



# MEMBERS UPDATE

October, 2017

**Bug Out Lessons From the Total Eclipse**

**The DIY "Sock Trick" Scent Blocker**

**5 Real Life Home Defense Stories**

**Top 7 Deer Hunting Hacks**



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## **7 Deer Hunting Hacks**

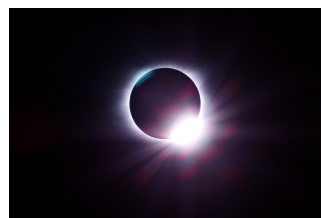
Sometimes it's the simplest things that can make all the difference in your hunting success. These hacks will help you focus your efforts, have more fun, and be deadlier than ever this deer season.



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## **The DIY Scent Blocker**

Sure, you could shell out the big bucks for a suit of so-called “scent armor.” But why not save your money and build your own DIY scent control “device” using a few items sitting in your laundry room?



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One brave NSRA reporter journeyed into the path of totality and lived to tell about it. What she learned from the event many described as “the largest mass migration in US history” may surprise you.



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## **5 Real Life Home Defense Stories**

Nothing is more fundamental than defending your home and everyone inside it from intruders. We've broken down five case studies to illustrate how to best prepare your home, your loved ones, and yourself.





# 7 DEER HUNTING HACKS: HAVE MORE FUN AND BE DEADLIER THAN EVER...

Fall is here and that means it's time to hit the field... because the rut is on its way. For hunters all across America, this means many months of careful preparation is about to pay off... in theory, anyway.

One of the keys to truly enjoying this incredible, sometimes all-encompassing pursuit is to do just that; enjoy the pursuit. Over time, the anticipation, the preparation, and the thrill of the chase are the factors that keep hunters coming back, season after season, not the results. Because, hey, that's why it's called "hunting," right?

Follow in the footsteps of the greats like Fred Bear, who understood this secret, and you really can't go wrong. Focus on enjoying your time in the woods, preparing your mind, training with your weapon, and you'll go into the woods with the peace of knowing that you are fully prepared to harvest an animal ethically and respectfully.

After all, it was Bear who said, "When a hunter is in a tree stand with high moral values and with the proper hunting ethics, and richer for the experience, that hunter is 20 feet closer to God."

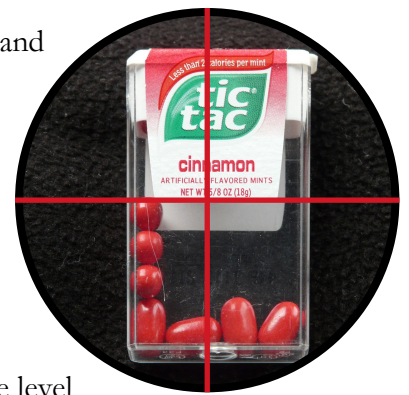
Well, that's about enough preaching for our tastes. Now it's time to get to the fun part:

**2** Hunting hacks to help you boost your chances of success.

## THE TIC TAC METHOD

There are about a million and one strategies for how to approach your stand without being detected.

For the most part, all of them underscore how obsessive hunters are about their entry strategy. That's not a bad thing, of course, far from it. But the level of control some hunters believe they have over the entry factor verges on flat out superstition.



Think about it. You the hunter must make it from Point A to Point B efficiently, in a reasonable timeframe, and with the necessary gear. Yes, there are infinite possibilities, but the outcome of your approach is pretty much binary. Either you did disturb the wildlife or you didn't; and this is seldom something you can avoid entirely.

Upwind, downwind, belly crawl or what have you, the objective is to avoid advertising your presence to the surrounding deer herd. The most effective way to do this is to move very slowly. It really is that simple.

Most techniques presuppose where the deer will be and how to best avoid them (using prevailing



winds, moon phases, or even astrology). Of course, if you knew exactly where the deer were, this might be possible. You also wouldn't need to sit in a blind, would you?

Given the randomness of deer habits and the differing levels of familiarity you may have with a particular terrain, the Tic Tac method is the best way to ensure you are making the most of your hunt.

Here's the hack: Keep a half-full (as opposed to half-empty) box of Tic Tacs in your pocket. If you can hear them rattling around as you walk, you're moving too fast.

The faster you move, the more likely you are to attract attention from a watchful doe and the noisier you'll be as you move. Deer don't hear much better than humans, but their hearing is quite different from ours, which is why they sometimes react to sounds we barely notice. Slow down, focus on your footwork, and methodically make your way to the stand and get settled.

