

02-17-2008, 09:03 PM

## [lost in samoa](#)

Member

About:

Join Date: Aug 2007

Posts: 88

### **Thoughts On Urban Survival**

Hello,

I thought I might post this info for your reading enjoyment. It is a series of articles and Q/A sessions from a poster named "FerFal".

He was a student in Argentina during their economic collapse. He has some very good insights into what life is like during a catastrophe. Particularly an economic catastrophe.

It's a long read, but VERY worth it in my opinion.

I will post the first segment, and if there is interest then I will post the others. There are 7 parts in total.

All credit goes to FerFal and the other posters who comprise this series.

---

### THOUGHTS ON URBAN SURVIVAL

Life in Post-Collapse Argentina, Oct. 2005

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 the 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 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 at Frugal's, [frugalsquirrels.com] 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 me 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 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 were 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, 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 a desert climate, and it almost never rains. It is almost impossible to live off 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 [main battle rifle]. 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 on 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 losing 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 though it would be a few years ago, is 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 a 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 to 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 turn 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 to 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 the 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 (Propane and natural 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 prescription 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?

**Urban Survival Part II and III**

**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 experience 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 the 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 many 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 FN 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 won't 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 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 them. 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.

### 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 a 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 of 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 battlefield, 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, 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, least 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 camouflage and toting 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 to be used to fight his way to his rifle. Man! That sounds "macho". I'd love to see him walking into Walmart 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 mechanism 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, FN 9mm 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 decent guns.

The caliber choice calls for endless debate and it is not my intention here. Lets 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 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, and 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 shelve 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 adrenaline 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 view, 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 a "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!! It's 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.

## Urban Survival Part IV

### 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? 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, proletariat). 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. One where 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, therefore 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 species. It's been this way for thousands of years.

## 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 in front of the door with the keys on your hand to jump you. This is why we are extra alert when approaching our house, looking all around us and if we see anything strange, we 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 whole 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.

MissingLink asked some good questions that might interest others as well, and since we are on the security issue, here they are:

"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 by surprise when you enter/leave your home.

"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.

#### Urban Survival Part V

#### PART V

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 sewer 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." 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 lets 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 in "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 gauge 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.

My advice is: 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.

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 weighs 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 on 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 know 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? 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 where 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 where 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 f 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 dieing 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 lets 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 point is 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 protein, and no matter how often I eat it, it always tastes good. Besides you can combine it with frizzed 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 its 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 form the fridge, and only use it to keep frozen our fresh pasta pizza and frozen 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 the 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. Once you start eating fresh fruits and vegetables again they go away.

This happened to me once, spent to 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 you 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 for 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 were 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 how they want.

## HEALTH & FITNESS

Visit you 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 victims 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, specially 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 good exercise and your punch will be more powerful if you connect. Running belts and bicycles are also good.

Whatever you do, the idea is to have a fit, healthy body. No use in shooting ½ 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 [bail-out bag], 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 of martial art classes.

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.

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 the 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.

FerFAL, B. A. Argentina

#### Urban Survival Part VII

Sorry,

I have yet to find part VI online. I'll keep looking for it.

=====  
Part 7 (excerpt)

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 where 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 moving 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 okay. Savings and investing was the key to our survival.

The survivalist that has 5,000-10,000 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 of 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 where 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 always has 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 wildlife 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 can't.

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 matter 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.

#### Urban Survival Q and A

This post is a compendium of questions posted to FerFal and his answers, collected over a few years. Read it as such.

=====

[ October 29, 2005, 12:59 PM: Message edited by: ferfal ]

--Now, the author answers some questions--

Thanks everyone.

Packinup, I actually started to write on the development of gray/black market but I didn't finish it, need to work on it a little more. I'll include it on the second part.

I consider it gray market because, even though some of the products are stolen or illegal imitations of brand names, these markets have turned out to be so popular that they are guarded private security and sometimes even police. Police taking care of a market that deals with stolen or illegal imitation products... who would have known...

On your second question: YES!! You have to be very, very careful. Keep everything to yourself.

For example, I dress with unknown brand clothes, even though I have lots of quality brand clothes, just because a little crocodile, Calvin Klein or New Man logo on your shirt can turn you into a victim. Even talking with a friend on the street about money is dangerous, the streets have ears. A relative living abroad is something you should never talk about openly, since kidnapers are always looking for good victims that can get hold of euros or US dollars.

ProGlock: electric power comes and goes, that's what I mean when I say that services suck. Some parts of the power grid are worse than others. The apartment I used to live in was a disaster; I'd spend 2 or 3 hours every one or two days without light. Now I'm living in what used to be my parents house (moved to Spain) and it;s perfect because it's interconnected with 3 different grid branches, even though one goes off, the others may still work. I sometimes have light while my neighbors spend hours without light.

Don't be confused about the cable TV stuff, almost everyone has cable (within city limits, of course). Some poor people, they just connect themselves illegally (I don't, I pay for my cable) but I'm talking about wooden shacks with no tap water connection or gas, that have a Direct TV satellite dishes or they connect themselves illegally. I should get a picture of this so you understand it better, promise I'll try to get one next week.

By the way, the last cable employee that tried to cut them off, got out of the place with no fingers...

Same goes for light, they just connect themselves illegally, companies figured out that they better lose some profit and not employees hands and fingers...

Absolutely, cash is king. And US Dollars and Euros are King of Kings. Just don't display them in public too much or you wont live very long. That is why I recommend you guys to keep some Euros, just in case. Our local paper money lost its value (to USD) when the economy crashed in 2001 (lost 2/3 of its original value)

Quality health services are expensive for most, and they adjusted to the new value of money accordingly, meaning they almost kept to USD prices. You can pay for these with USD.

Gold and Silver did hold their value of course, but they are not used to buy goods and services, besides, displaying a gold coin in a public market is as good as committing suicide.

Don't prepare for an idiot shooting a rifle at you from 200 yards away, prepare for the sneaky son of a gun that waits until you are distracted, fed the dogs some nice pills, and gets to you when you least expect him. THAT is much more likely than someone attacking you from 200 yards away.

I didn't mean it as an insult to anyone, I'm well aware that there are cases of people shooting enemies 1000 yards away. That is war. Killing someone that wants you dead before he gets close to you is perfectly logical.

Please name me one case of self defense where the person shot the bad guy 100 yards away.

I had a guy try to steal my car a while ago while visiting a friend at his farm.

I saw the guy next to my car about 300 meters away. I had my FAL PARA with me, since we were going to spend some time shooting that morning.

I could have shot that guy from a safe distance, right? But you can't do that in real life. People that shoot others 300 meters away for no reason, claiming self defense, are called psychos. I had to fold my rifle, hide it under my coat, walk to where my car and the guy were, and ask him what he wanted. When he said that he was there to take the car I leveled my FAL at him, and as it usually happens in real life, the guy almost pissed his pants, and left, babbling some BS story I no longer remember.

