

SPY + SURVIVAL BRIEFING

LIFESAVING STRATEGIES FROM FORMER CIA AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS PERSONNEL

APPLYING COVERT SURVIVAL PRINCIPLES IN THE REAL-WORLD

How Almost Drowning Taught Me How to Escape a Violent Mob

By Michael D.

Former Clandestine Officer, CIA, DIA, NSA

After weeks of Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape (SERE) training in the mountains, the pool adventure looked like it was going to be much more fun.

A parachute canopy floated on the water's surface like a pool cover. The goal was simple: Get into the pool, go to the center of the canopy, and get back out again. We opted to skip the training segment. We figured this would be easy. The trainers knew we would think that.

But, once you're under the center of the canopy, you find that you are being held down by it and by the water that's exerting surface tension downward. As you try to move



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out from the center, the parachute cords catch around your arms and legs. The canopy begins to encase you like a cocoon. You're fighting to breathe and can't figure out which direction you're going.

You spend panicked energy trying to untangle from the paracord and canopy. You become tied up in a knot of silk and paracord. You're trapped and disoriented. The canopy becomes a fabric coffin.

This training taught me a valuable lesson because the way to escape was to move slowly, deliberately and follow a single paracord line from the center of the canopy out

to its edge. Moving with a plan and destination prevents panic, disorientation and becoming entangled.

Several years later, on an operation in Europe, that training saved my life.

I was tailing a target, focused on

"A parachute canopy floated on the water's surface like a pool cover."

staying at a “discreet/not-to-lose” distance. This required me to keep an unbroken line of sight on the package while not being seen.

But, I was over-focused on the target and didn’t notice that he was heading into an agitated crowd. When I finally realized that I wasn’t in a crowd, but rather an angry mob, I was already in too deep to try and go around it. Things turned violent in a flash.

People hurled rocks and bottles, often striking their fellow rioters. These assaults brought immediate retaliation and escalated into a mob-wide brawl. I was right smack-dab in the middle of the whole mess.

Suddenly, my mind flashed back to the canopy training. So, instead of being swept along in the crowd of rioters, I used my training to find a way out. I started from where I was and followed a straight line out of the chaos. I was less interested in where I was going and more interested in getting out of where I was. By focusing on a straight line to get out of there and not deviating, I quickly escaped the danger zone.

So, here's the simple lesson: If you find yourself somehow caught in a mob, or riot, don't get swept up by what is going on right around you. Don't be the guy under the canopy twirling himself into a silk and paracord burrito. Instead, look to

the horizon, pick a distinct destination, and head straight for it. You may get pushed and shoved off course, but don't pick a new exit, simply course-correct.

If you get knocked down, whether to your knees or all the way to the ground, get up as fast as possible. Do not curl up into a fetal position and hope to go unharmed. You will end up kicked, stomped and trampled. Get up!

If someone hits you, dodge the blow as best you can and keep moving. It will be tempting to knock out the fool who hit you, but that will delay your escape and could spark a fight with others around you.

"People hurled rocks and bottles, often striking their fellow rioters."

As hard as it is, avoid becoming emotionally involved. Don't think about the philosophy of the riot, don't get angry at your captors,

don't panic. Do not give them control over your emotions, thoughts or feelings. Keep moving until you've escaped.

The bottom line is, my approach to planning for mob or riot events is two pronged. First, I try to avoid it. If I can't avoid it, then my second move is to escape as quickly as possible using the skills described above.

VSSL First Aid Kit

VSSL Outdoor Utility Tools launched in 2014 with the idea of placing survival items within the space normally occupied by batteries in a flashlight. And, this is exactly what they have done with their first aid kit. It is completely waterproof and comes in a sleek, compact design in a “flashlight” body.

A triple LED lamp tops a military-grade aluminum tubular body, while an oil-filled compass caps the opposite end. The body is 9-inches long and 2-inches in diameter. The entire unit feels solid and the first aid kit is tightly rolled in a nylon organizer and stuffed into the flashlight body. The kit includes:

- 4 large bandages
- 4 knuckle bandages
- 2 packages of 3M Steri-Strips
- 2 disposable thermometers
- 4 antiseptic towelettes
- 1 pack Celox hemostatic agent
- 2 antibiotic cream packs
- 2 burn cream packs
- 4 aspirin
- 4 ibuprofen
- Tweezers
- Emergency whistle
- 4 safety pins
- 1 large sterile gauze pad
- 1 pair of medical gloves
- 1 roll of adventure tape appropriate for repairs, trail marking and first aid.

