

URBAN DOMINO

Chapter 0

The new subdivision was built within a year. The housing company had sold all the units, about twenty houses and fifty town homes. Ranford Trace was about ten miles outside of Raleigh, about five miles from NC State. Scott Hindon and his wife Shelly had saved to be able to afford the new town home. Both sets of parents had helped with the down payment as well. So in 2001, they moved into their new home. One of the things that took getting used to was the Homeowners Association. A lawyer was on hand at the purchase point to explain the intricacies of the HOA. Town homeowners would pay a monthly fee as well as a yearly one, while the single-family homeowners would pay only the yearly fee. It was the way things were in modern America, and it would profoundly effect the future of the people living there.

Scott was a retail sales manager, whose main hobby was shooting at the range with a couple of friends that he worked with. One of the great things about where he lived was that there was an indoor pistol range about two miles down the road. Scott was not a competitor; he just enjoyed blasting targets about once a month with his Glocks. He owned several rifles, but since moving to Raleigh, he had left them at his parent's house. It was mostly Ar-15's and a bolt action 308. He kept his M1a synthetic with a battle load out Arktis vest, and a thousand rounds of surplus 308, with him. He was a closet preparedness junky, who always (much to his wife's chagrin) bought extra food on their weekly shopping trip. He owned several short waves, and kept emergency kits in both cars. Mostly this part of his "hobby" was kept a secret from his neighbors. Although Scott thought a lot of them, he did not want any extra scrutiny in a neighborhood that was close enough for gossip. His firearm hobby was an outgrowth of his interest in preparedness.

After four months life began getting into a simple grind. The local property Management Company sent out fliers for different committees that were being formed as well as a meeting for an election of a board of directors. Scott decided to put his name on the ballot. At the meeting, he was elected to the board along with four other people. At the meeting, Scott met a single-family homeowner named John Bell. They hit off immediately. John was from West Virginia, and loved to hunt and fish. He lived alone, and worked as an engineer for a local firm. He was an avid re-loader, a skill Scott wished he could pick up. John's favorite calibers were 357 magnum and 44 magnum. He was an Elmer Keith fan, and enjoyed building his own loads for his pet pistols. He owned mostly Rugers, with Winchester lever guns in the same caliber. His garage was transformed into a reloader's paradise. He kept charts and tables in a bookshelf, as well as extra dies for all sorts of calibers. Unknown to Scott, when John found out Scott shot 40SW; he purchased reloading gear for that caliber as well. Although each was glad that the other was a firearm owner, neither admitted their passion for preparedness. This was before 911, before times got ahead of them.

Scott became active with the board of directors. He became member at large, basically a tiebreaker when the board was split on a decision. John joined the community watch group, which consisted of John, Scott and five other men and women. A low-income housing area on one side, an older blue-collar neighborhood behind it, and a higher dollar neighborhood on the other side bordered the neighborhood. Crime had not become an issue, but all were eager to protect their homes and property investment. They held a meeting with their designated police officer and put up signs, but there wasn't really anything else they could do. It was pointed out that although the single family homes (houses) streets were subject to city rules and ordinances; the Homeowner Association owned the town homes. Any door to door salespeople or anyone not specifically living there could be considered trespassing.

9/11/01

Scott was at work, not only was his store involved in an end of the year inventory, the vice president of the company would be there to observe. About 10:00, the phone rang, it was the assistant manager's wife. She was upset, and the assistant immediately said turn the radio on. As the staff finished the inventory, everyone lived the horror of the attacks on New York and Washington, not to mention the pride everyone felt in the passengers of the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania, they chose to die fighting, whether to submit the nation to another homicide bombing.

When inventory was over, and the VP left, the mall the store operated in closed due to the unfolding national tragedy. Scott dismissed the staff, and headed home. Many thoughts clouded his mind, "was my wife safe?" "Are my parents ok?" "Are my sisters safe?" "Are there more attacks coming?". Scott made it home before his wife, and turned the TV on. He first called his wife, then his family. Satisfied, he then began dinner. His wife was six months pregnant, and he wanted to be sure she could relax tonight. Once dinner was ready, he had thirty minutes to spare before his wife came home. He went to the closet, and opened his safe. He checked his shotgun, his m1a, and loaded his only four pre-ban mags for his Glock 22. He preferred the older frame style to the newer finger grooved one, and today it felt good in his hands. He placed the pistol and two spare mags in a shoulder holster, and placed the rig as well as a g2 surefire light in a small duffle and put it under the bed. With an alarm system, a shotgun within a moments reach, Scott never felt he had to keep anything "under the bed" but there was uncertainty in the air, as well the fear that the authorities did not have a handle on things. He wanted to be careful.

Scott's wife came home, and told some interesting stories. Some of the children at the elementary school were picked up immediately by parents who either worked in the vicinity or lived close by. Some children had to wait as some parents were over two or three hours drive away. One child had to be picked up by a neighbor, much to the anger of the principle (the neighbor was not on the accepted family call list) because both parents had flown out that morning expecting to fly back before school ended. At the same time, teachers had to explain what was happening, and calm the children's fears.

After dinner, Shelly said she wanted to go to bed, Scott said he was going to call John and maybe go hangout for awhile. After settling Shelly in for the night, Scott called John. John said come on over so Scott headed down the street. Upon reaching John's place, they sat on the back porch, listening to the radio and talking. John said, "Well we dodged a bullet today" Scott said "how do you figure that?"

"They used planes on landmarks; they did not go after our infrastructure, power center or population centers. It could have been worse."

"What about the stock market? How do you think the loss of the trade centers will effect the market if it opens?"

"I think the market will bounce back, America is intact."

"How did it come to this?"

"They have been attacking us for over twenty years, Reagan and Clinton both never fought fire with fire, and we are going to have to hunt them down and take them out."

"I see what you are saying about Clinton, but Reagan did go after Libya, didn't he?"

"The bombing of Libya was the eighties version of the cruise missile attacks on Afghanistan and

Sudan by Clinton.”

“Reagan retreated from Beirut after the embassy bombing, and the Libyans after we bombed them still blew up a passenger plane over Scotland.”

“We just have never taken terrorism seriously enough in this country, but we will now.”

Scott pondered this for a moment, and said, “I am glad I have prepared a bit for emergencies, if there is another attack I feel at least in a small way prepared for it.” John laughed, and slapped his friend on the back. “I knew you were a survivalist, small duffels in each car, cases of water bottles in your store room.” John then motioned for Scott to follow him, and they entered John’s house. John led Scott to one of the spare bedrooms, and opened the door. Inside were cases of M&M’s, number 10 cans of dehydrated food, and clothes. John had cases of bottled water stacked up as well. There were also old surplus ammo cans stacked up as well. John exclaimed “me too, I guess birds of a feather.....” Just then there was a knock at the door. It was Harvey Mixson, and Kareef Mbungu. Both of these men were members of the community watch group. They wanted to talk about the attacks and how that might effect the neighborhood. The four men talked until late in the evening about what-it’s , and what to do.

In the end, John said, “Look guys, I am no expert but I think this is it for awhile until we retaliate. But you saw the Government response. They were like chickens with their heads cut off. We need to be able to fend for our selves if something like this happens again.”

Harvey said, “Come on John, you want us all to go out and buy guns tomorrow? Give me a break!”

Kareef countered, “Harv, I have seen many things in my home country of Ethiopia, if that kind of degradation happened here in America, having a firearm would be the least of your worries.”

John spoke up, “ Lets cool our jets tonight, try to get some sleep. Why not have a community watch meeting Sunday; invite whoever wants to come over to my place. I will cook some burgers, and we can discuss more after things calm down.” Everyone agreed, and also agreed to get some of the neighbors to come as well.

SUNDAYS MEETING

“Well I am glad y’all could make it, we have had an incredible week. This meeting is going to be more about what if’s than about general crime, but I think it is important to keep things in perspective.”

Brenda Garrera, and her partner Susie Smith both began to speak at the same time. Susie finished the thought, “ Harv says you want everyone to buy guns, do you honestly believe that AL-Qaeda will be parachuting into our backyards?”

John rolled his eyes at Harv, who still had a vote Gore button on his shirt. Scott spoke to the ladies, “ Although I do not believe a terrorist is going to strike our little neck of paradise, what if they do attack the infrastructure or DC? what would you do without power for a month, two months, and a year?” Everyone there pondered what he said. Scott continued, “What you should do is up to each and every one of you individually.” “I think, though that all of us should build up a supply of food and water, and medical supplies just in case there is a follow up attack.” Mitch Henderson, a truck driver who was the only military vet there said, “ That should be the priority, but you have heard the talk from the VP on Tim Russert this morning, until state and federal agencies are better organized, we may be on our own for a certain amount of time.” Kareef then said, “ Which brings us back to firearms, we have all seen the footage from the LA riots, and we should be prepared to provide security in our neighborhood.”

Harvey, who was starting to come around, spoke next. “We need to know our legal boundaries, also what won’t get us into trouble.”

A new member to the community, George Reilly said, “ I am an attorney, and am pretty sure you

can only use deadly force in your home not outside of it. But I do not recall ever reading about anyone being prosecuted for defending his or her homes or communities during a riot or natural disaster. I will do some research, and get to everyone. Ok?"

Gayle Green, a single mother of two teenage boys, who were at their father's house for the weekend; spoke up next " I am a registered nurse, I would be glad to give some first aid lessons, as well as CPR. I am not certified, but for demonstration purposes I can do it."

John said, " this is great; I feel like we can all work together to prepare ourselves for a time if something terrible happens."

Kareef then brought up the firearms issue, wanting to know what the laws in NC were and how to go about buying a rifle. The hour was getting late, and it was suggested that those who did not want to stay could go home. Most left except, Brenda, Susie, Kareef, Gayle, Mitch, Scott, and Harv. George needed to go home and study for a case he was working on for Monday.

Brenda spoke first, "When I was little, my grandfather used to take me shooting in a field near his home, but I haven't fired a weapon in years." "More like decades probably," snorted Susie. "John you are more of an expert than most here what do you suggest?"

"Well to start off, I think we can eliminate the large calibers, 30-06, 7mm, 8mm, and 308. We want to secure our neighborhood, not do distance shooting. We also don't want to attract any unnecessary attention. If police happen by our area and see us all decked out with assault rifles, they may decide we are more of a threat than say Joe drug dealer."

Scott spoke up, " How about a pistol caliber carbine? Its good enough for what is needed, and certain rounds work well in a carbine or lever action format."

Harvey countered, " I owe you guys an apology, I thought you were trying to form some kind of militia, and we would all be asked to buy camos and m16's."

Mitch said, " actually, an AR would fit the bill, but there is nowhere to practice. Within 200-300 yards an AR would work OK. A better choice would be an AK or SKS type of rifle. But with the political climate being what it is, a pistol caliber carbine would be best."

Scott agreed, "With a pistol caliber carbine, we could shoot regularly at the indoor range down the street, and probably get a cheaper rate if we shoot together. Also, we can purchase ammo in bulk, and get dies for John's reloader. I think it would work out fine. Now what caliber?"

John suggested the 357magnum lever in either a Winchester or Marlin. You could also substitute 38 special if you had too, and it was dang easy to reload. Some asked about a 9mm, others a 45. Scott offered 40sw. His argument was that the ammo was only a little more expensive than the 9mm, and that Ruger made a carbine for it that resembled the venerable 30 carbine of world war two and Korea. It would be easy to manipulate, and 10 round mags were cheap and plentiful for it. His argument was that it would be easier to learn to change a semi-auto mag than to learn to load a lever action under stress. Plus the carbine resembled a 22, so it may be more inconspicuous to someone passing by. Unfortunately, Scott told everyone he would not be purchasing any firearms, since he and his wife had a baby on the way, money was too tight to allow for new toys. After speaking for awhile longer, it was decided that the carbine would be the PC4 from Ruger. John pointed out that it would probably be better to get your supplies squared away first before worrying about the rifle. Most agreed, but went home and searched the Ruger website for more info on the carbine.

Mitch went home and pulled an old beat up trunk from his closet. His wife was asleep, and he lifted the well-wrapped duffle from the trunk and carried it downstairs. Once in his dining room he unwrapped the duffle and laid its contents on the table. Mitch had not pulled the contents of his "kit" out in almost thirty years. Cosmoline leaked all over the place and he chuckled at the thought of what his wife would do to him if she saw this mess. Carefully laying the contents on the table, he took stock of his "gear". He had two well worn but perfect 1911a1 Colt 45s, also after putting it together he had a greasy M14, modified for semi-auto. He also had seven twenty

round mags for it. Sneaking back into his bedroom, he retrieved another smaller case from the trunk, and brought it downstairs. Inside were two scopes for the M14. They had been packed in thick foam and six old army tee shirts. He didn't have time to clean the rifle, so he packed it along with its mags in the duffle. The pistols he took out to his garage and cleaned them perfectly. He then applied a little motor oil to the barrel and slide and played with each action to make sure they worked properly. He smiled that they did. He would have to see John sometime about ammo, both for the rifle and pistol. He would also need more mags for the 45's. I'll ask John or Scott about that as well. He was proud of his neighbors, presented with an obstacle, they came together and formulated a plan. He also reveled in the fact that the group represented different cultures and beliefs. Some things are worth fighting for he chuckled. He would have to see Scott about re-zeroing the scopes and rifle; Scott had said something about owning a M1a, which was the civilian equivalent to the M14. Mitch whispered to himself, "Gonna have to work with him, to make a good fireteam." Mitch had been a LRRP in Vietnam, and had had the fortune to save a Colonel's life in the field. That Colonel was soon promoted to General, and promised to pay Mitch back any favor he wished. Mitch wanted to keep his two pistols and his sniper rifle, which had become a part of him in the two tours of duty he had done. The General true to his word sent the weapons to Mitch's parents, when Mitch mustered out that year. Mitch was grateful, and had taken them out once and awhile to clean. He had never felt the need to use them again until 9/11.

As the months went by most of the members of the Community Watch group bought the carbine. Neighbors were also invited to come to the range to shoot. As time moved on twenty people had bought carbines, and most had gotten pistols that used the same ammo and magazine. Once a month the indoor range closed its doors to allow the homeowners group to shoot and have fun. Everyone enjoyed the camaraderie. Most purchased a thousand rounds to put away, about fifteen to twenty mags per carbine, and a good quality belt and pouches to wear. There was also a sleeve that fit over the stock that held two extra mags. This gave a person thirty rounds at a moments notice. There was also a flashlight that attached to the barrel, and some purchased aftermarket night sights and red-dot scopes as well. The food preps went well too. Most families built a good supply of food and water for at least a month. Some families were able to do bulk purchases and split costs. The medical supplies were purchased as well. Gayle began preparing a backpack with emergency medical supplies in case of an emergency around the neighborhood. She also taught her sons some basic medical practices, so they could pitch in as well. Time just moved on.

FEB 2002

Scott and his wife Shelly gave birth to a one hundred percent healthy baby boy. They swelled with pride. After three weeks, Shelly went back to work as a teacher, and Scott stayed home with the baby. He stepped down from the management position he held, and worked thirty hours a week as a shift supervisor. He was allowed to keep his benefits, and was paid well for staying with his company. The only draw back was that as Shelly came home, Scott would leave for work. It was a tough life, but they made it through best they could. Their consolation was that their son knew both parents and his first years in life were not spent catching every virus that floated around any given nursery. Their son Thomas was happy and healthy, everything parents could wish for.

Scott's preps changed as well. He had to prepare for his son. Terror alerts were becoming common as time progressed. The further history moved beyond 9/11, people went back to the grind of work/family. The terror threat level began to be taken as a joke, and laughed off.

APRIL 2003

“The new terror warning comes amid a new wave of messages not seen since before 9/11” said the news commentator.” “The Homeland Security Department is advising that everyone stock up on supplies and buy plastic and duct tape for their windows.” “ Closing their windows off to the outside will protect from Radiation as well as some chemical and biological contaminates.”

Scott turned off the TV and prepared for his afternoon nap. His son was napping after a big lunch of carrots and peas. Scott was about to go to sleep when the phone rang.

Scott sleepily said, “Hello?”

Harvey said, “Scott you sleeping?”

“What’s up Harvey?”

“Scott have you read anything about this AWB ban thing. I just heard it may expire in 2004, we may be able to get some decent high cap mags out of it.”

“Don’t get your hopes up Harvey, Democrats have at least two bills before congress on it, and the president has promised to sign it if it lands on his desk. I am sure the NRA will cave.”

“Wow, I guess these are the good old days then huh?”

Scott replied sadly, “I believe your right!”

At the outdoor range Scott and Mitch had found, which was about a two hour drive from the subdivision, Mitch said, “ Scott check your wind, you are covering me, think about going from spotting scope to your rifle. Haven’t you been reading “FRED’S BECOMING A RIFLEMAN?”

Scott snorted, put down the spotting scope, placed the butt of the rifle to his shoulder, and fired. His round hit the target in an acceptable area inside the ten ring. Mitch smiled and said, “I guess you have been reading huh?”

Scott retorted, “Mitch, I appreciate the time you are spending with me, but I fail to see what a fire team has to do with securing the subdivision. Other than being in a central area where you can provide over watch of a street or block, why all the rifle/counter rifle stuff?”

Mitch thought, and took a swig from his canteen; “ we will be patrolling probably just outside our area if things get bad enough. You and I have what amounts to artillery. If one of ours gets in trouble, we will have to be in a spot to help them. If I fire, I have to move, you cover. Then I cover you. You have to make the shot then be prepared to move to a secondary location. There is no shoot and stay.”

Scott understood, and said, “lets try it again.”

DEC 3003

Scott was tired; he had been on the net now for over an hour studying the message boards for all the info on the new terror alerts. It had been almost over two years now without a new attack on the homeland. He was concerned, and worried. He was also worried about the new spate of gun control legislation currently working through congress. He did not believe 2004 was going to be a good year for gun owners. He wanted a few items before they were banned. He wondered where/how can I get the cash?

He and his wife’s finances were in good shape, they were just broke. Two years without his salary, as well as rising local and state taxes were draining their savings. Some law enforcement agencies had traded in their used Glock 22’s and 23’s at a local gun dealer. These were being sold to the public used but at a great price of \$350 each. Scott wanted a few, some to play with as well he wanted his son to have a 23 when he was old enough. He also wanted to be able to give his son a M1a for his 16th birthday. Now his son was only almost two, but Scott wanted his son to grow up shooting. The art of the rifle as well the discipline of the sport was a positive attribute that everyone should have. Scott’s father had never allowed Scott this sport when Scott was a child. In fact, Scott had shown the sport to his father. Scott had a friend at the bank that was a financial officer. Maybe Scott could get a loan.

He called his buddy the next day. He secured a loan for "Home Improvement" in area of three thousand dollars. He immediately ordered his M1a, and bought the pistols he wanted. He also purchased a 10/22, and a mech-tech conversion for his Glock. This would allow him to have the pistol carbine he wanted. His repayment schedule was within the bounds of his "Fun money fund", and he made his purchases before any legislation was passed. He was done! Main thing now was to work on ammo and mags for everything. Some gear would go to his parent's home up near the Virginia border. His parents had renovated his deceased Grandfather's small ranch style home on three acres of land. His dad, who was coming around to the preparedness cause, helped stock the place and was working on the improvements bit by bit. It had a well, was situated in the country, and the neighbors had known the family for over fifty years. Scott usually thought of this place as a retreat, and had plans to bugout there if need be. Scott placed any gear here that he could not use in Raleigh. He also kept most of his bulk ammo, and military style gear there as well. It was a three-hour drive though to get there which presented its own set of logistic problems. He never did find a place to cache some supplies.

As December slowly prodded forward, Scott and his wife prepared for Christmas. He was working long hours at the store, and trying to do some shopping as well. Although he loved the holidays, and the fact that his son was going to have Santa, he was dog-tired. The worry over future terror attacks began to show. Most people by now have shrugged off the 9/11 attacks. Scott could not. Then on Sunday, December 20, the nation went on Orange alert. The info Scott had been reading on websites like Frugal Squirrel, Northeast Intelligence Network, and Timebomb2000; was now finally being brought to the surface. Homeland Security was raising the alert level to Orange, because of all the information and intelligence coming to light. To Scott it was both vindication and sad.

John worried about the alert level as well. On Tuesday, he went on a needed shopping spree at the local grocer/warehouse. He spent well over \$1000 on food, water, and other needed supplies. He also bought some Christmas gifts for to new members in his household. He bought two German Sheppard's, with the intention of training them. They fit in great with his schedule, and everyday, Scott would come over and let them out into the backyard to run and play. It was good for Scott's son to have the experience of playing with the puppies as well as the puppies getting used to children. John also went on a heavy schedule of reloading. He reloaded 44 magnum, 357 magnum, and 40SW. He also worked on some powerful 308 loads for Mitch and Scott. He pulled out many of his lever actions and bolt guns, cleaned them and placed them back into his vault. First and foremost, he began reading his bible again. Things were heating up around the world; he did not know quite how he felt about America's place in it. He was also dating a young lady, who was a Christian as well. They were going to have dinner together on Christmas Eve, since both of their respective families were in other states.

Kareef stared blankly at his desk at the accounting firm. He was ready to go home and eat dinner with his family and children. He had been raised a Muslim in Ethiopia, but once he came to America he embraced Christianity. His wife, Sheeka still wore her berka when they went out in public, but because she wanted to follow at least a few of her old country's customs. Kareef worried about the terror alert, and about an attack on the United States. Would it happen? Could it happen? Could a terror group really pull off something so horrible again? Scott and John were "Doomers" and almost always were on to some new conspiracy, or plot. It always made him laugh, but inwardly he marveled at Americans. "Americans have a power they don't even understand." He mused; " they build and garner hope as if life depended on it." In Ethiopia, unless you were part of the ruling class, life was about getting food, and defending your tribe

against a rival tribe or tribes.

Harv was livid with his stepmother. His father had just passed away, and left Harvey and his two sisters a lot of money. Unbeknownst to anyone but Harvey, his father had transferred a lot of money before hand to Harvey's account. Harvey's father had married his second wife a little under six years ago. He married her for her looks and prowess under the sheets. His father was wealthy, and at his age did not want a companion, he wanted some fun. The woman he married became an albatross to the family, and after the death of her husband began a legal search of all his funds. He had left everyone, Harvey, his sisters and the stepmother an equal share. But the amount given to Harvey before was to be given only to Harvey and his sisters. The stepmother was furious, and started legal proceedings to try to get her share. Harvey's attorney and friend told him to make her an offer, then not worry about it. Harvey wanted to mull it over. But he had definite plans for his cut. Harvey's finances were sound and already he and his wife would be able to live comfortably when they retired. He and his wife had both embraced survivalism. He had a year's supply of food and water, and all the other supplies he thought he would need. His next purchase would be firearm related. He and his wife both were shooting their carbines well and often, but he knew he wanted more power. Scott and Mitch had taken Harvey to the range a couple of times to shoot their M1a's. He had fallen in gunpowder love with the rifle. Harvey was in the process of purchasing ten of the M1a's . He decided that if he ever had children, or if he ever wanted to give a gift to his fiends, this would be it. He also purchased five more Ruger PC4 carbines. He loaded up on mags and ammo for the rifles. With the new terror alert, and Scott being more jumpy, he figured he was doing the right thing. Working through several different dealers, and traveling to many different gunshows across the state, he began to acquire the needed gear. He could not believe he had voted Democrat all these years. He had believed in gun control, and thought that all gun owners were just trash, but now he sadly saw the error in his belief system. He now knew all gun owners were mostly middle class, tax paying law-abiding citizens. He had gone to gunshows, where everyone he met greeted him with "hello" and "how are you". At the range, one time he had forgotten his ammo tray, and a person "lent" him a box of hand loaded ammo, simply saying, "see if this works I just loaded it." "If you like it, I know I did it right" Harvey was aghast at the media, who only showed COMBLOC weapons on TV; saying gun control was about ending the ownership of AK47's. He could only wonder, if the next election cycle brought about another Democrat, what the country would become. He worried enough over what it had become under a Republican.

Retired Captain Stanley Covington stared at his new home. He had retired from the United States Army only one month before. He had moved his wife of thirty years here to Ranford Trace to build a new life. Hi daughters went to local colleges (one at Carolina the other at Elon), and he wanted to be closer to them. He had been a captain in the eighty second airborne. He had been wounded in the knee in Afghanistan and after extensive rehab, he chose to retire. He was grateful to have only been wounded, he was grateful to be home. And here was his new home! He had not met his neighbors yet, but the area was quiet, and the real-estate agent had told him there was zero crime. Stanley like quiet, he had seen enough action for awhile. He would be starting a job with a security firm, helping to secure local buildings and facilities. It was a crappy job, because no one would be able to afford his recommendations, but it would pay the bills for awhile. He had heard there was an indoor range down the street, and he looked forward to going there to shoot his Beretta. He had purchased it awhile back in Fayetteville; in order to have another version of the handgun he was issued. He had snuck a few high cap mags for it over the years, and he was very comfortable with the firearm.

Scott stared at his new truck in awe. He had been driving a Buick LeSabre for almost twelve

years now. The car itself was still in decent condition, but with over one hundred sixty thousand miles on it, it was becoming a mechanics "wallet". Since the Hindon family finances were stretched pretty thin, Scott's dad had come to the rescue. His dad had a buddy who he worked with that had fallen on bad times. The "bud" needed to get rid of his new truck, a Ford F150, extended cab and bed, with trailer hitch, CB with antenna, and four wheel drive. All he wanted was someone to take the payments. Scott's dad refinanced putting more money down to lower the monthly payments and alas, Scott had a new truck. The flip side was that once a month Scott would spend the weekend hauling old wood and debris from his Grandpa's old house. Also Scott would help with the rebuilding of the old house. Scott heartily agreed to the terms.

[November 18, 2004, 01:46 PM: Message edited by: Jefferson's Ranger]

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on April 28, 2004 23:34April 28, 2004 11:34 PM:

Chapter 1

Scott watched the Homeland Security briefing in abject horror. Here the country was facing an imminent attack, and all the reporters wanted to ask was if the foreign law enforcement were properly trained. It was lunacy. It seemed to Scott as if the administration was sending a message to Al-Qaeda, similar to the briefings during the sniper case in Maryland. The Secretary did say that Americans should have alternate means of communications as well as emergency supplies ready just in case. That spoke volumes to Scott.

Brenda and Susie had a great Christmas. Their present to each other had been a seven day cruise to the Bahamas. They came home and began their plans for New Years. They had a new neighbor, Doctor Ferguson McPherson. Ferguson had just moved to Raleigh from New Jersey and would be practicing general medicine here in town. Because of medicare, he could not afford his own practice, he explained, but would have to work with established partners. Since the girls were on their way to the range, they asked if he wanted to go along. He said no, and mentioned that he wished he had known his neighbors were gunowners before he moved in. The girls just laughed, and decided not to try to speak to him much anymore.

George Reilly was tired and ill. He had a bad case of the flu, and had just spent an all nighter working on a case for his firm. Two more cases like this and I am out of here he kept saying to himself. His goal was to make a name for himself, then find a smaller town out west to practice in. He hated Raleigh, the politics and expensive mediocre food. He owned a nice house, had nice neighbors, but never got to see them or spend much time at home. He still needed to research the info that John needed, about defending your property, but just hadn't had the time in the two years since they had talked. George remembered those burgers too!

Events began cascading beyond control at this point. On January second two thousand four, which was a Friday, the infrastructure was hit at approximately nine AM. Businesses had just opened, the stock exchange had just started for business. Huge power stations from Canada throughout the Northeast and Northcentral US were hit both by conventional explosives, some suicide vehicles and computer hacking. The whole grid for the United States went down in a span of two hours. That was the beginning, then as authorities rushed to fix that problem, three dirty bombs were exploded in LA, Chicago, and Houston. The President was rushed to Air Force One from his ranch outside of Crawford. When the plane was in the air one of the emergency Sat phones began to ring. It was Al-Qaeda, asking if they had gotten his attention. He answered

yes, and they gave him these demands. At that point, the country could have been saved, it only required the President pull all US troops from the Middle East. At that point, the caller told the President to tune in to CNN. Although the power was out, the national media in New York had gone to emergency power and began to broadcast over the radio. The reports were grim, but another story caught the President off guard. Mushariff of Pakistan had been assassinated. Chaos and pandemonium had taken over Pakistan. The worst news, was that some massive nuclear like explosion had rocked Riyadh, and that country had erupted in chaos as well. The writing was on the wall for the Middle East. The caller gave the President until Monday morning to make the announcement. The President stared out of Air Force One in disbelief.

Friday, January 2nd, 2004

Scott had gotten to work early that day so he could leave an hour early that afternoon. With Shelly home for Christmas break, he was happy for the extra hours. They had a date that night, an evening at Golden Corral (their son would join them for this part of the date), then put the baby to bed and watch a movie. The popcorn was waiting to be popped, the movie waited to be played. Afterwards, who knew!?

Scott wanted the day to go by fast. As soon as he walked into the store he saw Mac, his coworker, and frowned. The power blinked out all across the interior of the mall. Mac began to curse.

"This happens to freakin' much, now we will have to reboot the whole comp system, and poll again."

"Even if the power comes back on, we may have comp problems all day, I do not want to hand write tickets!"

The store sold mainly luggage, but also carried gift items and some other neat stuff. Grundig radios, and Swiss Army Knives and watches were carried as well. Scott walked over to the radio wall and grabbed the old standby Grundig windup. It was preset to an AM station that the guys listened to on weekends, most of the workers here were college students, either at State or Carolina. So whenever there was a football game, the radio was played. Since most of the customers were football fans, it was never an issue. Scott turned it on, and the news chilled them both to the bone.

"Breaking"

This is AM870 coming to you live from our Raleigh studio, using generator power. It seems that at approximately 9:15 AM, the power grid of the United States went down. We have no idea what has caused it, and the Administration as well as Homeland Defense are being quiet at the moment. There is also reports of explosions in Los Angeles, Houston and Chicago, but these are unconfirmed. We go live to our reporter in Washington DC, Guy Talks. "Guy, what's happening there? what are you finding out?" "Well, first let me say that the Sattelite phone I am on, may kick off at any time, so we may be disconnected." " Washington is in a state of siege at this point, although there is no information that losing the entire grid of the US is linked to a terror attack." "No one, not our usual sources or any one else is talking to us, and the city itself is being closed to all non-government personnel." "In fact, all of the journalists are being asked to leave town." "This is unprecedented!"

"What do you see around you , Guy?"

"Well, there are all kinds of police and military units all around me, all carrying an assault rifle of some kind. They are telling people to go back to their hotels or homes and prepare to evacuate. Since there is no confirmation that there has been a terrorist attack, this leads us to conclude something else must be going on behind the scenes." " Got to go, we are being pushed from the

steps of the capital.”

“Well folks, there you have it, we are obviously waiting for more info.” “Wait, this is coming across the old wire right now..... wow the President will speak to the country tonight at eight PM.” “The Secretary of Homeland Defense, The Attorney General, and The head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation will speak to the nation in an hour. The director of Fema will be delivering a message to the country in thirty minutes.”

Mac began putting the “freak” in freaking out. He ran to the phones, they didn’t work, he tried his cell phone, again no tone. Scott grabbed him, and said, “Mac, chill out, you’ll be fine, I need your help though.” Mac calmed considerably, and looked at Scott, “We always made fun of you, called you the militia man, libertarian. I guess you were right eh?” Scott just smiled and said, “I would rather be wrong Mac, and made fun of to be honest.” “Mac, help me get all the batteries, binoculars, radios, silver emergency blankets, and multi-tools put them in a pile over there.” Mac began collecting everything Scott said to get. Scott picked out two hiking style backpacks from the wall where they hung. He then counted everything in the pile by item number and wrote it down on a sheet of paper. Mac wondered what was going on, but kept his mouth shut. Scott then evenly distributed the gear, so that each of them had three pairs of binoculars, Four Swiss Army multi-tools, a collection of batteries(D,C, AA, AAA). Scott then began to look for other things in the store as well. He found mace canisters that were for sale and would fit on your keychain. He grabbed those as well as a few maglites that were left over from Christmas. He split those as well with Mac. He then said, “Mac we need to get home, but first I want you to imprint my credit card, and charge me for all this stuff. If the power comes on, I want to be charged for this. Since the power is out, you will have to imprint my credit card. Ok?”

Mac laughed and said, “Dude, at this point who cares?” But Scott cared, he wanted the extra stuff, because he knew he would never come back here, but at the same time wanted to show that he intended to pay for it. This stuff would be good for trade, or give to someone. Mac’s share would be used for the same. Scott then said, “Mac, I am going to go to Radio Shack, to trade for a few things, stay here and wait for me OK?” Mac said sure, and Scott thought he heard a register open as he headed out the door. He wouldn’t stoop that low, but at the same time didn’t care if Mac took the cash. Scott had other things on his mind. Getting to Radio Shack was just a few steps down the hall. He knocked on the closed gate and finally the manager came out of the backroom. He said, “ We are closed, unless you can pay in cash.” Scott said, “ All I want is your FRS radios, how about you take a carbon copy of my credit card, when the power comes back on, you charge me.” The man thought for a moment, and excepted the deal. Scott soon left there with eight FRS radios. They would come in handy at home he thought. He knew the power would never come back on, but he also knew the mall would be a target after today. All this would be stolen anyway he thought. Getting back to the store, he saw both registers had been emptied of cash, but his backpack was still lying where he left it. Mac had taken the cash and his pack and left. Scott silently wished him well, then thought about his game plan. He thought it would be awhile before people started getting crazy, the main thing was getting home which was ten miles away. Scott felt he had time, Shelly was out of school and with the baby at home. He knew that she would not go anywhere without him. Her family was in north Raleigh, and he knew she was probably trying to get in touch with them. He had a few minutes before he needed to leave. The mall was still safe for now, although it wouldn’t be for long. Scott turned on the radio to hear the Fema broadcast.

This is the director of Fema. At approximately nine AM, due to explosions at some of the main power servers in the Northeast, the power grid of the United States went down. At this time, we are unwilling to speculate on the causes, but we want to get some emergency information to the public. We understand that some of the people listening are far from home, either at work, on vacation, or at school. Fema strongly suggests that you prepare to stay where you are for the

time being, with the help of the Red Cross, aid centers will be set up at the state and local areas to provide aid to those who may be stranded. After this broadcast, the state and local reps will come on the air in order to give more info on their particular area. Please get home and stay there. At six PM, a curfew will be in effect nationwide, and will last until six AM.

Pursuant to the emergency powers act already signed by the president, effective immediately all grocery stores, convenience stores and gasoline service stations are ordered closed. We anticipate a five to seven day recovery period, and the government will need to ration those supplies as needed. Looting will not be tolerated, and looters are subject to being shot. The President has not declared martial law, but has issued executive orders to help the recovery effort move along quicker. I will not entertain any questions at this time, good day, and GOD BLESS AMERICA!

Scott realized things were worse than he suspected. He thought the government was hiding something, as if something else would happen. Putting that out of his mind, he needed to get home. He walked to his parked truck, retrieved a small black duffle, and carried it back into the store. In it was a pair of royal robbins pants and a khaki robbins vest. He pulled out a locked pistol box containing a glock 22 and glock 27. He also unwrapped a mechtech conversion upper for his G22. Putting it together, it made a handy little carbine. With a Meprolight red dot scope, it owned pretty much anything within fifty yards. He had three Scherer 29 round mags (loaded up to 26 only) one in the hand grip and two in one of the mag pockets of the vest. The other pocket had power bars and granola bars. In the vest was a small amount of supplies for the ten mile trip home. He doubted he would need them but wanted to prepare for Murphy as best he could. The G27 went in the kydex holster behind his right kidney, and two mags for it on the left kidney. Making sure everything was where it should be, he strolled back to his truck. He secured the backpack in the extended cab, and sat down. He started the engine, deciding on highway forty as his best bet. Scott turned on the radio, and began to listen to the Homeland Security chief begin the briefing.

Homeland Security Secretary

Ladies and Gentlemen, at this time at the President's order, the terror threat level will be raised to RED. At nine AM, EST; the main power stations, dams, and nuclear power reactors from southern Canada throughout the northeast were incapacitated by explosive materials. Also destroyed were the relay stations, and transfer towers across the mid west. This was accomplished by suicide bombings, false emergency vehicles, gas tanker trucks set with explosives, and computer hacking. At the same time, in Los Angeles, Houston, and Chicago dirty bombs were exploded. This caused minimal damage, but has created a strong sense of fear in those communities. America has been hit with a deliberate and calculated attack. We expect recovery to take up to five to seven days before some power is returned. We ask that Americans remain calm, stay home, and check in on your neighbors. At this time, we believe there is a chance of possible follow up attacks in the major cities. Americans must be vigilante, and trust that Federal, state, and local law enforcement; as well as emergency service units are doing their jobs. And now the Attorney General of the United States.

The Attorney General of the United States

Ladies and Gentlemen, as was spoken by the secretary, the United States was deliberately attacked today. What I want to go over with you is some of the new emergency daily guidelines that citizens will have to follow until the emergency is over. There is a Federally mandated curfew between six AM and six PM. That means after six PM you must be within the confines of your respective homes or neighborhoods. At no time should anyone travel more than a mile from your home. Grocery stores and Gas stations, will remain closed until properly secured by

local and Federal law enforcement, as well as emergency personnel. Food will be distributed, as well as gas on a per need basis. All hospitals are under the control of the Federal authority and will be protected by local and Federal security units. Roads are to remain clear of traffic, and used only for Official Use only. Supplies need to be moved in some respects cross country, so all highways must be clear. Right now, if you work in these industries, we ask that you return to work on Monday. These industries have been deemed vital to the recovery effort.

TRUCKING
BANKING
SECURITY
PORT SECURITY
PORT SHIPPING
PORT TRANSPORTATION
FOOD DISTRIBUTION
AIRLINE SECURITY PERSONNEL
AIRLINE SHIPPING PERSONNEL
AIRLINE CARGO PERSONNEL
AIRLINE LICENSED PILOTS
AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL OPERATORS

All Federal law enforcement leaves, vacations, holidays are cancelled. All officers should report to their respective headquarters by tomorrow morning at six AM, if they have not done so already. Secure your families, then come to work.

Federal Service Units are right now rounding up suspected terrorists all across the country. We are trying to offset another possible attack, as well as find out who was responsible for this heinous act of terror.

At this time, all firearms purchases are suspended, as well as sales of ammunition. All FFL dealers, and any retailers selling firearms and ammunition, will do an inventory on your supply and prepare for ATF officers to pick up your remaining inventory. This inventory will be collected and kept at a central location, until the emergency is over. Then the inventory will be returned. Credit citations will be issued, so that monetary funds can be issued in the event that the inventory is not properly returned or used by the authorities.

Firearms owners may only use their weapons for self defense based upon their respective local and state laws. Any unauthorized personnel seen with any firearms will be disarmed.

I believe soon there will be more information from all respective state Governors, who will have a better grasp on the conditions in each respective state. That ends our briefing, another will be announced soon. GOD BLESS AMERICA.

“Wow!” Scott exclaimed to the windshield. This is huge. Letting all the information sink in, Scott was glad the trip home was uneventful. Highway 40 was crowded, but traffic kept moving. Either Americans are handling this better than I expected, or the gravity of the situation had not set in. Scott hoped that John, Kareef, Harvey, and Mitch were home safe, or at least on their way. They had a lot to do!

Scott pulled into the development and noticed something. Some of the people were packing their cars and leaving. Vans, trucks, SUVs, all types of cars were jam packed with stuff, trying to get home before the curfew. Mentally, Scott said a prayer for them, knowing it would be better to

hole up than to just run out and get stuck on the highway. Scott thought again about that, his home was only a mile from an exit ramp as well. Too much to think about on my own he thought as he pulled into his parking space. Wlaking in the door, he saw his son, oblivious to anything but his cars and trucks, "Daddy Home Daddy Home" he said as he ran to Scott. Shelley was different, barely holding it together after hearing the briefings and the news reports. Scott held his little family tight, together they prayed to the Lord giving thanks that they were at least together. All over the country, families were miles apart. Some would never be found.

John was in a quandary. There was a girl he was dating, he liked her alot, but wasn't sure about their place in general. Her name was Kristy, she was beautiful, bright and intelligent. She could lighten a room with her presence, and never lose a positive emotion. John was smitten, but at the same time he rather enjoyed being a bachelor. They had had dinner Christmas eve night, and spoke of their feelings. John just could not commit to a relationship. He didn't want to see anyone else, he just enjoyed his free time. The date had ended in a "lets just be friends" tone, and left both people unsatisfied. Now that the power was out, and things would be getting interesting real soon, he wanted to go to her, make sure she was ok, or at least offer for her to come back with him. "Well, I am the guy, time to play hero" He remembered what his father had told him when he was a teenager. As a teenager, John noticed that his mother actually ran the household, but that his father always had the last word in any decision that was made. His father first congratulated his son for the wisdom of noticing what was happening, and then told him why things were this way. A mother is at her best when she is caring for her whole family, her husband and children. This does not mean we shouldn't help her out with chores or other jobs, but that she takes care of things because that is just the way of the world. The only reason the Father has the last word, is when things go bump in the night, or a sound is heard that is not a normal known sound, the Man must find out what is wrong. Ultimately, the Man must handle all "BUMP IN THE NIGHTS". And that is why the Father has the last say. John loved his fathers reasoning, even if it took three trips round a story to tell it. So John would ride to Kristy's rescue. John worked in the research triangle, as a computer engineer. "Well that job title is a waste of a college education now" he chuckled to himself. He worked across the street from Kareef's firm, and saw that Kareef's Van was still there. Good, instead of a lone knight, maybe some cavalry. "I need to go see him, and see if Harvey is at work as well." Harvey worked about a block down the industrial street. We should stick together anyways to be safe.

Kareef kept a change cup in his office for the snack machines. Today, he was going to use all the change he had. He went to the machine and began purchasing all the snicker bars they had. Everyone else was in a state of semi-panic, especially after the Attorney General's press conference. Kareef was concerned he would be on the road pretty late and wanted some chocolate bars for extra "mmmfff". He had dumped all the files from his brief case, and filled it with the snicker bars, as well as some of the water bottles in the lobby. He looked around, and sure enough people were just leaving. There were water tanks in two different hallways, along with spares in the supply room. No one was paying any attention to them. He could not believe it. In his country anything of natural survival value would have been ripped up and taken. He decided that he was going to get those water tanks. He went outside, unlocked his Volkswagon Eurovan, and laid the back seat down. Keeping the back gate open, he started to walk back inside. "What are you doing Kareef?" Kareef did not immediately recognize John's voice. John just smiled as Kareef turned around "John today is not a good day for this"
"I know Kareef, hey how about I ride shotgun with you?"
"Is your car not working?"
" Well I think it would be better if we rode home together, and your van is bigger than my old Escort."

“ I see, have you seen Harvey?”

“Not yet, I thought we would stop at his office on the way”

“Help me first, I want to get a few things from inside.”

“You got it, what are we getting?”

“Water tanks”

After placing all the tanks of Kareef's office in the van, they drove back to John's office. They got his tanks as well. John also had a snack machine and a ton of change. They then stopped by John's car, and got his “kit” it included two snub nose 357 revolvers, and a lever action 357. It also had power bars, two nalgene bottles with water, a firestarter kit, water purifier, glock entrenching shovel, small hatchet, some paracord, compass, and a map of the area. He also had two emergency blankets, and a box of handloaded 357. He also grabbed his portable CB, purchased as refurbished form Sportsman's guide. With the extended antenna, one within about 10 miles, he should be able to reach Scott. After finally realizing they had done all the damage they could do, they set off to find Harvey.

Harvey was currently arguing with his boss. They had a huge client who was expecting a full techno briefing on the million dollar contract they had given to Harvey's company. Harvey's boss would not let it go. the boss was clinging to this deal like tomorrow mattered. Harvey wanted to scream, but listened for another moment. Finally when his boss stopped for air, (the guy reminded you of a walrus without his teeth)Harvey exclaimed, I quit. His Boss was dumbfounded, but Harvey just walked away. He went to his office, grabbed his briefcase, but realizing nothing in it was needed, he just left it. He got all the pictures of his wife and family, and walked outside. He noticed Kareef and John waiting at his Mercedes, and he smiled. Finally some adventure, he thought. John said, “I need your help, and I think we should ride together, and.....” Harvey said , “What ever it is, I am with you!” Harvey walked to his car and grabbed a small backpack and case. He unlocked the case, pulling out a shoulder holster with a Ruger 40sw and two magazines, as well as a Ruger pc4 carbine with two mags in a but cuff. One mag was in a side pocket of the case. That was placed into the action of the carbine. His backpack contained a kit similar to John's. He then said wait here, and paced back into his office. He grabbed to complimentary bottled water from his lobby and getting further down the hall found the company medical kit. He grabbed that as well. Walking out to his neighbors, his boss screamed, “Where are you going with that stuff?” Harvey just smiled, and said “Mr. Boss I suggest you go home, its the end of the world as we know it, tomorrow is going to be different than today or yesterday, You need to be with your family, not here.” “The client will not even exist tomorrow.” “I wish you a good day!” With that Harvey, John, and Kareef were off on their own adventure, to get Kristy. It was now three PM.