If someone starts shooting at you from 300 yards away, and you shoot back in self defense, that's ok, but that rarely, if ever, happens. Any bad guy that has survived through puberty will be smart enough to get close, very close, maybe when you are distracted with some chore/fieldwork and point a gun at you, asking you to calm down and walk into the house.

No way can you know what a man's intentions are 200 yards away, unless he starts shooting at you like an idiot. And if he wants you dead that bad, he will get close enough and make sure that that one shot is the last thing you hear on this planet.

As I said, dogs are the best alarm on the field, though those too can be eliminated, as it happened to my friend. A shame by the way, they were nice dogs.

But if your idea of a self defense plan is shooting anyone that happens to be within your 200 yard range, do as you wish. You will not have to worry much about survival; State penitentiary will provide all you need.

It is one thing to go to war, and it is another, completely different, to live your life in a SHTF situation.

When you deploy in a war zone, you set yourself mentally to do a job, when the job is done, you return home, you turn the mental combat switch off.

You cannot live your entire life as if you were in combat, it's impossible.

I'm as alert as I can be, all day long, and all night. Thanks to that I kept my family and myself safe, while everyone else I know has at least been involved in one or more violent crimes. I'm so wired up that the slightest sound will make jump out of bed at night and have my pistol ready even before I'm conscious of what I'm doing.

My house is the only one in the block that has not been broken into, my wife and son are safe, safer than all the other stupid sheep that blame God for whatever happens to them, and do nothing to prevent it themselves.

But still, you have to live your life, go to work, go to the supermarket... live a life! Do everyday stuff.

The stress of living that way will be the end of you, I'm 26 years old and already have problems related to high stress like high blood pressure, migraines, insomnia, etc.

I live in Buenos Aires city, on the south part, where houses are placed consecutively, sharing the wall on the right and left, all around the block. Most houses in my neighborhood have gardens and swimming pools. Gardens are also separated by walls, unlike the American style where you can simply walk from one garden to another.

Keep in mind that this has always been a 3rd world country, meaning that though our economical reality was completely different before the 2001 crisis, security in Latin America has always been an issue.

"You mentioned that your home has been the only one in your block not burglarized, what do you attribute this to? Is someone always at home?"

My house is particularly safe because it has a 7 foot iron fence with 1 foot long spikes where the property meets the sidewalk.

There is also a small garden between the house and the fence. The house's second story has barred windows as well.

Anyone that wants to break in has to jump the fence (risky, a kid that forgot the keys to his house and tried to jump a similar fence in my neighborhood, was found lifeless by his parents, still impaled on the fence) and break the door or the bars on the windows.

Shooting someone trying to break the door or bars would be like fishing in a barrel.

The fence would stop a group of people enough to shoot them down. A large, well armed group would be needed to break into my house if I'm in it.

The alarm also helps (needs to be upgraded by the way). Surprisingly, we did spend a lot of time out of the house, sometimes for 3 or 4 weeks, but I guess other houses are easier to break into.

My next door neighbor is a widow with children. I know that a couple of times they broke into her house and raped her and her girls.

There is another family in my block that has a private security guard (not effective against determined criminals in my opinion since they lack

training and proper weapons). Still, a couple of guys broke into that house and abused of the wife one evening. I suppose that they now take security more seriously.

“Have you been able to form any kind of mutual aid agreements with your neighbors? That is to say, your neighbors will help you if you are in need and you will help them if they are.”

No, they are sheeple and have sheep mentality. At best, they organize to pay for private and police security, which I do, but that is only good against small time thieves.

I did offer my help to my next door neighbor, the one with the girls that got raped.

I told her that if anything happens again she should call me or scream. I have to worry about my own family, but I just can't stand that kind of stuff happening next to my house.

Besides, she's a widow, her husband died shortly after they married. I know that I have to be alive to help my OWN family, but we will all die some day. I'm a Catholic and I will not have animals raping people next to my house and do nothing about it. How could I explain that to the Lord, not doing anything? Leaving a woman with no husband and her daughters in the hands of animals and do nothing?

I wont risk myself unnecessarily, I don't have any hero delusions, but I'll make an exception in this case if I ever have to hold true to my word and what I believe in.

“Have you put any effort into building a fortified room in your home for your family to fall back to in case of home invasion? What are your thoughts on this?”

Wish I had a “safe room”, but I just don't have the money right now for one. The house is still very solid, with independent reinforced concrete structure and double brick walls. Not much protection against sustained rifle fire, but enough for pistol rounds and some random rifle rounds. Combined with the steel barred windows, it's practically impossible for someone to break in when we are inside. They would make a lot of noise, and need a lot of time to pry open the bars. Not likely to happen if I'm shooting at them from the inside.

What I fear the most is someone pulling a gun at me or my wife when we enter or exit the house.

“If you did have a generator how could you prevent it from being stolen in your circumstances?”  
The generator would be safe if I put it in the back garden.

Carrying pistols: Brother Silicon, don't worry about it. My government has no control of this country, nor can they care less about what we citizens think about it, as long as politicians can steal as much as they want, they are cool with your beliefs, that's probably why we got here in the first place. This country is one big bad joke! Can you believe that the actual president has a logo for his that says “For a serious country” They are accepting that the country is not serious! I try to be discrete in my city, just because I fear information on my guns getting to the wrong people, magazine fed center fire rifles are almost impossible to obtain these days, even in the black market, so I keep quiet about it.

Night vision goggles would be an excellent addition, specially if you live in the country.

About trees and bushes near the house. Absolutely right. My friend, the one that has a farm, had all trees near the house cut down, at least 50-60 yards. He had some nice, big trees, but he said that people would sneak around the property, some even went there for the wood.

Do you imagine shooting someone in your property, in the middle of the night, because they snuck in to get some wood?  
The electronic gate opener is an excellent idea.

Silencers are not common and are illegal. I'm not sure about those home made, maybe they are good maybe they are not, I suppose it depends on the quality of the materials used and the ability of the builder. The most common kind of suppressor is made for .22 rifles and pistols. 9mm suppressors made by our Military Factories (FM) are of excellent quality and (if you use sub sonic 9mm) you only hear the bolt slam each time you pull the trigger.

The advantage of such a device, combined with a SMG or sub rifle, are obvious once you realize the need for discretion. Consider that once SHTF gun laws are likely to change, and not for good. The government will do everything they can in their desperate attempt to regain control of the country. A sound suppressor will allow you to hunt, practice, kill pests, and maybe even take care of some two legged pests that might represent a threat to you or your family.

You are right about the one religion, one race, thing. Even though there are some Muslims and other minorities, they are too few to create a social-racial group on its own. They are completely integrated into the white Catholic culture.

“Is the government still paying veterans benefits to retired military solders?”

