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How the 1% Prep for the Coming Collapse

By Janet Lee Voss

While you're busy stocking up on food and medicine, learning first aid and planting your survival garden, another group of US citizens is preparing in a much different way. They're not planning on sticking around for the big show; they're planning on leaving soon, or they've already left. That's right: prepping is different if you're a billionaire or even just a multi-millionaire.

Why is that?

Because unlike the events you're preparing for, things have already gone from bad to worse for the 1% of highest income tax payers. From a tax standpoint, they've already reached the point of disaster. And, knowing what they know, they aren't waiting to see how much worse it gets; they know where the country is headed. That's why literally *millions* of rich people are leaving the US every year. Many are even giving up their American citizenship.

What's the Rush?

The rich have the means to pretty much live wherever they want to. But to remain rich, one must keep as much as they can of what they have and what they earn. You can't avoid the

discussion happening around the tax code—it is, without doubt, targeting the rich. And why wouldn't it? Most Americans pay little or no taxes.

Therefore, increasing taxes on the wealthy, which is what this Administration is doing, is driving the rich out of the country. Sure, the

rich began leaving the country before this Administration, but the exodus of the wealthy has certainly grown in the past three years. Their reasoning is simple: The larger the federal government grows,

and the more the country resembles a stagnant European welfare state, the higher the taxes and more confiscatory the government becomes. It's not rocket science.

The way to stop this 1% exodus is pretty simple, too. If the federal government implemented a fair tax, a flat tax, eliminated the income tax and replaced it with a consumption tax, or a myriad of other lower tax arrangements, the wealthy would not be so inclined to leave. But, with the government really piling it on, adding new regulations, more taxes, and stripping away incentives for businesses actually trying to *make money*,



the outflow of wealth and its owners, is predictable. But this adversarial climate against successful people has become even worse since private property rights and personal privacy rights are being gutted by the feds. Millions of the top earners in the country have had it, and they're leaving.

But if you're not really wealthy, what does all of this mean for you?

How the Preparations of the 1% Impact the 99%

You might think that what other people are doing, particularly those leaving the country, doesn't affect you and your preparations. You're wrong. The faster the exodus of the super-rich, the faster your taxes go up and the harder it is for you to make your own preparations for being self-sufficient. When the wealthy leave the country, the gap in government revenue will have to be made up by the rest of the taxpayers. In other words: *you*. As long as the government still has someone—anyone—to feed its bloated infrastructure, it will continue with “business as usual,” but your business will be anything *but* usual.

Taxes will Go Up; Jobs will Go Down

The first two things that happen will be increased taxes and elimination of jobs. So, while you have a job, you'll have to pay more in taxes, and when your job is gone, you will (likely) not be as prepared as you had hoped because you've been spending more of your resources on taxes. In the absence of a national sales tax, you don't get to “vote with your feet” and decide how much you give to the government. No, as long as there are mandatory federal income taxes, you have to “put out or get out.” What will the tax increase be for the 99%? Around 60 percent. That's right: because the wealthy are leaving, and taking with them their

money that was formerly paid in taxes, you'll have to pick up the slack, or face the consequences.

The Fall of the Dollar and the Mass Exodus

It used to be that if people wanted to grow their businesses and grow their income, the best place to do so was in the U.S. However, the economic collapse, downgrade in credit, and increased debt resulting in higher taxes has made the United States much less desirable. People can get a higher return on their investments if they move their money offshore. To grow their money, they have to invest in foreign exchanges and other assets that yield more and are also less subject to high taxes. To keep their money, the 1% folks have to make sure it stays out of the United States.



To ensure that they have complete privacy and that their assets aren't in danger of being seized by the government, the wealthy are doing what they have to do...become *expatriates*. They leave, they take their money with them, and they abandon their U.S. citizenship so that they're not subjected to the financial transparency laws that the rest of us have to abide by. It's also easier to leave without a trace by buying real estate in other countries, financed by foreign banks, and—again—not

subjected to the invasion of privacy that real estate involves in the U.S.

Where are they Going?

Most of the wealthy jumping ship are buying property and relocating to Panama and Belize. They're setting up bank accounts in Singapore and Switzerland—accounts that take deposits in more than one currency (to protect against the decline of the dollar). They're arranging for second passports. They are, in short, getting their “ducks in a row” for a quick getaway, should the need arise. They may maintain a home here, in the U.S., but they've taken up financial residency elsewhere. Rather than fully relocating to one place, with all of their assets in tow, they're spreading out their assets across the globe in diverse forms. Real estate, gold, bank accounts, and foreign stock are all parts of the Financial Prepper's toolkit.

