

SPY + SURVIVAL BRIEFING

LIFESAVING STRATEGIES FROM FORMER CIA AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS PERSONNEL

CAN'T HAPPEN HERE? THEY JUST ADMITTED IT...

How to Access the Internet When the Government Censors It

By Jason Hanson

Former CIA Officer

Recently, as Cuba erupted in street protests, the communist government has taken steps to block internet access since the country has a single internet provider. This means Cubans use government-controlled internet, making it easy for the communists to shut down or censor information.

In fact, the entire country's internet went offline for about 30 minutes one day during the protests. Many Cubans use apps such as WhatsApp and Signal to communicate with their loved ones in the U.S. When internet access was restored, the government had blocked specific apps, including WhatsApp.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 3** Wall Street Jumps Into Gold Coin Market
- 4** One Way Modern Technology Has Made Us Weak
- 5** Shock, Awe and Friendly Fire at a Government Shooting Range
- 7** A Neglected Facet of Hand-To-Hand Combat
- 8** Facing Down Most Men's Greatest Fear

As the protests continued, the country has seen more widespread internet censorship. But Cuba (of course) isn't alone. Countries like China, Iran and Venezuela have also severely limited internet access during protests.

Hopefully, you live in a country that doesn't censor your internet access. Yet, if you ever find yourself in a country where websites are blocked, here are a few things you can do.

First, be sure to use a VPN. While



"Many Cubans use apps such as WhatsApp and Signal to communicate."

VPNs have many benefits, a crucial benefit for avoiding government censorship is your IP address. A VPN can provide you with an IP address in another country, which makes it look as though you are in a different location. And, if the website thinks you are in another country, it won't trigger the website's geo-blocking. VPNs should be used for everyday internet browsing even from your home because it can help keep your information secure. I use Proton VPN these days.



Second, use a SmartDNS. This is technology that is based on using your DNS (Domain Name Server) to unblock geo-restricted websites. The difference between a VPN and a DNS is that a DNS usually doesn't encrypt your traffic — it only reroutes information about your location, so it doesn't provide any security from hackers. But the advantage to using a DNS is that it won't slow down your internet speed as many VPNs do. If you are interested in a DNS, consider looking into Getflix.

Finally, you can use a proxy. But be warned, using a proxy will work in a pinch, but it isn't a good long-term solution. So, if you absolutely need to access a blocked website, a proxy can help. But it should only be done as a last resort because it's the least secure method. A proxy will hide your IP address to disguise your location, but it doesn't encrypt your internet traffic.

This is why proxies aren't as secure as a VPN — they're a good option

"A proxy will hide your IP address to disguise your location."

when you need to get around internet restrictions, but it won't do anything if you are trying to browse the internet anonymously. If you must use a proxy, consider checking out SmartProxy. You'll have to pay to use SmartProxy, but I add it here because many of the free proxies are just too unsecure to even recommend.

Obviously, Cuba won't be the last government to restrict internet access. It occurs more often than most people realize. The Twitter block in China is one of the most famous examples. We've also seen Turkey block access to social media in an attempt to stop protests. And with the way things are going in the United States with this current administration admitting they're working with big tech to silence "misinformation," you never know when you'll need these tips. So, if you find yourself in a place where the internet is restricted, these tools can help you get the information you need.

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BlackPoint Tactical Chest Rig

Chest carrying has long been a popular solution when belt carrying your firearm isn't an option. A quality chest system you might want to consider is the BlackPoint Outback Chest System. It's made in the USA with a sleek design, using lightweight materials to provide comfort to the user.

The system features a static buckle strap for easy on/off, an adjustable shoulder strap, a Kydex holster, and an adjustable harness system. The holster has adjustable retention and mounting attachments on all four sides, allowing you to adjust the angle of the holster to fit your needs. A sweat guard extends from the top of the holster, between the body and firearm. This protects both the gun from sweat and your body from the gun. Plus, the bungee strap provides flexibility for movement and breathing without affecting your draw.