I'm not sure, war veterans had to fight a lot to get paid. As far as I know those that were disabled do receive a small benefit, though it is not nearly enough to survive.

“What percentage of the population in your country was on government funded support before and the crash?”  
0%, remember this is a 3rd world country. If you don't have a job, you are on your own.

After the 2001 crisis, and with unemployment going from 25% to 50% in some areas, the government started issuing help to the unemployed. This so

called social plan benefit for the unemployed consists of 150 pesos (almost 50 USD)

This is not enough to feed a family for a week.

Seeing crippled Malvinas war veterans begging on the streets and buses is very common, even before the 2001 crisis. Also, retired people can barely (and I'm being generous by saying "barely") survive. They receive about 450 to 600 pesos in most cases (150-200 USD) Not enough for an old person to survive, certainly not enough for medicines. If there are no relatives to help, they end up on the streets where they die fast.

The sight of old people begging on the streets is heartbreaking.

I once helped an old lady, must have been 80 or 90 years old. She was leaning against a shop window, crying desperately, hugging a small handbag. I asked her what was wrong. She said she had lost her home to the bank (the same SOBs that stole her life savings, excuse my French) and she had just been kicked out of the family motel she was staying in. Man, I forgot about her. I suppose the mind just makes you forget, because if you don't you end up crazy.

You are right. The racial tension, plus welfare culture is a dangerous combination in USA.

"You make it sound like carrying a pistol on your person is a fairly common occurrence (at least now)."

My mistake, it is not common, at least for decent working people. There are parts where criminals carry their guns openly, sticking out of their jogging pants and no one does anything about it. No one dares mess with them, these are neighborhoods where police don't dare to enter.

Carrying a handgun, ready for use (loaded and on your person) is illegal, unless you have a permit that is almost impossible to get. You need to own a large company, and justify carrying the gun because you transport large amounts of money (several thousands of USD on daily basis). Carrying a gun for self defense is not a reason for a carry permit, only the protection of money. It's ridiculous, isn't it?

Still, owning handguns is not that complicated, once you get a gun user card, but a concealed carry permit card is out of the question. Some gun users still choose to carry guns, even though they don't have a carry permit. This is not allowed and you might lose your gun user card for this.

Carrying a gun, bought on the black market, and without even having a gun user card, will take you straight to jail.

On the issue of cops and guns, some may understand that you are carrying for self defense, because you are in a very dangerous area, and if you have you gun user card that shows that you bought that gun legally, he MAY be sensitive and let you go, or not. More than likely, he will ask for a small "tip", for his troubles. It's a matter of luck actually. You have to consider all this, and decide if the risk of getting caught is greater than the risk of getting killed for not being able to defend yourself.

I have one question, though. When the economy collapsed and as it seems that the banks always get out on top. What happened to people owing money on their properties ?? Or owing money at all ??

Good point.

Banks and multinational companies always end up on top. They are masters at surviving where others, small or medium size business fail. A lot of people lost their houses to the bank. Bank Boston, City Bank, HSBC, all the well known names made one big profit out of the misery of others.

The idea of all large corporate monsters dieing once the SHTF is only wishful thinking, unfortunately.

The same banks that stole people's deposits in dollars, returning pesos worth 1/3 of what a dollar is worth, still made you pay your debts to the bank. Many committed suicide or just died of heart attacks, some even died protesting in front of the same bank that stole their money.

The same didn't apply to personal loans, money pushers only made a marginal profit or lost money all together. The law benefits the banks and corporations, not the small investor.

I carry a Bersa 9mm pistol with a 19 round capacity magazine or a Glock 31 with a 15 round magazine. I don't carry spare magazines, but understand that carrying is forbidden over here, so your situation is different.

If clothing allows, I would carry one or two extra magazines.

It's not a matter of magazine as it is of total amount of ammo. 19+1 rounds is a nice amount of ammo, but if you carry a regular 1911 you are limited to 8+1 rounds of .45, so carrying 1 or 2 extra mags makes a lot of sense.

Bad neighborhoods? I avoid those as much as I can. Again, the legal issue is different. I would carry my pistol and a 12 gauge pump, because auto rifles are not allowed, but if I could I would carry my FAL carbine. And don't forget your BODY ARMOR!!

Yes, I have two extra mags in the glove compartment. Besides I carry pepper spray and a small iron bat in the car. On home defense.

I have my Glock close and loaded. My Mossberg with 4 rounds in the tube and a full stock shell holder, and two magazines for the FAL, one with regular FMJ and another with a mixture of AP and incendiary ammo.

Sincerely, I'd replace the shotgun with my SMG if I could, but there is the legal issue to consider. I have the two FAL mags loaded just in case, but it would call for a very particular kind of home invasion for me to use it.

Maybe if a large group of attackers starts to shoot from the street, taking cover behind cars.

#### Urban Survival Q/A - Most important need in the first few days after TSHTF

Someone asked this question on another board and thought others may find it interesting.

Quote:

Premise: USA is headed for a similar economic meltdown to the one you and your family experienced.

Given: I have had little or no success trying to warn friends and family who continue to think their lives will go on the same way forever.

QUESTION: What was your most important need/concern in the first few days after TSHTF, and what advice do you have for the rest of us regarding your answer?

Well, your friends just may be right, maybe nothing happens and their lives go on just like now more or less. Most people do know that sometimes life throws you an oddball or two, everyone has his or her own story.

What your friends need to realize is that what it's consider "normal" social structure is in fact a delicate system, one that can take a few bumps but every now and then things get a bit more complicated, sometimes it just goes over the edge completely and you get to see how fragile modern society actually is.

I'm talking about large power grid failures ( Such as the one recently in Barcelona, 3 days without power in a large metropolis), water or any other services. Whatever the reason, accident, sabotage, terrorist attack, it brakes that delicate thread and society suffers. Something as simple as garbage disposal is actually critical. A city without garbage disposal will smell pretty bad after a few days, garbage piling on the sidewalk, give it two weeks and rats will start spreading disease like crazy. I'm not just coming up with these numbers. We went for almost a week without anyone picking the trash once (strike), the smell was terrible as soon as you walked out the door and the rats could be seen on broad daylight.

Now, if it's only about services, a well organized city will solve minor incidents in short notice. Of course there are exceptions, ( mayor earthquake, tsunami, NBC terrorist attack) but even mayor incidents end up turning into short term SHTF inconveniences. It may take a week, a month or two, but eventually things do go back to normal.

Now, something like what happened here, an economical collapse, that changes life for you forever. I'm talking about a new perspective in all aspects of live.

Most man kind divides the world's history according to the birth of Christ. So do we, but Argentineans also refer to " before and after 2001" or " before and after the crisis or 1:1 ( when 1 peso= 1 dollar) I kid you not, this kind of reference is used several times a day on ordinary conversations.