Kristy's apartment had been home to her for six years. She had gotten the place when she was a sophomore at State, then kept it when she graduated. She loved her neighborhood. She could walk to the small convenience store across the street, and five blocks away was Cameron Village. The neighborhood had steadily decreased in property value, though as more and more low income homeowners moved in. Then the crack house opened near the convenience store. Her father had offered to buy her a townhome, but she refused. Here she was happy, until today. she had taken a personal day, since she planned to travel home this weekend. But the attack changed her plans. She spent all day now just listening to the news on the radio, and getting herself ready to bug out. She wondered what John was doing, if he was at home or work. Something inside of her said to wait for him, but she wasn't sure why. So she got busy preparing her abode and taking stock in her supplies. She reasonably had enough food and water to last two weeks. She checked her stock of charcoal for her little grill and smiled. She had enough for a few meals at least. She then went to her closet, and pulled out a wooden framed case. Inside was a gift from her grandfather who had passed years ago. He had given

her his prize possession, a Winchester '97 cut down to 18 inches, with the barrel shroud and bayonet to go with it. There were also about 100 shells, all #9 buck . She had not shot it since she was a girl, which then it knocked her on the ground before she learned to shoot it. Her great-grandfather had given it to her grandfather, and when he passed it was given to her. It brought back pleasant memories of long summer days shooting with her grandfather. No man was ever more gentle or kind. Her father had kept most of the collection, but she demanded that she got the 97. Her father, could never say no to his only child. she loaded it, then placed twenty more shells in her fannypack. "This is going everywhere I go today." After finishing taking stock, she began nailing all her windows shut, unplugging all the appliances, and loading her backpack for possible bugout. Then she began to read, trying to wait for whatever would come. Then she heard three quick shots, and a few screams from the store across the street. The C-store was owned by a Chinese couple, Lin and Ma Choy. They were both in their fifties, and been very kind to Kristy. She was probably the only person they excepted checks from, and she did not abuse the privilege. She ducked down and cautiously opened the blind to the street below. Three Hip-Hop wannabees were attempting to rob the store. Ma Choy had been dragged outside, and one ganger was slapping her to the ground. Another was watching the street, armed with a revolver. Inside the store, two more shots rang out, and Kristy sprang into action. More out of anger than common sense, she walked directly out onto her front porch, jumping down two steps at a time. The Ganger watching the street glanced her way, but looked away. Then somewhere in his addled mind it dawned on him that she had a shotgun. As she approached him, she placed the bayonet onto the weapon. Slowly the ganger began to call for his friends, and raise his pistol. She leveled the shotgun at his crouch, and opened fire. He was hit dead center mass, and fell to the pavement. His friend who was beating Ma Choy, immediately tried to run, but Kristy pumped another shell into the chamber and cut him down as well. She began to enter the store, and seeing a fleeing shadow, yelled, "Halt" the last youth, obviously the leader looked at her and laughed "What you gonna do with that Grannie gun?" she showed him, she stuck him directly in the abdomen, the bayonet slicing through all the tissue. Then she dis-engaged, and the tough, now reduced to whimpers began to cry out. His pistol lying on the ground had one shot left, and Kristy shot him in the head. Looking for Lin, she found him behind the counter, shot in the shoulder. She noticed a 38 revolver behind the counter as well as a pistol grip shotgun. Lin, ashamed, said "They had Ma before I could react, the power was out, I did not expect the looting to start. They take Ma, they want the money, I gave them the money , still they beat Ma and shoot me" "I know those kids fo years" Kristy said, "Lin, the two of you will have to come with me, to my place across the street. I will get you and Ma well there and watch your store. Come with me." Lin forced himself to walk, and once outside, he helped Ma to her feet. He gave kristy the keys, and she began to clean up the mess. She got them into her apartment, then went back to the store. She grabbed the only shooping basket they had and filled it with all the medical supplies they had. She then grabbed the weapons, and checked the pockets of the toughs for ammo. She retrieved the money , and took everything back to her apartment. By now Ma had gotten over her shock and began to bandage Lin. Kristy went back to the store, ignoring the crowd that was forming. she dragged the bodies into the now heating cooler. She heard voices saying "it was justified" "she should have waited for the police" she kept ignoring them, and finished her work. she had locked the door once inside, and began to rummage behind the counter, she found two boxes of 38 shells, and another box of shotgun shells. Lin and Ma both smoked, so she grabbed a couple of cartons of ciggs as well. She found more charcoal and fluid, and lots of matches. "The food will have to wait". She walked outside, and locked the door. To the crowd, Kristy said, "I am watching this place day and night." "You saw what happened, don't try it yourselves." "The show is over, move along" The crowd mostly college kids and adults did just that. Satisfied all was as well as could be expected, Kristy went home. If John doesn't show up

now, she thought. I am gonna beat him with a wet noodle. Ain't love grand!?

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on April 28, 2004 23:37April 28, 2004 11:37 PM:

Chapter 2

Scott looked at his watch, it was 3Pm. He had taken a walk around the neighborhood to see who was home and who wasn't. His three closest friends, John, Harvey, and Kareef, had not made it home yet. Scott was worried, but knew that they worked in the same general area. "I hope they tripled up to come home." Scott walked to John's place to feed the puppies. He let them out into the backyard, let them run and do their business. He looked out over the neighborhood, and took in the sights. John, Harvey and Kareef all lived in the center of a cul de sac. The three houses were raised, six feet higher than the rest of the houses which wrapped around them like a coil. These three houses had been the most desirable, and the most costly. Harvey's house was probably a little taller, and with a decent lookout position on the roof, one could provide overwatch on the entire community. Scott thought with the calamity unfolding that might be a good idea. Mitch's house was three doors down, then the street went into the townhome area. When the dogs had run enough, he brought them back into the house, gave them some water, and locked up. As he was leaving, Sheeka, Kareef's wife ran out of her house clearly upset and panicky. "Where is my husband, he should be home" "Do you think he is with John or Harvey?"

Scott replied, "I hope so, I believe so, we just have to wait." "If they are together with Harvey, I bet they will have some stories to tell." Sheeka did not see the humor, only stared blankly at the entrance way to the community. "Sheeka, why don't you come to my place for dinner, we will be cleaning out the fridge, and anything edible will be cooked on the grill." "I tell you what, let's go see Missy(Harvey's wife) and invite her as well." Sheeka, acknowledge with a smile, and they both walked to Harvey's house. Missy met them outside, Scott was happy to see her grin, and happier still to see her carrying a ruger in a shoulder holster.

Missy said, "I am worried too, Sheeka worried to death, but I believe the three of them are together, and things will be fine in the end." Scott invited Missy over to his house for dinner, and she agreed. Since the two ladies were talking fine amongst themselves, Scott headed home. He wanted to stop at Mitch's and catch up with him. Mitch and his wife were busy unloading their suburban. Scott was surprised to see it filled with supplies and gear. Mitch saw Scott and said, "Hey don't just stand there, grab some stuff and carry it inside." Scott did as he was told. The living room was filled with cases of food, water, and all kinds of camping gear. Mitch was beaming, and his wife was giggly. "The local food warehouse was still open." "They only excepted cash, and luckily I still had some, so I bought what I could." "Not bad eh?" Mitch had loaded up on canned soups, tuna, and rice. Also, he bought cases and cases of water. "They also threw in a case of canned dog food that was dented, I thought John's dogs would appreciate these." Scott sighed, "I bet they will."

Scott got serious, "Mitch, the guys aren't back yet." "I haven't given up hope, but we need to get the ball rolling on securing our little community here." "We are just going to have to start without them."

Mitch got serious as well "What do you want to do?"

"Well, Sheeka and Missy will be having dinner with my wife and I tonight, if y'all want to come over, you are more than welcome." "It's clean out the fridge night!"

Mitch thought it over and said, "I think I will pass." "I got a ton of stuff to do tonight, and I need some alone time with my wife."

Scott said "Ok, but do me a favor, keep your eyes and ears open tonight, ok?"

“Will do Scott, we can talk tomorrow about preps, maybe by then our boys will be back.”

“Mayhap so Mitch, see ya”

Scott went home and told his wife his plans. Shelley understood, and agreed that having Missy and Sheeka over would be a good thing. Besides they had a lot of food to eat in the fridge. Scott had been carrying a Glock 27 on his strong side, with two ten round mags, on the weakside. He went to his gunsafe, and grabbed his shoulder holster, putting his Glock 22 with the three precious fifteen round mags in the holster as well. He then slipped a denim shirt over it to conceal it. He had never gotten around to get a concealed carry permit, but he figured drastic times called for common sense measures. He opened the fridge, and started getting all the meat. He had hamburger, chicken, and sausage. He opened his grill and began cooking. Shelley began fixing all the frozen vegetables on the Coleman stove they had. Scott placed the frozen rolls on the top grill face, hoping they would thaw and be edible. Scott's townhome was in the center of four other townhome buildings. Other neighbors, saw what he was doing they immediately started grilling their refrigerated food as well. Someone brought out some beer, others wine. Everyone was talking about the emergency in a “we can get through this together” tone. One of the other board members, Bob began speaking with Scott in worried tones. “Scott, what do you think, should we get the board together, maybe have a meeting?” Scott replied, “I don't know if everyone is home yet, although I am worried about the security of the neighborhood, maybe we should wait until tomorrow after we have heard from the President and then hopefully the Governor will speak, let us know how the state is doing.” Bob spoke, “what about the community watch group? Are they home?” Scott spoke more worried this time, “Brenda and Susie are, but not John, Kareef, or Harvey.” “But I think we are going to have to get a few people together and work out a schedule for tonight.”

Bob said, “Do you really believe that is necessary?” “They did say the power will be on in a week.” “Shoot, we were without power for four days last year, in the ice storm, we didn't have any problems.”

Scott looked at Bob. Bob was a good guy, but typical of most people. He expected the government to take care of everything. He listened to emergency broadcasts, but really didn't hear anything.

Scott said, “Bob, they ordered the closing of all grocery stores, all gas/service stations, all convenience stores. After today, no one is to be more than a mile away from their homes.” Scott let that sink in. Then he said, “There are people, some in our own neighborhood, that will get hungry, real soon.” “I don't even trust the water now.” “It takes power to filter the water.” “In the ice storm, only parts of Raleigh were effected, there was no loss of infrastructure.” “Now who knows when things will be right again.” Bob looked away, as if his whole world had been torn from him. In the courtyard that was linked to all the patios, people were having a good time, laughing, eating, and talking. Someone had made a makeshift nursery on one of the patios and all the kids were playing. Some children had never played with other children living only two or three houses away. Neighbors that had not really spoken to each other were talking and eating together.

Bob said, “How do you want to do tonight?” Scott thought for a moment and said, “Well, let everyone here eat for a minute.” “In a few minutes I will speak up about tonight.” Bob nodded his head in agreement, and said, “Well you have your first volunteer, just call a meeting and I'll be there.” Scott said great, and Bob moved on to join his wife. Sheeka and Missy walked into the crowd carrying some of their refrigerated food as well. Bringing it to Scott, he placed upon his grill, and kept on cooking. He was thinking on what to say and worried about tonight. I wish the fellas would get home.

The governor looked out his window, although he could only see the block of street directly in front of his view, to him, he felt as if he was looking out all over the state. He would be speaking to the state tonight after the President. The President had given conference calls to all the governors both at once and some in private. The governor of North Carolina had gotten a long winded call. North Carolina had two main military bases, Fort Bragg, and Camp LeJeune. There was also Pope Air force base, as well as a few smaller ones all across the state. The President had assured the governor that all North Carolina reservists, whether army, navy air force or marine; would remain in the state to help maintain order and guard some of the necessary facilities. But the full time military, already strained, would be stretched again for the major cities, like New York, Washington DC, and securing Norfolk. Special Warfare units, would be used in a capacity of support for the special FBI and Homeland Security units now operating across the country trying to round up and interrogate muslim extremists. They had solid leads, the President had said, and were tracking down these so called sleeper cells before any more damage was done. What it meant to the governor of North Carolina, was that all the SBI, State highway patrol, county sheriff dept's and city police units as well any National Guard and reservists left in the state, was all he had to implement the Emergency Powers he would enact tonight after the President's speech. This would be necessary, the President had said rather candidly, because more attacks were imminent, and may be nuclear or biological in nature. The President's voice had actually quivered as he spoke those last words. The governor only hoped he had more time, a few precious days to get a system in place before the next hammer fell. According to all reports, North Carolinians were going home, and peacefully. Special SBI and State patrol units, with the help of the respective county sheriffs swat teams were right now securing major food warehouses and shipping depots. Also, they were going to basically empty every Home Depot and Lowes Hardware in the state. All the supplies in those stores as well as any major construction site, would be placed in certain zones and used for rebuilding any damaged areas. They were going to begin the fortifying of all food/gas locations that were centralized, as well as emptying out those that were not centrally located. Shopping centers would essentially become walled oasis's, for supply redistribution.

You see, although the Federal government was promising to get the power back on and things running again, even in seven days the world had been forever changed. The United State's economy had been wiped out in a few hours. without the infrastructure, for instance money was not changing hands, stocks were not bought, sold or traded. Goods were not bought and sold. Tens of millions of Americans had become unemployed overnight. Not only that, most would not be employable ever again. Perishable food as well, millions of tons would rot in their refrigerated packing systems in mere hours. Meat, vegetables, seafood, dairy products, fruits all were rotting now, waiting to be shipped. America ran on a just in time twenty four hour inventory schedule that now was gone. Personal family debt would never be repaid, which meant the banks would have to be paid back with something more than paper cash. Banking records themselves would have to be called in to question, because the records were kept electronically. A new system across the world would now have to be devised to generate currency and to consolidate debt. But there in lies another question, how does one feed over two hundred and fifty million non working and non paying Americans. Some deputy of the deputy of the deputy of the deputy of the secretary of the deputy had been sitting in his office twenty years ago in Washington DC, and figured this out. In order to keep his job another year and receive tenure and a retirement plan, he typed it all out and it was filed away in some Federal think tank contingency file. This file was now sitting on the President's desk, and the weight of it was probably more than the oak desk could take. No conspiracy, no concentration camps, no one world government, just the cold hard logic of some guy who was paid to worry about this stuff. It wasn't a bunch of old rich guys sitting in a dark room, hatching a plot to control the world, turning everyone into slaves; it

was the vulnerability of a nation that had forgotten to question its place in the world. Gone were the writings of our forefathers, and those of Thoreau, Emerson, Whitman, Poe. Gone were the literary genius of Hemingway, and Twain. There would be no Lawrence to write "THE GREAT GATSBY". Forever and ever after it would be this stupid file written by this stupid man, who was as unimportant as a fly you would swat on a hot summer day. This file sat on the desk of the President who was damned to read it. In the end, America really deserved this file, as most Americans had become fat and lazy, never questioning two political parties that never did anything constructive but take away rights, never questioning why they had to pay taxes, or where the tax money went. They never questioned a failed foreign policy supported by the political elite of both parties. The weekly or bi-weekly paycheck had become more important than the constant struggle of an educated people fighting to remain free. Government by the consent of the governed, and the two parties for decades had been given an open check. American acquiescence had been purchased with the promise of a Social Security check, once a month, but for the generation born after 1970, retirement might have to wait until seventy five or eighty. Such is the grandeur of life!

In this file contains the plans for the implementation of emergency control of the United States of America. It gives the legal background, legal support and rules that the President would follow in case of a catastrophic attack on the United States. It has the orders for all the Departments, what they are to do, and how they are to do it "in case of emergency". It gives information on how to get around the "Posse Commitatis" act, as well as which military units to send to which parts of the country to do certain things. It has all the legal mumbo jumbo to legally cancel the bill of rights, and to move any part of the population to anywhere. It gives the President the right to recall Congress even at gunpoint, to pass more emergency legislation. It gives the steps to take to Federalize all state and local law enforcement. So when the terrorists took out the infrastructure, this file was opened. It was designed to care for the protection and continuance of the United States of America. It was the perpetuation of the Federal government, to protect the American citizen in time of crisis, and it was as American as apple pie. The President would not even have to declare Martial Law. Most of the theory was based on what was accomplished during the "New Deal". The language was similar, the rhetoric would be the same. On the radio, Americans would eat it up!

So the governor is staring out of his window, wondering about all of this, wondering how his family is doing, trying to keep it together. He moves to his desk andBAM! he hears an explosion, followed by three more. The noise is in the direction of central prison in downtown Raleigh. All hell is breaking loose. Two days before, under intense media, a certain prisoner had been moved to central from another part of the state. Ernst Brungmier had finally been caught and convicted of three counts of capital murder, two counts assault. He was head of a group called "Aryan Serpents" a white supremacy group that was based in one of the rural counties. He was being processed in Central, before shipping out to a more secure prison. So his gang of thugs and malcontents decided to bust him out. Showing up in their best black fatigues, carrying AKM assault rifles with seventy five round drums, they just stormed the prison. They were throwing molotov cocktails, and shooting wildly in all directions. Unfortunately, the prison could not go into lock down due to the loss of power that morning. So the "storm troopers" actually made it inside, where all kinds of fun began. The guards, fought back tenaciously, cell block by cell block, with all the inmates running for cover or trying to escape. The only thing the serpents did was get themselves killed as well as hundreds of innocent civilians. The area around the prison was congested with traffic, and all the gunfire spread into the trapped crowds. City, county, state, and federal law enforcement began showing up immediately, mostly by helicopter. It was a turkey shoot by then. Law enforcement officials, needing a breather from the fear and

uncertainty they felt, jumped on this revolt with a tenacity not seen. They could handle this, they were trained for this. Other inmates, being in the position of picking up weapons laying around from the firefights, were trying to get out. The panic to get out of the downtown area was tremendous. Cars were driving on the sidewalk, shops were over run with panicked pedestrians trying to get out of the way. Blocks away from the shooting, people were running in every direction trying to get away from the noise. It would take all night before order would be restored.

John, Kareef, and Harvey had been stranded on highway forty for over an hour. The mood had been light, until the news of the prison break. Then the reality of the situation began to sink in. Kareef was ready to go home. They were going to get John's girl, and get out of there. She was twenty miles from the subdivision, and hopefully home and ready to go. Harvey was excited, and he felt guilty for it. He wanted to call his wife, let her know everything was fine, but knew the phones were out. He knew she would make the best of it, and probably fuss at him for having fun without her. John, on the inside was freaking out. He hoped Kristy was fine, and that she was home. He hoped coming to her like this would make her happy. He did not want her to think he was ordering her around or forcing her to make a decision. The more he thought about it the more he knew he loved her. The three men had turned off of forty, and into North Raleigh. Trying to find a residential road to get them to Wade Ave, then on to Kristy. The pressure was building up, then a corner and skreeching halt. A three car accident right in front. Two people seemed to be seriously injured, the rest were gawking. When Kareef stopped, and rolled down the window, it was the first time the guys were listening to anything other than the radio. The gunfight at central could be heard for miles around, John was the first to notice, turning the radio off. The three sat in stilled silence at the sound of shots being fired and what seemed to small explosions. Harvey said, "Isn't Central in that direction?" John replied, "I believe so!" Kareef stated the obvious, "Looks like something big is happening there." John began barking instructions, "Harvey jump on the roof and provide security, here take my binocs." "Kareef grab the med kit, and follow me." Kareef and John ran toward the cars, while Harvey climbed to the top of the VW. Harvey looked around not noticing anything, said "All clear". John began talking fast, " It seems like it will be awhile before help comes, lets see what how we can get things squared away." The two injured people, one looked to have a broken arm and collar bone, the other possible rib damage. The Broken arm was splint, with some aspirin given for the pain. The other was more serious, suffering from what was called flail chest. The person seemed to be breathing ok, so the only other thing that could be done was to use a pillow to support the chest area. One of the bystanders had a truck, and volunteered to drive the two people to the emergency health clinic a few miles away. First the truck was used to push the cars out of the center of the road, then the injured along with their passengers filed in the back to be driven to the clinic. John wished them luck.

Kristy was falling apart. Lin had lost a lot of blood, and all they could do was change the bandages and try to keep him calm. Inside her mind, her conscious was raging. "You killed three human beings!" "They were hurting my friends, I had no choice!" "YOU KILLED THREE HUMAN BEINGS!"

She was trying to hold it together, to be strong, for the Choys, who were hurting worse than her. Ma was cooing Lin who was barely able to not scream from the pain. Kristy's head began to spin, and then she vomitted onto the floor. She tried to wipe her mouth with her sleeve, and the juice erupted again. She cried out for God to have mercy on her, to forgive her, to take care of her family. Ma Choy, rose up and hugged Kristy, telling her it was alright, that everything would be alright. It was then that Kristy felt totally exhausted, and sat down on the couch. Ma Choy, went back to Lin saying, "Kristy, why don't you fix yourself something to eat, and drink some

water." "I will eat after you, then maybe we can force some soup into Lin." Kristy, glad for something different said ok; and walked to the porch to start the grill. She boiled some water, for some Ramon noodles she was going to fix for her and Ma and poured a can of chicken noodle soup for Lin. It was getting close to six, and it was dark as India ink outside. She heard the fighting downtown, and shuddered.

John watched Kristy's place carefully. Although it was dark, he could see her grill on her porch. "Man, she is brave" he thought, "If that is her" He peered back around the other block he could see, then back toward the waiting VW. He "Levered" a round into the chamber of his Winchester, looked around the corner one more time, seeing no one, he jogged back to the van. Kareef was anxious, and Harvey a little to excited. John said, "Well, the coast is clear, lets head in." "I did not see anything out of the ordinary."

Kareef said, "John you huff it on foot to the left, Harvey you take the right, flash your surefires once and awhile on the road." "We do not need any flat tires tonight!" Both men jumped out of the van and taking their cues, semi-jogged up to Kristy's with Kareef slowly following behind. It was dark, and Kristy saw two shadows moving then the van. She raised her shotgun and said, "Don't move, we have you covered!" John spoke first, " Kristy it's me, John" She dropped the shotgun, ran down the brick steps into John's arms. The kiss would have made any Hollywood director proud. Harvey blushed and Kareef just thought to himself, " I wish I was home." Kristy wanted to tell John everything that had happened, but just cried in his arms. John thought of the next struggle to get home, but for now this was good enough. It was six PM, and there was still sporadic gunfire in the distance. They were twenty miles from home, but right now John was satisfied. He silently prayed to the Lord thanks for allowing him this brief bit of happiness. Kareef and Harvey looked at each other, they missed their wives terribly, but thought at this moment, the trip had been worth it.

Once everyone was inside, and the food from the grill was brought in as well as some of Kareef's stash of snicker bars; they began talking about what next. Lin's shoulder was still bleeding, and he needed care immediately. There was an emergency clinic a few miles away(where the crash victims had gone), and it was decided to take Lin there ASAP. Kristy would not leave until Lin and Ma were taken care of. Ma did not feel comfortable going to where ever it was that they lived, so John gave Ma a choice. Her and Lin's vehicle was parked behind the C-store. It was an Dodge truck, with a trailer for goods purchased to sell at their store. John told her that he would make sure Lin was alright, take him to the clinic, and bring him back. Then they would come with he and Kristy, to his home and stay with him for the duration. They would empty anything of value from the store and place the goods on the trailer. It was decided that they would make a run for home in the morning, after Lin was taken care of. Ma had no choice but to agree, since she did not want to have to handle going to her home with Lin wounded and no help. It was decided that John and Kristy would take Lin to the twenty four hour clinic, while Kareef, Harvey and Ma loaded the supplies and got everything packed for tomorrow.

Ferguson McPherson M.D. was tired. The clinic was open for twenty four hours, dealing with just about any ailment that they were feasibly trained for. He had taken this job, to get a better feel of what a new modern neighborhood doctor had to go through. He knew if he could hack this a few years, he could build his own practice, somewhere quiet. He had gotten to work at eight AM, ate his bagel, some bottled water, and read the paper. The morning promised to be as boring as emergency clinics got. Then at nine AM, his world changed. It wasn't the power going out, not the info on the radio, nor the FEMA or Homeland Security/Dept. Justice press conference, that bothered him. It was the massive firefight taking place at Central. Although the clinic was at least ten miles away, they started getting some of the wounded. It wasn't pretty,

with all the Federal, State, and local units carrying all manner of firearms and equipment to handle potential disorder, the toll had been horrendous. The wounded started showing up after about thirty minutes of hearing the explosions. Here it was sometime between six and seven PM, and he had to dress wounds, take bullets out of bodies, give blood, take blood from those volunteering to give it, hold the hand of one little girl who had been riding in a car with her father when a flying bullet came through the windshield. The father had been killed instantly, and she would die in the next few minutes. He had reached his breaking point. The other doctors struggled through, but he did not know if he would make it. Things were quieting down, with a few people coming in who had had a car accident. Ferguson hoped to head home soon, but since they were one of the few twenty four hour clinics that had a generator with enough fuel for two days, he would have to stay. "At least I am not at a hospital." he thought to himself, they aren't even able to leave. Some new State agency, had shown up at the local hospitals, with their black helicopters and armed agents and basically set up camp. since 911 was down, all emergency response people were at the call and behest of the State Emergency Team. Since the attempted breakout, most of the EMT units were being dispatched to the scene of the attack. Ferguson just hoped that in the morning, he would be allowed to go home. He did not want to be drafted to stay at a hospital. He figured his townhome would be fine, "Heck, my neighbors are probably walking around with their guns" all of a sudden knowing your neighbors were armed made Ferguson feel a little better, and he wished they had an armed guard here.

Toby Hoster had been friends with Scott since he was born. Scott was almost a month older than Toby. Their mothers had gone to college together, and been roommates. They had remained friends over the years, and Scott and Toby had been buddies since the cradle. They were both thirty five now, Toby had remained in his childhood town of Eden, while Scott had moved on. They remained close, talking on the phone once a month, and on holidays seeing each other. They both shared a love for firearms, Toby was as much into Glocks as Scott, but their choice in rifles was different. Toby was an AK man, and poor Scott could never change his friends mind. Toby owned two Bulgarian thumbhole stocked AKs. He also had an SKS, that he had set up as a short counter sniper weapon. It had a fiberglass stock with a bipod and scope. They went bang when he pulled the trigger, mags were cheap and plentiful, and ammo was cheap and easy to find. In this part of "The Bible Belt", most homes had an SKS in it somewhere. Scott always preached marksmanship, and would talk for hours about having rifleman skills as opposed to owning "Cannon Fodder Carbines" Scott argued that even using an AR which is not much better or worse than an AK, you are still learning marksmanship, where as the AK is more a spray/pray weapon. Toby though, could hit just about anything he aimed at within one hundred yards, and that was good enough for him. "Crazy Survivalist Crap" Toby would mutter, "Is that what you read all night on those message boards?" Scott would only grin and say, "Don't Knock it till you try it"

Toby stood on his father's porch. His father owned a small six acre farm on one end of a road that connected two small highways between Eden and Reidsville. The other end of the road was where Scott's grandfather had lived. When the power went out, at first Toby had waited with his wife and their children, but as the day drug on, and the announcements were repeated over and over he got them out here to his father's place away from the city. He had made ten trips, getting all their clothes, food, paper goods and anything else that they would need to his father's place. His dad had agreed with Toby to double up with him, besides he could see more of his grandchildren, Toby's mom had died just one year before. Toby had been laid off from his third shift job at the textile plant, and was waiting to see if they were going to open the plant again before giving up and looking for a new job. He had been making breakfast for his children when everything blinked. Now he was standing on his fathers porch, armed with an AK and his G23,

staring at the road.

“Dad, I think I am going to head down to Scott’s grandpa’s old place, see if Barry or Robin(Scott’s parents) are there.” “Tell Sherrie I’ll be back in an hour or so!”

Toby’s father replied, “ You got it son, tell Barry to come see if he is there, see if they need help settling in.”

Toby knew that Scott had hidden a few things at the place. there was a “Basement” Built into one of the foundations of the out buildings on the property. Scott would want his father to know what was there, and Toby wanted to be sure to tell Barry about the stash. Toby kept his two AR’s, both M4gerys, as well as about thirty , thirty round mags there. there was at least three cases of surplus ammo 223, two cases of surplus 308, and some handloaded 308. There was also about two hundred rounds of corbon HP in 223. also two Glock 23’s with ten ten round mags for them and a case of forty cal for the pistols. Scott’s extra M1a, sat in its long term storage bag with the two AR’s. Scott’s bolt 308 was there as well. There was also two large trashcans filled with rice, four cases of MRE’s, and 100 cans of assorted soups, beans, and vegetables and fruit. there were also rubber maid containers filled with extra clothes, some were Scott’s and Shelly’s and there were new ones for the baby. There was also a solar recharged car battery operated well pump, to connect to the well for water. Just in case, there was also 5 cases of bottled water, enough to last three people a week. There was also three #10 cans of seeds, corn, green beans, beets, tomatoes. Scott chose those seeds because those were the items his grandfather always grew in the past. With three acres, his grandfather could always turn a good crop. Driving down the road, Toby could see that all the neighbors were a bit edgy, with at least every house had a fire in the lawn with an armed guard. Out here everyone knew everyone else, and most people had lived here for at least twenty years. some homes had ten to fifteen acres, others only one, but you still knew and accepted your neighbors. There was cattle, horses, and mostly tobacco growing out there.

Toby pulled into the driveway, and saw that Barry and Robin had indeed made it here. Scott’s youngest sister Michele was there as well. “I bet the oldest sister, Courtney and her husband didn’t make it out of Atlanta.” Toby thought to himself. Barry saw the headlights, and leveled his Remington 870 at the car. Toby stuck both hands out the window, and said “If you shoot me, you lose your best Pac Man partner.” Barry laughed and apologized, he said “ Scott was the best at Donkey Kong, but you had the stamina for Pac Man.”

“Toby how are you?”

“Shaken, Barry how are y’all?”

“Tired, we packed all our stuff, and drove out here, traffic between here and Greensboro is horrendous.” “There were accidents all over the place, I took the country route, coming through Madison, we stopped at Robin’s brother’s place for awhile.” “They are fine just a little shaken, they may end up here before it is over as well.”

“Well I wanted to come out here and show you something if I could.” “Do you need any help unloading the cars?”

“No I got that covered, but I do need help getting the generator started.”

“Fine, lets get that going, and then I need to show you something under the old playhouse.”

Barry, wondering what it was just moved toward the van and the trailer behind it. They lifted the generator of the bed, then filled it with gas. They brought it to the back of the house, and got it started. since everything was unplugged already because no one lived there, there wasn’t much to power but the lights. Once that was done and the bags and supplies were brought into the house they all followed Toby to the playhouse. The playhouse was an old chicken coup that had been converted to a playhouse by Scott’s grandfather when Scott and his sisters were old enough. It was a small one room building. Scott had built a small four feet deep six feet wide

room under it, with a concrete base and treated wood sides. It was not designed to be permanent, but to hold everything until the house had been finished. This would stock the house so that Scott would not have to keep everything at his townhome which was a three hour drive away. His family was never into preparedness, until recently his father thought the whole thing was a racket. His father had seen the error of his ways in the past six months, and had built a good supply of canned goods, and rice at the house. The house had been finished about a month ago, but Scott had not been by to move his supplies into the house. He had only told Toby about the safe room, because Toby lived in town and kept an eye on the place. When Scott's family saw the bounty, they were all visibly upset. Toby teared up as well, wishing Scott and his family were there with them. Barry said, "Toby, its getting late, give me a hand moving everything in the house, and show me how those AR's work, ok?"

"Sure Barry, to be honest, they are covered in cosmoline, might be better if we waited until tomorrow to clean them." "The glocks though, they work fine, we can load those up and get them ready tonight."

Michele spoke, "I want one of those, Scott took me to the range once in Raleigh, I have an idea on how to use it."

Toby smiled and said, "Tomorrow we go shooting, we will sight everything in and get them cleaned."

So all the gear and food was moved into the house, and when everything was done, Toby went home. They had a lot of work to do tomorrow. No one wanted to miss the President's speech, and the Governor's afterward.

Mitch heard the gunfire as he was finishing the last touches of getting his newly purchased supplies squared away. It startled him back to reality, and the business at hand. "I can't believe I blew Scott of like that." He muttered to himself. He had wanted to spend the evening with his wife, to hold her and tell her everything would be ok. She was not "high maintenance" or not the type that needed to be cuddled every five minutes, but he wanted her to know he was on top of it. She had seen him through the shakes, the nightmares, the jumping under the table when a car backfires reaction to noise, when he first came back from Vietnam. He never would have made it through had she not stuck by him, holding him sometimes all night and day till he felt "normal" again. He wanted her to know he was here for her now, much the same way. She knew it of course, but he had wanted to show her tonight. Now with the gunshots and explosions in the distance, he had work to do. He went to his wife and held her for what seemed an eternity. So much was unsaid, but an understanding that soon they would hold each other again. Mitch had to put his game face on, and face the music. The world was shattered, and in his small part of it, he would have to put it back together. He walked outside, with the light of the day fading, and headed to Scott's. There the people had begun to clean up, and the mood had changed from celebration to worry. The gunfire in the distance brought the reality of the situation to everyone. Scott took his chance, and started making noise to get everyone's attention.

"Hey everybody, would you please listen to me for a moment?"

"I would like to get some volunteers together to work shifts to watch the neighborhood tonight."

"If you own firearms, and they are sighted in and you know how to use them, please come to my porch and lets work out a schedule."

A lot of the neighborhood had bugged out, leaving empty houses and townhomes, Scott wanted to guard the entrance, and watch the few "scatter" trails the kids used to get between all the neighborhoods. To have a presence was mainly what he was looking for tonight. Tomorrow they could work a more appropriate patrol schedule. About ten people showed up, including, Missy, Brenda, Susie, Mitch, Bob, and a few other people. A few others said they did not own any weapons, but would be glad to help in any way they could. Scott told them that would be great,

go home and grab a flashlight, and meet them at Mitch's place. Everyone departed, to get their gear and meet at Mitch's place to assign shifts.

Stanley Covington felt lucky, real lucky. Both his daughters had come home this morning, to spend the weekend helping he and his wife unpack. "Thank you Lord" he spoke out loud to no one in particular but Jesus himself. He was debating putting on his holster, with the berretta, but thought that it might worry his family too much. After a dinner of hot dogs and chips, with warm soda, everyone was staring at the radio waiting for the President to speak. Stanley looked outside, and saw a large group of people form at his neighbor's yard, whom he had not met yet. Most of the people were armed with carbines, or shotguns, and some just carried flashlights. "Some kind of neighborhood watch I guess, after all the shooting downtown, it might be worth it." He immediately told his wife he was going outside, and after retrieving his holster from the closet, he went to meet everyone. Mitch saw his neighbor come out and right away knew he was a vet as well. They shook hands and both felt a sense of relief. Comraderie born through combat. Mitch filled Stanley in on what was happening, and they waited for Scott who was running late.

Scott was hurrying to meet everyone. He grabbed his M1a, his Arktis vest, one of his large Maglites, as well as his G2 surefire. He grabbed the radios he had gotten earlier in the day, and kissed his wife. Shelly was worried about her family, if they would come to her, or if they were home safe. Little Thomas had been put to bed, and the mess of the day had been cleaned up. Scott hugged her and said he would be home soon. Shelly asked him out of the blue, "Honey, are you going to hook up your CB?" Scott was taken aback, he had forgotten it, and he knew John had the same model in his car. "Sweet!" Scott grabbed it out of his car and headed toward Mitch's. He wondered if he had made the right decision. Should he have gotten his family together, loaded the truck and car, and rushed to Eden? Is it a mistake to stay here? He knew his wife would never leave without her family, without knowing, and he was here three hours away from what he considered refuge. "The only wisdom is to do" he said to himself. there were about twenty people at Mitch's, all waiting for Scott. Scott began speaking as soon as he reached the driveway.

"All right, we have about four main areas to cover, the main entrance, the side entrance to the other neighborhood, and two sets of trails around the townhomes." "What I think would be best is if we watched the area closer to our homes, breaking off into four groups. " "I have enough radios that we can set up a good communication center somewhere, then everyone will be in contact." "Tomorrow we can set up a better watch schedule, but tonight, we should be close to home, listening to the president's speech."

everyone broke off into there respective groups, Scott then went to Missy's place. Since Harvey and Missy's house was raised higher than the others and you could almost see the entire complex from their two story window, Scott thought that would be an ideal location for the communication center for the night. He also wanted to set up the CB with an extended antenna and see if John was trying to communicate with them. Anything was worth a shot. Missy agreed to monitor the radios, and call out if anyone needed help. She also suggested that Scott get Sheeka, and Sheeka could help her. They could also listen and send messages out to John in case he was trying to get in touch with them. Scott knew he should not be rushing things, and that a better plan should have been thought of, but he just couldn't focus right now, with the events of the day. He just wanted to get everything settled for the night, and re-prioritize in the morning. Missy then pulled him aside, and said, "Let me show you something." They went down the hall into the walk in attic area. Inside, Scott could see where the wall had been covered, where it should have been left open. Missy, pulled the wall back, until it gave way, and there were the ten irreplaceable M1a's with three large boxes filled with magazines. Another stack of

boxes held, about five thousand rounds of ammo. There was also five more Ruger PC4 carbines, open sighted, and another box of mags for them as well. "Harvey wanted to give an extra one to everyone at Christmas," she said, " But unfortunately with his father's death, he had to wait." Scott was speechless, but couldn't do much tonight. The rifles, fine as they were could not be fired without first Zeroing them in, and they had to find a place to do that. Scott knew Harvey and Missy were well squared away in preparedness supplies. He told Missy to hide everything again, and they would discuss it more in the morning. Scott needed to go home and clear his head.

John and Kristy drove the wounded Lin to the emergency clinic. John had just grabbed his lever carbine, and a water bottle, plus a med kit for Lin. Kristy had her shotgun, plus a fannypack with shells, and one of the "captured" thirty eight revolvers. Riding in Kristy's car, a small four door sedan, they scanned the dark streets, watching for trouble. The clinic had lights, and there were plenty of cars parked all around. "This is going to be a freak show." exclaimed John. "Lets get it over with" Kristy said. one thing that had become normal to them in the past few hours was carrying their weapons with them. They carried Lin into the waiting room, and everyone sighed. John said, " These are firearms, they have been necessary all day." "We will be keeping them with us, and we do not want or expect trouble." That seemed to placate everyone, Ferguson was taking his turn signing in the new arrivals. He saw the weapons and almost had a heart attack. He remembered the events of the day, and came back to reality. "What happened?" Ferguson said.

"this man's name is Lin Choy." Kristy began. "His store was robbed earlier today, and he suffered a wound to his shoulder." "We have bandaged it and kept the wound clean, as well changing bandages, but we had no other choice but to get him here."

Ferguson said, " Does he have insurance?"

John, tired of the stupid banter replied, " Here is all the cash we have, about three hundred bucks, here is my license if you need my address to bill me for more." "This man needs help right away before he bleeds to death" Ferguson looked at the license and was surprised, " I live in the trace too." "Do you know Brenda and Susie?" John, took a breath, and said, "Yes they are good friends of mine, can our friend here get some help or what?"

Ferguson opened the door to the backroom area and pointed them to an empty room. He began taking care of Lin, using some quick clot that had been brought out of storage. He then gave Lin two pints of blood to get him back up and running. giving Lin a sedative for sleep he said, " He will have to stay here until the morning." "If you can come back tomorrow, he should be fine for travel." " Are you guys going back to the trace tonight?"

John shook his head, " Not without Lin, I guess it will be tomorrow."

Ferguson said. " See all the people in the waiting room?" "There is nothing wrong with them, they are just here because we have a light on." "The generator will give out tomorrow about midday." "Then we will all be in the same fix." "I want to ride with you home." John said, "That's fine, Kristy and I will stay here until morning, then when Lin is ready and you are ready, we go home."

Ferguson replied, " I appreciate it, you don't know how much." " We are almost out of everything here, I have saved a few things, but they will run out quick if there is anymore wounded people coming in."

With that, John and Kristy sat beside Lin and kept watch. John decided to sit behind the service counter, in case anything crazy came in from the outside, or the people in the waiting room tried to make trouble. someone had a radio, and it was almost time for the President to speak.

Kareef had just finished packing the VW, when he found John's backpack on the floor of the passenger side of the van. It was open, and some of the contents fell out as Kareef moved it to

the side. As he was putting everything back, he saw the CB. There was a long wire that could be extended for an antenna, and the batteries were still good. Kareef was exstastic, and called for Harvey to come see. Harvey just about jumped for joy at the sight of the portable CB. They immediately climbed to the top of the porch and switched it on. John had left directions written on the side, and the CB had been preset to a specific channel. Kareef switched it on, and heard the sweetest voice he ever heard. Over the line came Sheeka's voice saying, "Kareef, John, Harvey are you out there?" "Are you there?" Kareef cried for joy, he replied immediately, "Sheeka, it is me Kareef, we are all safe, how are you? I was worried!" They told each other how much they loved one another, how they missed each other. Then the CB was handed to Harvey, who was crying at this point. Missy's voice was as sweet as anything he had heard. They gushed over the unsecure line for an hour. They guys told their wives about their day. They also spoke about tomorrow and how they were going to try to get home in the morning. As they said their goodbyes, each person got on their knees and thanked God. what a blessing !

Scott had dozed off with the radio in his hand. It began to crackle to life, but he was sleeping right through it. Shelly kicked him in the leg, and finally he awoke. "Yes it's Scott what's wrong?" "Scott nothing is wrong, this is Missy, we heard from the guys, the have had a wild ride today, and are coming home tomorrow." "They are at John's girlfriends house, and are coming home tomorrow."

Scott just said, "Thank God!" And he put the radio down. He got on his knees and prayed to God, giving thanks and asking forgiveness of all past sins. He prayed for his family, his friends, and the future of his son. He then prayed for his country, and just then the President began to speak.

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on April 28, 2004 23:38April 28, 2004 11:38 PM:

Chapter 3

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

My fellow Americans, today the United States was brutally and horrendously attacked by terrorists. We have every reason to believe that attacks will resume in the coming days. We were not the only ones, with attacks in Great Britain, Poland, Italy, Spain, France and Germany. The United States and Great Britain are both without power for the foreseeable future. The world economy has ground to a halt. Nato is mobilizing to secure Europe's borders, and US troops who are stationed there are lending a hand.

In the Middle East, President Musharrif has been assassinated, and Pakistan has erupted in civil war. US and allied troops working to build a free and independent Afghanistan, are watching the events in Pakistan, and working to keep them from spilling over into their area of operations. In Saudi Arabia, the capital of Riyadh, has been hit with a nuclear device. we have no word from the royal family, or from our embassy there. When it is safe to do so, the United States will send a fact finding team into Saudi Arabia, to assess the damage. Right now it just isn't prudent to do so. In Iraq United States forces were attacked repeatedly in Baghdad and Tikrit. On the border with Syria, a US observation unit has disappeared.

Never in our young history has our nation ever been attacked so viciously or our very safety tested to the core. Not since the darkest days of the second world war has the United States and our Allies seen this level of carnage or destruction. I can assure you all tonight, that the armed forces of the United States are still intact, as well as the will of the President to use them. They will be the mighty hammer, by which the American people use to put the final nail into the

coffin of terror.

Who would do this? And who helped them? At this moment, we are certain it was AL-Queda, with the help of Iran and North Korea. At this moment, after warning our allies and economic partners, the United States launched a nuclear strike on the cities of Tehran, Iran and Pyongyang, North Korea. It is never a Presidents dream to use weapons of mass destruction. It is not what any American is bread for, or educated to do. But no nation can expect to help or take part in an attack on the United States and get away with it. I say this to the remaining countries that harbor or are aiding Al-Queda, or other terror cells that are connected to them, you have twenty four hours to turn them in to our authority, or face similar consequences. There is nowhere for you to turn or run anymore.

The Secretary general of the United Nations has informed me that the U.N. will be moving its operations to Beijing, China for the foreseeable future. China has not been physically hurt by the terror attacks on the west, but their economy like ours, is in a shambles. Because it is state controlled, and they are able to better communicate at this point, their economy and that of most of Asia will be saved. We are allowing all U.N. delegates and their families as well as all foreign embassy staff to return to their homelands. These are the only official flights that will be allowed other than military flights in U.S. airspace. We wish them luck.

I have empowered all the governors of this great nation to keep order and distribute aid as best they can. All National Guard units, will stay in their respective states, to help with the recovery effort. As congress returns from their homes to help us in this time of need, we will be passing new emergency bills that should pave the way for our speedy recovery. The cabinet, as well as the National Security Agency is working around the clock to come up with solutions to get our country back on track and preparing for the future. All military personnel, serving overseas, will remain there until further notice. We expect they will see more action in the immediate future. Citizens, these are harrowing times for our nation and way of life. I ask that you stay home, check on your neighbors, help out where necessary. Do not take part in any of the looting and theft taking place in some parts of the country. Do not take the law into your own hands. Wait for your local emergency management units to set up goods distribution centers in your area, and stay safe. In the coming days there will be more information, and more action by your elected officials. The coming years will show the tenacity and free spirit of the American people. May God bless us all, and God bless America.

There was silence on the radio, as all of America breathed at the same time. Everyone had held his or her breath during the speech. But what was the President saying? How could we as a nation continue a war overseas, when so much is and will be needed at home? The United Nations moving to China? Tehran and Pyongyang nuked? The reality set in for all Americans, that their world of MTV, fast food, malls, ATM's and gas were over. A new almost feudal society would now become the norm, or so it seemed after the President's speech. And new terror attacks were expected. Fear was beginning to grow all across America.

You see, everyone has his or her own slice of heaven on Earth. For some, you have your family and friends, you work, you play, and you come home, everything in its place. People who are single meet in bars and celebrate their solitude. Moms raise their children while Dad is at work. The wealthier side, own multiple homes, fly across country on a whim, keep manageable debt. The poor, some receiving governmental aid, working hard just to slide by another day. The middle class keeping the river flowing, keeping the ports open with more and more tax money, accepting a little erosion of their privacy here and there. What it was/is is crowd control. Everyone has his or her slice of the pie, some smaller some larger. When the lights go out, the power is off, no more stoplights, no more internet, you can't use your cell phone, and the regular phones are out as well (how many sheep keep rotary phones anymore?), people begin to realize that it is over. The Urban/Suburban parts of the country are hit the worse. It is all really

psychological, because the base is gone, you can't go to bat without home base, and it just isn't there. So here we are, Friday night, and the President has spoken, and in cities all across the country people realize their way of life is over. And panic is setting in. Now we were all good citizens on 9/11, we went home from work, watched TV, kept our anger over being attacked in check while we were immediately told who perpetrated the attacks. We waited patiently while our military prepared the attack on the Taliban in Afghanistan. When the power went out in the Northeast during August, they all just went home, acting like it was mardi-gras. But not many people thought about a possible end game attack in the US. No one thought it could happen. We did not take it as seriously as we should have. But now, all across the country, people were waking up. For the first time, people began thinking about their place in the world. They began thinking about where the next meal would come from, how they would feed their families, how would they make it? Panic, and stress began sinking in, especially to the middle class. This group of people so used to working and paying bills, of having stability. Now all of a sudden they were angry, scared, frightened. They started looking at the Democrats and Republicans differently. They realized they had been taken all these years, and that the fix which was more inert government bureaucracy, needed to be stopped. Trapped in homes without electricity in a century where tiny wheeled vehicles were sent to Mars, the middle class began understanding what went wrong, and that to fix the engine, the car would have to be wrecked first. Panic, stress, but mental freedom.

The Governor of North Carolina

My friends today will always be remembered in our history. There is nothing I can say that could take away the anguish and tearful pain we all feel tonight. But let me tell you North Carolina is ready to meet this new challenge. Let me assure you tonight, we will meet these challenges together, and we will build a better and stronger community because of it. North Carolina has a strong history of dealing with times of distress with a commitment to community. I am sure this time will not be different. We have all heard the President's speech, and need time to digest it. I will be as brief as I can, but we have a lot to cover.

First, we are extending through Sunday night, 6PM time for those still traveling or in transit to get home. This day has been very trying on everyone, and I want to be assured everyone can get home. There will be an outward state highway patrol presence on all major highways. These officers will be there to assist anyone who needs it. There may be temporary roadblocks set up to monitor traffic and make sure everyone is safe, so be prepared for long delays. All North Carolina airports will be open, with planes leaving for overseas travel only. You must have a valid foreign passport to leave, and you must be going to your country of origin.

All National Guard units are being activated. I know some have just come home from overseas deployment, but your skills are needed again. You will report to your respective armory's, on Sunday morning at 6AM. We will also have the support of the Army, Navy, Air force and Marines stationed in North Carolina, as well as The US Coast Guard. We have many airfields both public and private, as well as ports and inlets that will need to be patrolled. These units will also beef up security in cities like Charlotte, Raleigh, Greensboro, Wilmington, Asheville, and Fayetteville. These units will be acting in accordance to the emergency Powers that the President has in time of crisis.

Aid Delivery Areas will be set up all across the state. We are looking at building them, one per ten blocks in each city. Towns and Hamlets will set up differently depending on need. Aid will be distributed depending on need, and that will be decided by Emergency Administrators who will be on hand to interview all respective clients. Welfare recipients, and those on some other form of aid, should bring all info with them when we are set up and running. Others will have to sign up or register with the administrators before the aid system can begin. We expect to be up and

running by Tuesday, if all goes to plan. Please be patient, there are a lot of people to take care of, and limited resources to provide at the moment. Please be honest in your needs request, and give factual information to the administrator.