Why You Should Care

Beyond the obvious issues of taxes and jobs, which you can't do much about, you should care about and learn about what the 1%--the American wealthy--are doing, because they're driven problem solvers with means, and they've happened upon solutions to get themselves out of the mess brewing in this country. However, the noose is tightening. As more people leave, and more income is lost, the U.S. government comes up with more ways to keep revenue in the country and keep citizens in the country.

Could our borders close like they did in Nazi Germany?

Yes; that isn't a far-fetched scenario.

When the desire to control its people becomes the driving motivation

behind a government's actions, it will do anything to preserve its power, including turning the United States into a police state.

If you want to take advantage of the tools available to the 1% to ensure your financial and physical freedom, you need to learn what to do and do it quickly. Already, under-the-radar

countries like Paraguay, which were formerly easy relocation options for U.S. citizens, are starting to tighten up their borders and increase their regulations for setting up financial or physical residency. You'd better believe that the U.S. government will do all it can to prevent the flight of its wealthiest individuals to these countries and will use all options available to prevent it,

including pressuring other countries to cooperate.

Take a cue from those who are most affected by the ever-worsening economic conditions and a government that wants to take everything from you and your family; start your financial preparations now.

Preservation Without Power

By Janet Lee Voss

What happens to your food supply when the power goes out? What happens when you're truly forced off the grid? How will you keep your food fresh and free of harmful bacteria? How will you preserve the food that you're growing in your garden or raising in your yard? To be fully prepared, you need a thorough working understanding of food preservation without electrical power.

Harnessing Power from Nature

Preserving food without power doesn't mean "without any energy inputs." For our circumstances, it means preserving food without your oven, or microwave, freezer, electric stove, or electric dehydrator. It means, essentially, preserving foods through methods that use solar energy, climactic conditions, biological functions, or wood-fire energy. Some of these preservation methods are actually just storage methods that slow the decomposition of foods.

There are several categories of food preservation and storage that use no electrical inputs, and little in the way

of other energy than fire. The most common include: fermenting, curing and smoking, drying or dehydrating, root cellaring, and in-ground storage. There are entire books written about each type of preservation. To decide which types will work for you, here's an overview of each and some basics to get going.



Fermenting

When you think of fermenting food items, the first thing that comes to mind is probably beer. However, fermentation is for that and so much more. The first record of a fermented beverage is for fermented honey, or mead. Fermentation has been widely used throughout the centuries because the combination of

bacteria, pH of the solution, and alcohol content resulting from the fermentation process keeps food from spoiling, even when not refrigerated. Beer was, essentially, "liquid bread." Making cider was a way to preserve the calories from apples for long periods of time. In the Far East, fermented beans (miso) and fermented vegetables (kimchi) are still staples of the diet.

One extra benefit of fermentation is that, because it is done in the home with naturally-occurring bacteria, the finished foods can act as "immune boosters." Additionally, traditionally fermented foods, such as cabbage, are some of the most nutritious vegetables you can eat.

Any food, if left in the right conditions, will ferment. "The right conditions" mean a proper balance of oxygen, pH, sugar, and bacteria. Otherwise, the food will rot. Fermentation can be used to preserve fruits and vegetables effectively, and requires little equipment other than a plastic bucket, salt, and a bucket cover. Fermented foods can keep for up to a year, or longer (if bottled correctly). There

is no power requirement for home fermentation.

Curing and Smoking

These techniques are primarily used for meat and fish, and work best during late fall/early winter when outdoor temperatures are between 30-40 degrees. Curing is the first step to smoking. Curing is the process of drawing water out of the meat using a salt brine (brine curing) or a salt pack (dry curing). In both instances, the meat is submerged or packed with the salt or brine and left to sit for five to seven days in an area with a temperature that is no more than 35-40 degrees. By curing your own meat, you can avoid harmful nitrates found in most commercially-available meat products. No power is needed to cure meat.



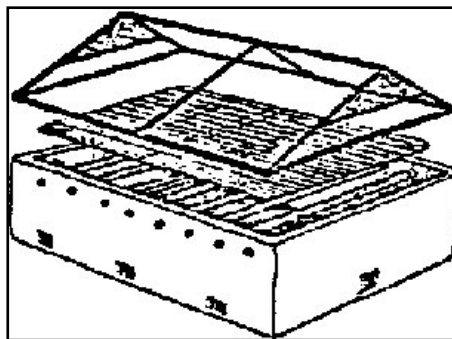
The second step in this preservation process is smoking. You can build a smokehouse, which makes sense if you plan to smoke larger quantities of meat. You can also build a smoke barrel, for smaller batches. There are two types of smoking: hot smoking (at temperatures of 170 degrees Fahrenheit and above) and cool smoking or “hard smoking”

(at temperatures of around 110 degrees Fahrenheit). The distance between the fire and the smokehouse is what generally determines the temperature. The time needed to thoroughly smoke the meat depends on the size of the cut of meat and the temperature of the fire. To preserve meat without power, you need to “hard smoke” it.