Example;

"Nice car! How did you afford it?" "No, I bought it before the 2001 crisis"

"Have you ever been to Paris?"

"Yes, beautiful place"

"Really, man I wish I could go there"

"Yea, but I went before 1:1"

This is just an example, of how such an event transformed everything for us, in such a terrific scale.

Economy is probably the weakest link in the chain in modern society. It's all numbers, and data, no tangible materials, and most people simply ignore that our economy system works around TRUST.

You TRUST that that piece of paper the bank gave you equals the savings you worked so hard for decades. Objectively speaking, you are the world's greatest fool, surrendering saving that could be translated into houses, cars, clothes and food, tangible items, for a piece of paper that's worth less than 0.1 cents. But that's the way our world works and we couldn't have it any other way. This is only possible when you have blind trust in certain consolidated institutions.

Alas, but what happens when these institutions betray that trust? People don't believe this can happen, even if it has happened, many times throughout history.

Banks may care about their clients, but they care about themselves first, then their elite clients, and then the average person.

Out of ALL the banks in this country, every single world famous bank, they all stole the saving from the clients. This can happen, and crime or lawful action is only determined by a signature at the end of a resolution my friends. Desperate times, desperate measures, our constitutional rights to private property were ERASED... at least until the higher powers determined we could have them back for a while longer.

Only one bank in the entire country gave the money back to those that wanted it. A small town bank somewhere in Patagonia ( Santa Cruz, I believe) stood by its clients, and though many did close their accounts, most clients decided to keep their money in the bank that proved worthy of such trust!

It's strange but that's what happened.

Of course this does not happen with large banks, there's always speculators and powerful people that will get tipped off and leave with bags full of money, while the average person loses everything. ( well, not everything, about 1/3 of the money was returned after a few years, by converting the accounts in dollars to pesos which cost 3 times less than a dollar)

So, I'd say that the most important thing you should know, before and after the crisis: Understand that the gov. and private institutions don't care about YOU or your family, they care about themselves, keeping their profits high at ALL costs, and governments staying in power for as long as possible to keep filling up their pockets.

Even a benevolent gov. ( few around these days) will gladly sacrifice YOU and YOUR family if they estimate it will work for a greater good.

It's hard to determine a certain day, so as to talk about " few days after TSHTF". There was a braking point when the president gave a lousy speech, the "cacerolazo" protest in front of the government house and his resign after that.

It's more of slower or faster "slide" rather than a certain fixed day, though the events may later cause a protest or lootings that will be later on considered as the start of the SHTF.

Look for the sings of trouble, various degrees of social unrest, lack of response by the government. Generally speaking, look for signs of the average Joe, middle class person just having got fed up with it all. No one can guesstimate when SHTF will occur, but you sure can look for the alarms sounding off here and there.

Many times high ranking gov. officials mangle certain information that is not openly released to the public in fear or civil unrest, same happens with large corporations. Listen to you friends that work in such places, gather gossip, news ( careful, most big time media is censored or bought by the powers to be) and come to your own conclusions.

Answering the question :

Quote:

"What was your most important need/concern in the first few days after TSHTF, and what advice do you have for the rest of us regarding your answer?"

First, make sure you have enough supplies ( food and water) to last for a couple of weeks at least. If you don't, rush to the supermarket and buy it using credit card if they still accept it.

If you have enough food, stay put at home and keep track through the TV of what's going on. Don't go out there just to fool around.

IN our case, martial law and curfew at 8 PM was established, people could not gather in group greater than 2 or 3 persons, so it was not safe anyway. None the less, few obeyed all this crap, but it was still established so you know what you were dealing with if cops caught you.

The greatest need when the lootings started was means to defend yourself. Maybe that's why I encourage everyone to make weapons part of their basic preparedness kits, right along with food, water, money, and medicines. We watched daily as the lootings spread everywhere, and when the mobs of distressed people started looting homes along with the supermarkets and shops, things got really scary. I watched such a mob pass about 15-20 yards from my home. At first I only heard drums ( used during the protests) but these protesters were also looting along the way. The mass of looters was huge, covered the entire street and sidewalk, all across as far as I could see, a block long or more. So, having means to defend yourself is very important during the first days as well as later on, after the veil of fear of "punishment per crime" is removed from the society.

People that seem normal during "normal" times, unleash the animals they keep at bay during law abiding times. The evil among normal people also surprised me. Average Joe takes advantage of the possibility to loot without getting punished for it if he sees the chance. Hell, nothing people do surprises me anymore.

Then there was the need to get cash, which disappeared within hours from ATMs after banks closed. The "NO credit card" signs showed up instantly. Only cash. And cash was getting very hard to find.

Many supermarkets closed their doors, fearing looters, and those that were opened quickly started to run out of basic supplies.

As for advice:

-Keep a healthy amount of cash at home at all times. Precious metals work but you'll need cash to get by until banks and financial entities willing to pay a fair price reopen. Selling your gold in a pawn shop will be bad business, most likely they'll try to get advantage of your need. At least until the market settles and then they'll start paying according to the real value, but this takes some time.

-Have a gun for self defense, and learn how to use it. If you only have one weapon, make that a handgun and a box or two of premium ammo. Why handgun and not a long arm? Because things will be VERY dangerous out there and you'll be wanting some protection, even when walking the dog, picking up mail, or going to the grocery around the corner, you cant' do that with a long arm, and THOSE are the times you need to be armed the most.

-Have at least one or two months worth of food, water, medicines ( prescription meds you need for a certain condition you may have!), whatever you use around your house, such as soap, shampoo, dishwasher soap and various cleaning supplies. Once you have that, work towards a 6 to 12 month supply, specially concerning food. 2 or 3 years worth? Yes, nice to have but if you see the SHTF period extending that long, you better have a place to relocate because its' simply not safe to be there anymore.

-Work towards financial security. Money in accounts in two or three countries, investments portfolios, real estate. Try placing your eggs in different baskets because, as we talked about it earlier, you can't really trust them. Real estate is probably the safest and easiest form of investment, it has worked for my family really well, even through the crisis. We still have the pieces of land and buildings over it. It loses some value but adjusts over time to the reality of the country, going back to become a source of income.

-Have back up plans for EVERYTHING. Alternative sources of light, for transportation, fuel, ways of cooking, but most of all, have another location to move in case it is no longer possible to continue in the country or region where you are. This is my case and I'm really glad to have alternatives to move out of my country. I'm not talking about a cabin somewhere or a retreat, once things get that bad, you better get moving and relocating somewhere else, another state or even another country. You simply can't fight the reality around you when crime gets out of control, along with everything else. Have your papers ready ( passport, birth certificate, etc)

-Know that during troubled times a house, retreat or cabin is of any use as long as it is inhabited. If SHTF for real, no empty building remains empty for long. Either it gets picked to the bare walls, or even worse, you find it one day with a family or several already established in there, which will take a long time for you to evict the invaders through legal channels.