There have been instances of rioting and lawlessness already in Greensboro, Durham, Raleigh, and Charlotte. This has taken much needed resources away from the recovery effort, and destroyed countless lives and property. We must take heart that the coming days will be hard and treacherous, and we have to come together as a community to make it through these trying times. North Carolina has a long history of legal firearm ownership. If you are forced to use a firearm to defend your home do so in accordance to North Carolina law. Do not use unnecessary force. If you are seen with a firearm away from your home it will be confiscated and you could face a prison sentence. Remember, under the Emergency Powers and Patriot acts, you can be held and arrested for any length of time without legal representation. Do not put yourself or your family at risk. Let the legitimate authority do what they are paid to do. As of this moment, all North Carolinians are to carry ID with them anywhere they go. All people must be able to be identified at all times. We are still hunting for terrorists even here in North Carolina. Law enforcement as well as the Homeland Security units must be able to quickly identify residents in any given area.

My fellow North Carolinians, it is with regret that I speak with you tonight. We have been attacked by an implacable foe. We will all suffer in the coming days. But if we have patience, and try to build on the great sense of community we all have inside our hearts I know we can pull through. As I leave you I ask that you pray to your higher power, for our state of North Carolina. Good Night!

After the Governor spoke, the speech was replayed in Spanish, for the large Hispanic community that resided in North Carolina.

Moscow, Russia

Retired general Orlov Kotsky listened to the news broadcast with a stifled groan. "Here I am retired for ten years, and now my country may need me." "Oh well I do my patriotic duty fishing now!"

Just then the phone rings. Orlov answers it, and is glad he did. It is an old friend who is still in the GRU. General Vladimir Moshky was a Russian's Russian. He lived and breathed his job.

"Orlov my old friend, how many fish today?"

"Shut up, to me you are still a puppy." "What do you want?"

"Orlov it seems we may need your services yet again." "Do you remember a the Vesta File?"

Orlov sniffled, the excitement tingling his back.

"Of course, I had the unfortunate deputy of the deputy sent to gulag for wasting paper on it."

"Why?"

"It seems that our leadership is interested in it once again." That sank in! "We will be bringing you back as well." "How does Marshal Kotsky sound to you?"

Orlov was a schoolboy again. "I will see you tomorrow." Orlov had been one of the most thorough experts on American culture. He could sniff Americana in the wind, and read an American breeze like a book. The Vesta file was written by a deputy of the deputy of the general secretary. At the time, Orlov thought the man a spy and sent him to the gulag. He could not believe that they would actually implement it. "History runs full circle." He thought as he reached for his Vodka.

Back In North Carolina it's Saturday morning, January 3rd, 2004.....

John looked at Kristy, who was watching Lin, and smiled. Behind the smile was worry after worry. "We got to get home." He thought. The speeches were something else, and a few things were hitting John kinda funny. Questions popped into his head. Why aren't they recalling the troops? Two cities have been nuked? More attacks are expected? The United Nations is moving to China? "This is too much he thought."

It would be daylight soon, and they would have to make the trip back to Krysty's place, and then prepare their convoy to get home. Then there was Ferguson, who seemed like a competent doctor, but had a weird sense of humor. A doctor that was more worried about his own bacon didn't sit well with John. He would have to wait and see. As first light hit, John made sure Kristy was awake and ready. Lin was a bit groggy, but since the bullet had gone right through the skin above his breast just under the arm, he would recover. Ferguson was gathering the last of his supplies and getting ready to close up shop. Just then, the generator sputtered and ran out of fuel. The lights went out, as the sun shone through the windows of the waiting room. John wanted that generator. He pulled Ferguson aside.

"Doc, who is coming in today?" "Did the rest of the staff leave you here?"

"They all left on their own, it is just me, I doubt anyone will be coming in to keep the place open."

"I want that generator; we could use it in the Trace." "I think I have a way of getting it there." "I need your permission to take it."

"You mean just load it up and take it with us?"

"I do, this place isn't going to open again, and there is no use leaving it." "The owners and other doctors left you here alone all night, as I see, this is your severance package." "And anything else we can use as well."

"I see... I say go for it!" "I will get a list of inventory going, but we have to get rid of the people in the lobby."

"Leave it to me."

John formulated a plan in his head. He knew they would need all the equipment here as well as any medicine, painkillers, whatever. He wanted to be sure the doctor had plenty of time to gather everything he would need. He told Kristy of his plan and she agreed. Kristy would drive Lin back to her place, and get everyone moving back here. Once here they could re-jostle all the gear on Lin's truck and trailer to fit the stuff they were taking from here. He would stay here, and provide security, and try to get that generator unhooked and in a safe place until they got back.

"Time, Time, Time, there just isn't enough."

As Kristy left, he realized how strong she was, even though he hated to be away from her. He watched her drive away, and then got to the task at hand. It was then he saw the movement out of the corner of his eye. Four kids in their late teens/early twenties were heading in his direction. They looked like they had had a long night, and were trying to find something in particular. He then realized their need. "They are looking for drugs!" He exclaimed. He ran into the lobby, and yelled, "everyone out!" "There is going to be trouble"

Everyone began leaving, all the hangers on from the night before. He wished them well. The four came straight to the lobby door, and rushed in. John thought he recognized one of them, "Ahh Mac, from Scott's store."

"Man, hook us up, we need some stuff!"

"Mac, its me John, Scott's buddy, look there just isn't anything here."

"Our apartments have been robbed, what we left with we sold for a hit, this is too real for us, we need to get well."

"Not here pal, there is nothing here for you!"

Mac was holding a baseball bat, and a few others brandished large kitchen knives. John pulled his lever up, and aimed at Mac's crotch. "I will do what it takes to defend myself, and I won't say it again."

Another person in the group shouted, "Kill the pig!" "Kill the Pig", two took a step toward John.

John just fired right into them point blank. They still tried to stab at him. Mac and the other person tried to move forward, but John covered them.

“Just because you are having a bad day doesn’t mean you have to die today.” John said, hoping the other two would just go home. Mac and his last pal, then seemed to lose heart, and ran away. John stared at the two wounded crack heads lying on the floor writhing in pain. He remembered the testimony he saw on C-Span some years ago, when one of the congressional committees was working on the crime bill. A man owned four shops. Someone was breaking into his shops and stealing his expensive tools. Since it was obvious that he was a target, and that all shops had been broken into except one, he asked the police to stake out the last shop. They refused, saying lack of resources, so he did it himself. Now the guy was a bit eccentric, so he waits in his shop, with a SPAS 12 shotgun, and sure enough someone breaks in. This guy warns the thief to leave, and that he is armed. The thief, who was actually a former employee, threw a wrench at the shop owner. In the split second of fight or flight, of action or distraction, the shop owner shoots the thief in the legs pretty much point blank. He then calls 911 and the police and paramedics arrive. But the shop owner gets in a lot of trouble. Some deserved some not. He chose an obvious unpolitically correct firearm. He intentionally stalked his prey (His shop, his income loss, his business, his dare I say it property) and intentionally wounded the criminal, which means he was not in fear for his life. The shop owner did make a lot of mistakes and paid heavily for them. The kicker though was the fact that now the shop owner has to pay a stipend to the thief for the rest of the thief’s life. The lawsuit was major news in the one of the congressman’s states, so they had a hearing about it because of the assault style shotgun (It sure wasn’t designed for bird huntin’). John looked down at the two, both of whom had tried to cut him with their steak knives. “I should finish them off, I’m not at home, this is not my place of business, and I could get in more trouble than they would.” Just then, Ferguson ran into the lobby to see what the commotion was, and took it all in. John said, “They were looking for drugs, I told them you didn’t have any, they decided to cut me instead.” Ferguson looked down at the wounded people on the floor, and said, “There is honestly nothing I can do to help them, we are out of supplies and what is left is going with us home.” “I can bandage the wounds, but I have nothing to stop the bleeding.” John said “Lets do that, then leave them in the lobby. “They got them into two couches, and did what they could. “Who knows, John told one of the “hopheads”, “Old Mac may come back for you.” John then realized what he had done and began to shake, and then he ran outside to vomit. “I hope I never have to get used to that, I don’t care if I never see anything like that again.” He went back inside to see if Ferguson needed any help.

As Ma watched from Kristy’s porch, Kareef and Harvey loaded the last of the supplies in the store unto the trailer. They had found a tarp inside the storage room, and used that to cover everything. Now it just came time to wait for John and Kristy, and then hit the road. They heard her car coming down the street, then heard her honk twice, which was a pre arranged signal. She filled them in on what was going on, and they got everything squared away. Kareef would drive his van, which was loaded down with supplies, with Lin riding shotgun. Harvey would drive the Choy’s truck with the trailer attached. Kristy would bring up the rear in her little hatchback. When they got to the clinic, then they could re-prioritize. So off they went! Ma rode with Kristy, with the pistol-gripped shotgun in her lap. What a crew they made. The roads in the neighborhood were clear, as most people in the area had taken the opportunity to “bug out” to safer areas. They all made it to the clinic, and began loading the supplies from the back door of the place. Harvey noticed the two wounded “heads” in the lobby, and asked what to do about them. John said, “we have done all we can, just leave them.” When everyone was loaded, John took a look at all the vehicles. They had Kareef’s VW van, Kristy’s car, Lin and Ma’s truck with the supplies, and then Ferguson’s Suburban. He then made a decision. He called Kristy over to speak with her.

"Honey, you should leave your car here, it's just not practical to take with us, and we don't have enough people for security as it is."

"I don't think I should leave it, I have had it for years!"

"If there is time and a way, we will come back for it, but right now it would be safer, to leave it."

John got serious, "Ma will drive the truck, and Ferguson will drive his suburban, Kareef his VW."

"We can put Lin in the suburban with Ferguson, then Harvey with Kareef, You with MA, and then me with Ferguson bringing up the rear." "It will be a regular convoy, with shooters in each passenger side for emergencies."

Both of them winced at the terminology, but both understood too well the implications. Kristy saw the logic, and went to her car to get anything of value. Kareef saw the tires and said, "Let's get the tires and the car battery, we may be able to use them for something." Everyone agreed, and the guys started working on getting the tires off. Kristy tried to raise someone on the CB but couldn't, so she guessed they were out of range. Her little car was gutted, with the tires, the rims, even the spare taken. Also the seatbelts were cut, for the material. the engine was gutted, with the battery, and all hoses taken as well. Anything they could think of was taken from the car. Ferguson entered the clinic one more time, took a look around, and made sure everything they could grab had been taken. He left four bottles of water and the left over fruit for the two wounded heads, and off they all went.

Toby awoke to the sound of his father's tractor. He had attached a digger to it and was building a barrier to one side of the driveway. Toby smelled something good and dressed and went out into the kitchen. Toby's wife Sherrie, or Sher was fixing eggs and sausage on the grill. His sons who were four and two, were both sitting at the table waiting for breakfast. The four-year-old, Christian said, "grandpa is going to let me ride the tractor today." Toby smiled, and said, "When you do, be careful and do everything Grandpa says." "Ok Daddy." The two-year-old, Miles just sat and read. It took him awhile to get activated in the morning. He took after his father. Toby went outside just as his dad finished with one side of the berm. "Dad, what are you doing?" "I am building an earth barricade on both sides of the driveway." "This way, I can add a wooden fence, with some metal poles as a barricade to stop anyone from entering the driveway." "We are kinda isolated out here, so it would be better to buy some time before someone was upon us." "Plus, the dogs need time to scamper after they begin to bark." Toby nodded, surprised his dad was already thinking in those terms. Of course, if you knew their ancestors you would not be surprised, Toby's family came from western Virginia, where toward the end of the Civil War the residents were forced to band together to defend themselves from Yankee cavalry as well as marauding deserters. Defending your property went back generations here. Toby asked his father, "Do you think you and I could repel an attacking force." "I think we would need more people, plus watch all sides." "You are right son, but this is all we got right now." Toby thought a minute, and said, "suppose we ask the Hindon's to stay with us." "We more than have enough room, and their supplies added to ours will make the next few weeks livable." "We need more people here we can trust." Toby's father had known the Hinden's for most of his adult life, he considered Barry a friend and brother. "Ask them, I think that is a splendid idea."

Scott was meeting with the other board members. This included Bob the VP, Connie the treasurer, Lucy the secretary, and Paul the member at large. The debate was about having a community meeting, trying to get everyone on the same page, and holding things together. Scott and Bob were outnumbered.

"It is just preposterous to think that anything bad would happen here." "I can't believe you had twenty people running around last night, with guns and flashlights." Connie was leading the debate, with Lucy and Paul in the background saying "yeah" and "that's right". Scott said, "did you not hear the explosions, the gun battle not fifteen miles from here?" "Why do think John,

Harvey, and Kareef aren't here yet?" "This is ridiculous!"

Paul said, "ridiculous, are you guys running around with guns?" "What if someone got hurt?"

Bob spoke up, "You mean a criminal or a homeowner?"

Paul said, "I despise your little group, shooting guns, this is a new century, and get new parts for your head."

Scott then said, "Fine, I resign as president of the board, y'all, that's "you guys" for the Liberal minded, can sit with your heads in the sand all you want." " I can say this though, I will sleep tonight will you?"

Connie, who just talked to hear herself sound good, said, "No Scott don't resign, we just need to rule on what goes on here to keep it legal."

Scott said, "Whatever, but we are going to meet with all the homeowners that are left, and come up with a game plan."

Scott went on, " First, I would like to see who is left in the hospitality committee, and get them to look into talking with the ritzy neighborhood to our left." " They are bound to have an association as well, and maybe we can work together." "See what they need and see if we can barter with them."

"Second, get the architectural committee together and see what we need to do to better defend our community." " I want our new neighbor, Stanley to work with them, he just got back from Afghanistan, and maybe he has some ideas."

"Third, I want the social committee to meet and get back to us on what they can get started as far keeping people busy." "Shelly had a great idea about setting up a school, and preschool here so that we can keep the kids busy." "The parent's may be needed to work, and this way they would know their children are safe." "Also, find out how many musicians we have here, no sense in the next few weeks not having a block party to keep our minds balanced."

"Fourth, I want the board to rule that if the power comes back on we compensate all homeowners for any property we use." " I am not talking about taking from people that are home, but there are houses that are empty, and we need what is inside them." " If they are not back by Monday, we get what ever is left, and hold it in a central location." "We rule that we will compensate the owners however we can if the issue comes up, but personally, I don't think we will see any of those people again."

Paul got up and pointed a finger at Scott, "You are nuts, your talking about forming a government and taking over peoples everyday lives." " That is ridiculous!"

Scott had had about enough of Paul. Lucy and Connie are here for the ride, but Paul's bleeding heart crap was wearing thin. "Paul, you point your finger at me again, I will break it." "We have a responsibility to lead, that is why we joined the board in the first place." "We either act or get acted upon." "The world outside is changing buy the minute and we have to act."

"There is no more TV, no more take out." "You can not go to the store, buy grocery's or clothes."

"There is a blue-collar neighborhood to the back of us and a projects development to right of us." "We have to have order here, then go to them and see what they have planned." "We will also protect our families, and our homes, which are now twice as priceless as before the attacks." "You heard the President there will be more attacks."

Paul screamed, "You paranoid libertarian gun nut." "This is nuts and I will not stand here and believe it!"

Scott smiled and said, "I accept your resignation." "You are out of here."

Lucy then spoke up, "both of you have resigned, we all need to calm down."

Paul countered, "I apologize, I just do not believe things are that bad, and I am morally opposed to violence."

Scott, thinking to himself that Paul wasn't going to make it, said, " Paul I apologize as well, I should not have threatened you." " We are all under stress and worrying about our families." " Why don't we vote on my proposals, and if they don't make it we can discuss something

different.”

Bob immediately said, “I motion to accept all of Scott’s proposals, who seconds them?”

Lucy and Connie both seconded.

Scott then said, “ OK, now that that is done, how about the community watch group?” “ I want us to vote on a statement that we fully support them and that we are behind them one hundred percent.”

“Why?” questioned Connie. “Because they are going to be guarding us all while we turn this place into self contained area.” “ They will be coming to us for approval on ideas about defense, and we are going to OK them.”

Paul merely groaned. The motion was approved. Community watch just got a blank check.

Scott said, “lets get with all the leaders of the committee’s and get them started on a game plan.” “We can meet with them on Sunday, then meet with all the homeowners on Monday.” “If anyone asks tell them what’s going on, all this is public record.” Lucy said, “I am still to record notes just like a regular meeting?”

Scott said, “Yes, we have nothing to hide, and I want full disclosure on all our meetings.”

The meeting was adjourned.

Scott went straight to Mitch’s house. He told Mitch of the meeting and Paul’s semantics. Mitch was worried, and it showed. John was the head of the community watch, with Harvey and Kareef gone as well, that left Scott, Brenda and Susie. Scott said, “well Mitch , looks like you and Stanley joined the community watch.” “We will have a meeting with all the heads of the different committees tomorrow.” “In the meantime, I have an idea.”

Scott told Mitch about the area across the street. There was a new housing development being built. They had already built two new townhome buildings, but that was it. But the land had been cleared for at least 100 yards, which would allow for the zeroing of the rifles that Harvey had. Also, it looked like there was a ton of building materials that had been left there. And there was two dump trucks, parked in the back, which looked like they were used to haul trash and used materials. Scott had been watching this place for a few months since it went up. It would have added ten thousand dollars to the worth of Scott’s townhome. Now, it would be looted for everything it had. With two buildings built, however, it would also be a good place to train, doing entries and home defense situations.

Scott said, “ I will talk to Brenda and Susie, get them on board.” “You speak with Stanley tonight and see what he says.” “ I think it would be a good idea if there were a training situation set up, so if we have an armed guard, then we can have absolute faith in their abilities.” “Those townhomes would be perfect.”

Mitch thought for a moment, and said, “well that is well and good, but shooting out there may not be wise just yet.” “ The police would love to drive by and be able to pick up some carbines and a few M14’s to boot.”

Scott said, “Yeah, I guess you are right, maybe put that on the back burner.” “But I still think we should go get all the stuff we can.” Mitch agreed, and decided he would talk to Stanley that night.

“Yeah, and OH MAN< I forgot about tonight!”

Mitch laughed, “Well we just do it like last night, what could happen?” “I just want to be sure, you remember the break-ins we had two years ago.”

Mitch said, “Stanley and I will work on the parameters of what our defense force should be, what we need to accomplish, and present it to the watch.” “By then, John will be back, and hopefully things will fall into place!”

“Ok Mitch, but should we at least do a roving patrol tonight?”

“Look, Scott I think things will be fine, but if you want, we can try to get organized.”

“Well, maybe we should wait until Sunday, after the community meeting.” “Then we can get everyone together and make some solid decisions, and hopefully the guys will be back by then”

Weaving around downtown as much as possible, John's convoy was making good time. In some spots, people were out walking their dogs and waving at the cars. In other spots it looked like a warzone, where cars had been picked clean, and houses looked broken into. It was surreal, and looked as if you were watching a documentary on Yugoslavia in the early nineties. As they got closer to where inner Raleigh connected with highway forty things took a different turn. There was a tremendous amount of law enforcement about. There were no roadblocks per se, but there was an interest in all vehicles passing through major choke points. Everyone kept their weapons down, out of eyesight, but was wary. They passed through without a hitch, and got about five miles from home, when they turned down a street where all the subdivision's bordered on. The street had a small shopping area, with a grocery store, drug store, "Only A Dollar store", a pizza parlor, Chinese takeout, and a gas station. John could only guess at what was happening. There was a small little bird copter in the empty parking lot, as well as three Bradley armored carriers. Four of the uniformed officers were dressed in "Federal" blue, with body armor and M4 carbines. The rest of the uniformed officers were city PD. What looked like the grocery workers were unloading the store into eighteen wheeler trucks, also, men and women with emergency unit written in yellow on blue jackets with clip boards were coming out of and going into all the other stores. A massive tanker truck, and a machine No one had ever seen before was pumping gas back into the tanker. Some of the different shop owners had obviously protested and were in flex cuffs on the side of the road. It was surreal, and definitely gave shivers to all that were watching. Harvey noticed something wrong though.

"That is an awesome display of force, but they have no defense plan."

Kareef countered, "Who would attack them?"

"Well no one I hope, but look at this set up, no counter sniper cover on the top of the building, no one is manning the old M60's on the Bradleys, and the city boys are hanging around their squad cars, only watching the road." "There are two old houses across the street, there could be snipers there covering the whole operation." "I could hide fifty people in the woods between our community and this place." "They have an old law enforcement mentality, times have changed."

Kareef said, "what do you mean?"

"Well they are watching the road, which is good and bad." "The helicopter is not protected, and could be shotdown or destroyed by sniper fire." "No roving patrols, no one on the roof, and they let us just drive on by."

"They really believe they are in total control."

Kareef called ahead, and as they entered the their neighborhood, a huge sigh of relief passed through everyone in the small convoy. As Harvey and Kareef pulled in near their homes they got out of the van and ran to their waiting wives. Scott and Shelley were feeding John's dogs and came back out to the front yard with Little Thomas in a wagon. John ran to his friend, and they shook hands, introductions all around for Lin and Ma Choy, and Mitch, his wife, Stanley and his wife and two daughters came outside to help everyone unpack the vehicles. Once that was done, everyone said his or her goodbyes. The travelers needed to rest, in a place where they felt totally relaxed. there would be plenty of time to talk and plan later. John and Scott agreed to meet early Sunday morning to discuss things, and have a little breakfast.

Ferguson went to his neighbors Brenda and Susie, and knocked on the door. When they answered he said, "I would like, when it is convenient, to learn to shoot, if you would teach me." These were days of firsts.

Meanwhile.....

Hector Rigaldo sat in the old farmhouse opposite the shopping center with his two partners. They were well camouflaged, and were taking copious notes on how the authorities were loading all the trucks. They too were concerned with the lack of security. But the concern gave

way to plan as they were preparing to attack the center. They needed every bit of the supplies in that area. Hector had over one hundred people to feed in his own community. He was a veteran of the Mexican army, then had come to North Carolina and done well for himself. Using two restaurants, he made enough money to help get more of the people from his village here to North Carolina. They in turn paid him part of their wages for their first few years. After 9/11, Hector formulated a plan. He knew that if there were any other attacks in the US, they would be devastating. He began making sure families put more food and water into storage units. He also made sure that they had access to all the trucks and any other heavy equipment. Since a lot of his people were part of road crews, construction crews, landscaping crews, and other industries, they kept a running list of where equipment they might need would be, as well as copies of keys for all trucks, and heavy wheeled vehicles. Since he and another friend spoke English very well, they got fake ID's, with fake Social Security numbers, and began buying firearms. To stay off the radar, they purchased Winchester and Marlin lever action 30/30's. These were great self-defense rifles, and no one really watched who bought those. They bought them mostly at Big Mart and gun shows, and kept a low profile. Now he had all his people armed. He had two buddies that served with him in Mexico. They were both armed with Remington bolt guns in 308. They were scoped out, and his friends were very proficient with the rifles. They leased land in a neighboring county, and he trained his group there. So here he was, staring at their first possible raid, and trying to make sure these "Gringos" were that dumb. "We need that food" he said to himself. Turns out the Gringos were that dumb!

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on April 28, 2004 23:40April 28, 2004 11:40 PM:

Chapter 4

While everyone was saying their goodbyes, Mitch caught Harvey talking about the "cleaning" out of the shopping center. He was both worried and intrigued by Harvey's description of what was going on. Mitch felt he needed a closer look. Since John, Kareef, and Harvey needed time with their wives, he didn't want to bother them for more intell. He decided to check out what was happening himself. He knocked on Stanley's door, and talked with him about it. Stanley agreed that they should go and observe what was happening. They decided to go and speak with Scott, who also had the two CB radios. They wanted to be able to contact him if something happened. They walked to Scott's place, and were surprised to see a small crowd there.

Shelly's family had pulled into the neighborhood while everyone was celebrating the return of their friends. It was her father and mother, as well as her sister, brother in law, and their baby. They had three cars filled with food clothes and other supplies they thought they would need. They had originally thought to stay at the parent's house, but there was a small amount of looting going on and they thought it would be safer where Shelly and Scott lived. When Mitch and Stanley walked up, everyone was unloading the cars. Scott was ecstatic, with his inlaws at the house, it would help Shelly cope as well provide help in securing the home.

Mitch spoke first, "Hey Scott we need some help!"

Scott, "Sure what do you need?"

Stanley spoke next, "We want to do a recon of the shopping center, to see what is going on." "If they are emptying the place out, that is bad news for us." "Where else would they set up a redistribution area but there?" "We need to see what is going on."

Mitch spoke up, "I can't believe that the neighborhood across the street isn't saying anything." "That's a government housing area."

Scott had not had time to think about the implications of losing those possible supplies. He then noticed as did everyone else, that there was a murmur coming from across the fence that

separated Ranford Trace from the housing project. People were literally yelling from there apartments and heading for the entrance of the project. The back end of the project area connected to the side of the townhomes. Although they were on two different main streets, the streets met at an intersection, with the shopping center across the street from the projects. Scott, Mitch, and Stanley ran across the parking lot to the divider wall that separated the two neighborhoods. People were yelling and screaming, and heading toward the shopping center. Stanley noticed that there were some Hispanic men running in order of two's and three's kinda pushing the crowd, whipping them into a frenzy. All of these men wore a red bandana around their left arm. Since you could not see the shopping center from this vantage point, the three men ran back to Scott's place. By this time others began coming out of their townhomes and looking toward the project area. Fear was growing because of the protests.

Mitch started, "What are those guys with the bandana's doing?" "They seem to be whipping people into a frenzy!"

Stanley advised, "I have seen this before, in Bosnia, guerrilla leaders would turn a peaceful protest into a violent clash in no time." "Mob politics happen quick." "The Klan uses some of the same tactics as well as the Church of Islam."

Scott said, "There are local police there, as well as the feds, and now a third group, these Hispanic guys." "A little recon might be a good idea."

Mitch said, "Stanley and I will head out immediately, we will take one of the radios, and call you once we have some kind of info."

Stanley said, "I want to get my oldest daughter, Anne, to go with us, she can shoot, and we need a third person."

Scott spoke next, "Alright, radio me when you leave and then again when you reach a decent observation point." "I am going to get the ball rolling here, and mobilize the community watch, as well as any one else."

"When you have a plan or proper info, relay you are coming home, and give it to us personal."

"Remember, the Feds are probably monitoring all FRS frequencies, especially with a possible riot on their hands."

Both older men grunted affirmative, and ran to get started. Scott went into his townhome, where Shelly's family was settling in. He grabbed his Arktis jungle vest, his M1a, and the radio. setting everything by the door, he then went back to his "locker" and removed a rem 870, and made sure it was loaded. Scott then called out to his brother in law, and handed him the shotgun. He had faith that his Brother in law could handle just about anything with it. They then left to gather the others. Scott began knocking on all the doors of the people he knew would help with the situation. This would take some time.

Hector smiled as he raised the binoculars to his eyes. His plan was working beautifully, the projects were roused and about to riot. He had planted a few men and women in the crowd, as well as parked a few old cars there as well. In the cars were Molotov cocktails in the trunks. Once the shooting started, the "plants" would immediately open the trunks, and begin throwing the cocktails at the security units. He had placed his two best shooters with bolt 308 guns about two hundred yards away, in an old tobacco barn in an undeveloped field. Then across the street on the corner, where an empty house stood, he placed three other men with lever rifles overlooking the shopping center. When the shooting started, they would have a commanding field of fire over the entire parking lot. This was an incredible find, three armored cars, one tanker filled with gas, two eighteen wheelers loaded with non perishable food, and another being loaded. The helicopter he would have to destroy fast, and would. The city officers were unorganized, deferring to the federal authority, while they were trying to diffuse the situation that was getting out of hand. People were walking toward the riot from all directions. He would start the show soon, he thought, and we will have these supplies for our families. Some of the

migrant workers he supported had told him that the law enforcement lines were stretched to thin. He was 99% sure that support would not arrive in time, and that if it did, it would be in the form of a few helicopter gun ships. He had another group that would be creating a diversion on the beltline in about five minutes, and that would give him the precious opportunity to take the goods he knew he needed.

The security for the shopping center was haphazard at best. The three Bradleys were spaced apart, one guarding the service station, the other two at the opposite end of the parking lot, at the main entrance. Each Bradley was an older design, an Army hand-me down. The turrets were cut away, open, with a mounted M60. These were not National Guard issue, these were from Federal stocks. On one side was painted "Department of Homeland Security" the other side said "F.E.M.A". They were painted blue. The Emergency Security personnel wore holstered Smith and Wesson 40 cal pistols, while the Homeland security Personnel wore holstered Glock 35's with an assault vest and an M4 each. There were about ten of the emergency people, and ten of the Homeland security detail. Harvey had not counted properly. The pilot for the little bird sat idly by the helicopter, scanning radio frequencies. There were six city police officers who were excitedly watching the gathering crowd. There was obviously a difference of opinion between the city cops and the feds. The Fed leader was calling someone on the radio.

"This is Collection 1 to Depot, over."

"Go forward Collection 1"

"Depot I have Code 3 in progress over"

"Collection 1 no repo men available over, only tow truck over"

"Depot status on tow truck"

"tow truck 40 minutes, there are code three x 20 over"

"Depot status local garbage collection over"

"garbage collection unsanitary over"

"Depot, Collection 1 will wait for tow truck, over out"

"Depot out"

What this meant was that no units could be sent to the deteriorating situation at the shopping center. The only available rescue was by gunship, which would be messy. The federal unit commander also learned that local law enforcement was not to be trusted, and that they were in a large part beginning to go home. The center was not going to hold. ETA on gunship would be 40 minutes, and there were twenty other code three (riots) situations that they were handling. This was not good news. The city PD in charge was giving the federal commander a serious dressing down over the worsening conditions. The other officers, just watched the argument, and watched the growing crowd. The crowd was beginning to move forward slowly, with two or three loud mouths in back yelling and working them up. The officers noticed that the loud mouths were wearing red bandannas, but in the overall scheme of things, the information was not processed. Things were beginning to get out of hand.

Stanley, Anne, and Mitch all ran to a vantage point one hundred yards away, to the left front of the Hispanic snipers. As they monitored the situation, Stanley recognized a guerilla op. He saw the whole thing with clarity, and realized something really bad was about to go down. Pointing out the men with red bandannas to Mitch, Stanley then pointed out possible "shooting" spot across the street. Mitch immediately went into counter sniper mode looking for targets. Then all hell broke loose. The crowd, worked up with the stress of no food or power, and seeing their food being taken away from them, charged forward. At the same time Hispanic men and women, wearing red bandannas unlocking the trunks of some of the old cars and pulling out Molotov cocktails. They were then lit and thrown into the parking lot of the shopping center. Feds, now began searching for targets among the crowd. Since no shots had been fired yet,

and there was no visible sign of firearms, they held fire, but locked and loaded. Then the snipers opened up. Two men manning the m60's were dropped almost instantly. Then they began working on the helicopter. Then the officers began taking fire from the abandoned farm house across the street. At that point, the federal officer in charge gave the order to "go loud" and people began dying. The city pd had no choice but to back the play of the feds, and it was a turkey shoot. The rioters were caught in the middle, and going down in large numbers. The Hispanic second wave entered the fray, opening fire on anything in uniform. Rioters and the gunmen broke through to the shopping center, and a serious firefight was underway.

Scott had rounded up everyone with a firearm that he knew of. They were all meeting at his townhome, loaded for bear. People were using fannypacks, backpacks, camera bags, anything that would carry extra ammo. By necessity, Harvey, John, Kristy, Kareef were brought in as well; since this was such an explosive situation. There were over twenty people armed and ready to repel any attack on the neighborhood. Since no moves had been made in breaching the wall between the two areas they were just waiting. They would see some action soon.

Stanley and Mitch were taking in the riot, when two shots sailed over their right side. Although they were already in a hidden position they hit the deck. Anne, who had never been in a firefight before started looking for the source of the shots. Stanley grabbed his daughter and yanked her to the ground.

"Mitch, we got to do something, it looks like the group of bandannas has exacerbated a situation, to take the center." "There are also local PD taking serious hits, we have to do something."

Mitch said, "Stanley, you go back and get Scott, think about what you want to do, so by the time you get there you will have a plan." "Anne and I will hunt down those snipers."

Anne merely nodded her head, looking at her father. Stanley gulped, and pulled out the three magazines he had for his "borrowed" Carbine. He gave them to his daughter, kissed her forehead, and zigged his way back home. Mitch and Anne moved out, trying to find the two snipers.

The two snipers were exacting a serious blow to the authorities. They hit the Feds manning the M60's, and killed the helicopter pilot. They then worked on the fuselage, and cockpit. They then began searching for targets within the shopping center. They shot anything in uniform.

Hector smiled at the progress he was making. His men and women were taking charge of the center, already taking over half of it. The officers had retreated into the large grocery store, with a few hold outs in the parking lot. It would not be long. His units were now working over the parking area looking for targets or keeping the rioters at bay. The rioters were now just trying to run back home, out of the firefight.

He scanned the area with his binocs, studying the center closely. He wanted to wrap this up soon.

Stanley, was almost out of breath when he reached Scott's house. He was surprised at the amount of people he saw waiting for news. He had formulated a plan, and these people would have to carry it out. He wished they were trained, that they were ready to for the fight. But they would have to learn quick.

"Alright everyone, this is it." "A large group of Federal law enforcement was basically looting the shopping center of anything of value." "Another group of what appears to be Hispanic men and women are attacking them, using the people in the government housing as a diversion." "There are city pd officers there as well."

"People are being killed for the food contained in that area." "It is as simple as that."

Scott said, "What do you want to do?"

Stanley replied, "We need to stop anyone from taking that food." "The Hispanic group, is as much an invader as the Feds." "We have no choice but to stop them both."

The seriousness of the situation took hold on the group. Most had not answered the inner question of "Am I willing to kill?" Most were confused, tired, and stressed because of the change the world had seen in the past twenty four hours. Stanley then began to speak some more.

"Ok, here is what we are going to do!"

"First, we organize three five man teams, using three pickup trucks." "They are going to be the offense."

"The next team, that will be led by Scott, will go over the wall and cut off the vehicles being used by these guys." "Scott you guys will also have to neutralize the old farmhouse, right next door as well."

"I need a Med team pronto, get Ferguson and Gayle ready." "we may need one of them to work in with Scott's team, which looks to a large secondary force right now."

The groups were separated as follows:

team1

Harvey M1a and radio

Kareef Pc4 carbine

Brenda Pc4 carbine

Susie Pc4 carbine

George Pc4 carbine (Loaned from Harvey)

team2

John Winchester 44 trapper and radio

Kristy Winchester 97 pump

Steve Pc4 carbine (Loaned from Harvey)

Chris Pc4 carbine (Loaned from Harvey)

Fred Pc4 carbine (Loaned from Harvey)

(Steve, Chris, Fred are roommates who live in the townhomes. They helped keep watch the first night, and were armed shortly after)

team3

Stanley Pc4 carbine (Loaned from Harvey) and radio

Butch Pc4 carbine (shoots with group, not member of community watch)

Jason Pc4 carbine (shoots with group, not member of community watch)

Jackson Pc4 carbine (shoots with group, not member of community watch)

Gansen Remington 870 (neighbor of Jason, did not shoot with group)

team4

Scott M1a with radio

Galtier Pc4 carbine (shoots with group, not member of watch)

Frank Pc4 carbine (shoots with group, not member of watch)

Gayle Medic

William Gayle's son, trained in some first aid

Robert Pc4 carbine (shoots with group, not member of watch)

Ralph Pc4 carbine (shoots with group, not member of watch)

Barry Pc4 carbine (shoots with group, not member of watch)

Team three would take Scott's truck, since it had a CB in it. It would coordinate the attack with Missy who would provide overall comms to the operation. She had one of the portable CB's as well as one of the radios. Mitch had the other CB, and was waiting for contact from the group. Info would flow directly between those with the CB's, then be filtered out to the teams with only FRS radios. Mitch would find and eliminate the snipers, then provide the same service to the

group. Teams one, two and three would ride to the shopping center and unload, attacking under fire. Team 4 would move through the government housing, now reeling from being fired upon by both law enforcement and the Hispanic group, clear it and provide what little aid they could. Scott would then take a few of the men and clear the old farmhouse, which seemed to be another over shoot area, and command center. It was a quick plan, and no one was real happy about it, but it was that or nothing. The people living in the projects would be helped as much as possible, since they had been so horribly used. Scott's group realized that the whole area community would have to come together in order to make it through the next few weeks. Team 1 would enter the shopping center from the gas station, while 2 and 3 would enter from the front, with a small amount of support from Scott's team.

Hector was happy! His plan was working wonderfully, and his people were following orders to the Tee. They would need the supplies this "hit" would give them as well as the supplies from two more attacks he was planning as well. There was a large farm in a neighboring county that would be large enough for his group to occupy after the raids were over. Since a lot of the people in his group were farmers, he had the knowledge base to start. They needed the supplies to get them through the winter, so in the spring they could plant. Any weapons or ammo captured would be needed as well. He salivated at the thought of the Bradleys, and what they could be used for in upcoming raids. He told the radio operator Hidalgo to call the trucks and bring them in. The shooting was dying down. Most of the gringos had been killed or wounded, and it was time to bring in the trailers and trucks to cart the goods away as well as drive the eighteen wheelers full of food to their hiding place. The trailers belonged to three different landscaping companies, which employed a large part of the people in Hector's group. They had taken off the mowers and weed eaters, and were going to use them to carry the supplies that would not fit in the eighteen wheelers. He now had the Bradleys for security, so he was not as worried as before about driving the stuff to the unloading point. The attack was not personal or political, his people needed the things here, and had decided to take it. That the loss would effect the community here was not his concern. The fact that he used the people in the government housing area as a small diversion did not bring him joy, but he had to protect his people. As the trucks and trailers began pulling into the parking lot, he gave the signal to start the next phase of his plan. The fact that Hector had lost 15 of his people did not hurt his feelings either, he had mouths to feed.

As teams 1, 2, and 3 left the neighborhood, Scott's team began tearing down the wooden wall separating their townhomes from the government housing area. They chose a spot that a vehicle could drive up to, so they tore down enough wall that a vehicle could make it through. Pouring through the hole, Scott realized they needed serious training if this ever happened again.

"Robert, Galtier, Frank, and Ralph; stay with Gayle and William." "Gayle, find a spot and start treating as best you can." "Robert, you take charge." "I'll be back in a bit." "Barry, you are with me"

Scott and Barry leapfrogged to the front of the housing area. They could not believe the destruction they saw. Scott could only guess that between the molotov cocktails and the Federal M60, plus the pent up rage and frustration, the damage had been done. There were wounded people everywhere, some family members moving around trying to find loved ones, and dead bodies as well. Scott had a feeling Gayle would be overwhelmed soon. Scott got on the radio, and called Missy.

"Motherhen, this is four over."

"Go four"

"Theraflu is go"

"Go four"

“Four gone”

Scott grimaced at the code, but it was necessary. This would activate Ferguson and Gayle’s other son, Mathew, who were waiting at Gayle’s home, which had been turned into a small medical center. This would get them to the hole in the wall, and prepared to move people to the house for whatever treatment they could give them. Scott also realized he did not have enough people, to provide security for this endeavor.

“Barry, go back and give them a hand, tell Robert I am going to find the farm house, then call Stanley to get some help.” “Tell Robert four is his show.”

Scott looked back as Barry ran toward Robert. The team had fanned out in a large square, and Gayle was moving people toward the hole in the wall. William had moved inside the wall, and was helping load the family station wagon with two wounded men. Ferguson had pulled his suburban to the side, to be used next. Already, those not hurt were helping, with something to do, it helped get them over the shock. Scott rounded the building and ran to the next one, and got spotted. Three bandanna’s were moving back toward the parking lot of the project. When they saw him they began yelling and cursing in his direction. He looked to the other side and three more were running toward the team. “Well, time to fish or cut bait.” Scott said out loud, and began firing. Two of the runners went down hard, the other dove for the pavement. The three that originally saw him began firing. Scott had good cover, and turning to fire at the first group, then running back to his original vantage point. Reaching it, he saw Barry and Galtier preparing to fire at the three men now leapfrogging toward them. As they opened up on them, Scott saw the one who had hit the deck when his buddies were shot. Scott put three rounds into his chest, and then got on the radio.

“Motherhen, this is four over”

“Go four”

“Four getting flu shots over, Ole MacDonald is now three”

“Go four”

“four gone”

Scott had handed the farmhouse over to Stanley, the projects still had a few bad guys floating around.

Mitch and Anne were making good time to the old barn where they saw a flash of metal. Just then, two women armed with lever action rifles jumped up and opened fire at them. Luckily, they shot high in the rush of the moment, and Mitch and Anne were able to hit the deck and roll left. Anne was first to her feet, and shot one of the women. Mitch, almost out of breath, jumped up and shot the other one. He then grabbed Anne’s shirt, and in the same instant threw her down to the ground. Just then they saw one of the snipers peeking out of the window of the barn. Mitch, wished he had a grenade, but he would have to do this the hard way. With the snipers knowing they were there, it was a stalemate.

Hector was not happy. Some vigilante’s had begun moving into the projects, and shooting his men. He needed everyone he had to loot the shopping center. Just then one of his spotters on the roof of the house told him about the three trucks heading their way. He tried to call his snipers, but got their report of taking fire. Something was wrong. No one was going to take this score from him. he immediately told his men to take defensive action in the shopping center. He had a reserve of five men at the house with him. In the shopping center he had twenty men and women, all armed. He told the five to form a perimeter between the farmhouse and the government housing. He then waited to see what the trucks would do.

Stanley had the trucks stop in a part of the road that was a low dip, partially blocking the view from the farmhouse. He jumped out of the truck, along with Gansen, ordering Jason to stay

behind with the CB. He ordered Jackson and Butch to ride with team one. As the two trucks drove toward their destination, Stanley and Gansen moved through the brush to just behind the farmhouse. They were behind and to the left of the five Hispanics who had formed a perimeter between the farmhouse and the projects. Seeing the back of the farmhouse gave Stanley an idea. About two paces from the backdoor was a wood pile. If Stanley could somehow shove the wood onto the backporch, and light it up, maybe he could burn the enemy out, instead of trying to shoot them out, or go in and get them. He called Missy, to get some help from Scott.

“Motherhen this is three over”

“Go three”

“Behind ole MacDonald, need help from four”

“Three will rog/dog with four”

“Three wait for rog/dog affirm”

Stanley smiled at the use of terms on the radio. He spent a quick five minutes with everyone formulating this language before they left. He was glad he did. He then heard serious gunfire from the projects, and realized Scott was on his way. As if to confirm, his radio came on.

“Motherhen to three”

“Go Motherhen”

“Four diverts”

“Go motherhen”

“Motherhen out”

Scott began making all kinds of noise. He had reunited with a few of his teammates, and they were holding down the eight badguys. Scott wasn't sure what Stanley had in mind, but he hoped it was quick. As gunfire erupted, Stanley and Gansen ran to the back of the farmhouse. One badguy charged down the backporch, but his charge was short lived, with buckshot to the belly. Then Stanley and Gansen began throwing the wood into the backporch. As he lit the fire, Stanley and Gansen ran back to their cover, and prepared to shoot whoever came out. Hector saw the smoke, walked down the steps inside the house, and saw the growing fire. The five badguys Scott was holding down began to back up, trying to cover anyone who ran out of the burning house. Hector yelled at his men to grab everything and get out of the house. As he ran down the stairs, he wondered what had happened to bring out the community against his force. As they ran out the back door, they were met with a hail of bullets. Gansen asked, “Should they be allowed to surrender?”

Stanley said, “NO, after what they did today, its no quarter!”

Hector was the last to run out of the burning house. He saw his men die in a hail of bullets and understood what was happening. He pulled his 1911 out of his holster and ran toward his five men holding off Scott's team four. He was cut down with a shot of 00 from Gansen's 870. the five men, had been cut down to three, and they saw their leader die in a hail of bullets. They immediately ran for the street, to get to their buddies at the shopping center.

Team one had been challenged to capture the gas station, and they met a well set up ambush as they pulled in. They should have dismounted the pickup, at the street, but this was their first real taste of combat. They drove right into a hail of bullets coming from two directions. They were stuck in a crossfire. Harvey was driving, so he ducked under the dash board as bullets shattered the windshield. everyone in the back of the truck began jumping over the side, trying to get away from the hail of fire. Kareef saw where two of the gunmen were hiding, and opened up with his whole magazine. Silencing that group for only an instant, he saw Brenda, moving behind him. They didn't have time to wonder about the other two, or Harvey, they just kept moving forward. The other gunmen seeing movement began to bring more fire down upon Kareef. Jackson and Butch, who had jumped out of the other side of the truck, ran toward the shopping center, trying to get out of the crossfire. Looking back they saw two bodies in the pickup, hanging out. With lumps in their throat, they found cover around the corner, and began

looking for a way to get back into the fight. Team two dismounted at the entrance of the shopping center, hearing heavy fire at the gas station, they instinctively tried to head in that direction. As soon as their presence was known a hail of fire came pouring out from the grocery store. It was enough to pin them down, but not keep them from moving toward team one. John left Steve, Chris and Fred to cover he and Kristy, as they tried to make it to their friends. Hearing an explosion behind them, they saw that the farmhouse was burning down, and heard the gunshots. taking a brief look at the gas station, John and Kristy ran to the back of the Bradley closest to them. the Backdoor ramp was open, and inside John saw three M-4's mounted in racks on each side of the ramp. The rack was not locked, and there was a locker with loaded mags on the floor under each rack. He grabbed two M-4's loaded them, and then grabbed six mags. With Kristy stayed at the Bradley, providing cover as John ran back to the three college roommates. He quickly dispersed the carbines, should them how to load and fire, and told them if they jammed to use the Pc4. He put both weapons on full auto, and told the guys to make some serious noise, firing at the grocery store. they would wait for his signal, which would be him firing full auto with another M-4, and they would fire as well. Although no one had any training with full auto weaponry, the noise and confusion may by John and Kristy some time to help team one.

Mitch and Anne were angry and disgruntled. the shooters inside the old barn were out of the main fight at the grocery store, but were able to hold Mitch and Anne at bay. Mitch wished he had a full auto M14, so he could lay down a serious amount of fire at the barn, so he and Anne could move closer. "Oh well" he thought, "Gonna have to do it the hard way" He called Anne, who was down a ways from him in a gully. Signaling his intentions, he began a steady fire into the barn. Changing mags, he started firing on all the holes and spots where he thought someone could fire from. As he did, Anne charged forward, trying to make it to the outer wall. She was close, almost making the corner of the building, when a shot rang out from inside. A 308 bullet hit her shoulder, going through the bone. She yelled in pain and fell down on the ground. Mitch kept saying, "Oh man oh man oh man" and ran to her firing into the barn. She was alive but going into shock quick. His anger and stress getting the best of him, he ran directly to the back of the barn, found the door, reloaded another mag for his M14, and fired the whole mag into the interior of the small barn. He dropped the rifle, pulled both 1911's from his holsters, and jumped inside. The two hispanics, one already wounded, both tried to bring their rifles up in time, but were caught by total surprise. He emptied both pistols at them, reloaded and walked to them. Both had multiple wounds, but were still breathing. He shot them both in the head. He had no time to think, he grabbed both rifles, and checked both bodies for ammo. He found two small backpacks with a radio, fifty rounds of match 308, and two canteens of water. He grabbed everything, and went outside the barn. Anne was still laying on the ground, trying not to scream in pain.

