

# *SurviveInPlace*

## Lesson 13

### Urban Movement After A Disaster

Lock Picking

Choke Points

Baseline Disguises

Surveillance Detection

“Diamond” Formation

By

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## **Lots of good stuff this week**

This week we're going to cover basic foot movement in urban areas after a disaster. EVERYTHING in this lesson is easier if you have the option of using a bike, vehicle, or mass transit. We're only covering travel on foot because if you have it figured out, you always have the option to upgrade to a faster, easier mode of transportation.

We'll talk about strategies for movement, what you should have with you, and what you should be looking for. Some of the situations, scenarios, and strategies in this lesson will be considered extreme by most people. They're all used around the world on a daily basis, and I pray that they'll never be normal in the US.

I was much more comfortable when I was the only "paranoid" person in the room. (I consider myself to be "moderately aware" rather than paranoid) Over recent years, I've gone from being considered paranoid to being almost normal. It's kind of freaky, and although it's given me a lot more people to talk with about the things I'm passionate about, it's disturbing that so many other people who I respect also think that these skills may soon be necessary.

I knew that things were changing quickly when "Emergency" hit the best seller list. The main thing that it did was increase awareness of the preparedness lifestyle. For you preppers who have been in the game for years, we're not alone anymore. For those of you who are new to this whole thing, I'm glad to have you on board.

## **On to the lesson**

We're going to focus on three major types of post-disaster movement in this lesson:

1. "Just" a disaster with no reason to be covert. People are in shock, no increased risk of violence yet. (immediately after a terrorist attack like 9/11, unexpected natural disaster, etc.)
2. A disaster with civil breakdown (exploration/gathering/all non-trade) where you may have to switch to covert. (economic collapse, predicted natural disaster with pre-planned looting by gangs like Katrina, a breakdown in the electrical grid, food chain breakdown, etc.)

3. A disaster with civil breakdown (travel with the intent of shopping/trading) where you need to carry goods/currency and may have to switch to covert.

Thanks to the prevalence of video cameras, we have some great video documentation of peoples' reactions after the WTC collapsed on 9/11. Two of the most common problems that the videos showed were people wearing suit coats/blazers while their faces were covered in dust and people running barefoot down the street holding their high heels/ fancy dress shoes in their hands.

We don't have to wait for another terrorist attack to experience the same problem. Hawaii and California experience small tremors on an almost daily basis. Many other parts of the country have seismic activity every week. The majority are too small to feel, but are a constant reminder that major earthquakes can happen. When they do, people will be dealing with debris on the ground and dust/smoke in the air, just like New Yorkers dealt with after the WTC attacks.

The average person spends just under ½ of their time away from home during the week, and it's likely that in a disaster situation, you will start out away from home and you will want to get to your home as quickly as you can. Ideally, you would have your 72 hour kit with you 24/7 and you would always be able to wear running/hiking shoes, but that's just not reality for most people. As a result, we need to be prepared to improvise and adapt if disaster strikes, we're not ideally dressed, and we need to travel through urban areas to get home.

For the point of this section, we're going to focus on a journey from where you're walking to either a "safe house" or your house. The safe house can be the house of any friend where you could go to get shelter, water, food, fire, first aid, possibly communicate, and gear up as necessary to make it the rest of the way home. In other words, we're covering journeys of less than 12 hours where food and water will be smart, but not necessary for surviving the trip.

To begin with, you want to make sure that you can regulate your temperature. In the summer, this may mean turning clothes inside out if the liner is a lighter color than the outside.

In the winter, this may mean stuffing your shirt/pants with crumpled newspaper and/or wearing a trash bag as a coat/kilt. Homeless people use this little trash bag trick, and our family used it growing up when we went to football games on cold rainy/snowy winter nights. (I told you I could identify with rednecks ☺)

If you are in a high dust environment, you will want to filter the air. Dust and smoke in your lungs will keep your lungs from being as efficient as possible. The resulting decrease in oxygen will keep you from traveling as fast and thinking as clearly as you otherwise could. Depending on what chemicals are in the smoke & dust, it could also cause permanent damage to your lungs.

At a minimum, take off a piece of clothing or rip a strip of cloth that you can use to cover your mouth and nose. Try to pick a cloth that isn't too hard to breathe through. A loose knit fabric is perfect, because it will allow you to add or remove layers as necessary.

If you have access to water, wet down your cloth. Water will allow it to catch more debris and breathing the moist air will be easier on your throat and lungs.