Don't worry if you spook a deer; it's inevitable that you will, no matter how careful you are. Furthermore, it doesn't mean your hunt is going to be a complete bust. So, avoid letting it impact your positive attitude, as one of the greatest challenges to the hunter is to remain alert and persistent in the face of perceived adversity. If anything, consider spooking deer on your approach to be a positive sign that deer are in your area.

## SUIT UP OUTDOORS



While many whitetail senses are mythologized to a ridiculous degree (their hearing and eyesight for instance) one sense that's hard to overstate is their sense of smell. According to Researchers at Mississippi State University, deer have a

sense of smell that is somewhere between 500-1,000 times more acute than our own.

Thus, it's almost impossible to control for all of the funky scents that you bring with you to the field. This includes, but is not limited to, the smell of the camp where you dressed or the vehicle you traveled in.

All unfamiliar smells can alert deer from at least a half mile away. And as you've no doubt witnessed, a deer that's on high alert tends to be suspicious of all further signs of your presence.

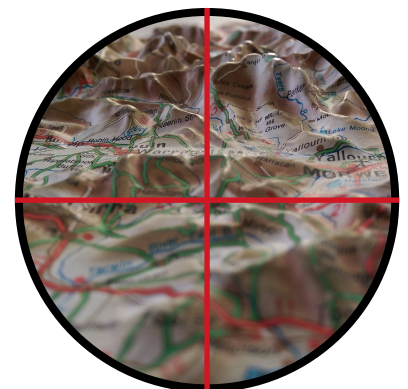


One way to control for this is to actually get dressed in the field. If possible, store your camo clothing in a weatherproof box on your way into your stand.

There's no perfect way to eliminate all scents that are outside the human range of detection, but this will reduce all the foreign smells like the inside of your International Scout or the smoke of your campfire.

## GET TOPOGRAPHICAL

Good news, this hunting hack is much more effective and easier to implement than ever before. Using Google Maps or a similar software, you can get both topographical data and satellite images of your hunting area, sometimes while you're in the field.



Why is this so advantageous? It has to do with understanding deer movement and verifying where exactly they are coming from and going to. Deer trails aren't hard to spot, but rare is the



hunter who spends time walking trails in the offseason.

Using a satellite map, you can start to layer in information about where you see deer and when. This helps establish patterns, as these animals tend to have a routine. When you can see the cover, fence lines, and obstacles the deer navigate through, you get a much better sense of where to hunt.



If you know where a buck seems to be in the evening versus the morning, and the route he travels, you can really build a file on him. What's more, you can use information about wind direction to help determine which stands to hunt and how to approach them to increase your chances of going undetected.

The familiarity you can gain from studying these maps also helps tremendously when it comes to blood trailing. Whilst we often imagine a deer running erratically after it's been hit, it's more common they simply follow their familiar trails as the flee.

This is particularly true when bow hunting. If you know the major traffic arteries in a given direction, you'll be able to make an educated guess if the blood trail plays out.

On a side note, it never ceases to amaze us how much our human sense of direction tends to meander when we're on the ground. Whatever landmarks you hold to be due south or what have you, they don't hold true when you look at them on a map.

Roads that seem generally straight tend to bend, and the distance between certain points can be vastly longer or shorter than you believed it to be. Whether hunting or trailing, dispelling these faulty notions can save you lots of time and boost your success rate.

## PRACTICE HOW YOU PLAY

This is one of the most important hacks no one seems to talk about, not ever. It's especially important for hunters who use a bow, crossbow, or handgun, though it's helpful to rifle hunters also. When you practice at the target range, consider how to best simulate the shot exactly as you'd take it from your stand.



Take bow hunters for example; the vast majority of archers we've observed sight in their bows and practice from the standing position. In fact, we can't recall ever watching an archer practicing from the seated position. Yet nearly every archery stand is configured for a seated shot!

There's so much geometry going on in archery and changing positions alters almost all of your angles. It's like golf. Archery is the most extreme example, but shooting with open sights, or with a crossbow, is also going to feel very different from high in a tree.

It may not be possible to practice shooting from your deer blind in the offseason, but there's always a way to enhance your simulation. At the very least, visualizing your shot and the relationship between your elevation and target can be helpful.

If you expect to be wearing gloves when you hunt, or any other excessively bulky clothing (like a ghillie suit), consider wearing some of this paraphernalia when you train with your weapon. Shooting a firearm for the first time wearing gloves, particularly with a light trigger pull, can be an eye-opening experience. It's highly preferable to have that experience with a paper target sitting in front of you.