Drying and Dehydrating

The easiest way to preserve food is to dry it. You can use an electric dehydrator, but if you have no power, you'll need to create a solar dryer to make efficient work of this task. Fish, fruits, vegetables, and herbs are good candidates for drying with a solar dryer. Beans, corn, and grain are excellent foods for dry storage, but you generally harvest these foods after they're already dry.

If you dry your own produce, you can avoid sulfur, which some people are allergic to. To preserve color and vitamin content in dried foods, however, you might want to sulfur your produce. That's an advanced step, though.



To dry your own produce outside, construct a solar dryer by making a frame with a screen on the bottom, air holes covered with screen on the sides, and a window pane on top. The screen keeps insects out while promoting air flow. The window pane will magnify

the effect of the sun. The solar dryer is for use with thin pieces of produce only. To dry fish, set it on a screen that is protected from the sun and from animals. (This method works better in warmer, more arid climates.)

Root Cellaring

Root cellaring is less of a preservation technique as it is a “powerless” storage technique. When you store vegetables in a root cellar, you're not altering them in any way to prevent bacterial growth and spoilage, you're altering the environment they're in to prevent spoilage and maintain nutritional quality. It is possible that you'll actually want to create several different “root cellar” areas throughout your house. Different fruits and vegetables have different requirements for preservation.



What most people think of, when they think of a root cellar, is an underground space that is cool, dark, and damp. The elevated humidity in these spaces keeps vegetables and fruits from shriveling due to lack of moisture. The lower temperature slows bacteria growth. Apples, potatoes, and root crops store well in damper areas. Onions, garlic, and pumpkins keep best when stored in a slightly warmer and drier area of the house.

In-Ground Storage

In-ground storage requires planning,

because you need to make sure that your vegetables are at the right point when cool weather hits so that they stop growing very much (so they're not "over ripe" or "over grown" and woody), but that they are big enough to harvest and be useful. Yearly temperatures can vary, so it is best not to "bank" on this method for more than one-half to one-third of your storage needs.

Root vegetables such as carrots, turnips, and parsnips are the best

candidates for in-ground storage. In areas with mild, damp winters, you can leave these crops in the ground through March, harvesting only



as much as you need on any given day. Out of all of the preservation and storage techniques, this is probably the easiest! It won't work for everyone, though. Gardeners in the Pacific Northwest and Southeast can most easily take advantage of this technique.

As you can see, with a bit of planning and ingenuity, you can preserve and store the bulk of your food harvest without artificial power sources. Start planning now, so you're prepared.

Survival Seeds

What You Need and Why

By Janet Lee Voss

Grabbing some seed packets and sticking them in the freezer is a step towards food security, but it isn't the only step, nor is it enough to ensure that you can feed yourself and your family when transportation and food-delivery systems break down. To create a seed bank that you can depend on, you must be strategic.

Two Types of Seeds Needed

When considering which seeds to store, you must balance your supply between seeds for plants that will provide bulk calories (think about starchy foods like corn and beans) and seeds that provide essential nutrients and vitamins.

If you remember reading accounts of sailors too long at sea without fresh foods, you remember hearing terrible stories of deaths due to scurvy, a disease caused by lack of vitamin C. Without the right planning, scurvy and

other vitamin-deficiency diseases such as rickets, beriberi, and pellagra won't be a thing of the past, they'll be an unfortunate part of your present reality.

A Third Seed-Saving Consideration

You can only grow your own fresh food during part of the year in most of the country, so you'll have to not only consider calories and nutrients when deciding which seeds to save, but also which foods you can store for up to six months during the winter.

Here are the top seed storage recommendations for the three most important factors in seed saving for food security. (There is some overlap between categories. Desirable attributes are noted.)

Top Seeds for Bulk Calories

Seeds in this category deliver high calories per volume. The most calorie-dense plants are those that produce

starchy edible seeds. After starchy seed producers, plants with starchy roots or starchy fruits are the next most desirable, in terms of producing straight calories to eat.