The strap comes in coyote or black colors. The holster comes in black, green, grey, and coyote, and is available for most popular handguns. The BlackPoint Outback Chest System won't replace your everyday carry holster. But, it sure can make carrying your pistol a lot easier while on the move, so you may want to add it to your bug out gear if this is something that interests you.

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WALL STREET JUMPS INTO GOLD COIN MARKET

How This Historic Shift Could Impact Your Investments

By Forest Hamilton
Universal Coin & Bullion

I want to start by thanking you for all the feedback on my two month RV trip. But I won't be releasing part-two of my "RV There Yet?" series this month because there are certain moments in history people need to know about and we're in one of them.

For the majority of my 24+ year career, I have been overjoyed with the performance of the coins I have placed in my clients' hands. And the primary reasons that gold, silver, and certified coin investments have done so well is relatively simple.

First, precious metals and certified coins work on the oldest and most consistent economic law in existence, supply and demand. No matter what is happening in the world, if the demand (or perceived future demand) for gold and silver coins is higher than the supply (or perceived future supply) the value goes up. Currently, demand is outpacing the supply of gold and silver coins, which is a significant factor in the recent rise.

Second, gold and silver are widely accepted as the best inflation hedges in existence. At almost any point in history, an ounce of gold has been able to buy nearly the same amount of goods and services. This is largely due to dollar devaluation.

As our government continues to print money to bail us out of pandemics, poor policy and terrible spending habits, the dollar will continue to fall and inflation will continue to rise. And, inflation isn't coming, it's already here. Our real inflation rate is averaging over 1% per month this year.

One of the least talked about, but

most important factors in the gold and silver coin market is how small the market is (compared to stock or real estate markets). An illustration I like to use is this: If the stock market is like the ocean, and the gold market is like a lake, then the certified coin market is like a swimming pool.

If I dropped a Cadillac full of money in the ocean, nobody would notice. Drop that same Cadillac in a lake and you might see some small waves on the shore. But drop that Caddy in a swimming pool and the effect would be significant. Simply put, it takes less money to move a smaller supply.

And this leads me to why I wrote this article rather than continuing my RV odyssey. Wall Street has made a major move into the certified gold and silver coin market and I believe it is some of the biggest news of my career.

Blackstone, a major investment firm that managed almost \$620 billion in investments in 2020, recently bought a majority stake in CCG (Certified Collectibles Group) who is the parent company of NGC (Numismatic Guaranty Corporation), one of the leading certified coin grading companies in the world.

This is only the second time in history that Wall Street has seized on opportunities in the gold and silver coin market and the first time had staggering effects on the value of the coin market.

One year after Black Monday (the stock market crash of 1987), Merrill Lynch set up its \$25 million Athena Fund to invest in rare coins.

"Wall Street has made a major move into the certified gold and silver coin market."

Following Merrill's lead, many more rare coin funds began popping up. Among them, Shearson Lehman Hutton Inc. got involved and my mentor, Mike Fuljenz, helped supply them with over \$1 million dollars per month in rare coins for their fund.

The results were significant. The PCGS 3000 Index (like the Dow Jones for rare coins) went up over 660% over the next 4 years. The sale of CCG and the recent buyout of PCGS (Professional Coin Grading Service - the other prominent certified coin company) by a group of investors has underlined the fact that certified coins are now more desirable to mainstream investors.

In fact, major firms are paying top dollar to take a sizable stake in the market. This means more millionaires and billionaires will be entering the rare coin market that NGC and PCGS serve. I believe that other Wall Street firms and investment groups will soon follow suit and stake their claims in the certified gold and silver market, raising interest, excitement and prices to levels not seen in decades. In other words, now is the time to act if you've ever considered investing in rare coins.

[Publisher's Note: For questions about buying gold and silver coins you can contact Forest Hamilton directly at foresthamilton@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.]

