is limited, I hope I'm able to transmit the main ideas and concepts, giving you a better image of what you may have to deal with some day, if the economy collapses in your country. Here is what I have so far:

URBAN OR COUNTRY?

Someone once asked me how did those that live in the country fare. If they were better off than city dwellers. As always there are no simple answers. Wish I could say country good, city bad, but I can't, because if I have to be completely honest, and I intend to be so, there are some issues that have to be analyzed, especially security. Of course that those that live in the country and have some land and animals were better prepared food-wise. No need to have several acres full of crops. A few fruit trees, some animals, such as chickens, cows and rabbits, and a small orchard was enough to be light years ahead of those in the cities. Chickens, eggs and rabbits would provide the proteins, a cow or two for milk and cheese, some vegetables and fruit plants covered the vegetable diet, and some eggs or a rabbit could be traded for flour to make bread and pasta or sugar and salt.

Of course that there are exceptions, for example, some provinces up north have desert climate and it almost never rains. It is almost impossible to live of the land, and animals require food and water you have to buy. Those guys had it bad; no wonder the Northern provinces suffer the most in my country. Those that live in cities, well they have to manage as they can. Since food prices went up about 200%-300%. People would cut expenses wherever they could so they could buy food. Some ate whatever they could; they hunted birds or ate street dogs and cats, others starved. When it comes to food, cities

suck in a crisis. It is usually the lack of food or the impossibility to acquire it that starts the rioting and looting when TSHTF.

When it comes to security things get even more complicated. Forget about shooting those that mean you harm from 300 yards away with your MBR. Leave that notion to armchair commandos and 12 year old kids that pretend to be grown ups on the internet.

Some facts:

- 1) Those that want to harm you/steal from you don't come with a pirate flag waving over their heads.
- 2) Neither do they start shooting at you 200 yards away.
- 3) They won't come riding loud bikes or dressed with their orange, convict just escaped from prison jump suits, so that you can identify them the better. Nor do they all wear chains around their necks and leather jackets. If I had a dollar for each time a person that got robbed told me "They looked like NORMAL people, dressed better than we are", honestly, I would have enough money for a nice gun. There are exceptions, but don't expect them to dress like in the movies.
- 4) A man with a wife and two or three kids can't set up a watch. I don't care if you are SEAL, SWAT or John Freaking Rambo, no 6th sense is going to tell you that there is a guy pointing a gun at your back when you are trying to fix the water pump that just broke, or carrying a big heavy bag of dried beans you bought that morning.

The best alarm system anyone can have in a farm are dogs. But dogs can get killed and poisoned. A friend of mine had all four dogs poisoned on his farm one night, they all died. After all these years I learned that even though the person that lives out in the country is safer when it comes to small time robberies, that same person is more exposed to extremely violent home robberies. Criminals know that they are isolated and their feeling of invulnerability is boosted. When they assault a country home or farm, they will usually stay there for hours or days torturing the owners. I heard it all: women and children getting raped, people tied to the beds and tortured with electricity, beatings, burned with acetylene torches. Big cities aren't much safer for the survivalist that decides to stay in the city. He will have to face express kidnappings, robberies, and pretty much risking getting shot for what's in his pockets or even his clothes.

So, where to go? The concrete jungle is dangerous and so is living away from it all, on your own. The solution is to stay away from the cities but in groups, either by living in a small town-community or sub division, or if you have friends or family that think as you do, form your own small community. Some may think that having neighbors within "shouting" distance means loosing your privacy and freedom, but it's a price that you have to pay if you want to have someone to help you if you ever need it. To those that believe that they will never need help from anyone because they will always have their

rifle at hand, checking the horizon with their scope every five minutes and a first aid kit on their back packs at all times.... Grow up.

SERVICES

What ever sort of scenario you are dealing with, services are more than likely to either suffer in quality or disappear all together. Think ahead of time; analyze possible SHTF scenarios and which service should be affected by it in your area. Think about the most likely scenario but also think outside the box. What's more likely? A tornado? But a terrorist attack isn't as crazy as you thought it would be a few years ago, isn't it? Also analyze the consequences of those services going down. If there is no power then you need to do something about all that meat you have in the fridge, you can dry it or can it. Think about the supplies you would need for these tasks before you actually need them. You have a complete guide on how to prepare the meat on you computer... how will you get it out of there if there is no power? Print everything that you consider important.

WATER

No one can last too long without water. The urban survivalist may find that the water is of poor quality, in which case he can make good use of a water filter, or that there is no water available at all. When this happens, a large city were millions live will run out of bottled water within minutes. In my case, tap water isn't very good. I can see black little particles and some other stuff that looks like dead algae. Taste isn't that bad. Not good but I know that there are parts of the country where it is much worse. To be honest, a high percentage of the country has no potable water at all.

If you can build a well, do so, set it as your top of the list priority as a survivalist. Water comes before firearms, medicines and even food. Save as much water as you can. Use plastic bottles, refill soda bottles and place them in a cool place, preferably inside a black garbage bag to protect it from sun light. The water will pick some plastic taste after a few months, but water that tastes a little like plastic is far way better than no water at all. What ever the kind of SHTF scenario you are dealing with, water will suffer. In my case the economical crash created problems with the water company, that reduces the maintenance and quality in order to reduce costs and keep their income in spite of the high prices they have to pay for supplies and equipment, most of which comes from abroad, and after the 2001 crash, costs 3 times more. As always, the little guy gets to pay for it. Same would go for floods or chemical or biological attacks. Water requires delicate care and it will suffer when TSHTF in one way or another. In this case, when you still have tap water, a quality filter is in order, as well as a pump if you can have one. A manual pump would be ideal as well if possible. Estimate that you need approximately a gallon per person per day. Try to have at least two-four weeks worth of water. More would be preferable.

POWER

I spent WAY too much time without power for my own taste. Power has always been a problem in my country, even before the 2001 crisis. The real problem starts when you spend more than just a few hours without light. Just after the SHTF in 2001 half the country went without power for 3 days. Buenos Aires was one big dark grave. People got caught on elevators, food rots; hospitals that only had a few hours worth of fuel for their generators ran out of power. Without power, days get to be a lot shorter. Once the sun sets there is not much you can do. I read under candle light and flashlight light and your head starts to hurt after a while. You can work around the house a little bit but only as long as you don't need power tools. Crime also increases once the lights go out, so whenever you have to go somewhere in a black out, carry the flashlight on one hand and a handgun on the other.

Summarizing, being in a city without light turns to be depressing after a while. I spent my share of nights, alone, listening to the radio, eating canned food and cleaning my guns under the light of my LED head lamp. Then I got married, had a son, and found out that when you have loved ones around you black outs are not as bad. The point is that family helps morale on these situations.

A note on flashlights. Have two or three head LED lights. They are not expensive and are worth their weight in gold. A powerful flashlight is necessary, something like a big Maglite or better yet a SureFire, especially when you have to check your property for intruders. But for more mundane stuff like preparing food, going to the toilet or doing stuff around the house, the LED headlamp is priceless. Try washing the dishes on the dark while holding a 60 lumen flashlight on one hand and you'll know what I mean. LEDs also have the advantage of lasting for almost an entire week of continuous use and the light bulb lasts forever. Rechargeable batteries are a must or else you'll end up broke if lights go out often. Have a healthy amount of spare quality batteries and try to standardize as much as you can. I have 12 Samsung NM 2500Mh AA and 8 AAA 800mh for the headlamps. I use D cell plastic adaptors in order to use AA batteries on my 3 D cell Maglite. This turned out to work quite well, better than I expected.

I also keep about 2 or 3 packs of regular, Duracell batteries just in case. These are supposed to expire around 2012, so I can forget about them until I need them. Rechargeable NM batteries have the disadvantage of losing power after a period of time, so keep regular batteries as well and check the rechargeable ones every once in a while.

After all these years of problems with power, what two items I would love to have?

1) The obvious. A generator. I carried my fridge food to my parent's house way too many times on the past. Too bad I can't afford one right now.

2) A battery charger that has both solar panel and a small crank. They are not available here. I saw that they are relatively inexpensive in USA. Do yourself a favor and get one or two of these. Even if they don't charge as well as regular ones, I'm sure it will put out enough power to charge batteries for LED lamps at least.

GAS

Gas has decreased in quality as well, there is little gas. Try to have an electric oven in case you have to do without it. If both electricity and gas go down, one of those camping stoves can work as well, if you keep a good supply of gas cans. The ones that work with liquid fuel seem to be better on the long run, since they can use different types of fuel. You can only store a limited amount of compressed gas and once you ran out of it, you are on your own if stores are closed or they sold them out. Anyway, a city that goes without gas and light for more than two weeks is a death trap, get out of there before it's too late.

A DIFFERENT MENTALITY.

I was watching the People & Art channel with my wife the other night. It was a show where they film a couple for a given period of time and some people vote on who is the one with the worst habits, the one they find more annoying. We were in our bed, and this is when I usually fall asleep but since the guy was a firearms police instructor I was interested and managed to stay awake. At one point the guy's wife said that she found annoying that her husband spent 500 dollars a month on beauty products for himself. 500 USD on facial cream, special shampoo and conditioner, as well as having his nails polished! If you are that guy and happen to be reading this, or if you know him, I'm sorry, but what an idiot!! "500 USD, that's a small generator or a gun and a few boxes of ammo" I told my wife. "That's two months worth of food" she said. We were each thinking of a practical use for that money, the money this guy was practically throwing away. Once the SHTF, money is no longer measured in money, but you start seeing it as the necessary goods it can buy. Stuff like food, medicine, gas, or the private medical service bill. To me, spending 500 dollars on beauty products, and to make it worse, on a guy? That's simply not acceptable. The way I see it, someone with that mentality can't survive a week without a credit card, no use in even considering a SHTF scenario. And this guy is a firearms instructor?... probably the kind of guy that will say that a handgun is only used to fight his way to his rifle... and his facial night cream...

Once you experience the lack of stuff you took for granted, like food, medicines, your set of priorities change all of a sudden. For example, I had two wisdom teeth removed last year. On both occasions I was prescribed with antibiotics and strong Ibuprofen for the pain. I took the antibiotics (though I did buy two boxes with the same recipe just to keep one box just in case) but I didn't use the Ibuprofen, I added it to my pile of medicines. Why? Because medicines are not always available and I'm not sure if they will be available in the future. Sure, it hurt like hell, but pain alone isn't going to kill you, so I sucked it up. Good for building up character if you ask me.

Make sacrifices so as to ensure a better future, that's the mentality you should have if you want to be prepared. There's stuff that is "nice to have" that has to be sacrificed to get the indispensable stuff. There's stuff that is not "basic need stuff" but it's also important in

one way or another. My wife goes to the hairdresser once every month or two. It's not life or death, but it does make her feel better and it boosts her morale.

I buy a game for the Xbox or a movie to watch with my wife every once in awhile, just to relax. 7 or 10 dollars a month are not going to burn a hole in my pocket. Addictions such as alcohol, drugs or even cigarettes should be avoided by the survivalist. They are bad for your health; cost a lot of money that could be much better spent, and create an addiction to something that may not be available in the future. Who will have to tolerate your grouchy mood when your brand of smokes is no longer imported after TSHTF?

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PART II

GRAY/BLACK MARKET

Once the SHTF the black/gray market will take no time to appear all around you. In my country, gray markets were even accepted in the end. At first it was all about trading skills or craft products for food. Districts and towns would form their own barter markets, and created their own tickets, similar to money, that was used to trade. This didn't last long. Those tickets were easy to make on your home computer, there was no control and eventually people went back to paper money.