Best Calorie-Dense Seeds

- **Peas:** Peas are a good choice for your food-safety seed kit because they are both higher in calories and nutrient-dense. High in vitamin A and vitamin C, composed of 73% carbs, 22% protein and 3% fat, peas pack a punch. Peas are also easy to grow, harvest, dry, and store. They can be picked fresh or allowed to dry for storage.



SURVIVAL SEEDS

WHAT YOU NEED AND WHY

- **Beans:** Dry beans are the primary choice for high-calorie storage. “Green beans” aren’t nearly as calorically dense. Beans are also excellent sources of protein and carbohydrates, as well as amino acids. Their carb to protein ratio is similar to peas.
- **Corn:** To get the most out of growing your own corn, select field corn varieties, rather than sweet corn varieties. Grow the ears to maturity, and dry the seeds for cornmeal. Cornmeal has four times as many calories per cup as fresh, whole corn.
- **Runners up:** In addition to the top three, also consider adding seeds for parsnips, beets, and winter squash to your high-calorie seed storage plan.

Top seeds for Vitamins and Nutrients

Calories alone aren’t enough to sustain healthy growth. We need vitamins, too. Vitamins serve a variety of functions in our bodies—from regulation of bodily functions to production of new cells, to fighting disease. Some plants are more vitamin-packed than others. To get the most out of your garden space, time, and limited resources (water and fertilizer), plant the most nutrient-dense seeds.

Best Nutrient-Dense Seeds

- **Kale:** Kale is THE single most nutrient-dense food you can



grow. It’s packed with vitamin A, vitamin C, Iron, and Calcium. You need to eat the leaves either fresh or fermented. (Fermenting them helps preserve them for longer storage.)

- **Broccoli:** Broccoli is an excellent source of antioxidants, calcium, and fiber. A bonus for broccoli is that you can sprout its seeds on your countertop during the winter for fresh greens when it is too cold outside to grow anything. As little as ¼ cup of broccoli sprouts per day can deliver enough vitamins to avoid most vitamin-deficiency diseases.



- **Pumpkin:** Pumpkin is considered a “superfood.” Trendy? Yes. Worth growing? Yes. Pumpkins can be stored throughout the fall and into winter without losing nutrients. They’re high in vitamins A and C, as well as Calcium and Iron.
- **Spinach:** This leafy green is another excellent source of vitamin C and protein. It’s also relatively easy to grow.
- **Runners up:** Carrots are high in nutrients, and are also easy to store during the winter, so they’re a good choice if you have issues with squash bugs or squash vine borers that prevent you from growing squash. Cabbage is a good source of vitamin C, and is also easy to store during

the winter—either fresh or fermented.

Top seeds for Long-Term Storage of Food

In addition to the nutritional qualities of the food produced by your seeds, you need to think about storage potential. Unless you live in the Southern United States, you won’t be growing your own food year-round, unless you build cold frames and grow primarily cool-weather crops in the winter.

You can preserve any type of food if you have power, but what can you preserve without power? For you to truly be food-secure, grow foods that you can preserve without needing power for canning or freezing. These seeds will give you food that you can store and use during the winter.

Best Seeds for Food Storage

- **Winter Squash:** Butternut, acorn, and hubbard squashes are the easiest to store throughout the winter. Pumpkins are another good candidate. If you are planning to harvest seeds from your squash to replenish your seed supply, you need to separate squash varieties, or stagger the plantings so that they don’t cross-pollinate each other.
- **Beans:** To grow beans for storage, select varieties that you dry, rather than those you eat fresh. Limas, runner beans, navy beans, and more are excellent for storage.
- **Corn:** You can store corn dried on the ears or shelled. Grow field varieties rather than sweet varieties.
- **Carrots:** Carrots can be stored “in the garden” in regions with humid, cool, but not cold winter

weather. In colder regions, carrots can be root cellared. They're great sources for vitamins in the winter.



- **Onions:** You might not think of onions as a “health food,” but

onions are easy to store, and they're great sources of vitamin C in the winter.

- **Cabbage:** Cabbage is good for cold storage and fermenting, and provides much-needed vitamins in the winter.
- **Tomatoes:** Keep tomatoes for use all year without canning them—build your own solar produce dryer and dry them for use during the winter.

Keeping Your Seed Stash Full

In order to enjoy true food security, you need to grow enough of each of these seeds to eat, and enough to plant the following year. Don't eat

your entire stash of beans or corn! Some of these vegetables require two growing seasons to flower and set seed, so make sure you know which will flower and set seed in the first year, and which ones need to be lifted or overwintered for a second year.

Additionally, when you purchase seeds, make sure you buy varieties that are marked as “open-pollinated” NOT hybrid. You can't save and re-grow the seeds from hybrid plants. Buying hybrids for a self-sustaining seed bank is a fast way to put yourself in jeopardy after just one growing season.

