



# How to Survive the End of the World as We Know It: Tactics, Techniques, and Technologies for Uncertain Times

By James Wesley Rawles

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**In the vein of Sam Sheridan's *The Disaster Diaries*, a comprehensive guide to preparing for the apocalypse.**

**Recent geopolitical events have made formerly unimaginable scenarios terrifyingly possible. Now, you can learn how to prepare for the worst.**

Disruptive elections. Global financial collapse. A terrorist attack. A natural catastrophe.

All it takes is one event to disrupt our way of life. We could find ourselves facing myriad serious problems from massive unemployment to a food shortage to an infrastructure failure that cuts off our power or water supply. If something terrible happens, we won't be able to rely on the government or our communities. We'll have to take care of ourselves.

In *How to Survive the End of the World as We Know It*, James Rawles, founder of SurvivalBlog.com, clearly explains everything you need to know to protect yourself and your family in the event of a disaster—from radical currency devaluation to a nuclear threat to a hurricane. Rawles shares essential tactics and techniques for surviving completely on your own, including how much food is enough, how to filter rainwater, how to protect your money, which seeds to buy for your garden, why goats are a smart choice for livestock, and how to secure your home. It's the ultimate guide to total preparedness and self-reliance in a time of need.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“The preppers’ bible.”—Jim Forsyth, *The Chicago Tribune*

“Civilization is still standing now, but that does not mean it always will... We’d better know what to do in the event of a deadly viral pandemic, major asteroid strike, unprecedented hyperinflationary (or deflationary) economic depression, third World War, or any other global disaster, Rawles argues. He spells out all the hazards that we might face in a post-disaster society: looting, armed violence, food shortages, etc. Then he lays out steps we can take now, such as taking survival- training courses, designing shelters, and stocking them with necessary supplies. He even offers a chapter on disaster-proof financial security: savvy investments to make now, earning income in the midst of a major recession, and bartering in the wake of a true disaster.”—*The Futurist*

#### About the Author

**James Wesley, Rawles** is the founder of SurvivalBlog.com. A former U.S. Army Intelligence officer and technical writer, he is the author of the novel *Patriots*.

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#### Introduction

#### An Extremely Fragile Society

We live in a time of relative prosperity. Our health care is excellent, our grocery-store shelves bulge with a huge assortment of fresh foods, and our telecommunications systems are lightning fast. We have cheap transportation, with our cities linked by an elaborate and fairly well-maintained system of roads, freeways, rails, canals, seaports, and airports. For the first time in human history, the majority of the world’s population now lives in cities.

But the downside to all this abundance is overcomplexity, overspecialization, and overly long supply chains. In the First World, less than 2 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture or fishing. Ponder that for a moment: Just 2 percent of us are feeding the other 98 percent. The food on our tables often comes from hundreds if not thousands of miles away. Our heating and lighting are typically provided by power sources hundreds of miles away. For many people, even their tap water travels that far. Our factories produce sophisticated cars and electronics that have subcomponents that are sourced from three continents. The average American comes home from work each day to find that his refrigerator is well-stocked with food, his lights come on reliably, his telephone works, his tap gushes pure water, his toilet flushes, his paycheck has been automatically deposited to his bank, his garbage has been collected, his house is a comfortable seventy degrees, his televised entertainment is up and running 24/7, and his Internet connection is rock solid. We’ve built a very Big Machine that up until now has worked remarkably well, with just a few glitches. But that may not always be the case. As Napoleon found the hard way, long chains of supply and communication are fragile and vulnerable. Someday the Big Machine may grind to a halt.

Let me describe just one set of circumstances that could cause that to happen:

Imagine the greatest of all influenza pandemics, spread by casual contact—a virus so virulent that it kills

more than half of the people infected. And imagine the advance of a disease so rapid that it makes its way around the globe in less than a week. (Isn't modern jet air travel grand?) Consider that we have global news media that is so rabid for "hot" news that they can't resist showing pictures of men in respirators, rubber gloves, goggles, and Tyvek coveralls wheeling gurneys out of houses, laden with body bags. These scenes will be repeated so many times that the majority of citizens decides "I'm not going to go to work tomorrow, or the day after, or in fact until after things get better." But by not going to work, some important cogs will be missing from the Big Machine.