ONE WAY MODERN TECHNOLOGY HAS MADE US WEAK

Could You Survive This If It Happened Today? (Your Dad Could)

By EJ Snyder

Former Army Ranger and Extreme Survivalist

I was 8 years old and out hunting with my father in upstate New York early one winter morning. After four hours, I became very cold and my dad told me to go back to the cabin. He said to just follow our tracks in the snow as my guide back.

So, off I went, but soon it began to snow heavily and within ten minutes, the tracks were all covered up. I had no idea where I was or where I had to go. I was officially lost. I was frightened with no means of finding my way because I didn't even have a compass. I started to cry, but knew that wasn't going to help me. So, I focused on what scouting had taught me.

Since I was dressed in an orange snow suit, I saw a huge boulder that was a good ten feet high and I climbed to the top. I looked at the tracks I made in the snow and started yelling "Dad!" in that direction over and over again.

Thankfully, my dad was on his way back too and called back to

me. When I saw him, the thing that stood out to me was the shiny object in his hand - his compass.

Today, we have navigation systems, GPS, and maps on our phones to help guide us. We've given up on using a traditional Road Atlas or the Local AAA Maps to get us from A to B. Even in the woods, many folks have abandoned a traditional compass for an electronic direction genie.

Don't get me wrong. All these things are amazing and make life easier, but you need to be prepared for finding your way without all the latest technology. You must have a backup plan and a few trusted options to find your way.

When I was out on the Graded Land Navigation course in Ranger School, my issued compass broke after I took a fall. I was only two-thirds of the way to my first of five checkpoints in a timed event, where the distance between each point was large. Thankfully, I had a wrist compass attached to my watch, and I had become very good at map reading and honing a directional sense. So, with a trusty

back up compass, Ranger Pace count beads and my map, I finished the course and got a passing mark.

Since then, I've been in countless battles in the military and adventures in the wild where having a compass has literally saved my life. Folks would benefit by shutting down the electronics and learning the old ways of map and compass use. Having these skills will go a long way when you need a backup plan or your batteries go out or (heaven forbid) an EMP hits. I, for one, never leave home without a compass and a map.

So, here are my suggestions for three of the top compasses out there: Suunto MC2 Global Compass, Cammenga 3H Tritium Military Compass (I grew up and trained on this type, so I'm biased), and the Silva Ranger (a Ranger School favorite).

All these are great compasses, but with every piece of equipment comes some training and lots of practice to master it for use when you need it most. And, because I like to have backups for my backups, I also use wrist compasses and my trusty Ranger pace beads. I've used the pace beads my entire career as a Light Infantryman to keep my pace count and distance travelled.

Knowing how to find your way without an electronic device can be lifesaving. It will give you confidence that if you are ever out in the wilderness and get disoriented, that you can find your way back. For a few dollars you can get a valuable piece of gear that can easily fit in your pocket (or on your wrist) and, when you need it most, it can show you the way.



SHOCK, AWE AND FRIENDLY FIRE AT A GOVERNMENT SHOOTING RANGE

The Courage to Act Even When You're Unprepared

By Michael D.

*Former Clandestine Officer, CIA,
DIA, NSA*

Pat had arranged a day at the Spec Ops open firing range near Ft. Meade, MD. (Meade is the Headquarters for the National Security Agency, my previous employer).

As a former NSA Ops Officer, I had a fair amount of experience on that open range. In fact, it was less than a mile from the Secret Service Sniper Range where I had been introduced to the amazing and complex field of sniper operations (I say introduced because it would be hyperbole to suggest that I am trained as a sniper).

Prior to this, my most recent training on this range was the Practical Pistol Course and my instructor was a federal agent with



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vast experience including military security service in combat actions. He was well qualified, but his real claim to fame was that he was truly experienced. While training me, he recounted the thoughts and feelings that rushed through his mind during real-life gunfights.