These markets were usually placed on warehouses or empty land, and were managed by some wise guy and a few thugs or hired security. Anyone can go rent a kiosk inside these markets for about 50-100 pesos (about 20-30 dollars) a day and sell his goods and services. Peace within these markets is usually respected... lets just say that these managers don't call the police if someone tries anything funny, like stealing, fighting or taking advantage of women. That's not good for their business and anyone that tries to mess with their business finds out how much pain the human body can actually experiment or gets a free ticket to meet the Lord. Sometimes even uniformed cops manage security on these markets, for a small fee of course. As always, you still have to be careful. They may still try to pick your pockets or even attack you once you leave the market. Once you leave the market, you are on your own, as always.

These markets evolved and now a lot of different products are available. Today I visited my local market, a warehouse that is fairly well set up and cleanly managed. They had problems for selling stolen merchandise and fake Brand name clothes a few days ago. What can be found at a local markets? Mostly food and clothing. Some have more variety than others but cheese, canned food, spices, honey, eggs, fruits, vegetables, beer, wine and cured meat are generally available, same as bakery products and pasta. These are less expensive than those found at supermarkets. Fresh fish is sometimes available but not always, people don't trust much products that need refrigeration, and they get those at supermarkets instead.

Clothes are also popular and you can find copies of brand name clothes, imitations, or even original stolen new clothes, the same goes for shoes and sneakers. Children clothes, underwear, socks, sheets and towels are all very popular. Some sell toys, but they are always China made, mostly poor quality though there are some few exceptions. Others sell tools, also made in China can be found as well, but they are of poor quality. Some offer their services and repair stuff or offer work as handyman.

You would be amazed of the junk that these guys manage to fix: TVs, CD players, Power tools, etc. They even manage to solder the small integrated circuits boards sometimes. Give one of these guys a screw driver and a bar of chocolate and he will fix a nuclear submarine.

After food and clothes, the 3rd most popular item has to be CDs and DVDs, movies, music, play station 2 and Xbox games, programs, it all ends up there just one or two days after the official release in USA. Seems that they have a guy hidden under Bill Gate's desk or something. Anyway, almost everything can be found there, and if you want, you can ask around, talk to the right guy and buy illegal stuff like drugs or black market guns and ammo. The quality of the drugs is questionable, of course, and a lot of addicts die from the mixtures these guys sell. Guns are mostly FM High Powers, Surplus 1911s and Colt .45s, Sistemas, and old Colt Detective revolvers in 38 special that found their way from police and military armories into the black market. Condition isn't very good but if you have money you'll be amazed of what you can end up with. Everything that is used by the military and police, including SMGs a, Browning 50 BMG Machine guns, and even frag grenades, is available in the black market, if the customer has the amount of money and a little patience, of course. The big guns may take a while, but the handguns and grenades are readily available.

GOLD!!

Someone hit me in the head please because I messed up about the gold issue. Everyone wants to buy gold! "I buy gold. Pay cash" signs are everywhere, even on TV! I can't believe I'm that silly! I just didn't relate it to what I read here because they deal with junk gold, like jewelry, either stolen or sold because they needed the money, not the gold coins that you guys talk about. No one pays for the true value of the stuff, so big WARNING! Sign on people that are buying gold coins. Since it is impossible to determine the true mineral percentage of gold, small shops and dealers will pay for it as regular jewelry gold. What I would do if I were you: Besides gold coins, buy a lot of small gold rings and other jewelry. They should be less expensive than gold coins, and if the SHTF bad, you'll not be losing money, selling premium quality gold coins for the price of junk gold. If I could travel back in time, I'd buy a small bag worth of gold rings. Small time thieves will snatch gold chains right out of your neck and sell them at these small dealers found everywhere. This is VERY common at train stations, subways and other crowded areas.

So, my advice, if you are preparing for a small economical crisis, gold coins make sense. You will keep the value of the stuff and be able to sell it for its actual cost to gold dealers

or maybe other survivalists that know the true value of the item. In my case, gold coins would have been an excellent investment, saving me from losing money when the local economy crashed. Even though things are bad, I can go to a bank down town and get paid for what a gold coin is truly worth, same goes for pure silver. But where I live, in my local area small time dealers will only pay you the value of junk gold, no matter what kind of gold you have. So, I'd have to say that if TSHTF bad, gold jewelry is a better trade item than gold coins. Forgive me for not talking about this before, but I didn't realize this until today, when I visited my local market warehouse and saw a "Buy Gold" sign.

PART III: GUNS, AMMO AND OTHER GEAR

After TSHTF in 2001, only the most narrow minded, brain washed, butterfly IQ level idiots believed that the police would protect them from the crime wave that followed the collapse of our economy. A lot of people that could have been considered antigun before, ran to the gun shops, seeking advice on how to defend themselves and their families. They would buy a 38 revolver, a box of ammo, and leave it in the closet, probably believing that it would magically protect them from intruders.

Oh, maybe you don't think that firearms are really necessary or your beliefs do not allow you to buy a tool designed to kill people. So you probably ask yourself, is a gun really necessary when TSHTF? Will it truly make a difference? Having gone through a shtf scenario myself, total economical collapse in the year 2001, and still dealing with the consequences, 5 years later, I feel I can answer that question. YES, you need a gun, pepper spray, a machete, a battle axe, club with a rusty nail sticking out of it, or whatever weapon you can get hold of.

A LOT has been written on survival weapons. Everyone that is into armed survival has his or her own idea of the ideal gun battery. Some more oriented to a hunting point of view, others only as self defense means and others consider a little of both, and look for general purpose weapons. Talking about guns, there is one special subject I want to rectify, and it's the point on what's the primary weapon for the survivalist, specially an urban survivalist that has to function in a society, yes, even after the SHTF. The primary defensive weapon for the survivalist is his HANDGUN. It's the weapon that stays with him when he is doing his business around town or working on the field. The survivalist IS NOT a soldier, even though you are a soldier or you once were the meanest mother on the battle field, your home town is not a battlefield and it won't be, even if the SHTF. A LOT of water has to go under the bridge until the situation gets to a point where you can calmly walk down the street with a rifle on your shoulder. People, if you are interested in real world SHTF situation and you want to prepare for the real deal, then understand that this isn't black or white. You wake up one day and listen on the radio that the economy collapsed and that the stock market closed indefinitely. What do you do? You still have to go to the office/work/whatever. Kiss the wife good bye and walk to the office with your AR across your back, or across your chest, Israeli style, and ready to shoot? You won't get far. Someone will shoot you or throw you in jail, or in a mental institution.

What I'm trying to explain, is that it's ok to prepare for China invading your country, Germans and UN or Martians. That is the extreme, less likely worst case scenario. There is an infinity spectrum of gray between the black and white. White being your average normal day and black being total TEOTWAWKI, lizard men invading the planet. Rifles do have a place in the survivalist's arsenal, and a very important one. But you have to understand that 90% of the time, the handgun will be the weapon you have available when you need one. You can't compare to a trooper in Iraq that has his weapon with him at all times. I ask you how many soldiers do you know that keep wearing cammo and totting their M4s around town when they return home?

What works for war does not work for the survivalist, especially the urban survivalist. Even if you live in a retreat far from town, you have to work, don't you? Or do you have employees that take care of all your mundane tasks, leaving you all day to keep watch with your rifle ready? A soldier is part of a huge machine; HIS job is to carry that rifle, while others take care of other needs. A survivalist, one that is not part of a large survivalist group, has no one to cover for him. When a new guy looks for advice on what to get for defense, some will recommend a rifle or shotgun as a first defensive weapon. Let's say race riots start in this guy's city. He still has to go to work every day. What is he supposed to do? Shove his pump shotgun in his pocket? A handgun, even though less powerful, can be used for home defense AND go with you wherever you need to go. If the place floods, he can still hop into an evacuation boat without leaving his weapon behind. I'm sure no rescue team will pick you if you are carrying a long arm. They'll ask you to leave it behind for sure. What if your government, realizing that TSHTF and that they lost control of the events, bans all firearms indefinitely? Don't know about you, but if things are that bad, I'd like to be armed. You can hide a handgun under a jacket. You can't hide a long arm under your clothes.

I think it was Clint Smith who said that the handgun is only used to fight his way to his rifle. Man! That sounds "macho". I'd love to see him walking into Wal-Mart with his tactical M4, taking the subway, visiting the doctor or going to the bank. "Over here Mr. Smith, you can hang you M4 right next to my coat" I don't think so. Guys, unless you have your own shooting school, you do not get to carry your rifle to work.

OK, now that I got that out of my chest lets look at some options.

Handguns: Revolver or Pistol? Pistol ALL THE WAY! Yes, I saw the video of the guy that accurately emptied his S&W in 1/2 a second. I also saw the shooting range and the crowd behind him, watching the event. Can he shoot and reload that way if he is in his car, driving with one hand and shooting with the other, while a bunch of scum bags in another car are shooting at him? Hey, maybe he can. I know I can't. Can you? Generally speaking, the revolver is more difficult to master than the pistol. The double action is hard and it affects speed and accuracy. It can be done, but I found that pistols are easier, as did many shooters. Also, even though they seem to be more simple, revolvers are not as rugged as service pistols, the mechanisms that cycles the cylinder and cocks the hammer is both complicated and fragile compared to auto pistols.

Before anyone starts casting evil voodoo spells at me for insulting their prized S&W or Ruger: I own revolvers and like shooting them, I just don't think they are the best option for self defense, and I see that everyone I talk to in my country who is worried about security as I am also chooses pistols. Quality pistols resist sand, mud and dirt in general better than revolvers, where a small pebble locked in the mechanism may render the revolver inoperable.

I personally had a problem with a new stainless steel Taurus Tracker .357 magnum. After shooting it a couple of times I reloaded it and shot all 7 rounds as fast as I could and when I tried to empty it, I found that the empties were stuck because they expanded because of the heat. I had to wait until the gun cooled a little so I could empty the gun. Stuff like this can get you killed, even more in a 7 round handgun. I once saw a man walk into a gun store wanting to trade his 357 magnum revolver for a 9mm high capacity pistol. He said he was driving when thugs from another car started shooting at him. He was chased for a few blocks. He said that he pulled his revolver and started shooting at them, and ran out of ammo real fast. He wanted more capacity and fast reloading. I could not agree with him more. Some will consider this "Spray and pray", thinking that all rounds should hit the target and if some don't then it means that you need more time at the range. Those same people will tell you that they intend to use bolt action rifles as defensive rifles, making each shot count, without ever missing their target, one shot one kill. I don't agree with this. One shot one kill is ok for snipers, but the survivalist should have other alternatives.

I don't see anything wrong with shooting four or five rounds at a chasing car. If those rounds make them think twice about their intentions, they are rounds well spent in my book, even if they don't kill the attacker. Suppressive fire is possible if you have a high capacity pistol. I wouldn't doubt on using such a tactic if it serves my purposes, or if it buys me time to get out of there. Also keep in mind that criminals are cowards and therefore attack in groups. The survivalist should be able to face more than just one attacker. Getting into a gunfight with two or three armed men while packing a 6 round revolver is rather hard to deal with. A high capacity pistol can load about 15 or 19 rounds, and that can certainly make a difference in a gunfight where you are outnumbered.