Happiness is a Warm Gun

Mark Walters Interview Part I

By Wallace Streete

As you know, we only seek to provide the best information to you, Lamplighter Report reader, and today we are happy to present the first of a two part interview with Mark Walters, a member of the United States Concealed Carry Association (USCCA) and the host of the Armed America Radio program.

Mark not only is a member of the USCCA, but he actually lives the organization. If you have never heard of Mark before, you will enjoy this interview and hearing his compelling experience of being “carjacked”—well, it was an “attempted” carjacking--you see, Mark carries a handgun and so what might have happened, well just imagine...

Read Part I of the interview with Mark Walter here.

Wallace: To begin, Mark, just tell everybody a little bit about you and your credentials and the radio show and that type of thing.



Mark: It was about 6:20 in the morning. My daughter was just two weeks old, my first born, and I was on my way to work. I owned a freight brokerage company in Tampa. As I approached the traffic signal, a vehicle popped out from the right lane from a dead stop – just shot out in front of me, forced me to stop. Two guys got out of the vehicle and attempted to force their way in a car in the left turn lane, right off my front left bumper. It was really surreal. I pulled my gun out of its holster and when they couldn't get into that vehicle, they turned towards me. I drew my fire on them and stopped the intended action against me and the woman there, in the middle of the road. The whole encounter probably lasted less than 30 seconds.

But it changed me, obviously. I used to say – and still say – that at that time, I had carried a gun for a long time, but I used to say that if a criminal attacked me, they had a 50/50 shot of finding an armed victim, because I didn't carry my gun with me all the time. Since that episode, I carry my gun with me all the time.

It was a couple years after that, that I got a little 3x5 index card in the mail for Concealed Carry magazine. I was one of the first 50 subscribers of the magazine and then later became the CCA. I started some conversations with the owner and founder Tim Schmidt and began writing for the magazine. The first story I wrote for the magazine was what happened to me back in 2002. That story was entitled, "The importance of carrying your gun 100% of the time." That article now resides in the best of Concealed Carry magazine columns over the years. And I've been writing a per-issue column for them for the last six or seven years now.

The radio show took off as an idea when Tim and I were down at the SHOT show in Orlando a number of years ago. We were just sitting around the Bahama Breeze drinking cocktails and relaxing after a long day, and I said: "We need to elevate the magazine to the next level, take this to the next level of media. How about a radio show? Put Concealed Carry magazine on the air."

And Tim was like, "That'll be great! Do you know anything

about that?" And I said, "No, I don't have a clue." A waiter set down our second round of drinks and that was the end of the conversation. But, about four weeks later I get a call from the gentleman who runs The Buckeye Firearm Association up in Ohio, asking if I would co-host a one hour radio show with him. I called Tim and said, "Man, you won't believe the call I just had. We were just talking about the radio in Orlando and now I'm going to go do the thing with Buckeye." He just said, "Let me know how it goes."



Well, it went very well. After about six weeks, Tim called me up and said, "That's a local organization, we should do something on a national level." I then pitched the idea to the WGKA radio station in Salem, Georgia, here in downtown Atlanta. And I pitched it to them because the station I had been co-hosting with Jim Irving in Cleveland, from my home, was a Salem radio station up in Cleveland. So I figured that they would be familiar with the program and I got the typical,

"Hey, thanks a lot, great idea, we'll call you in a couple weeks."

I never heard from them. Three months went by and, finally as I was driving through town, I got a phone call from the station manager and he says, "I'm sorry it's taken so long to get back with you, but we think you might be onto something." I happened to get the call as I was driving back through Atlanta from a business meeting in Florida. So I pulled off the highway and found their offices in Buckhead, and the next thing I know, I'm up in the offices shaking hands on a deal for a radio show.

Four weeks later, we were on the air as a one hour radio broadcast in Atlanta only. Four short months after that the show was nationally syndicated on the Salem radio network. And I think we had about three affiliates at that time. In the two and a half short years after that the show has exploded on the scene and is now played in 36 states and 140 markets on 100 plus affiliates around the country, and it's continuing to grow like a weed. It's now one of the fastest growing radio programs in the country.

Wallace: Outstanding! Give me a typical one hour radio show, what do you guys talk about on that show?