"Anne, I know you hurt, but hang on." "I need to get all the gear together so we can leave." Anne nodded, and Mitch moved to where the two women had been killed. He picked up the two lever guns, and checked the bodies for ammo. Each person carried two boxes of 30-30 (forty rounds) and had a small backpack with food and water. He gathered everything , and using his shirt, made a bandage for Anne. He called Missy, knowing he would need a vehicle.

"Motherhen this is out house over"

"Go outhouse"

"Outhouse needs tractor over"

"Give five minutes outhouse"

"outhouse need bandaid "

"Motherhen call outhouse back in five"

"Go motherhen"

Missy called Ferguson on the radio, to see what could be done. Ferguson had ten wounded

people in Gayle's house already, and Mathew was getting tired. "Gayle has raised two fine sons." Ferguson thought. Neighbors, not directly tied to the action, had begun helping out as best they could. The gunfire and subsequent firefight had echoed throughout the area. People had begun coming out of their houses to see what was going on. As people began walking about, helping where they could, Ferguson had found out that there were a few people with rudimentary medical skills. He had them busy, and he saw Gayle's station wagon pulling up with more wounded. William was driving, with Gayle in the passenger seat.

"I think we have done all we can at the projects, people are being carried or walked here, so there is no point in me staying out there."

"Gayle, Anne has been wounded, they need to be driven here."

"William can go, can he take your suburban?"

"Of course, William, can you handle that?"

"I can, but where are they?"

"down old Tobacco road, there is an old barn, you can see it from the road, the 'burban should make it fine."

"Get them and bring them home"

"You got it!"

William who was 17 took the keys from Ferguson, and left. Ferguson called Missy, and told her to report to Mitch that William was on his way.

"Motherhen to outhouse"

"Go motherhen"

"Black tractor coming your way"

"Go motherhen, and thanks"

"Motherhen out"

After Gayle and William left, Robert was able to get the rest of the team into the fight. There were three bad guys left on one side of the projects, and three still holed up between the burning house and the projects, trying to make it across the street. They finally broke cover and made a run for it. Stanley shot one of them, while Scott hit another. The last one, was shot by Chris, who was awaiting John's signal. He couldn't believe he had killed a man. The last three in the projects, decided to make for a car, that was parked further away down the street, away from the shopping center. They made a break for it, and were cut down by Robert, Frank, Ralph, and Barry. Everything except the shopping center was now secure.

Barry and Frank collected the weapons from the downed bad guys. Scott and Stanley immediately with Gansen and Galtier crossed the street and met up with Chris, Fred, and Steve who were taking cover behind another Bradley. As they filled the others in on John's plan, John opened up on the last set of bad guys holding team one down. Then Chris, Fred, and Steve opened up on the grocery store, to keep those bad guys heads down. John and Kristy ran toward the gas station, and made it to an abandoned car when another bad guy opened up from the hidden position above the gully, overlooking the back of the store. This was the gunman who, with the help of the set of known gunmen, had done the damage to team one. Harvey, sensing the lull in firing, jumped from the truck, hitting the pavement. Since he had been presumed dead, the lone gunman on the gully exposed himself to Harvey's position. Brenda jumped up, to take a look at the truck, to see what had happened to Susie. The other gunmen, seeing Brenda, opened up and she went down hard. Harvey had left his M1a, in the cab of the truck, so he pulled his pistol, and emptied the mag into the lone bad guy. The bad guy went down, and Harvey grabbed his rifle from the truck. The two gunmen left, concentrated on Harvey, who had cover behind the truck. Kareef, and John firing from two different locations, hit both gunmen. At that point, Harvey ran to the gully, and seeing that the lone gunman was only wounded, finished him off. Team one had had a horrible baptism of fire. Brenda, Susie, and

George Reilly were dead. Kareef began collecting the weapons as well as their three comrades, and placing them in the truck. He just wanted to go home. Someone heard yelling, and in a tunnel vision type of shock, noticed Scott signaling toward the grocery store. There were still a few bad guys.

Robert and Ralph had worked their way back to the hole in the wall, with the captured weapons and ammo. They were going to secure them in Scott's townhome until the events were over. Once they did that, they began providing security to Gayle's house which was filled to capacity. Some of the wounded were beginning to fall at the houses next door, in the yards. Most of the neighbors were fine with the situation, others were beginning to complain and were getting very boisterous. Missy had pulled in Jason, who was still at the parked truck, waiting on the road. Robert and Ralph with the help of Jason, were helping keep a lid on an explosive situation. Anne and Mitch were brought in, and when Anne was properly taken care of, Mitch lit out for the shopping center.

Stanley took command of the situation by necessity. Everyone was tired, and they had lost five people. Jackson and Butch's bodies had been found near the gas truck, where they had been cut down before being able to fire a shot. He did not know his daughter had been wounded yet. But they needed to end the siege quickly, and get home. He ordered John, Kristy, Harvey and Kareef to guard the back of the store, while Scott, Chris, Steve, and Fred to assault the front. He took everyone's captured M4's away, since they were not familiar with them yet. He did not want a jam from an unfamiliar weapon to cause a loss of life. As they prepared for the assault, Stanley told Scott, "Today has changed all of us forever." "We will have to debrief, and deal with our grief after this."

Scott said, "I just hope it was worth it." "I hope those people work with us, I hope we can work with them." "I hope the government will understand."

Stanley nodded, but said, "We may be shooting at them before this is over." "Where do you think they were going with this food?" "Something isn't right!"

Firing and running, yelling from the extreme exhaustion they were feeling, as well as the anger; they charged into the grocery store. The scene was gruesome, with dead police officers, dead Federal agents, and dead workers inside. This had been the last defense for them, and the bad guys had just firebombed them with molotov cocktails. There were burning shelves of perishable food, and a smell of gas. The workers had been murdered with shots to the head. The four bad guys left, had run to the backroom, and were shooting it out with Scott's team. The bad guys ended up in the produce back room, trapped on all sides. As they pondered their fate, Scott found three unused molotov cocktails, and decided to use them. They were lit and thrown into the back room. The bad guys were toasted, with no quarter given nor offered. The battle of the shopping center was over.

As everyone was meeting in the front of the shopping center, Mitch made it to the new warriors. Two Federal agents and one city police officer had been found wounded but still alive, and were being prepared for movement back to Ranford Trace. The "prize" was impressive. In supplies it was amazing.

Basic Count

Thousands of pounds of pasta, rice, ramen noodles, and tortilla

Forty pallets worth of canned food, soups, canned meats, sardines, stew, and sauce.

Produce=everything still edible

Bread

One hundred different bottles of juice-grape, apple, cranberry, etc

All kinds of toiletry items-shaving, bathing, male and female hygiene

Some hardware supplies-duct tape, electric tape, screws, nails, hammers, screwdrivers

Cases and cases of bottled water

Cases and cases of beer and wine
Junk food
Beef and assorted jerky
Cheese
(This was only a guess made by Stanley and Scott)

Weapons Captured

10 Smith and Wesson 40 cal pistols, three mags each (Counting one in the pistol)
6 Smith and Wesson 10mm pistols, three mags each (Counting one in the pistol)
10 Glock 35 pistols 40 cal three mags each (Counting one in pistol)
22 M-4 carbines, 10 from the security officers, and 6 from two of the Bradleys. 7 mags per carbine.
6 Mossberg riot guns
1 case of tear gas grenades
1 case of flash bang grenades
Various bullet resistant vests (None that stopped 30-30 rounds)
Various assault vests
10 kevlar helmets
3 M60 machine guns, with about 600 rounds of 308 ammo
3 Bradley fighting vehicles

As the team gathered everything and began the work of moving the stuff to the neighborhood, two choppers were heard over head. Everyone became apprehensive, with one of the wounded Federal agents saying "Thank God". The choppers were loaded for bear, and seeing the carnage below were prepared to wreak some havoc.

"Tow truck to Depot over"

"Go tow truck over"

"Collection 1 not code over"

"Tow truck requests permission for towing over"

"Tow truck return to Depot over"

"Say again depot?"

"Condition red repeat condition red"

"Tow truck returning to depot over"

This exchange was taking place all over the country. All Federal units began battening down the hatches at the signal "condition red". What that meant was that a nuclear device had been found in Washington, DC. All agencies were preparing to hunker down for a few days, until the coast was clear. Phase two of the terrorist attack was about to begin. Nuclear weapons, capable of destroying entire blocks if not whole cities, were on American soil. One of the cities on the list was Charlotte, NC. After Wall Street, it was the most important financial districts on the east coast. Although Ranford Trace had gotten a reprieve from the two choppers, what was about to happen would change everything once again. The choppers banked away from the shopping area, as Mitch just scratched his head. "Something bad is about to happen" he said. "What could be worse than this?" said Scott. It would not be long.

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on April 28, 2004 23:42April 28, 2004 11:42 PM:

Chapter 5

Scott and Stanley stared at the carnage between the government housing project, the shopping

center, and the burning farmhouse. Mitch was already starting one of the eighteen wheelers, to drive into their subdivision. There were two houses, side by side, that were empty. One was awaiting sale, the other, the family had bugged out on Friday. These houses were chosen to place all the extra food in. Anything remotely medical or health related, band-aids, aspirin, cough syrup, and other over the counter health items would be distributed to Gayle's house, which was now an impromptu mini-hospital. Gayle and her two sons would move their personal belongings into Ferguson's place, and a schedule would be worked out to keep the hospital staffed 24/7. There wasn't much they could do for the life threatening wounds, but they did the best they could. The generator from Ferguson's clinic was brought in to give power to Gayle's house, and Ferguson was able to get some of the more technical medical tools working. It saved the lives of more than a few people.

Jackson, Butch, Diane, Susie, and George were dead. The bodies were brought back to the subdivision in one of the captured trailers. The whole neighborhood came out to see it drive by. The sadness felt by all was fueled by the sight of their bodies. Jackson's wife and three kids had been on a trip to see some extended family, and were God knows where. Butch lived alone in a townhome, and was always ready to supply you with a cold beer when you had just come home from work. Scott smiled at the memory of Butch. Diane and Susie were a set of the nicest people you had ever met. They lived a lifestyle that most people could not understand. They never apologized for it, just worked through it. They were always happy, walking around the neighborhood, saying hey to everyone, stopping to pet your dog, or to hug your child. They would be sorely missed. All five people were buried in a green area behind Brenda and Susie's townhome. Unfortunately for the times, all five's homes were entered and anything of value taken for the good of the community. This included food, ammo, any soap, deoderant, personal hygiene materials, paper products, tools, and vehicles. All other homes in the subdivision were raided as well. Scott and Mitch kept personal journals writing exactly what was taken, giving an estimated worth. If the owners came back, or family members came back, some kind of compensation would be offered. Times demanded that all resources be used and nothing left to waste.

The people of the subdivision had mixed emotions about what had occurred. Some felt that the police would be coming soon to cart them all away, others felt that it had been necessary to both keep what little food was at the shopping center, as well as protect the government housing area. Stanley, because of his experience and leadership, was now in charge of all armed response in the neighborhood. This suited everyone in what was the community watch group. They would now have to become something else. Scott knew that there would be "Hades" to pay at the board meeting Sunday, but they would have to suffer through it. Although no one thought of it that way, the community watch group was now the de facto head of the subdivision, and now in charge of the project area. That fact was painfully clear to everyone, as all the community watch as well as their supporters were armed.

The extra firearms, until sense could be made of what the neighborhood needed, who would get what, how training would be handled, among other things; were stored at John's house. With the "big three" living on top of the knoll, this area was the easiest to defend. The Bradleys were a different story. They had no idea where to hide them, sense they could be spotted by air anywhere they were. And the sense was that the community watch had won them fair and square. If the Feds wanted them back, they should ask, not come in and try to take them. This was uncharted ground for everyone. Eventually it was decided to park them across the street, where the new subdivision was being built. a large part of the area was paved, and there a good line of sight from Harvey's house. Until they could be figured into the defense of the community,

that is where they would stay.

There was also the issue of what to do about the bodies. It was decided that the old tobacco barn would be a decent place for a funeral pile. They could not find a house anywhere that they could ask permission, so the bodies were taken there and the barn was burned to the ground. There was nowhere to bury that number of people, and the barn was far enough away that no one would see or smell the burning flesh.

The Gas rig was parked with the Bradley's, as well as the trailers and the two eighteen wheelers. The subdivision had a nice fleet of heavy vehicles for their use. Already parked there were two dump trucks, used by the builders. They also had the strange solar powered pump that was used to fill the tanker. It could be used later from the tanks at the shopping center, which thankfully were underground.

Scott's F150 had not fared well during the attack. It was filled with the bullets and blood of the failed assault on the gas station. It was towed to Scott's, where it was a stark reminder of the brave new world they were all apart of.

Toby stared into the Saturday night sky, then back along the roads that junctioned to his house. He had spoken to Barry earlier and he had agreed to move in with Toby's dad. Scott's grandfather's house was boarded up yet again, and all supplies including Scott's stash of food and weapons were brought with them as well. Toby was pulling watch, edgy to say the least. He had heard from a neighbor, who was a ham operator, that things were getting tough in Greensboro, which was the closest large town. Gangs had fought it out with law enforcement, and rumor was the great oil reserve near the airport had been blown to pieces. If that were true it spoke volumes about how much control the government really had on things. Toby also feared raiding parties from either Greensboro, or Danvil, Va. Since these were the largest towns nearby, with their own sets of criminal activity. He also knew about the trouble makers here in Eden, most of whom he had grown up with. Tomorrow he was going to go to a neighborhood meeting being held at the local church, after services were held. Then the street and surrounding farms should be able to come to some sort of agreement on how to move forward. Toby had some ideas, and planned to do some talking. "I wish Scott was here!" he thought. Scott was more of a talker!

Scott walked home alone, for a few precious minutes with his wife. He thought of his late night on Thursday, surfing the net, and his late night jog around the subdivision. "If I only knew then what would happen on Friday!" he said to himself. He hoped his family was doing ok, and he hoped they made it to Eden. He began to realize how tenuous the situation was now. The helicopter hovering then flying away really bothered him. By all accounts they should have been strafed then another helicopter group swooping in and finishing them off. But they just left. Something was wrong. He watched as people were taking different things to Gayle's house for use with the wounded. In some ways the neighborhood was really coming together, but tomorrow would be the real test. The meeting would encompass everything that needed to be done in the short term. They still needed to find a source of water, it worked now, but Scott wasn't sure he trusted it. They would have to boil it before using it, which created more logistics problem's. How do you create a massive fire pit here, without creating an out of control fire? You would also have to boil almost one hundred gallons a day to make it worth the trouble. Also, when the toilets finally quit working, what will we do? They had captured a lot of food, but it wouldn't last more than a few months, if that much. Half had been promised to the project people, but the other half wouldn't go far. He had also lost five good friends, not only were they

not replaceable because of their friendship, but that was five less people that could secure the subdivision. They had a tremendous amount of firepower, and no one to use it. He had met no one from the other neighborhoods he trusted to give firearms to, but may have to patrol their area just the same. He wanted to go to Eden, where they stood a better chance. "I have to talk to the group about my plan b."

Scott entered his home, carefully unloading his rifle, setting it down, and taking off the Arktis vest he wore. His wife ran to him, in front of her family, and would not let go. The family stood up, and just watched the moment solemnly. "My day isn't finished." he whispered into her ear.

John and Kristy came home to a house full of gear and supplies. They both dropped onto the couch, in plain exhaustion. John was coming to the same realization that Scott had. Tough decisions would have to be made.

Harvey looked at his wife, and smiled. Throughout the day she had kept the communications going, keeping people alive. He was proud and amazed by her strength. "Thank God I married a working girl!" he thought to himself.

Kareef and Sheeka held each other for what seemed like an eternity. He couldn't stay long, having to meet at Stanley's house for guard duty. She cried, and begged him not to leave again. after a few moments had passed, he walked outside again.

The KGB agent smiled at his reflection in the rear view mirror. He was waiting for the "Arabs" who would take the package from him. His family was already in Russia, and his escape from the United States was well planned. A large KGB station operated in Tijuana, and all he had to do was cross the border. The "Arabs" were getting what just about any third rate country would love to get their hands on. The old Soviet Union had secreted four suitcase nukes into the United States during the Reagan presidency. They had been kept up, even improved over the years waiting for the chance to be used. The call had never come, until the power blackout. When it was obvious that America would not back down from it's international militancy, the call had finally been made. The crazy "Arabs" would be allowed to "flip the switch" but this was a classic black ops mission by the KGB. The suitcase nukes could only be detonated by satellite phone, one call would be placed and BOOM. The nukes would totally destroy everything within ten blocks, and sow confusion and terror. The "Arabs" were going to take things to a new level though, using delivery trucks and tankers which would explode within five blocks. when the first responders arrived, then the call would be made to the suitcase nuke, and everything would be destroyed. It was designed so that across the country, law enforcement and medical personnel would think twice about showing up for work, and set the stage for total chaos in the United States. Seeing the brand new Honda Accord pull into the driveway across the street the agent pulled his briefcase out of the backseat and got out of the car. He stood up, and shook his shoulders. He wore an MP5 shoulder holster, with three thirty round mags to balance it. He wished it were a Stechkin, but ammo and mags were easier to find. He also had a Glock 19 in an IWB holster with two mags for that. He did not trust the "Arabs", who had been known to turn on allies at the drop of a hat. He rang the doorbell, in the tiny little neighborhood of Southport NC. A beautiful westernized Arab woman answered the door. She invited him in. Inside the house looked like any other suburban home. The children were coloring on the floor of the living room, dinner was cooking in the kitchen, although with a propane grill. The Russian entered the house, and following her lead walked down a flight of stairs into the basement. There everything changed. A large shortwave radio blared Arabic on a table, and three Arabic men stood around the table loading magazines for their Pakistani version of silenced MP5's. They also had four Browning high power pistols, with magazines already loaded on the table. The Russian smiled,

he loved firearms.

“Lenin, you have our package?”

“Yes Abdul, your package is with me”

“Lenin, where will you go now?”

“Mexico, my way is clear and free”

“Here is your package Lenin, Allah wills you to be home soon”

“Good luck”

“Lenin” pulled a smile pint of Vodka out of his pocket, and knowing the men would not join him in a drink, began to down it quickly. The men looked at him with pained disgust. Business with Russians left all involved dirty. Declaring “DAS VADANYA” “Lenin” left the home, and got into his car, and drove away. He had a ways to go.

Abdul smiled at the briefcase on the table. Opening it, he took out the phone, plugged in the newly charged battery, and turned it on. “Tomorrow as America prays, they will know the pain of Allah’s will.”

Juarez Hernandez was a tired man. As head of the Cuban Intelligencia, he was second in command of Cuba. And now, with the information on his desk, he was the head of Cuba. Castro had just died of complications revolving around his mixture of rum and insulin. Going into shock, Castro was now dead. Hernandez was now the defacto head of Cuba. He had been reading the situation reports from his agents in America. He could not believe the American agencies like the CIA or the FBI had not caught on to what was happening. This was a classic KGB operation, complete with muslim extremists. “They have been in bed with the Russians for years” he thought. How could the Americans not understand what was happening to them? He simply laughed, and opened a locked file drawer. Inside he pulled out an old copy of a file with Russian symbols. It was called the Vesta file. He broke the seal and stared in bewilderment at what he read. “So they have finally done it, finally set the stage for world domination.” he spat at the file. Juarez had fought in Africa, South America, Asia, and the middle east in the name of communism. In the end, he had learned to keep his real feelings to himself. He had no ill will toward Americans, in fact, it was an American tourist, who just happened to be at the right place at the right time, who saved his only daughter. She had almost been hit by a car in Paris, and an American had saved her. He knew that Americans would be striking out at anyone who attacked them. “These Russians should get out more” he thought. He called his trusted officers to meet with him ASAP. He would not take part in a war with the United States. In fact, he would rather help them, then be a part of some cataclysmic war. He also called the officer in charge of the observation unit overlooking Guantanamo bay. He wanted to speak with the base commander. He would also have to speak with the Russian and Chinese delegations in Havana. “To think tonight is Saturday, dinner with my family, a walk with my wife” he longed for simpler days.

Mario stared out of the window. As night fell he could smell the chaos and fear growing. He then looked at his living room where he had assembled his things for the trip to Scott’s grandfathers place. There was his Cetme, a rifle in 308, that was a tremendous deal at three hundred dollars. It could shoot well out to two hundred yards, and mags were cheap for them as well. Scott had talked him into getting it at a gunshow they went to together a year ago. He had acquired an assault vest for it, that fit eight loaded mags. He also had his Taurus 22lr revolver, and a double barrel shotgun. He laughed inwardly at the memory of how he came to own it. He had gone to an estate auction. He bought a bed, the frame, box springs everything. He got it cheap, because he would have to dispose of the mattress himself. As he was taking it apart to load in his truck, he found the shotgun between the box springs and the frame. Someone had hidden it there. The barrels were twenty two inches long, and the action seemed fine. He took it to a gunsmith,

who shortened the barrel, and set it up for buckshot loads. Mario loved that thing, as he had to live in the poorer section of Wilmington. He had moved there after getting a job, and was having a tough time of it. His marriage had ended, and he did not have custody of his two kids. They lived in Greensboro, with their mother. He knew he would have to get them on his way to Scott's place. He would drive by Scott's townhome, but expected that Scott had bugged out long before now. He wished he had paid more attention to his friend, and prepared better, but most of the money he had went toward his kids, and keeping his truck up. Times had been hard in North Carolina for some time. He had his large Jansport backpack, which held about 3200 cubic inches worth of stuff. He also had gotten down his needs section to two duffles. He would place everything in the back of his truck, then put his brand new mattress on top. He would then chain it down, so no one could see under it. He had fabricated a harness for behind the seat of the truck to hold his Cetme and the shotgun. All night he had practiced jumping out of the truck, laying the seat down and grabbing either the rifle or the shotgun.

Mario pulled out of his apartment complex and into the night. He knew he wasn't supposed to be traveling this late, but he wanted to get going. The neighborhoods in the poorest or blue collar parts of town were getting more and more restless. He had heard of looting, and the fact that it seemed local law enforcement was just packing up and heading home. On the radio, it was just pre recorded blurbs about how to boil water, do not use gas grills inside your home, and other idiosyncratic information. "I bet Scott and his family are already partying" Mario thought, "I sure hope everything is ok with them" Mario and Scott had grown up together in Greensboro. As they got older they had drifted apart, but in the last few years had gotten back in touch with each other. Mario had gotten into firearms, and Scott would meet him for gunshows from time to time. They spoke on the phone mostly, about the good old days when they played in a garage band, acting as if they could actually play songs from bands like The Police, or Led Zeppelin. Scott had always told Mario that if anything bad happened to get to Raleigh, and if no one was there, get to Eden. Mario was now taking that advice seriously.

The KGB agent was rip roaring drunk. Singing Russian songs as he drove through eastern North Carolina he thought of the next thirty six hours. He was taking some back roads to skip Wilmington, then hoping to connect to forty just before entering Raleigh. He had to get to Asheville, which was all the way across the state before Tuesday. The rest of his team was meeting there in a pre-arranged house, with the appropriate gear to get them to California. Although he was loyal to the cause of America's destruction, his conscience was beginning to get to him. He saw visions of his own family dying in a fireball of radioactive waste, and it caused him to want to drink more. Winding through the countryside he felt anger at having to even be here. He was watching the road, but not really paying attention to it. He knew his car could handle just about anything, it was an armored Crown Victoria, in a nice forest green. In the trunk, he had over a thousand rounds of 9mm, to compliment his armament, as well as extra magazines for the pistol and submachine gun. He also had rations for the next five days, and extra gear. He wore a level 2a vest under his clothes, so he did not fear getting into a shootout. The more he drank, the less he feared anyway. He saw the truck a split second before he almost hit it, and he slammed on the brakes. He came to a skidding halt behind the truck, which had stalled at the unlit intersection. Mario, had tried in vain to get the truck started and was about to panic, when he heard the car come to a skreeching halt behind him. Mario opened the door and looked behind. The KGB agent got out of his car, and pulled his Glock from behind his back. "This stupid redneck shmizat is going to pay with his life for almost wrecking my car" the agent thought. He was unsteady due to his intoxication, and walked very slowly toward Mario. All Mario could see was the legs of the man and the handgun at waistlevel in the headlights. Mario did exactly as he had practiced, jumping out of the cab, pushing the lever to move the

seat down, and then he grabbed the shotgun. He fired both barrels into the form and then opened the action. It was one of those moments, when adrenaline takes the place of good sense or training. He fired before he aimed. He placed two more shells into the action and began to walk toward the man he had shot. The whole time Mario was saying "OMIGOD OMIGOD OMIGOD". He had shot the man right under the beltline, right under the man's bullet proof vest. At first Mario thought he had shot some sort of police officer, but could not understand why the man approached his truck with a gun. The man was bleeding to death, with both rounds of buckshot nearly tearing him in half. Mario reached into the man's pocket and found his Russian embassy ID. "Well how about that Mr Vladimir, you are a little far from home eh?" The Russian, already dying from blood loss, and going into shock, just smiled. He just said Sunday, then died.

Mario had to do a quick assesment. He searched the body for weapons, and finding the MP5PDW, as well as the harness and Glock magazines, he placed them into the Crown Vic. He opened the trunk of the Vic and was astounded by the gear inside. He got his backpack, the two duffles, as well as his Cetme, and placed it all in the trunk. He got the vest off of the corpse, and put it on. It was tight but it fit. The Glock 19 now rode with Mario, and the double barrel shotgun was laid in the passenger seat. He found some documents, and paperwork in the glove compartment. "Armored?" he thought, "This is the twilight zone, how does some Russian embassy official rate all this Gucci kit?" oh well, it was all Mario's now. The truck was left where it was. He would miss it, but he had to have reliable transportation. He still didn't understand why the man tried to kill him, but he was glad he got the first draw. He pulled away, and treid to get the face of the man off of his mind.

SUNDAY MORNING

In New York City, looting had been going on all night, and it was not contained. Local police, State police, and National Guardsmen were refusing to come to work. Add to that more and more abusive actions of a select group of Federal officials, and you have fires being lit everywhere. No one was there to notice the three tanker trucks parked in three different locations, no one noticed certain garbage cans being placed on certain sidewalks.

Charlotte, North Carolina was one of the largest cities in the Atlantic seaboard south. It was the largest financial center on the east coast after New York City. If there was ever to be a recovery, the records and transactions that began and ended here would be a part of it. The streets were quiet, no one noticed the ambulance being parked on one street, the moving truck on another.

In Los Angeles, the police had finally gotten the upper hand in gangland style looting and violence that harkened back to the Rodney King riots. As they had been fighting and dying to restore order, no one had noticed the weird looking ambulances pulling into the parking lots of different hospitals. No one noticed that certain power company vehicles had been left near government buildings. Hey man, its just LA!

In Washington DC, hardly any of the elected officials were showing up for work. All across the country, as local law enforcement battled rioting, and looting and sometimes Federal agents, and EMS personnel reported to work with the chance they would not see home again, the elected officials, those that should have been at the forefront, went home like cowards. Only the President, the Vice President, and the various heads of departments and the machinations of government were there. The President was working on the recovery, trying to keep the governors from quitting the "team". The President was angry, because on the one hand, he

needed the full time military to help in calming America's streets; on the other he did not want to be the first President to declare martial law. He hoped that wouldn't be necessary, but times were moving far faster than anyone expected. Federal agents were being rebuffed at every turn, in the forty eight hours since the blackout, and it only looked like things would get worse. Now there was intelligence that another attack was coming possibly Monday, and now everyone was battenning down the hatches, digging in. It was a feudal atmosphere, and the President was disgusted with it. Federal agencies like FEMA and the Dept of Homeland Security had surprised him, with all their readiness gear. The funny thing was all the military hardware they had acquired in such short notice. "One more thing for the conspiracy nuts" the President thought. After four years in office, he had no idea how Washington worked, nor the true meaning of the perpetuation of the Federal government. As he stared out of his window, (he had refused to go to the bunker) he saw the military trucks pull up to the street. "Funny, they all look middle eastern" Then everything went bright, then he knew right before he died, that it was over.

In all four cities, vehicles, whether they were military looking, or ambulances, or tankers, or anything else, began to explode. Some were filled with just regular explosives similar to the Oklahoma City bombing. Others carried Anthrax spores, or Ricin. As the first responders started moving toward the area, their chemical testors began to go off. They would then stop, put on the protective gear, then proceed to the effected site. After about thirty minutes assessing the damage, then "Abdul" made the call. The four suitcase nukes exploded, taking about eight to twelve blocks depending on the density of the buildings. It was a cataclysmic wave of sound and debris stretching out from the center of the explosion. It wasn't that buildings were falling everywhere, although some did, it was the power of the explosion. It created a wall of glass and debris, that effected everything for blocks, and destroyed everything in its path. It reached as high as fourteen stories, killing all apartment inhabitants, as well as anyone on the street. All churches within the blast sphere were destroyed. Since it was Sunday morning, after the blackout, they were filled to capacity. Millions were killed within the hour. At the news of the devastation, what passed for local and state government ceased to exist. All emergency personnel, as well law enforcement went home. National Guard troops, just walked away from their posts. There was no infrastructure to help the wounded or radiation poisoned. It all ended today.

In Washington DC, the nuke had been placed right under the White House, somehow. The capital was now a devastated museum to an empire that was now destroyed. The President and the Vice President were never heard from again. There would be no new one, as the infrastructure was gone. All across the nation, Federal employees just began the long trek home. It was over.

The EMP was almost non-existent. Since the bombs had been placed either underground or in buildings to blow outward or upward, there was no air burst. But the devastation was horrendous. The radiation, which was thought to be terrible, did not spread to quickly either. Instead, the people were affected in the immediate blast area, but not outside the blast area.

The Governor of North Carolina just stared at the info coming through the ticker tape printer. He was astounded at the loss of life, and the loss of control. America was now a shambles, North Carolinians were now on their own. He opened his closet door, and pulled out his BOB duffle. Opening it, he pulled out his UMP 45 cal submachine gun, and loaded a thirty round mag. He turned hi sat phone on and said "Code Blue". At that, his specially selected team of security would escort him and themselves to a pre-planned location. The good thing about being politically motivated is that you have access to gear and things survivalists could only dream

about. If they had planned this right, his team would be at the "Farm" in less than four hours. There, they would wait out the storm, and try to survive the best they could. State government now ceased to exist.

Mario had to spend the night in his new car. The next morning he awoke to a grey sky, and the threat of a decent rain storm. He turned on the car, still praising his luck. The radio came on, and the news report confirmed what he already believed.

"We know that small scale nuclear weapons were exploded in Washington DC, Los Angeles, New York, and Charlotte, NC." "The Governor has not been heard from, and no state or Federal agency has even offered any more info than that." "It is as if the infrastructure of the United States has vanished." "We do not know how long we will be on the air, as our supplies of fuel were dependent on a state contractor." "Hang in there North Carolina, help has to be on the way."

But none would come, the stage was set for anarchy in the United States, until hopefully the military could get here and re-establish some sort of order. But that would take awhile, and Scott and his community as well as his friends and family would have much to do before then.

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on April 28, 2004 23:44April 28, 2004 11:44 PM:

Chapter 6

Mario began searching the glove compartment of the car. With the information he had heard on the news, he was afraid he would not be able to stop at Scott's place. He wanted to get his kids, and get to Scott's Grandpa's old house. Going through the glove box, he found an annotated map. It had symbols, located at the exits off of highway forty. Although all the writing was in Russian, he was guessing that these were storage depots of some kind. He noted that there was a number, at the left corner of the map. It seemed to be a combination of some kind. Since it was daylight, and he had parked in a rather secluded spot, he walked outside the car to check the trunk again, and make some breakfast. Taking water from one of his Nalgene bottles, he did a quick "cold man's bath", then started his small canister fuel stoves. When the water came to a boil, he made some oatmeal. He then changed into a pair of jeans, a turtleneck, and a sweater. Over the sweater went the shoulder rig for the mp5pdw, and then he placed the Glock 19 into the IWB holster. He re-did his BOB bag, just in case something happened to the car, and placed the shotgun on the passenger seat, weaving it through the seatbelt, so it would not move while the car was in motion. He had read about the FBI agents in Florida, who tried to take on two armored car thieves. The agents had placed their revolvers loose on the dash board or on the seat of the car. At the first time of slamming on brakes or turning, the agents lost time trying to re-acquire their sidearms. He did not want to make the same mistake. Afterward, he decided to give the mp5 a shot. Pulling it from the holster, he slammed the stock down into the engaged position, popped the safety, and moved the selector switch to three round burst. He yanked the forward handle down, and popped off the whole mag. "Wow" he thought. He loaded another mag, and began learning how to fire the weapon. When he had emptied all four mags from the shoulder harness, he reloaded them from the supply in the trunk, satisfied he at least had an inkling of how to use the pdw in a fight, he placed it into his shoulder holster. He decided that he would head for Greensboro, where he noticed there was a nice large storage symbol where eighty five and forty converged. He did not like the looks of that, but there were a few smaller storage symbols on the way as well. He planned to load up wherever he went, so that he would not be arriving in Eden with hat in hand. There were other symbols as well, one large one

in Southport, but he was not sure what that was. "All I need are my kids" he thought as he drove away looking for the nearest exit to highway forty.

Orlov Kotsky stared at the report in front of him with unmatched glee. The Attacks on the United States had progressed better than he thought they could. Although it would be at least two years before the first European troops would begin combat operations in Canada/US, he could sense victory. His Chinese counterpart, Chinyuan smiled slightly as well. The western part of the North American continent was promised to the Chinese, the east to the Europeans. It would be years before these operations could take place, but already the jigsaw puzzle was coming together. China would already have her hands full, as conventional combat operations against Taiwan were in full swing, as well as enforcing a peace between Pakistan and India. China had told them both to get along, or else; period. With the UN now setting up in Beijing, everyone could see the writing on the wall. US forces in Afganistan and were trying to move out of country, and were heading for Australia to regroup. Russia had its hands full trying to unite Europe, which was dealing with power blackouts of its own. Soon they would have Europe in their pocket, as Russia was prepared with aid for the recovery. Eastern Europe may be a problem, but the military would soon deal with that. With US forces in Europe martialing in Germany, and planning for a run to Poland, Russia expected to Eastern Europe to join the new order very soon. Poland had never successfully repelled an invasion, and the Russian military did not expect a change in that trend.

Marine two star general "Moses" Allen could not believe the report he held in his hand. Here was this Cuban officer, who supposedly now the premier of Cuba, asking for an alliance. No American officer worth his "chest salad" would ever trust a Cuban military man. That was just one of the unspoken rules coming out of officers training school. Although Moses was too young to remember the Cuban missile crisis, the history of that event was always present in the minds of anyone who commanded Guantanamo Bay. When news of the nukes reached his command, he had placed the camp on red alert. His Marines, as well as some of the foreign detail helping with the prisoners there, were armed and locked and loaded. He would allow no breach of military law, and no breach of the perimeter. His people would fight to the death. As this was happening, two Cuban soldiers approached the main gate, and handed a package to the guards there. And now General Allen, was reading it. He made his decision, realizing that this man was probably telling the truth. The Marines here had enough firepower to destroy half of Cuba, and they knew it. There was no trick they could play, no ruse that would change that fact. He would meet this man, and see what would happen next.

The board met in Lucy's townhome. Everyone was present, and on edge. Before the meeting, they had heard the radio broadcast, with the news of the new terror attacks. It had sank in hard. There was also news that all across the state as well as the nation, the infrastructure was falling apart. In the larger cities, there was widespread looting, with people rushing into grocery stores and sporting goods stores. Anything of value was being looted everywhere, and order was falling apart. In some states there was still some sort of law enforcement presence, but in most urbanized states the wall just crumbled. The panic created by the knowledge that more nukes could go off at any time caused even the most sane person to question what was happening. Even those relatively safe from any kind of violence began driving around trying to find more food, more supplies. People were losing there sanity. Scott began the meeting. "I would like to call this meeting to order, and note that we have a qourum." "Now where do we begin?" Paul began, almost fuming , "I can't believe you idiots attacked that shopping center and took the law into your own hands yesterday!" "It is unbelievable that you think you can get away with it."

Scott was tired, and really not in the mood to verbally spar with Paul. Paul had not volunteered for anything, he had not helped in any way. He was just here to bust chops, make noise. Scott was beginning to wonder if this was worth it, to wonder if he should pack up his family and head to Eden. Surely that would be preferable to this. But here he was, and he would have to deal with Paul and those like him from now on.

“Paul, what do you mean?”

“What do you mean, what do you mean, Scott?”

“Paul, we acted to protect the people that live next door to us, who were caught in the crossfire between the Hispanic group, and law enforcement.” “The Hispanic group was trying to take over the shopping center, to get what little food was there.” “It was a well coordinated attack, and it almost succeeded.” “As it is we got there too late to save any of the local city officers, except one who is wounded at Gayle’s house.” “The two Fed’s died in the wee hours of the morning due to too much blood loss.” “All I can say is that a Homeland Defense helicopter flew over us, and chose not to attack or contact us, they just flew away.” “With what has happened this morning, I do not believe they will be worrying with us just now, if ever” “So Paul just what the hell are you talking about?” “Please explain to me how you have earned the right to question me about what happened yesterday?” “I lost five good friends, neighbors, while you stayed here in relative comfort.” “So what the hell are you talking about?”

Paul looked visibly shaken, Connie, Lucy and Bob hoped Paul would just let it go at that point, but he was going to press further. “So what was it like killing? did you enjoy it?”

Scott reached out and grabbed Paul’s neck, with both hands. It was a simple act of anger and frustration, with no release valve. Paul began to turn red, as Bob wrestled Scott to the floor to save Paul from being strangled. Paul jumped up screaming “Now you want to kill me? what kind of man are you?”

Bob turned and decked Paul, as Scott calmed down. Scott just reached for his pistol., pulling it from his holster. In his mind he just thought “this is what it has come to now, the power of the gun.” “No talk, no compromise, no compassion, just the gun.” “It would be so easy to pull the trigger to just take one more life” Lucy and Connie both screamed as Bob jumped between the quarreling men. Scott said, “ If I see you again, you better be doing something constructive, period.” “If I see you doing anything to harm this community, or to challenge this group of people, I will kill you.” “You are through as far as the board is concerned.” Paul urinated in his pants, then ran for all he was worth. Scott simply holstered his pistol, and sat down. He had crossed the rubicon. They would have to realize that now everything had changed, and that this was survival. His personal line in the sand was crossed, and he would walk in those footsteps until he couldn’t anymore. He put his head in his hands and began to feel dizzy. The stress and strain of the past two days had finally hit him. You can read all the fiction you want, study books written by the pro’s. You can attend every self-defense course offered in the world. But nothing can prepare for the reality you have to face. The world that he knew was over. The soft life, the French fry, cheeseburger drive through was closed. Scott’s ancestors had fought the British and Federal armies. Scott was a Southerner. His ancestors had fought for their homes, more so than any lofty political ideal. Freedom, States rights, the Constitution meant little to him or his ancestors when their families were threatened. Right now he had a community to defend. Defending the community meant that his family would be safe.

“Bob, let him go, I will talk to him later.” “Paul needs a reality check, real bad.” “I think I gave him one!”

“Ok, lets focus on what we need.” “Has anyone gotten in touch with the neighborhood next to ours, the ritzy one?”

Lucy spoke, “We have not made contact yet, but planning on it.”

Scott spoke next, “OK, how about after this meeting?”

“But we don’t know who is in charge there, or what is going on?” Lucy complained.

Bob countered, "I will take the three college boys with me, they ended up being pretty good in a fight, they can cover us while Lucy and I go over there and make contact."

"So I guess no one is in charge of any of the committies?" "We are just going to operate from scratch then eh?" Scott was thoughtful, at least without the old committie structure, they could have more control over events, and lessen the amount of friction and confusion. Jobs could be assigned, and tasks written down. Hopefully, people would become part of a team and want to complete the necessary tasks, whatever they would be.

"Connie, we need to get a place to burn trash, a place to cook, and a place to boil the water from our taps." "Can you handle that?" She just shrugged, and said "sure"

The next item on the agenda was the distribution of the food that was captured. Scott wanted to hold on just giving it all away, as it was just as important to keep as a form of currency, as anything else. It could be used as an incentive for work in getting the neighborhood ready for surviving. It was all the ruling group had as leverage to get any of the tasks done that needed doing. The board agreed, and Connie volunteered to work up a list of equivalency, that would show how much food would be paid for certain kinds of work or activity. They also voted to give some food to the housing people, and to try and get them to elect a representative so they could be heard in the meetings. The people in the housing area were now linked to Ranford Trace. They were now in this thing together.

The meeting was ended, and everyone went home to rest until the big meeting that night. Scott saw Stanley making notes, as he walked around the community. Scott spoke first, "Stanley how is your daughter?" "She will be fine, the bullet went straight through the meat of the arm, so she just needs to heal up." "Great I am glad to hear that she will be fine, if she and Mitch had not kept those guys pinned up, who knows who else could have been killed." That statement just kinda hung in the air, as both men realized they were in the line of fire from that barn. Stanley changed the subject, "Scott, I have been going over some things in my head, and will be making some recommendations at the meeting tonight." "Can you listen to a few things?"

"Sure Stanley, what have you got?"

"Well first, we need a lot of stuff, with everything that has happened, I think a run or two would be in order to a local mass retailer of home repair supply." "We just need stuff"

"Second, we need volunteers for armed patrols now, things will be getting chaotic soon, and who knows, the Hispanics may have a second group that comes looking for them."

"Third, how do we set up the patrols, how do we arm them, I need at least two weeks to train them to be half way decent."

"Fourth, I want to fortify the area, which would encompass the projects, as well as the wealthier neighborhood as well." "We can defend the area, but that brings us to square one."

"What is that Stanley?"

"What the heck are we defending? there is no water, no supplies, no way to grow crops here, no way to cook or clean." "It's like we are defending the desert from a flood."

"I know Stanley, I have been thinking about the same thing." "My parents have a place in a town called Eden, which is three hours from here." "The area there is better for this end of the world stuff than Raleigh."

"We should talk about that sometime after we get this place at least squared away."

"I agree Stanley, a later conversation."

At that point, they were in the middle of the road, between the townhomes and the houses, and they stopped, as Stanley was heading up to the houses, and Scott wanted to head back to his townhome. Just then, an older man that seemed to be in his seventies walked out of his townhome and began heading in their direction. He wore an odd looking cap, with a different camo pattern. It somewhat resembled the British DPM pattern, but was darker and well worn. As

he got closer to Scott and Stanley, they noticed he had a holster attached to his belt. The pistol looked to be a Browning highpower, and the man had a gait about him that said he meant all business. He introduced himself to the guys, as they both stood in excited awe. "I am Roger Moore, from Rhodesia, HIYU(how are you)?" "I am volunteering for any armed assignment you have, and would be willing to help in any way." " Don't make fun of the name, where I am from bad guys were dealt with, and the women were better looking." "Besides, everyone knows Brits can't hit the side of a barn with a car cannon, but a Rhodesian can write symphonies with them." Everyone began to laugh, and Mr. Moore began to tell some stories, designed more to teach and befuddle than to entertain.

EDEN

Toby sat at the back of the church, in total awe. This church was designed to hold about one hundred people. He estimated that there were now over three hundred inside with another fifty outside. A local politician Toby had never seen before was in charge as he tried to get order in the crowded church. He was getting nowhere, and it showed. Most people were just interested in talking with one another, trying to find out some more news, something they hadn't heard before. Finally, the Pastor spoke up and everyone quieted down.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a long meeting ahead of us, it would be prudent to thank the Lord that we are all safe here today, and ask his blessings on those that are not." everyone began bowing their heads, some on bended knees. To Toby it was a powerful moment, and one he would never forget. The Pastor began, "Our Lord, these past few days have shown us the extent of horrible evil done to this world. We ask you to show mercy on the souls of those that would do us harm, and show charity to those in harm's way. We ask forgiveness of our sins, even as you bestow blessings upon us. We give thanks for everything we have oh Lord, and thanks to you for sending your only son down to us to save us from our sins. In Jesus name we pray."

There was not a dry eye in the church, and it felt as if a great weight had been lifted from the shoulders of all who were there. The worry, self doubt, and darkness of fear began to vanish as everyone realized they were here to build, to regroup. It was a coming together, under the watchful eyes of the Lord.

Ideas were thrown back and forth, and the meeting began to drag on. The one thing they did accomplish was that there were over eight hundred acres, between the area that was Eden, Reidsville, stretching down through Wentworth, and touching Madison, and Stoneville. It was the rural area of Rockingham county. Most of which was being used to grow Tobacco. Toby waited his turn to speak, and when he did, he never realized he had a voice that could carry.

"Look, with all this acreage, it looks like we need to begin planning to plant in the spring." "In the meantime, we need to be gathering, supplies, farm equipment, seeds, and building material."

"We also need to think long and hard about security, and we need an armed force to keep the brigands out." "Why don't we vote tonight, on what planning groups we need, then these groups will have to figure out to get their jobs done." People began nodding their heads in agreement.

"But before we leave, we need to set up an armed force, and start guard shifts immediately." Again everyone was in agreement. After a few more hours of debate, the groups were formed, and elected. An armed volunteer force, would immediately begin to take shape, and start small patrols here and there. It wasn't much but it was a start. The politician, wasn't elected to anything.

Mario had connected with highway forty, and was moving at a steady pace. The closer he got to Alamance County, the more crowded forty became. Finally on the outskirts of Burlington, traffic

came to a screeching halt. He pulled over on the side of the road, and began to think about his predicament. The storage area was in a nicer part of Greensboro, which should still be relatively safe. He wanted to hit it, unload it, then make camp at Scott's parents place. He was sure they had bugged out, but he hoped their home was still safe enough to sleep in for one night. He wanted to get his daughters and get to Eden, before total chaos became the norm. Pulling over onto the shoulder, he gets a pair of binoculars out of his bag and stands on the trunk of the car to look at what is causing the blockage. He doesn't see anything, but cars backed up as far as he can see. He looks back from where he came, and sees that the shoulder is relatively clear. He has an idea, and decides to try it. Getting back into his car, he decides to turn around on the shoulder, and drive to the last exit. There he can connect with 70, which becomes Wendover Ave, once you are in Greensboro. It takes a little longer on a good day, but the old highway runs through some beautiful country. Driving on the shoulder back to the exit, he gets a lot of looks from the stalled cars. Some people just wave, others flip him the bird. "Yankees" he thinks to himself. A truck has pulled over onto the shoulder, with an overheated engine, Mario decides to go around, driving up a hill, and around. "Time to see what Russian money can buy in a car" Mario humms right through it. He makes it to the exit, and driving carefully, gets into Burlington. He then crosses onto 70, which is called Church Street in Burlington. The street has an panic feel to it. Shopping centers dot the road, with fast food restaruant's are everywhere. He keeps going until he hits a roadblock. Sighing, he gets his license out, and then realizes he is not in his car. He looks for any other patrol cars, seeing none, he strains out of the drivers side window to get a better look. It is an accident, where two eighteen wheelers have collided at an intersection. Apparently they were carrying food, and people from around the area had shown up to pick it up. The police had arrived, and were trying to stop the near riot. Shots began to ring out, and everyone ran for cover. Mario had a choice, to drive out of harms way and try later to get to Greensboro, or take the road to Elon College, which would put him on highway 87, and well on his way to Scott's Grandfather's house. He had a split second to make up his mind, and he chose the road to Grandpa's. He could not get through to his children yet, but hopefully he would be able to after getting to Grandpa's house. "Damn" he thought, as he reached the relative safety of the country side.