All items are good quality and include brand names like 3M, Curad, Bayer, Advil, and Celox. This first aid kit is appropriate for one or two people and is good for a bug out bag or vehicle glove compartment and comes with a lifetime warranty.

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READYING YOURSELF FOR ANYTHING

A Simple Blueprint For Building a Homemade IFAK

By Dr. Omar Hamada
Special Operations Physician

Today, it seems like we need to be ready for almost anything. You need to be ready to hole up for 2 or 3 months at a time, ready to defend your home and your family. And, you need to be ready to react if you are caught out in a situation that warrants a rapid reaction that could result in injury to you or those around you. So, you need to be able to tend to wounds and injuries wherever you are.

In recent years, the term IFAK has become quite popular. IFAK stands for “Individual First Aid Kit.” It differs from a larger, heavier trauma bag. Instead, an IFAK allows you to quickly and easily manage life-threatening injuries in the field. This way, you can evacuate/escape to a safer environment before seeking more definitive care.

So, how do you put an IFAK together? Well, you could buy one online. Problem is, most times you don't know exactly what you'll get. And if your kit is filled with stuff that doesn't work, you could be in real trouble. This is why I am going to walk you through putting together a solid IFAK that is portable and easy to use.

The first thing you want to do is decide what you need your IFAK for. There is a simple mnemonic we use that addresses the major issues that can kill you quickly - M.A.R.C.H. It stands for Massive hemorrhage, Airway, Respiratory, Circulation, Hypothermia. You'll want to make sure your IFAK covers these primary killers.



Use a portable, tactical, MOLLE-compatible pack made from ballistic denier 1050 nylon. Some think 1680 is better because it's a bigger number. But it isn't. It's single ply and fails more readily.

Your use and need will determine your IFAK's size. This isn't a trauma kit. You want this portable, so think smaller. Something you can throw over one shoulder or even attach to a belt.

"Use a portable, tactical, MOLLE-compatible pack made from ballistic denier 1050 nylon."

Next, you'll need two Gen 7 CAT tourniquets to stop a massive hemorrhage involving an extremity. Include a pair of trauma shears. I like the excellent Leatherman Raptor if you want to splurge, otherwise a \$7 pair will do. You'll also need a latex-free nasal trumpet (a.k.a. a nasopharyngeal airway) and a couple of single use KY packets.

Add 2 T.O.C.S. chest seals for pen-

etrating chest injuries or a tension pneumothorax — one occlusive and one vented. A T3 trauma bandage, a Quikclot hemostatic dressing, a space/hypothermia blanket, a Sharpie permanent marker, and some REACT-911 casualty cards. Be sure to throw in a few pairs of nitrile gloves and a roll of medical tape.

Stage everything inside so you can deploy it with one hand. Remember, when you open a bag in a tactical environment, everything inside either turns to a rabbit and runs away or gets stuck and won't let go. Plan accordingly.

The most important thing is to actually carry it and train using your IFAK. It does you no good if you leave it at home or have no idea how to apply a chest seal or use the tourniquets — especially one handed. Be prepared and practice!

BEGINNING OF THE END FOR COINS IN OUR CURRENCY?

The National Coin Shortage of 2020

By Forest Hamilton
Universal Coin & Bullion

A few weeks ago, I saw a photo on Facebook of a sign that read: "Our Country is Currently Experiencing a National Coin Shortage. If possible, please use your credit card, debit card, correct change, or other forms of payment. We apologize for the inconvenience."

At first, I laughed. Then I began to wonder if it was real. But before I could verify if this was more fake news, a few emotions hit me...

Fear. Fear there was a real coin shortage. That the pandemic had gone from making toilet paper and meat disappear, to making pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters disappear. What would that mean for the future? Was it another form of government control? Did they want me to have to use my credit

and debit card so that they could track my every purchase? Was this another attack on my privacy and free trade? Was it all planned?

Humor. I began to laugh at the rabbit hole my thoughts were tumbling down. The reality is that all of my thoughts were possible, but without doing research, I couldn't make sound decisions moving forward.

