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LIFESAVING STRATEGIES FROM FORMER CIA AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS PERSONNEL

HOW TO ENSURE YOU SURVIVE A REAL LIFE GUN BATTLE

Competition Shooting as Self-Defense Training

by Jason Hanson
Former CIA Officer

On November 5, 2017, Stephen Willeford decided to stay home from church and rest up. At 11:30 am that morning, his oldest daughter woke him from a nap, asking if he heard gunfire. Stephen had heard gunfire, but was unsure where it was coming from. He rushed into a back room, opened his gun safe and snatched up his AR-15. Then he barreled out the front door barefoot and sprinted down the street toward a local church.

A man wearing black body armor and a helmet with a visor emerged from the front of the church. Stephen scrambled behind the front tire of a truck. The gunman raised



WHAT'S INSIDE

- 3 A Little-Known Way to Invest in Physical Precious Metals
- 4 The Societal Breakdown Will Continue to Get Worse
- 6 Safe, Effective "Bio-Hacking" At Any Age
- 7 In A Major SHTF Scenario, Your Dollars Will Be Worthless

his pistol and fired three times. Stephen propped his AR-15 on the pickup's hood and peered through the sight. He fired twice. The gunman stopped shooting and ran toward a white Ford Explorer idling outside.

As the shooter rounded the front of the Explorer, Stephen fired twice more, striking the man in the arm

and leg. The Explorer sped away, but Stephen noticed a blue pickup stopped nearby. The driver told

him to get in and the two men pursued the shooter. As they got closer to the SUV, it swerved all over the road before crashing into a ditch. The

gunman was dead in the driver's seat from a self-inflicted gunshot to the head.

"Stephen had heard gunfire, but was unsure where it was coming from."



That day, 26 innocent people lost their lives. But, it could have been even more if not for Stephen. The deceased suspect had bullet wounds and bruising on his chest where Stephen had shot him. The fact is, Stephen wasn't new to guns. He started shooting when he was 5 years old. As he grew older, he was drawn to competition shooting and was actively competing for years.

Considering this, many people wonder if competition shooting helps or hurts your self-defense shooting skills? Truth is, there are pros and cons to competition shooting for self-defense training.

The benefits include shooting under stress. Competition can expose issues in your shooting you may not know about otherwise. They're only revealed under the pressure to make split-second decisions and precise shots. Once you know what's wrong, you can work on fixing it. Competition shooting also teaches you to draw from the holster quickly and how to draw when moving quickly. This can certainly help your chances of survival in a gunfight.

However, there are a few drawbacks to competition shooting for self defense. The problem is a lot of

competition shooting focuses on speed but no cover-based shooting. This can create an unconscious bad habit, leaving you lethally exposed in a life or death gun battle. In a self-defense shooting, getting behind even a small amount of cover can keep you safe from gunfire.

Also, a lot of competition shooters use "race guns" with hair triggers that you would never actually carry

concealed on a daily basis. You obviously would want to train on the gun that you use for concealed carry or for home defense.

"As he grew older, he was drawn to competition shooting and was actively competing for years."

The bottom line is, I think the pros do outweigh the cons and I would encourage you to give competition shooting a try. There are many leagues around the United States such as USPSA and IDPA. A quick internet search will let you know if there's a group in your area. No matter your skill level, these groups are always very welcoming and are more than happy to help out someone new to the sport.

Springfield Hellcat 9mm Pocket Pistol

If you're looking for a great pocket gun, consider the Springfield Hellcat. The 9mm Hellcat comes with two magazines. One is an 11-round flush-fit magazine and the other is an extended magazine that holds 13 rounds. This gun comes with what Springfield calls their U-Dot sights. The rear sight aperture is a drift-adjustable metal U-notch outlined in white. On the front sight is an Ameriglo Pro-Glo high visibility tritium night sight. It features a tritium vial surrounded by a day-glo rim that's visible in almost any light.

Also, this is the first striker-fired Springfield pistol with no grip safety. There's no frame safety either. The only safety is the safety blade on its forward angled flat trigger. In other words, this is like a Glock pistol where the only safety is on the trigger.