A forensic doctor that used to live in my neighborhood got killed last year. He was ambushed when he exited a restaurant by 5 or 6 men. Even though they did kill him he managed to kill 4 of them and severely injure another. He shot regularly and carried a Glock .40. I'm sure he was lucky but I also think that his choice of weapon was also important in the outcome. If anyone is wondering, people in my country that are serious about self defense carry Glocks. Those that don't have the money for a Glock carry Bersas, FM High Powers or 1911 surplus .45s. At first I wasn't sure about the Bersa, but once I tried them I saw that they are very descent guns. I now own two Bersas and am pleased with they performance.

The caliber choice calls for endless debate and it is not my intention here. Let's just say

that 9mm, 40S&W and 45ACP are the obvious choices. 40S&W seem to be the most adequate, both in FMJ and HP, while 9mm lacks some stopping power and hollow points should be used if possible. Though the 9mm lacks power compared to the 40S&W, it is more popular world wide, a factor to consider seriously when choosing a handgun for SHTF. Besides, 9mm can also be used in a number of carbines and SMG, another important fact to be considered.

SMGs and carbines chambered for 40S&W and .45 ACP are also available, but they are not nearly as popular as those chambered for 9mm. Whatever you choose keep 500 or better yet 1000 rounds of quality ammo for your handgun at all times. 100 rounds won't last much if the crisis lasts long. Also consider that once the balloon goes up, governments tend to restrict guns and ammo.

Rifles

I previously stated that the urban survivalist will be using his handgun 90% of the time he needs to defend himself and family from attackers. I didn't pull this figure out of thin air; it is quite accurate based on what happens here on a daily basis, even a little optimistic. Cold harsh reality has shown us that most attacks occur when entering or exiting your home, when you are more vulnerable. Almost no one is stupid enough to try to enter a barred house with armed occupants. Believe me people; the gene pool will clean itself rather fast once the SHTF. So, is a rifle necessary? Of course it is! There is still that 10%, and that 10% can still ruin your day. And this percentage sky rockets if you intend to use that same rifle for putting meat on the table. If you have to settle with just one rifle, go for a semi auto. Ideally you should have a bolt action one and a semi auto rifle. A bolt action and a semiautomatic 308 would make a nice combination.

Whatever you choose, try to keep it within military calibers and military weapons if possible.

It may seem that I have something against bolt rifles but I don't. I think they are fantastic weapons, but I think that semi autos are much better fighting weapons. The idea of "picking them out" 300 meters away with your bolt rifle, as they come in a row blowing whistles and firing warning rounds is laughable at best. Bolt rifles do have advantages over semi autos, accuracy not being the most important one. Bolt rifles such as Mausers last forever and are harder than rocks, THAT'S important. They are simple, easy to repair tools that will serve you (within their limitations of course) longer than any other weapon. For example, the coil spring on my Mauser 1891 safety broke into 3 separate parts, after almost 100 years of faithful service. I dug into my tool box and found a spring left over from a kitchen shelf door. I cut it approximately to the length of the previous spring, replaced it and the rifle was fixed. There are not many weapons that allow this. And it is a very valuable attribute once the SHTF and spare parts are no longer available.

Stick to common calibers, 223, 7.62x39mm, or 7,62x51 (308). 223 vs. 308? I'm not going there. If you prefer 223 because it has less recoil, it's lighter, or you favor the AR rifle go ahead. If you think that 223 is more powerful than 7,62 sign up to Physics I. Just remember what I said before, a survivalist is not a soldier serving in Iraq, and you

don't have the entire USMF to back you up. You are on your own. You are not going to pin your attackers down with a questionably effective round and wait until someone hits them with artillery.

About ARs... I wouldn't trust my life to a rifle that has more versions than Rocky sequels... the way I see it, it means that the basic design was the problem and there is no solution. On AK ... all has been said. The most popular rifle on the planet, and popular not because of politics, but because it works. It also fires an intermediate power, effective round, available world wide. SKS are also good, but I'd rather have removable magazines. Again, don't use voodoo on me because I say I wouldn't trust my life to a AR. If you keep your weapon clean, know its limitations and feel comfortable with it, go for it please. A couple of rounds of 223 will kill anyone just as well.

If you want a rifle that can do a little bit of everything relatively well, do yourself a favor and get either a M1A or a FAL in 7,62 (308) with a carbine length barrel. Preferably with a red dot scope and some kind of light mount. Leave full length barrels to hunters and bench rest shooters. Do your homework on both guns and you'll see what I mean. Choose 308 not because of the added range you can get out of it, but because of its power at all ranges, choose it because it turns cover into concealment. Think about all the possible cover material you can find in a city, like cars, trees, low walls and other structures. The 308 will go right through it, or destroy it after a few rounds. It's a proven cartridge through out the years.

Shotguns.

Shotguns are good general purpose guns. The main advantage I see is the devastating stopping power and the ability to use special ammo, like slugs and less than lethal ammo. I'm not so sure about the role as an "inside house" gun. The muzzle blast is great and quick follow up are not easy, especially when adrenalin is pumping through your system or, even worse, when someone is shooting back at you.

Pistol caliber carbines and SMG.

If possible, I'd choose a SMG reduced to semi auto (only if necessary, of course, full auto selector is better if possible) or other kind of short, small, pistol caliber carbine. The combination of a 9mm handgun and a 9mm carbine or SMG reduced to semi auto or full auto class III has lots of advantages in my book and is a fine combination. Some think that full auto is a waste of ammo. I don't think so, not if you know how to use your head, and use this feature wisely. If you can get a short barrel and collapsible stock, you'll also have a weapon that can be hidden under a heavy coat. A red dot scope would enhance accuracy a lot. The advantage of having the same ammo for long and small arm is not to be taken lightly. From the logistical, survivalist point of you, this is one big thumbs up! Think about cowboys and Americans that lived in the west, they also knew the value of using the same ammo for rifle and handgun. They had single action handguns and lever action handguns chambered for the same ammo, the modern

survivalist can have the same ammo for his auto pistol and his sub-rifle as well.

Some think that a pistol caliber long arm is just one big clumsy pistol or a rifle sized gun that delivers pistol power and accuracy. This is BS. Anyone that ever fired a pistol caliber rifle or SMG knows that they are much more accurate, hitting torso targets at 100 yards is easy, and a little more if you have a red dot scope. Also, SMGs can manage hot ammo specially made for such guns, much more powerful than the one for handguns. Even if you use regular handgun ammo, the added barrel length adds a few extra feet per second making it more powerful. Just check the information on body armor. Body armor that is rated to stop 9mm, for example, is not rated to stop the same 9mm ammo out of a SMG or carbine, because the added speed will make that same round penetrate the vest. Anyway, +P ammo is more than enough power out of a SMG or carbine; you don't have to go looking for special SMG ammunition.

If you can get full auto that's one nice feature to have, not worth it if you are on a tight budget, but if you can get it, it may come in handy someday. Full auto SMG are giving police in my country a lot of headaches. A criminal with little or no training will put 3 or 4 cops armed with pistols and shotguns on their toes, just because of the sheer volume of fire these high capacity 9mm deliver. There was this case of a bad guy standing in front of a patrol car full of cops on a red light stop, pulling a 9mm SMG out of his coat and emptying it on full auto. The cops didn't have a chance, he killed them all. The car looked like Swiss cheese with 40 9mm holes all over the vehicle.

SOUND SUPPRESSORS

All I'm going to say on this subject is: Have one if you can. That's it. I'll leave the rest of it to your imagination, don't make me say it. Today it may seem like a "nice to have" feature... after the SHTF, it may be an "O God I've got to get a suppressor!!" feature. I'd buy a good suppressor instead of an ultra high dollar scope like the SOG. Buy a good quality scope, but don't spend a fortune on it, and use the rest of the money on a suppressor. If you are serious about preparing for SHTF, you'll thank me one day; just trust me on this one. 9mm and 45 suppress quite well. Not as well as .22, but there is much more power on the big bore ammo. Combined with a full auto SMG, the possibilities are much greater. Sometimes it's just better to go unnoticed, especially in a SHTF crisis.

BODY ARMOR

Dear God! Buy body armor PLEASE!! Its dirt cheap in USA. Preferably, get the police concealable kind (class II) then continue to work on it and get class III A military armor and some rifle plates, just as you do when you start buying guns. You'll end up with 2 or 3 sets of armor which are great to have for family members and spares. Just so you know, I got so desperate about body armor I ordered it from USA through internet (bulletproofme.com), I ended up paying a total of nearly 600 USD for body armor that costs 200 USD in USA. Buy it while you still can. When the SHTF you'll end up wearing

it, believe me. I don't wear mine all day long but I do wear it when I have to go some place dangerous, deal with people I don't trust, or when I have to go teach Architecture Representation late at night, and must travel through a much dangerous road at 12 PM.

PART IV

-Interlude -Studying the SHTF at the University: Dark omens.

I forgot it! Darn, same as the gold stuff but worse, much worse. I've never been good at remembering some things, like numbers and names of people I meet, I forget those (instantly), they just flee my mind, uneventfully, but I do remember some other things that don't seem to be as important. I do remember living in USA as a kid. I remember my school, Pierce School, Don't remember exactly where it was, because we lived some in Boston, Massachusetts and some in New Hampshire. I remember my best friend, Freddy, and a girl (why is there always a girl? [Smile]) Samantha, Sam. She was red haired and tall, I had a picture of her playing together but I lost it. Some time between the age of 3 and 26 I lost that picture that was so dear to me. I remember the smell of an orange shaped "scratch and smell" sticker my kindergarten teacher stuck in a small book we made once. But I almost forgot this forever. This, this was important, a moment where the life we once knew stopped existing, and a group of students, in a class room that looked like an abandoned building, realized it, all 60 of us at the same time.

It's 1:06 AM over here. I just finished showering and my wife and son are asleep. I was putting shampoo on my hair, thinking about what I wrote today on this post, and remembered the exact moment when I realized along with several other people, not only that TSHTF (that we all knew) but that the world we once knew no longer existed, and that this was not a hurricane, this was an ice age period, it wouldn't just go away.

We understood it the same way a kid understands photosynthesis: Because a teacher coldly explained it to us, even used graphics. I slept 5 hours yesterday, 2 hours the day before yesterday. Saturday night I didn't sleep at all. I'm already used to it. Deadlines at the University, staying late at night, drawing in CAD 3D, waiting until Renders are ready. It's a competitive world out there, and no one sympathizes with what you are going through, they just want you to perform as expected, and the standard is always high. It happened 4 years ago, almost a year after the December 2001 crisis. It was a social studies class and this teacher, don't remember if it was a he or a she, was explaining the different kinds of social pyramids. God! Now I remember more! We even had a text book with those darn, cruel pyramids! The first pyramid explained the basic society. A pyramid with two horizontal lines, dividing those on top (high social class) those in the middle (middle class) and the bottom of the pyramid (the poor, proletarian). The teacher explained that the middle of the pyramid, the middle class, acted as a cushion between the rich and the poor, taking care of the social stress. The second pyramid had a big middle section, this was the pyramid that represents 1st world countries. In which the bottom is very thin and arrows show that there is a possibility to go from low to middle class, and from middle to the top of the social pyramid. Our teacher explained that this

was the classic, democratic capitalist society, and that on countries such as Europeans one, socialists, the pyramid was very similar but a little more flat, meaning that here is a big middle section, middle class, and small high and low class. There is little difference between the three of them.

The third pyramid showed the communist society. Where arrows from the low and middle class tried to reach the top but they bounced off the line. A small high society and one big low society, cushioned by a minimal middle class section of pyramid. Then we turned the page and saw the darned fourth pyramid. This one had arrows from the middle class dropping to the low, poor class.