Next, we need to protect your feet. When I look at the footwear people wear on a daily basis, I'm amazed at how flimsy most of them are. People regularly go out with ½" thick flip-flops, fancy pointed-toe dress shoes, heels, thin-strappy sandals, and the like. I'm not going to be critical about foot fashions, but if you do choose to wear this kind of footwear you need to know how to take care of your feet if you have to travel long distances in the city.

To share the importance of good shoes for urban travel, I want to share a quick story with you. Like Neil Strauss, I've gone through the OnPointTactical.com Urban Escape and Evasion course and for the practical exam I spent 8 hours evading 9 bounty hunters in a downtown area. I had on GREAT hiking boots. They are actually the third pair of the same model for me. I've worn them for guiding backpacking and mountain climbing trips in Colorado, and I've worn them for rough trail running. I can wear them for a full day of backpacking with a 60 pound pack and still have relatively "fresh feet" at the end of the day.

After 8 hours of walking and evading on concrete in my favorite boots, my feet were shot. We figured that with our pacing, we were averaging about 2-3 miles an hour with stops, and we figure we went somewhere between 15-20 miles.

Some people have scoffed at the emphasis that I put on quality footwear, saying something to the effect of, "I wore flip flops for 3 days at Disney and I felt fine." This is possible because Disney and many other theme parks use a special asphalt that is impregnated with rubber to keep guests from getting tired and going home early. Concrete (what sidewalks are made of) is 10 times denser than asphalt, and roughly 20-40 times denser than theme park walkways.

The reality is that, unless you have a job where you wear hiking boots or running shoes on a daily basis, you are probably going to need to compensate for your footwear during a long hike in an urban area...even if there is no debris on the ground.

You're going to need to make some judgment calls on short and long term comfort and damage, but here are some general guidelines:

- If you're wearing heels, break them off.
- If you are wearing no socks, thin dress socks, or hose, put fabric or tape between your foot and your shoes to give yourself a little blister protection.
- If you pass a store that carries shoes, buy a pair that will allow you to move faster.
- If you pass a store that carries tape, buy some in case you need to repair or reinforce your footwear. Ideally, buy duct tape.
- If you pass a store that carries superglue, buy some for it's MANY survival uses we have discussed already, including shoe repair.
- Walk on asphalt rather than concrete. Walk on dirt rather than asphalt. Walk on grass rather than dirt.
- If you can walk in the street, rather than on the sidewalk, walk in the center of the street. Most streets are "crowned" rather than flat so that water will run off of the street/road. Walking in the middle of the road will be easier on your back. If you can't walk in the middle of the street, try to alternate walking on the right and left side of the street.

- If the bottom of your shoes are very thin, you can reinforce them by putting a coat sleeve, strip of cloth, tape, and any other available material between your foot and the shoe.
- Remember, your best solution is to start with or acquire good footwear. All of these steps are simply ways to compensate for times when you don't have good footwear with you.
- If you have the opportunity, and it is advantageous, use the best mode of transportation you possibly can. i.e. buy a bike, skateboard, rollerblades, etc.
- In cold weather, build up your shoes as necessary to keep your feet warm. Make sure that you don't wrap anything too tight so that you lose circulation to your feet.
- Stay hydrated and snack when possible if you have a long walk.
- As you develop "hot spots" apply duct tape directly to the spot. If a sore or blister is already forming, try to put some paper, cloth, or reversed duct tape over it to protect it from the tape.

### **How do I get there from here?**

One of my "Franken-soldier" (mercenary/civilian private security contractor) friends introduced me to the concept of PACE routes. PACE stands for Primary, Alternate, Contingency, and Emergency. In an ideal world, you will have PACE routes memorized from your place of work to your house. If you haven't completed that level of preparation yet, you should have local maps in your 72 hour kits.

If you are out to lunch with a group of friends/co-workers when you have to switch into survival mode, you're probably not going to have your 72 hour kit or any of your survival gear with you. This simply means that you will need to be able to improvise and adapt and acquire a map as soon as possible.

In addition to buying a map, two free sources of maps that you're likely to have in almost any city are mass transit maps and maps in phone books. Almost all white pages have maps in them as well as many yellow pages.

As a personal note, not all private security contractors/private military contractors are evil. Nor are they all good-guys. All of my friends who are PSCs are stand up guys who are still serving their country, even if they are

not paid directly by the military. They are red-blooded Americans who would fight martial law rather than enforce it.