Mark: Well, I should have mentioned that it's now a three hour program. The show elevated itself from a one hour local Atlanta show to a three hour national broadcast. I focus the program

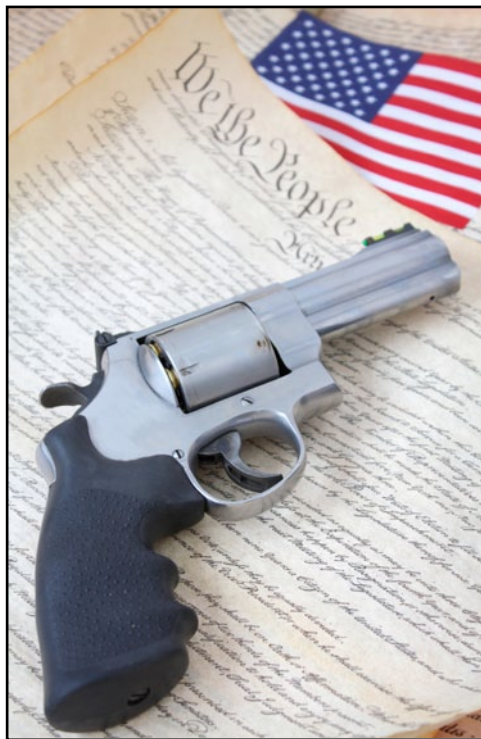
specifically on one issue. We're a one nut tree, and that is, your right to carry a firearm, your right to use a firearm to defend your life, your right to deploy deadly force against someone who would attack you and violently take your life, to take what you have that doesn't belong to them. You have that unique right in America to carry a firearm and we focus the show on that.

Gun owners are not all the same - you've got four or five different types of gun owners out there. You've got sport-shooters, you've got hunters, you've got collectors, and then you've got concealed carry permit holders. And all the sub-groups of gun owners get lumped into one group (as gun owners, we all support each other), but the concealed carry permit holder is by far the most politically active and vocal of all of the gun owners.

And that's because they actually exercise their Second Amendment rights to not only keep, but to bear arms; which means to carry a gun with me, now, on my person. It means I have a gun on me - to keep and bear arms. So, consequently, as concealed carry permit holders, they are the most politically active, and the most vocal. And it just so happens, not by coincidence, that concealed carry permit holders are the fastest growing segment of gun owners. So the show appeals to a growing segment of society in that respect and there is no doubt in my mind that that's why the show is as successful as it is. More and more people across America

are exercising their right to keep and bear arms, and you're going to see that number continue to rise over the next several decades.

Wallace: That's a good point about the difference between a gun owner and a gun carrier. So, for the person who's a gun owner and they might be on the fence on why or why not to carry their weapon, what would you say to them?



Mark: Join the United States Concealed Carry Association. Listen to Armed American radio. Here's what I like to say on the air every week: "No self-respecting caveman would have left his cave without a club; why would you?" That's an analogy I'm not going to get into, the whole paleolithic era and all the other garbage that goes with it. I've got people coming at me from all sides. It's a metaphor, that metaphor is a common visual we all have of

a caveman leaving his cave and carrying a club with him. And, metaphorically speaking, as you well know, they lived in a very difficult environment, no caveman would ever have left his cave without his club. Why would you be any different today? Because, as I like to say: I don't understand the man who has no means of defending his family, or his own life.

As a father, as a husband, it's your responsibility. Your role in our society is to be the protector and the provider for you and your family. You can be none of those if you possess no means to defend any of it. You have a responsibility to be able to protect and defend what is yours, period. If not you, who? There is no one else. To me, it's unconscionable that a person would choose not to possess the means to defend his or her family. And in today's environment, that tool is the firearm, period. It's not a knife, it's not a machine gun, it's not a bazooka, it's a firearm. It's a handgun. It's the most effective means of self-defense we currently have.

And you have that responsibility, and you have that right, every human has the right, and in America that right is recognized by the Second Amendment in our Constitution. As a result, you have a responsibility in this country to uphold, protect and defend that right. You have a responsibility to carry a firearm. That's your giving back to society. And that's where we are today. There are organizations out there that can help you, the USCCA being the

largest one out there, that's 100% dedicated to concealed carry and everything that living the armed lifestyle entails.

Wallace: I want to ask you some questions about the membership and things in a minute, but I have a real quick question for you, personally. When you go back to the car-jacking, you said you were carrying about 50% of the time. Was that a kind of instant paradigm shift for you when that happened? You just happened to have your weapon on you, so did you start carrying 100% of the time instantly? Or did it take some time, because I'm guessing that that's an instant paradigm shift that you had.