-Keep a low profile. Showing off money or expensive clothes, flashy cars or jewelry is a good way to get targeted by criminals.

-Understand that in just a matter of weeks crime starts increasing exponentially when serious SHTF such as an economical collapse occurs. These kind of situations may take decades to reverse, or maybe never go back to what it used to be.

When I was 20 years old I lived in a 1st world country, 8 years later it's a mixture of cheap 3rd world tourist sites, a bit of tasteful 1900 architecture, surrounded by sights fitting either Ecuador, Colombia or some kind of war zone, and it all went to hell in a hand basket in less than a year. The change was amazing for anyone that cared to notice. Libraries, churches, town theaters, it all closed and later reopened having been replaced by bar\*\*\*\* house joints, "All for 2\$" shops, Bingos, casinos, self proclaimed churches, many with links to Umbanda Brazilian rituals. A perfect example of the decay in our society through the last years.  
Hope that helps.

FerFAL

#### Urban Survival Q/A - Mistakes survivalists make

=====

Mistakes survivalists make

-----

Another question from leftofcentralfl in Mnionreport:

Quote:

QUESTION: What mistakes do you think most people make preparing for what you and your countrymen have gone through?

I wouldn't call them "mistakes", I don't hold the SHTF Bible so all I can give is my humble advice which may be correct or not, so all I can tell you is "I wouldn't do that if I were you", and depending on how sure I am, add a smarta\*\* grin.

There's simply some preparations that make little sense if you think about it, others that I've seen that just wouldn't work, in spite of all the speculations.

a) Maybe the one that rubs me the wrong way the most concerns retreats. It's also something many survivalists consider the summit of their preparations. A self sufficient fortification-ranch, with the nearest neighbor several miles away. Isolated farms or retreats are targeted and are often victims of robbery and in some cases extremely violent home invasions. You may have 6-10 able men you are counting on to defend it when TSHTF... "when TSHTF" ...so they aren't there right now? Then you don't have them, nor will you have them when you need them, most likely.

The isolation works to the attackers favor, who often take their time having their way with everything and everyone inside the house. The "away from everything" theory just doesn't work when taken to the field. Happens here and same happens in Africa where ranchers and farmers have to fight rebels, rogues or whatever they are calling them these days.

They'll find you, they'll know about you one way or the other. You can't hide simply by living a gas tank away from the city. If there's a road that reaches your place, you are fair game, doesn't matter if it's a dirt road in poor condition. You get there with a car/truck? So can bad guys.

You are obviously safer from small time robberies or pickpockets and snatchers, but you are more vulnerable to the worst kind of criminals. Not that living in a city or suburbs makes it MUCH safer, but I'd rather live here where I live now than in a farm house any day of the week. People can somehow organize to hire security, talk to the police. Yes, most people border idiotic and are pretty clueless, but it's better than being alone with no chance of even trying to convince people.

I'm not talking about living in a large city being the best option, I'm talking about living in a small town or community, looking for safety in numbers but avoiding the problems of a metropolis.

I definitely would choose a house in a small town or subdivision near a city, rather than a far away retreat.

Rather than looking for the ultimate self reliance retreat in the middle of nowhere, look for a subdivision where you have enough land, where you can keep a small orchard and some small critters if you want, a place with a basement where you can build a NBC shelter as time and money allows.

That's what I'd look forward to if living in US.

b) The barter items thing is also pretty strange. I don't see how it could possibly be a smart idea to buy goods to sell or trade after a crisis, surely not in the quantities suggested by some people. Beats me, are they going to set up a shop in their garages and sell everything? Would you buy food and other supplies from a guy that sells it with no possible way of verifying the conditions under which the food was kept? How much of a profit could you possibly make, comparing to having saved that same amount of money in gold, for example?

I don't understand it and I don't know of anyone that made a profit by doing this. Yet, people stock up on TP and many other cheap, easily obtainable items thinking that it will be "worth it's weight in gold" after the crisis. Newsflash: if it's cheap and easy to produce, it will keep being that way AFTER tshtf.

Some guys advice to "invest" in such goods, tools, food and supplies for after TSHTF. No, no, no. 200 or 500 bucks worth of tools rusting away in the shed is not an investment. Its' 200 bucks worth of tools for which you don't have any use. That's not an investment. An investment generates money, while products rotting away in some basement does nothing for you.

c) Forgetting about their financial security. I'd worry about REAL investments. Buying real estate that will provide me with a steady income on the longer run, an investment portfolio divided in a couple of reliable (or as reliable as any organization can be) that will slowly grow, most of it set on minimum and medium risk investments, and not falling for the promises of high risk ones.

Money is so important, I cant begin to explain it. When prices skyrocket beyond the limits of superinflation, money does not turn into toilet paper as many survival experts predict, it become cherished, more valuable to you than ever. You have to turn yourself into a discriminating shopper, always looking for the best possible price, sometimes shopping in different branches of supermarkets so as to find the better deals and avoid those "hot" items grocery chains slip without you even noticing.

My father is visiting right now, handling business, and one thing he told me when I asked how did he see things going on here, he used the words "cheapskate" and "miserly".

He said something like" People count coins over and over, by the cent, and spend maybe 10 minutes thinking about spending every cent. They also look kind of shabby, untidy, I can't explain it. Even the guys running around downtown with suits look bad"

I explained that his overall perception was indeed correct, mostly because the average person here uses clothes until they wear out, there's not that much money left for looks, not getting haircuts as often as they should, shaving.

Yes, the fall on the purchasing power of people did affect the average person (at least most of them if not all) and you can see it on the streets.

d) Not all places are equal in terms of crime, but if something like this happens in US, I'd worry about being armed at all times, and learning how to use it to defend myself.

Again, not talking about waiting for the end of the world to bug in and pull the shotgun out of the firing ports, go on with your life but to do armed.

Most people here don't see things this way.

The anti gun campaign is very strong here, and the majority of "sheep" see guns as evil objects, even though rape, crime and violence is smeared on their face every day. What can I say, most people are pretty stupid.

Those of us who go armed in this country are a reduced minority. After a few words, we recognize each other at the range or at gunshops with a knowing nod, knowing that most people, even among shooters, don't share our opinions.

Even among "gun people" we have our important share of "Zumbos", elitist hunters who think that firearms are hunting tools and shouldn't be used by the lesser "civilians" for self defense.

d)Not trying to bore anyone to death here or anything, but going back to the issue of money. It's so important to be financially set. Rather than spending tons of money on junk you wont ever use invest it smartly. Rich, unprepared people will suffer after TSHF... only in your wildest dreams. Money buys everything, including expensive food, medical care, security and relocation if needed.

When the economy collapses a big chunk of what used to be middle class (50% as minimum, more for sure) ends up being poor. It doesn't matter how much guns you have, doesn't matter if you can start a fire with a couple of Popsicles sticks or build an atomic bomb with a Snickers bar and a paper clip. Skills are of course important but you finances affect everything.