This was during one of my earlier experiences as a clandestine operator in the CIA's Hard Targets Unit of the Joint Clandestine Collections Group.

I was still getting to know the guys, so we were all displaying our bravado like war medals on our chests. We were ringed by a large contingency of the CIA's Security Services who provided the response vehicles. They brought out armored response vans, field medical service vehicles, and lots of security personnel.

It worked out that as Pat was scheduling our day at the range, the

"We were just there to 'train' on HK MP5, Uzi, AK-47, M-4, Berettas, revolvers..."

Agency's field response units were also looking for an opportunity to conduct some joint training. So, as with any US Government activity, it grew from six guys doing live fire and open range maneuvers into a multi-agency production. Some administrator organized a strategy and planning session involving everyone but us operators — shocker, right?

When we arrived, there were scores of high-tech and armored response vehicles, planning and coordination tents, medical services canopies, etc. We thought we had shown up on the wrong range or on the wrong day.

We were just there to "train" on HK MP5, Uzi, AK-47, M-4, Berettas, revolvers, shotguns, flash bangs, smoke, etc. (i.e. have the absolute most fun six guys could have with an entire compliment of full-auto firearms on an unsupervised range

and virtually unlimited cases of ammo).

Instead, we had all of these adults with plans, procedures, and rules that were going to mess up everything. Their plan was to have us show up with no prior knowledge of the scenario (mission accomplished). They had devised a mock situation imitating a real-world event that had transpired a few years prior near a US Embassy in a country that we refer to as a "non-permissive environment."

The security forces were not there to aid us or provide any logistics, advice or firepower. They were there to observe how we dealt with a mock exercise that we had not trained for, prepared for, and flat out did not expect. They wanted to compare our instinctual responses and actions against their pre-planned, well-studied and considered engagement tactics.

Good thing we did not know we were being evaluated before we began the exercise or we would have surely botched everything. As it was, we thought we were just going to do our range play before these guys set up to do some special event exercise training. We had no idea we were not only involved, but were the premier protagonists in this little play.

As we were laying out our choice of toys — I mean, professionally selected weapons to be employed in the defense of lives, liberty, and oil rights — a senior (you could tell because he was older and all of his people formed up behind him) told us the plan:

"Men, there are three non-US CIA agents being held in that hot house. (Note: a hot house is a live-fire structure that is built and furnished like a real house, apartment, school

"They had devised a mock situation imitating a real-world event."



room, office building, airport terminal, aircraft, etc. You use live fire to clear and disable hostiles and rescue friendlies. Go get them out. You have 30 minutes."

Now, this is usually very well-rehearsed with highly trained professionals whose entire career is built on hostage rescue. However, they were trying to duplicate an ad-hoc crisis that had required locally and immediately available operators to extract high-value assets.

Of course, there were no real people in the hot house and no actual armed defenders. The point of them watching us was to see how we

would go about this without the proper training, tools, plans or leadership. The goal was that the Agency's Security Services could lay out some kind of response that could be taught and trained to non-HRT (Hostage Rescue Team) operators deployed around the world.

I have no idea what they thought of us or how we went about it, but I felt great about how we moved, shot and communicated.

We bonded during that exercise as though it was a real-world event, even though it turned out to be very anticlimactic. You see, when we breached the final room with flash bangs and cover fire, there were no assets to be rescued. No hero's welcome. No fanfare. No Hollywood moment of carrying them out on our shoulders in slow motion as the building burst into flames in the background.

All we got was the armorer reminding us to clean our weapons before returning them to the armory.

The bottom line is, none of us ever know what we might be called upon to do on any given day. The best way for us to prepare to conquer the unexpected is to accept challenges others would avoid and learn to rely on our inner strength, perseverance, instincts, and passion for personal survival. It brings to mind this quote by Shannon Alder: "Courage doesn't happen when you have all the answers. It happens when you are ready to face the questions you have been avoiding your whole life."