Abdul and his gang were looting Southport for all it was worth. They would move at night, hitting houses pre-selected, killing everyone, and getting all the food they needed. They would just leave the house there empty with the door open. The symbolism of that was not lost on the terrorists. They had to wait one more week, then would take the yacht waiting on the dock out to sea. There they would meet up with an Iranian sub, who would then take them home. They were close to having the supplies needed just in case the correct communication was not made in time. Then they would be stuck, but that was ok. each man and woman had prepared to martyr themselves in that event. They would begin attacking Christian churches, blowing themselves up in the attack. Allah would surely grant them eternal paradise for this. What they did not count on, was a ex marine from the Korean war, and his grandson.

Leroy Evert lived two houses down from Abdul. He had noticed the odd coming and goings of the Muslim group for the past two days. Since hearing of the nuclear attacks, and knowing what he knew of war, he knew these people were up to no good. Seeing them with mp5's slung across their chests only confirmed their lowly status in his mind. Leroy was an old guy, with a twenty something attitude. He was known to enjoy a cold glass of lemonade, whether it was hot or cold outside. After being wounded in Korea, he was allowed to finish his enlistment working on the ammunition depot at Fort Fisher, and had fallen in love with the area. He had married and prospered in the Southport area, and raised one son. Unfortunately his son had chosen to follow in his father's footsteps, and was killed in Action in the Panama invasion. He had been a decorated officer serving in the navy seals, and that left Leroy to raise his grandson. Lashaun,

had grown up, gone to college, and owned a few successful businesses in the Wilmington area. Both of the Evert's were avid shooters, and were very enamored with the M1 Garand. It had saved Leroy's life quite a few times in Korea, and Lashaun liked the rifle because it was a highly manufactured piece of American manufacturing. Both men owned quite a few of the rifles, and shot them as often as they could. Lashaun had driven down from Wilmington, to get his grandfather, and take him back to his home. BUt they had both become suspicious of the Muslims three houses down and across the street. Now that they saw them with Mp5's, they knew these were bad guys. The fact that it looked like they had raided a house down the street only cemented the accusation. They came up with a plan.

Abdul was watching his men unload the captured suburban, into the house. He was happy, as all was going well. He noticed a thirty year old looking man standing on a porch down the street. The man waved at Abdul, and Abdul waved back. "I have not seen this infidel before", Abdul thought. The man seemed to stare at them, and Abdul began to get that sixth sense only a combat veteran could understand. "Assam, Hamoud, go to the back of the house quick, and make sure no one is moving in the back yards." "Get Amoui and Mali to come to the front fast." The men did as they were told. Leroy, was already in position on the roof of his home, with a vantage point where he could see all five men. He would shoot the one's in the backyard, Lashaun would take the one's in the front. Lashaun tapped his boot on the porch two times, and both men began to fire. It was over before the terrorists had time to respond. The Muslims had paid a terrible price for not learning the first rule in combat. Never bring a subgun to a rifle fight. The women inside, seeing their husbands cut down began to wail, and then the whole house seemed to ignite at once. Luckily, it began to rain, and mother nature put the fire out. The families of the terrorists decided to commit suicide rather than live without them. As Lashaun and Leroy checked what was left, they celebrated the fact that the supplies had been loaded into the basement, and there was no damage there. They brought Leroy's old Chevy as well as reloading the captured suburban, and went home with all the re-captured gear and supplies. They now had enough to get them through some rough times coming up. They would make it!

Mario pulled into Scott's grandfathers place feeling depressed about not making it to get his kids. He was surprised to see that although it looked lie fresh tracks had been made in the driveway, no one was there. He remembered Toby's father lived near here, but didn't remember where. "It's been six years since I have seen this place" he thought to himself. He began setting up camp in the back yard, putting up the tent and spreading out his sleeping bag. Once that was done, he sat down to eat a cold MRE before turning in. He hoped he could drive up the street and see if any of the houses looked familiar, and see if he could find Toby's father. He felt it would be a long night. As he stood up, he heard a voice from behind, "I couldn't shoot a man while he eats, but I will now if you don't put that rifle down." Mario did what he was told, and heard another voice from the darkness of the woods. "This is private property bud, it ain't no campground"

Mario recognized the voice, it was Scott's dad, Barry. He spoke excitedly, "Mr. Hindon, It's me Mario!" "I was only looking for Scott and the family." "Can I put my hands down now?" Barry silently motioned for Toby to put his AK down, and said, "Mario, come here and shake my hand!" "It's good to see you!"

Mario, felt safe for the first time in the past twenty four hours. His parent's had been divorced when he was a teenager, and he usually went to Scott's house for dinner every other night when they were kids. He looked on Scott's parents as his own, and seeing Scott's dad Mario just broke down and sobbed. Barry just put his arm around Mario's shoulder and said, "One of my son's is home now!"

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on April 28, 2004 23:45April 28, 2004 11:45 PM:

Chapter 7

All the people of Ranford Trace filled in the courtyard between the townhomes. Everyone was quiet, and milling about. After all the day's news, people needed something solid, something tangible to hold on to. The tension and stress level in the air was stifling. The events, both local and national, as well the fight over the shopping center hung heavy over the gathering. Most of the wounded had gone home, there were a few that were just awaiting death, their wounds too serious for the small amount of care Ferguson and Gayle could give. People from the housing project mingled with those of Ranford Trace, as bonds were being built by the two communities. Scott began the meeting, "I would like to call this meeting to order, we have a lot to cover tonight, and I know everyone has something to say." "Let me start with....."

Paul then said, "I have something to say, and I think everyone should hear it!" "We have a larger problem here, and that is do we want these people in charge." Scott's blood began to boil. Stanley who was standing beside of Scott just winced. Some of the people began to look around, anxiously. Paul kept on, "I mean, you were voted in when things were normal, maybe we need different leadership now." Paul was building his case slowly, and out of the corner of his eye Scott could see Connie and Lucy nodding their heads in approval. "So it has come to this" thought Scott. Paul then pointed to Scott, "To be fair Scott, you should tell everyone here about what happened earlier this afternoon." Scott realizing what was happening, decided in a split second that this was for the best. Scott replied, " In the stress of the moment, Paul began an out of control argument." "I had to point my gun at him in order to regain control of the meeting" Paul countered, " The only answer to anything you have dealt with in the past three days has been to point a gun at something, that is all you know how to do." Paul continued, " We need new leadership, and I think we should vote on whether we want a bunch of vigilante's running the show." A few people began to say "yea" and "alright". Paul continued, "Also, none of us had a say in allowing the people from the public housing into our neighborhood." "How was this safe for us?" More people began to voice their agreement. Stanley and Mitch just stared at Scott waiting for him to reply. He then winked at them, and they instantly knew that the cause here was lost. John, Kristy, Kareef, Sheeka, Harvey and Missy just stared ahead. There had been serious debate among them about the stability of staying here. With no proper water facilities, as well as other necessity's, the situation here was untenable. They all knew it would have to come to this to force them to decide to leave or stay. It looked like they would be leaving.

Scott then held both hands up in the air, quieting the crowd. "Let me just say, that everything we have done thus far had been to react to events around us." "There was not always time to gauge public opinion, or to ask if it was ok, we just had to act." "But I see that maybe that wasn't the best policy, so I resign as president of the board." The crowd gasp, and Scott's wife shot Paul an angry look. Paul was beaming, this was better than he thought it would be. Lucy and Connie were one hundred percent behind Paul. Bob supported Scott. Paul then spoke up, "First order of business is the food we have, I think we should evenly distribute it to all the families here, so everyone has plenty to eat." " I also think all families should receive a weapon of some sort to defend their home." Stanley then stood up, obviously disgusted. He looked out over the crowd, and into Paul's eyes. "I will tell you now that you will give more food to the community watch group, because we will continue to guard the neighborhood." "I will not hand weapons out either, unless we are paid in food as well." "The community watch group has done too much to earn what little we have, if you want to squander it, that's fine, but I want our fair share." Paul looked shaken a bit , not expecting Stanley to say that. Stanley then continued, "You will

continue to pay us, every week, to guard this area.” Paul said, “Now wait a minute....” but the crowd agreed, and Stanley just nodded. Bob spoke next, “That is only fair, I second the motion” the crowd chanted “hear, hear” and it was settled. Paul had lost one of his political goals. Connie spoke next, “How do we figure out how much food will be given to the community watch, and how much to be given to everyone else?” Bob then said, “we split the food evenly with all the people, but to pay the community watch group, everyone should give from their new found supply, say three cans a piece.” the crowd agreed to that as well. Paul was losing control, but decided to keep quiet. Scott had by this time walked away from the front of the group, and stood by his wife and her family. He felt good, like he could leave. “I am going home after all” he thought. The meeting adjourned, with Bob, Stanley and Connie heading over to the two houses that the food had been stockpiled into. They began counting and inventorying their supplies. Paul went home was on his way home to celebrate, when he saw Scott walking toward him. Scott held out a chunk of cheese, and said, “Hey Paul, you are a wine guy right?” Paul just nodded, unsure of what would happen next. “Well here is some cheese to go with your wine.” Roger Moore, who had been off to the side, just laughed out loud. As Scott walked away, Roger told Paul, “Checkmate, mate”. Paul ignored the old man and continued walking toward Connie’s house. There he met with Connie and Lucy after the meeting. Connie spoke first, “I believe we made a big mistake, this is going to cost us in the long run.” Paul shook his head, “No, we got what we wanted, the food will be handed out, not saved, and they will give out the captured arms to all of us.” “I would say that went fairly well.” Lucy just smiled, and said, “Who would have thought Scott would just bow out gracefully, what a sod.” Paul just laughed, “Yeah, he knew his time had come and gone, and now we run things.” Connie was dead pan, when she burst their bubble, “The real power here is the community watch, and they are already getting more food than everyone else.” “Most of them were survivalist freaks before the attacks anyways, so they have plenty.” “I don’t think we did much good except alienate them, so they will not be as open to new ideas or people in the future.” Paul said, “They need us just as much as we need them.”

Scott settled in at his home for a long night of talking. Mitch, his wife Agatha, Stanley and his wife Barbara, Harvey, Missy, Kareef, and Sheeka were all standing or sitting in the living room. John, Kristy, and Ma, as well as Stanley’s two daughters were watching the houses while the others met. Scott had had enough of the neighborhood, and wanted to go home. “Well you saw what happened tonight, can’t say I did not expect it.” Everyone just nodded. “I want to tell you about my parent’s place in Eden.” and he did.

The house was his Grandfather’s home for over four decades before he passed away. The place sat on top of a hill, with three acres. It had well water, with a solar pump, that could work with car batteries as well. The property could grow some crops, but not enough probably to feed a large group of people indefinitely.

The street was filled with people who had lived there all their lives, and Scott had known most of them for years. Although it wasn’t perfect, it was not a fully stocked mecca, it be more livable than here in this urban mess they found themselves in. They would have to pack everything they owned, for the trip, but if they made it, it was worth it. Everyone agreed that it was probably a better set up than what they had here. And finally Scott told them, there is just a feeling of unusual peace when you sit on the porch of the old ranch style house. “That is worth the three hour drive, anytime.” Everyone agreed that they needed to prepare to make the trip.

“Well, what do y’all think is the first order of business to get the ball rolling?” Stanley thought a minute, and said, “Well, we have the three Bradley’s, that is a good start, but we can’t depend on them totally, if the tracks break, we can’t fix them.” “We need a large set of vehicles, that can carry a load, and also carry the kids, and all the supplies.” “I believe we should hit some car dealerships, and go shopping.” Harvey spoke up next, “what about gathering more supplies, we

should do that as well.” “I bet the grocery stores are going to be looted like crazy, since the nukes, but what about Home Depots, or Lowes Hardware?” “we should go there and get all the gas cans, water cans, propane tanks, tools, and whatever else we need.” John spoke next, “Its too bad we don’t know a good mechanic, so some of the vehicles could be modified, like in the mad max movies.” Scott agreed, “We will have to change some things around, so that we can protect our little column.” “I have a RAND study on the Rhodesian war, it talks about the effect of the insurgency on traffic, and how to defend against attack.” “We can probably ask Roger as well, seeing as how he was there.” Missy said, “We should ask Gayle and her boys if they want to go to, and Ferguson.” “Medical skills are at a premium now.” Everyone thought that was a good point. “Look” said Scott, “We should keep this planning to ourselves.” “Whoever we ask to join us, do it as a what if, not as a definite.” “I think the trips to town for stuff should be kept as quiet as possible.” “ And from now on, nothing the board didn’t appropriate is their’s.” “The way I see it, all the vehicles, the gas rig, and the Bradleys are ours, and not to be shared, unless we are paid from the grocery raid.” Everyone agreed. “We have to assume everyone else as being hostile.” “Stanley, you go about making a guard schedule, with Missy as the communications coordinator.” “While we can, lets get enough of us together to go into town for raids on what we need.” “Everyone work on a list, then we can meet again to condense it.” “Think about food, clothing , fuel, ammo, building supplies, camping gear, baby needs, female needs.” Everyone work on the list!

Three Days Later....

Mario was explaining to Toby how he came about getting the car and the exotic gear. Mario also explained about the map and the gear that was probably sitting out there along highway forty, in places like Greensboro, Winston Salem, and some areas not that well known. The list ran all the way to Asheville. Mario wanted to go to Greensboro, both to retrieve the gear and to also get his daughters. He knew he could not do it alone. But here was his snag. Rockingham county, being primarily rural, was holding things together. Since most people were connected by family ties or generations of people that grew up together, there was a stronger sense of community. This was a big difference compared to Wake county, which housed the state capital, Raleigh. Raleigh was mostly made up of people from other states and countries, and there was no real tying together of community. This is why Wake county was a shambles and Rockingham county was retaining an amount of order. The Rockingham county sheriff, as well as the mayors and town councils were working together to try and keep some order, as well as closing the borders, and beginning to produce food. Shopping centers were occupied, and supplies given to those who needed them. Arms were carried by everyone, and a volunteer militia system was put into place to rotate for guard duty. The carrying of firearms was not only condoned, but encouraged. Since law enforcement was now part of the recovery, most criminal activity was handled by the citizenry. Most of this led to criminals being shot in the act, or force marched at gunpoint to the local constabulary. All in all the community atmosphere of a primarily rural county was showing all the strengths of the people that lived there.

Mario asked Toby, “Let’s go, we can do this, we have the Crown Vic, and ample supplies for the journey, what do you think?”

Toby answered, “I don’t know, our turn at patrolling the Rockingham/Guilford line tomorrow and the next night, after that maybe.” “We should see the sheriff.”

“Won’t he just say no, especially if he finds out about what happened?”

“Why would he, since the gear we get would help to protect us here?” “Plus, we need more people for a trip like this, Greensboro is a shambles.”

“Well lets talk to him as soon as possible”

“Alright, we can go to Wentworth(the county seat) in an hour or so.”

“Great”

Cuban Premier Hernandez sat in silent awe at the communications equipment in front of him. General Allen was fuming at his subordinates, trying to get everything perfect for the conference call. This call would link every American military base in the world, as well as all the carrier battle groups. They had five minutes before the communication would take place. General Allen strode beside Hernandez and said, “Won’t be long now, then we will show the Russians and Chinese how to play some war” Hernandez merely shuddered, realizing that if there was one misstep, one miscalculation, then everyone would lose. The communication link came up, and a five star air force general came on the screen. Flanked by a large group of officers, in a large meeting room. The air force general did not smile, or frown. He was professional and to the point. He began the briefing.

Officers of the United States of American Armed Forces, I am here today to tell you that we are at war, and I am going to tell you how we are going to win this war. I am air force general Sugarbaker, of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. I was visiting Pope Air Force base when the attacks began. As of today, I have no contact with any higher ranking officers in the Joint Chiefs, as well as the NSA, or the Pentagon. We have no news on the whereabouts of the President, the Vice President, or any ranking members of Congress. As of right now, there is no governing body of the United States of America. From reports we have generated from Special Forces observations to spacetime imagery, urban America is a shambles. The rural areas of the country seem to be pulling together, but the cities are total chaos. From the info we have, it looks like the emergency response left something to be desired, and now panic and looting are winning out over order. It looks like all Federal emergency management as well as law enforcement called it quits. Some states are maintaining order, but we expect them to fold as well. Since I am the highest ranking member of the armed services left, and we have no info on the civilian authority, I am assuming command of all United States military forces. I do not take this lightly, nor do I even want it. But here it is, and work has to be done. First, I want to remind all of you about your oath to the Constitution, and how that plays into the next phase of this war. We will not use troops to go out and subjugate the American people. I want that understood by everyone listening. I know there are reports of airmen, marines, army, and navy personnel leaving their posts to try and make it home, at this point, my command is to let them go. I know that flies in the face of just about every code that we live by as officers, but this is my reasoning. Our number one job right now, is to get our overseas forces home ASAP. We have the power and strength to do just that, and to inflict on last crippling blow to the enemy. The American people, including the men and women deserting their posts, must sort out the future of this nation on their own. It will be tough, but I honestly believe we will have a stronger nation because of it. Our people, trained by the best in the world, will help build a stronger and better equipped America. Let them go home. To those military commanders, who are retaining enough soldiers to maintain base security, work as best you can with the civilian authority, and remember your oath. Once our counter attack is finished, we should be in a position to get our people home, and then be a major force in rebuilding our country. I will not be a part of a military dictatorship over the United States.

Now for info on project Darkness. During the late 80’s and early 90’s, all of the world’s military forces went to satellite communications and navigation. The United States, through the research gleaned in the “star Wars” era, found a way to shut down all satellite traffic in space, in simple terms, bringing the world back to pre-WW2 technology. It is a utilization of EMP, and solar rays from the sun, which in the end would turn earth’s orbiting satellite’s into junk overnight. That system is operational and ready for use. We will be implementing this system, as well as strategic sub-launched missile attacks on the infrastructure of China and Russia. This will give

us a few major advances, a small window of opportunity to even the playing field. With their infrastructure down, they will be dealing with the same problems we are facing, as well as they would not be able to launch any of the inter-continental ICBM's. The drawback is, neither would we. I am willing to risk it, because we still have our nuclear sub fleet, which has realtime compass ability to launch unguided nuclear payloads to any target in their respective area of operations. They will be given pre arranged launch codes, because we are going to use our sub-fleet to drive home our warning to the rest of the world. It will be, "Leave us alone, or we will continue to rain fire down upon you" If Russia and China do not understand this, then we will continue to destroy them at will. Neither of those countries will have the capability left to launch any nuclear weapons at the US after project Darkness begins. One we get home, I have every hope that a representative form of government will be formed, our great country will rise again. I expect operations returning our troops from over seas should take about three months to finish, without delay. This will be the last communication you will receive from me, and through the teletype you will receive your individual orders.

Remember your oaths, your beliefs, and your principles. Read your American Revolution history, and re-read the Constitution of the United States if you have to. Good luck, God speed, and God bless America!

General Allen ordered the commlink turned off. Knowing that the offensive would take place in the next few hours, he then in front of his men, knelt down and prayed. Our Father, who art in Heaven.....

Five large satellite's floated into an orbit above the earth. With the go codes given, using fuel from reserve tanks for just this instance, they moved into strategic positions all around Earth's orbit. As they exploded, all satellite's in the atmosphere were caught in the blast wave. Thousands of electronic orbiters, and sensor relay stations were crushed by the wave of debris and electricity. All computer based GPS and guidance systems shut down. Russia, China, North Korea all lost their guidance systems, essentially locking them in their silos. The sub fleets of China and Russia were now floating wrecks, without the satellite GPS guidance systems to get them to their stations. As they came up for air to get their bearings, they were destroyed by pre programmed missiles launched by American subs. American Cruise and Tomahawk missiles began finding their targets after the atmosphere was crushed. Russia, China, as well as parts of inland Asia, and eastern Europe lost power. All Russian naval bases, as well as China's were nuked. The message was clear-touche'. With this lightning attack, the playing field was level. Now all countries were in the same boat so to speak. Although still landlocked to the total continent of Eurasia, no country on Earth would now be able to openly oppose the United States. American troops in the middle east were fighting their way to ports of entry to ship out to Australia, where they would prepare for the trip home. All navy battle groups were now waging war on any Russian or Chinese naval vessel, in an attempt to buy time for US forces to retreat back to the United States. The gamble had worked, and now the US would be unopposed in getting her children home.

Harvey was walking the beat with Scott on their guard shift. They mused about the way things had changed, and how everyone was anticipating the trip to Eden. Harvey said, "You know, we should go and visit old Gary down the street, see if we can trade for some ammo." "What do you think?"

Scott thought for a moment, and said, "Might be a good idea if you and John go, ya'll have done more business there than I have."

"Yeah, maybe you are right"

Scott was going to be part of the first raiding team that would be going into town for gear and

supplies. Although everything was promised to everyone, the real reason was to build up supplies to take to Eden with the old community watch group. Although Paul had supported the idea, once again it had fallen to the community watch group to get the job done. It was decided to take the semi, and all three Bradleys. They were going to hit a large shopping center in one of the nicer neighborhoods on town. They felt it had the best chance of not being looted yet, and should yield a large haul. They would take about thirty five people, load the semi, and come home. they decided to fill it, then come home no matter what the temptation would be. Before they could leave, Stanley wanted to get everyone up to speed on the weapons and how to drive the Bradleys. Taking groups of five across the street, he taught them in quick fashion how to load, unload, strip and clean, fire and move with the M4. Stanley told everyone to keep the selector switch on semi, because there was no time to learn accurate full auto fire. Then Scott held a class on the Glock 35, explaining the uses of the best fighting pistol around. Roger Moore was given one of the M1a's and was run through the paces with Mitch, who had to listen to an endless barrage about how much better the FN FAL was to the M14. Mitch, frustrated, lent Roger his copy of "Boston's Gun Bible" the case was closed after that. Teams began practicing getting out of the Bradley, and firing the M60. It was found that with the M60 mounted, they were able to deliver accuracy with it firing full auto. It was then decided who would go on the first trip. There were two major shopping centers within a close distance, the closest was a mixture of a Home Depot and a Wal-Mart. The next was a real high dollar shopping area which would be the groups first target. There was a Sport's Town and next door a large retailer called Hiker's Paradise. Sport's Town sold guns, ammo, and camping supplies, while Hiker's carried camping gear, bike's quality clothing, and food. That same shopping center also had three types of clothing stores, an electronics store, and several restaurants . It was hoped that they would be able to get it all into the semi, and get out before anyone showed up to ask questions. At dawn they began their journey. The Bradley's were loaded down with people. Each Bradley held three armed watcher's as well as ten people to load the supplies into the semi. They were also bringing along the two dump trucks, for extra stuff. Scott was placed in command, as it was decided Stanley would stay in the community. As the convoy roared down the road, everything seemed eerily quiet. They passed the shopping center, where the fight had happened, and kept on going. Fifteen minutes later, they entered the upscale shopping mall. The plan was simple and to the point, two Bradley's would park outside the front of the store, the third would park in back. The semi would be pulled to the loading dock, and the dump trucks would wait by the side of the semi. The volunteers would do the actual looting while the armed units would stand watch. The shopping center looked deserted, and there was no sign of any looting or others violence. Since Sport's Town was first, they followed the plan. Two Bradley's pulled in front of the store, as one person manned the M60, the driver began scanning the parking lot for any movement. The back bay door opened and the volunteers rushed out to the back of the store with the others. the second Bradley had a ladder attached, and Mitch and Roger immediately pulled it off and climbed to the top of the roof. There they provided over watch for the operation. The third Bradley came to a stop in the back of the store, and disgorged its passengers. Scott, John and Kristy used a crowbar to enter the back door of the store, and then the volunteers followed suit. Everyone turned on their flashlights, and the ransacking began. As John and Kristy led one group to the camping section, Scott led another group to the hunting/firearms section. There was a backroom behind the gunrack, and a vault in the room. After searching through the desk, Scott found the combination written on a sheet of paper, taped to the bottom of the desk. They opened the vault, and found more firearms. "Looks like someone likes there riot guns" Scott muttered to himself. In the vault were ten Remington home defense shotguns, still in the boxes. There were also ten Ruger 10/22's, and five Winchester 30/30 lever rifles. "Get it all" Scott yelled and went back out to the firearms floor. In the gunrack were various shotguns for hunting and home defense, hunting rifles, and various 22's. They netted about forty different

firearms, and alot of ammo. There was ammo for the main calibers, like 223, 308, 9mm, 45, 40sw, as well as some of the more hunting oriented rounds, like 7mm, 3006, 270 and so on. They loaded it all up. There was also archery equipment, and fishing supplies. They got it all. There were also loads of camo clothing, and boots. There were also fanny packs, and backpacks in the same camo patterns. The camping section held sleeping bags, all kinds of Coleman accessories, coolers, thermoses, small propane tanks, adapters for large propane grills to use the small bottles of fuel. There was all kinds of rain gear, tarps, batteries, and FRS/GMRS radios. There was a pallet of bottled water as well. Everything was carried to the truck. Scott was worried, he wanted to have enough room to hit the Hiker's Paradise store next. After three hours, they were through. They had about half of the semi left to use, plus the two dump trucks were still empty. They went to the Hiker's store next, running the same pattern, and began to unload it as well. What they found there was a great balance to the sport's store. There were four pallets of dehydrated food in the backroom, as well as a shipment of high quality hiking boots. They looted more sleeping bags, sleeping pads, all manner of backpacks, fannypacks, pouches. They got quality rope, and cord. There was more camping gear, as well as binoculars, watches, and knives. There were books on edible plants, poisonous plants and hiking trails through out North Carolina. There were bikes and child carriers built for off roading. There were tents, and clothing designed for cold weather. There were camping stoves, plus the fuel to operate them. There were warm socks, gloves and hats. There were also Protec helmets, to be used for biking, kayaking, and mountain climbing. They had loaded the semi full, and were already filling the dump truck when Scott got a call from Roger on the roof.

"Scott, you copy?"

"Go ahead Roger" so much for radio security

"We have two school buses, as well as four pick up trucks full of people heading toward the sports store."

"Do they see us?"

"Yes, they are driving wide around us"

"Keep them under watch"

"Gotcha"

"Kareef, you read me?"

"Go ahead Scott"

"Kareef, move your Bradley to the semi, we are almost done."

"You got it"

Scott then ran to the back of the store where John and Kristy were watching Kareef and Barry move the Bradley toward the loading dock.

"John, you and Kristy go out front with the two Bradleys, and take charge." "Get with Mitch, tell him to fire on anything that heads our way, we are just about ready to leave." "Tell Gansen and Galtier to fire those m60's if there is the first hint of trouble."

John said, "You got it, boy, those fellas are going to be pissed we got here first."

Scott just smiled, "I hope they are impressed with our arsenal, I do not want a firefight."

John just smiled and said "Amen"

The group pulled up to the sport's store similarly to what the community watch group did. The two buses went to the back of the store with one of the pickups, as the three front pickups parked front to back in front of the store. The men and women were armed with an assortment of SKS rifles, and scoped hunting rifles. A few had shotguns and pistols. It looked like a group of neighbors, who had just woken up to the brave new world everyone had begun to live in. Once Scott's team was loaded and ready for take off, they waited to see what the new group would do. They heard glass breaking and some loud curses as the new group discovered the store had been looted and emptied. The leader of the group, walked out the front door of the store, climbed to the top of one of the pickup trucks, and just slung his fist in the air at Scott's group.

Kristy was the only one to respond, as she climbed to the top of the Bradley, smiled and gave him the finger. The new group just packed up, and left. Scott told John, "I bet they hit the Wal-Mart, we left it alone." "I bet you are right, and we have to drive right by there too" John replied. "I hope they let us pass, they don't stand a chance against us, and we don't have any room for a china mart spree today." "Plenty to share today I guess" John offered. As they began their journey back home, Kareef was in command of the lead Bradley. He was driving out about fifteen minutes ahead of the convoy. Scott had ordered that the rem870 riot guns be loaded and carried by the volunteers for some extra firepower in case the convoy was attacked. Kareef had his two guys Frank and Barry, as well as ten of the volunteers, two of which were armed. As they turned at the intersection where the Wal-Mart was, he noticed the new comers weren't there. He called Scott to let him know the news.

"Scott, you read me over"

"Yeah Kareef"

"Our friends are not at Wal-Mart"

"That is strange, that would have been my first stop"

"I smell a trap Scott"

"Kareef keep going like your going home, we are right behind you"

Kareef turned right to the connector road that would get them to their street. As he did, he saw that the two buses were now blocking the street, and that there was no where to turn around if he went any farther. He ordered the driver to stop, and he then pulled a pair of binoculars out and took a look. The road block had been a hasty affair, and the people around it were armed with a variety of shotguns and rifles. Most of the people carried shovels, axes, or baseball bats. He looked right or left, but did not see the pick up trucks anywhere. "I do not like this" he thought.

Scott who was riding in the semi, got worried. There were now four pickup trucks full of armed people somewhere waiting to hit them. The second Bradley held Mitch, Roger, and Gansen, plus ten volunteers, two of which were armed. The roadblock was at the bottom of a hill, with an office park on either side. There was only one way in/out of the park. This was the perfect bottleneck ambush site. The people manning the roadblock must live in the small subdivision further down the road. "Their mad, we got the stuff before they did" Scott mused. Kareef's Bradley had already made the turn, but no one else had.

"Kareef, this is Scott, do you read me?"

"Yes Scott go ahead"

"When I give the go ahead, I want you to strafe the crap out of the two buses." "When you are done, put your vehicle in reverse, and back up to the corner." "I will have Mitch's Bradley go forward after that." "You will them re-load, and cover incase those pickups hit our rear." "Mitch will bash through the roadblock, and I want him to shoot anything that doesn't run at that point." "Mitch you copy those instructions." Mitch replied, "I copy, but if they have any sense they are monitoring us." Scott shook his head, "I hope they are, I want them to run and leave us alone." "There is enough in that Wal-Mart for them, and we got here first." "We will crush them if they resist, we have no choice."

Just then John broke into the radio broadcast, "Scott I got three trucks coming for our rear, they are staying away, but are watching us close." It was time to put up or shut up. Scott was glad he ordered all the shotguns loaded and given to the volunteers, now there was some extra firepower in each Bradley, as well as two in each dump truck. The newcomers plan was obvious. They hoped the convoy would get bunched up, then they would harass long enough so that the group would leave the semi and the dump trucks and run for the Bradleys. What they did not realize was that Scott and his group had already one battle under their belt and were mentally prepared to destroy anything that blocked their path. Scott did not want to fight anyone, especially these people who were just trying to survive. But he would fight if attacked.

“John, destroy those trucks over”

“You sure Scott, we could try to scare.....”

“John, take them down, and stay in the rear of the convoy until I say different.”

“Kareef, strafe the roadblock”

“Kareef out”

“Mitch, when Kareef slacks his fire getready to smash the roadblock down.” “If these people fire on you, fire back.” “If they run, let them run”

“Gotcha Scott Mitch out”

John opened fire on the trucks. The first one seemed to explode as the 308 rounds tore through the engine block. Gas was everywhere, and soon a second truck caught fire. The third truck stopped behind the destroyed two, and the occupants began pulling their wounded from the wreckage. John held his fire at that point, since they were out of the fight. Kareef opened up on the school buses, and the people began to flee from the heavy fire power. Kareef then signaled to Mitch who drove forward to smash the buses out of the way. He slammed in between them, then backed up and pushed them away one at a time. Kareef covered Mitch, and called to Scott with the all clear. Scott accepted the obvious, and gave the order for the group to move forward. Just then the fourth pickup truck appeared, from one of the business parks. It just pulled out and stopped, with the driver and the other occupants getting out and pointing their rifles at the convoy. Scott hoped they were through, since it was such a lopsided fight, and they were. They just stood there, in shock at what had happened. On the way home, they passed an old auto junk yard, and garage. It was run by an old man and his son's, John had done some business with him in the past. The older man was sitting in the front of the shop, in a rocking chair. As the convoy passed, he stood up and waved to it. Scott made a mental note to visit the man in the next few days. They would need some advice on getting a few vehicles modified for the trip to Eden.

Stanley was having a long day. He and Harvey were training the homeowners how to fire and load the 30/30 lever action rifles they had captured. They had agreed to hand these out to the homeowners, as long as the homeowners learned how to fire them and load them. In trade, the community watch was able to collect more food from the grocery store supplies. The supply itself would run out on a few days, and then everyone would be back to square one. Until then, the plan was to get the homeowners up to speed on the rifles, which would be passed out to form a new militia. Although Stanley was happy to arm and train new people, these people were beholden to Paul and the board, not the community watch. He wondered if that would bring trouble down the road.

“I will be glad when John and I can get to the gun store and see if they have any ammo left”

Harvey said to Stanley. “I wonder if the guys running the place are even there?”

Harvey thought for a minute, then said, “Well we should check it out, we have enough stuff to trade for some 223 and 30/30 which is what we really need.”

“Yeah tomorrow would be a good day for that.”

Paul closed the blinds to his house, and made sure all the doors were locked. He then proceeded to make little white lines on a mirror he kept for just this purpose. He then pulled out a worthless one hundred dollar bill, rolled it up, and snorted a long line into his nostril. The feeling was intense and immediate, and gone almost as quickly. After a few of these, he felt normal again. His supplier wanted more and more stuff in exchange for the coke. Paul had just about given all his food ration, and some of his clothing for this large supply. But the dealer had wanted a down payment as well for the next shipment. He wanted the addresses of the gun owners, and anyone else who was holding large supplies of food. Paul had given him the info, and the dealer had been pleased. Paul had hidden the problem from the world since his early days in college. Since things had turned upside down, he wanted more and more of the stuff. He

would do anything to keep getting it. The dealer had told him that the three major gangs in Raleigh had come together, and that they wanted more loot and supplies. Paul understood only that he wanted more white stuff, and would give any info he had for it.

As the convoy returned, all the looted materials were placed in the two homes that were being used for warehousing. Guards were placed around the houses to make sure nothing was taken. All the firearms and ammo was moved to John's house, which was filling up quickly. Scott gave an after action report to Stanley, who just shook his head at the wasted roadblock. They realized they would have to send an expedition out everyday at this pace, or the next roadblock would be better prepared to stop them. They were also going to get the guys together to hash out what they thought the vehicle needs would be. They also needed to find emergency replacement vehicles for the Bradley's, since once the tracks broke, they would become useless. More stuff to think about.

The sheriff of Rockingham County had given his ok for the trip to Greensboro. His stipulation was that four recently discharged from the military deputies go with them. They had at their disposal three armored trucks, taken from an armored banking service. They also had eighteen bay Sundrop truck as well, to use for carrying supplies back. Mario would lead the convoy in his armored Crown Vic. It was decided that what was ever in those storage areas needed to be secured. Mario was just happy to have the support to get his daughters. They would plan the route, with the deputies, and file it with the sheriff in case they needed a rescue.

Harvey, John, Kristy, and Roger left in one of the Bradleys to go to Gary's Gun shop. It was a short drive, and they were there quickly. There were at least twenty armed people around the street in front of the shop, with several trucks parked near the rear entrance. Ol'Gary was clearing out. One of the armed guards had a SAW, while others had either M16's or MP5's. John commented to Kristy that most of the guards looked like LEO's, and she agreed. Harvey and John got out of the vehicle, and held their hands high so the guards would not shoot. Harvey identified himself, and one of the shop workers recognized his name. They were allowed inside, as Kristy and Roger stayed in the Bradley.

"Harvey, John, what are y'all doing here?"

"Well Gary, we need some stuff, and we have some things to trade"

"Like what?"

"Well I have some silver, some food, and some SW1076 10mm pistols for trade."

Gary pondered this request, actually, he did not need the business, as he was loading everything up to be carted to his home out in the county. Harvey had been one of his greatest customers, always buying something when he came in the store. Gary had helped get the M1a's for Harvey before Christmas. The mention of the 10mm's was troubling, as they were Raleigh PD issue.

"Harvey where did you get those 10mm's?"

"Long story Gary, but I will say it wasn't easy."

"Were y'all in that shootout the other week?"

"That was us Gary, we tried to stop a gang from capturing our neighborhood grocery store, and to help the police who were there." "Those pistols no longer have owners."

Gary nodded, understanding that the world had indeed changed. He hated to over charge, but he wasn't coming back to his shop again.

"Harvey this is what I have for you, you say you need some 223, 30/30, 00buck, and whatever cleaning supplies I have?"

"Yeah Gary, and any magazines for the Glock model 35/22, and any mags for the AR-15."

"Here is what I want Harvey, give me \$2000 in silver, and a pickup load of food, and this is what

I will trade you for.”

Gary promised Harvey and John 10,000 rounds of 62 grain 223, 2000 rounds of 30/30, 2000 rounds of 00 buck and assorted slugs, ten pistol mags for the G-35, and a case of Beta mags(12). John began salivating at the mention of the Beta mag. The mag held one hundred rounds, and was very robust. Harvey agreed to the terms, and the trade was made. Using Ferguson’s Suburban, they brought all of the ammo home. It was stored in John’s house, which was filling up to capacity.

Scott told his wife and her family about the proposed trip to Eden. He was glad they voted to go as well. There was a lot to plan for, and things to do before then, but the trip was getting closer. Scott would be happy when and if they made it to Eden.

Toby stared out into the night sky from his father’s backporch. He wondered what his friend was doing, and if he was on his way home. “I hope you get home soon, Scott” Toby mused, “It is sure getting interesting!”

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on April 28, 2004 23:48April 28, 2004 11:48 PM:

Chapter 8

Courtney (Scott’s older sister) was not happy at all. Here they were, stuck in “Hotlanta” at least six hours from her family. She knew in her heart that they were in Eden, at her grandfather’s house. She just had that gut feeling they were there, waiting on her to get there as well. She realized, that all these years, she had been too far from home. Her husband, Arthur had been acting funny since the attacks as well. It was as if he wanted to tell her something, but couldn’t quite get it out. They had stayed home almost two weeks now, but the city around them was crumbling. The first few days after the attacks weren’t too bad, but then after the nukes had gone off, then things went screwy fast. First they noticed the sirens and ambulance bells had quit. Then they could both see and smell the smoke from hundreds of fires all across the city. The neighbors had gotten together and talked about what was going on, but no one really wanted to do anything about it, they just wanted to stay home. So here she was, eating dinner consisting of Chef boy Ardee, and hot tea, by candle light. If it were a hurricane or ice storm and they were stranded it would be romantic. Not now, now it was dangerous. Arthur decided now was the time to speak, so he started the new conversation, “Courtney, I need to tell you something” “What, spit it out, you have been trying all day”

“Well, you remember at the family reunion last year, when Scott and I went for a drive, to your grandpas place, to get some stuff you had stored there?” “Yeah, I remember, you guys ended up staying the night there, because some of Scott’s old school buddies showed up, and there were a lot of beer cans lying around the next day.” “You and Scott were in so much trouble” Courtney laughed at the memory, because although she fussed at the both of them, along with Shelly, inside she was happy. Her husband had been accepted into the Hinden family almost immediately, and Scott had treated Arthur as a brother ever since. Their politics had been similar, and they generally enjoyed each others company. Her brother Scott usually brought about extreme emotions in people, they either really liked him, or really disliked him, and although Arthur considered Scott a little extreme, he was generally fond of his brother in law. “Well, Scott talked me into buying a few things, and I should have told you, but I didn’t, but now, I really think we will need them, and.....”

“Slow down Arthur, Scott can talk you into a lot of things, what is going here?”

“I have been buying some things, in case of emergencies, actually, I was preparing stuff, so that

if we ever had to leave Atlanta, we could.”

“You know I had already prepared our thirty six hour kit, just like the Homeland Defense Dept. said.”

“I bought a few things more”

“Like what? (she was getting angry, she knew he did not get a promotion at work he wanted, and lost a bonus this year)”

“We have enough gas, food and water, plus the camping gear, to get us to Eden, barring any unusual occurrences.” “ I also got us some firearms, because my fear of this happening.”

“Scott talked you into buying guns, that little dork, I am gonna give him a piece of my mind after I let you have it....”

Just then there were three explosions off in the distance, and Courtney began to realize maybe Scott was on to something. She calmed a bit, and looked into her husbands eyes, and said “Did you at least get enough for both of us?”

Arthur smiled, his wife seeing some reason, and said, “I did, we each have a glock 23 which is a handgun, and spare mags for them, I also bought a M1a bush rifle,a Remington 870 mariner, and for you, A Ruger PC4 carbine.”

Courtney just sighed, and said, “You realize those names mean nothing to me”

“I will show you after we eat, I think starting tonight that the pistols shouldn’t leave our sides, and tomorrow, we will begin packing for the trip.”

Courtney, was glad almost that her husband had defied her, and made those purchases without her consent. She still wanted to chastise him a little, but decided that this was one of those times she should just let it go. The next day, Arthur ran Courtney through some drills, how to load, to fire, reload. He explained the easy Glock safety, which is do not put your finger on the trigger unless you are ready to destroy something. Their backyard was twenty five yards, with no house behind their fence. Arthur dug a trench four feet deep, and then set some targets inside, so that Courtney could fire her weapons. Once she had at least a working knowledge of her handgun and carbine, they began preparing to leave in earnest. Arthur owned a Ford F150, with an extended cab. He had been making additions to the body of the vehicle ever since he had purchased it a year ago. What Courtney was learning about her husband was that a light bulb had gone off in his head sometime around August, two thousand three. His truck was well prepared for a road trip, with an electric wench, front collision guard, all lights were covered with a thick mesh guard, and a rear collision guard. On the bed of the truck, he had roll bars installed both at the back end of the cab, and the back end of the bay of the truck. He had a cover which was the same height of the cab placed on the bed of the truck, under the roll bars. If the truck flipped, the roll bars would take the roll, sparing the cab damage, and hopefully allowing them to get back on their way. Their was a ring bolted onto the center area of the cab, just under the front seat. This was for the 870, which Arthur installed a folding stock. Behind the front seat, was a cordura based apron, with straps to hold the bush rifle and the PC4 carbine. In the extended cab, he had placed an old military ammo can, which held two cloth bandoliers of m14 mags, each bandolier holding four mags. In another can behind the passenger seat, was fifteen ten round mags for the carbine. In the seats of the extended cab, held their bug out bags, complete with rations for each for seven days, fuel, stove, and sleeping gear. Also there was a three season tent, with extra tarps. The tarps were camouflaged, and two were long enough to cover the truck. Never trust the rainfly that comes with a tent. Also, with a couple of good tarps, you can purchase a cheaper grade of tent, and the tarp evens out the quality. Most tents are made fairly well, the degrading factors come when the elements get a hold of them. A quality tarp can make a cheap tent last decades. For the bed of the truck, he had purchased several thirty inch duffles, each one numbered with a laminate card. He also purchased a rubbermaid based large children’s wagon. In the off chance that they had to abandon the truck, he could get two of the duffles into the wagon, based on their number. One and two were more important than three

and four. He also had four of the square blue seven gallon water tanks in the bed as well. He had an extension shelf that would connect to his trailer hitch. It held five ten gallon gas cans. For he and Courtney, he had purchased surplus British Kevlar helmets, which were a bargain at thirty bucks a pop. Although he did not trust that they would stop a round to the head, they could provide more protection in a crash than a plastic Protec helmet, which was his other choice. Since Arthur was on the hefty side healthy, the Brit helmets also were a little larger than anything made in America. He purchased two sets of Peltor tac 6 hearing aids, which were a perfect fit under the helmets. Arthur had taken more advice from Scott and acquired an Arktis jungle vest, for his homeland defense rifle. The reason this vest was so well liked by Scott (and the author) is that the mag pockets are larger sized than the American made counter parts. You can get sixteen M16 mags in this vest or twelve 308 mags into it. The mags come out easier, since the pockets aren't quite as tight. It is also about seventy five dollars to one hundred dollars cheaper than Blackhawk and Eagle Industries. For Courtney's carbine, he chose the Tactical Taylor Mav base, with pistol mag pockets in place of the usual mag set up. This was a great vest for the beginner, because you could essentially set it up any way you wanted to, utilizing the Pals webbing system. He had a hydration reservoir pocket on his vest, on the mavs deep pockets he set up the GI canteens with the hydration tube to run over the shoulder straps. Their clothing would be layered, jeans, mock turtle neck, sweat shirt. Even though it was winter in the South, most days the temp stayed around Forty degrees, which with adrenaline and stress, meant you did not need a heavy coat. Winter coats were packed into their BOB's though, just in case.

He went over everything with Courtney, his plan, and how he began to believe these preparations were necessary. She was surprised that her brother had had such an impact on Arthur.

"Well, it was the fact that the only laws being passed and the only real Federal response was to form another agency, that made me look around the world a bit differently." "Then in August with the power outage in the Northeast, it was like a rocket going off in my head." "I always thought Scott a little weird when it came to his concerns, but I realized he was onto something." "I should have told you about this, and involved you in it, but this was not something I wanted to debate or compromise on." "Besides, most of my purchases were one time deals, I don't need more guns, or another vehicle." "I just wanted to be able to get us home to your Grandfather's place." "It is my responsibility to do this." Courtney just smiled, and realized he was right. "I love you Arthur, she said. They planned to leave the day after tomorrow, and hoped that they could drive the whole way.

Russia

Kotsky and Mishka stared at the written reports of the damage done by the American attack. Although it was unexpected, all it did was put off the inevitable. They had then rounded up all the Cuban personnel and shot them, since it was obvious they decided to bat for the other team. The Russian President wanted to up the timetable for the subjugation of Europe. France and Germany were playing ball, using their navies to help with the quarantine of the British Isles, since the small pox outbreak. The Americans in Germany had been forced to surrender, since the American navy was to spread out to rescue them. Soon the highest ranking American officer in Europe would be in Russian hands. Soon, Russian armored brigades would be moving on western Europe. Eastern Europe for the most part had signed on the UN plan of the occupation of Europe. Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary were the only ones who refused the UN resolution of forced occupation. They were added to the list as being rebellious against the new world order that was taking effect across the globe. China had begun operations against Taiwan, using a massive rocket gas attack, and landing troops from the far reaches of

China to subjugate them. The operation only took a few weeks. Japan and South Korea had immediately acquiesced to The New World Order, and the rest of Asia was following suit. Australia and New Zealand told the international community to go “spit” and were actively helping American and British forces pull out of the middle east and Asia. Chaos seemed to reign around the world, but the Russian and Chinese armies would soon put an end to that. Already, troops were being mobilized, conscription notices posted and men rounded up. Old production methods were put back into place, producing the AKM, SKS, and armored vehicles and tanks. Old jet planes whose designs dated back to the fifties were being re-produced to make up for the loss of the world wide GPS communication grid. Pilots would have to learn to navigate again, with a compass and flight orientation. It would take a few years longer, but soon the world would be under Soviet/Chicom control.