Curiosity. They say curiosity killed the cat, but I believe it's the key to many of life's secrets. It's how we choose to focus our curiosity that dictates whether it helps or hurts us. Curiosity can create awareness, opportunity for knowledge and confidence. And that is what I was seeking.

In the weeks since coin shortage signs started popping up, I have spoken to hundreds of my clients all over America. A great number of you share my initial thoughts and feelings and here's what you need to know:

On June 11th, the Federal Reserve acknowledged the COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted the "normal circulation patterns for U.S. coinage." The Fed wrote, "In the past few months, coin deposits from depository institutions to the Federal Reserve have declined significantly and the U.S. Mint's production of coins also decreased due to measures put in place to protect its employees. The Federal Reserve is working on several fronts to mitigate the effects of low coin inventories."

In a recent Forbes article, the Assistant Professor in the finance division of the Columbia Business School, Yiming Ma, said that de-

scribing the current coin circulation disruption as a coin shortage isn't entirely accurate. "A disruption is a better way to describe it," Ma said. "It's reflecting the fact that, once circulation is resumed, these disruptions will ease out."

Ma went on to say that businesses that primarily take coins, like laundromats, vending machines and car washes, likely stopped operating during the pandemic. These businesses are key components in getting coins back to banks to redistribute into the economy. Since they weren't receiving coins, the flow had been significantly reduced.

"Did they want me to have to use my credit and debit card so that they could track my every purchase?"

What this all means is that yes, there is a national coin shortage. But, it will likely resolve once lockdowns end and business ramps up

again. And while I can't say for certain whether this is all part of a grand scheme to fleece us of our freedoms, rights, and privacy, I do know that more people are calling me every day about gold and silver coins as protection against uncertainty. If you have any questions that I can answer for you, please let me know. I'm always happy to share advice from my 20+ years in the business.

[Publisher's Note: For questions about buying gold and silver coins you can contact Forest Hamilton directly at foresthilton@universalcoin.com or call 800-822-4653. Please know, if you purchase any coins from Forest, we don't receive any compensation from him. We simply know he's one of the good guys in the business that can be trusted.]



SAVINT YOUR MONTHLY SAVINGS INTELLIGENCE

This month, you can discover the 7-second test that shows whether you've got survival food that is quality or that could make you very sick. (This is the information the big companies pray you never see.) Plus, I'll show you the survival food I trust for my wife and kids and why I had to rely on it during a devastating situation. All of the details are at www.SpyFoodStorage.com.

SHOTS FIRED! WILL YOU SURVIVE?

Simple Tips For Escaping the Kill Zone When Gunfire Erupts

By EJ Snyder

Former Army Ranger & Extreme Survivalist

When I was in the 1991 Gulf War, up-armored Humvees did not exist and so we prepared the best we could. We lined the floorboards and cargo space with sandbags and attached any scrap metal we could find to the sides. Some guys even sat on their Flak Jackets.

Then, back in Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2004, we only had a few up-armored vehicles in the Battalion. So, my experience and success in survivability from 13 years earlier came into play. On top of homemade armor, I insisted we practice reaction drills, so if we got ambushed we'd have a better chance of surviving.

One day, we drove down a corridor and a string of bullets lashed out at us. Everyone ducked below the windows and our "Mad Max" armor to prevent giving the attackers a clear target. Even the driver was down as low as he could be and was taking evasive maneuvers. Thankfully, the entire convoy was able to clear the kill zone safely, with no injuries. All because we knew exactly what to do when the gunfire started.

The blunt truth is, in today's world, gunfire could break out anywhere, at any time, for any reason. You could be caught between rival gangs trying to settle a score or in a riot where someone pulls out a gun and starts shooting in the mob of people. Whatever the reason, keeping your wits about you and follow-



ing a plan may be the only thing that keeps you alive.

In all the scenarios I am about to discuss, the main point is to clear the kill zone as fast and as safely as possible. Your goal is to get out alive - period. We will discuss what to do if gunfire erupts while you're on foot, in a crowd, in a vehicle or inside of a building.

"One day, we drove down a corridor and a string of bullets lashed out at us."

If you're in a crowd and shooting starts, the first thing you should do is get as low to the ground as possible. This will lessen

your silhouette and present less of a target to the shooter. Second, try to identify where or in what direction the shooting is coming from. Once you know where the firing may be coming from, you can plan your direction of escape.