What will happen when the Big Machine is missing pieces? Orders won't get processed at the Wal-Mart distribution center. The 18-wheelers won't make deliveries to groceries stores. Gas stations will run out of fuel. Some policemen and firemen won't show up for work, having decided that protecting their own families is their top priority. Power lines will get knocked down in windstorms, and there will be nobody to repair them. Crops will rot in the fields and orchards because there will be nobody to pick them, or transport them, or magically bake them into Pop-Tarts, or stock them on your supermarket shelf. The Big Machine will be broken.

Does this sound scary? Sure it does, and it should. The implications are huge. But it gets worse: The average suburban family has only about a week's worth of food in their pantry. Let's say the pandemic continues for weeks or months on end—what will they do when that food is gone and there is no reasonably immediate prospect of resupply? Supermarket shelves will be stripped bare. Faced with the prospect of staying home and starving or going out to meet Mr. Influenza, millions of Joe Americans will be forced to go out and "forage" for food. The first likely targets will be restaurants, stores, and food-distribution warehouses. As the crisis deepens, not a few "foragers" will soon transition to full-scale looting, taking the little that their neighbors have left. Next, they'll move on to farms that are in close proximity to cities. A few looters will form gangs that will be highly mobile and well armed, ranging deeper and deeper into farmlands, running their vehicles on surreptitiously siphoned gasoline. Eventually their luck will run out and they will all die of the flu, or of lead poisoning. But before the looters are all dead they will do a tremendous amount of damage. You must be ready for a coming crisis. Your life and the lives of your loved ones will depend on it.

## **The New World and You**

If and when the flu pandemic—or terrorist attack, or massive currency devaluation, or some other unthinkable crisis—occurs, things could turn very, very ugly all over the globe. Think through all of the implications of disruption of key portions of our modern technological infrastructure. You need to be able to provide water, food, heating, and lighting for your family. Ditto for law enforcement, since odds are that a pandemic will be YOYO (You're on your own!) time.

You'll need to get your beans, bullets, and Band-Aids squared away, pronto. Most important, you'll need to be prepared to hunker down for three or four months, with minimal outside contact. That will take a lot of logistics, as well as plenty of cash on hand to pay your bills in the absence of a continuing income stream.

## **The Great Unraveling**

As this book goes to press in the summer of 2009, we are witnessing a global economy in deep, deep trouble. Artificially low interest rates and artificially high residential real estate prices in many First World nations fueled a worldwide credit bubble. That bubble burst in 2007, and the full effects of the credit collapse are just now being felt. The resulting recession might turn into an economic depression that could last more than a decade.

The collapse of the credit default swaps (CDS) casino is indicative of much larger systemic risk. These exotic hedges are just one small part of the more than six-hundred-trillion-dollar global derivatives market.

There are other derivatives that are just as dangerous. Veteran investor Warren Buffett called derivatives “a ticking time bomb.” I concur.

All of the recent bad economic news and the advent of the H1N1 flu call into question some of the basic assumptions about living in a modern industrialized society. We are forced to ask ourselves: How much stress can a society take before it begins to unravel? How safe will our cities be in another year, or in five years? Will supermarket shelves continue to be well stocked with such a tremendous abundance and such a wide assortment of goods?

With the information contained in this book, you can prepare yourself to live independently (“off the grid”) for an extended period of time. Self-sufficiency is the bottom line.

Please note that I make reference to some useful Web sites throughout this book. If you aren’t on the Internet, you can access these sites from free Internet terminals at most public libraries. If any of these URLs are obsolete, then do Web searches for their new URLs or comparable Web sites. For the sake of brevity, I have used the SnipURL.com service to truncate the longer URLs for Web sites mentioned in the book. These short URLs will make it quick and easy for you to reference the Web sites mentioned herein.

Also for the sake of brevity, I use a lot of acronyms in my writings. Each acronym is spelled out the first time it is used, and in this book’s glossary.

This book provides both a challenge and a response: Are you truly ready for TEOTWAWKI? If not, then herein is what you’ll need to know.

Read this book. Give it some prayer. Then get busy!

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Bertha Buentello:**

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Technologies for Uncertain Times as your daily resource information.

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**Samuel Ware:**

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