“What is this?” Some of us asked.

The teacher looked at us. “This is us”

“It’s the collapsed country, a country that turns into 3rd world country like in pyramid five where there is almost no middle class to speak, one huge low, poor class, and a very small, very rich, top class.”

“What are those arrows that go from the middle to the bottom of the pyramid?” Someone asked.

You could hear a pin drop. “That is middle class turning into poor”.

I won’t lie, no one cried, though people rubbed their faces, held their heads and their breath.

No one cried, but we all knew at that very moment that all we thought, all we took for granted, simply was not going to happen.

“You see, the income from the middle class is not enough to function as middle class any more. Some from the top class fall to middle class, but the vast majority of the middle class turns into poor” Said the teacher.

I don’t know how many people in that room suddenly understood that he/she was poor.

The teacher continued “You see, we have a middle class that suddenly turns to poor, creating a society of basically poor people, there is no more middle class to cushion tensions any more. Middle class suddenly discovers that they are overqualified for the jobs they can find and have to settle for anything they can obtain, there for unemployment sky rockets, too much to offer, too little demand. You see they prepare, study for a job they are not going to get. You kids, you are studying Architecture because you simply wish to do so. Only 3 or 4 percent of you will actually find a job related to architecture.”

We all sat there, letting it all sink in. After a few months, it all proved to be true. Even the amount of students that dropped out of college increased to at least 50%. They either so no point in studying something that would not make much of a difference in their future salaries, had no money to keep themselves in college, or simply had to drop college to work and support their families.

Someone once said, in this forum, that if this had happened in USA, the social unrest would have been much worse, because people from S. America are stronger. At first, I told him that I didn't think so, I said that all humans adapt when they have no other choice. But now that I consider it more, maybe he was right. Not that S. Americans are stronger, but they are more used to adversities. Most of us are children from grandparents that escaped civil war, either in Spain or dictators in Italy, our parents survived the dirty war, even more dictators, and therefore their children are of strong character too. Can USA citizens survive what we survived? Of course they can, though I think that there are too many that are not like you, many that don't prepare, and take everything for granted. Those are the ones that will be responsible for the increase in the social unrest once the SHTF, those that were too lazy to take care of themselves before the SHTF, or that had gone soft through out the years, believing that the government will "take care of them because they pay their taxes". But in the end, they will pull through. People will adapt, they always do. You'd be surprised. And those that don't want to adapt to the new reality they live in, will die young, thus cleaning the gene pool and ensuring the continuity of the specie. It's been this way for thousands of years.

Note: I'm sorry I took so long to continue this post. I spent the last few days drawing on the computer, I have to present this sort of thesis for the University, a school project, to a board of 4 teachers in 3 weeks.

CRIME AND INSECURITY

Even though crime has always been an issue in South America, my country was quite the exception. It was dangerous, yes but nothing like after the 2001 economical crisis. One used to be able to let kids play on the sidewalk, or walk back home from a party, a few blocks, and be somewhat safe. This all changed now. There are no kids playing on the sidewalks anymore. I should emphasize this a little more. There are absolutely NO kids playing on the sidewalks at all, at any time of the day. Maybe a kid rides his bike a few meters on the sidewalk, but always under the supervision of an adult. A kid riding a bike on his own will get that bike stolen in no time, probably get hurt in the process, therefore no responsible parent leaves a kid alone on the street. Teenagers present a greater problem. You can't keep a 15 or 16 year old inside a house all day long, and even though they are big enough to go out on their own, when the sun goes down things get much worse.

This is when parents organize themselves; either taking them to someone's house or to a club and picking them up at a certain time. Taxis and remises are used sometimes, but there have been lots of cases of girls getting raped, so no parent worth a buck leaves his

son or daughter in hands of a stranger. After years of living like this, almost everyone learned to be careful; sometimes they had to learn the hard way. Practically no one leaves a door or window opened or unlocked. Nor do they hang out in front of the house talking to friends. A bad guy might just see you there, like a sitting duck, pull a gun on you and take you inside your house.

There are no “bandit’s law” anymore. One used to hear people talk about “You shouldn’t resist a robbery, give them what they want and they’ll go away”. That holds true no more. These guys are under the influence of drugs, epoxy glue, or just hate your guts so much, because you have a better life than they ever dreamed of, because they were abused since the day they were born, that they will hurt and humiliate you as much as they can. Letting a criminal inside your house almost guarantees you that he will rape/beat/ torture and abuse whoever they find inside.

I personally drew a line a few years ago and decided, after one long, serious conversation with my wife; that no one would be allowed inside the house, no matter what. We figured that there are worse things than death. Having decided that, I make sure I always have a weapon on me. They’ll have to pay dearly for my life, plus interests.

By far, the most dangerous moment of the day, is when I (or my wife) leave/enter my house. A solid, secure house cannot be broken in easily, so criminals wait until you are standing on front of the door with the keys on your hand to jump on you. This is why we are extra alert when approaching our house, look all around us and if we see anything strange, keep walking around the block or keep on driving. No door is ever opened when there is a strange person around. Whenever someone knocks on our door (and we don’t know him/her), they are answered from a second story window. Criminals sometimes disguise as electric company guys or something like that, saying that they have to fix something. NO! If there is something to be fixed they can fix it on the sidewalk. Anything inside your house is your responsibility and the company is not going to fix it for you. Either way, it’s always better to play it safe, Better to be rude than dead.

On the car/driving issue, that calls for an entire post dedicated to SHTF driving. For now I’ll just say that windows and doors have to be closed at all times, a weapon must be within arms reach, and that stop signs and traffic lights have a hole new meaning once TSHTF. If your country ever falls as mine did, you’ll remember me whenever you see a traffic light. You never stop at a red lights or stop sign unless there is traffic, especially at night.

At first, police would write you a ticket for not stopping at a red light if they saw you (another way of saying that they will ask for a bribe if they see you pass a red light), but after a few months they realized that nothing could be done, people would rather risk a ticket than risking their lives, so they decided to turn traffic lights to permanent yellow at night, after 8 or 9 PM. This is, of course, very dangerous. Night car accidents are both frequent and brutal since sometimes both cars hit each other at full speed.

MissinLink asked some good questions that might interest others as well, and since we

are on the security issue, here they are:

quote:

“Do the invaders of homes in the country just drive up in cars or trucks? Do they hide and sneak up? How do these home invaders attack a home in the country? A similar question could be asked for homes in the city.”

Sometimes they just drive up to where you are working, if you are far away from the home, but most of the time they sneak up on you. Criminals are not stupid, and they will spend days checking the place and specially YOUR ROUTINE. For example, if they see that you lock the gate at night, as most do, they will wait for you behind a tree until you are close. This is done a lot. Dogs are the best alarm you can find, and criminals know that. They will poison them with pills when you go to sleep and attack the place in the middle of the night. I know of many that had their dogs killed. If they think that security is tight, they will just hide near the main gate, and wait for you to leave or return. When you stop at the gate and must get out of the truck to open/close the main gate, they attack. I'd say that the most frequent kind of attack is attacking by surprise when you enter/leave your home.

quote:

“Most common times of attack? Day night evening morning? I understand occur when coming or going from ones home, etc.”

7 am, 9 am, 1pm 7pm, all are common times for attacks. There is no “safe” hour of the day. Night is particularly dangerous. Maybe attacks during the day are faster, they want to get some money or jewelry and leave fast, while at night they might stay inside more time, maybe till the next day. But there are no fixed patterns. If I could give one advice concerning SHTF security, it would be: Eyes and ears wide open when you enter/leave your home. If possible, keep a gun on your hand when doing either one. If something looks, even “feels strange, then go around the block and check again, carefully. If you see them still there, either call the police (if still available) or get help. If you approach the house with a large number of people they will leave. One time, I saw a couple of strange looking guys at my door. I went round the block and saw them still there. I started flashing the car lights and the horn and they left. I had a gun with me, though, so be careful when trying this. Also, remember that a car is one heavy, powerful piece of machinery. I know a guy that had one of those big chrome-tube bumpers installed on his truck, especially for hitting those that were stupid enough o try to make him stop by standing in front of the car.

If I had a truck, I would do so myself. Though I would keep my mouth shut about it, as always. Just say that you think it looks cool or something. Every now and then someone tries to force me to stop my car by standing in front of it (I suppose there are still fools out there that get robbed this way), in the middle of the street. I just aim at them and accelerate at full speed. They always jump out of the way before I hit them. By the way,

at first, doing this made me feel nervous, but can you believe that now it's just common driving, as normal as changing gears? I guess it's a little sad.

PART V

Note: Sorry for the delay. This thread started ok and it seems to have a lot of acceptance so I give it serious thought before I post, try not to leave anything out so it can serve the better, as a mini guide of things that may come.

A LIST OF THINGS THAT "If you had it to do over again" YOU WOULD GET.

Nomad came up with this one. It's a good idea because it may help some of you from making the same mistakes I did. There are things you don't think about until you need them, and then it's too late.

OK, if I had to do all this from scratch? Say, for example, if I had a 2 year warning, fairy godmother appears one night, all dressed in blue waving a magic wand, saying "Your country will go down the sewage in 2 years, consider yourself warned dear" There are several things I would have done differently, and things I would have bought: Food: I'll get to the food issue soon enough, but you can never have too much canned or other long shelf life food. This was probably one of my greatest mistakes, I overlooked the food problem.

I was talking to my wife today while driving, asked her the same question "Nomad asked me 'what would you do if you could go back in time, before the 2001 crisis'".

My wife, though smart, isn't much into preparedness, but she answered "I'd buy food" in a heartbeat. Don't you remember that you could only buy one small bottle of oil at a time, same with sugar, flour and milk? Don't you remember all those empty shelves at the supermarket?"

Definitely, more food, especially food that lasts for a few years.

CAR: I would have bought a 4x4, even though I live in the city. A 4x4 allows you to drive over the sidewalk or through wasteland, away from roadblocks or riots. I've see those that have 4x4s simply go off road, climb over a boulevard and leave while the rest of us poor car owners have to stay.

A 4x4 truck also has more mass and power in case that someone tries to cut you off or rams you with the car. It's less likely to stop running if you hit someone or several people (in a riot situation) since it's prepared for cross country use and the engine is much more protected.

Fuel containers: Not only jerry cans, but those big metal containers, that hook up like small "u-hauls"? I'm not sure about their capacity; maybe they can hold one or two

barrels of gas. I saw them at construction sites, and they were not that expensive if bought used, before the 2001 crisis. Now, I don't know, haven't seen them for a while.

A generator: These are imported and very expensive for us. I think that they are now making them here, but I'm not sure about the quality.

A nice TV and DVD player: I know what you are thinking "this guy has gone ... "nuts" "[Smile] Please, let me explain. Going out for dinner or to the movies is not only dangerous but also expensive. You WILL find much better use for that money if SHTF.

There are places in Buenos Aires where you can go out for dinner, movies, or theater shows and have a good time, safely. They either have their own security or arrange with the police for added security. These are the kinds of places you are likely to visit if you ever come to Argentina; places where tourists can move around, relatively safe (there are always exceptions, of course). But these places are either for tourists or for the extremely wealthy. I have a good socio-economical level, better than 96% of the population at least, yet I can't afford to spend that amount of money every weekend or even two weekends a month. Going out for a walk is a possibility, and we do go out for a walk every now and then, but let's just say that the view isn't that good, and you can only walk about 6 blocks in the same direction before you get out of the area which is guarded by private security, after that you are on "you are on your own" land. You CAN go for a walk (just like millions that live in Somalia or Afghanistan go for a walk as well) millions of citizens do, but I'd rather not risk it.