If you are middle class do everything you can to improve, climb way up the ladder. No I'm not talking about making more money than Bill Gates, I'm just talking about something every determined middle class person can achieve, no need to be a freaking financial genius. Make sure you climb your way up to the upper middle class, because once the pyramid starts sinking you don't want to be below the 50%.

If you are really serious about financial security, diversify your real estate and other investments in different countries. My father did this and it made all the difference in the world. The man is my hero.

When you see serious trouble in the horizon and survivalists are thinking about bunkering in their cabins, you simply go on vacations to check out that little apartment or house you bought in Costa Rica for a bunch of pocket change a month. If Zombies take over or China invades, you can look for a job there, or live like a king thanks to the income you receive from that other apartment you have in France, a place in a small town near a mayor University, which you rent to students each year.600 Euros a month will allow you to live comfortably in Costa Rica, and most countries in South America. And the best part of all this? If nothing EVER happens you just have a few properties here and there that are constantly generating money for you, in case you want to retire early or if you ever have a health problem or any other issue that puts you out of the job market. Again, a couple of properties here and there inst' such a big deal, most people can achieve that with a bit of effort, its' just a matter of priorities.

e)The lack of reality based preparations. Some people focus on preparing for something that will never happen, preparing for getting up one day and walking into Mad Max's world. This is of course, not a smart idea. Not only are you forgetting about the other, more likely possibilities, but you also ignore that you'll have to go through them before it reaches to a road warrior point, if it ever gets to that.

People that have thousands and thousands of dollars in tools, equipment, and maybe spent hundreds of thousands more building the ultimate retreat, but don't have a penny invested anywhere. When asked they'll say that it will all be worth nothing when TSHTF.

Hopefully, this person will have several years worth of food along with all the other stuff he'll rarely get to use, so at least he won't starve to death. But is eating all you aspire for in life? Not to mention what would happen if he got sick/robbed/place burns to the ground/hurricane/flood destroys it and suddenly needs the money he said he would never need.

Prepare for a broad spectrum of possibilities. So you'll have your food and supplies for short and medium periods of time where supermarkets may be closed due to looting, riots, lack of supply, etc and you have others plans in case things get worse or you are forced to get out of there.

Something like what happened here happening in US? Don't go nuts, shooting the neighbor's kid for crossing over to your yard to pick up his frizzbe. Just adjust to the situation.

Once the first few weeks are over and people start calming down, just be more careful out there, don't throw away money on stuff you don't need and try to keep a generally low profile. It's also important to do well at work, because people get fired like crazy during those times, companies trying to reduce expenses or not needing you any more for lack of production.

During these times is when your investments kick in. Not only do you have a place to exile to if things don't go back to normal or they don't fit what you expect in life anymore, you also have a form of income that is out of the circle of your local economy. Let's say the dollar loses 1/2 its value, you still have your apartment in France or wherever the heck you want to invest, pumping in Euros that are now much more valuable, probably compensating for the local inflation, so whether you decide to leave or stay, you have the means to go either way.

FerFAL

**Urban Survival Q/A - Conversation with USMCBulldog**

Quote:

Originally Posted by USMCBulldog

I live in a very rural area with a very low population density, but we ALL know each other in my small town. Nothing happens here without everyone knowing.

That's fine, but what if new faces DO start showing up? Any public land or trailer parks nearby?

Are you going to drive them all away? What if they don't want to leave? Are you going to kill them all, their children?

Quote:

I hear cars coming long before they arrive, dogs bark when ANYONE comes near on foot.

If you ever have to endure something similar to what happened here, you'll have kids trying to steal anything almost on daily basis, from some firewood, to a potato, constantly looking to sneak in.

Unless you are willing to kill children and their parents often and build your own cemetery next to your farm or hang their heads in your trophy room, you'll find yourself shooting warning shots several times a day.

Quote:

I lived in the city and I did not really know ANYONE around me, not even the people next door - that is the nature of the city. It is very cold and impersonal.

So true. Unfortunately that's the way it works in most places. Sometimes you need a bit of initiative thought, talking to your neighbors, looking for similarly minded people. I intend to rent before I buy when I move to US, so as to check the general mentality of the neighbors, get to meet a few of them and evaluate if they are people I could eventually trust.

Quote:

The thieves and criminals get weeded out very quickly here and move to the CITY where they can blend in and be unnoticed and prey upon the unarmed sheep who live there.

We have guns here in the city too you know, and some of us even know how to use them

Seriously, are you willing to weed people? How many and for how long?

How about children? Because that's the kind of little rascals that will be stealing from you all day, not some big mean biker with a face full of tattoos you would gladly shoot a couple of times.

Their parents? They'll try to rob you or steal cattle from you at night. It doesn't take a crystal ball to know that if SHTF and there's lawlessness, and you killed some of their children, sooner or later someone will wait until they can get payback, taking over you or one of your family members when your guard is down or when any of them is leaving the house for some reason.

Quote:

Nobody from the city is going to come to this town and attack any farms without serious risk of getting their asses handed to them

You are right, they do expect country folk to fight back. That's why experienced criminals will wait until they can catch one of the family members alone, entering or leaving the farm, then use him/her as hostage to get in. That's when things get ugly. A couple got tortured for days with electric shock, the poor old man tied to a bed getting shocked, the wife beaten, the stories are many and all of them terrible. You see, since people no longer trusted banks, everyone, including farmers, kept their earnings at home, hidden somewhere, so robbers try to make sure people don't keep anything from them, and often use torture to make sure. You also have others that are simply sadistic SOB and enjoy raping and torturing people just because.

Quote:

When one person is attacked in the city, everyone else looks the other way, happy it wasn't THEM this time. When law and order breaks down it will be heaven for the thugs and pure hell for everyone else. We do not have any police here...we don't NEED them.

Things will change a lot if SHTF and you have desperate people out there, with crime soaring along with unemployment.

The question specifically asked for mistakes preparing for what "you and your countrymen have gone through", so that's what I'm explaining. It's not about "what if", or "we'll weed them out". When dealing with the level of crime we have here, what I'm trying to explain here is what in fact happened to many folks living in the country, and many are desperately trying to fight:

a) Both criminals and less even good, poor people that simply are too cold or too hungry.

b) The financial problems they face, barely making it to the end of the season.

It's not about guns and the willing to use them. Our country folk are pretty rough guys, not a bunch of Late drinking \*\*\*\*\*cats. Our "gauchos" are the equivalent to your "cowboys", and while cowboys use guns, only our rich "gauchos" have a nice pony (Colt) or a "Winchess" as they call them, all others use knives (Facón) to fight, and fight they do pretty often even today. It takes some guts to duel against another person with daggers.