A NEGLECTED FACET OF HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT

This Simple Training Twist Can Help You Survive in The Street

By Matt Numrich

Head Instructor of Spy Black Belt

I've written before about mixing simple combative drills with basic cardio movements to create a self-defense workout that anyone can do. These workouts are surprisingly simple, yet can build fighting endurance, stamina and strength.

Today, I want to share another simple workout you can do, which will add a fun twist to your training. You see, when we train self-defense, we often assume everything will be linear. We train from the view that the opponent will attack on a simple direct line and that we can retaliate using a simple forward or backward movement to evade and counter.

That may be true in some small number of situations, but, in reality, with adrenaline pumping and things moving chaotically and fast, there will be a lot of awkward angles. It's also easy to forget that there will likely be obstacles in your way. These obstacles can throw off your timing and balance before and after your strikes or even during your escape.

That's why, in my self-defense classes, I set up obstacle courses for my students to mix in with their self-defense techniques. They seem elementary, but they are very functional when you look at self-defense scenarios that happen in real life. The point of the obstacle workout isn't so much the techniques being trained, but what happens in between the striking or defending. To drive home this point, I would like to share the "over-under drill." You can create this workout on your own if training solo or with training partners.



The setup is easy. Place a partner or striking target (heavy bag, striking pad, etc.) on opposing sides of your training space. You can make the space as long and wide as you want. Or you can keep it short and tight. It's all up to you and your current energy and fitness levels.

Then, in the middle of your training space, place something you have to "go over" such as a box, a rolled-up towel or yoga mat, etc. Or you can put something in the middle of the space that you have to "go under." This could be a rope strung between two walls, a broomstick resting across two chairs, etc.

Now, to perform this simple workout, pick a side to start from. Then strike the target or your training partner with any of your favorite moves (knees, elbows, headbutts, etc.) Once you've performed the strike, as quickly as you're able to, move toward the center of your training space and go over or under the obstacle you've placed there.

Then, after you're past the obstacle, approach the target or training partner on that side and perform another strike. Repeat the process of performing an attacking or defending move, then quickly move over or under the obstacle.

This workout is simple, but not easy. Depending on your fitness level, three rounds of one minute each will usually wear you out more than you would imagine. And it will help build agility, balance and stamina.

I have found that just doing simple movements, like going over a box or under a rope, works muscle groups we're not used to using either in our self-defense training or our everyday life.

The effect on your cardiovascular system is real and the ability to regain your balance, adjust your coordination and refocus on the target, will give you something often taken for granted until you need it.

FACING DOWN MOST MEN'S GREATEST FEAR

Chest Pain Doesn't Mean "Heart" Pain — Here's How to Tell

By Dr. Omar Hamada
Special Operations Physician

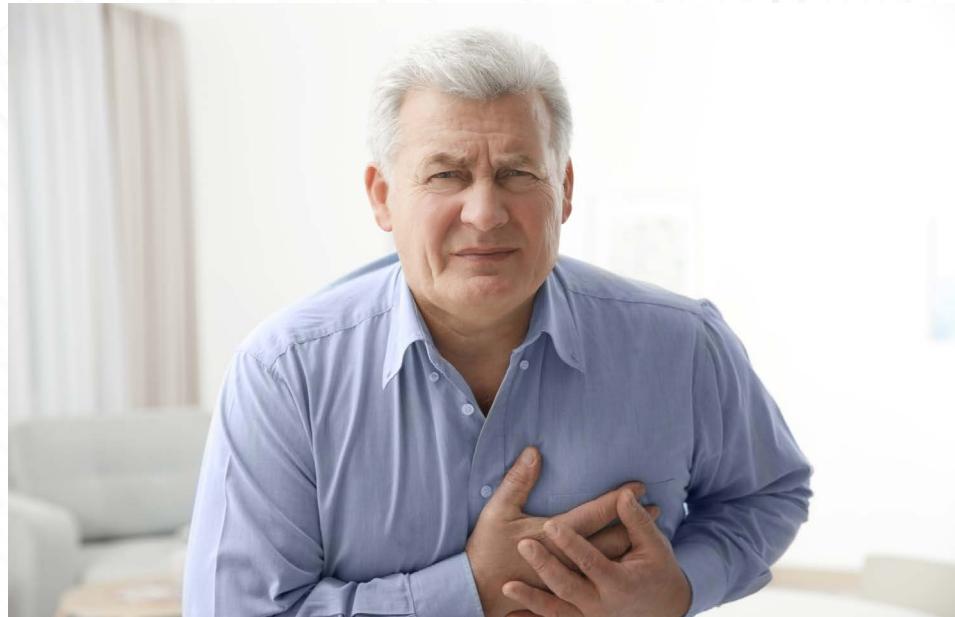
As an Emergency Medicine physician, I see patients with chest pain all the time. Most times, it's not actual heart pain. But how can you know if your pain is just heartburn or a heart attack? Truth is, it's almost impossible to tell without coming into the hospital to get checked. But there are signs that can help us know if it's probable that we're having a heart attack or not.