Just the day before yesterday, a young woman was waiting at the bus stop in my neighborhood, holding her 6 month old daughter. A cop that was chasing a bad guy opened fire with his High Power, with no regard to bystanders as they always do. The 9mm FMJ (JHP are not allowed for the average police) went right through the baby's buttocks and through the mother. Miraculously, the bullet didn't hit any of the baby's internal organs and the mother also survived after a few days at the hospital. Was that just luck? Maybe, I prefer to think that God does work in mysterious ways. We have a lot of cases like this, where innocent people get shot by the police, and the stupid "no JHP" rule makes it worse, since 124 gr. FMJ 9mm will penetrate walls, windows, even bad guys and end up injuring or killing innocent people.

So, back to the TV, good places are too expensive and just going out for a walk at night with your wife/girlfriend is out of the question. All of a sudden popcorn, pizza and a movie sounds like a good plan. I'm not saying that you should spend all day in front of the screen like a zombie. Reading is nice, I love reading myself, but once the SHTF, going out with a date at night won't be that easy, nor will it be that cheap. You will end up paying for that added security the shop/bar/theater owner hired, the higher price of gas and food, while a DVD copy can be found everywhere, and costs only a couple of bucks. After the SHTF there will be a lot of "why don't we watch a movie" nights. Like it or not TV is cheap, safe entertainment. A play station or Xbox is also nice to have. Even if the country collapses, there will always be a guy with a DVD writer making copies. Just

something to think about if you like movies.

BOOKS: Oh, almost forgot. If you like reading a lot, buy books now, even if you won't read them for some time. If your economy crashes, paper will become a source of income for many. We have thousands of scavengers collecting cardboard and paper all day long, specially at night when people take out the trash. As a result, books are not cheap, because they have a value of its own in the form of paper. Also, consider that books are heavy, making transportation expensive and many are printed abroad. Just as an example: I returned from visiting my parents in Spain with three suitcases. ONE suit case was entirely full of books. Books cost about 80%-200% more than what they cost in USA or Spain.

Guns & ammo: I always liked guns, so I always had weapons. But I didn't have an adequate survival battery. If you don't have a good survival selection of weapons, buy them now, or as soon as your budget allows. Make it one of your priorities, just after food, water and shelter. There are several posts on the ideal choice of weapons. Get at least a service size pistol and a military semi auto rifle and a 22 handgun/rifle. (Try to get both if you can, they are not that expensive). A bolt rifle (preferably in the same caliber as the semi) a pump 12 ga shotgun and a sub rifle, like a SMG or pistol caliber semi auto carbine (same caliber as pistol) would complete the package. I forgot to buy a 22 pistol until after 2001, and ended up paying for a Norinco 22 pistol the same price I would have paid for a Ruger pistol before the crisis.

Other Stuff: My advice is to see what you use regularly and what you expect to need after TSHTF. Of those goods, see where they are made. If they are made outside your country, they will either increase in price or stop importation entirely after TSHTF. In my case, one good example (of many, many others) is Gillette disposable blades. They are made in USA, and right now they cost a fortune. But as I said before, check what is being imported. No point in buying cases of Cubans for trade after TSHTF if you live in Cuba, right? I wouldn't think of these items as trade goods, but as "gifts" to buy favors, build up relationships with police, government officials, doctors, people you might need favors from. Stuff, like liquor/wine, a nice pen, perfume, makeup and other "free shop" kind of items can go a long way when you need some strings pulled, or a "friend" within certain circles. And it's not only the item, sweet talking also must be applied.

For example, you need renew your driver's license after the XXXX crisis. The problem is that the office is low on personal (they had to let go 25% and 50% are on strike) so you'll have to wait 4 months until you get an appointment. You approach the information desk where you find Betty. Now, Betty hasn't had a date since the age of 10, and she weights as much a healthy manatee (though she's not THAT pretty) you kindly ask her to please help you fill the paperwork, and though she's as cold as a Popsicle, you keep calling her by her first name and when you leave she smiles and says good bye.

The next day you drop by and give Betty a Revlon lipstick for "helping" you fill the form, which had difficult questions like "name?" "Age?". It cost you about 4 bucks

before the crisis but, since it's made in France, it went up to 20 dollars and then, 2 months ago, they no longer imported it. Revlon saw that they no longer had a market for their 4 Euro lipstick, which now costs Americans 20 dollars and the segment that used to buy it is spending that money in other items like food, so their marketing experts told them that the 4 Euro lipstick is no longer profitable in USA. Betty used to love that particular lipstick, she thought it made her look like Cindy Crawford (poor Betty) but 20 dollars was more than she could spare in her good looks, and when she finally decided to drop the 40 pounds of M&M's she ate a month in favor for the lipstick, the girl at the drugstore told her that the item is no longer imported into the USA. Her face lights up when she sees your present, and tells you that you shouldn't have bothered, and she asks "how did it go with your license". You tell her that you actually have a problem, it seems that it takes 4 months to renew, and you ask her if, well, maybe she can do something about it... you get the picture.

In other occasions people will let you know that they want a plain and simple "bribe", and there 50 bucks or 100 bucks according to the situation will get the job done. I've used "gifts" (a perfume) to get my passport faster, saved a few months, and I've used bribes every single time the police stopped me for "inspection". I know this does not apply to 1st world countries where most officers are honest self-sacrificed people, I mean no insult to the law enforcement community on this forum, but please understand that it does apply to 3rd world countries, and I'm not getting shot by an angry cop over 10 or 20 pesos, let them have their bribe. I tried it once and I will never try it again. A cop stopped me and started BS me. I told him "ok officer, guess you'll have to write me a ticket, I understand". He didn't want to write a ticket, he wanted money and things got ugly. I'm never doing anything that stupid again.

FOOD A delicate issue. Even though not in the same way, it does affect us all. Keep in mind that if TSHTF, prepared or not, food will always be in your thoughts. If you don't have it you'll do ANYTHING to get it, and if you are prepared you'll worry about being able to get more for the future. Once you see food prices go up between 200% and 300%, or simply see it missing, you'll realize what a valuable commodity food really is. To those that think that food will never be a problem in USA: Come visit my country, even though there are desert areas up north, most of the country is fertile "Pampa".

Just after WWII Argentina practically fed Europe, Argentina was known in Europe as "the world's granary". Cattle and wheat was enough to feed our own country and another continent. So, what happened? Why are there so many that have little or no food and end up eating out of dumpsters? I mean, the land is still there, isn't it? Well, the country is the same country that used to be called the "world's granary" but some things changed. Several big, multinational corporations, such as Benetton, bought hundreds of thousands of acres of natural resources. I don't know the exact number, but I do remember that the media started talking about the integrity of the sovereignty of the country being at risk because of these massive purchases of land, so you can imagine how many acres were bought. Mysteriously, the media suddenly dropped the subject.

Another important factor is that now, with our new economy, it's not good business to sell Argentine food to Argentina. Why sell a kg of meat to the local market for 17 pesos when they can now sell it to Spain for 17 Euros when 1 Euro = 3, 5 pesos? [Editors note: The Irish Potato Famine was not the result of not enough food being in Ireland...but rather the Irish peasants were too poor to purchase anything and English land owners selling their goods to the highest payer] All this combined with high unemployment, salaries that are not enough to buy the minimal amount of calories for a typical family, and the high prices resulted in a country that slowly started to suffer hunger.

Again, I can pin point the exact moment when the entire country realized what was happening. After the 2001 crisis things had been bad, but people in Buenos Aires, the capital city and the richest province, didn't realize how bad things actually were in the other provinces. This was until teachers noted that kids had problems with education. You see, they noticed that they had problems to concentrate, that they fell asleep, and that they found it difficult to resolve mathematical equations.

They later found out that this was due to malnutrition, kids were not receiving the minimum amount of nutrients for a healthy working body. The breaking point was when a reporter interviewed a little girl about 8 or 9 years old. The reporter lady asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up, the usual kiddy questions. The girl, crying, said that she didn't want to be anything; that she didn't care. The lady asked her why was she crying. She said that she cried because she was hungry, that she had nothing to eat for days, and it was then that I noticed how skinny the little girl actually was.

Seeing children starve is terrible, I guess we all saw those images of the starving kids in Africa. But when you see them speak your same language, with your same accent, in your own country, it hits a nerve.

People talked about it for weeks, and they interviewed pediatricians that confirmed that the number of children dying because of hunger had increased drastically in the last few months. So whatever happens, let it be a hurricane, economical collapse, earthquake or meteor hitting earth, food and water always come first.

Ideally you already have a food plan and have a year worth of food in your basement... You don't? Hmm... neither did I when the SHTF and let's just say that I had my manhood up my throat all the time, fearing that supermarkets would definitely close and me and my family would be left without food. If you don't have your food needs sorted out already, just do what I did; start buying a little extra every time you go to the supermarket. The points you want to look for your storage food are, in order of importance:

- 1) No need of fridge.
- 2) High nutritious value/volume
- 3) Long shelf life, between 1-5 years.

4) That they don't need water

5) That they don't need cooking

This will usually take you to canned meats, canned tuna, canned vegetables, dried pasta, dehydrated soups, chocolate, milk powder, marmalades, soups, rice and dried beans. Canned food is excellent when it comes to long shelf life. Most of the time they are already hydrated, so they don't need water, and you can eat them out of the can. Just watch out not to dent the can, if this happens air may get inside and ruin it. If you have a dent or bump in a can, consume it fast. Also remember that once the can is opened, you have to remove the food from the can. My favorite canned food is tuna. It lasts forever, it's full of proteins and no matter how often I eat it, it always tastes good. Besides you can combine it with frozen vegetables or rice.

Canned fruits and vegetables are also good, but they have much less vitamins than the fresh ones, and you lose most of it unless you drink the liquid they come in. Dried pasta may need a lot of water to cook, but it's one of the best ways to store carbs in convenient to use form. Flour or wheat can also be stored in large quantities and are nutritious, but they require more preparation to consume.

We've become quite independent from the fridge, and only use it to keep frozen our fresh pasta (ñoqui) pizza and frizzed vegetables. We practically freeze everything, because it lasts longer, practically indefinitely, and because if the lights go out a large mass of frozen food will last for hours, even a day or two. The more mass of food you have frozen to longer it will hold. The survivalist, especially the urban one, should try to rely as little as possible on the fridge. That's why canned food and freeze dried food is your best friend. Yet, anyone who has been for a while with no fresh fruit knows that after some time the skin starts to suffer. Sores will appear after a while, especially on delicate skin like the lips and mouth. [Editor's Note: This condition is commonly known as Scurvy] Once you start eating fresh fruits and vegetables again they go away.

This happened to me once, spent too much time without fresh vegetables and my mouth was a mess, full of sores. After a week of eating fresh vegetables regularly the symptoms disappeared. That's why you should try to have some fresh food to supplement your storage food. Not much, just 2 or 3 fruit trees on your garden and a small orchard would be fine. You don't have to feed out of this, you just need a little fresh veggies or fruit every once in a while.

On the news right now while I write this: We had elections last Sunday, we voted senators. It seems that in one of the north provinces people were surrendering their ID documents for bags of groceries, some for water, or for 10 pesos (3 USD) they were later taken to warehouses where they spent the night to ensure that they voted. The next day the candidate's men took them to vote, hauled inside cattle trucks, like animals. When they arrived they were given their ID documents back with the number of list they had to vote. Thugs guide them and ensure they vote who they want.