The Hellcat weighs only 22 ounces when loaded with the 11-round magazine and one in the chamber. The barrel is 3" and the overall length is 6". The width of the pistol is only 1". The Hellcat is an extremely attractive concealed carry pistol and a very worthy competitor in the pocket pistol category if you're looking for a new gun for pocket carry.

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435-572-4432

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A LITTLE-KNOWN WAY TO INVEST IN PHYSICAL PRECIOUS METALS

Invest 25% of Your IRA or 401(k) in Real Gold and Silver?

by Forest Hamilton
Universal Coin & Bullion

Now that many leading mainstream banks have raised their gold price target and have recommended a significant portion of everyone's portfolio be in gold, it's time to make sure your whole portfolio, including your retirement portfolio, is properly balanced in precious metals. As I wrote last month, a division of Bank of America now recommends a 25% position in gold and Bank of America just raised its year-end 2021 gold price target to \$3,000 an ounce, over 50% above gold's all-time high price and 50% above the bank's previous target price of \$2,000.

Many investors have taken care of their more active asset portfolio, but they have kept their 401(k) or IRA entirely in stocks and bonds, perhaps thinking that those were the only options. Maybe their company only provided those two choices. But, there are other options. Precious metals should be a part of your retirement portfolio both inside and outside of your qualified retirement plans.

I recently spoke with America's Gold Expert, Mike Fuljenz, about what people should do to protect and grow their portfolios in these uncertain times. He believes gold is headed for new all-time highs and that people should have at least 25% of their portfolio in gold and silver, both inside and outside of their 401k and IRA. As far as what types of coins should be held in IRAs, Mike and I both recommend 1-ounce Gold and Silver American Eagles along with the specific, key date, low mintage

fractional Gold Eagles that are his top recommendation.

The \$10 and \$25 Gold Eagles are one of the few assets to offer double play potential. First, from their underlying gold content and secondly, from their growing rarity, as we typically select low-mintage American Eagles that have developed strong investor premiums due to high demand and relatively low survival rates.

Many of these hand-selected coins have been locked-up long term in IRAs over the past 30 years, leaving an extremely finite supply. When I asked Mike about the new wave of Quantitative Easing, he shook his head and sighed. Congress and the Federal Reserve are "going crazy" with the printing press. The parade of stimulus packages brought forth by the Federal Reserve and Congress are on course to add as much as \$10 trillion in new money and new debt.

The official estimate for this year's federal deficit is \$3.8 trillion — more than triple the previous record. And, it may go much higher than that. The total U.S. debt has risen \$2.5 trillion in the first four months of this year, from \$23.2 trillion in January to \$25.7 trillion in May.

The latest "stimulus" bill being pushed through the Senate by spendthrift Democrats is called the Monthly Economic Crisis Support Act. It was introduced by Senators Kamala Harris (D-Calif.); Bernie Sanders (Ind-Vt.); and Ed Markey

(D-Mass.) The bill calls for sending \$2,000 per month to individuals, \$4,000 to couples, plus \$2,000 per child up to three children. That's \$10,000 for a family of five, or \$120,000 per year, although payments would be reduced for those families earning over \$100,000.

At the same time, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell is promising total giveaways to banks for loans.

"When it comes to

lending, we're not

going to run out of ammunition," he said. Adding, *"we will provide essentially unlimited lending to support the economy."* That's a promise of unlimited money. And, when so much money is printed without backing, the limited amount of gold and silver left in circulation becomes more valuable, just as it did in previous wartime inflationary periods.

The bottom line is that I certainly hope you're stocking up on gold, if you haven't already done so.

[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.]

"The official estimate for this year's federal deficit is \$3.8 trillion — more than triple the previous record."

if practiced often can be honed. Be aware of your surroundings and everything going on around you. Complacency can kill you. Let's get one thing straight, situational awareness is not about thinking everyone is out to get you. It's about being able to analyze people and circumstances and calibrating your body's instincts and then trusting your instincts and taking action on them to avoid tragedy.