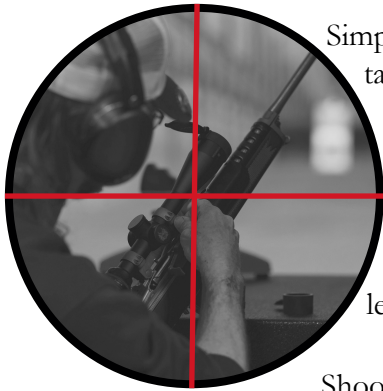
## SIMPLIFY YOUR SHOT

One of the most important keys to your success as a hunter is respect, particularly when it comes



to marksmanship. Yes, the relationship between the two may seem a bit esoteric, but we'll do our best to tie it all together.

Because you'll be shooting at a live animal, it's your ethical and moral responsibility to be as accurate and deliberate as you can possibly be. Out of respect for the animal and for the success of your efforts, simply being "competent" with your weapon is not enough.



Simplifying your shot starts with taking your weapons training seriously. With adequate practice and refinement, all of your shots will become simpler than they were when you were at a lower level of proficiency.

Shoot your rifle in as often as possible; just once to sight it in before the season is not enough. Practice with your bow until your draw and release is second nature, until you're grouping tighter than you imagined you could.

You owe this to the animal you hunt and to yourself. Plus, come on, how much more convincing do you really need to go shoot guns and bows more often? Here's your readymade excuse.

How many videos have you seen where the hunter misses the buck of a lifetime because he didn't realize his scope got knocked off zero? How many stories have you heard about bad hits and wounded deer that were never recovered?

This is why it's so important that you put in the shooting time necessary to feel 100% confident that you're putting forth your very best effort. When it comes down to it, things will occasionally go wrong and the only comfort you'll have is knowing that you took your preparation seriously.

The second piece of this equation is to simplify your shot in the heat of the moment. This type

of discipline is hard to train for and even harder to implement when your adrenaline is pumping. That's why thoughtful preparation is essential.

Your goal is to be patient and take only the most responsible, high percentage shot available. The best, most effective shot is through the heart and lungs with the animal standing perpendicular to your shot. The difficulty is, of course, getting the animal to cooperate.

There's no one easy way to improve your decision making when it comes to shot selection. But we've found it can be very helpful to visualize taking different shots before and during your hunts.

Before the hunt, look at some wildlife photos and mentally diagram where the heart/vitals are in relation to the animal's body position. Consider where you'd need to place your crosshairs to strike the vitals.

3D archery targets can be very helpful with this exercise. You don't need to buy one, though, just spend a little time "window shopping" at the local Bass Pro Shop.

We like to practice holding our sights on deer we don't intend to harvest, just for practice. This will help you develop a "plan" for which shots you'll take and be patient for those shots to present themselves.

## **CARRY A TRIMMER**

We can't say how many times we've climbed into a stand, nocked an arrow, and immediately wished we had a pair of loppers, or snips, or a handy camp axe. You know, there's always a potential new shooting lane or a bit of new growth you need to hack away at.



We know what you might be thinking; this is a problem that could easily be remedied with more



thorough preparation. To be fair, this is at least partly true. But that's definitely not the whole story.

There's something that happens when you sit in a stand, with a gun or a bow, during a hunt that changes your perspective dramatically. You just can't anticipate this shift during routine maintenance.

In the planning stages, you didn't think you'd need to take a shot in that direction, but then it turns out to be the deer highway this season. If you don't have a cutting tool, you're going to miss out on some opportunities. It's that simple.

Pick a tool that's appropriate for where you'll be hunting and that you can commit to keeping in your pack and carrying to the stand. A pair of shears is perfect in brushy country, while a backpacking axe can give you a bit more reach in a tree stand.

## CONTROL YOUR B.O.



As we've already mentioned, deer have a highly acute sense of smell. And while we already covered a method for how to keep your clothing from absorbing foreign odors, we've yet to discuss the number one odor that will ruin your chances of bagging a big buck: the human smell.

The many nuanced biochemical forces that factor into the human odor are extremely complex and fluid (no pun intended). Body odor, if you will, is a mixture of hundreds of compounds given off by bacteria that live on and inside our bodies. These organic compounds evaporate into the air through your skin and your breath, literally as you sit in your blind.

Thus, even if you climb into your blind with your scent completely managed, the longer you sit, the more stink, AKA "volatile organic compounds," you emit. To make mitigating the stink factor even more difficult, everyone's B.O. is different.

The answer is to use scent control methods while you are in the field. There are lots of products on the market for this purpose and, generally speaking, research has proven them to be effective.

However, recent research published by Mississippi State doesn't name names. Instead, it simply bears out that odor blocking sprays have been proven effective.