They love America, the Constitution, and individual rights. Some of them are still in the National Guard or the Reserves and pick up contractor work between drills and deployments.

Not all PSCs are like my friends, but enough are that I encourage you to do your research before you buy into the demonization of PSCs by the media, Hollywood, and politicians. As a start, I've included a link to a comparison of contractor pay and soldier pay on the resource page. I think you'll be surprised by it. I was.

## **Urban Travel After Civil Breakdown**

The sheer number of potential civil breakdown scenarios makes an exact set of guidelines impractical. If the civil unrest is localized to a few streets, a neighborhood, or a section of town the response will be different than if there is civil unrest across an entire town, which will be different than civil unrest that is regional or nationwide. In addition, your actions are going to depend on WHO is in authority in your immediate area. Is it the police that you know? Are they guard/military troops (who vote conservatively 80% of the time)? Are they UN troops?

In the US, some recent short term examples of localized breakdowns in civil order are small scale riots in LA when the Lakers win the NBA championships and WTO riots in Seattle. These didn't affect people who were a few miles away at all, and people who weren't near the riots when they started could easily avoid them or go around them.

Of course, many situations can't be avoided so easily. Two examples are the power outages on the East coast (short term) and New Orleans after Katrina (short to medium duration).

We could have varying degrees of civil breakdown as a result of similar events, terrorist attacks, high unemployment rates, currency devaluation, food shortages, or other economic triggers.

The guidelines that I'm going to give you are general in nature and you'll want to adapt them depending on your particular situation.

The most obvious trigger to let you know that you are in a situation where you need to follow these guidelines are when the police/fire/EMS are overwhelmed and there is an increase in criminal and civilian violence. Along with those factors, you will likely have one or more of the following:

1. Drinking water shortages
2. Food shortages
3. Breakdowns in power, water, and/or communications
4. Currency instability

### **Movement away from your house**

The movement that we're going to deal with in particular is movement out from your house in a time of extended civil unrest. We're going to assume that the disaster has precipitated a situation where there is a large number of people but a shortage of supplies.

I'm breaking the movement up into two categories: Travel with no intent of trading and travel with the intent of trading. In both cases, we're going to cover travel by foot since it is the most basic form of travel. The biggest difference between the two is the presence or absence of carrying valuables and the increased chance of identifying yourself as a good target.

### **Why would I want to leave my house?**

The problem with survival provisions is that, sooner or later, they run out. The goal with your survival provisions is to have enough on hand to be able to survive until you find a reliable source of consumable items, like food, water, fuel, and medication.

Your survival supplies will allow you to survive without interacting with anyone else for a time, but eventually you want to start venturing out and finding ways to start replacing consumables at least as fast as you are using them.

Hopefully, the situation that prompted you to go into survival mode is just a natural disaster or riot and will pass quickly. If not, here are some of the other reasons why you will want to venture out before order is restored.

1. Water



2. Helping friends and neighbors
3. Finding shelters, gangs, and other threats in your area
4. Finding other mutual aid groups in your area
5. Replacing supplies
6. Finding where medical help is if you need it
7. Gathering intelligence
8. Finding out who is in authority in your area and creating it if there is a vacuum
9. Teaming up and organizing your neighborhood/city
10.       Setting, checking, retrieving caches
11.       Finding backup shelters
12.       Finding PACE routes to your backup shelters
13.       Finding PACE routes out of the city
14.       In general, finding ways to improve your situation, through better shelter, fire, water, food, or security.
15.       Trade/barter/market

As your particular survival situation develops, you're also going to want to know what's going on around you and whether or not it is smart to stay in your current location. As we discussed earlier, if a church, community center, or park that is a block from your house is designated as a refugee center, you may want to relocate as soon as possible.

You're also going to want to know if there are any gangs or community groups operating in your area. Since Katrina, CERT and Neighborhood Watch groups nationwide are preparing for future unrest and will have a presence as soon as an event happens.

Most of these groups will be friendly, but some will be outright unfriendly to outsiders, and others will be living in a narcissistic fantasy land trying to create their own private fiefdom straight out of Hollywood.

As you read survival websites, you'll soon see that this isn't common, but is a very real concern. Some people are HOPING for a disaster so that they will have a chance to be "important" and live out their fantasies developed by watching movies and reading novels. These people are more interested in having instant social status and think that they'll be making all the right decisions like their favorite fictional character. In the event of an urban

survival situation, my plan is to identify and avoid groups and individuals with this mindset as they pop up.