Here are a few things to think about: As you're passing random people in the streets, analyze them and try to figure out if they're a threat. Are they carrying any weapons? Avoid stereotypes such as if they're poorly dressed or their age or if they're covered in tattoos. Instead, in a riot, assume everyone is capable of harm if push came to shove. As you're traveling around town, notice the various secondary roads, wonder where they're leading and whether they can take you home. And I cannot stress this point enough, the best way to survive a riot is to avoid one in the first place. Listen to your instincts. If they are telling you something doesn't seem right, find a way and a reason to leave.

Now, if you do happen to get caught in a riot don't panic or aimlessly start running. Even if you want to make a run for it, you'll have an angry crowd to contend with. A crowd that won't take kindly to some maniac who's pushing and shoving in an attempt to flee. That's when you may become a target. Instead, put the left, rational (logical) hemisphere of your brain to work so that the right (emotional side) doesn't take over. Since the human brain can only think of one thing at a time, start analyzing the situation.

This is easier said than done, so you have to really get down to specifics. Here are a few of the things to focus on as you feel the fear start to creep in: Look at what people are doing and where they are heading. Are they standing still or moving in a specific direction? Are there any fights going on? Is anyone chasing anyone else? Is anyone throwing rocks or other objects? Even if they're not flying in your direction at the moment, they might be soon. Is your car nearby? Can you reach it quickly and safely without running? Is there an open door close by to

take shelter should violence erupt? Do you know how to pick a lock to escape through a building or warehouse? Are policemen arriving in your proximity?

One thing is clear: whatever's happening, you have to start moving. You should also hide anything that could make you a target such as jewelry or a gun. If you go for cover, but end up trapped, keep your group together. And, always keep in mind that you have to move with the flow of people, not against it. Be on the lookout for a chance to make a quick turn on an adjacent street. Or duck into a building if the main riot is not trying to get into the building. But, be aware that buildings can become traps if crowds of people start pouring in. If that happens, try to make your way to higher floors as the majority of rioting will likely happen on the ground floor.

You also need to understand that the police will likely assume you're part of the riot. It's guilty by association. So, if they're throwing a tear gas canister in your direction, you don't have time to explain that you're a good guy. Just run like hell. And if you're caught, it's best to comply. If they take you in for questioning, good, that's your chance to leave the danger zone.

In summary, surviving a riot comes down to these basic actions: First, avoid them whenever possible. Second, always keep your everyday carry (EDC) gear with you. Third, get to know your neighborhood and potential escape routes. Fourth, practice your situational awareness skills. Fifth, if you're caught in the riot, move away from the violence with the least amount of attention as possible. Lastly, if you're with family or companions, stick together. There's safety in numbers.



SAFE, EFFECTIVE "BIO-HACKING" AT ANY AGE

The Sleep Monitors I Use

by Dr. Omar Hamada
Special Operations Physician

One of the most popular phrases in business strategy is, "You can't manage what you don't measure." I heard this in business school and Ray Dalio, Tony Robbins, Dan Sullivan, and many other experts say it too. So, if you want to manage outcomes and change habits or processes to optimize results, you have to measure them.

Thanks to wearable biotechnology, we can now measure our body functions and make adjustments to improve performance like never before. We can instantly measure our weight, hormone levels, fertility, brain waves, heart rate, glucose and ketone levels, muscle density, fat percentage, anxiety, breathing, alertness, recovery, cardiac output, VO2 max, lactate threshold and, most important, our sleep.

Sleep is one of the three foundational metrics of optimal health. Without proper, consistent and healthy sleep, we cannot have optimal health. The rates of obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and even cancer increase — all because of poor sleep habits.

Previously the only way we knew whether we slept well is how we felt in the morning. Today, we can get information on our sleep patterns, arousals, breathing, apnea patterns

and sleep efficiency. The technology to do so is not only minimally intrusive, it's also affordable for anyone who wants it. Using these biohacking technologies, we can now know what we could only guess at a few short years ago.