HEALTH & FITNESS Visit your doctor NOW. Get yourself fixed. Visit the dentist and make sure your mouth is in perfect conditions. Nothing is worse than having toothache and no one available to take care of it. Remember that doctors may not be as available as they are now, in the future. For example I got eye surgery to take care of my sight problem. Now I see perfectly without glasses. The advantage of laser eye surgery isn't limited to not needing glasses. (Which can break and would be nearly impossible to replace after TSHTF)

Even people react to you in a different way. Humans are after all instinctive animals. Bad guys will look at you as a weaker person if you wear glasses. Maybe they don't know that at a conscious level, maybe they do, but they do react differently. This is not me imagining stuff, it's the way things are. Old people and women are especially vulnerable. After old people and women and children, come small framed people, the smaller you are, the weaker you look, the more likely you are to be chosen as a victim by a bad guy. It sounds, cruel, and it sure is, but that's the way it works. A young man with a well formed body, broad shoulders, muscled arms and a "don't f*** with me" face, is less likely to be a victim of small time thieves. If a professional group chooses you as a target that's a completely different story, of course.

Talk to your doctor a lot. Just like "The little Prince", never stop yourself from asking a question. Adopt that as a general philosophy and you'll end up learning a little about everything. Mechanics, doctors, policemen, you can always learn something new from people with skills. As a survivalist, and as a smart person, you should try to know a little about everything. Always be curious. That's how I learned that I had to diversify my stock of antibiotics. A doctor told me, that the body will adapt if you always use the same, making that particular antibiotic not that effective, especially in small children, so now I keep two different kinds of antibiotics.

Working out 3 times a week, for a couple of hours will keep you in shape. I work out at home; I have a bench and some weights. Try to compliment some aerobics and weight lifting. Working the boxing bag is good exercise, works most muscles if done right, and you'll have a much more powerful punch. Keep in mind that a bag is no replacement for a sparring partner and that the bag does not faint nor does it punch back. Still, it's good exercise and your punch will be more powerful if you connect.

Running belts and bicycles are also good. Research on the subject and make your own routine, join a gym and talk to a professional if possible. Whatever you do, the idea is to have a fit, healthy body; no use in shooting 1/2 MOA at 100 yards if you have a gut that hangs half way to the floor and you can't run that same distance without needing an oxygen mask. I know, shooting is fun, and working out isn't. At least for most, but after some time you'll start to enjoy it, your stamina and morale will definitely increase, and you'll start looking forward to working out.

The survivalist that spends 3 hours a week on his gun skills and no time at all on his own

body is not doing things right. Imagine if you have to run away from a riot/gunfight/attack while carrying your BOB or fighting bare handed against someone that got you by surprise. This applies for life in general, before or after TSHTF a man has to now how to fight bare handed. You don't have to be Bruce Lee or Mike Tyson, just know how to through a decent punch, cover your face, or some kind or martial art classes.

I once had a fight that got a little ugly. It happened in my mother in law's house, which proves that thing can go bad everywhere at any time. A guy my wife's sister was dating argued with me and things got physical. He had problems with the police for beating up an ex girlfriend (which he was proud of, go figure) and had spend 2 years in jail for stealing cars. My wife's sister was showing up with mysterious bruises on her body, from "falling while working out". So you could say this guy wasn't my favorite person. Anyway, he grabbed my neck by surprise; I grabbed his arm with both hands, one in his hand and the other in his elbow, and twisted it around. The leverage made him let go of my neck and a kept on twisting it forcing him around. He punched me with his other hand but the position wasn't in his favor so it was just a glancing blow. He pushed with his back against me, so I placed my left arm around his neck, my elbow flexed over his Adam's apple. The guy went berserk so I decided that I had to hold on until he passed out, or I would get seriously hurt. I had practiced this choking move with my friend, the one that has the farm I talked about before. He told me that after 30 seconds of choking the person passes out, and after 60 seconds, if you keep choking him, he dies.

So I placed my left arm firmly around his neck while holding my left hand firmly with my right arm, pressing as hard as I could. The guy went nuts. He slammed me against the walls, trying to get me away from his back. He started clawing with his fingers on my biceps, desperate. Me? I just held my lock around his neck, mentally counting. As if by magic, after 20-25 seconds. He lost all strength and fell to his knees like a rag doll, and I let him go.

Meanwhile my wife, her sister and my mother in law were all screaming me to stop. Once he caught his breath he said that I was psycho, and that he was just fooling around. Not believing a word he said, I said I was sorry and we both got into the elevator, since we were leaving. As soon as I close the elevator door, the s*** bag attacks me again. I guess he felt humiliated in front of the woman he beat up. He tried to grab me the same way I did. I knew that this was getting out of hand and I completely lost patience with this clown.

I brought my serrated Cold Steel El hombre from my pocket and placed the dull side against his arm. He got the message instantly a let go of me. Once he did this I shoved him against the elevator, my forearm pressing against his neck and the knife under the neck as well. He calmed down instantly, saying he was sorry, bla ,bla, bla. When we got out of the elevator I told him that if he ever got close to me or my family again I would put a bullet in his head. I never saw him again. This guy was a thief and women beater and I had no use him. Besides these are the kind of rats that would brake into your house

when you leave, or worse.

I'm ranting all over the place again. What I mean is that practicing defensive moves is useful, especially if you spar with someone that knows his stuff. My friend practices Judo. He won the state championship and was left in 3rd place in the nationals final. Practice as you would fight in real life. Getting choked isn't nice, but you get to know what you are working with and know how effective it actually is. Being in shape will also make you less prone to diseases, such as high pressure, heart problems, and will boost your immune system in general.

Knowing first aid procedures is always helpful. I'll take the Red Cross course this summer. Keep a first aid kit and any other special medicine you may need. If you take drugs regularly try to have at least a year's worth of the stuff. Medicines are hard to get and expensive, many are made in other countries and if SHTF they might not be available. My father in law has Parkinson and needs a special medicine that is no longer imported. He asks friends that travel to get it for him.

I stock pile as much medicines as I can. Apart from the regular 1st aid kit stuff you usually have at home, I concentrate on Ibuprofen and antibiotics, both for children and adults. Antibiotics are precious here, with all the viruses that are floating around. Lung infections are particularly dangerous. Also remember that keeping a clean, ventilated house goes a long way when it comes to preventing diseases. This is hard when the city is full of filth and there are cockroaches and rats everywhere but it can be done. My neighborhood isn't that bad, there are places that are much, much worse, where people literally sleep and eat with rats. Cockroaches are a problem, but I keep them somewhat controlled with that poison that comes in syringes and you place around the house.

That reminds me, stock up on rat and cockroach poison. Services are bad in general, and the garbage collectors are no exception. Once, they went on strike for about a week (though there are worst places where they go months without collecting) and you could see rats running around eh piles of garbage that people threw on the street's boulevard. This is not healthy, of course. And helps spread diseases all over the city, so keep that in mind as well.

PART VI

MORE ON SECURITY: KIDNAPPING

The theory behind kidnapping is simple to explain, yet it evolved into a complicated issue that presents itself in several forms and the survivalist should understand to better defend his family and himself. The way kidnapping just popped out of nowhere it astonishing to say the least. One day kidnapping for money is almost unheard of, and within a couple of months, after the economical collapse, everyone starts getting kidnapped. The news report of about 3 or 5, sometimes even 10 kidnaps in one day in Buenos Aires city.

As time went by, the news dropped the issue and you don't hear much about people being kidnapped any more. Does this mean that the kidnaps stopped? I don't think so. I still hear about people getting kidnapped in my own neighborhood, express kidnaps (I'll explain later). Since my neighborhood is "nice" compared to most of Buenos Aires, I can only conclude that kidnapping is still VERY popular, but that the media isn't reporting about it any more because of obvious political reasons. Why did kidnaps start in the first place? In a country where there were nearly 0 cases?

Because since the economy crashed, suddenly there were lots of poor people that didn't have enough money to feed their families. This was the main reason, but not the only reason though. After the first riots and looting, it was quite obvious that the government and police had no true control of what was going on. Obviously they were overwhelmed.

Once the veil of crime=jail is lifted and people comprehend that they will not be punished for their crimes, it's the beginning of the end people. All of a sudden, bank robbery, stealing, kidnapping and murdering people is just a matter of personal moral values, nerve and determination, and punishment is almost left out of the equation.

1) The first kind of kidnap to appear was the most common one. People were intercepted, either when walking or driving, by the band of kidnapers. Well organized bands of at least 5 or 6 members, with battle rifles, SMG's and communications, intercept the victim with at least 2 cars.

Do not be mistaken; these guys know what they are doing. In most bands you will likely find a LEO gone bad that decided to increase the poor cop salary the gov. pays.

The victim is taken to a far away location in one of the many extremely poor neighborhoods in Buenos Aires. They call asking for a ransom, a ridiculously high one, and the negotiation starts. The person is held for a few days, maybe even a couple of weeks. If a month goes by and the person doesn't show up, forget about it, he's already dead. Some times they torture him too much, covered his mouth with tape "As seen on TV" and the victim chokes to death, dies of heart or health complications or they just get scared of getting caught and shot the poor guy. They get scared of getting caught not because of the police efficiency, but because most of the time one of the kidnapers KNOWS the victim. Either an employee, friend, neighbor or relative that knows that X person has money available for Y reason, either he is already wealthy, or he sold or inherited and has a large sum of cash available. These kinds of kidnap are generally very gruesome, with tapes of the victim being tortured sent to the family, fingers getting cut and other creative means of encouraging the family to pay. Survivability of this kind of kidnap is about 60%-70%, give or take. Not good.

2) The second kind of kidnap is called "Express kidnap" because it occurs fast, a smaller amount of money is asked as ransom, so that the family can come up with it within an hour or so, and if everything goes as planned the victim is released with an hour or two. This is, by far, the most popular kind of kidnap we see today in my country. Even police advise you to pay and get over with when they ask for small ransoms. The victim is chosen randomly, because of the way he/she dresses, because he/she seems to be easy to

control and dominate and isn't likely to resist the attack.

Kidnapers found out that this low profit, but fast, low risk kind of kidnap is very profitable in the long run, and does not involve the complicated and expensive logistic of long term kidnaps, where you need a place to keep the victim, feed him, someone to watch over him 24/7, etc.

The victim of an "express kidnap" rarely leaves the car/van he/she was pulled into. The criminals Survivability is much greater than in the 1st kind of kidnap, I'd say about 90%. This doesn't mean that the victim is in good hands. Girls are raped by the gang most of the time. Men may fare a little better, probably get beaten up a little if they are problematic. The chances of surviving are greater because kidnapers don't know the victim most of the time, they don't have time to worry about the "what if's" get scared and decide to get rid of the victim, and because police is almost never involved in them. As I said, when small sums of money are asked for they recommend to just pay.

3) The third kind of kidnap isn't nearly as dangerous as the previous ones, but you should still know about it to prepare of it better. After all, it's all about preparing and covering as many scenarios as possible, right? "Virtual kidnaps" caught all of us by surprise. It consists on someone knowing that a wealthy person is going to be "away from town" or unable to communicate for a certain period of time and taking advantage of it. They will call the family and say that X person has been kidnapped and that they have 30-60 minutes or sometimes more to pay(depending on the time the person will be unable to communicate) The family, unable to get in contact with the family member pays, only to later realize that it was all a scam.