Raleigh

Officer Mel Millet was glad to be alive. He was the only officer to survive the attack on the shopping center. He felt a large sense of gratitude at what the people of Ranford Trace had done for him. Although he was still bound to crutches for the next few months, with some exercise, he would regain the use of his leg. He was young, only being on the Raleigh police force for a few months, when the balloon went up. He had made a decision, to live here, since his parents lived all the way in Montana, and he had no illusions of ever seeing them again. He wanted to stay in Ranford Trace, and help out as best he could. He was going to address the board tonight, and ask to stay, as well as ask if they could send a party into town to get his things from his apartment. He was hoping they would let him in. He had taken to walking with his crutches every three hours during the day. The fresh air made him feel healthier, and the exercise helped him feel like he was getting better. The community watch group had asked that when he walked he carry his service pistol and belt, and wear his badge, so that people would respect his presence. He found that when he walked the neighborhood in its entirety, people said hello, and waved to him. He had a calming presence around the neighborhood. Today he was doing his usual rounds, when he saw something that peaked his interest. A black male, was knocking on the door of Paul’s house. Seeing a black male in this neighborhood was not a sign of trouble by any means, but this particular male was. Mel recognized him from some of the intel briefings at the office. This was a “soldier” of one of the big drug dealers in town. The male, carried a backpack, and was let into the dark house. The police officer, fearing the worst, decided to tell Mitch, a man who reminded him of his father. “something ain’t right about that”.

Shelly Hindon was a woman with a mission. She was Scott’s wife, and was tired of staying home and doing nothing. She was a doer, not a passive react to life person. She decided that if they were going to move to Eden, she would help with the list’s and preparations. She had been a teacher for almost ten years, and was a mother to boot. At the next meeting of the minds, she was going to suggest a few of her ideas, and see how they would fly with the group. She knew her husband would listen and give his honest opinion, but wondered about the others. She did not enjoy the shooting sports, and refused to carry or fire a weapon. Scott never pushed or force his hobby down her throat, and she grew to respect his views on the second amendment. She had been raised to hate guns, and to not associate with people who owned them. But Scott had slowly brought her around to his hobby, at least in accepting it. It happened when they were watching the news, and the Albanians had risen to fight against the Serbs who were occupying their land. Shelly asked why didn’t the Albanians just kick them out. Scott had to explain since they did not have access to firearms, all they could do was protest, and try to get guns through the black market which took time and was expensive. Shelly could not believe that no one had access to guns. Scott explained why the second amendment was so important, and why it was

included at the specific order from the thirteen states, in the Bill of Rights. The Constitution itself would not have been accepted by the states, if the Bill of Rights had not been included. No one else in the world has those rights guaranteed by birth other than Americans. Shelly knew that her husband's weapons had been used in defense of not only their neighborhood, but in defense of those who were not able to defend themselves. She still questioned the use of violence, as any sane person would, but she knew her husband had done it all in defense of his family. She decided to make herself the head of a women's club that would plan for the supplying and care for the children going on the trip. She began to try to figure out the logistics of what the children would need, including diapers, formula, baby food, wipes, baby soap, special clothes washing detergent for babies with sensitive skin, canned fruits and vegetables, bottles, sippy cups, pacifiers, clothes, the sleeping arrangements, how would children stay occupied on the road, children's books, crayons, shoes, the list was almost endless. This was very necessary because Shelly had a premonition that the whole Trace community would end up going with them in the end. She did not know how or why, but she just felt it.

Mel found Mitch in his front yard, playing with about ten of the newly looted hunting rifles. He was mating new scopes to each rifle, based on the calibration they could handle. Most of the hunting rifles would make decent sniper rifles, with heavy hitting calibers like the 7mm, 8mm, and 30/06. There were a few in 308, that he couldn't wait to get to the range. They had a basic 200 yard range, and he would scope each rifle in tomorrow with its new scope. They had enough weapons for a few good fireteams, and Stanley was really training the community well in small unit tactics. With the unfinished townhomes, they were also getting a small amount of house clearing training as well. "We are lucky to have Stanley, don't I know it!" Mitch thought. He saw Mel walk up and he smiled, Mel was a good kid, who had the awful luck of being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

"Mitch, you at a stopping point?"

"Yeah Mel, anytime, something wrong?"

"I spotted a black male going into Paul's house, I recognized him from some briefings my unit had before the lights went out." "The male in question is part of a drug gang operating in north Raleigh."

"Mel, are you sure?" "How could anyone be dealing drugs now a days anyway?"

"Shoot Mitch, it is probably easier for the stuff to enter the country, if no one is looking or cares to look anymore." "There are plenty of things to trade for it as well."

"And this guy went into Paul's house?"

"Yeah, he did knock first, but was let in"

Mitch thought for a moment, Scott, Stanley, Harvey, and Kareef were helping to train some of the homeowners in the use of their new weapons, as well as giving them a course in small unit tactics. So they were busy, and Mitch did not want to interrupt them for this. Was it even worth worrying about anyway? So what if the idiot was doing drugs, what was it to anybody else.

"Well, Mel, with the way things are, is it our business to ask Paul about this, or should we get involved?"

"Mitch, y'all have to do what's best for you, but Paul only has so much food, he has no firearms, what could he be trading for drugs? Info maybe?"

"What kind of info?"

"Like where do all the gun nuts live? where is the spare food kept? Who has more food than other's? Where do all of the single women live? Any cops live here?"

"Wow, I never thought of it like that, but you are right" "Is the drug dealer this guy works for a real bad guy?"

"You bet, one of the worst, once, he had a crush on this girl, who enjoyed his money, but also enjoyed the attention of other guys." "He caught her with another guy, so after he beat the guy

senseless, he then brands his name into her forehead." "So everyone would know she was his girl"

Mitch was almost physically sick at the mental picture he got. "Alright, maybe this is worth checking out" "Lets go see Roger, who said he was gonna stay home and have a Bushmills quiet day." "What does that mean?" asked Mel. "Bushmills is an Irish whiskey, but who can tell what that crazy Rhodesian is talking about."

Mitch went to get Roger, while Mel hid behind a house to keep an eye on Paul. Sure enough, about two hours later, the man left Paul's house, and walked into the projects. Mitch and Roger walked up behind Mel somewhat later, and just stared at Paul's house. Roger was a little shaky, already having had a few whiskeys. His mood turned black when Mel filled him in on their suspicions. "I can deal with this mate, I did this sort of thing back home" Mitch was still not sold on the idea of questioning someone forcibly, but Mel and Roger both were already planning to get in the house that night.

"Mitch, you go tell Stanley and Scott about our little party, tell them to meet us here in an hour."

"Roger, I know you have seen some things in your lifetime that builds you for this type of thing, but I am unsure how I feel about what might happen next."

"Mitch sometimes good people have to hang around semi-good people who aren't afraid of doing bad things" "Besides he may sing like a canary anyways"

"Mel, you took an oath to the Constitution, you think this scumbag is worth blowing that off?"

"Actually, I took an oath to uphold the laws of the community, not the Constitution, but this is different" "I do not believe we live in civilized times anymore." "I believe we either start acting like bigger fish or we will get eaten by the bigger fish." "This isn't about his drug use, its about what intel he is giving someone who may do us harm" "Either way, we have to deal with it!"

Mitch just nodded his head, he saw enough interrogations in Vietnam to know he never wanted to see another. He had thought they had been worth it to, but in the end it wasn't enough. He said, "I will go get the guys" and trudged off. Roger followed him with is eyes, then spoke to Mel, " He is a good man, a vet too, he has earned the right to disagree with us." Mel merely nodded, not sure if even he wanted to go forward into the house. As night drew closer, Scott and Stanley appeared, and the four men discussed the next move. Scott spoke first, "Look, Roger, we talk to him first, reason with him, then we talk some more, got it?"

Roger nodded and said, " I think you guys are making this a bigger deal, more than likely he will just tell us what's going on, probably think we are out of our minds not him."

"Either way" Stanley spoke, "No rough stuff unless we find out there is an imminent threat."

Roger said, "Deal!"

Stanley went first, to the back of the house and waited, he would cover if anyone came outside, or if Paul ran out the back door when Scott, Mel, and Roger knocked. Harvey, John, and Kareef waited two blocks away just in case there was trouble. Missy, once again manned the radios, to send help if needed.

Scott walked up to the door, he had only his G22 and G27 holstered under his jacket. Mel wore his utility belt with his service pistol, and Roger had his faithful Browning. Scott knocked, then knocked again. There was no answer, so Scott then proceeded to bang on the door, saying, "Paul, it's me Scott, we saw someone leaving your house we just want to make sure everything is ok." No answer! Scott looked at Roger and Mel, shrugged his shoulders, and tried the doorknob. It was unlocked, not liking the sensation crawling up his neck, Scott opened the door to a dark and smelly house. It smelled of stale crackers and burnt rubber. Turning his surefire on, Scott swept the living room, and entered. Roger moved left, and Mel went right. Scott moved quickly, sensing there was no danger, and went straight for the backdoor. Sticking his hand out first, he then stuck his head out, motioning for Stanley to come on. Roger and Mel were covering the stairs after clearing the rest of the first floor. They just looked up the stairs fearing

the worst for Paul. Scott moved first, saying, "Paul, Its Scott, we are just checking to make sure you are OK." They got to the bedroom first, then the next bedroom. Paul lived alone, so the next room had been converted to an office. They all entered together, and there was Paul. In his office chair, laid back, DEAD! Drug paraphenalia was al over the oak desk. Mel spoke first, "Looks like an over dose, I don't see any signs of wounds or gunshots." Scott said, "It had to be intentional, that guy administered the death blow, then left." we should search the house, and see if the guy left anything that can help us find out what is going on." Roger discovered the papers first. In Paul's handwriting, was the map of the neighborhood, with notations where the community watch people lived. It also had stars on the houses that were being used for storage, and a large circle around John's place, which housed the armory. Everyone in the group looked at Paul, and was personally glad he was dead. Except Scott, who bent down on his knees, and asked the Lord to forgive Paul for his sins. He also asked the Lord to forgive himself, for his failure to find a common ground with this man who was now dead, so that this could have been averted. He asked the Lord for divine guidance, on how to proceed and how to help these people he felt obligated to protect. He said Amen, stood up, and said, "We need to find the guy who did this, and find out who needed this info." "I have to get the board together, and figure out how to proceed." "Stanley, I suggest you get ten of your best together, and get them loaded up for a trip to Raleigh." "We may need to hit these guys before they hit us" "God help us, but I wish it would snow or God would give us an ice storm, to buy us some time." "Alright, lets get cracking"

Hemingway Stoddard was a friend of Scott's from work. He had actually decided to find a better paying job, even if it meant moving. Scott always joked about it, knowing his friend would end up moving North. His friend was one hundred percent Southern. Not in a political way, or a way that meant he looked down on others for not being Southern, but in a way that usually brought calm to people. In their business of retail, Heming could disarm any disgruntled customer, and turn a return into another sale. But retail is retail, and Heming was ready for greener pastures. Heming shared some of Scott's wacky ideas about preparedness, and often was the butt of the same jokes others used on Scott. Heming was a preparedness junky as well, and had built quite a larder in his condo, where he lived in Cary, which was a town right next to Raleigh. He was into firearms as well, and had purchased well. He studied guns like there was no tomorrow, and often read two or three books on a particular tool before purchasing it. He had standardized, like Scott on the Glock 22, with sixteen rounds of 40sw, to Heming, it was the perfect fighting handgun. He had bought a National Match grade M1a, and all the accoutrements that went with it. Only there wasn't much good it was gonna do him now. He was in Cleveland, Ohio in the winter time, and the world was ending. Most people would have just curled up and died, but not ol' Heming. Although the job interview and subsequent business tour would only take two days, the day of his interview was the the now famous Friday. The hotel he was staying at had only been four blocks from the company, so he was preparing to walk over when the power went out. He had gone to the office, signed in, and waited until someone could see him. The job would have paid twice what he could have made in North Carolina, and would have put him on the fast track for a quick promotion. As he waited he listened to the news reports, and realizing that he was too far from home, just got up and walked out. He went straight to a small hot dog stand, and bought three chili dogs. He gobbled them up, and asked directions to a local camping store. He was sent on a wild goose chase, having to ask directions three more times, but finally arrived at a mass retail outdoor shop. Surprisingly they were open. Used to the massive winter storms coming off of Lake Erie, the people of Cleveland seemed to take the news in stride. Hemingway felt different, and was preparing to get home any way he could. Once in the store, he asked the clerk if they were taking credit cards, the clerk replied yes, why wouldn't they? There was emergency lighting in the store, and the registers seemed to be on, so there must have been a

generator on. So Hemingway got a shopping cart, and away he went. He purchased a quality three season two person tent, a zero degree rated mummy style sleeping bag, a 5000 cubic inch backpack, a small stove and five canisters of fuel, water/wind proof matches, a large poncho, real tree rain gear, two large tarps, winter goretex boots, eight pairs of socks, two pairs of heavy gloves, all manner of camping food, one large maglite flashlight, two reloads worth of batteries, a machete with sheaf, a hatchet, and topo maps of Ohio, West Virginia, Virginia, and North Carolina. He knew he may have to walk home, but he was definitely going home. He then went to the hunting section. He knew with the power out he could not purchase a decent firearm, because of the "instant background check" system. But what he was hoping for was a blackpowder rifle or shotgun. Luckily these were not regulated the same way as a centerfire rifle, so he could just purchase one of the rack. They only sold rifles, which was a bummer because the modern replica pistols are pretty robust, and Heming was hoping to find two Ruger old armies. But he settled on a .54 caliber percussion rifle. He then loaded up on powder, caps and shot. He asked one of the employees to wrap the rifle in cardboard, because he had to carry it. As he checked out, they made an imprint of the card, giving him a copy with the receipt. Just as he was leaving, the Attorney General announced the ban on further firearm sales. The clerk just smiled and said, "Looks like you got here just in time". Everything fit in the backpack, except the rifle which was wrapped up so no one could see what it was. Hemingway walked back to the hotel. When he entered the lobby, the manager, ran up to him and said, "Mr. Stoddard, we have generator power for the next two days, but you may want to make other arrangements beyond that."

Heming replied, "I am from North Carolina, and all flights home have been cancelled, I appreciate you allowing me to stay two more nights, but I may need a few more nights beyond that." "The company that paid my bill only paid through tomorrow, may I pay for the rest of next week as well?" The hotel Manager, feeling sympathy for Heming, and knowing that he only had twenty people staying in a hotel that was built for two hundred accepted the offer. "I live in the basement, so I can be here twenty four seven, Mr. Heming." "As long as I am here, you may stay." "I will except no payment until the power comes back on."

Heming shook the man's hand and said thank you. But he knew the power wasn't coming back on. The manager also said, "To conserve power, eating times in the restaurant will be eight AM, twelve PM, seven PM." "Also, at night, the power will be cut, because of the key less entry door lock." "We will provide a door stop, which will keep anyone from entering." "Our lobby will be secure, and only the front door will be open for entry or departure." "we ask that you keep your door partially open, with the chain connected, because if it is shut, you will not be able to open it until power is restored." "I will see you at seven then, Mr. Hemingway." And off the manager went. Hemingway had a lot to do before dinner, so he walked up the steps to his second story room, and got to work.

Hemingway had brought carry on luggage because of what he called his "BUG OUT STUFF", since you could not carry on a plane anything a grown man might need for emergencies, you had to check it in your luggage. Hemingway had brought his clothes for the interview, but also a few extra goodies just in case. This included his Glock entrenching shovel, Glock field knife, PUR scout water filter, two boxes of power bars, three Nalgene water bottles, a swiss army tool (This thing is stronger than a leatherman, better than a Gerber or SOG in the author's humble opinion), two Surefire G2 flashlights, a roll of 100 mile an hour tape, a safari vest, heavy rain coat, water/wind proof matches, a stove kit that ran on wood, bark, or trioxane fuel bars, British style mess kit (well worth the money to ship here, again from the author's humble opinion), stainless steel cup that fit over a Nalgene bottle, sanitizer soap. His extra clothing other than suits consisted of goretex boots, jeans, two pullover sweaters, cloth gloves, long sleeve tee-shirts, and warm socks. Although you need a lot more for a good BOB kit, this was good enough for Hemingway's piece of mind, and after his shopping spree, he felt better prepared for an

uncertain tomorrow. He wanted to go through everything and pack the backpack and start prioritizing, but he needed to square away his quarters first. Knowing the door jam would not be enough to stop a dedicated assault, he wanted to get down to the maintenance dept, and see what they had in the way of tools and nails. What he needed was a carpet square and some nails. It was five thirty by this time, and he knew dinner was at seven. He also felt safe that the power would not be cut until nine or ten, since people would have to eat and then get in their rooms. So he felt that his stuff was fairly secure if he left for an hour or two. He walked out of his room, making sure the door locked behind him. He then made it to the lobby.

"Mr. manager, my wheel came off my piece of luggage, I was wondering if you had a maintenance person who I could speak too, I know how to fix it, I just need the right tools and a screw."

"Mr. Hemingway, if you would wait, I can take you down to the maintenance room myself."

"I would like to fix this as soon as possible, is there someone down there, I can walk there by myself."

"Sure, just take the stairs, then at the hallway go right, Shelton is there and can get you squared away."

Hemingway was grateful that the manager let him go by himself. He walked down the steps, and made it to the office. Shelton, an older gentleman in his late fifties greeted him. "Mr. Hemingway, the manager radioed me you might need some help, what can I do for you?"

"Well, I need a metal saw, about twenty large nails, and a carpet square."

Shelton looked puzzled, and said, "All that for a wheel? on a piece of luggage?"

Hemingway had a lot of respect for people who were mechanics, plumbers, or any other service tech job, and when he spoke to those people it showed. "Shelton, you know I wan to better secure my room, I will be here until this blows over, and I don't trust the door jam."

Shelton smiled, he respected anyone who took responsibility for his or her own protection. "And what pray tell would you be doing with a metal cutting saw?" Hemingway sensing telling the truth would be better than lying outright, said, "I am a Southerner, a North Carolinian in fact, I do not go aorund in times of distress unarmed" Shelton laughed, and beamed, "I was trained at Fort Bragg before shipping out to Vietnam, the people of North Carolina always treated me as a neighbor and family member." "Whatever your doing, here is a key to this office." "You have access to it whenever you need it." "Your secret is safe with me." "If I was you, I would hunker down, this city is gonna implode before this is over." "I brought back a nice 45 from the war, If I had two I would give you one, but it is all I got." "I ain't coming back after today anyway, it's gonna be dangerous here before long." and with that Shelton's radio crackled, and he had to respond to an over flowing toilet. Hemingway said goodbye, and thought "What do you know, not all Yankee's are that bad"

Hemingway made it back to his hotel room, and placed the nails in the carpet square, then placed the carpet in front of the door. "Perfect" he muttered, "you can't even tell in the dark. What Hemingway did was create a "killzone" in front of his hotel room door. If the someone came into the room, they would step on the nails, which were poked through the carpet square. The square would be taped to the floor, but at night no one would be able to see that. Once they stepped on the nail they would be frozen in pain. Then Hemingway could react, take the offense or defense depending on the situation. He planned on shooting first, then using the shovel for any extra trouble. It was the only plan he had until he felt comfortable leaving. He wasn't ready to do that just yet, even though in his heart he knew the end of the country was at hand. He then went to work on his rifle. He wanted to saw it down to a more manageable length, since marksmanship wasn't his concern right now. He cut the barrel down to fourteen inches, and used a metal brush to smooth out the end of the barrel. He also took about two inches off the stock, making it straighter instead of curved. He had now a powerful one shot blaster, that at

least made him feel better about his situation. "It ain't my M1a, but it will do!" He then taped the one of his Surefire G2's to the wood under the barrel. "The first practical/tactical 18th century urban assault carbine in .54." "My mother would be proud". At this point it was dinner time, and Heming did not want to miss the hot meal. He walked down stairs, through the lobby and into the dining area. The rest of the guests were there, and the manager was serving the food. It wasn't much, just a lot of hamburger from the now defunct refrigerator. There was boiled veggies, and bread. Heming appreciated it, since it may be the last time he had bread or veggies for awhile. He noticed, that as the manager was serving the guests, that his family was moving all the non-perishable items to the hallway, heading toward the access downstairs. Heming also noticed that there seemed to be a few new relatives of the manager as well. Two of the men were wearing revolvers on old heavy leather belts. "They are going to bug out of here after tomorrow." he thought to himself. "We stay here another night, but it will be on our own". Heming bet that the power did not even come on tomorrow. He ate his meal, and decided to step outside to the front lobby, and walk outside a bit. It was dark, cold, but he wanted some fresh air before he went back to his room. Stepping outside, another business man was staring into the night, smoking a cigarette. They exchanged pleasantries, and both just stood still, staring into the darkness of Cleveland. The man was from Oklahoma, and had brought his family along with him on a business trip. His wife and four year old baby girl were in the room waiting for him so they could go to sleep. The man just wanted to smoke another cig, before he could let the day go. They were on the second floor with Heming, and he thought he knew which room they were in. As the man left, Heming just kept looking into the night, wondering about Scott, wondering about his own family, wondering about tomorrow. Heming decided tomorrow he would look into getting a vehicle. He remembered reading a book called, "Inside Delta Force" where the author had to pass a test to join the US's elite unit. The man decided to rent a van, load it with some supplies and drive around Washington DC, following his orders and collecting info at different drop points. His ruse worked, and he was not discovered. Heming figured a van would foot the bill nicely, and he was going to see about acquiring one.

Getting back to his room, he had about an hour of time before the lights would go out, and he would have to sleep. He first rolled out his carpet nails, then fixed the door stop. Satisfied, he then pushed the bed over toward the door, to further mask his position. He planned on sleeping on the floor, in his sleeping bag. He gathered all his gear, and sorted by what he wanted to carry on his back, and what he would roll in his luggage. His luggage bag was a Tumi, 29" bag, which he had only half stuffed to check on the plane. The great thing about a Tumi bag was it is made from Ballistic Nylon and coated with fusion z. Now the bag itself is not bullet resistant, but loaded down with clothes and what not, it should provide a modicum of protection. "Protect me long enough to fire back" Heming thought. He found that his backpack was heavy, and his wheeled piece held too many items he could not live without. "Stuff it, I will just have to make do" He really wanted that van.

The next morning Heming awoke to the sound of gunshots and sirens. His wrist watch said it eight AM, and just as he figured, the power was not on. He quickly went to the sink washed off in water he purified, and dressed. Carrying all his luggage, he went downstairs to the lobby. Sure enough the manager was no where to be found. Heming walked to the kitchen, which was now devoid of all food, except a few pieces of fruit, which Heming grabbed. Some of the other guests were already downstairs, looking outside, looking scared. The man and his family was sitting in the chairs, with panic in their eyes. Heming just waved mornin', and moved to the stair case. He wanted to go downstairs to see if there was anything of value. He brought all his gear with him, and went straight to the maintenance room. There he unlocked the door and went

inside. There was a note from Shelton.

Son, if you are as good as I think you are, here are all my keys, to the whole building. As an aside, take the door to the left, it goes to an employee only parking deck, which is below here. There are two vans, we use to drive people to the airport. Both are in great condition, I just changed the oil in them last week. There is also a closet, with weed eaters and hedging tools, the important thing about the closet is there are four five gallon gas jugs, all fully loaded. You will need them to help you on your way. The next closet is the lost and found closet, with clothes, and other stuff people leave behind. Take what you need. The keys I gave you will open any door in the hotel, good luck, and remember, PAY IT FORWARD. Shelton


Heming smiled, and moved straight for the parking deck. Sure as his word, there stood the two vans. Why the manager did not take them blew Heming's mind. But they were here, and now they were his. He moved to the equipment shed, and found the gas tanks. He was going to put them all into one of the vans, but remembered Shelton's request, PAY IT FORWARD. The man and his family was upstairs. Heming decided to get them to come down and help, and to give them one of the vans. He checked the oil in both vehicles, turned on the engines, and placed all his gear, except his safari vest, which held the loading components of his musket. He then drove the vans one at a time to the door, so they would be closer. He ran back up the steps to the couple who were still waiting for something to happen. Heming startled them at first, but said, "I know y'all are a long ways from home, there is something downstairs you have to see." At first he thought they were going to run away, but the man said, "Lets go" and the whole family went downstairs with Heming. Heming showed them the van, and the gas, and then they went to the lost and found closet. Inside were coats, boots, and all other manner of clothing and bags. the family was able to find a heavy winter coat for each of them , as well as winter shoes. They also loaded up on gloves and hats, as well as pants belts. Heming dug through all manner of bags looking to see if there were any hidden weapons anyone could have forgotten about, but there were none. The man's name was Rob, and as they began collecting stuff, they formed a plan. They decided to move all of the family's luggage downstairs. The steps leading down was the only way to get here from the lobby. They walked the parking deck, and found only on way in or out there as well, and there was a barrier in place to block traffic. After testing it, the men decided that until they were ready to leave, the barrier would stay in place. The only problem was someone could walk around it, so they would have to be careful. Heming and Rob began rummaging the downstairs proper, starting with the manger's apartment. they found nothing of real value, everything had been cleaned out. But at least they could sleep there. there were two bedrooms, so the family got those, while Heming would sleep on the couch. He was glad to be working with Rob, although it was extending his stay in Cleveland. With the tools in the mechanics shop, they decided to modify the vans, so that they could carry more, and they could better pack the insides. so they were going to stay one more week, get things ready, then move on. They raided all the blankets, towels, and wash clothes. They found the supply area, and found a few cases of bottled water, a few cases of soap, and some assorted snacks for the machines. All of it was moved to the apartment. Heming taught Rob and his wife how to load and fire the percussion musket, and the wife stood guard during the day while the men worked. Heming shared his food, since they were all working together as a team. Things were working out! The other guests as the days went by began to drift away, or just plain leave, some mentally prepared for what lie ahead, some not. Heming couldn't worry about them, he just wanted to get home. After everything they wanted was taken from the lobby and hotel, the steps leading down to the basement were cut down, so no one could use them to enter. The entrance of the parking deck mined with broken glass and debris, to impede anyone trying to walk around the buffer. Heming and Rob began making plans to take a look at the outside world, but that

would have to wait for another day. Heming prayed every night for his family, and for his friends. As the first few days went by, he tried to get lost in the constant preparation for the trip.

By the fourth day, Heming had built a hide, in the bushes in front of the hotel. He would access it by walking out of the parking deck, crawling along back of the bushes. Once in the hide, he could see the streets, and watch for people. He had taken to watching the road a few hours everyday, since most of the preparations were finished. The vans had been modified nicely, using straps from lost luggage, they had built carriers in the wall of the van for the fire axes they had found in the hotel. They had also taken out the couches, in favor of building a living area for themselves in each van. The back of the vans now sported shelving for supplies, and all the supplies they had left. The side windows had been blacked out using black spray paint they had found, and they had also given the vans a weird urban camo job with some gray paint they had found. Each adult now wore a belt with a large kitchen knife (Heming wore his Field Knife), and they had found some metal tubing in the alley behind the hotel, and fashioned really nice clubs out of them. It was all medieval, but it was all they had. Plus they had the fire axes. Things were coming together, so much so that Heming could perch himself here everyday, and watch for signs of life. He had left the musket with the family, since protecting the vehicles was the most important thing. All around them Cleveland was crumbling. Already one of the worst racially violent cities in the country, the terror attacks had only added fuel to the fire. Fire trucks, ambulances, and police cars would go up and down the street day and night. The problem was Heming had no idea where they were going? The city was in utter chaos, and the hotel had been broken into already four times. No one had yet found the basement, although it would only be a matter of time.

Heming stared up and down the street, and saw a car coming toward the hotel. It was a brand new BMW, four door, and filled with gang bangers. They stopped at the hotel, and filled out of the car. There were six of them, and all of them pulled handguns out of their baggy pants. Two had what seemed to be single shot shotguns. They were mulling about, waiting for something, then Heming saw what that was. Looking at the building across the street, a black male looked out and over from the roof. He had a scoped hunting rifle, and was panning the block ahead. Heming got a bad feeling about the situation, when a police car charged onto the scene. Two young Police officers, obviously tired and worn out got out of their car. They were only armed with their sidearms. They began exchanging words with the gangers, when Heming saw the sniper begin to take aim. Where Heming was from, you did not shoot at police officers, and he moved before he could think. Yelling sniper, and pointing toward the roof, he swung his club at the closest gang member to him. In slow motion, you could hear the "Thwack" all up and down the street. The police officers sprang into action, one pulling his pistol, and crouching to fire on the youths, the other was trying to get into the squad car for his patrol rifle. The police officer opened up on the youths, hitting two before they opened fire back. Heming dove for the next ganger who was trying to get behind the beamer. The sniper fired, and hit the officer who was still fumbling for something in the floorboard of the car. Heming had by now gotten the pistol from the youth, and checking the action, fired the snubnie revolver at another ganger with a shotgun. The hit was devastating at close range. The last officer then fired took a round in the head, from one of the gangers, and Heming heard the loudest report he had ever heard. Rob fired the musket at the last ganger, knocking him off his feet and into the opposite wall. The youth was dead almost immediately, and that left the ganger who Heming had hit first. Heming just swung one more time, hitting the guy in the head, and killing him. The sniper, figuring his gang was dead, disappeared. Heming motioned Rob to get over there and they proceeded to strip the weapons from all involved. The police officers were armed with Ruger P90 45 cal pistols. They carried three more eight round mags on their duty belts. Heming grabbed everything, the belts, the weapons everything. He got the keys to the trunk and saw that there

were three duffles, so he grabbed those as well. He made it to the front seat and found what the officer had been grabbing. In a double rack under the seat, was a Remington 870, and a Remington 7600. The 870 was a classic, but the other was new. The 7600 was a pump action 308 carbine, utilizing a ten round mag. It was designed so that officers would not need to relearn another rifle. Heming grabbed everything, as Rob came over to help him. The Gangers had had an assortment of handguns, three 38 revolvers, one smith and wesson 4506 45 cal, and two single shot shotguns. Looking through the trunk of the BMW, they found two cases of canned soup, and a small propane burner with a case of propane. There was also a box of ammo for each caliber. Heming figured these guys were bait, to get more gear for their group. "I wish I had time to hunt down that sniper" Heming mused. He was sorry for the death of the officers, but was glad for the windfall of weapons and supplies. They went back to the basement to split the gear up. They would have to leave tonight whether they wanted to or not. reprisals could be a bitch.

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on  April 28, 2004 23:50 April 28, 2004 11:50 PM:

Chapter 9

Heming and Rob gathered the gear in the apartment, and began opening the duffles. One held six extra mags for the 7600, and boxes of different types of ammo. There were urban fragment rounds, basic FMJ rounds, and some hollowpoint rounds. All in all they had about two hundred rounds for the rifle. In the same duffle, there were spare Ruger mags, and 45 ammo. About two hundred more rounds of ammo for the handguns. The ammo was Blackhills, 230 grain hardball. The next duffle was a shocker! inside it was another 870, with a factory folding stock, and 00 buck, as well as slugs. Again, about two hundred rounds of shotgun ammo. The last duffel held some interesting things as well. Inside were two gas masks, two kevlar helmets, and an extra Bullet resistant vest. This was rated higher than the one's liberated from the police officers. There was also six tear gas grenades, and six flashbangs. Then there was the gangbangers haul, which included three 38 revolvers, the SW 45, and two sawed off single shot shotguns. The SW45 had two extra mags with it, and it seemed like this had been "stolen" from someone's collection. With all the weapons and gear laid about, Rob and Heming discussed how to split the collection. Heming, who was more knowledgeable about firearms in general, spoke first, "Rob, there is an equitable way to do this, it just comes down to needs and wants." Rob just stared at the collection, and nodded. "here is the deal Rob" Heming said, " we split the grenades, three each, I will take the two Ruger's, the folding stock shotgun, and the 308." "We each take a single shot shotgun, you keep the three 38's, the SW45, and the other 870." Rob took a long look at the 308 and sighed, "It's too bad we didn't get two of these, I would feel better if I had one too." Heming understood, and said, "I know Rob on this someone has to give, to me, you have a wife that can cover you, that is an extra shooter, I have only myself." "I need the extra firepower, and this is not a sniper rifle by any means, just a carbine in a powerful caliber." Rob, in the end agreed, and they both went off to their seperate vans to prepare them to leave. They would leave at night, following the highway out of town. Heming hoped to get to West Virginia, before he had to stop for gas, while Rob hoped to get to the edge of Indiana. They added more nylon sheaths to the vans to hold the weapons, and generally checked on the contents of the car. The hotel had been a cornucopia of supplies for them. They had found four cases of squeeze bottles, with the hotel logo on them, they were filled up using Heming's water filter, and loaded onto each van. Rob and his wife got to keep the two helmets, and the vests the police officers were wearing. Heming got the vest from the duffel.

Heming was trying to figure his load out, with the police belt, and decided to load for bear. Luckily, one of the policemen had been left handed, so Heming decided to go "Double fisted". With one on each side, he then placed the mag holders on the front of the belt, so they ran across his belly. He tied a string around the shotgun, and decided to strap it to the inside of the drivers seat where he could reach it. He figured as he drove, he would access to all three weapons. The 7600 was placed in a rigged sheath above the windshield, and the single shot shotgun was placed in another sheath above the back doors. The faithful fired percussion musket was placed above the side door. He wanted firepower at all the exits. He looked around and decided he was ready. Rob and his family seemed like they were ready to. They said their goodbyes, and Heming let Rob read the note from Shelton, that said PAY IT FORWARD. Tears welled up in their eyes, as they waved. It had taken them the better part of an hour to break up the barrier to the deck, and as they left, they realized how the world had changed. Leaving the hotel, they saw for the first time the complete and utter devastation that was the city of Cleveland. Buildings were burned out, and there were bodies on the street. Cars had been overturned and destroyed, with garbage floating everywhere. It was sobering!

Heming's plan was to take 77 all the way to Winston Salem then take back roads all the way to Eden. "This is gonna be a time" Heming yelled to the wind, as he placed a well worn Bob Seger tape in the radio and began to sing along "Roll me away won't you roll me away tonight"

All across the country, people began to deal with the loss of infrastructure. In most towns and counties, the FEMA and Homeland Security personnel that had mobilized were quietly disarmed. They were given the option of helping in the recovery of the given area, or they could go home. With the county sheriffs, city police and National Guard all refusing to follow any orders from any of the Federal command and control offices, there wasn't much any of the organized Federal response could do. In most instances, they folded up shop and started going home to their families, some of whom were thousands of miles away. With no word from Washington, no one was going to follow the direction of some Federal Emergency Management wannabe. And since there was no central leadership anymore, they had no jurisdiction anywhere. So they were disarmed, and told to work like everyone else. Neighborhoods began organizing, joining with other neighborhoods. Cities began cleaning up the mess from the panic and the looting, and began establishing some sort of order. The basics were sought, like food, water, and shelter. It would be a long winter, as the transportation system, had ground to a halt. Luckily, soldiers, sailors, marines and air force personnel were being released to their communities. In groups of three's, four's, or more, they began arriving home. This helped with organization and protection. In some instances, families were reunited, and communities began to build.

It was the day after they had found Paul dead of an apparent overdose. They had immediately decided not to do anything for two crucial days. The idea was, that whoever administered the "coup de grace" would come back for the maps, which detailed the whole neighborhood. A watch was put into place around the clock, but not out in the open. Quietly, each board member was told of what had transpired and what was going to happen next. There was some debate, but in the end, Scott had basically told them that the board was through, and that he and community watch were calling the shots. A small group of people were put together hastily to watch the projects. It consisted of Kareef, Sheeka, and Galtier, and Lashonda. Lashonda lived in the projects, working two jobs to make ends meet. When the Hispanic group attacked the

grocery store, she had stayed in her apartment, cowering under her bed. When the fight was over, she had realized that the people from Ranford Trace had come to her rescue. She had immediately began training with Stanley as well as volunteering with some of the "looting" trips. Her son was six years old, and attended the daycare/school that Shelly had set up for the neighborhood children. Lashonda had been grateful that they took in all kids regardless of where they live. Her son was reading better after a week, then he had when he was in public school. So when Stanley, Scott and Mitch had come to her to ask for her help, she readily agreed. They believed the "soldier" for the dealer either lived or had access to an apartment in the government housing area. The idea was to find out where he lived after he came back to get the maps he had forgotten. They did not have long to wait.

When the "soldier" reported back to the dealer the next day, the dealer threatened the "soldier's" life if he did not return with the maps. The "soldier" had his own addiction to feed, so back he went, from North Raleigh to South Raleigh, to get those maps. The "soldier" was in command of a small group of gang members which had positioned themselves in the projects. They had been armed with part of the weapons stolen from a raid on a National Guard convoy running through Raleigh days ago. The Gang, being more intent on playing cards and smoking "wacky tacky", had never even bothered to load or learn how to use the weapons. They sat in their crates, unused. They had their "pieces" after all, their handguns, which were hidden among their person. They were waiting for the signal to hit Ranford and take everything they wanted. They had the discipline to stay hidden however, so no one knew where they were or that they even existed. That would soon change!

The "soldier" left the apartment late the next night, tired but determined to get the maps, and be done with this. As he left, he did not notice a tall man smoking a cigarette in the shadows a few feet away from him. Kareef knew deep down that the guy walking was the one who killed Paul. As the guy headed for the opening in the fence, Kareef keyed his Walkie Talkie twice, and the rest of the team slowly began moving. As the guy walked down the street, he felt like a bullseye was painted on him. He turned the corner, and saw the Paul's house. It was dark, and ominous. It was as if a light had been shown on it after he left, and then darkness had fallen. All he wanted to do was turn around and head back to the apartment he and his men were using. But he knew if he did, the dealer would send more men, and their first item of business would be to destroy him. So he trudged to the house, and knocked on the door. It was unlocked, so he opened the door, and a shotgun barrel popped him in the face. Falling backward, he fell off of the porch and onto the ground. John kept pointing Kristy's Winchester at him, saying, "Keep quiet". Then Roger, Scott, and Mitch ran out of the house and quickly cuffed his hands behind his back. Mel came from around the building, and said, "I am a police officer for the city of Raleigh, by my sworn powers and belief of your guilt, I am incarcerating you." The soldier, tired and wanting a fix, just said, "I will tell you everything you want to know, just don't hurt me." Scott spoke next, "You are going to tell us everything, and I want names, addresses, and directions." "If you lie, then we send you back to your dealer friend, with a message from us." Scott was tired of fooling around, he wanted to get everyone to Eden, this was a distraction to what they needed to do which was leave.

There was no interrogation. The soldier told them where his men were, and where the dealer lived. He told them which area of Raleigh had been taken over by the gangs, and which areas had not. He filled in info the group did not have. Now they just needed a plan to deal with the "dealer", so they could move on with the planning of the exodus. Everyday they stayed, meant there was that much more a chance that things would spin out of control. A decision had to be made, and a plan implemented. But what?

Scott, Mitch, John, Kristy, Harvey and Stanley met at Harvey's house, to decide what to do.

They were now the heads of the community, and would not ever again allow any more “instant insanity” to stop them. Connie and Lucy had been informed of Paul’s death, and had been told that the board was through. They accepted the decision, and were happy to be done with it. Scott was glad to that the drama over leadership of the neighborhood was over. One less thing to worry about. Scott began the meeting, speaking loudly so everyone could hear.

“So I guess it comes down to, do we go get this guy, or wait for him to come get us?”

Stanley spoke next, “I think we should get him, but we need to seriously take a look at our ammo consumption.” “We don’t have a lot of linked 308 to begin with, and if you go into Raleigh proper, you are going to need those Bradley’s.”

Mitch shook his head, then said, “We don’t need to enter Raleigh at all, we just need to post a watch on the exits off of 40, which there are only two.” “We let them in, trap them and take them out.” “We just need to get him the maps, so he knows how to get here.”

Harvey, John, and Kristy liked that idea, no one wanted to go back to inner or north Raleigh. Scott actually wanted to do both.

“Look” Scott said, “We need to take Mel and get his stuff right?” “Why not get a group in, with a SUV of some type, get Mel’s stuff, and do a little recon, to see if the info we have is any good?” “Shoot, it would be nice to know if this dealer has stockpiled any supplies of his own.” “Plus, we get those supplies, we get back here, we will be that much more squared away.”

Stanley and John both started to speak, but John got there first. “We need more ammo than anything else, we got a lot of 308, but none of it belted, we have a bit of 223, but we need lots more.” “In 40 we are set, as well as most other pistol calibers.” “But we need more carbine/rifle ammo.” Stanley just nodded his head.

Scott nodded as well, understanding the issue. With the weapons they had, they were trying to build fireteams, so that small unit tactics could be employed. No one wanted a repeat of the attack on the grocery center, where so many had lost their lives. They had trained all the volunteers until it hurt, teaching marksmanship and small unit tactics. That burned up precious ammo and supplies, but it was necessary to build cohesion. John could not reload for 223 because he did not have the dies or the bullets, so that was out of the question. Most of the stores and shops in the area had been looted at this point, so getting more was out of the question. One good battle, like Mogadishu, and they would be out of business, or back to pistol carbines again. So an attack on a position in Raleigh was a serious question. They would get no help from the wealthier neighborhood on the one side, since all attempts to contact them had been spurned, and they had a small unit of bad guys in the projects to deal with tonight as well. So it would be up to the armed citizens of Ranford Trace to deal with the problem. Harvey spoke up, “We have three issues here, two we can really do something about.” “One, we need to get rid of the guys waiting for their leader in the ‘jects.” “Two we need to get Mel to his stuff and bring him back.” “Three we have a drug dealer to take care of.” “In all honesty, one and two are easy to handle, the third we can talk about after.” “Personally, I say we wait for him to attack us.” Scott could see the consensus was going against him. He just wanted the next fight to be away from his home, the shopping center had been too close for comfort.

“Ok, does anyone have an idea about how to get those guys behind the wall?” Scott asked, because he really had no idea how to get at them.

“Kristy had an idea, tell them honey”

“Well, y’all may not like it, but I thought if three or four girls walked up there, knocked on the door, and said the dealer sent us they would open the door, and we have those tear gas grenades and flashbangs just sitting around.” “Once the door is open, we toss the grenades inside, then keep the door open, and more people can enter the place, and take it without firing a shot.” “what do you think?”

Scott just laughed, “Who else would go?” “We have masks, that came with the alphabet soup guys kit, it is possible.” Kristy just smiled, “Well it is my plan, so I’ll go, we could get Sheeka, and

Lashonda.” “They both have been practicing, and are good shots with the Smith&Wesson’s we captured.” Scott looked at Stanley, who was the “General” of the neighborhood. Stanley said, “I think it just might work, we have to do something, they will be getting antsy, and this will be totally unexpected.” “Lets do it!” They also decided to send a four person patrol to set up an operation to monitor highway 40. They would send out two four person teams, to build a hide and monitor the exists. Although Scott was voted down, he saw the sense in waiting and watching.

Kareef, who was waiting in Lashonda’s apartment, took the call from Missy, who was again at her communications desk. When Lashonda and Sheeka were successfully dolled up, the three of them met John, Kristy, Scott and Stanley at the fence and they walked to the edge of the building. The apartment where the gunmen were hiding was out of the line of sight of the hole in the fence, so they were able to meet there and make their plans. The apartment was on the second story, so it was decided that the three ladies would walk up to the door knock, and do their best to get the door open. Once the door was open, they would toss the flashbangs inside, and then keep the door open for Stanley, John, Kareef, and Scott to charge inside. Galtier would watch the back of the Apartment, in case someone tried to jump out of a window. This needed to be done quickly, and efficiently. Each lady carried a large purse, with a pistol, extra magazine, and the flashbang. As they climbed the stairs each women had their own thoughts, but were ready to prove themselves. As Kristy, who was first got to the last rung before knocking on the door, the door opened, and out poured two of the bad guys. They were armed with only pistols, and were obviously stoned. When they saw Kristy they froze, and began to slowly react by pointing their pistols at her. She dove forward, getting between them, and launching the flashbang into the apartment. The two men, looked at Kristy, and then a volley of shots broke out from the steps. Lashonda and Sheeka both opened fire, taking down the two gunmen. The other four inside the apartment began to react as if it were a police raid. They all threw their pistols to the ground, and getting on their knees, placed their hands behind their heads. Kristy got up, sporting a new bloody lip, and Sheeka entered the house, moving to the left. Lashonda moved right, and Kristy brought up the rear. Kristy, in the quick of the moment, had forgotten to pull the pin on the grenade, so nothing had happened. Kareef, John, Scott and Stanley charged in after the ladies, and began flex cuffing everyone. Mel was called on the CB, and he was driven into the projects, with Harvey and two other volunteers. Mel arrested the four men, using the same language as before. When the men took the bad guys away, Scott, John, Kristy, Lashonda, Sheeka, and Kareef took stock in the contents of the apartment. Lashonda remarked, “So this is where the magic happens” Scott said “I guess so”. Inside was all the paraphenalia for making and distributing drugs. Mostly crack and a meth lab. There was a crate of six M16a2 rifles, a case of thirty round mags, two thousand rounds of ammo, and web gear for everything, the web gear had canteens, and a buttpack with emergency rations for three days. There was another box, and once opened contained the biggest surprise. It was an M249 saw, an older version, and there were five 100 round boxes of linked ammo for it. Scott was excited, because this grew their firepower. John was succinct, “I wish I could just reload this stuff” “It would make things easier”.

It was getting very late, almost to the point where there was no point in going to sleep. Stanley decided to make the next day a rest day, and get some sleep. The guards schedule was posted on the front of his house for the next three days, and the criminals had been placed inside Paul’s house, at Scott’s insistence. They had to live where they had killed a man. Justice was a hell of a thing, and more would be coming for those men. Sitting down at his desk, Stanley began to write (by candlelight), his plans for the next week. They were going to set up observation points on both exists, making contact with the people who lived in those areas as well. Hopefully those people were ready to take responsibility for their own protection. Stanley

just stared at the piece of paper he was writing on, then looked at the wall of his house. There was a picture of George Washington, looking down upon the winter quarters of Valley Forge. "I wish it were him here instead of me" Stanley thought to himself, "I wanted to retire, and make some of that crazy money I heard you could make in the security business." But here he was, training more people, getting them ready for some new tomorrow. He had talked to Scott at length about Eden, and Scott had been honest about their chances there. But Scott wanted to go home, and for some reason, Stanley was feeding off of the emotion. Stanley knew there was zero chance of a long term settlement here. He also wanted to be someplace where he would not have to worry about an attack from some unknown enemy. Paul's death had shook him a bit, and he was not afraid to admit it. Paul had been a closet addict, and no one had expected the outcome of the past few days. Scott wanted to have a meeting of the whole neighborhood, and outline what would be going on for the next month, if that long. Basically, everyone was going to be invited to go to Eden. There would be no promises about food and shelter, and no one knew anything about the condition of the roads between here and there. But the offer to go would stand. It was the choice between staying and fighting for crumbs, or going to a place where with a little hard work you might make it. Scott was honest about their prospects, and did not paint a rosy picture, but it was all they had at the moment. That he did not just pack up his family and leave, was a testament to his spirit. That Scott had prayed at the sight of Paul's body, asking the Lord for forgiveness for sins, made everyone who heard the story begin to look at their own faith. An awakening was occurring in the community. Stanley jotted his ideas down on the notepad, and blew out the candle. He decided to sleep on his thoughts, and maybe sleep in till lunch time.