### **Concentric circles of security**

You're going to have several zones of security that increase as you go out from your house. As an example, one set of outgoing concentric circles of security could be your safe room, your house, your property, your street, your neighborhood, and your side of a physical barrier, like a river. Each level is a little less secure than the previous one and you need to be more cautious and more aware as you go to less and less secure areas.

At some point, the security level is going to change from one where you're fine walking around alone to one where you will always want to have a buddy with you. Again, this could be your house, or if your street has teamed up, your entire block could be safe enough for you to go out alone. Remember, we're not talking about the day after a flood in Iowa where everyone is helping each other. We're specifically talking about a situation where civil order has broken down.

If you are in a survival situation, you also do not want to leave all of your belongings unguarded. Since you don't want to go out alone and you don't want to leave your supplies unguarded, you can quickly see why it is so beneficial to have at least a few adults on your team, if your house can support it. If not, you should try to team up with one or more neighbors when you go out so that you can go out as a pair and your spouses can look out for each other at home.

### **Be as boring as you can be**

As you're going out progressively from your house, be very mindful of the people around you. Take note of their dress, level of cleanliness, how much they're carrying, whether they're carrying visible weapons, whether they look tired or energetic, whether they are walking with a purpose or listlessly, etc. This is called the "baseline" and you want to match it as closely as possible. As an example, if everyone is wearing civilian clothes, you don't want to go out in BDUs wearing a helmet, a ruck sack, and carrying an M4 unless you want to attract attention.

Another issue with dressing in a "tactical" look after a disaster is that you look more like an authority figure. As a perceived authority figure, you've

got increased risk of “bad” people attacking you and “good” people swarming to you for help. If you actually are acting in the capacity of a first responder, than this isn’t a problem, but if you’re moving about with a purpose, it could become a big pain, real quickly.

To avoid this, try to wear clothes that are as close to what you see other people wearing as possible. Avoid wearing clothing with school, city, or neighborhood names/logos. Conceal any weapons that you’re carrying, unless carrying weapons is the norm. If you carry a pack, try to make it one that looks more like a book-bag or courier bag than a tactical bag. If people are moving confidently and with a purpose, do likewise. If they look hungry, tired, and worn out, try to match it.

One of my biggest “tells” in rough neighborhoods is that I’m white, fit, have short hair, and I can have an intense look unless I’m consciously trying not to. In a recent trip to an apartment complex in a seedy part of town, I was walking through the courtyard and a little 3-4 year old girl started pointing at me and yelling, “COP! COP!” while crying and clinging to her mother’s leg. It was the middle of the day and I was dressed in a non-descript North Face shirt, shorts, and tennis shoes. She just interpreted my purposeful air (and probably the fact that I was the only white guy within a mile) as law enforcement. If I’d been trying to be invisible and match the baseline, it could have been a big problem.

The baseline will likely be very different as you go from your neighborhood to other neighborhoods. This can be especially true in a survival situation. If people in your neighborhood are well fed, have water, feel safe, and are getting sleep at night, they are going to carry themselves very differently than people in an area that is suffering. As you get a feeling for the different baselines in your area you can plan your appearance so that it is easy to transition from one to another.

**To Do:** 1. Start identifying the baseline look for the different areas in your city. Figure out what you would do to your appearance to walk through it and blend in. The baseline will likely change in a survival situation, but this exercise will train your mind to start identifying the baseline.

2. Identify the boundary lines where the baseline changes near you. It may be a city boundary, railroad tracks, a

highway, a city street, or something else.

## **What to take?**

This is going to be somewhat dependant on what will fit in with the baseline in the areas where you will be traveling. It's likely that a courier bag or a small backpack will be all you can carry externally without standing out.

You can also carry extra gear in cargo pants and, depending on the season, a jacket or coat. Cinch things down and gear up so that you can jump up and down without making noise and having stuff flop all over. In short, try to avoid carrying gear that will be loud or will prevent you from running.

At a minimum, you're going to want to have the following on you: knife, multi-tool, lock pick, lighter, light, comms. After that, it's going to depend on your situation. I would suggest the biggest weapon you can carry without deviating from the baseline, spare mags, water and possibly a way to purify more, chain and/or a cable, a padlock, a map that does not have any markings on it, a TINY survival/medical kit, pepper spray, small bolt cutters, chalk or a livestock marker, and a notepad & pen.