Mark: Oh, that was an instantaneous shift, no doubt about it. It began a couple years prior to that, when I first moved to Tampa, Florida in 1992. I had two handguns at that time, one was a little Taurus revolver, and I had a buddy of mine who was flying into Tampa from Virginia. I was supposed to pick him up and had fallen asleep on the couch, and woke up at the exact moment his flight landed, which was okay because the airport was twenty minutes away and I could get there in time without having to wait around for him. In a rush, I bolted out of the house without my firearm - this was a few years before the car-jacking.

I lived in a bad area of town that was referred to by the locals as "Suitcase City." It's an area that borders the University of South Florida, from 30th street to Bruce

B Downs Blvd to the west to Interstate 275 between Bears avenue and 50th and that whole rectangle area is referred to as "Suitcase City" because it's very transient, with the highest crime rate at the time in Tampa. There are a lot of drugs, lot of petty theft, and murders, robberies, burglaries, that kind of thing.

When you first go to Tampa, it fools you. When you look at the magazines for the apartment houses, I moved down there very quickly, I got the hell out of Philadelphia as fast as I could. And I literally just sold my furniture and moved to Florida. I saw the pamphlets and saw all the palm trees and said, "Well, that place looks good." So that's where I wound up, and I ended up staying there for about four years.

Anyway, I was on my way to the airport and was stuck at a traffic light on 131st Ave, just a couple blocks from my house, and the car in front of me didn't move when the light turned green. And I sat through the light cycle with this idiot who didn't move, a couple minutes later the light turned red, then green again and he still hadn't moved. I hit the horn and went around him. But as I did, he sped up and came around me on the other side and flashed what I thought looked like a handgun. Not unusual for that area, but it was sort of surreal because I just thought, "I don't have time for this crap. I have to get to the airport."

He pulled up in front of me,

stopped his car and opened his door; I stopped and did one of those little K-turns. Backed up and bolted down 22nd street to Fowler Avenue and took off to the airport. But I remember thinking later, "I don't have my gun with me," as I was pulling out of my driveway. That incident is what caused me to get my concealed carry permit.

So I went ahead and got the permit. And a couple years later is when that carjacking incident took place. When I first got the permit, I never carried the gun on a regular basis. Sometimes I did, sometimes I didn't, if I thought about it I did, if I knew I was going over to a nice area of town, I was not going to carry it with me. It's kind of a pain in the ass, in Florida, it's hot; so I just wear shorts and a t-shirt. And then I had that incident on Fletcher Ave, and that changed everything. So that's how I got to that point. And from that day forward, I don't think I've ever left my home without a firearm.

Wallace: Yeah, I'm not much of a hindsight kind of guy, but do you ever think about what could have happened or what would have happened that day if you wouldn't have had your firearm with you when you were car-jacked?

Mark: Oh absolutely. I wrote a book about it, "Lessons from Armed America," and that story is Chapter One. And it could have had a very different result. There were two against one; they were making movements toward my vehicle. When the driver got

out of the car, he pointed in my direction and said, “You’re next, motherfucker!” That’s what he said and I can hear him yell it. And I’m sitting there thinking, “What the hell is going on here?” The whole thing was just surreal.

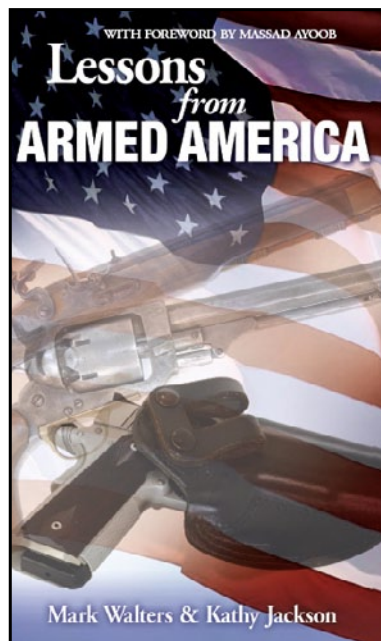
And I guess it was just because we made eye contact when he exited his vehicle, he was blocking me, I almost hit him and in hindsight I probably should have. I would have got a new car out of the deal and that situation would have never unfolded. But after he tried to break into the window of the Camry with a shirt wrapped around his hand and couldn’t, he turned his attention towards me. That’s when I pointed my firearm at him, and then at his partner, when he noticed what was going on. They stopped immediately and started to back up towards a Jeep Cherokee, pushed their way through the left hand turn lane and took off.

There’s absolutely no doubt in my mind that if I didn’t have a gun with me, that I would have been taken out of the car, there were two of them to one of me, and who knows, my two week old daughter may have never known her dad, my son two years later may have never been born. That’s absolutely a possibility. And it was just a coincidence that a few weeks earlier I had taken multiple attackers training from a Clearwater S.W.A.T. instructor, over at Knight Shooting Sports in Clearwater.