What Stanley had mapped out were plans for three different events. One was the convoy to Eden, two was the observation points and three was the force drive into Raleigh to get Mel's stuff. Stanley was dead against a drive into Raleigh, feeling that any material gain in getting Mel's belongings would matter little to the loss of a life or a vehicle in getting them. He could make do with what he would be given here. Stanley also felt that any police officer's home would have been broken into by now, just for the possible extra weapons they held. It just wasn't worth it. His idea for the convoy to Eden, though, had merit. They just needed vehicles to do it. He wanted to take extended cab trucks, and modify them to the standard used by Specops guys in Afghanistan. This would include a rollbar that extended over the bed and over the cab itself. They would have to arm each truck with its own gas, and supplies, and these would be used in groups of two to scout ahead of the highway, and look for ambushes. He also wanted an RV to be built up for a medical center. He knew they could do it, and he had asked Ferguson and Gayle to get some ideas together for what they needed. He wanted other RV's for an armory, and some for caring of children, etc. He would need two for downtime, so that armed members of the group could in effect rest when their shifts were up. They would also need an eighteen wheeler that had a flatbed carrier that could handle the weight of one of the Bradley's, so they could keep one for spare parts. Another large truck would have to be made so that the mechanics would have a place for their tools and equipment. And they had already submitted a list for things they needed from the next expedition into town. It was going to be a huge undertaking moving all these people and their meager supplies to Eden. It was a three hour drive in peaceful times, but with the way things were going, he was afraid it would be a long trip. He wanted them to be as prepared as they could be for it, so that if there was any hassle, they could deal with it and move on. The Observation Points would be easier, since that was strictly a military operation. They would have to survey the area, and find points where the highway could be watched, from both directions. He didn't expect that to be too hard, but he would be taking a look at things in the afternoon.

Somewhere near the South Carolina Border with Georgia

Arthur and Courtney were making decent time. They had left Atlanta, barely believing the different scenes they saw. Some city blocks were burned down, with trash floating around, and bodies laying on the streets and sidewalks. You would turn a corner, and other blocks looked just fine. But it was the difference of armed groups, guarding what little they had left. The city was becoming a warzone, and it would not be soon until it spilled out into the suburbs, which were mostly untouched. Arthur was glad they had left when they did. They were now close to the South Carolina border, and would soon need a place to stop to stretch their legs and possibly fix a hot meal. For some reason, Arthur was dying for a barbecue sandwich. Canned barbecue is just awful, but with the right amount of A1 sauce or Tabasco, it was edible. Courtney was watching the countryside go by, and worrying about their trip. They were well stocked, and well prepared physically, but the scenes of Atlanta would not leave her mind. Mentally she was in an almost state of melt down. No human being is set up for scenes of mass destruction and death. It is how you handle it after the fact that counts.

Arthur found a small hill with a surveyor's trail running up the side off of the highway. Running up the hill, Arthur found a place under a large pine tree and parked the truck. Looking around, he had a nice view of the highway, as well as the farmland that was on the other side of the hill. They hadn't really breathed since they left Atlanta, so Arthur thought this might be a good place to camp out for the night. Courtney jumped out of the truck, and grabbing a pair of binoculars, she began scanning the area. Not seeing anything, she began to help Arthur get their camping gear out of the bed of the truck.

"Courtney, why don't you take first watch, kinda watch the highway and this patch of woods, this may be a spot for vagrants or others who campout on highways, we don't need any surprises." "Also, if another car comes down the road, we need to know about it." Arthur was trying to find his voice, trying to lead, trying to follow the "reality" ride where ever it took them. Courtney walked over to a spot that allowed her to watch both the highway and the and the woods. Satisfied, she began looking around, getting to know the topography of the area, just like when she played "war" with Scott and his friends years and years ago. Arthur put up the tent, and covered the truck with a camo net. Satisfied he had hidden them pretty well, and that once night came they would be hidden, he began supper. Placing the burner over the small propane bottle, he cooked two cans of Barbecue. He added some A1 sauce, until it was ready. Using the last of their bread, he made sandwiches, and put a few slices of tomato on each one. He brought them over to Courtney's watch, and they ate. The sandwiches hit the spot, and the Tang they drank to wash it down wasn't bad either. They both mentally let go of the sights and scenes they had seen, and talked about the road ahead.

They buried Paul in the new cemetery they had built for the homeowners who had died in the firefight that seemed so long ago. A lot of people had argued against it, but in the end, Scott had won out. The act of forgiveness, can be physical as well as verbal, and this was as much to show forgiveness, as it was a hope that God would indeed show mercy on Paul. Scott had argued, that although Paul had tried to hurt the community in many ways, the monkey on his back had explained part of the reason why. People who did not share Scott's Christian belief's only hoped that he was right. Scott knew inside his heart, that they would all need God's forgiveness someday. After the burial, community watch began gathering people for an impromptu meeting in the courtyard. What most noticed was the amount of armament that was apparent on the community watch, as well some of the homeowners. There had been a shift,

with most people realizing that they were on their own, and they would have to make the best of it. As people began filing into the courtyard, they also noticed Scott standing dead center in the yard, so that everyone had to gather around him. Once Scott was sure most of the people in the community was standing around him, he began to speak.

Most of y'all know me, and have seen me around. You all know that I was on the board of directors, until I resigned because of issues relating to Paul, and the shootout at the shopping center. Most of you have heard by now, that Paul was found dead of an apparent forced overdose. It seems Paul had a drug habit, that was kept hidden from us for sometime. We have captured the men who did it, and I am here to tell you about what is going to happen with that situation. We also found detailed maps, of the neighborhood, with stars and marks over the homes owned by gunowners, and members of community watch. The two houses we are using to store food and gear were marked as well. John's house, was marked since that is where our armory has been placed. The whole neighborhood had been carefully mapped as if someone were planning a raid to get our stuff. I also feel that there are some notations on the map, that seem to point out where females of all ages lived, with numbers of how many, and whether or not they were armed. We know from talking with the prisoners, that there is a large gang in North Raleigh, who were planning to attack us to get everything we had. We have every reason to believe that they have access to military weapons, based on what we found in the low income apartments next door. Paul was trading the info for drugs, and once they had all the information they needed, they gave Paul an overdose. (Scott paused at this point, to let the info sink in) Now there are things we are going to do to make sure nothing happens. We are going to build observation points, on the two access points to our street. We will man them, twenty four /seven, until it is no longer necessary. We are also going to send greeters out to all the neighborhoods around here and up to the access points. We are going to get them to help us man those observation points. Stanley will train everyone, until they are up to speed to take a shift at the two points. While this is going on, we are going to step up our foraging, collecting anything that is useful, including vehicles, and RV's. I will tell you why in a minute. I want you to understand something, that we are all going to work at something from now on. There will be no more hiding in your homes, getting handouts from our dwindling supplies. Everyone has to work, even if you don't agree with what we are doing. This is a new world we live in, and there is a lot of work to be done to prepare for it. To be honest, I don't care about your politics or what your beliefs are. The time has come when we are going to have to work for a common goal, which is the basic survival of our community. It is just that simple. From now on people will work, and be paid in food and water. You can be a member of the armed militia, you can help with the building of defense works, you can help with the new daycare school that needs volunteers badly, you can join the new foraging group, and help there. If you know anything about car engines, or fixing up vehicles, we need you. If anyone has any medical, or military, or law enforcement knowledge, please help us. There just is a need for everyone, no matter what you did before the attacks. If you know anyone in the neighborhoods around us, please help the greeters. This is no time to stay at home and wish for the best. The world is still turning, and you have to be apart of it. (Scott paused again to let everything sink in) And what is the reason that we will work so hard? Because I want to go home! (Everyone looked at one another, wondering what he was talking about) There is a town called Eden, which is about a three hour drive from here, where there is still farmland, and water, where we can all be relatively safe. There is enough room for all of us, if you will join me. I am not promising you a paradise, in fact, you will probably work harder there than you will ever work here. But there we have a better chance of surviving, of getting by, than we do here. I want you all to know that everyone can come on the trip, that all are invited. everyone who works can go. I do not want to leave anyone behind. Let's face it, the city is dying, there is no way to grow food,

we can't even trust the water coming out of our faucets. There will always be warlords and gangs to fight. Is that what we want our children growing up in? Nothing short of a military campaign will end the problems that we face here, and no one has the strength or patience for that. Besides, who would be the liberator, and who would be the conqueror? Do we want to fight every neighborhood around for scraps of food? That is where this is leading neighbors, take or be taken. I want to find another way, and this is the only way I know. What do you say, shall we prepare for this endeavor? Do we take this grand adventure together? What do you say????? The crowd was quiet at first, then a murmur rose from the depth of the group. Everyone began saying "yes". It began softly at first, then rose to a crescendo. People who had never spoken together before or since the cookout began shaking hands and talking. Scott was embraced by many, and shook hands with everyone until it became time for someone to say something. Stanley, who was proud of his friend, said, "Ok everyone, lets all go home tonight, and meet back here early in the morning around six AM." "Think about any questions you have, and come ready to work." Scott just smiled for the first time since the attacks he felt he could finally count the days until he was home. There was a lot of work to be done before they could leave, and the prisoners would have to be dealt with, but he felt they were finally on the home stretch. "What a day" Scott thought, "What a day"

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on  June 02, 2004 23:55 June 02, 2004 11:55 PM:

Chapter Ten

Phileas looked out over his little kingdom. standing up on the flat roof of his house, he looked out over the road, looking left and right. "I am too old for this crap" he muttered to himself, as he prepared his old bones to climb down the ladder and allow his son to take the next watch. It was just he, his brother Phillip, his son Peter, and his grandson, Paxton. They had all survived their wives, one way or another. Paxton, who was the youngest at the age of thirty nine, had never married. Phileas ran an auto junkyard as well as an auto shop. He and his son had a great reputation, for quality work, at decent prices. You may not have the stock engine that you had when you dropped it off, but it would run better than it did before. Paxton had added to the business, bringing a knowledge of welding, and machining to the shop as well. What that meant was they could build or rebuild any engine, as well as repair vehicle body damage. They made a ton of money off of people who couldn't afford big name shops. When you stopped to have work done on your car, you would also have to listen to the three men argue politics, each arguing from their own generational views. It was always entertaining, and they had developed quite a following in Raleigh for their political satire. Phillip, ran an army/ navy store in Apex, and did quite well selling survival supplies as well as MRE's, and military gear. He was a veteran of the Vietnam War, and was proud of it. Coming home in '73, he began to sell military surplus almost as an "in your face" store, against all the anti-war sentiment. By the eighties, he had begun to sell more survival oriented products, making huge profits during the Y2K scare. He had married, and bought a farm in Johnston County, but his wife decided she wanted to rekindle a relationship with her high school sweetheart, and dumped Phillip after almost twenty years of marriage. She got the house, and a sizable amount of cash as well. He just moved in with his brother, who had built a house next door to his junkyard.

When the power went out, and it was obvious it would never come back on, Phillip went back to his shop, and with the help of his nephews, emptied it of everything. He had built a small cache of supplies at the house, because of his survivalist bent. Between that, and some of the groceries they had purchased before the crash, they had just enough to eat for awhile. Phillip

had a big surprise for the other guys, though, when he pulled out three crates from his storage shed he kept on the property. He had purchased five MAK-90's in the mid-nineties, when they were \$200 a piece. He had dutifully taken off the planet of the apes style federally mandated thumbhole stock, and replaced it with a more cosmetic side folding stock. He had also purchased over sixty thirty round magazines, and about four thousand rounds of ammo. He had also acquired ten precious one hundred round drums. Each member of the family now had a good carbine to defend themselves with. Phileas and Peter also had a small old fashioned briefcase, that they showed to Paxton and Phillip, inside were four 1911 handguns, with about thirty , seven round mags. They had about one thousand rounds of 45 ammo for them as well. Then out of a trunk came two Winchester 97 shotguns, in trenchgun configuration. They had about five hundred rounds of #4 buck for them as well. The way Phileas explained it was, "We repaired this old Ford truck for a guy who was almost ninety years old." "He asked if we would do a trade instead of taking cash." "We said what was the trade for, and he pulled these out." "The geezer said he had no family left, and he couldn't give these away to just anyone, so would we accept them as a trade for keeping his truck running long enough, so he would not have to buy a new one." "His father had brought these guns back from WW1, and left them to him." "They had been well preserved, and he had taken great care of them." "We accepted the trade!" Noting that they had enough food and water for a couple of months, they set about preparing the house and junkyard for defense. This wasn't hard, since the junkyard and garage were walled in by a large wooden fence. The house was next door, and the wall went around the house as well. They began climbing to the top of the house, and watching the road. Peter took his turn on the roof, shouldering his carbine. He watched in some satisfaction, that there was no activity at a large convenience store, which was just down the road. He wanted to go there sometime and empty it of anything of value. He hated the thought of looting, but times had changed, and there had to be food in there.

Just as he was thinking about all that, a small Honda accord turned from the opposing street, onto their road. It was obviously coming from highway forty, that had created the intersection. The Honda was flying, and turning into the small gas and grocer, hit a light pole. Behind it came three motorcycles, and a pick up truck. The occupants of the car spilled out, and it was all females. The gang following them obviously were not friends, as they began to pull weapons out of their pockets. Peter yelled for his family to "load up", and as they spilled around the ladder he told them what was happening. Knowing seconds counted, everyone sprinted for the store in full load out gear. Phileas, to old to run, stayed put, watching from the roof. "There goes my nap" he yelled with clenched fist in the air. It was the simple things, after all that made life worth living. As the men charged forward, they yelled "Halt" "Stop What you are doing" and "Put those guns down" the gang immediately began firing on the junkyard men. It was a lopsided battle, with AK's sputtering against mainly handguns. No one was hit in the first volley, so the gang decided the women weren't worth it, and hopped on their vehicles and left. The men were winded by the time they got to the ladies. The ladies were in shock, and a little bruised from the accident. Paxton went back to the shop to retrieve their pickup truck, while Peter told the ladies to come with them. At first, they weren't sure, after all could these guys be as bad as the last? But in the end, they went, deciding that the gang may come back with more members. There was a mother and her three daughters, who had been in town on a college sight seeing trip, and were trapped here. They wanted to get home to Virginia, but it just wasn't safe for them to travel. Peter talked them into going to their place and resting, while the guys towed the car to their shop. Lucky for the ladies, these guys knew a thing or two about how to fix a car!

"Ok people, this has to be unanimous, the choices are death or we let them go!" Scott gritted his

teeth, he didn't know how he was going to vote, even though it was time to. The decision on what to do with the criminals was being voted on. Since these men had killed one of their own, and would have participated in killing more, Scott wanted the whole complex to vote on what would happen to them. It was a somber moment, with Connie and Lucy arguing to set the men lose. After all, who would volunteer to kill another human being. But the community watch group had argued that these men had come to kill them, and that the whole complex should vote, so they did. After an hour, Scott and Stanley, as well as Bob tallied the votes. By a margin of twenty votes, it was death. Scott and Stanley would have to make a decision, either firing squad, or hanging. No one had ever witnessed a hanging, and all the veterans refused to take part in the firing squad, saying that the firing squad was for people who had at least fought honorably. Scott showed them his history book, showing US MP's shooting member's of the Hitler Youth "Werewolves" most of whom were ten to twelve years old. They begrudgingly changed their minds, although no one really wanted to waste a bullet on them. The men were in sorry shape, going through withdrawals, without their favorite drugs of choice. They almost welcomed death, in order to escape the pain of addiction. The whole situation, reminded Harvey of Dante's Inferno. In the end, Roger volunteered to handle the problem, and said he would shoot all of them in the back of the head. Scott, who was kinda against the whole thing, decided that they would hang the men, and place signs over the bodies detailing the crime. He did not want to open the door on Roger's blood lust just yet.

There was a freezing drizzle the morning they decided to do the job. They found suitable tree's, and using rope that had been liberated from a store, the men were hung. It was a sad and somber day, as the reality of their situation sank in. Mel mumbled something about how much the men deserved it, Scott stifled him with a comment about who would be the hangman next time and who would be the hung. These men were bad, and deserved their punishment, but there was no use in relishing the fact that men had died today. Scott prayed, asking forgiveness for the men, and asking forgiveness for what they did. The rain began to fall harder.

"This the European Union Broadcasting System, and this is the news on the hour." " Russian soldiers today arrived in large numbers in Eastern Europe, to quell the rioting and uprisings there." "Although the governments of Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, and The Czech Republic all deny the reports of any uprisings, The Russian ambassador to the Union today noted progress on restoring order to Eastern Europe." "In a horrible coincidence, the ambassadors of the Eastern European delegation who were meeting in Paris, were killed in a freak gas line explosion." "It seems as the authorities were trying to restore power to parts of Paris, some of the gas lines were still in need of repair." "In other news, United States forces stationed in Germany, surrendered en mass to German authorities." "German general Koenig, noted that this was not a problem, it was just a situation where the American Navy was so tied up in other parts of the world, and that there was no place for the Americans to go, with all the ordinance and weapons at their disposal, it was felt that it would be better for the American's to open their bases, so that German forces could monitor their operations." "The Americans were disarmed and allowed to perform their usual tasks, discluding security details." "There is no news from Great Britain, whom we fear has suffered terribly from terror attacks including weaponized Anthrax, as well as some form of humanized Mad Cow Disease." "The European Union, for the safety of all involved has operated an around the clock naval blockade of the islands." "The Mid East is still in massive turmoil, with Isreal and Syria fighting many battles in both the Golan Hights and over Lebanon." "There is a rumor of a large gas attack in Gaza, but it is unknown at this time the amount of casualties, or who was involved." "The American and British forces are still fighting their way out of Iraq." "The European Union, along with it's allies The Russian Federation of States and China, have sent a delegation to Turkey to hash out a

new peace plan for the region, but it will take time before all parties can agree on certain terms.” “American forces came under heavy attack in the Sunni triangle over eight weeks ago, after the terror attacks began.” “ It is believed that WMD’s have been used by both sides, causing heavy civilian casualties.” “This has been a report from the European Union Broadcasting System.” Heming turned the radio off and just cursed under his breath. “You know, I think those people just enjoy suffering, beats all I ever heard” he said to no one in particular. He was cruising down the highway, watching for a place to pull over and rest. He had finally found a station that he could understand on the shortwave, and wished he hadn’t found it. He knew what the European Union was, and what it stood for now. “It won’t be long before they send more troops here I bet” he thought to himself “ I hope they do, I would love to get my hands on some of those German Plastic rifles they all use now.” “ Man, history sure repeats itself.” He was watching his rear view, and sure enough, the same headlights were following him, and had been for at least two hours. Seeing a curve in the road, and an abandoned service station ahead, Heming just came to a stop, yanked out his 308 carbine, and lined his sights on the driver side of the car behind him. As the car came in to better view, he recognized who it was, and motioned for the car to stop. It was Rob and his family, who had obviously changed their minds about going to their home. Rob jumped out of his vehicle, and waved at Hemming. Hemming just said, “Pull in behind this service station, I think it would be a decent place to spend the night.” Rob yelled ok, and everyone drove behind the old building. They all said their hello’s, and Rob began to relate his story. “My wife and I were dead set on getting to our home, but then as we drove, we thought about what we would be going back home to.” “ Our neighbors by now have probably gone through our house with a fine tooth comb, and to be honest I would not blame them.” “We just don’t have anywhere to go, except, with you.” “It is better to travel together anyway, and with two vehicles, if one breaks done, we still have the other.” Hemming was all for it, but he explained that it was a long trip to North Carolina, and he could not promise them an easy life if they made it to their destination. Everyone knew the risks, so they were all on the same page. They set up camp as best they could, with someone keeping watch on the old roof at all times. Rob went through the old gas station and didn’t find much of value, except a collection of old telephone books. Hemming began searching, and along with his map, he found an outdoor supply store about ten miles down the road. After talking with the others, they decided to drive by there to see if there was anything of value left. The next day, they awoke early, and prepared to move on the outdoor shop. It was decided, that Rob and Hemming would go, in one of the vans, while Rob’s wife would stay with the baby at the old service station. The service station had not been used in years, and showed signs of falling in. The other van was hidden, somewhat inside the station itself, and then they walked around the area, looking for signs of anyone being around. Finding nothing, they made sure Rob’s wife had all she needed, and the men left for some urban foraging. They parked the van in a wooded area about two blocks from the store. They moved through the trees, and stayed away from the road. The store was out in the middle of nowhere, with only a lonely two lane highway to keep it company. It was one of those stores that the local gentry kept in business. Hemming carried one of the Ruger 45’s, and his Remington pump 308. He had left the other 45 with Rob’s wife, as well as the folding stock 870. Rob carried his SW 45 as well as the standard police issue 870. Both men’s pockets were filled with ammo. Coming to the last stand of trees, they knelt down to observe any activity going on at the place. What they saw made them sick. Two gang banger wannabee’s were standing outside the front door of the store. A third was forcing an old man to the ground. He pulled what looked like a Berretta out of a military style holster and fired into the old man’s skull. The man just fell forward, into a puddle of mudd. The three boys just laughed, and one started to head back into the store. Hemming lost all control at that point. He was still chiding himself for not getting the sniper in Cleveland who ambushed those police officers, and here were two more gang members killing an old man.

Hemming charged from his vantage point screaming. He shot one of the criminals with his rifle, then throwing the rifle down he pulled his 45 out and hit the next gang member. The third jumped into the store, as a hail of buckshot from Rob's shotgun shattered the glass. He was running trying to keep up with Hemming, who was panting like a wild man. A hail of gunfire came out of the store, shattering what was left of the glass at the store front. Hemming and Rob both ducked, and took stock of the situation as they both calmed a bit. Rob reached out and searched the closest body, and finding a pistol belt, he unbuckled it and draped it around his shoulder. It was a military issue belt, with a Berretta handgun, and a magazine holder with two mags in it. The other two dead criminals were too far to get too, and Hemming thought that it would have to wait till later. Hemming pointed to the back, and said, "You go back there, don't let them escape." "I am going in the front, after what they did today, we are going to kill them all" Rob just shuddered, realizing that he did not really know Hemming that well. Hemming brought his pistol up and began blasting into the store to cover Rob. Once he thought Rob was in position, he started looking around for a way to enter. He saw a small Honda accord, crawling to it, he noticed that the keys were in the ignition. More shots rang out, as he figured a way to get the car to slam into the front of the store. He reached down to another one of the dead criminals and got their handgun, and an extra mag. He then laid across the front seats holding the steering wheel tight and placing his other hand on the gas pedal. He figured once he heard the crash through the wall, he would have to jump out somehow and fight. So, he started the car, and pushed on the accelerator. The car went right through the front of the store, stopping right in the middle. Three more criminals were inside, ducking behind the gun counter. They opened fire on the car, but it was not well aimed and they mainly hit the front grill. Hemming jumped out of the car and firing with the 45 in one hand and the Berretta in the other, kept their heads down until he could get to a better position. He ended up behind a tent display, with no real cover, he reloaded everything, and resolved to just head straight for the counter. The three wannabees were trapped, and the fourth one could not get the locked back door open. Hemming called out to them, "Throw your weapons out, and I will take you alive." In reality, he hadn't decided if he was going to keep his word or not. The leader, said, "Man you kiss my @ss, you leave we let you live." At that point, Hemming decided there was only one way to deal with them. He remembered a movie he had seen about Wyatt Earp, where right before the battle of OK Corral, Morgan Earp told the Clantons, "There has only been one way to deal with any of you" Hemming stood straight up, and noticing that none of the bad guys were standing or even looking in his direction, he walked toward the counter. Two of them heard him walking and stood up, he shot them dead. The other two, scared, stood up and threw down their weapons with hands raised high. The leader smiled, and said, "You can't kill us now, cop we surrender." Hemming just grimaced, "I am not a cop, and there will be no prisoners taken today." Both men started to drop their hands, as Hemming shot them both where they stood. "People like you won't be getting any jail time anymore." Hemming walked outside, where a cold wind was blowing, looking up at the sky, and then up and down the stretch of highway. He reloaded his 45, and let the Berretta drop to the ground. He holstered his pistol, and called out to Rob, " Rob it's done come on out." Rob walked up a moment later, looking around sheepishly. "I heard them surrender Hemming, was that necessary?" "Ask the old man Rob" "This world ain't like the old one, you either fight or flee, and I am not going to flee if someone is getting hurt by this trash." Rob nodded, deciding Hemming was right.

The bounty of the hunting shop then took up most of their time. The criminals had driven from Cleveland to get here. They had traveled in a brand new RV, with a towing trailer. Rob and Hemming decided that was way better than their vans. The RV was stocked with some food, as well as some drugs and alcohol. The drugs were dumped, but the alcohol kept for "medicine/trade". There was also a Mossberg 590 shotgun, with bayonet lug. Hemming thought these guys must have been part of a gang that had obviously hit a National Guard unit or

armory. There was ammo for the shotgun, as well as a bayonet. They checked the bodies of the six gangers, and each one had a pistol belt with a Berretta, and an extra two mags. They loaded up the RV, and then went back inside to see what they could get. The store itself was a small country style, catering more to a camping clientel than a hunting one. There were only six firearms, two Remington Shotguns, with twenty six inch barrels, and two Ruger 10/22's. There was a Savage bolt 308, and a lever action Winchester 94 in 30/30. There was a small amount of ammo, in most of the popular calibers. Rob remarked that they could use the ammo they didn't need as trade barter. They loaded up everything , and placed the bounty into the RV. They found plenty of camping supplies, sleeping bags, sleeping pads, all weather tents. There was clothing, even for children of preschool age. There was also some camping stoves, with fuel, water purifiers, filters, Nalgene bottles, mess kits, batteries. There was a small selection of pocket knives and all purpose tools. They decided to take only what they needed, since the gunshots probably alerted the local populace. They got ten sets of clothes for each person, and two pairs of hiking boots. They loaded up all the food, and power bars. They selected two small back pack camping grills, and got all the fuel for them. They picked out four heavy sleeping bags, and four good inflatable pads. They picked out three nice all season tents that could be carried on a back pack. They also picked out two high capacity packs for Rob and his wife. The selected four sets of mess kits, along with utensils, and carrying pouches. They took all the maps of the area and any maps of the places they were heading. they got two good pair of binoculars, and two pairs of Gerber tools. After they had gotten everything they felt they needed, Rob stood guard outside, as Hemming searched the office. He found a small safe under the desk, with a combo lock on it. Turning the desk over, he found the combination written underneath one of the drawers. He opened the safe, and found to his astonishment, two matching serial numbered 1911's. There was also eight, eight round mags for it. His first inclination was to take them, but he decided that these were family heirlooms. He flipped the desk back over, and finding a pencil and paper, began to write.

We found these six looters as they shot the owner of this store. We killed the looters, and and buried the owner of the store out back. Due to necessity we had to take some of the items in

the store. I am leaving \$200 in silver \$5 coins, and I hope this pays for what we took. We also buried the "documents protector" with the owner. I suspect if you are family you will want to remove the body and bury it in a family plot. Please accept our condolences.

Yours Truly

Hemmingway

Hemming then placed all the silver he had, onto the letter and walked out of the office. He thought, "Someone may enter the store and take the money, but at least I left it for the right reasons." He walked out front, and with a shovel began digging a grave for the owner of the store. Once the grave was filled and the safe placed inside, Hemming filled the grave with dirt. He then said the Lord's prayer, surprised he had remembered it, since he had not been to church in ages. Once they were done, they got into the RV, and drove to the place where they had hidden the van, then they drove to the old service station, to rest and prepare for the journey home.

The three members of the posse watched the two men leave. They were unsure whether to ride their horses down to the store in a blaze of glory or wait for the others. As the other's drifted to the observation point, the two men had already buried the owner of the store. They decided to wait, since them en had been seen praying. Once the men left, they moved down into the store's parking lot. "Should we call Bart, and get a group after them?" Sid just shook his head.

He looked at the letter, with the silver, and then walked to where the owner of the store was buried. "Leave them be, they did right by us today, we did not get here in time." A boy twelve came riding into the parking lot on a four wheeler. He ran to the back where the crowd of men were. "where's my dad?" the boy asked crying. The men dug up the body, as the boy just looked on. The safe was brought up out of the hole, and opened by the boy who knew the combination. The 1911's were still there, as well as the mags that went with them. Sid, who worked in the store part time, when not working his shift as a deputy sheriff, told the boy, " Your father bought these so that both of you would have the same pistol." "He knew you wanted one, and he wanted you to have it." "There is another safe inside, where he keeps other things, that we will see gets to your mom's house." "Your father was killed by these looter's, then the other two men showed up, they then killed the looter's. They paid for what they took, with silver, no less, and then buried Hess." "I say we let them go, we need to organize so this doesn't happen again." And so it was.....

Harvey stared at the makeshift roadblock through his binoculars. He and his "team" were hidden behind an old van that had been burned out, about five miles from their community. They were trying to recon the area going toward the exit to highway forty. This exit was important for two reason's, it was an access way to get on to forty, staying on the road and crossing over forty took you directly into downtown Raleigh. The neighborhood between Harvey and forty had built a large double sided roadblock, effectively closing off the road. The idea was to talk to the neighborhood, and hopefully get them to open the road, so that they could build an observation post on the exit. Maybe they would have to block the road going into Raleigh itself, but they needed to talk with this neighborhood first. Harvey's team, with the back up of a Bradley if they needed it, was checking things out to see if it was possible to approach the roadblock without being shot at. Harvey was whispering to his teammate, "If you look at the second story window, on the left side of the road, there is a sniper." "Then looking right, there is another sniper on the right side." "It looks like they could fire in either direction, if needed." "They will have us in their sights as soon as we round this curve here." Harvey jotted down his notes, and gave a hand signal to move his team back to the rally point. People who lived in this area were out and about, talking, trading, and watching these "commando's" with interest. Some of these people's houses had taken fire when the firefight erupted over the shopping center over four weeks ago. At this point, they kept their distance, hoping to be left alone. The older more established neighborhood that had erected the roadblock had closed itself off to the area, out of fear or maybe there had been a looting. They were close to downtown Raleigh, so who knew why they had decided to do that. the idea was to open these areas up, so that the road to the exit could be used. But it was becoming a bigger mission, as people were finding out, and a trade area had opened up at the shopping center. This was good as it got people talking to one another again, and communication was improving.

Scott met Harvey as the team entered Ranford Trace. Harvey gave his report, and Scott decided what to do. He would drive down tomorrow, with one of the Bradley's, and make an appearance. If all was well, hopefully they could parley a deal, or at least some sort of alliance. Scott wanted nothing more than to pack up and go home, but they needed more supplies before they could head out. John and Kristy, along with about twenty people were "foraging" the local RV shop, and should be back any minute.

The foraging teams had become quite efficient at getting in and getting out of any area they were in. They moved fast, like locusts, stripping what was needed and getting out of dodge. They were even able to tailor vehicle loads for whatever they were after. Today, they were after RV's. These would make the trip to Eden alot easier, as well as provide shelter once they got

there. No one would be guaranteed a free lunch, and the RV's would make expedient housing in case none could be found. There was an RV center about thirty miles away in a town called Garner. The team, beefed up a bit for this particular mission, numbered almost thirty people. They wanted enough to guard the dealership, as well as getting the vehicles started and driving them out. To save wear and tear on the Bradley, it was parked on an eighteen wheeler flatbed, driven to the area, then unloaded for security.

They reached the RV center about mid-day, and began the routine of clearing the area and setting up a perimeter. There was not a lot left, either people had been coming to the dealership and getting what they wanted, or it was waiting to be restocked. What ever happened, there was only a few large one's left. They did find some nice models though. There were two 2004 Fleetwood Providence 39L Diesel engine full size RV's. These guys were huge, with pop out sides, and towing capacity. They also were equipped with water purifiers, for the sink and bath. There was also a Thor 35F model, and three 2004 Coachhouse Plat 270xl's. And last but not least, a 2003 Gulfstream Lite 22 ss. Galtier and Frank began clearing the office, and searching for the keys, as everyone prepared to leave. Five gallon fuel tanks were carried to each vehicle, in case they did not have enough gas to get to the community. Steve, Chris, and Fred had climbed to the top of a building to watch over the streets that connected to the RV center. John was sitting in the copula of the Bradley, with Kristy monitoring the communications of the team members. Everything was going smoothly, and quick. John's hair was raising on the back of his head, and he looked back to the four lane road that they had come on. He began noticing subtle things about the buildings and abandoned cars around the road. He had a bad feeling, and decided that he was going to keep the Bradley off the trailer for the trip home, it would bring up the rear of the convoy heading back.

Steve and Chris were watching the area around the center for any signs of movement. Most of the time if anyone was moving around they either ignored the raiding or ran away. Steve commented to Chris that it seemed as if some of the buildings surrounding the area looked burnt. Fred called out, "Hey look down that corridor, is that a flash of something?" The shot hit him before they heard it. Fred took a high powered rifle round in the side of his head, under his Kevlar helmet. Steve and Chris, who were standing, both hit the roof of the sales building fast. Chris got on the talkie with Kristy, and told them where the shot came from, "B1 this is Roof support"

"Come in Roof Support"

"one down shots fired"

"Say again R1"

"shots fired one down"

Kristy gulped, knowing that one of the guys was dead. John, was yelling at Barry who was driving to get the Bradley moving, forward. Kristy would have to wait to respond as the Bradley moved to the front of the dealership.

"B1 to R1, where did the shots come from?"

"Two blocks down 12 o'clock, three story building....."

The Bradley had just driven into the fire line of the building. An RPG raced from the second story window, and narrowly missed the Bradley, exploding into a parked car nearby. John freaked out, began screaming incoherently, pulling back on the loading lever of the M60, aimed it at the windows, and began cutting loose. He was yelling over and over "what the H....." Anne's arm was still in a sling, and she was helping with gassing up the RV's. When the firing began, she climbed the side of one of the RV's, seeing where the firing was coming from. It was then she heard more firing to the rear of the center, and she realized they were trapped. About twenty people came pouring out of three buildings firing AK47's, and charging the dealership. They stopped at some parked cars, and began pouring fire into the center. Anne called to her team, who was standing around. They were armed with the pistol carbines, since their job was

to gas up and drive the RV's. Now they were a combat team. She called out to them to climb aboard the RV, they were going to charge the enemy position.

On the left side of the dealership, three snipers had begun to pin down the team to keep them from reacting to the shots fired in the front and rear. Unluckily for the snipers, Mitch was on this team, and had his scoped semi M14 with him. He found a decent spot, and with a spotter, began returning fire. He hit the first sniper, and kept the others pinned down. The rest of left team then moved on to the front of the dealership to pour fire on the building with the RPG's. The right team, faced no fire, and splitting just in case of attack, sent some members to the rear to help Anne's team.

Barry moved the Bradley behind the dealership office, to keep it from being an RPG target. John was trying to dismantle the M60 to move it to a firing position on the building. "Shoulda practiced this, this is taking to long" he muttered to himself. Two RPG's slammed into the dealership, blowing out the glass, and debris. The roof Steve and Chris were covering on, began cave in a bit. They crawled to one end of the roof thinking they could jump off, and as they bunched together, a third RPG impacted unto the roof. They died before they hit the ground. Kristy, hearing John say "God no please" picked up the Bradley comm headset and called in to Missy, who was monitoring the transmissions.

"Jesus wept" Missy said as she got the transmission from Kristy. She ran down the stairs of her house, to the front door, and began ringing the bell they had installed there. When everyone heard the bell, they stopped what they were doing, and ran to Harvey's house. Harvey, Kareef, Sheeka, Mitch's wife, Scott and his family, Stanley his wife and younger daughter, Bob, Connie and Lucy, and all the other members of the Ranford Trace community. Everyone formed up on the green that stood in front of Harvey's house. Missy gave a quick rundown on what she had heard. Stanley was frantic, both because his daughter was out there in the thick of it and because he had trained those people. Stanley spoke to the crowd, "I will take twenty of you, with the two Bradley's and try to get there." "We are up against a well armed bunch, and it seems like they might be well led too." "Everybody meet me at John's to gear up, and we will be off." Scott began walking toward John's as well., Stanley caught up with him. "You can't go Scott, you and Harvey will have to stay here." Scott stopped in his tracks, "Now wait a minute, I am" Stanley put his arm on Scott's shoulder, which was calming, and said, " Scott, you are a leader, no one doubts your courage, but you need to stay here, all this is your responsibility." Scott wouldn't argue with his friend, but said, " You report back as you can, and get everybody home safe" Stanley already felt that there were dead, but he kept those concerns to himself. Missy was informing Harvey of as much, and Harvey went to join the others.

Lin and Ma were unlocking John's garage, which had become the neighborhood armory. Lifting the door, Stanley said, "A teams, get your gear and three day packs, you other ten form a line, we will get you kitted out." The A teams, were people who had been trained in the use of the M4's, and had performed recon duty, or foraging duty. They constituted the what was considered the hardcore militia base. Most of the other people in the neighborhood had been trained in the use of the Ruger pistol carbines, the lever actions or the M1a 's. For this trip, it was the m1a's that were going . Everyone kitted out, with their three day packs, gear, and rifle. Once everyone who was going was prepared, Stanley walked them across the street to get the Bradley's. There he was met by Ferguson, who had set his Suburban up for emergency medical use. William was driving, and ready to go. Stanley nodded, and said, " You get between the two Bradley's, and drive slow." "When we get there, be prepared to take fire, Doc, this is really hairy."

At the RV center, John was taking heavy fire from just about every conceivable angle. The Bradley had to be hidden behind one building to keep it out of reach of the RPG's. He had gotten the M60 off of the tripod mount and it was now churning rounds toward the building

keeping the RPG from being launched, but it also meant he couldn't swing to help Anne's crew, who were too far away. He hoped she was OK.

The two RV's that Anne's team was preparing were being systematically shredded by AK and RPK fire. She was angry, since she could not actually use the vehicles anymore. Luckily for her team, the vehicles were sideways, taking the brunt of the gunfire. Then she formed a plan. Getting one of the team mates to help, as the others returned fire, she collected all the gas cans. Seeing that ten of the individuals had bunched near a collection of cars, she called out to two people. Bailey and his friend Shorty were both seventeen years old. Their parents lived at Ranford Trace. The boys had volunteered for every foraging mission, to have something to do. Anne wanted them to crawl about six yards, and throw four of the gas cans at the ten people who were bunched. With the cans leaking, she hoped to catch the area on fire, and either force the people out into the open, or force them to flee. Either way, that would force the other ten to fish or cut bait. The idea was they would all retreat. Bailey and Shorty were keen, and off they went. Crawling as far as they could, they began taking fire from the gang in front of them. Since the element of surprise was gone, they tossed the gas cans, and watched them hit the ground. Even though no one was hurt in the fuel release, the gang with the AK's retreated a bit, giving the boys a chance to run back to the cover of the RV parking lot. By this time part of the right hand team had joined up with Anne's group, giving her more firepower. The other gang, was attempting to flank, and was being pinned by fire from her "techies". It was then she formulated a plan. If they allowed the second group to actually get close enough to where they thought they were flanking, they could wipe them out, and still keep the other group who had retreated pinned down. She took charge of the right side group that had arrived ordering them to watch the group that had retreated due to the fire started by the gas. She pulled most of her "techies" back a bit to see what would happen next. The gang that was trying to flank took the bait, and charged the small hill, since the fire from the foragers was slackening. This gang had no military precision, just courage that you get from firing full auto, and seeing too many movies. They charged up the hill, firing wildly, mostly in the air. Anne watched from her vantage point, then gave a shrill whistle to her team. From behind a far RV, her team ran, and kneeling down on their knees they placed well aimed fire down into the hill. The gang was caught in the open, with their other team still behind the fire that was burning the spilled gas. It was over in a fusillade of fire. The right hand team, moved into a blocking position, firing into the fire, keeping the retreating gang under wraps. The flanking gang, was destroyed. There was no quarter given, and as Anne's team moved down the hill to collect the weapons and ammo, they finished off any survivors. With three people collecting the ammo, once they returned, Anne formed a perimeter keeping an eye on the retreating gang, who had found new positions and were giving harassing fire. Since every member of the foraging unit carried a three day pack with food, water, ammo, and medical gear, they settled in for a long night. They were about fifty feet away from the other three positions, and they began taking stock of their situation. There was about four wounded personnel, who were immediately cared for. A runner was sent to John, who was trying to get his own perimeter up, and he ordered the runner to check on all the positions, and get back to him. Mitch and his spotter, were holding their own, but had noticed movement down and in front of their position. They could not move away, nor was there a vantage point to provide covering fire for any other position. Mitch just watched his front hoping for the cavalry to arrive. As darkness came both sides settled in for a battle of attrition. The Ranford Trace foragers waited for the cavalry, while the attackers waited to see what would happen next.

Raul could not believe the stupidity of the gang he had been assigned to. He had given them weapons they could only dream about having, and tried to get them into shape as a new

partisan group, but they were fools. Raul looked the part, being able to converse in both rapid Spanish as well as English. Raul was an ex-Sandinista, who had taken to Communism like most American boys to beer. He had long left Nicaragua behind, working for the KGB. Through this association, he had become a member of one of the most powerful drug cartels. The cartels, had a working relationship with Al-Qaeda, who before 9/11 was allowed by the Taliban to harvest Opium to sell on the international market. Iran supplied banks and other operatives, while Osama became the face for the Jihad. The Russian and Chinese Intelligence services became interested in these connections as early as the late eighties, and began working with them. Using basic Communist doctrine, the idea was that the drug culture in America could be used to bring the revolution to its shores. The drug trade provided fake identification, ability to slip in and out of the United States with impunity, and in both Mexico and the United States, corruption of government officials who could grease the wheels so to speak. It was through these contacts, that illegal arms began to flow, both to gangs like the Crips and Bloods, but more importantly, to the growing hispanic gangs in all the major cities in the US. Also, these arms and modern explosives were sent to Islamic operatives in the US. Russia used its contacts within the Russian mob (the Russian Gov and the Russian Mob are really the same entity) to pour money and gear into the US. China through its economic ties with Panama and Mexico, began working the same conduits. The idea was to begin a violent campaign against the American suburbs, pitting at first gangs against law enforcement, then as American politicians passed more and more draconian laws to attempt to curb the violence, the American public against their own politicians. As the nineties came and went, more and more news articles came out about huge caches of ComBloc weaponry being found in states like California, Texas, Arizona, and Florida. This included AK47's, RPK's, and RPG shoulder fired grenade launchers. What was not reported however was also the amounts of modern C4 explosives and written instructions on how to make all kinds of bombs as well as WMD's. What stopped the escalation was 9/11. Afterward, the system went quiet waiting to see how the American response would be and if the drug trade would be affected. By 2004, it was obvious the Bush administration had bitten off more than it could chew with the Middle East, and illegal immigration was growing. Also, politicians were ignoring all the information pouring into Washington daily about the growing targeting of law enforcement by Gangs, as well as the growing influence of China and Russia south of the border. In fact, the Democratic party tried to have more stringent anti-gun laws passed, which would only effect the law abiding citizen. This despite decades of studies and trends showing that CCW programs as well as the ownership of firearms was stopping crime everywhere. It was an act of treason at this point to even consider more draconian laws against the American populace. After the go ahead was given for the "jihadists" to carry out a final and crushing blow to the United States, the guns and gear flowed into the United States in record numbers. Even if Federal authorities found some of the shipments, it was only the tip of the iceberg. The Russian/Chinese plan was simple, once the power was out, weapons would be given to any criminal grouping in the country, who in turn would create all the mayhem they wanted. This would keep the American citizen, considered fat and lazy off balance enough that when the time came for occupation, they would beg to be saved by a Communist army landing on their shores. What they did not count on was the American spirit. In communities all across the country, Americans banded together and fought off all attempts to destroy their resolve. The Communists had also predicted that the US military would become a dictatorial force, further deepening the rift between the populace and law enforcement. Here they were wrong as well. Whole military units from all branches were being allowed to go home to help rebuild as they saw fit. The military had even crippled the Communist war effort by years. No one had heard anything from Cuba, who was to be an integral part of the invasion of the American South. Only Internationally, had the US suffered major defeats. So agents like Raul were now being used to train and build insurgency forces all across the country, to try and create an instability in the

Urban areas. This was similar to Communist doctrine in Rhodesia, which worked because of the end of British colonialism. But these gang bangers were a far cry from dedicated marxists. Raul watched out of the third story window of a building three blocks away from the RV center. They had picked up info of a military style convoy moving toward the center this morning. He had set up this ambush, to try and capture a few of the armed force to interrogate them to find out who they represented. He also remembered that one of his “clients” had taken interest with one community who had been foraging further and further out from their community. He had sent a squad to try to get the dealer to attack the area, since obviously their forces were split. But his team had not reported in. “Tonight they will not sleep”, he thought.

Scott was running around the housing area, trying to make sure everyone was in place. The people left not going to rescue the foragers were mostly the workers who had opted out of the militia unit or foraging. They had taken Stanley’s class on rifle skills, and had been issued lever actions or pistol caliber carbines. Now they were manning the “breastworks”. There were two entrances to the community, at each one a house with a 360 degree view was turned into a small fort. The observation rooms were fortified with trash bags, filled with dirt stacked around the walls up to a 5’9 persons chest. Windows were smashed out, with plyboard painted black placed into the window seal. Observation slits were placed in the wood, then, brick and mortared into place from the inside. In the attic’s, sniper lofts were built, with cross slits in the four sides of the roof, so that a person with a bolt action rifle could see in 360 degrees, lying on their stomach. Each house was manned by ten people, for four hours, then the shift would change. Although the shift change was a routine that could watched and planned against by a foe, it was the best they could do for now. Dirt berms were placed blocking half of the road, then a “fence” , then another dirt berm, forcing any vehicle to slow down to a crawl, then stop. Around the woods, and water protection areas, booby traps were placed, broken glass, broken glass bottles, wooden two by fours with rusty nails hammered through, rocks, and just plain holes surrounded the community. Since the rescue party had left, the whole community was up in arms, manning the defenses and preparing for a fight. Three pick up trucks, with about eight people were set up, on the off chance that another group would have to head out. Scott hoped that wouldn’t be necessary, but he would not let these people be unsupported. Harvey’s team was working its way through the government housing area, whose resident’s were rousing and preparing for a fight as well. Since they were now part of the same cohesive community, they had been issued lever guns as well, and were preparing to use them. The government housing area was a straight shot from the barricade another neighborhood had put up, that Scott was going to try to negotiate with. Since that was the easiest access way from downtown Raleigh, and it was obvious that it was a gang the foragers were fighting in Garner, Harvey watched the roadblock with interest. They did not ever use that road, so contact had not been made. It was a shame, since everyone had so much to gain from a mutual defense pact, and possible trade. But, alas, “time had come today”.

Scott moved around the neighborhood, checking the defenses, and talking to people. After twenty minutes had passed, he went to Harvey’s house, to get a status report on Stanley’s convoy, as well as the forager’s current status. He was worried, if gangs were armed with RPG’s, just what kind of terrorism were they dealing with here. He shook his head, and began humming THE WHO tune, “Won’t Get Fooled Again”.

John was thinking about a song by THE WHO as well, called “Let’s See Action”, and ready to get out of dodge. They had a precarious hold on the situation, with the only reason they hadn’t been annihilated was because the opposing force just wasn’t quite up to what they were doing.

Plus, the training everyone had been receiving from Stanley was just plain showing through. It was as if someone had seen "Black Hawk Down" but forgot the punch line. In the action in Somalia, even though the mission had not quite turned out the way it was planned, the mission was successful. And the enemy had paid a terrible price for the shooting down of two Blackhawks. John mused, "We are giving these guys a run for their money tonight".