Some SOBs even took advantage of real kidnaps, pretending to be the kidnapers and asking for ransom before the real kidnapers got in contact. This kind of "virtual kidnap" isn't as popular anymore, though some get caught every now and then. Most smart people make sure they always know where family members are and communicate with cell phones or tell each other when they wont be available to prevent these situations.

I dedicated some time to the kidnap issue because I firmly believe that if your country goes through an economical crisis for any given reason, desperate immoral people will find out about the fine art of kidnapping soon enough and Americans may have to face this kind of threat, which they are not used to. I personally know a man that escaped his kidnapers 3 times. Once he escaped through the roofs, by removing some sheet metal in the room, and the other two he jumped out of the moving vehicle. You must think the man is 7 feet tall, all muscle, and trained with some of the best defensive schools... [Smile]of course not. He's a short, stocky, barrel chest fellow, now in his 50s that looks like a neighborhood Italian butcher.

This man's weapons of choice? A frag grenade and a 357 revolver. He had the grenade rolling inside the car floor among the pedals the last time I heard of him. The thing would get caught under the pedals and at least once he crashed his car because of it. He once even shot his own mother on the hip with the 357 magnum. A patient had

escaped from a mental institution and broke into the woman's house from the back yard. The old woman called his sons and the first to arrive was "grenade guy". As soon as he entered the house he saw the man and shot him without saying a word, missed and wounded his mother in the hip. The poor escaped patient froze right where he stood when he heard the shot.

Right after this, the woman's other son arrived and saw his mother bleeding on the floor next to his brother, and thought that the nut case had hurt her. Thank God they stopped him before he blew the poor man's head off. This man obviously knows nothing about the proper equipment and defensive tactics, but hey! Anyone that escapes kidnapers 3 times has my respect. So, what can we learn from this?: That even though your weapons of choice may be a little "exotic" or even down right inappropriate, DETERMINATION, MENTAL ATTITUDE, (along with a nice dose of good old luck) is enough to make the difference. The training helps a lot, and so does the gear, but in the end it's all about attitude.

This man gets a 0 when it comes to weapons, shooting skills and tactics, but it's all about proper survival mentality. He's quite the SSS (shoot, shovel and shut up guy) and for sure has a few dead bad guys on his debt, not that I'll ever know anything about that. He managed to survive and excel in a rough business, the recycling of paper, where they deal with paper scavengers, which are not exactly Berkley college boys, if you get my meaning. His recycling company made him and his family very rich, specially now, that there are lots of poor people that scrounge paper and cardboard to survive.

Bragging about the people you kill is not a good survival attitude, and should be avoided. Seriously, if you have problems keeping your mouth shut when it comes to stuff like this, do some serious soul searching and change it. Same goes for new guns, large food supplies or new equipment you may be proud of. The word gets around fast so keep it to yourself.

And this takes us back to the kidnapping issue.

"My Scout/Squad M1A1 looks SO cool! And it shoots like a champ. They cost a fortune right now, but I was smart enough to buy it before the economy crash back in XXXX! "

You tell your mechanic, a guy you've known for years. Now, the guy that your friend just hired, who just happened to overhear the conversation, him you never met before. Neither do you know that he's a problematic kind of guy that has drug problems and is always looking for expensive stuff to sell.

You are also clueless when you are held at gunpoint some days later, just when you were leaving to the office, and the first thing the guy says is "I want the guns".

So, what can you do to protect you family and yourself from kidnapers?

1) Keep you mouth shut about everything that has economical value, or your family's schedule. Especially be careful around people that have economical problems or drug

problems, people that always need cash. Don't trust your employees with internal business affairs. Remember, most of the time the informant is someone close to the victim.

2) Keep a low profile. I know people that even though they have the money to buy any car they want, they stick to common low profile cars. Even the private school I went to when I was a kid that has its own mandatory uniform, encouraged parents to send kids wearing regular clothes instead. Kids dressed in private school uniforms were being kidnapped all over the place.

3) Learn evasive driving. Never allow cars to cut off escape routes. Again, the use of body armor may make the difference between escaping a well organized kidnap or not.

SHTF DRIVING

Get yourself comfortable and fix yourself a cup of coffee because this is one long subject that calls for a book of its own. I'll do my best to synthesize and tell how driving changed after the economical collapse. As always, crime directly affects the way you will drive after TSHTF. As will the price or availability of spare parts determine what car should you get. Another factor to consider is that, as I said before services will suffer in quality after TSHTF. This means that roads will no longer be what they used to be.

People that live in 1st world countries are used to well kept streets and roads. Let me tell you, after only a few months of no maintenance, street will look as if bombed from an airplane. Rain and temperature difference destroys the pavement very fast. Right now in Buenos Aires there are holes in the street the size of trucks. There were cases of cars actually falling inside these craters, so you can imagine the conditions streets are in.

A low car, designed for perfect pavement should be avoided as much as possible. That's why I said that if I could do everything all over again I would get a 4x4 SUV. This doesn't mean that you should buy a huge 4x4 truck to drive around the city all day long. That's not very practical and you do need a fast, easy to maneuver vehicle that can get out of problems fast. A medium size SUV should be the ticket for both agility and 4x4 power. Getting stuck in a roadblock because your truck is too darn big to maneuver around it, then what's the use of the 4x4?

There are many options out there. The small Suzuki 4x4 are good options, though a little bit fragile for my taste, maybe a Jeep Wrangler would be better. Anyway, just keep in mind that your vehicle should be a compromise between speed, ease of maneuver or agility, and 4x4 traction.

Ok, so now you spent some hours on the Internet, searched for the best option, and you bought your brand new SHTF 4x4 car. Now what? Is that it? Unfortunately no. Choosing the right vehicle gives you the tool, but you now have to learn how to use it, and it's not

exactly what you learned when you got your drivers license, as a matter of fact, it's quite the opposite. I can read your mind "Go to sleep FerFAL. You are burned out and you make no sense" [Smile]Let me explain.

Close your eyes. Look inside you. Find that little politically correct driver guy inside you, the one that was born the day you learned how to drive. You see him? Good! Grab him before he sneaks away. Now hit him, choke him, and kill that little PC driver guy inside you. I killed mine a couple of years ago. It took me about 2 years to drive the way I do now, to react without thinking. What does it mean? I no longer flinch, or stir the wheel when something comes close to the car; I keep driving as if nothing happens. A dog runs in front of the car and I don't move an inch, a ball hits the windshield and nothing. I killed the little PC guy inside me, the one that used to say "Watch out! You are going to hit something/someone! Turn the other way!". Reacting like that can get you killed after TSHTF.

Guys, you have to prepare for people throwing objects at your car, standing themselves in front of the vehicle so that you stop or crash against a light/tree/whatever, so that they can rob you. It takes time and determination, but you MUST get to a point where if the windshield blows in you can continue driving as best as you can, if someone puts twisted nails on the road and blows your tires, you keep calm and keep driving, always keep driving no matter what, until you get to a gas station or other place safe. Especially at night, or early morning you have to keep the car moving all the time. Of course this is not always possible. Sometimes there is too much traffic and you have to stop. In this case, slow down before you get to the cars, and keep the car moving slowly until the light changes, in order to always keep the car moving. Never cut away your own escape routes by getting too close to the car in front. Leave at least 5 meters or so in front of you, so that you have enough place to maneuver.

At night, no one stops at red lights in Buenos Aires. That's why many districts decided to turn the traffic light to a permanent yellow at night, in order to reduce car accidents. There are places in Buenos Aires where you don't stop at the traffic lights all day long. Today, when I was retuning from the University at 1.30 PM, I passed a red light right in front of a police patrol car. The cop didn't say a word. He understands that no one stops on the Dark road (the road I take back home) unless it's inevitable. This won't happen over night. It will take at least a few months after TSHTF until cops and authorities understand the new reality of the country. Even now, there are those that may stop you from crossing on a red light at night. But most patrol cars will understand, even crossing the red light themselves.

Another variable that has to be dealt with on the street is people. People that live in 1st world countries have little problems and low stress compared to guys that don't know where they are going to get money to feed their families next week, or when they are going to finally find a job. Fights among drivers in 1st world countries may end up in the beating of someone in the worst-case scenario. Over here, people are so nervous and aggressive that many times people kill each other. This should not be ignored guys, if

SHTF the sheep will turn aggressive and might be dangerous. They will usually start a fight over a minor problem, just because they are nervous, or angry at the world. You can still get beat to death with a bat or bare hands you know? Your weaponry should take all of this into consideration. A handgun should be with you at all times, but it may be excessive for dealing with a mad driver. A bat and pepper spray will be enough to face an unarmed attacker, most times. I keep one canister of pepper spray and a small bat in my car at all times, apart from the 9mm pistol I may be carrying.

The pepper spray car tactic is the following:

- 1) Idiot driver starts a fight over XYZ.
- 2) Mad driver chases you, honking the horn, flashing lights and insulting.
- 3) I slow down, and let him place the car next to mine
- 4) 9 out of 10 times, the mad driver will lower the passenger window to insult you the better.
- 5) That's when you grab the can of pepper spray, lower your own window as if for insulting and you spray him into his own car by surprise.

This will ensure that the mad driver will stop chasing you, and you prevent an even more violent episode where you would end up using lethal force. I had more than a couple of problems myself with other drivers. One Saturday night a guy in an armored truck chased me for several blocks, flashing lights and staying on my tail. I don't know if he was mental, or on drugs, drunk or if he wanted to rob me. In this case having a smaller faster car allowed me to escape the nut driver. In another occasion a driver broke my right mirror. One time a guy got out of his car on a red light and started hitting my car. Of course, I didn't get off the car. That would have been stupid and dangerous. What did I do? I had left some space between my car and the one on front. The guy was kicking my car on the right side. I put the gear on reverse, catching the guy between my car and his, and rolled him between the two like a freaking burrito. The guy fell to the ground, I never knew how bad he was hurt or not. I suppose that not too bad, because my car didn't even show a small bump or dent, so it couldn't have applied much force to the man's body. I don't care much, either. After going on reverse for a few meters, I shifted to 1st, turned left and left the place.

You should get to know your car and what it's capable of. 180 degree turns using the hand brake isn't that hard and after a day or two of practicing it you should be able to do it easily. If someone is chasing you and the situation is serious, suddenly hitting the brakes will bust the chasing car's front, ruining the radiator and engine. You'll crash your back side but your car will still work, his won't.

Cars blocking the road (kidnapers, thieves) should be avoided with a 180 degree turn, or

going on reverse fast and turning using the regular foot brake can also achieve a almost 180 degree turn. If you can't go back because they have cars cutting the road there too, don't crash your car as fast as you can "As seen on TV". What you should do is: SLOWLY, place the front bumper of your car against the back wheel axis of the car blocking the road (they usually place the car ACROSS the road to cover more area) and accelerate. The trunk compartment, the back part of the car, isn't nearly as heavy as the front part where the engine is, so it should turn quite easily when you accelerate. Shooting your handgun while maneuvering will keep them away from you while you do this.

These are just a couple of defensive driving techniques. If possible, take some defensive-dissuasive driving classes. They are almost as important as shooting classes, in my opinion. Almost forgot. As many, I like hearing music when driving, and I used to set it rather loud. I quickly found out this isn't the smartest thing to do, since you can't hear what is going on around you; shooting, people screaming, a car running out of control, for example. Keep the volume low so as to listen to what's going on around you. Or turn it off completely if you are in a high risk area.