I'm big on redundancy. In my survival pack, I have waterproof matches, flint and steel, Vaseline imbedded cotton balls, a lighter and a firestick. I have a K-Bar, a few folding knives, and a machete. You get the idea. I also believe in redundancy of my biotech monitors. This way, I can compare different technologies that each measure in different ways.

There are many sleep monitors available. There are wearables, those you set on your nightstand and those you place under your sheet or mattress. There are apps that listen to and record your breathing patterns and will let you know when and how much you snore.

The most popular wearable sleep monitors are also fitness trackers and serve a dual purpose. These include the Apple Watch, the Oura Ring, Fitbit and many others. My favorite, hands down, is the Whoop. I was an early adopter of Whoop and have hung with them as they've adapted and improved the product. It truly is an amazing piece of equipment. You wear it on your

wrist or your arm and it measures heart rate variability, injury risk and your sleep effectiveness.

A team of scientists and engineers at MIT designed the Whoop and a ton of research has gone into it. It's used by many professional athletes. They use the flow of cloud-based data to learn more about human performance and continually improve their algorithms. I love this equipment. It's smaller than a watch and has changeable bands so you can choose your fabric and color schemes. Its sleep interface is beautiful and provides fantastic information.

Likewise, there are many bed monitors like Beddit, Withings, Beautyrest, and Emfit. I generally don't like these because they only do one thing — measure sleep movement. And, you have to deal with cords and plugs under your sheets and mattresses. But for some, these are perfect because you have nothing directly touching you and they are "minimally invasive." You don't feel them or see them — you interact with them through an app on your phone.

The only nightstand mounted monitor I've used is S+ by Resmed. The S+ uses sonar to track your sleep, movements and breathing. It can "see" through sheets, blankets, comforters and pajamas with sonar technology. It provides highly accurate information about your sleep. I often use it in conjunction with my Whoop and compare the two. They are usually within 5% of each other, giving me confidence in my data.

I certainly hope you'll find a monitor or two that you like and try them out. I think you'll be pleased and will be able to make adjustments in your habits that will result in better, healthier sleep.



IN A MAJOR SHTF SCENARIO, YOUR DOLLARS WILL BE WORTHLESS

Employ These Operative Tactics When Bartering For Your Life

by Michael D.

*Former Clandestine Officer, CIA,
DIA, NSA*

I was in India. My partner and I were tracking down a member of a terrorist group that targeted and killed American citizens. To get to them, we had to operate in their world. That meant circulating among people in their social circles and fully integrating ourselves into the society and culture.

We couldn't use American currency. In fact, we could hardly use Rupees. The world we infiltrated operated on bartering and promises, not cash or checks. Our mission required us to mingle with those of the Dalits and Shudras (laborer's) castes. But, to close the deal, we would have to barter and negotiate with someone of power in that neighborhood. That meant someone of the Kshatriyas or leader/warrior caste.

For readers who are not familiar with India's caste system, it is comprised of five levels of society. At the top is the Brahmins caste, their priests and teachers. Just below that is the Kshatriyas/warrior cast. Below that is the Vaishyas/merchant caste, followed by the Shudras/labor caste. At the very bottom of the caste system are the Dalits/beggars. It is very common to have Dalits following you everywhere in hopes of a rupee or two. There is no progression in the caste system. A person is born into a caste and that is where they will be for their entire life.

While there is no potential in moving from a lower caste to a higher caste, there are ways that people improve their lifestyles. For instance, in the Dalits/beggar class,



people will intentionally infect themselves with leprosy, amputate fingers or limbs or even blind themselves to “earn” more pity and thereby receive more donations. But, they cannot bargain, barter or negotiate for a higher caste.

Prior to this particular mission, I trained in conducting effective and successful negotiations. It was this training that helped my partner and I to successfully operate in a barter economy. Myself and six other intelligence officers went to New York and trained with a US Ambassador. It was amazing training, from an expert with vast experience in all levels of international negotiating. We trained nine hours a day and conducted live exercises where we performed ad hoc negotiations with random strangers.

