

How To (Legally) Break The Rules When SHTF

- Wherever you stand on the issue, decide your values ahead of time. The stress of a catastrophe is not the place or time to sit down and sort out your values.
- Legal provisions sometimes exist in times of emergency, such states with Good Samaritan laws and FCC Regulations permitting the use of radios without a license to prevent loss of life. Just learn what they are beforehand.
- Whether your personal values are affected or not, understand that there are plenty of people who think that a diminished chance of getting caught means anything goes. There are people in life who only pretend to have a moral compass to get what they want.

Some folks refuse to break even cultural taboos in emergency situations, costing them their lives. Others take the other extreme view, saying anything goes post-TEOTWAWKI. What is your stance?

When is it OK to take a life? Is torture ever justifiable? What is the difference between looting and scavenging? What about preparing for emergencies? Do you stockpile medicines? If you store supplies for barter, when is demanding more than you paid supply and demand and when is it price gouging? Do we have any more authority as a group than we do as individuals? When should you obey a law enforcement officer, and at what point does he become just another man or woman with a gun? What about trespassing? Are there times when it's OK to exceed the speed limit.

What Survival Secret We Lost To History

Breaking the rules doesn't just apply to laws either. Should I obey the voice over the loudspeaker or the guy giving instructions over the Radio or TV? When does the end justify the means and when is it just a shallow justification?

Values are Subjective

First off, answers will vary from one person to another dependent on a several factors, the foremost of which are values and vision. Each of us ranks values differently and our attitudes and behaviors flow out of our vision. Also, values are somewhat subjective in survival situations. As we are subjected to the stresses of survival situations, chemical changes take place cause instincts kick in. These instincts can be very strong.

The Deterministic Paradigm

Determinists argue that they are irresistible. They blame our behaviors on our genetics, our upbringing and our environment. They argue that none of us are responsible for anything that we do. Your temper is your grandparent's fault. You got it from them through your genetics along with your red hair. The fact that you are impatient, that's your parent's fault, because of the way they treated you when you were young and vulnerable. Whether you are happy or sad, that's your boss's fault, because of the hostile work environment he has created.

Determinism says that whether you loot or kill or save lives and share, you had no choice because you did what you did because of your upbringing or because you were born that way or because the circumstances of the disaster made you do it. It is a very convenient philosophy that absolves the believer of all guilt.

The Paradigm of Proactivity

One of my most influential mentors (Stephen Covey) taught me the story of his colleague, Viktor Frankl. Frankl was a Jewish psychiatrist and neurologist who was imprisoned in the Nazi death camps. Frankl was in one of the most extreme environments imaginable: naked, freezing, tortured, starved, deprived of dignity and not knowing if he would be sent to the gas chambers and then incinerated like the rest of his family less his sister or if he would continue to shovel out the ashes of those so condemned.

In this environment, Frankl realized that he had a last freedom that the Nazi guards couldn't take from him. Ultimately, he decided how the experience would affect him. Covey wrote, "They had more liberty, more options to choose from in their environment; but he had more freedom, more internal power to exercise his options." Dr Frankl projected himself into other circumstances in his mind, such as lecturing his students about the lessons he was learning from the torture he was experiencing. He realized that he chose his response to any stimulus, including being in a death camp, and began exercising that freedom. As he did, it grew and continued to grow until he had more freedom than his Nazi guards. He became an inspiration to the other prisoners and did untold good in the death camps, eventually being permitted to practice medicine.

What I Believe

Determinism is taught in most schools and universities and is widely accepted. And I think it holds true for the animals it was tested on (see Pavlov's dog) and even for people, to the degree that they are mentally ill or don't know any better. I don't think it holds true for healthy, enlightened or exceptional people. We clearly exploit what Covey called "the gap between stimulus and response" and choose our response to

any stimulus.

Charity

I try to be charitable. I feel good when I help other people. It just feels like the right thing to do, so my mantra is: "Give 'til it hurts and then give a little more." My solution is that I have been able, I have stored more than I need so I can help others. The problem is that one household can only help so much and then they will go from rescuers to victims.

You need to know where to draw the line and draw it ahead of time because everyone turns into a good little socialist as soon as they run out of food. Your town may even get together and the starving may vote the town socialist. Then they will search every home and pool the food, even though it contravenes the Constitution and is just plain wrong. The only sure hedge against this eventuality that I can see is to cache food.

Remember, one Big Mac, divided equally amongst the inhabitants of the Earth, is of no benefit to the recipient, so feed those near you. If everyone gives too much, there will be no one left to help and rebuild. Someone must survive. In this situation, whoever has food will decide who that is.

Price Gouging vs Supply & Demand

In the context of natural disasters, price gouging is when retailers raise prices to exploitative levels in the wake of natural disasters. The practice is especially egregious when the products are non-luxury products needed to survive and prices are raised on existing stocks of drinking water or milk. Laws against the practice have been held to be constitutional.