Quote:

We in the country will fare much better than those in the city if TSHTF. We have a "rural economy" (barter) and grow a lot of our own food including veggies, pigs, cows/beefers, goats, chickens. We do not have centralized water distribution - we are on our own wells. Sewage? No problem - we all have septic systems. City people depend upon the supermarket always being available, water flowing out of the tap, and the sewers flowing. Many would be dead in a couple weeks if they were not.

You'll have more food, that's for sure. But that's only part of the equation. Your barter economy will mean little regarding other products. You won't "barter" with Shell for the fuel you'll desperately need to keep the machinery going, nor will you barter for equipment, spare parts etc. Town communities barter with the good they produce, a minimum fraction of what a community needs these days. I'm telling you this because I know how much people in the country suffer right now, the crisis hit them as had, or worse than folks in the city. Specially small time producers which can barely keep up against conglomerates that own thousands of acres.

Quote:

Even if the S never HTF, I absolutely LOVE it up here on my farm and would not trade it for the fanciest penthouse in the city.

More than enough reason to stay where you are.

In my experience, the rich or higher middle class fares better than the country folk with somewhat limited economical resources. If anyone out there feels that they belong to the later group, please don't take offense, I'm just saying what I've seen with my own eyes or heard on the news.

Even wealthy people, who can afford some serious manpower if they want, have a hard time securing their property.

Same happens with private neighborhoods, fenced, away from the city and with 24/7 armed guards, with patrol vehicles guarding the perimeter.

Still, criminals get in and rob the houses, even murdering people within the perimeter in some occasions. This can be found on the internet, it happens often enough, but the information will be in Spanish.

Look, I just searched this, occurred just 22 hours ago. Two houses robbed in a private country club by three armed, masked men. They broke the perimeter fence and did something to the motion detector system. Broke in at 5am and surprised the house owners while they slept. Later escaped without hurting anyone. This happened in Pilar, one of the "rich" neighborhoods in Buenos Aires.

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2007/08...m-01469359.htm>

Do you think you could provide better security, better than hired guards working around the clock, a fence with barb wire on top and a patrol vehicle going around it all day long?

I don't think so. Wait, let me change that: I KNOW so, for sure. If they can get to those guys, they can get to you.

We were visiting my wife's best friend, who is dating a pretty wealthy eye surgeon. They invited us to their house in a private neighborhood.

As soon as I approached the main gate I saw that the security was pretty tight. Guards armed with pistols and pump shotguns, there was a chain link fence, or was it a wall? I don't remember. They also had a couple of vehicles ready.

We ate a nice BBQ and while we were having coffee in the garden I heard shots.

I tensed up a bit, knowing for sure that they were gunshots, and asked the home owner about it.

He said something like "Oh, it's just the guards, probably firing some warning shots to the vermin trying to get it". He said it as if it were the most common thing in the world.

We talked about it with my wife on the way home, we decided that we didn't want to live that way. Even if you do earn a lot of money here, you'll still be a prisoner. I don't want to live in a place where I have hired guards shooting over people all day long to keep them at bay. That's not what we want.

You see, it's not about dealing with a punk or two or a bunch of junkies or some Bloods, Crips, or whatever gang is popular out there these days.

Those clown you can organize and hunt down, easily to identify and FEW. The real problem is when you have 1/2 a nation willing to do anything to survive because they are basically starving.

That's the problem.

I understand what you say, I really do. Our local country folk keep their guns ready, shovel nearby and mouth shut too...hell, I could kill a guy in my backyard here in the city, put the corpse in the trunk and throw him in a nearby river, and chances are that I won't get caught, but that's not the problem, the problem is that you can't fight an entire country.

I'm not trying to ruin anyone's illusion of how they may handle things, nor am I saying that living in the country here in Argentina is impossible or anything like that. People live in the country here, do so happily, but there's this insecurity problem that simply can't be denied.

Sometimes they reach some sort of unspoken agreement, you allow them to take some firewood and some small amount of wheat or whatever you are planting, but you draw the line about getting within the perimeter of the living quarters or the livestock. All I'm saying is, shooting everyone as you suggest is not a solution.

My advice, for anyone in your situation would be to try to get along as well as possible with these people, rather than thinking about weeding them all out, which you can't do.

Besides, the idea of evil hordes swarming out of the city, it's childish and naïve. You won't be dealing with hordes of zombies. When sometimes like this happens, you have looters at first (mostly staying in the city as you say) and then you have organized criminals hitting both in the city and the country, even road pirates (we call them "Piratas del asfalto") robbing cargo trucks on the roads far away from the towns and cities, but the looting ends sooner or later and all you have left is people. Some good, others bad and everything in between. Some lazy and others hard workers looking for second chance. They are not an evil mass of destruction.

Think about maybe planning a strategy along with your neighbors were these new folks (at least those that are worth it) could get integrated to your community. Heck, hire some of them as guards/help to give you a hand around the place. That's what a lot of people do around here. With a crisis going on all they ask for is some place to build a cabin or shack, some food and very little or in some cases no money at all. Now that's an idea worth discussing with your neighbors as a reality based plan to deal with an economical collapse and the subsequent unemployment and crime that goes along with it.

FerFAL

**Urban Survival - December 2004 post – situation report on the fall of Argentina**

December 2004 post – situation report on the fall of Argentina

OK, here it goes, hope it helps. We often call unprepared people, the mass, sheep. Sheep describes them pretty well. They do as the rest of them do, don't fight for their rights, accept almost everything and so on. But what happens when "sheep" get desperate? Well, that's what happened here.

After years of closing factories and the destruction of the national industry, extremely low wages, people got fed up. This destructive economy by Menem, our previous president, one of the most corrupt presidents in the history, (he was into the bombing of the Jewish Embassy, managed the drug market in the country, just to mention some) plus the stupidity of the following president, De la Rúa, was a formula for disaster.

One day the Minister of Economy declared that no one would be able to get more than 100 bucks a day from the ATM (correct?) nor close accounts. You could just get 100 bucks out of the bank a day. That was it. Then came the devaluation. Before this happened 1 US\$ = 1 Argentine peso. Suddenly this changed into 1 US\$ dollar = 2 pesos then 2.5 even 4 pesos. Today 1 US\$ = 3 Pesos. The banks kept the people's money, including their deposits in US dollars. If you had 1000 US\$ dollars in Bank Boston for example, they turned it into 1000 pesos, that equaled 333 US\$ dollars. They stole 666 dollars from you! Prices went up 200%, 300% and sometimes more. Imagine for one moment what your life would be like if today you go to your local 7-11 and everything has gone up 200%. How would you survive with your pay check?

The sheep got desperate. First, because they had been stolen by banks and wouldn't return the money to the people. (The so called "corralito") then because the classes with the lowest income found out that their salaries weren't high enough to buy the minimum food stuff to survive. The country marched asking for the president's resignation. He had to leave the presidential palace in a chopper... Banks were destroyed by people that wanted their hard earned money back. Supermarkets and other shops were looted, as well as regular houses. This lasted for about a month, the chaos spread all over the country, concentrated in the largest cities.