The Ambassador went to great effort to make sure we understood Gaming Theory and its role in negotiations. The most critical take-away from that part of the

training was the Nash Equilibrium. Nash was a brilliant mathematician who studied gaming theory and devised the concept of sub-optimal equilibrium. Simply stated, it means the only way to achieve genuine success in bartering or negotiations, without either party wanting to punish or get revenge for a poor deal, is that both parties need to accept less than their optimal goal. And both parties need to be clear about that.

A significant difference in bartering and retail is that neither party should be expecting a big payday from the deal. It's a matter of trading items or services for items or services of nearly equal “market” value. Bartering or negotiations are not single events. They have precursors and consequences. Lie, cheat, or fail to deliver, and the other party will expend every resource to punish you and broadcast to everyone that you are unfair and not worthy of negotiations, bartering or agreements.

That knowledge and understanding helped us as intelligence operatives because we need to protect our anonymity and stay under the radar and you can't do that if you are screwing up bartering, business deals or negotiations.

Another key element in successful negotiations is to understand the true, absolute value of items and services. On any normal day, you can buy a bottle of water for under \$2.00. But, you would give every possession at your disposal in exchange for that water if you were on a desert sojourn without water. So, recognize the "absolute" value and "market" value of goods and services.

Barter items that retain the most value in austere conditions or in economic collapse are goods like water, food, medicine, medical supplies, tools, bullets, batteries, etc. The most valuable services will be medical, dental, repairs, security, labor and confident leadership.

Now, if you find yourself in need of goods or services, but don't have any goods to exchange, consider the services you can proffer in exchange. Don't limit yourself to what you have in hand. Add items or services to your inventory so that you can exchange them for what you need.

Once, while I was on a solo mission, I needed access to a

hotel room. The maid would not cooperate. She explained to me in broken English that if I wanted her to let me in that room then I would have to get her a key card that would let her enter the building at night through the service door.

So, I watched that entry door that day and waited for someone with a key card to show up. As soon as they did, I used the pretense of feeling ill and needing to sit down for a minute. The kind, unassuming man helped me inside and let me sit for a moment. While he was helping me get comfortably into a chair, I relieved him of his key card. But, I knew sometime soon he would discover that it was missing and I wasn't sure how long it might take him to make the connection that the last time he used it was helping me. So, I knew I had to trade the key card to her right then or spin a cover story that it somehow snagged on my shirt while he was helping me. The point is, I got what the maid requested so that I could get what I needed.

Besides Nash Equilibrium, there are several security considerations that need to be managed. This is where most of my real-world experience in impromptu bartering developed — security considerations. Try to start your search for a barter partner with a "warm contact". Maybe a hotel

clerk, taxi driver, waitress or someone of that ilk. You will need to warm them up by being friendly and "trustworthy" with them. You may need many links in your chain to get to the person you need to deal with. Your original contact can vouch that they were the ones who originally sent you in the direction of your final barter partner. They will perform their due diligence before meeting with you and you need to do the same.

During initial discussions, conceal your inventory of barter items. Keep them in a secure location, protected to the best of your ability. Only take items to the barter you are willing to lose to theft. And do not let the other party know you have anything besides what's on you. You don't want them following you back to your safe site.

Choose your meeting place and time. Have several alternative sites. Case them well and identify where threats might take up observation or ambush positions. Have an ally take up a position where they can oversee that spot (counter ambush oversight) and the deal site.

Project confidence and strength. Make references to your "network." This implies that if your barter partner cheats, follows or ambushes you, he will have to answer to a large, organized, consolidated group.

It's not hard to imagine a not-too-distant future where most of us will find ourselves needing to barter for some essential items. And these skills could help you to successfully negotiate and barter to get what you need. Practice bartering with friends and family and get a feeling for the flow, tempo, and techniques. Remember to use your situational awareness, observation skills and watch what they are really saying rather than just listening to their words — their body language will reveal their uncensored thoughts.