## **Why a chain and padlock?**

Let me give you a hypothetical scenario. You have a light industrial area near you. From previous exploration, you have identified one facility that is a couple hundred yards long that is abandoned and has 8 foot barbed wire fence, but gates at both ends that are not locked. As you are checking out the neighborhood for threats and resources, you notice 3-4 rough looking teenagers scoping you out.

You happen to be near this facility and duck in one end and speed up to get across to the other end. As you get to the other end, the kids are half way through and gaining on you. As you go through the 2<sup>nd</sup> gate, you run your cable through the fence, lock it with your padlock and take off.

Now the teens have to either get over the barbed wire fence or double back in order to get to you. You have the option of returning later and retrieving your lock and cable. By identifying this choke point in advance, you were able to easily diffuse the situation and avoid a no-win conflict.

You could also use this technique to block a door by locking the push bar or handle to a pipe, metal beam, or stud. This works better with a cable than a chain, and it depends on the door being solid enough to slow down your pursuers.

The basis for this strategy comes from a fictional story by Victor Aguilar called, "200". I apologize in advance for some of the language he uses, but he has some very good nuggets of information and I'll link to it on the resource section for this lesson.

As a slight modification to this strategy, you could do the following if you had two teams out at the same time. Let's use the same scenario, except this time the gate at one end is locked. Your team and the other team are walking down parallel streets, one block apart so that you will pass by the open gate and the other team will pass by the closed gate. As you spot your tail, you radio to the second team and have them double time it to the locked gate to either pick the lock or cut the lock.

As you enter the open gate, your pursuers will think that they have you trapped and will have no reason to speed up. As long as your other team has defeated the lock by the time you get there, you can walk right through and re-lock it or replace it with your own.

On defeating locks...practice makes perfect. MasterLocks are amazingly simple to rake (pick). They are even easier once you figure out a particular lock. As a novice picking a MasterLock, it might take anywhere from 5 seconds to 5 minutes. Once you know the right combination of wiggles for a particular lock, you will be able to pick the same lock in 1-3 seconds in the future. As you get better, your times will improve considerably.

Keep in mind that picking locks is illegal, damages the pins and will make the keys for the lock not work eventually. In other words, don't pick locks that you want to work in the future with a key. (i.e. the lock on your house, or a lock that someone else is using in a non-survival situation.) But if you have potential chokepoints like this that are padlocked, it might not hurt to "learn the locks" in your area if you are in a survival situation. Just keep your local laws in mind.

This brings up the importance of knowledge about the area around your house and the importance of route selection. The more you can learn about

your area now, the better prepared you will be in the event that you have to switch into survival mode.

**To Do:** look for choke points in your area that could trap you in a survival situation or that you could use to stop pursuers. Mark them on your SurviveInPlace map.

### **What the heck is a livestock marker?**

I grew up on a farm and we raised pigs the years when we thought it would be profitable. Whenever we'd work on the pen, feed them, or spend time with them, we'd have a grease marker with us. If we spotted one that was sick, injured, or needed special attention, we'd mark it with the pen so we could identify it quickly when we came back later with whatever supplies we needed. The markers look like BIG crayons and they have grease in them that won't wash away without scrubbing.

Carrying grease pens and/or chalk with you will allow you to use pre-defined "hobo codes" or your own codes to mark points of interest for you or other people in your group when they go out.

### **What about Murphy?**

Before you go out, take some time and brainstorm possible problems that you might run into and pre-plan your response. As an example, what if you don't make it back on time? Can your team/neighborhood spare anyone to look for you? Should they look for you? You could have gotten lost, had an innocent accident, gotten arrested, or you could have gone into a bad area. If it was a bad area, do you want another pair of team members meeting the same fate?

These are questions that you need to ask and answer BEFORE you go out. Some others:

1. What is the appropriate response to local/federal/international law enforcement? The response could be different.
2. How often will you check in by radio? What codes will you use? Will you leave your radios on or will you just have scheduled times to communicate?

3. What is the plan to call you back if something happens at home while you're out?
4. What will you do if one of the pair has an injury that hurts mobility?
5. If you are aggressively pursued, will you split up or stay together? If you split up or are split up, when/where will you meet up? How long will you wait?
6. How will you avoid and detect surveillance?