The big issue with crowds is that they can be very tightly packed,

making it almost impossible to move. People will be panicking and running every which way. You don't! You must keep your wits about you.

Next, look for some kind of cover or concealment. Remember, cover can stop a bullet, concealment only hides you. So, get to cover if you can and only settle for concealment if you must. From there, you need to plan an escape route, looking for things you can run to and get behind to keep you safe. Listen to the gunfire and although difficult, try to count shots so you have an idea when the assailant may be changing magazines or switching firearms. Between 20 to 30 rounds counted is a good number to use. Once you commit to move, run as fast as you can, and continue this way until you have cleared the kill zone.

When you're on foot and gunfire starts, take the exact same actions as above to get out of dodge as fast



as you can. There may be a lot less people in the area, which means you'll be easier to spot and target, so head for cover as soon as you know where the gunman is firing from. Then, make your plan, count rounds, and move out of the area until you are safe.

If you're in a vehicle when shooting starts, how you should react depends on whether you are a passenger or the driver. As a passenger, when you hear gunfire, immediately duck below the window line. This way, the gunman can't see your silhouette. Next, try to get as low to the floorboard as possible and curl up. Car doors are hollow, so the door will only slow down the bullet, not stop it. Getting low may prevent you from getting shot through the door.

If you are the driver and you hear gunfire, you need to look ahead and find a clear and safe route out of the area. Once you see your route, duck as low behind the wheel as you can and get out of the area. Be aware that other vehicles may be trying to do the same thing. So keep focused, because you don't want to crash and disable your vehicle in the kill zone. But don't worry about dings, dents or scratches to your car. This is about

saving your life and the lives of your passengers.

Now, if you are completely stuck and you can't move your vehicle, you need to identify where the shooting is coming from, then everyone should exit the vehicle on the opposite side of the gunman. Get behind the wheels for cover. Make your plan. Count the rounds. Then start your escape from the area until you are out of the kill zone and safe.

If you're inside a building when gunfire erupts, remember to run to safety as outlined above. But, if you are cut off and forced to stay in the area, find a good safe place to hide. Lock yourself in somewhere. If possible, barricade the door. Stay quiet and turn your cell phone to silent immediately. While hiding, if you don't already have one, find some kind of weapon to defend yourself with. Remember, if you're forced to fight, this is life or death. Hit the gunman in vulnerable locations to hopefully incapacitate him and then run like hell.

All of the information above is easy to plan and remember. When I

was in the Army, we always practiced battle and reaction drills so that they were second nature. You should do the same whenever possible. At a minimum, go over for yourself or with friends or loved ones, what to do in any of the above situations. Talk through the situation and how to respond and make sure everyone at least has a good mental game plan for each scenario.

Next, practice by running simulated scenarios to sharpen your reaction skills. You can do this by walk-

ing in an urban area and using a code word (other than gunfire, or gunman, etc.). You want to practice, not cause alarm or panic.

Once someone says the code word, look for cover and practice planning escape routes.

Finally, always try to maintain situational awareness. Be aware of what's going on around you. And, if you suspect or know you are going someplace where one of the scenarios above could happen, you have two choices. Either don't go or be ready and willing to execute any of the plans we've discussed here.

"Once you see your route, duck as low behind the wheel as you can and get out of the area."

A STRANGER IS TAKING PICTURES OF YOUR CAR OR LICENSE PLATE

What Should You Do?

By Jason Hanson
Former CIA Officer

Not too long ago, a man was arrested after he threw a bottle at someone taking a photo of his license plate at a Publix grocery store in The Villages, Florida. The victim was parked in a handicapped spot when he noticed a black Saturn chasing a white Lincoln SUV around the Publix parking lot.

The driver of the Saturn was 18-year-old Kerry B. He yelled obscenities, threw items and flipped his middle finger at the other vehicle.

When the cars stopped, the victim went over and attempted to take a picture of the Saturn's license plate. But, Kerry began to yell at and confront the person. Then he threw a plastic bottle at the person, hitting him in the face.

Kerry was arrested on a charge of

battery on a person over the age of 65 and booked at the Sumter County Detention Center.