The good news for you is that it's easier than ever to do a little research and see what people are saying about particular products. Find one with a lot of positive reviews online, do a little research, and put it in your hunting backpack with confidence that, yes, it is more effective than just wishful thinking. Or, if you're feeling crafty, see our instructions to build a DIY Scent Blocker inside this issue.

## THE ULTIMATE SUCCESS HACK

It goes without saying that the goal for most hunters is to bag a trophy buck. Yes, that's a great accomplishment and a great feeling, but not one that you can recreate on a regular basis.

The hacks we've discussed here are meant to simply and amplify your preparation. Thus, you can head into the field knowing your chances of harvesting a trophy are as high as can be.

The secret of the most successful hunters is that they enjoy their hunts regardless of the results. It's not easy, but with the right approach it's very achievable. And here's the kicker: You'll have more success than other hunters, because you'll spend more time in the field.









## The DIY Scent Blocker “Sock Trick”

As you know, it’s not an exaggeration to say that a whitetail’s sense of smell is 1,000 times better than ours. That said, the most likely factor to screw up your hunt is blanketing the area with a human scent that pretty much sticks out like a web of caution tape around your stand. Heck, some researchers believe deer can smell you almost a mile away.

That’s why many hunters shell out the big bucks for clothing that promises to lock their human stench inside its sticky fibers... or some such gobbledygook. We’re not seeking to talk trash about these products, their effectiveness, or even their hefty price tags.

On the contrary, we want to applaud them for solving a real issue that faces hunters. However, before you invest \$500 on a suit of scent control camouflage, we suggest you read this article.

For the thrifty, conscientious, and in-the-know hunters out there, there is a much cheaper, equally effective solution to the “scent” conundrum. All you need to execute it is an old sock, zip ties, and some baking soda or talcum powder.

### Materials:

- One old, decommissioned crew or knee sock (with no holes in the foot portion)
- 1 cup of unscented talcum powder or baking soda
- 1 zip tie
- Garden shovel
- Freezer bag
- Pliers with wire cutters



### Fill'er Up and Seal the Heel

Don't bother measuring out a cup, simply fill up your sock with your unscented powder of choice. A funnel might make things a little smoother and less messy. The size you're going for is roughly the size of a peach or large lemon.

The more the better, in our opinion. You can't really overfill the sock unless you've filled the sock past the ankle.

Next, use a zip tie to seal up the powder-filled portion of the sock, leaving you with a peach-sized sock ball with a tail. Use your cutting pliers to trim off the extra plastic on the zip tie.



### Bag it and Freeze it

Next, place your talcum sock scent controller in a freezer bag, zip it up and place it in the freezer or refrigerator to preserve freshness.

**IMPORTANT:** Don't forget to throw your scent-control device in with your supplies when you're packing up to go hunting.



### How to Use Your Scent-Locker Device

Before you head into the field, pat your camouflage down with your scent-sock. Sure, the powder may reduce the vibrancy of your amazing camo pattern, but it will increase your overall camo-factor significantly. Place the scent-sock back in your pack and take it with you to the stand.



Here's why: As you sit in your stand, hold the sock up and tap it gently and use the powder to determine the wind direction (AKA where your greatly diminished human scent is blowing).

This handy exercise allows you to mitigate your scent as well and select the best hunting locations. Additionally, this will help obscure the scent of your breath, perspiration, and whatnot that you give off as you sit and wait for that big buck to come pay a visit.



# Total Eclipse: I Was There... And The Lessons We Can Learn From It

By Hannah Blake



On August 21, 2017, most Americans went outside at their locally designated time to see the total solar eclipse. Of course, the band of full totality was very narrow, even though it did stretch from coast to coast. As a result, there was what some experts have called the largest mass migration in U.S. history in the days leading up to the big event.

I was fortunate enough to be located within a relatively short distance of totality, so of course I went to check it out! What was perhaps most intriguing about the experience, aside from the eclipse itself, was how much getting to and from the totality site mirrored an evacuation during a natural disaster.

Sadly, the people of Texas would get a big reminder of how this works just a few days later as Hurricane Harvey raced toward landfall. Before that happened, though, we all had an opportunity to put aside everything else in our lives and gaze (safely through solar glasses or pinhole cameras) at the wondrous sight in the sky.

I'd like to share my experience with all of you, and then dissect it so that we can learn even more about how to deal with a natural disaster or any other event that requires a massive evacuation. Remember: a disaster can happen anywhere, at any time, so you must always be prepared!

## Getting to the Eclipse

Many people took several days off of work and traveled to their preferred viewing spot in advance. Despite this, there were still numerous news videos depicting cars lined up for several miles on freeways throughout the middle of the country, even two to three days before the eclipse.