## **Detecting and avoiding surveillance**

I have sold silver online before to people who live locally. This involved meeting them to exchange silver for cash. Being the "moderately aware" person that I am, one of my first concerns was that they could easily follow me home under the assumption that I had more precious metals there. As a result, I pick public meeting places (I like Starbucks and food courts) and park my car a couple of blocks away. After the exchange, I stick around awhile to read and pick a U shaped route to get to my car so that I can easily tell if I am being followed.

Basically, if my car is Southwest of my meeting location, I will go East, spend a few minutes in a retail store, go South, West, and back North to my car. The chance of anyone following the same route with the same pacing is very slim, unless they are following me.

This is a very basic form of surveillance detection. Two other forms are using reflective surfaces, watching someone who stays at the same distance from you, even after stopping or changing speeds.

## **Switching to Covert**

If you suspect that you are being followed or see someone who you'd rather not recognize you, it may be advantageous to change your appearance quickly. A few simple way to do this are:

- Buy some cheap hair extensions from a drug store or dollar store and superglue them to the inside of a ball cap. Ideally, you want to have this available in advance.
- Reverse or change your jacket. Switch pants and/or shirt.
- Put in colored contacts.
- Put on or change your sunglasses.



- Use fake facial hair.
- Shave or dye your facial hair. (You may be able to quickly shave and look different. I've usually got dirty blonde/white hair. When I shave my goatee/beard, I end up bleeding for half an hour and I don't look that much different than I did originally. I get a much better effect by dying than shaving. You'll only learn this by trial and error.)

Whatever you do to change your appearance, you need to make sure that you still end up matching the baseline, and not like someone at a Halloween party in a cheap costume.

My contacts who have done extensive undercover work, including Kelly Alwood, from OnPoint Tactical, all agree that the only way to get good at it is to practice. Practice will tell you what looks natural, it will tell you which disguises last for a few minutes and which will last for several hours, and practice will give you confidence in your disguise, which will help keep you from telegraphing doubt.

If you get into disguises, one "test" that you can do is to pan-handle at a busy intersection near where you live. For such a safe exercise, the risk of embarrassment makes the "pucker factor" pretty darn high when you see someone you know.

## **Traveling for Shopping and Trade**

Traveling for shopping and trade is split out because at some point during your travel, people are likely to see that you have money or they will see that you bought something valuable. Both of these actions make you a good target.

Before we get into that, let's back up a minute and talk about what items should you try to have on hand for trade and barter.

Ideally, you want to have items on hand that you won't need for survival that you can use for trade & barter. I wouldn't trade clothes, water, food, or fuel unless you have an abundance of the item or a way to replace the item easily.

Some examples of items to trade are multi-tools, cigarettes, novels, small games, soap, anti-diarrhea medication, sugar, salt, 550 cord, or, as suggested by James Rawles from SurvivalBlog, high-capacity magazines that



you own specifically for trade. Ideally, you want consumables that are cheap now and that people would pay a lot for if there was a shortage. Another GREAT item is matches or lighters. Ragnar Benson tells about urban survival situations in other countries where people went through 750 matches PER MONTH!

Of course, if you've "picked the right horse" and have the accepted currency on hand, you can simply use it. What I mean is that the accepted currency in a medium to long term urban survival situation could be FRNs (Federal Reserve Notes/dollar bills/paper money). But, it could also be "junk" silver (pre-1965 US coins), silver 1 oz rounds, modern US coins, or even gold for large purchases. The fact is, the medium of exchange can be whatever a particular society decides that it is.

It could also be salt, bullets, cigarettes, gas, or something completely different. After Katrina, dollars, fuel, water, and food worked as currency. When Argentina had their massive inflation, coins were worth more than paper money. In Zimbabwe, they knocked 12 0's off of the paper currency and kept the coinage the same...essentially ADDING 12 0's to the value of the coins. They eventually started using foreign currency to conduct business. We just don't know what the currency will be until the disaster is upon us.

My suggestion is to buy some of each with an emphasis on small denominations of cash, junk silver, multi-tools, cigarettes, and other consumables. If you LOVE knives, water filters, solar/crank gadgets, or something else that you never seem to be able to buy enough of, then buy new versions with the intent to sell/barter/trade the old ones eventually.

### **Money Management (How to keep from having all of your money stolen)**

If you've traveled much overseas, you're going to be nodding your head in agreement as you read this section. The reason is because you're going to use the same anti-theft strategies in a post-disaster survival situation that you use when you're traveling in a foreign country, in a bad part of town, or, if you're like me, in everyday life.