In this instance, the victim was snapping the license plate picture in case Kerry fled the scene. But, there are many reasons someone may want to take a photo of your car or license plate. Perhaps they think you committed a crime, were driving aggressively or suspect you of damaging property and trying to flee.

But what exactly should you do if you notice someone taking pictures of your car or license plate? I would advise trying the polite option first. From a safe distance, I would ask the person taking the pictures, "Is everything okay?" I would not jump out of your car and confront them and escalate the situation. Don't say, "What in

the world are you doing?" They may have good intentions that you aren't aware of and you need to get the facts about what's really going on.

"Then he threw a plastic bottle at the person, hitting him in the face."

If you are driving your vehicle and you notice someone taking a picture of your car,

don't stop. Just keep driving and if you have someone else in the car, they can always take a picture of the car taking a picture of you, just to be safe.

Keep in mind, if your car is in a public space or visible from a public space, a photographer has a legal right to take a picture of it. They also have the right to photograph you or the license plate on your car. And you have no right or ability to stop them from photographing your car. You can ask them why they took the photograph, but you have no right to demand an answer, nor do they have to answer your question.

At the end of the day, remember to be polite and kind if you see someone taking a picture of your car. I know you may want to strangle them, but it won't do any good. You can always document the person who is taking the picture and go to police if you think something nefarious is going on. Of course, always be prepared in case the person goes crazy, which is why I carry a Sig Sauer P365 (loaded with Speer Gold Dot) in my pocket, a tactical pen clipped to my pants pocket and a stiletto knife clipped to the other pants pocket.



SELF-DEFENSE FOR RIOT SCENARIOS

Two Concepts to Stay Safe Against a Potential Mass Attack

By Matt Numrich

Head Instructor Of Spy Black Belt

Social distancing may be easier when you're in a Costco or Wal-Mart, with specific directions posted to wear masks and maintain six feet of separation.

But, how do you properly “distance” yourself when caught in the middle of a mob who care more about their cause than your safety? When it comes down to it, we can't allow ourselves to be swallowed up by a swarm of hyper-emotional people. The wrong look to just one of them could trigger a dozen people to turn on you and dole out a vicious beating. That is why you need to be aware of your surroundings and proactive in your tactics.

I live outside of Phoenix (a short drive from Scottsdale, Arizona). It's not a “hot spot” for unrest, but we did see a few protests, small riots and some looting. However, there were plenty of news reports and

rumors that these gatherings might happen in the days and hours before they occurred. So, we were given prior knowledge that specific areas could be dangerous and should be avoided.

If you have information that an area may turn dangerous, obviously don't put yourself in the middle of it. Too many people think it “won't happen,” and end up in needless trouble. If you have forewarning and still need to travel, take a different route.

You can do this on vacation too. While traveling abroad with my family, we use simple things such as checking the US government's travel alerts and watching both world and local news to keep tabs on any civil unrest we need to be aware of. You too can use these same strategies to gather this basic knowledge.

But, sometimes you won't get advanced warning of a mob and so you need some basic “everyday

carry” (EDC) items on your person at all times. When it comes to social unrest and riots, you want easy access to a weapon (i.e. gun, knife or tactical pen), some hidden money (\$20–100) and a bandana or scarf to wear to help blend in with protesters (until you can escape), protect yourself from chemical agents, and bandage up wounds. This simple kit could be lifesaving.

In the event you find yourself stuck in a riot, two concepts can help you survive. The first is “Inside to Outside and Keep Moving.” The worst place to be is in the middle of a mass of angry people. You're vulnerable to attacks from every angle. Always work toward the outside of the mass of dangerous people. This way, you can keep everyone in front of you and see potential trouble coming. The point is not to stay there, but to keep moving. A moving target is harder to attack, so keep moving out of the crowd until you fully escape the danger.

The second concept is for when you absolutely have to engage. It's my favorite self-defense move. I call it a “stomp kick.” It's a powerful move which can push people back several feet where they end up on the ground. To perform it, bring up your rear knee as high as you can. Then kick straight out (not up), landing as much of the sole of your foot on the center mass of the opponent as possible. Quickly return your foot to where it started and repeat, if necessary. But, as soon as you can, escape from the area and your attacker will likely still be on the ground in pain. Hopefully, you never find yourself in this type of situation, but you can never say never these days.