I remember being at a supermarket and the mob outside, negotiating with the manager. Sometimes, they would not destroy the place if the supermarket surrendered them the goods peacefully. Food got scarce. I mean, you could buy just a certain amount of milk or water, 4 bottles for example. And most imported goods disappeared. Electro domestics such as TV, videos, and refrigerators kept their prices in dollars, inaccessible for most people. The same happened with real estates, cars and luxury goods. Today this all seems far away. Not because it got better, but because us humans have this damn capacity to "get used to". How did our lives change? I can't even begin to explain... everything changed! The streets are more dangerous than ever, thanks to the general poverty.

Education suffered thanks to this as well, kids working or stealing to survive instead of going to school. How could I explain this to you? For example, tools are really expensive, since most come from abroad. Remember, our national industry was sold out or destroyed. Stuff like MRE, Emergency food bars are impossible to get. No one imports them anymore. (I paid 10 dollars for 1 MRE a guy had) Guns and ammo are really expensive and are sold in small quantities. Forget about buying a "case" of ammo! Forget it! I know it's hard for some of you to imagine this, but you just can't buy a "case" of anything. A large store may have 10 or 15 boxes of 308, 20 rounds each box. Small stores have 10 or less. Only common ammo is available such as 22, 38, 357. 9mm, some 40 s&w, 12 ga 308 and a little 223, that's pretty much it. Ammo for my 357 sig is hard to get. I buy a box of it every time I find one around... and it's extremely expensive.

If you just HAVE to buy something strange like 300 magnum or 270 (strange for us J) there's one place you can get them from but be prepared to pay +100 dollars for 20 rounds. While we are at it, there are also few models of guns, 70% of it is used. You can find about 4 or 5 12 ga pumps, Mossberg 500, Maverick or Remington 870 in each store. Handguns are relatively plentiful, not the newest models but still there's some Beretta, Glock, Colt, S&W, Walther, Taurus, Rossi and Sig. Same goes for Mausers and bolt action rifles as well as side by side shotguns. Semi auto rifles are hard to get. Some big gun shops have 1 FAL each. M16 are quite rare and expensive. Saw a Galil and a SKS (600 dollars) the other day, but it's not common and the red tape is HUGE. I found a good FMK3, one of the few left around, and bought it for 250 dollars, but this isn't common.

Shoes and clothes are also, expensive, even in US\$. Labor is cheap; you can have a maid and a gardener for 300 dollars. There's no "safe" job. With

20% unemployment they pay you whatever they want and if you don't like it there are 100 persons waiting to get your job. Owning a shop-business is hard. You have to consider armed robbery (some get hit 10 times a month) and still you have to pay the police for protection (from themselves) Hope it helps, at least so you can have an idea how your world would be if this happened in your country, hope you never have to experience it in the flesh... If you have any questions just ask away. Hope I can help.

— FerFAL

Yesterday, 06:14 PM

## [MsDoodahs](#)

Moderator

About:

Join Date: May 2007

Location: Chappell Hill, Texas

Posts: 4,077

Thought some might find the following useful:

If you're in an apartment/city setting and want to grow at least some fresh food, you might try these: [www.earthbox.com](http://www.earthbox.com)

I have a couple of them, last year I grew tomatoes, eggplants, and peppers in them. For tomatoes, I actually prefer the "tomato success kit" available from [www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com). I bought tomatoes at the grocery two weeks ago; had fresh ones off the vines in the earthbox and success kit right through January!

There is a neat website to check coins for their melt value, see [www.coinflation.com](http://www.coinflation.com)

Also, I've provided this "list" to several folks here (and elsewhere). I put it together for a friend of mine from a book called [Making the Best of Basics](#). This is grocery store food. I've read that in stress times, it's actually better for your family if you try to keep them on as close to their normal diet as possible. Anyway...here it is. And if you can, get a copy of that book - it's really useful for planning what to buy and how much to buy.

----  
Some general storage info from "Making the Best of Basics" that I thought might help with your planning. I've found that a LOT of products do not list their "expiration date" anymore. This book gives the general "use by" for ... damn near everything, lol.

I'm only doing the most common grocery store stuff because that's easiest to get.

Estimated shelf life for various stuff in months:

Commercial ground cornmeal: 60

Commercial ground wheat flour: 6 - 12 (if you buy the wheat berries and grind it yourself, the berries themselves have an indefinite storage life)

White enriched rice: 24 - 48

noodles (mac/lasagna/spag) 18 - 24

oatmeal 12

Nonfat instant powdered milk 24 - 48  
 dehydrated butter 60 - 96  
 dehydrated cheese 60 - 96  
 buttermilk powder 24 - 36  
 non dairy creamer 24 - 36  
 dehydrated eggs 60 - 96  
 evaporated milk 24 - 36  
 condensed sweetened milk 24 - 36  
 white, brown, powdered sugar indefinite  
 corn and maple syrup indefinite  
 iodized, pickling, ice cream salt indefinite  
 vegetable shortening 12  
 liquid vegetable oil 12 - 24  
 olive oil 12 - 24  
 baking soda 18 - 24  
 baking powder 6 - 9  
 baking chips 18 - 24  
 cocoa powder 18 - 24  
 cornstarch 12 - 24  
 arrowroot 12 - 24  
 hominy/hominy grits 12  
 ready to eat dry cereal (corn, rice, shredded wheat) 12  
 Fruit, canned - all EXCEPT citrus 12 - 18; citrus 6 - 12  
 Fruit cocktail 12 - 18  
 Dried potatoes 36 - 48  
 Dried beans: 60+  
 Canned veggies:  
 Beans (green/pinto/kidney/red/yellow/peas) 24 - 36  
 Beets 12 - 24  
 Carrots 24 - 36  
 Corn (whole kernel or creamed) 24 - 36  
 Potatoes 24 - 36  
 Canned soups/chili 24 - 36  
 Canned spag/sauce 12 - 24  
 Peanut butter 12 -24  
 unshelled raw nuts 12 - 24

roasted canned shelled nuts 12 - 24

crackers 6 - 12

graham crackers 12 - 24

black pepper indefinite

vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, soy sauce indefinite

flavorings/extracts 12 - 24

Mixed Italian, Mexican blended herbs 12 - 18

Jerky 6 - 9

canned corned beef 12 - 24

canned deviled meats, vienna sausage 12 - 24

canned chicken/turkey 12 - 24

canned shrimp/tuna/mackerel/halibut 12 - 24

canned salmon/sardines 24 - 36

canned and bottled fruit juices, all 12 - 24

cake mixes 12 - 24

candy bars 12

Chips 12 - 18

Pudding mixes 24 - 36