So, let's talk about risks, types of pain, and the causes of that pain. Increased risks of heart attacks are your increasing age, male gender, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, obesity, smoking, a family history of heart disease, preexisting heart or other vascular disease, blood clotting disorders and congenital anomalies.

"Heart pain" is usually described as a heavy, aching, crushing, squeezing pain in the middle of the chest that takes your breath away, makes you nauseous, sweaty, and can radiate into your neck, jaw, back, shoulder and arm. It's caused by a problem with oxygen delivery to the heart because of a clot, plaque or spasm in and of a large surface vessel of the heart.

Heart pain can be treated with medications like aspirin, nitroglycerin, blood thinners, clot busting drugs, a heart catheterization, balloon angioplasty or a stent. But there are other types of chest pain that can come from various causes. Sharp, stabbing chest pains after a cold or upper respiratory infection is usually inflammation of the thin lining of the lungs (called pleura). This inflammation is called pleurisy and can be very painful. Time, steroids, and anti-inflammatories help.

Pneumonia can also cause sharp or



aching chest pains. Antibiotics and pain medications help relieve this pain. Arterial dissection — where the walls of the vessel literally come apart and allow blood to dissect the various vessel layers to the point it ruptures — is dangerous and immediately life threatening. If the vessel ruptures, death will usually follow.

The tearing or ripping chest pain associated with this condition radiates straight through to the back. Diagnosis is made with a CT scan and treatment entails either emergency surgery or beta-blockers and pain medications.

Pulmonary emboli (blood clots in the lungs) can cause shortness of breath, chest pain, and an elevated heart rate. These are usually diagnosed with a CT scan and treated with a blood thinner. Sometimes there are so many clots that medicine is administered through a catheter, using ultrasound for visualization, and suction for clot removal.

Esophagus spasms can cause pain that mimics heart pain and is managed with nitroglycerin. Your esophagus can also be irritated by frequent reflux. The reflux can be treated with

medications, but occasionally surgery is needed to correct a lax lower esophageal sphincter.

To be thorough, I will also mention pericarditis. Like pleurisy, it's an inflammation of the thin lining that forms a bag around the heart after an upper respiratory infection. This can be very painful and feel like a knife is sticking into your heart. It is treated with anti-inflammatories.

But by far, the most common cause of chest pain is musculoskeletal. This causes a very painful spasm of the muscles of the ribcage that seem to worsen with movement. Musculoskeletal chest pain may also involve the ribs after trauma or a violent fit of coughing that fractures an osteoporotic rib, thus causing severe pain.

The most important takeaway from all this is that if you have chest pain, take an aspirin, take nitroglycerin if you have it, and get checked out immediately. Don't wait, because what might have been taken care of quickly, with little problem, can become a large problem, requiring much more intensive and invasive intervention. Better safe than sorry.