First of all, we want to get into the mind of a thief or a husband/father of a hungry family. For the most part, thefts are crimes of opportunity and you

can do a lot to prevent them by not exposing yourself as a target or making yourself look like an easy mark.

I love watching animal shows. Not the stupid pet trick shows, but the wildlife shows where a lion will stalk a herd of gazelles, looking for dinner. The lion knows that she isn't going to eat unless she kills and she has to use her resources efficiently or she will die of starvation. As a result, she doesn't go after the largest gazelle...she goes after the one that she has the best chance of catching and killing without getting injured or using up precious resources.

When you're traveling to and from your trading destination, you will be a ripe target. You'll have all of the elements needed for survival AND you'll have money.

Getting back into the mind of the hungry husband/father/thief; he is going to look for signs that you are worth robbing and evaluate the potential of getting hurt/arrested/killed. We've already covered the baseline look, so your dress/appearance isn't going to make you stand out and the next thing is where/how you carry your money.

You always want to carry your money in front of you...in your jacket, shirt pocket, neck wallet, money belt, front pockets, cargo pockets, shoes, etc. so you can use your eyes to detect thieves. The most common form of pick-pocketing is called the "bump" and "pick" and takes advantage of this fact. It's very simple. One person bumps or distracts you and a second person picks your wallet. This is easiest with a "checkbook" wallet or what one of my private military contractor friends calls a "George Costanza" wallet, but it can be done with any wallet.

Think about the last time that you paid cash for something. Did you reach in your pocket, pick out the right bills by feel, and hand the cashier exactly the right bills? Probably not -- unless you are blind. More than likely, you pulled out your wallet or your cash, sorted through it, and pulled out what you needed.

As you did this, it's likely that you telegraphed how good of a target you are.

What bills were visible to the cashier? To other shoppers? Keep in mind that a fat wallet looks valuable, even if it's full of \$1 bills and discount cards. Think about how many "gold" or "platinum" cards you flash when you pay

for things. All of these are telltale signs that you may be a good or bad target.

**But what about the “blind” crack you made?**

Many blind people actually CAN reach into their pockets and pull out exactly the right currency to pay a bill without pulling out all of their money.

In England, they can do it because the bills are different sizes. In Canada, the bills actually have Braille on them. But in the US, they do something different.

Since US bills are all the same size, they do it by using a system of folding. \$1 bills are left flat, \$5 bills are folded lengthwise, \$10 bills are folded by width, \$20 bills are folded lengthwise AND THEN by width.

This allows them to tell what bill they're holding without being able to see it. It also allows them to reach into their pocket and pull out no more than what they absolutely have to when they're making purchases.

When I'm traveling or at fairs/markets, I carry cash in different pockets. I also do this in Vegas when I'm playing blackjack.

I'm a card counter and basic money management dictates that you should always have 30X your base bet. If I'm playing at a \$25 table, I've got at least \$800 on me, plus any winnings for the day and my spending money. One way that I split it up is as follows: I put my spending money in my left front pocket. I put \$400 in each of my cargo pockets and my winnings in my right front pocket.

This way, when I want something to eat/drink, I can reach into my left front pocket and pull out “all of my money” and it's only \$40-\$50. When I sit down at a table, I reach into one of my cargo pockets and pull out everything that's in there and lay it on the table. I don't count out \$400 from a bigger wad of cash...I already know how much I'm laying down as soon as I reach in my pocket. If I want to put down \$500 instead, I pull out \$400 from one pocket and a single \$100 from the other cargo pocket. Since I know that the only thing in that pocket is \$100 bills, all I have to do is pull

out the first bill I grab. With practice, you can do this so that it looks like that's all that you have in that pocket.

I also use a two step process. It is handy when we're at theme parks, in the winter, when I'm skiing, or when I'm doing security/close protection and have my pockets full of "goodies". It's very simple. I start out with a single \$20 in my pocket and more \$20s in a neck wallet. As I get close to using up the \$20, I will either pull out another \$20, or if that doesn't seem smart, I'll go to the restroom, enter a stall, and pull another \$20 from my neck wallet. This way, I can just pull my cash out of my pocket without ever showing very much money and making myself a target.

You can use any of these methods (folding, putting a single denomination in a pocket, or two stepping) to effectively hide exactly how much money you've got. The exact method is not important...rather, focus on the concept of dividing your money and hiding how much money you're carrying. If you know that you're going to buy something expensive, know how much it is going to be, and can get isolated before you buy it, I like to pre-position the exact amount of cash in my left front pocket so I can pull it out without having to open multiple pockets.