Anne had crawled forward a bit trying to hear the voices of the gang watching her position. She was trying to grasp at exactly where they were. As night fell, the gang opposing her position was beginning to drink and smoke, and talking loud. It was as if the TV show was over until tomorrow. She wanted to act tonight, to open this position, so that they could fall back through it, and then backtrack to the highway. She had sent a runner to John, and he had OK'd the plan. "This ain't little big horn" she thought, Anne and John were surrounded by superior firepower, and all they wanted to do was attack. Most Americans would rather fight than flee. Seeing a cigarette light she could not believe her luck. The gang that was supposed to be watching her group was sitting and talking passing a bottle and smoking. If she had the use of both arms, she could have handled the issue herself. But she slow crawled back to her group, and writing something on paper, sent a runner to John letting him know they had their out. When the runner reached John, He was lying on his stomach, staring at the building with the RPG's. He read the note, just about laughed in delight, then went into the Bradley to wake Kristy. Kristy called Missy giving them the map grid point that they would be moving to, and told Missy to call the cavalry and have them wait. Missy relayed the message to Scott and Stanley, and both men breathed a prayer that it all would go well. Stanley stopped his small convoy in a preplanned position, and waited. Once the breakout began, he was going to attack the main building, in a lightning raid. They would be pre occupied with the breakout to handle an attack from the outside. The only problem was distance and noise. He had to figure that he was being watched or listened for by the opposing force. Getting his people in a defensive position, and preparing them for a possible attack was easy enough, but then to load back up into their vehicles and make a run through unknown territory would be tough. After all, this gang was large in number and had access to RPG's. Stanley thought back on all the news reports he had heard in the nineties about custom's agent's and law enforcement seizing illegal AK47's and RPK's, coming from China. He did not remember anything about rocket launcher's, but wasn't there a few mysterious plane crashes where they seemed to fall out of the sky right after takeoff? Was that a test run? How many drug cartel gangs were operating in North America? Wasn't there plenty off information about Islamic terrorists meeting with FARC and other terror groups in South America? "We are in worse trouble than we thought" he mused. He thought more on the subject, his words screaming through his mind. "THERE IS A CONCERTED EFFORT BEING MADE TO ARM GANGS IN THIS COUNTRY, SO THAT THEY CAN AND WILL BECOME A FIFTH COLUMN, POSSIBLY A BREEDING GROUND FOR FUTURE TERRORISM." He shuddered, shaking almost uncontrollably. He had served in Afghanistan, before being wounded, he had friends in Iraq, and all over the globe fighting a global war on terror. But the fight was lost here at home. If American citizens were surviving these terrorist attacks, and bouncing back, why are these gangs all of a sudden popping up with weaponry obviously shipped from either China or Russia? Something is trying to keep Americans from rebuilding, from reforming their communities. The answer was easy, it was right there, one only had to reach out and grab it. Russia and China were coming for America's throat. With natural resources getting tighter and tighter every year, and the middle east becoming more and more powerful, something had to be done. The New World Order, by way of Russia and China was coming. He could see it now, and he was mad as hell. He knew the US military would be fighting to get home, he also knew they would not stand in the way of Americans trying to rebuild their country. But without parts, and industry, there was only so much the US military could do. Someday, maybe in a few years, the

rest of the world would be coming to occupy the US, and sooner rather than later. Europe, would probably sit this one out. Their power and grandeur was over. They would have to be content sliding more and more into a mixture of Communism and Islamic law. No, America had to be taken out, almost enslaved, before space was colonized, before Democracy could really take hold in places like Africa and the Middle East. America's influence wasn't just military technology, or political, it was Britney Spears, SUV's, and partisan politics. The soap opera had to end, because the whole world wanted to play. Stanley pinched himself, and got his mind back on the matter at hand. He waited for the radio to squeak, so he could think globally and act locally.

Scott was thinking similar thoughts as Stanley, as a bitter wind blew through Ranford Trace. "When this is over, we are going to have to re-think our position" he knew they had a new obligation, a new mission. They had been trying to hide from the rest of the world, trying leave this reality for a new one he had built up in his mind. It would be so easy to leave, just take off. But why, when there was so much work here. "We need to retake the city, to rebuild some sort of government." "We can't just leave" The truth hit him like a ton of bricks, smacking him in the face, and pushing him down. He began to walk trying to clear his head, and trying to keep warm. He wouldn't sleep until everyone was home safe.

Mario kept running, then at the sound of the whistle, hit the deck. He popped up with is Cetme, and firing two shots, stood up, did five jumping jacks, and hit the deck again. The exercise was to stimulate stress in a combat situation. At the sound of three more whistles, he stopped and looked at the target. He had made it to the ten ring, at seventy five yards. The Sheriff's deputy, who had been an ex- Marine recon member, smiled at him, and wrote down the score. After weeks of planning, they were finally going to head into Greensboro, and get his kids. He would be accompanying a unit of twenty men, all ex Marine or Army, with a para rescue officer as well. So many servicemen were returning home, that Rockingham county had a surplus of military personnel. So it was decided that Greensboro would get a recon, and possibly an incursion. Mario cared little for the incursions, in fact he had given the maps and all other gear captured from the Russian to the new "military" authority. The militia of Rockingham county had grown to large proportions. with a large corp of military men, they had trained just about every able adult in rudimentary forms of small unit tactics. Since planting would not start until spring, training served two purposes, one getting everybody up to speed, and two keeping everyone's minds off of the fact that food was becoming scarce. "Two More Months" had become the mantra. There was also a terrible refugee problem from Guilford county as well. Criminal activity had grown, with the loss of law enforcement in Greensboro and High Point. This forced the population to attempt to leave. Rockingham county was the obvious choice. Roadblocks had been set up at all the major highway junctions, and refugees were stopped, and in most instances turned back. There just wasn't food or supplies for them. They were only allowed in if family or friends who lived in Rockingham county could identify them. The process was tedious at best. At some point in the past week, the refugee movement had stopped cold turkey. Instead, gangs with heavily armed began probing the border areas. The rural areas around Guilford county became wastelands as the gangs ventured out of the city looking for supplies. In some areas, the gangs were easily ambushed by well armed citizens, but in most areas, the gangs had free reign. They would swoop into a neighborhood, usually an upper middle class or wealthy area, and strip it of everything. Terrible acts of human cruelty were common place, reminding people of the television footage of Bosnia or Croatia. It was medieval .

Mario was staring out into the winter morning and holding steady with excitement. They were leaving today, to get his daughters and to find those storage depots. He was happy, ready to be doing something, anything to get him closer to his girls. He had his assault vest, loaded with mags for his Cetme, and a belt and holster for his Glock. He had a three day pack, with extra clothes and food. He was as steady as he would ever be. All the members of this force were armed with 308 semi auto rifles. It reminded Mario of one of the books Scott had lent him on Rhodesia. They were loaded for bear, and would be able to fight on their own for at least three days if they had to. He breathed in, and entering his position on the truck, rode off into the early morning dawn.

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on  November 18, 2004 13:49 November 18, 2004 01:49 PM:

Chapter 11

Anne was as ready as she would ever be. Her team was prepared, and psyched. Once they took out this group in front of them, they would then be able to retreat through that corridor. Then they could move more freely around the shopping center, and hopefully away from the gang that was trying to kill them. Except for Anne whose arm was still in a sling, each team member had a pistol carbine slung on their back, and an AK in their hands. A few spare mags were stuffed into pockets or fannypacks. They would crawl down the hill, then on a whistle, raise up and charge. They would be charging the enemy perpendicular to their defensive position. they would wheel 180 degrees back to their old position, covering for the rest of the group which would pour through the breach. The tactic was used on the second day, battle for Gettysburg, by Union forces, in what was the most important moment of the battle. Anne had seen the movie, and the strategy had stuck in her mind. With the breach open, John could move the Bradley down the hill, and cover her teams rearward movement. The Bradley was the only vehicle left working at this point. Anne stood up, about ten feet from the gang members. They weren't even watching the position. She smiled and blew her whistle. Pulling a pistol it's holster she and her team opened fire on the remaining position. The gang members, scared to death, high and drunk, froze for a critical minute, while the foragers poured through their position. The gang members tried to rally, but were cut down in a fusillade of fire. Her team moved into a blocking position, and she sent a runner to get the others.

John, seeing the runner, took a guess, and whistled again. everyone began moving to the new exit. He carried the M60 in his hands, since the Bradley was being used for wounded personnel. Kristy, called Stanley with his go signal, then got out of the Bradley, to help provide another shooter. Just then, shots from the main building rang out, sensing new movement. Raul was angry, he could not get these gangs motivated beyond pillaging and looting. He had these people somewhat surrounded, and now, thanks to the unorganized gang, they were breaking out. He began launching RPG's into the parking lot, hoping to get lucky. The man beside him, armed with an RPK, began strafing pre arranged areas in the lot. The idea was to bog down any movement, or to put fire into any areas where defensive fire could be placed. Raul had to smile, because this morning was the kick off of a new offensive for the gangs and criminal element to break out of Raleigh and begin moving into the suburbs. He had a counterpart, a Russian named Gorky, who was helping to get that started. If all went well, they would have a force large enough to hopefully force the US military forces at Fort Bragg to react, and try to reoccupy the cities in the east. Then guerilla warfare would begin in earnest. Thus forcing the US military to implement Martial Law type rules, which would further break down the United States. Causing a slaughter here in Raleigh, and moving on Fayetteville, would get the ball rolling. Classic

Communist tactic.

Stanley saw the fire being launched from the two story building through his binoculars. He assembled his team, and began slowly moving into position. He had to take his time, or they would begin to move their fire patterns toward his position. The scouts they had placed along his route were easy to dispatch, they were either high or drunk, and made all kinds of noise. They were taken out nice and quietly, as his people moved into position. The two remaining Bradley's, were charged up and ready to roll, once Stanley gave the order. Receiving the call from Kristy, he gave the order. He had one group on foot, moving slowly to the other side of the building. They were going to assault the other side. They carried the remaining tear gas grenades, to be used to assault the building. The main force, charging with the Bradley's, would provide what cover they could, trying to keep the windows clear from RPG fire.

John had the whole team moving, collecting whatever gear they could grab, and trying to keep moving for their exit. Anne was taking fire from snipers and whatever was left on her flank, and they were running low on ammo. They had captured some AK's, and RPG's, and were using them as fast as they were captured. John noticed four gang members running down an embankment with two RPG's and AK's. He was running on the side of the Bradley, between the main building and the armored vehicle. As he saw the movement, he hit the deck and began lining the M60 up to fire on the enemy. Since the parking lot was resting on a hill, he fired a deadly burst onto the gang members. They were obliterated in a hail of 308. Mitch, reacting to the fire from the M60, swore under his breath, looking up and over he saw a gang member's head pop up, and then the same guy aiming his AK in their direction. He stopped running, and taking a breath, dropped the guy in one shot. "I wanted to be a grandfather at this age" he said, "I did not want to fight a war on my doorstep" The fog of combat took over, as he yelled for people to keep moving, he picked up anyone who fell, and dragged anyone who didn't jump up to run. All of his old reflexes were coming back, and he was angry and scared all at once. The group, kept moving in what seemed to be slow motion. Then the RPG's came raining down upon them. At least seven were launched at once and all at the Bradley. Most impacted either too short or behind, but two got lucky. Both shots impacted the treads, immediately ripping them off as the Bradley tried to move forward. When it couldn't move anymore, John and Mitch threw the backdoors open, and yelling began to get the wounded out of the back. Stanley's group was now in the fight, pouring fire onto the building, and tying up the second story windows so that John's group could retreat and regroup. Raul was desperate, with this new group, he was sure he was being attacked by official authorities, and was not prepared for their assault. "Why didn't my scouts report this to me last night?" but it was too late, and he gave the order to abandon the position. Just then group one began launching the tear gas grenades into the first floor of the building, and the gang members had to stop. Raul, realizing he was going to either die or be captured decided to end it himself. He pulled his Makarov from his holster, and blew his brains out. The gang members, barely in any kind of disciplined order before, then flew into a panic. It all comes down to training. They all dropped to their knees, and placed their hands behind their backs. Coughing, wheezing, and puking because of the gas, they waited for the authorities to arrive. They did not realize that the days of "fair" trials were over. And as luck would have it, Roger was the first to enter the building. Team one, began clearing the first floor, picking up stragglers and collecting gear. Team two pulled seconds later, shooting any gang members running from the scene. Stanley raised a blue flag, on his Bradley, which was the signal for all clear, and all the shooting stopped. John and two others ran down to the building, to help with the clean up.

"John, is Anne OK?"

"She is fine Stanley, and quite the hero" "You should have seen her firing your '92f one handed"

"Lets collect all this gear, and get ready to go home, I don't like this"

"I Have three RV's that weren't hit, we are going to load them with the wounded and all the

captured gear, and should be ready to roll within the hour.”

“Good, bring one down here, and lets load it with all this gear.”

“John, how many did we lose?”

“Stan, we lost six, with six more wounded.” “We have the bodies, and are preparing them for movement”

“I don’t have the words.....”

“None of us do Stanley, none of us do!”

The gang had an impressive arsenal, with full auto AKM’s, and RPK’s. Also, there was a small supply left of RPG’s and grenades. All the weapons were either made in China or Russia. They esimated they had faced a force of about one hundred gang members, with some prison escapees mixed in. It was obvious they had been armed and equipped by someone, and as Roger “asked” more questions, they eventually found Raul’s body. Roger instinctively turned the body over, and ripping the pants off of the body, looked at the left hand calf. Their was a small tattoo, of a hammer and sickle. There was a Russian word under it, with a sword. Roger made sure he had a full magazine in his Browning, and walke dot the remaining twenty prisoners. He looked at Stanley, and said, “ That guy was KGB all the way.” “I saw the same Tattoo’s in Rhodesia, on those marxist barbarians we fought.” “None of these criminals should be allowed to live past the next five minutes.” Stanley nodded his head, too weary to care. He left the room, just as Roger began to shoot the remaining gang members. Their screams could be heard for blocks. When all was done, they found where the gang had kept their vehicles, and that was a treasure find. They had raided a Nissan dealership, and had accumulated ten xterra’s, and ten Armadas. The trailer was loaded up with as many as they could get on it. And the rest were driven home. The Bradley that no longer functioned was looted of everything, and the inside was set on fire. As the group pulled out of Garner on the way home, everyone sighed a breath of relief, until the radio call came from Missy “Get home we are under attack!”

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Harvey’s team had just set up the observation post overlooking the roadblock. They were on the farthest edge of the project area, looking about five blocks down the road. With the battle raging over the RV center, Scott and Harvey thought it best to watch the road which led to downtown Raleigh just in case. The roadblock, though well intentioned, was to centralized, and out on the open. Harvey knew it would only be a matter of time before someone with the power smashed it down. He hoped they could negotiate with these people and hopefully get them to change their ways. If that neighborhood fell, so fell everything in the next ten miles. It was then he saw through his binoculars a lot of activity running through the area. Men and women were hurrying to man firing positions, and panic was high. He kept observing, when three explosions rocked the roadblock. Someone with a cannon was taking the roadblock down brick by brick.

“Call Scott, tell him to get ready for us to report soon” “Looks like these guys are hitting us twice in one day”

Gorky was happy. Tanks were his first love, he loved building models of them as a kid, and watching old patriotic films of t34’s as they crushed the German army. His father had led an armored division in Afghanistan until he was killed. Gorky had shown aptitude for learning foreign languages in school, so he had been plucked out of the commune class and placed in an intelligence foreign studies program. He was dedicated to his country, and grew up hating America. He had broken his teeth during the late eighties and early nineties, trying to coerce FBI agents and DEA agents to turn. He had failed to get even one to become a double agent. For his failure he had been assigned to work on a new assignment. It turned out he loved it. Gangs and gang warfare had been a part of America’s dark history since the nineteenth century. In the last forty years, what had changed was the direction of intel gathering. It all became part and parcel to drug trafficking. Because the drug trade was so lucrative and the fact that it crossed all

national boundaries, it was a natural place for intelligence services to mingle and work. It was here Gorky was in his element. Arab terror groups helped ship Opium to Europe, and Africa. They also helped get arms to South America. South America in turn was a great place for terror groups to set up and have legitimate bank accounts. It was also a safe area for groups to meet. Then there was Mexico, where the whole government was on the best retirement plan a drug cartel could buy. The Russian and Chinese Intel services had been quick to help, and build these areas in the sixties and seventies. The US had been slow to get on the bandwagon until the mid-eighties. But by then they were chasing skirts. Everything came down to position, and that position was the southern American border with Mexico. The US had won the cold war everywhere but here. And for the past twenty years, Communist money and guns had flowed into the US. The gangs were seen as the natural source for a guerilla campaign in the US of A. With the power out, no help in sight, the gangs were being unleashed upon the American populace. The Russians had known that the American military would ever be part of a martial law situation, they had long memories of Nuremberg, and also they enjoyed massive public support. Politicians knew this, and this is why they had been building up the National Federal Law Enforcement forces for decades. The military would do more to help the average citizen, by just staying out of a political situation. To get them to react in CONUS, you would need a reason. And thousands of drug crazed criminals with full auto weapons as well as RPG's would be just that reason. Then the army would have to clamp down upon citizens as well as trouble makers, and the end of the US would be complete. At this point, they were close to getting what they wanted.

So Gorky was riding atop a Bradley fighting vehicle "liberated" from a national guard unit, with a twenty millimeter auto cannon. And he was loving tearing apart the stupidly placed roadblock in front of him. He was crossing the bridge, and would soon connect with Raul's forces on the other side. He had not heard from Raul, but that was ok, who could stop them now? He was supposed to get new orders weeks ago from Lenin, but Lenin had not been seen or heard from in a long time. He had had to improvise, and the attack was on. "We are only an hour from Ft Bragg, he mused, Stalin would appreciate the irony" He knew he was leading an undisciplined mob, that was ok, he would let them loot and pillage all they could, it would only help the mission. He did not care, seeing these gang members for what they were, animals. He had assembled all the trucks they could muster and loaded them down with men. Some were escaped prisoners, others gang members, others still were the wannabes, mostly white kids (To quote Steven King, "they have forgotten the face of their fathers"). Armed with everything from looted LEO weapons, Nat Guard, Federal guns, whatever. They also had AK's and RPG's. Gorky was in his element, and it showed.

There were about two thousand agents from Russia and China, operating within the US. Their job was to bring the criminal elements together, arm them, and hopefully lead them into creating some kind of guerilla military force. This was in the hopes of getting the US military to clamp down on the violence, and in the meantime, enforce rigid rules on the American populace. The hope was that a wall could be built between the American people and the US military. Then a door would be open for UN peacekeepers to roll into the US, and "save the day". They would then disarm the American people, and control the entire population. It was a plan that would take years to implement, but Communists are patient. Certain left wing politicians, and a few right wing ones as well, had been secreted away during the first terror attacks. They would be brought back out in the limelight after the first UN troops occupied the US. They would "Americanize" the occupation, and hopefully help keep the American public down.

Gorky tapped his radio operator's head, and the operator yelled something into the communication headset. A disorderly dismount occurred from the backs of trucks and out of vans and SUV's. The criminal element was being unleashed on the community just Southeast of Raleigh. Gorky wanted a quick victory, he had given one of the local drug dealers a chance at

this area, but he had loused it up. Gorky wanted all armed opposition crushed and quickly, so that operations could take place closer to Fayetteville. He was unleashing about two hundred criminals unto this area. He was giving them free time to loot and pillage. He had also sent about twenty guys to the other exit coming out of Raleigh, near an old junkyard. That should cover any escape for the neighborhoods. He wanted all these people under the knife by nightfall.

The neighborhood directly in front of the assault put up a good fight. It was a shame that Ranford Trace had not communicated with them before this. Harvey, angry, frustrated watched as the cannon rounds tore through the roadblock and the gangs of criminals began charging through the new holes in the defenses. He called Scott who was standing by , and told him what was happening. Scott sent ten people armed with what they had left which was lever action rifles. They would meet Harvey in the project area, along with the people of the projects who were armed as well. This would constitute a blocking force, to hold off the attack as long as they could. Hopefully, Stanley would arrive in time to help.

Harvey got everyone together, and said, "I do not have any grandiose plan of defense, my idea is we will charge into that neighborhood, and help them fight off these aggressor's" "These idiots will not be able to capitalize on their armament, because they will be hell bent on looting everything in sight." "Ultimately that is how we will beat them." A boy of thirteen, walked to the front of the crowd, he was crying , as the noises of the battle got closer. He raised a pole, and tied to it was an American flag. He told Harvey. " I guess we should carry this in front, so the other neighborhood will know we are the good guys" Tears welled up in everyone's eyes, and Harvey said, "You carry it son, you carry it!"

Scott ran home. He wanted to get a few more pieces of gear he thought he would need. All the children had been moved to Harvey's place, since it was the easiest place to defend. Mel, who was still in crutches, was in command of the defense of the three houses on the hill. It was the last ditch place, the last fort before it was over. Scott's home was empty, with everyone off to different places. His brother in law was waiting with another group at the entrance. His in laws had gone with the children. He walked up the stairs, watching the pictures in the hallway as he walked. He thought of happier times, and wasted time. Getting to "the reading room" he opened the closet, which was empty. He had had his father in law carry all the bugout bags to Harvey's in case the battle went south. Scott had sent his as well, but he did not expect to make it to Harvey's. He opened his gun vault, and remarked to himself how empty it was. But he did not want a gun. Inside the vault was a COLD STEEL KUKRI. It had a black sheath, and attached to his belt. He instead just stuck it under his belt, in his lower back. He could still run, jump, hit the deck. But it would be there if he needed it. And by the end of the day, he believed he would need it.

They had fifteen people left, most were forming on the hill leading to the opening to the projects. He had one group of three at the entrance on the main road, even though the fight would be ahead of them and through two different neighborhoods. Scott looked toward the nicer white collar neighborhood, and spat on the ground in disgust. There had to be a hundred people there, some with guns, they could help. Scott was getting angrier by the second. He walked back into his house, and opening the closet door pulled out a box. Inside was two flags, one was an American flag, the other the Gadsen flag . It was yellow, with a serpent on it and said, "Don't Tread On Me". Scott placed it on his flagpole, and carried it with him. seeing BOB waiting for him, he said, "Bob, you are in charge, Harvey has everything under control, we wait here for the next wave." Bob was struck, "Scott, where are you going?" "I am going to get some volunteers from the rich 'hood next door." "I will be back in a few" Gunfire rang out down the street.

Scott began yelling once he entered the next housing area. "Citizens, citizens, come out" "We need your help come out" nothing but silence. Scott then picked up a rock and through it threw the first window of the largest house he saw. The house must have been empty, because there was no response. He then aimed his M1a into the air and fired three shots, and said, "Until someone graces me with their presence, I am going to make sure I shoot out all the windows in this place" "Come on guys, if the poorer neighborhoods go, you are next" "What are you Democrats?" He walked to a hill in a yard that overlooked the small driveway. He held his flag high, and waved it back and forth. "Muster on the green" "Muster on the green" Scott's last retort must have worked, because people began opening doors and walking toward him. "Grab your firearms, you neighbors need your help" explosions ripped in the distance, and gunshots could be heard everywhere. Men and women began filing toward the green. Some carried rifles, shotguns, handguns. Others had shovels, hoes, and baseball bats. Scott had generated quite a crowd.

"Friends, my name is Scott Hinden." "Y'all know me, we have shared walks through each other's streets, waved as we drove by each other, and even spoken as we passed" "A group of people are attacking a neighborhood a few miles away." "If we do not stop this assault, they will soon be upon us" "We can not hide within our neighborhoods forever waiting for help" "We have to make our own luck" "Are you with me?" "I say again, are you with me?" People began cheering, and shaking their fists in the air. Scott led them to his neighborhood, which now numbered almost one hundred men and women armed. He walked up to Bob, who said, "Harvey is moving in now, but expects he will need us before it is over with." "What do you think?" "Let Harvey head on in, we will wait through this breeze, then move through the woods, and try to make the flank." Bob said, "it is a nice breeze today"

Stanley's party was going as fast as they could. He needed to get back and make sure everything was ok. Missy had not been on the radio, and in a few minutes they would be home. The trip was uneventful, thankfully. They had wounded to tend to, and dead to bury. "And another Damn battle to fight to" Stanley mused. John was reloading his M60, and talking with Kristy. She was making sure her shotgun was fully loaded and ready to go. Sitting in the back of the Armada, and trying to make small talk, even though they were worn out and tired. The convoy was breaking to a halt, and everyone was scrambling to get out of their vehicles. Stanley could not believe his eyes, there were about one hundred people heading out of Ranford Trace, ready to do battle. Armed with everything from assault rifles to baseball bats, they were being led by Scott who was hoisting a Gadsen flag. "That boy's got spunk" Mitch called out. Scott turned and waved, and just kept walking.

Stanley wanted to find out what was going on, before he just walked into battle. He wasn't sure what was going on. He had the Bradley driver pull into the neighborhood and drove directly to Missy's house. There she was helping get people settled, as everyone left was camping out on her lawn. Stanley knew that was the "doomsday option" and figured that every last adult was heading out to do battle with the enemy. He told his people to get the wounded to Gayles place, and the walking wounded would take up position guarding the area. That included Anne, his daughter, who tried to protest. Stanley wasn't hearing any of it today, telling her she had earned a rest.

Missy filled Stanley in on the details, realizing that Harvey was on the left flank, and Scott was on the right. The left was expected to fold first, with Scott providing a left punch. There was two Bradleys, with 20mm cannons, and they were giving the whole area hell. Whoever was commanding the operation had some military training, but that the gang was falling apart as they hit the neighborhood. They were more intent on looting and pillaging than pressing a military victory. Stanley, who not only had the two working Bradleys, also had RPG's captured from the last scrape. "This bunch has to be connected" he thought. "Missy, does Scott have a radio?"

“Yes Stanley, why?” “Missy tell him to get into a position of overwatch, and wait for my signal.” “Stanley that will leave Harvey on the left flank!” Missy’s heart missed a beat. Stanley was in command mode, and not thinking about individual people. “Missy, we have RPG’s that can take out those two Bradley’s.” “But I need a two pronged attack once we get there in order to get surprise.” “Harvey will just have to suffer in order for us to win.” Missy just let out a sigh, and made the call to Scott.

Harvey’s team made it to the beleaguered fortifications. People were dying everywhere. The gangs were not firing or even watching the flanks, only trying to get control over the people as they ran about. It was a scene of total mayhem. Harvey’s team began firing on anyone with an AK, and began taking a toll on the attackers. Gorky’s Bradley began firing toward the new front, Harvey kept moving his team, although some were taking hits. The 20mm rounds were horrible up close, doing unspeakable things as they tore through Harvey’s ranks. Harvey called Missy, wanting to know when help would arrive. She just told him to hold on, and keep “The Skeer on”. Harvey did the best he could.

Stanley was rushing to the scene, pushing everyone onward. They were all dog tired, and the fatigue was beginning to show. But they were moving on. Stanley scanned the street, as they turned onto it. He was heading straight for the subdivision, and preparing for a fight. As soon as they got there, he would dismount his team, and try and set up shots with the newly acquired RPG’s. He wanted Harvey’s team to be the bait, while Scott’s team would be the “homerun”. He wanted to totally wipe out these brigands, collect their weapons, and set a watch on the bridge entering downtown Raleigh. He hoped this was a last gasp, and that there were no reinforcements on the horizon.

Gorky was worried, there seemed to be a new force on his right flank, and some of the men were reporting hearing vehicles on the horizon. That was the direction Raul should be coming from. He had to take a chance that it was Raul, and not an opposing force. He decided, even though there had been no radio contact with Raul, that it had to be Raul coming from the other side. No Americans owned the kind of firepower that it would take to wipeout Raul’s force. “Americans don’t know how to fight anymore!” Gorky yelled to no one in particular. He ordered his Bradley to move toward the left side of the street to try to hunt down the new threat to his force. His men, were now totally a rabble, looting and pillaging the homes of the subdivision. There was no military order to them now. he still controlled the three Bradley’s, and the crews of each one seemed for the moment to following his commands. They easily moved through the roadblock, and began searching for new targets. Just then a gas tanker truck headed straight for his three vehicles. There was no one driving the gas tanker, and Gorky noticed that the firing from the right flank had died down. He looked back quickly, and the gang was still oblivious, shooting unarmed people and stealing anything in sight. He ordered his men to fire everything they had at the semi, but it was too late. An RPG was launched from somewhere and right in front of the Bradleys the gas tanker exploded. Two of the Bradley’s were lifted up into the air and came crashing down, the other just disintegrated into thin air. Gorky, with most of his body burned, was thrown clear, into the parking lot of the shopping center. He was barely conscious, when an older man looked down on him, and spat on him with disgust. For Stanley, this piece of trash needed to die a slow death. As more RPG rounds began impacting on the besieged neighborhood, both Harvey’s flank and Scott’s flank charged into the subdivision. The gangs who had been looting the neighborhood, suddenly realized they were no longer in control and tried to run or surrender. There would be no prisoners this day. Stanley stared at what was left of any houses or buildings in the wake of the blast. “Signs of war are unmistakable” he thought to himself, “And I am a damn good artist.”

When it was over, Scott moved through the now destroyed neighborhood, trying to help anyone who had survived, and collecting any weapons that were left. Harvey pulled his team and went home, since they had been on duty for two days. Stanley's team, pulled the Nissan Armadas up to the field, to collect wounded and whatever supplies could be salvaged from the mess. The larger well to do neighborhood, had found its voice, and offered to house the survivors in some of their empty houses. Scott agreed to work with them, and to share some weapons and ammo with them, and help train a new militia unit ASAP. This cleanup would take awhile, and Ranford Trace had lost many good people in the past three days. People could not speak, only stare at each other and shake their heads in fatigue. Maybe it would rain, and help wash away the stains of violence. Who knew?

Greensboro had become a desolate town after the crash. Gangs ran freely, fought each other and some formed partnerships. None of that was any consolation to the innocents caught in the middle, who were trying to get out of town. Mario and the patrol from Rockingham county moved as stealthily as they could, clearing road debris and working their way to the center of town. Mario wanted to get his kids and get back. Something about this city made the hairs on the back of his neck stand straight up, and everyone felt like weapons were being aimed at them though they saw no one. It was sobering, and Mario had renewed respect for the armed services since entering this Godforsaken town. They moved slowly, checking the roads for any sign of mines or any other obstacles that could have been placed there. They moved through a neighborhood that was burned down, and it seemed empty, but no one felt at ease there. They could find no people, not yet anyway. One of the pick up trucks that had been modified as an IFAV, moved beyond the patrol and onto a side street. As they drove a little ahead and left of the column, the noticed serious blood trails along the road. They called in for extra support, and when another truck arrived, they followed the trail. It lead to a house on a small hill overlooking the neighborhood. when they got out of the trucks and walked up the steps into the house, they smelled the bodies. It was near impossible to open the front door of the house, because so many bodies were lined up upon the floor. Whoever had come into the neighborhood, had killed everyone there, and dumped their bodies here. trying not to vomit, the patrol moved away from the house, as another one of them set it on fire. The prayed a short prayer for the dead, and began to collect themselves. They moved on, down another street, toward one of the storage units. The area was empty of people and vehicles, and the silence was deafening. Two vehicles moved into the storage area on a quick recon. Since it was getting to be late afternoon, and the storage area was fenced in, they decided to empty it out, then set up camp for the night. Following the directions on the map, there were five units side by side that were notated on the map. A prudent use of 00 buck opened the locks, and the doors were raised. Inside was a treasure trove of arms and food. Each bin held crates with fifty AK47's each. There were also crates upon crates of ammo, cheap chest webbing, and MRE's. The nicest find was the large supply of RPG launchers and rocket propelled grenades. It was obvious these were to be used for no good purpose. The men searched the rest of the storage facility, and found one unit filled with bottled water. These Russians had prepared well. Two one ton trucks were already filled up, and the third was half way done, and this was the first stop of two storage areas. Obviously, they would have to head back, unload, and come back to the next storage facility. Mario was getting antsy, being so close to his kids and not being able to hold them. The men prepared guard shifts for the night, and tried to rest and get some sleep.

The next morning, they broke camp, and began moving toward Mario's ex wife's place. It was a round about route, that would get them back to Rockingham county. They would cut through

Summerfield, then head down an old country route to Brown Summit. The ride was surprisingly uneventful, until they got to an old country intersection, which was way out in the middle of nowhere. The column had to stop and as they prepared to dismantle the roadblock ahead, the tree line on either side erupted in gunfire. Lulled into a false sense of security by the expectation of peacefully passing through, the men were unprepared for the new firefight breaking out around them. They were less than ten miles from Mario's children. A gang had set up shop in the area, and decided to test their luck hitting this convoy. It was their mistake.


Mario's squad jumped out of the truck and hit the deck. Seeing an opening to the left of their position, they moved as one to cover, and began returning fire. This is where fire discipline can defeat a surprise ambush. The men from the militia began returning fire, with 308 semi auto weapons. The effect was devastating. The gang was ripped to shreds in the first volley. Mario's squad then charged forward into the woods directly in front of them, and began clearing it.

walking in a line, where every man was side by side fifteen feet apart, they cleared the area.

Mario knew all was not well in his old stomping grounds. They cleared the woods, finding only a few survivors, as more shots rang out in the distance. They preceded to find a position that gave fire protection to the convoy, so that other squads could fan out. The gang decided they had had enough, and tried to flee, but they were cut down. There had been an understanding that they would offer no quarter nor take prisoners on this jaunt. They stuck to their agreement.

The commander of the convoy then ordered Mario's squad and another to head for Mario's ex-wife's house. It was well off the beaten track, in an area where everyone was related. Mario hoped they would not give him too much trouble, and was ready to fight if they did. Moving cautiously through the area, they noticed the homes were burned out, and rotting bodies were everywhere. Bile rose to Mario's mouth, and he saw the house he was looking for. Leaving his unit behind he ran, to the house, and seeing it burned to the ground, ran through it to the back yard. There he found answers he did not want. Graves had been dug, with the names of both his children and a few others. His kids were dead, buried, and he did not get here in time. He dropped to his knees, dropping his rifle, and began to sob. Three men caught up to him, and tried to console him as best they could. Mario slid into a deep depression, as the events of the day slowly faded into memories of his children. He cried uncontrollably, asking, "why God, why?"

Capt. Bart Covington stared at the long convoy moving this God forsaken land of Iraq. They were heading to Basra, to get on some of the last ships home. Iraqi's everywhere were firing on them, sniping at them, and attempting to stop the convoy at all costs. The costs were heavy to the population, since there was no rules of engagement, the US forces unleashed a horrible barrage on any part of the land that gave them trouble. In the weeks since the fall, these forces had fought their way out of central and northern Iraq, to try and make it for the naval pickup and possible trip home. They would Stop in Australia, then head to the west coast. If Iraqi's had to die in the process, so be it!

Posted by **Jefferson's Ranger** (Member # 3860) on  November 18, 2004 13:52November 18, 2004 01:52 PM:

Hemming was a little tired, and a whole lot of wet. He had no idea where he had gone wrong, or what had just happened. The little group of people had stopped for the night inside an old barn, and everyone was starting their chores, preparing for dinner, and just shaking off the heavy driving they had been doing. Hemming had wanted to take a walk for a bit, to check the area one more time, just to make sure they were not imposing on someone's land. He then walked a few yards out from the barn, heading back to the highway, to see if they had been followed. It had been a long drive since they left the shootout at the outdoor shop, trying to get out of the area just in case they were being followed by the gang or by a posse of locals. Rob had made some noises in the mobile home about shooting the criminals in cold blood, but overall, Hemming had thought the whole situation was over. It had begun to rain, a cold wet almost freezing drizzle, so he headed back to the barn. It was then he heard the engine of the mobile home start up, and he ran the rest of the way back to the barn to see Rob and his family pulling away. Surprised, he looked into the barn and saw what they had left him. The van was there, as well as his backpack, and his luggage. The folding stock shotgun was laying on its side, as well as the police duffel with assorted ammo in it. There was a note, on the ground, and Hemming picked it up.

Dear Hemming,

I cannot get over the ruthlessness you displayed at the shootout. When those boys surrendered, you shot them down in cold blood. How could I know for sure you would not do the same to my family in the future if we have a disagreement. I guess I did not know you as well as I thought I did. Thank you for all the help you have given us over the past few weeks. I know you have kept us alive, and I appreciate it. Here are your supplies, as well as an even share of the ammo. I have also left you a week's supply of food. Good luck!

Rob

Hemming could hardly control his anger. "Well you think you know people". He began going through his stuff. It was the weirdest thing, all of his stuff was there, including his tactical blackpowder blaster. "I guess Rob thought he was doing the right thing." Hemming was angry, and he began loading his things in the van. He decided to wait until tomorrow night to head out, using the next day and a half to rest and pack properly. He looked at his weapons, and decided it could be worse. He had a 30/30 lever action, his shotgun, his two Ruger 45's, and a bolt action 308. Rob took the slide action 308. "I have to get my bearings, and head home."

The next few hours Hemming fixed a meal and plotted his course. They were in western Virginia, making good time out of West Virginia. He estimated another three days travel, and he would cross the North Carolina state line into Eden. He wanted to be careful, since the lights had been out for a few months by this time. "Time crawls for man" he thought. He went for one more jaunt outside the old barn before settling in for the night. Although most of his supplies were in the van, he stashed his backpack and essentials in another part of the barn. He then found a cozy spot to sleep and succumbed to the exhaustion of the moment.

He awoke the next morning, thinking he had heard shots, but dismissed it as a bad dream. He slowly worked through the barn, checking for any signs of entry or if anything had been moved. He then quickly walked outside, again looking for any signs of trouble. Finding none, he went about making breakfast. He had a packet of oatmeal, washing it down with two spoons full of tang in his cup with water. "Oh what I would give for a meat lover's plate from Denny's."

He decided to go on a longer hike, and stay another day. He was beginning to enjoy the solitude, and was trying to let the anger and stress of the past wash away. The scenery was beautiful, as spring was trying to bring life back to a country torn by war. He walked toward a hill keeping the barn in his sights, and just breathing the air. Careful not to silhouette himself against the skyline he looked out across the Virginia landscape. It was breathtaking, with farmland breaking up the wooded areas, surrounding and overtaking the small roadways that snaked through the countryside. It was still chilly, and his breathe floated away in the crisp morning. Pulling out his binoculars, he scanned in a more "information" gathering gaze about the area. He noticed a farmhouse, about ten miles away, and made a mental note that smoke was coming from the chimney. He saw chickens running about, and also saw two men with assault rifles in a perched area around a barn closer to the house. They did not look out of place, just on guard. He didn't blame them. Hemming decided that he probably needed to leave tonight, he had stayed too long here. But the rest and solitude had refreshed his mental state, and he thanked the Lord for the respite.

Dillsboro, North Carolina is a nice little town just outside of Asheville. It is a large tourist area, with gift shops, and wonderful restaurants. It is a place where all the locals know one another, and notice anything out of place. In a little area known as Sylva, next door, there was an odd group of men hiding in a rental cabin. The locals had formed a militia, mostly to handle any trouble from trapped tourists or raiders from across the state line. Then people had noticed the strange coming and goings of the five men in a rental cabin, in a new neighborhood that had been opened up for rentals. The men had a military bearing, and some of the locals swore up and down that they had a Russian accent when they had spoken on shopping trips and forays into town before the power went out. Now the men had hunkered down in their cabin, and two stayed on constant patrol. They were armed with AK's, with one man carrying a scoped Druganov. They kept a constant eye out, and some of the local Ham operators had a pretty good business of listening to their radio transmissions at night. These men were getting restless, and the militia was going to have to decide how to handle it.

"Bear" Gibson, a retired railroad man, had become the head of the militia unit tasked with keeping an eye out for these strange men. Bear was not a man who took death lightly. He had seen a tour of duty in Vietnam, lost a son in the invasion of Panama, and had his daughter kidnapped in Africa, where she had gone to build a church. His wife had died of a broken heart afterwards, and it was only the scenery of the mountains that had kept Bear going. As he watched these men, it was obvious they were military, and foreign military as well. He knew that if they tried to rush the cabin a lot of townsfolk would be killed. So he made his decision. Leaving the hidey hole they had devised to watch the place, he went to the Mayor's house to let the leadership know what was going to happen next. Everyone agreed, and the mission was on. A group of re-enacter's had quietly pushed a small cannon up a hill on the opposite side of the rental cabin. They would begin firing whenever they could, and then everyone else would open up on the house as well. It was a simple, robust plan, hoping to shoot the crap out of the building until these strange men surrendered. Although no one was in any kind of shape or training to assault the house, four men drew the short straws to make the final act. Bear knew this was it!

The cannon opened up, sending a ten pound metal softball through one side of the house. The militia heard the sounds of men yelling and windows began breaking as the soldiers began firing into the woods and hills trying to suppress any more fire. As the militia rifles opened up, there were more screams inside the house. The Russians had waited too long to leave. They had

waited for Lenin, who would never make it. As the firing subsided from the house, Bear waved a blue flag, signaling his men to hold fire. A pre-designated team ran from the edge of the woods, and sprinted to the back door of the house. Using a sledgehammer they battered the hinges and dove through the door. The four men rushed inside, checking the rooms and counting the bodies. When everything seemed correct, one went outside to signal all clear, as the others began collecting weapons. The Russians had been killed by hunting rifles, m1 garands, and sks rifles, all of which the Democrats had tried to ban at one time or another. The irony of Russians in the middle of the Bible belt being killed by rifles on a list to be banned by the Democratic party was not lost on any of the men as they cleaned up and headed toward Dillsboro. The weapons haul was large, with ten folding stock AK74, with red dot optics on them, two drugonov sniper rifles, and five mp5 submachine guns, with silencers. There were also ten glock 19 pistols, all marked property of the UN. The irony of that was not lost on the men either. All the weapons and ammo were loaded onto trucks and taken back to town. These men had fired some of the first shots against the coming European invasion of North America.

Australia was fast becoming a large military base, as all US, British, and allied troops began amassing there to escape the deployments in the Middle East, Africa and Asia. The Americans were particularly keen on getting home, and were preparing to do so immediately. Australia was a paradise compared to everywhere else in the world. They were largely unaffected by the wars and diseases that were overtaking the rest of the world. But the people of Australia were steadfast in their support of the US and Great Britain. Ships were being refitted, troops were being rested and prepared for their trips back home. The British commander, realizing that getting home to the United Kingdom would be suicidal, through in his lot with the Americans, and decide to help them get home. But intelligence was coming in about a huge Chinese flotilla heading for Mexico, and the destination of the military troops on board was California. Right before the fall, China had made major trade agreements with Mexico, which included supplying Mexico with weapons systems in return for basing rights and oil. The info had been largely ignored by both US intelligence as well as the left-wing media, and had actually been brokered by a former member of the Clinton administration. With the exception of a few Americans who were being ignored as crackpots, no one paid any attention. China had built up a troop strength of about one hundred thousand men, and were poised to invade California, so they could secure the coastline for larger troop landings later that year. With the destruction of satellite intel by the Americans, that time table had to be extended. But the shipping lanes were open, and China was ending what they could as soon as possible. It was a gamble with time. The American military, with the aid of the Cuban military, was trying to follow the new threat, and was building it's case for a new naval battle in the Pacific, either at Hawaii, or off the coast of Mexico. Hawaii looked to be the place. Part of the north Pacific fleet had already moved to Hawaii as soon as hostilities had broken out. They were running observation and factfinding missions, looking for Chinese or Russian subs. There were small battles, usually between subs or smaller ships, but nothing major had begun yet. Russia was preoccupied with Europe, and would not provide resources to the pacific theater. It would be China's show. No one knew how the American and allied fleets had fared running to Australia, and China could not afford to send ships below the Philippines to find out. They were in for a shock.

Phileas and Paxton stared out at the convenience store with worry. There sat about ten guys, all armed with AK's, setting up an observation post. They showed just enough order to be hostile, and Paxton could only guess it meant more trouble. They had been listening the horrible battle miles away all day, which ended with a huge explosion and fireball they witnessed. And now this

gang was getting edgy, obviously hearing the battle as well. It was then, with the huge explosion, the gang began high fiving each other, and jumping up and down. "This can't be good" Phileas thought. The men began breaking into the store, and some began walking down the street. The street had mostly elderly people living there, other than the auto shop. Phileas knew that the people here were mostly helpless, and the gang would exact a heavy toll out here. He had to have a plan. Once again, he and his family would have to fight over the store. The mother and three daughters they had rescued months before had turned into great shots, and were in better physical shape than the men. Once the gang was done with the store, and had loaded what ever they could find, they began walking toward the first house. Inside was an elderly couple by the name of Jostlin. They were preparing to move to Wilmington to be closer to their grandchildren when the end came. Mr. Jostlin owned an old shotgun, and as he peered out the window, he saw the gang members walking toward his house. He had an old double barrel he had sawed off when the lights went out, and loaded with buckshot, he was ready to go. His wife in an act of bravado had a hatchet in her hand ready for the men as well. Both were in wheel chairs, and had stationed themselves at the end of a hallway, to fight. They would not give in meekly to these gang members, and had heard the shooting going on all day. Phileas got everyone together, and said, "Now if I know old Jostlin, he has that shotgun of his ready to go." "When that gang gets hit with the first volley, we run to the house and surround it." "Peter and Paxton will help one of the girls get through the bedroom window, to help the Jostlins, while the rest of us will fire and close in on the gang." "We can win this!" As they began walking toward the house, using the tree line to hide a bit, they heard the huge blast from the antique shotgun. They broke into a run just as full auto fire began returning fire. The Jostlins rolled themselves back into the last room, and waited hoping to get a few more before the auto fire got them. The gang had lost three men at this point and were firing wildly into the hall way trying to wound or kill whoever had shot at them. They had posted anyone to watch the outside door or the yard. As they prepared to rush the backbedroom, they began taking fire through the windows from outside. Sensing a trap, they ran in all directions. One of the girls had climbed through a window, and handing Mr. Jostlin a Winchester '97 pump, began firing a 1911 out of the door way. When she stopped to unload, Mr. Jostlin rolled himself back into the hallway, and emptied the shotgun at whatever moved. The battle was over in thirty minutes, as the rest of the gang tried to surrender. Phillip marched them to the backyard, and finished them off. Ms. Jostlin said, "It was time to feed the hogs". The last battle for southeast Raleigh was over. Phileas said to the Jostlins, "Y'all may as well come with us, lodgings are tight, but until this place is repaired, you can't stay here." Mr Jostlin commented, " I am much obliged Phileas, can I keep the shotgun?" Up and down the street, neighbors began creeping out, and Peter began talking amongst them. A community had been reborn.

John must have slept for three days straight to recover mentally from the events of the past week. He was tired still when he awoke. And he was tired of living here. There was a loud knock at his door, and Kristy raced him to the front room to see who it was. Scott was standing there, waiting patiently. John opened the door, and invited Scott in. "John, I just want to get to the point, I want to go to Eden." John looked around at his house, he had never really wanted to live permanently in Raleigh, it was just a place to spend his career, then move to the country somewhere. "Scott I am all for leaving, since the riff raff have taken care of, it should be safe to travel." The neighborhood had been going through a change since the now famous battle of Southeast Raleigh. Most people who were all for leaving, had since decided to stay and rebuild. Stanley had found a new calling becoming a new constable in Raleigh and helping rebuild a law enforcement presence. There was also a military office which was staffed by a contingent from FT Bragg. They relayed news about troops coming home, and began repairing some of the

communications grid. The military was there to help, and stayed out of most other civilian affairs. Everyone was grateful for this, also the fact that some of the returning soldiers were allowed to keep their issued weapons, which added to the feeling of security. Criminals had become few and far between, since everyone was armed. The military also began providing classes on self defense, and small unit tactics, preparing a militia movement that would be connected to other states. Everyone knew and believed with all the info coming in, that it was only a matter of time before a European army entered the US. Although life had to go on, preparations were being made for the future confrontation.