The chief argument against such laws is that can prevent businesses from proactively preparing for disasters. Business

exist to turn a profit and if anti-price gouging laws prevent businesses remaining open in spite of increased risk and operation costs, they will simply close during emergencies. I'm not a lawyer, but I suspect that the private individual will have little exposure to these laws by the time a barter economy evolves.

Looting vs Scavenging



In armed conflict, pillage is a war crime. Looting is the indiscriminate taking of goods or antiquities by force during a catastrophe or civil unrest and under some conditions looting can earn the looter the death penalty; under martial law, mob rule or vigilantism.

Mob Justice

Also known as ochlocracy, mob justice is rule or intimidation of legitimate authorities by a mass of people and a pejorative for majoritarianism. Along with tyranny and oligarchy, ancient Greek thinkers regarded it as one of the three “bad” forms of government whereas monarchy, aristocracy and democracy were

the three “good” forms.

For a glimpse of mob justice, you need look no further than most neighborhoods where some boys are gathered together. I call it, “one boy, one brain; two boys, half a brain syndrome.” The more boys you put together, the dumber they get. They think that their numbers give them more authority than they possess individually and pretty soon they are doing something they would never think of doing on their own.

I think the magic number is three. If three dogs group up together on their own, they are likely to cause trouble. So, if I see three guys grouped up together, that’s the point where I “go to orange” on the situational awareness scale. I don’t feel that rounding up a mob gives us the authority to pass the death penalty in any situation where it would be unreasonable to dole it out as individuals. Either you’re right or you’re wrong. Having several people agree or disagree makes no difference in my opinion.

What you can do

- **Decide Your Limits Ahead of Time** – Don’t wait until the world has gone sideways to decide what you will and won’t do.
- **Be Realistic** – The fact is, not everybody is proactive and values drift when human beings compete for resources. Being a good person doesn’t mean that you must also be naïve and end up a victim.
- **Be Prepared** – Many of the moral crises you could face in a survival situation can be avoided or diminished by preparing ahead of time.
- **Be Antifragile** – Like Viktor Frankl, antifragile people grow stronger in response to volatility, chaos and stressors, benefit in some way. Being resilient is not the same thing as that which is resilient merely is not damaged instead of growing stronger. The antithesis is being fragile, which means you will come away damaged.

- **Differentiate Between Breaking Rules and Compromising Values** – There are valid reasons to break rules and laws and this can often be done without compromising values.
- **Cultivate Inner Strength** – I may not be the most effective survivalist in some people's minds because my mission is not to "stay alive at all costs." I know that I am going to die one day, and whenever that day comes, I am ready. I am more concerned with how I have lived my life, what I stood for and the legacy I will leave when I pass.

How Far is Too Far?

Pragmatism or Sociopathy?

If pragmatism "emphasizes the practical application of ideas by acting up on them to actually test them in human experiences" (-Gerald Gutek) then it sounds a lot like how humans learn and adapt, which is to say, how we survive.

You don't have to be a sociopath to commit unspeakable atrocities. Plenty of folks who do not have impaired empathy and remorse do terrible things. The difference is that their crimes bother them. Jeffery Dahmer was this second sort of person. Explaining how he came to commit his crimes of rape, murder, necrophilia, dismemberment and cannibalism, Dahmer said that he concluded that there is no God and therefore no right and wrong and no selfishness. He decided that he should only be motivated by what made him feel good and that his crimes were his exploration of unbounded hedonism.

Some survivalists substitute "survival" for "what made him feel good" and use that to justify fantasies about, and the planning of, numerous crimes should the "S" hit the fan causing what has been popularized as a "WROL" (Without Rule of Law) scenario occur.

“All Guns, No Groceries”

There are groups criminals (disaffected survivalist criminals) who plan to use the absence of law enforcement to rob other survivalists. They comb social media, gathering information on other preppers within range and draw up detailed plans of how they plan to overpower them and live off their supplies.

This is a terrible idea. They are in the group of survivalists that Maine Prepper referred to as the “All Guns, No Groceries” crowd. To the newbie survivalist, guns are a quick fix. They are also sexy, something food storage is not. Buying them is as easy as slapping down some plastic and Bam! they’re prepared ... or at least they think they are.

It goes back to the oldest Mormon food storage joke, which goes:

Member – “Bishop, I don’t need a year’s supply of food.”

Bishop – “Oh, yeah? Why’s that?”

Member – “Because I have a ward list and a 12 gauge!”