Of course windows and doors must be closed at all times. Also try to keep at least half a tank full worth of gas in jerry cans. There are times when a roadblock will force you around alternative roads that you didn't count on. Extra fuel is nice to have. If room in the vehicle is an issue, have at least one small can. And, as always, keep eyes on the road. But not only for other cars and people, but for bumps on the street (that can sometimes be like craters) or rocks and other objects bad guys may put so as to make you crash or force you to stop. Your eyes should be focused much further away most of the time, so as to anticipate to this.

Part VII

Tea with aunt Sheeplly

"Why do you want to move to Spain? Here you can live much, much better. Her you can afford 3 maids, and a gardener, private school, private health and tennis lessons. You can live in what Europeans would consider a mansion".

The argument was an old one already. My mother, my aunt and my grandmother where having tea in my parents living room.

My mother was arguing with my aunt again. My father was gone before it even started. He went to fix something in the house as he usually does when my aunt is around. It's been years since he last had the patience to withstand even 5 minutes of the woman's narrow minded, sheep mentality ramble.

"Alicia, I don't care about how many gardeners or maids I can afford here. You can afford to have that many people working for you precisely because there is so much misery that people will almost work for food. I'd rather live in a country where I can safely walk the streets and not have a maid. Don't you see that the same reality that allows you to have 3 maids and a gardener is the one that can get you killed every time you walk out of your house?"

The argument went on and on, with my grandmother siding with my aunt. Not because she thinks that the reality of this country is good, no, but because she doesn't want to see one of her two daughters leave to a country at the other end of the world.

Most Spanish immigrants, like my grandparents, hate to see the new generations, sons and grandsons, leave to the country they once escaped from, because it promises greener pastures. They escaped hunger, civil war, and now, 50 years later, they want to go back? Old folks just don't understand that. They had to leave everything behind, family, possessions, to give their family a better life. And in those days you just didn't take a plane, my grand parents had to spend a month in a stinking boat to get here. They all remember that trip, and they just don't get used to the idea of, thanks to airplanes, being just 24 hours away.

For all of them, moving to Spain means that their loved ones are a month worth in a stinking boat away.

There are many like my aunt in this country. People that, surprisingly, don't fear SHTF, but actually look forward to it.

It means cheaper workers, cheaper services, and new exploitation opportunities. And I'm not only talking about locals, I'm talking about large international corps. as well.

What locals seem to ignore, or simply don't care, is that you still have to live WITH those that are in a much worse position. Maybe you are incredibly wealthy, yes, but wherever you go you will have to go with an armored car and bodyguards. You wont have freedom, not real one at least.

As I said before a number of times, people will surprise you for being incredible resourceful and /or incredibly stupid.

Most of the "Herd" will simply sail through life being happy that their favorite soccer team won the finals and that they can go have a couple of beers with their friends.

Notice that not much changed since the ancient Roman times, where the emperor claimed that you only have to give the population "circus and wine" to keep them content and under control.

People like my aunt, these are the fools that love vacationing in Brazil, and think that Cuba's communism is the greatest creation right next to sliced bread. They will come back from Cuba in love with the place. Oh! The resorts, the food, so many cheerful people. They seem to forget that if Cubans don't put a happy face they get executed, and that they have a great time because they are tourists with money that can afford to live like kings. Why don't they move over there without a penny, and live as Cubans really do? Let's see if the like pimping their wives and daughters to survive, lets see if the y like living like rats. Of course they don't.

Another issue I want to point out. SHTF such as political crisis or economical collapses take time to settle.

There wont be a declared SHTF day. Yes, there are events that are like landmarks, milestones in the course of history. But it will take time, society will change little by little, until the new reality is assimilated and accepted, consciously or not, by the entire population. After a few months, you'll se people talking about before and after certain event that changed their world. For you it may be S-11, for me it's life before and after the 1:1 (meaning the 1 dollar, 1 peso conversion) or life before and after the 2001 crisis. People use it on their daily conversations. " So, you've been to Hawaii?, wow!" , "Yes,

yes but we went back before the 1:1, now it's impossible to pay for such a trip", " Yes, too bad"

This time of uncertainty, until people accept that the world around them changed, takes time, months or even years, and it's a SLOW decline, slowly slipping down. One day you'll start seeing more people begging, more prostitutes, houses not painted, cars will start to look a little more shabby, because people don't have money to fix them, until one day you will tell yourself "wow, this wasn't like this 6-12 months ago." Things do not get accepted day over night, a SHTF event may occur in a matter of seconds, but it takes MONTHS to sink in.

That's why you should keep an open, independent mentality, and eyes and ears listening all around you, so as to stay ahead of the herd.

Financial security, and the ability to move:
The greatest survival trait.

Which brings me to my final consideration on survival, my final conclusion concerning surviving mayor crisis.

Money.

Yes, some paper money, gold, silver, but mostly money in accounts in a couple of "safe" countries and money invested in real estate.

We had people going from middle class to poor over here. We had people going through some terrible situations, and it's safe to say that those that fared better were those with solid finances.

Our society runs on money, people. Not only paper money, but accounts and virtual money. It would take a world wide collapse, practically the end of humanity for money to be useless as a concept.

A country, or several, even a continent can go down into misery, dragging it's local paper money with it, but the other end will rise proportionally. I truly believe this, and history also shows that there are always losers and winners, conquered and conquerors, the balance, the ying yang always remains.

A giant meteor could destroy earth and little green men could enslave us, yes, but in the infinite spectrum of possibilities, that scenario is the less likely one. I'd rather prepare for those that are more likely. And it's very likely that though your country can go down with an economical collapse, suffer civil war or natural disasters, you will probably have the possibility to escape to somewhere safe, greener pastures.

Hell!, that's what thousands of Argentines ultimately did, what my family did, and what I intend to do as soon as possible.

Just last week my parents told me that they ran across some old friends that recently moved to Spain. Bad guys broke into their home with them inside, don't know exactly what happened but it must have been ugly, so they got fed up of the insecurity and moved to Spain with their daughter.

I consider myself a citizen of the world, and have no problem to move if I must. I strongly suggest you think about this, because it may be the ultimate survival solution. While I do believe in the stronghold, retreat concept, I do not believe it is possible to fight off an entire starved, crazed nation.

If we are going to consider long term, permanent TEOTWAWKI, do consider moving to another country, far away, and plan accordingly. This means, having money in accounts, documents and passports ready, maybe even learn a second language.

Now that I think of it, a solid financial situation and making sure his kids had a worldly, ample mentality, was all my father did, unconsciously or not, to make sure his family survived, and he sure did succeed where millions of others failed. Considering he lived in a shack with earth floor when his parents moved from Spain 50 years ago, he sure did better than the rest.

My father's "survival arsenal" ? a 22 semi auto, a .22 revolver and a box of ammo, until I convinced him of buying a 1911. Still, we did ok. Savings and investing was the key to our survival.

The survivalist that has 5000-10000 bucks worth of weapons, years worth of food and a safe water source but no money invested anywhere is not doing things right. Even if you invest all you have on your retreat, and manage to get off the grid and live in your retreat without the need of anything else, you are pinning yourself down to one single point in the map, from which you can't move.

Look to what happened to an entire generation of Spanish. They fled Spain escaping civil war. Look at what we are now doing over here. Moving to Spain, escaping from a economical/political SHTF scenario. See a pattern here?

I know that some refuse to leave their country because of patriotism, but you still CAN be a patriot and still leave if you have to.

Many of the most dedicated fighters had to leave my country during the "Dirty War" civil war/dictatorship in the 70's. They were alive to come back and bring those dictators and murderers to justice, while those that stayed and fought simply got executed. Which would you rather be?

Save money, invest, travel, make new friends, visit those long lost parents in the old continent, they will be happy to see you, travel around and learn about different cultures, how to be flexible and adapt to them. This is, by far, the best advice I can give you all when it comes to bad, bad, SHTF.

Sometimes, you simply run out of options. Happened here, happened before, and happened in several places. It can happen to you.

A person is not a survivalist simply because he lives in the woods, wears camo all day long, and has always a rifle hanging from his shoulder and looking for trespassers to shoot. That is not what I want in life, and that is not what I consider a flexible, adaptable person. In my humble opinion, the survivalist can feel as comfortable in the woods as in a cocktail party surrounded by sheep. He can play both games, he can adapt. He's a person that can smile back at those that think differently and keep his convictions to himself if needed. A person that cannot tolerate the presence of others that are not like him has a limited adaptation capability and therefore is limited when it comes to survival. Maybe he's great at wild life survival, but not at the real world, society surviving. He's good at the kind of survival required to survive a plane crash in the Amazons, which is great, but he can't deal with society and other people.

You have to get over the idea of the retreat being the ultimate, final survival answer to a crisis. That's incorrect. The final, terminal solution is to leave the country or region. And that requires some social skills and savings. Keep that in mind before you spend every

single penny you have on the ultimate retreat. Before anyone beats me in the head with a cinder block, the retreat/bug in house is very important, yes, it's the semi-last solution, it's the place that keeps you safe through small and medium crisis (which are more likely than big time SHTF), and it's also your home, the place you are more than likely to spend the rest of your life in if nothing goes WAY down the swage. But when TSHTF in a large scale, you have to get out, as many of you advised me to do.

Final thought: A Message of Hope

Finally, I want to give a message of hope to you all, and remind you and me both that survival is about surviving, but not for the mere fact of living, but to live happy, rich lives.

Prepare because it's the smart thing to do, and not because you are looking forward to SHTF and other disasters.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that TSHTF will be a brand new start for you, and that all your problems will just go away and you'll have a new start in the brave new world.

It doesn't work that way. Quite the contrary, everything will get worse, small problems will turn into bigger, more serious problems. If you have drinking problems, you'll drink more, if you can't keep a job, you'll spend years unemployed, if you have a disease, you'll see that it's harder to get attention and medications. Again everything gets WORSE.

Someone once asked me, "How is it that you can't shoot a criminal 200 meters away, but police don't do anything to stop them?"

SHTF, whatever type of crisis it may be, isn't fair. It will be absolutely unfair.

You'll have good, honest people starving, while corrupt ones make profit, you won't have a cop to protect you but they sure will come after you when a criminal presses false charges against you. That's the way it works.

So, anyone looking forward to TEOTWAWKI for a fresh start, better think again, and get your life straighten out NOW.

Survivalists are often considered as dark fatalists, doomsday worshipers. This is not so, the real survivalist should not be like this.

Negative people will have a hard time dealing with a crisis. It takes a positive, good natured person to make it through.

Know that there are dangers, and situations you can not predict and prepare as best as you can for them. But never forget to live life at it's fullest. You and I, we don't know how long we have on this Earth, so make the best out of it, each passing minute.

A survivalist should not be a pessimist, he should always be positive, happy and enjoying life more than anyone else because he understands that each minute of peace we have is precious and unique, and he never takes it for granted.

The way I see it, the survivalist is a vital, fit, ever curious, good humored person. He's fit because he takes care of his body, and his body takes care of him, he's curious, because he thinks that it's important to learn new things all the time, and he enjoys learning, he

has a good humor because he's sure of himself, and treats others the way he wants to be treated.

That's how we should behave. Being a survivalist is 90% mental attitude. And even if SHTF does not occur in our life, that attitude makes our life more rich and fulfilling.

There are things in life we can control and others we can't, the survivalist way of thinking makes sure we control those we can and accept those we cant.

So, if you have that mentality, either by having a fully independent homestead or simply a few funds, some supplies, a couple of weapons and bug out bags, set that chin a little higher, walk a little bit straighter, no mater if you are a doctor or accountant, trucker or plumber, be proud my friend, because you are a dyeing breed.

You are, without a doubt, a better person.

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