So, I had taken some firearms training in the past, and the first thoughts through my head, and I wrote this in the book, were, “What’s behind him? What happens if I have to pull the trigger in this car?” I thought I was going to lose my hearing, those weird thoughts going through my head. But I would have not hesitated, and looking

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back in hindsight, I’ve taken a number of training classes since then and worked with my gun since then over the years, but I had no hesitation about pulling that trigger. And I would have not lost a wink of sleep over it.



Wallace: Yeah, and I wouldn’t have blamed you in that situation. And that’s another question I

wanted to ask, because you are in that world where you do carry your weapon and things like that, the old adage, “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” and I actually think that I had a friend say this Saturday, “An armed society is a polite society.” And it’s true; you’re not going to go acting the fool if you know that a guy has a gun. So what do you think keeps people from believing that, “the police aren’t going to protect me,” and instead, go proactive? Because the fact is, the police department is reactive rather than proactive. What do you think keeps people from internalizing what you said earlier? Why don’t people believe you when you say, “Dammit, you need to keep your own firearm, and you need to protect your family?” What keeps someone from doing that? Is it a convenience issue? Peer pressure? What do you find is the big hurdle for people?

Mark: Well, in a word: fear. I truly think that it’s fear alone. And gun owners who don’t carry their guns live their lives in a state of denial, quite frankly, with the mentality of “It isn’t going to happen to me.” It’s like a car wreck. I don’t care where you drive, what kind of car you drive, what part of town you’re driving in, what kind of street you’re driving on, or how fast you’re going, it makes no difference. Every single time you pass another vehicle going the opposite direction, you are literally feet and inches away from death, and a violent death at that. One wrong move by another

driver and you're impaled to your steering wheel with steel sticking out of your head. And we become so accustomed to driving that we tend to think that it couldn't happen to us. We live in denial. When we are literally feet from death everywhere we go. That is the nature of driving an automobile, but we deny that, we deny what happens, what can happen.

Our own human instinct, our own self-preservation tells us "Oh, that doesn't happen to me, that happens to other people I read about in the paper." And the truth is that if you worried about it, then you wouldn't be able to go outside and live your life. And we all know there are people with phobias who live like that; it's a defensive mechanism that our body puts out, mentally and physically, in fact.

Now you take that person and apply the same thinking to a gun owner, "I don't need my gun; I'm only going to the grocery store. I live on this side of the tracks, not that side of the tracks. That shit doesn't happen in my neighborhood. Even if it does, what are the odds of it happening to my house, to me?" In fact, the odds are very, very small that you will be a victim of violent crime. But what we know is that in reality, violent crime happens anywhere, anyplace, anytime, in the blink of an eye; to anyone, at any time. And when it does happen, it happens with a swiftness and

violence that you'd better be prepared for.

And you even have gun owners who just stay there in denial; they don't think about those things. "I have a gun at home in case someone breaks in." Really? You're far safer at home than you are going to the grocery store, because that's when you're out and about. The fact of the matter is that we're turning out criminals every day; you wouldn't believe who you're rubbing elbows with when you're grocery shopping. You're rubbing elbows with convicted felons, you're rubbing elbows with child pornographers, and you're rubbing elbows with rapists and murderers. They are all over your community; I don't give a damn where you live. They're everywhere. And when you bump into them, you don't even know it. And if you are in that right place at that right time, when one of those psychopaths decides they want to be a psychopath, you're unprepared. If you choose to do so, then you go about life unprepared at your own peril. You would much rather have it and never have to use it, than need it and have it sitting at home. It will change your life forever if that happens.

Wallace: Yeah, that's a really good point. And I hope that people who read this will hopefully understand that paradigm. And hopefully, they won't have to go through what you went through

to have that sink in.

But speaking of that, and I'm going to get back to this grocery store thing, because of the story in Tampa. But, in light of your experiences, and certainly countless others with folks across the country, tell our readers why it's important that they join the USCCA. Give us three very good reasons and/or benefits that you, USCCA, believe are why people should carry a concealed firearm. Why do we all need to be a member?

This is the end of Part I of my interview with Mark Walters, member of the United States Concealed Carry Association (USCCA) and the host of the Armed America Radio program. In next month's edition, we will see why Marks thinks that all armed Americans should become members of the USCCA, how the media's role in gun rights affects everyone, and examine a myth or two about the number of guns in America and how guns relate societal violence in our country. Until next time...



To find out more about Mark Walters, his radio show, or the USCAA, please go to:

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-

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