Splitting up your money like this also allows you to empty 1, 2, or even three pockets in the event of a mugging and still not get wiped out. If I'm in a rough area, I go so far as to put an old hotel key and a couple of non-activated "loyalty" cards in my back pocket with some cash. If I need to, I can grab them and toss them at a mugger and use the distraction to either attack or run.

That's all well and good for cash, but if you are trading or bartering, you will probably need either a shoulder bag or a backpack.

Use the same strategies with whatever currency or exchange medium you are using...pack the items into various "denominations" so that you don't have to ask people to make "change" for you. This will help you get a better deal and it will help keep you from showing off how much you actually have with you.

Keep in mind that the process of negotiating, buying, and exchanging currency for another item will give people in your immediate area an idea of how much you are carrying with you. If there are very unsavory people in

your immediate area, you should weigh the benefits of completing the purchase, asking the vendor to do the deal in private, waiting until they leave, or waiting until another time.

### **Strength in Numbers**

Again, the best way to avoid becoming a target is to make sure that you don't look like a target. But what if you have to make several small purchases in the open or you need to make one large purchase? The easiest solution to both of these situations relies on having a team with you.

If you have several small purchases to make, split them among the group. If you have one large purchase to make, you can do it in private. If you have no reason to think that anyone sees you as ripe targets, than just act nonchalantly and head home. Stay aware, but look nonchalant.

If on the other hand, you feel like you were "cased" or are being followed, you can approach the purchase as if it is a "close protection" detail where the buyer or the most likely target is the "principal" and the rest of your team is the protection detail (bodyguards).

Essentially, have everyone but the principal spread out and looking around for people who are paying too much attention. You still want to stick to the baseline look, but be observant of what is going on around you and who is paying attention to the purchase.

There are two ways to approach this after the purchase:

1. You have made yourself an obvious target. In this case, you will want to travel in what is called a "tight diamond" formation. You will have one person 5-15 feet ahead of the principal, 5-15 feet behind the principal, and one person with the principal (assuming 4 people). If you have additional people, they will take the same relative formations, but further out. The goal here is to make yourself look like a big gazelle. When they see that there are 3-4 people obviously protecting the principal, they know that they will probably sustain losses if they try anything.
2. You have not made yourself an obvious target, but you feel like being cautious. As you leave the store/market and start heading back home, you want to use what is called a "loose diamond" formation.

Essentially, you'll have one person 10-30 yards ahead of the principal, a second person either with the buyer or across the street from the principal and a third person 10-30 yards behind the principal. Additional people can be tighter, pair up, or be further away from the principal. Done correctly, a loose diamond formation is almost undetectable in a crowd. It's just a few people going the same way on the same day.

In general, the more of a threat that you perceive, the more formidable you want your group to look. The less of a threat that you perceive, the more you want your group to blend in.

In any of the three scenarios, you will want to go through the same surveillance detection routines (reflections, turns, pacing) as we discussed earlier.

I mentioned something at the very beginning of this lesson that's worth repeating. Everything in this lesson is easier with a bike, vehicle, horse, or the use of mass transit. I've illustrated everything with the worst case scenario (only foot traffic) since the lessons would, by default, cover the easier scenarios.

You've probably noticed a lot of overlap in these sections...baseline, choke points, observing your surroundings. That's because these are all fundamental skills. The more you practice them in the coming weeks, the better equipped you will be to survive and thrive in both non-survival and survival situations.

Assignments for this week:

<b>To Do:</b> Identify 3 choke points near your house, work, or in between that could trap you or that you could use to evade others if necessary.
<b>To Do:</b> Consciously identify the baseline look around you as you go through your week. Create their "story" in your mind. Do the same with people who obviously stick out.
<b>To Do:</b> See if you can identify the boundaries where the baseline look changes.
<b>To Do:</b> Try one of the money tricks mentioned to minimize the amount of

cash that you expose when you make purchases.

Keep your eyes open for an important announcement in the next few days. You won't want to miss this!

Make sure to visit the resource page at <http://urbansurvivalplan.com/516/lesson13t/> to see the resources for this lesson and to let me know what you thought. I REALLY value your comments.

See you in a few days!

God Bless,

David Morris  
Publisher, SurviveInPlace.com