It’s no longer funny because I’ve heard too many times, but also because I know that many of the guys who have gone through all the hard work to prepare to that level are better armed and far better trained than the “all guns, no groceries” crowd. In a high-order, wide-scope, grid-down catastrophe, the “all guns, no groceries” folks will find themselves in the unenviable position of being armed and starving, facing the choice of trading guns and ammo for food or trying to take food by force from a better armed, prepared and networked adversary who has known they would be coming for decades and made extensive preparations for the eventuality. Even if they get one or two, they’ll be hunted down.

Along the same vein, I have also crossed paths with people who claim to keep a “list” of people they feel have wronged them

in some way who they plan to seek revenge upon under the cover of a city WROL.

Situations Where Breaking the Law Could Be Forgivable

Most people understand that desperate times call for desperate measures. Mindlessly abiding by rules written to apply to markedly different circumstances could end up needlessly costing lives.

- **Poaching While Starving** – Poaching is hunting without the permission of whoever controls the land. From the days of poaching the King's deer to feed a starving family in the 13th Century, to modern tribes in Brazil and the Kalahari who have lived off subsistence hunting for millennia until their land is appropriated by the government and they are required to apply for hunting licenses which illiteracy prevents them from applying for, the people have demonstrated empathy for true subsistence poaching. I have yet to hear of poaching charges leveled in a legitimate wilderness survival incident and even if they were, better to be fined than starve.
- **"Looting" to Feed Your Family** – Police on the job during Hurricane Katrina have said that they overlooked "people in survival mode" taking baby formula or drinking water but busted "looters" with sneakers and TVs.
- **Cannibalism for Survival's Sake** – Even something as taboo as cannibalism has been forgiven in the case of Uruguayan Air Force Flight 571 that left members of a rugby team, their families and supporters stranded high in the Andes Mountains. People are more forgiving if you have no other option.
- **Disobeying the Voice on the PA System** – Nearly everyone in the Twin Towers on 9/11 who obeyed the voice on the PA and sheltered in place died that day because the SOP

for the building failed to imagine the threat bringing the buildings down, which it did. This is not to say that you should never obey it, but that you should think for yourself.

If You Do Break the Rules

Don't Get Caught

In the book, Three Felonies a Day, civil rights lawyer Harvey Silverglate alleges that US law has become so vague and the concept of intent has been abandoned that each and every American commits felonies on an everyday basis. In fact, the average professional commits three felonies per day and if the US government becomes hostile toward you, they will find something and prosecute you.

Let me be clear, I'm not saying to go to any length to save your own bacon and involve yourself in a coverup that could just dig you in deeper. I am saying, whether you are abiding by the law or breaking it, don't create any more evidence than necessary. It creates unnecessary risk and there is no benefit from doing so ... unless you value convenience more than freedom. If you are addicted to convenience, by all means, post your sensitive data on the internet. While you are at it, get yourself locked up to stop yourself from breeding and voting. Your right to privacy is a birthright paid for in blood and should not be traded for whatever small measure of convenience the tech sector is peddling at the time, yet millions of American can't get their hands on the newest tech trinket fast enough, consequences be damned.

Beware Restorative Justice

After disasters where lawlessness and injustice has occurred, the people demand justice and politicians give it to them in the form of law suits and trials. If past disasters are any

indication, people sue for everything from war crimes to “social justice for underserved segments of the population.” Even in a HEMP, a lot of cell phones and cameras will still be working, and the lack of privacy that precedes the disaster may follow survivors into disasters. Even minor crimes are sometimes taken out of context so, if you do end up having to break a law, you might consider covering your face.

I carry a flesh toned FR balaclava, a hat, gloves and sunglasses in my EDC bag. In Brazil, I noticed that criminals often take their T-shirts and tie them as face masks, looking out through the collar and tying the sleeves behind their heads.

“If You Can’t Do the Time ...”

You have probably heard it, “If you can’t do the time, don’t do the crime.” Yet so many yahoos proclaim, “I’ll just SSS ... shoot, shovel and shut up!” Disasters eventually come to an end. Sometimes after days, sometimes after years, but when they do, evidence comes forward and crimes, especially homicides, are investigated. How many criminals have gone jail for having committed a crime that was tied to them through DNA evidence, a technology that did not even exist when they committed the crime?

I train to only shoot when justified and I’m sure I will continue to fight just like I train. I don’t see that changing. I have had to defend myself and based on my training, research and experience, if you survive the first fight on the street for your life, you may have to fight a second battle in court for your freedom. Be prepared for both.

“He Who is Good with a Hammer Tends to Think Everything Is a Nail”

If lethal force is the only tool in your tactical toolbox, what are you going to reach for? Lethal force is not always

the most effective response. For this reason, I always include at least one less-lethal option in my EDC and it can go a long way. Use of force often does not start out at lethal levels and if all you have trained to do is use your firearm, you may pull it too soon or hesitate, neither of which is acceptable.



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