Photo by Tracy L. Crider

I didn't have the luxury of free time, so going to my preferred spot the day before, or even earlier, wasn't an option. On the plus side, I was starting from only about an hour and a half or so away from a peak totality site: Toccoa, Georgia. The bad news, though, is that driving on North Georgia's two-lane highway was an exercise in futility due to eclipse traffic.

I found myself stuck in a massive traffic jam with only 80 minutes left to go. A local radio DJ informed me and thousands of others that the road we were all attempting to travel was backed up for approximately 20 miles, which meant that it clearly wasn't going to be possible to make it to Toccoa in time.



The DJ also made sure to let all of us know that if we had waited to travel to see the eclipse, we were basically stupid. Not exactly a nice message to hear while trying to reach the one of the greatest celestial events of my life, but it did serve as a good reminder that time lost could mean lives lost during an actual emergency.

Instead of giving up and watching the eclipse in an area with less than 100 percent totality, I did what any other survivalist or prepper would do; I improvised and quickly came up with plan B. Pulling off of I-985 at the exit for Cornelia turned out to be one of the best decisions I made that day, and I'm glad things worked out like they did.

## Viewing the Eclipse

I was surprised by what greeted me in Cornelia, Georgia; a complete and utter lack of massive crowds. Yes, there were definitely people ready and waiting to see the stellar celestial event, but there weren't any big festivals or tens of thousands of people

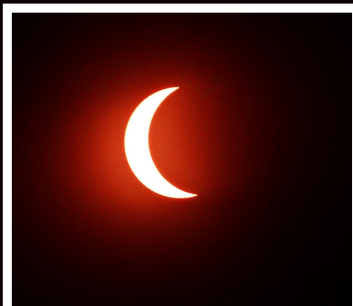


Photo by Tracy L. Crider

jamming the area. Even odder was the fact that Cornelia was actually in the full totality zone!

This is a prime example of people becoming too fixated on one specific location or plan during an emergency, and we'll come back to this point later on.

I quickly discovered that pulling off in Cornelia was a happy alternative and I set up in a vacant lot with a few groups to see the big show. One thing that had a lot of people bummed out was the recent email sent from Amazon.com informing everyone that many of the solar glasses that had been sold by third-party sellers from their site weren't adequate enough to view the total eclipse.

As a result, there were numerous people attempting to view this historic event who didn't have the protective eye gear they had purchased. Fortunately, the spirit of giving was in the air that day and people in Cornelia (and around the country, according to numerous reports) shared their properly rated solar glasses with others so that no one missed out.

Seeing the moon fully eclipse the sun was awe-inspiring. Everything became very dark, the temperature dropped and the local wildlife started acting oddly. Meanwhile, pets stuck to their normal routines, and none of them seemed to validate earlier news reports that they should be wearing protective glasses too.

The total eclipse only lasted about two minutes, but these are two minutes I'll never forget. It's understandable after experiencing this event why some people become eclipse chasers.

## Examining the Lessons of the Total Solar Eclipse

Seeing the eclipse was amazing, but it also brought up numerous important planning and safety considerations that can be utilized during a natural disaster. For example, at least one of the people watching the eclipse in Cornelia had their concealed carry weapon on hand just in case things got out of control. This definitely made sense considering that some people attribute crazy theories to eclipses, and they can also make people act quite oddly.

Let's go through the lessons step-by-step to ensure that nothing gets missed. After which, this can be added to your binder of natural disaster and emergency evacuation materials.

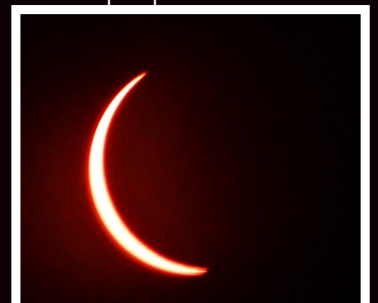


Photo by Tracy L. Crider



## **Planning in Advance**

Something I didn't do well enough during this event was planning far enough in advance to reach my intended destination. Of course, you can't possibly predict if or when certain disasters are going to hit your area, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't already have a good evacuation plan in mind that can take you in up to four different directions, as needed.

Consider the eclipse to be similar to an evacuation event that people have a couple of days to prepare for. A prime example would be an incoming hurricane that's still over the ocean. In Texas, many cities were evacuated early because these plans were solidly in place and city officials paid close attention to all of the warning signs. Unfortunately, the same thing didn't happen for Houston, and the results have been devastating.

When a major predicted natural disaster is headed your way, it's already too late to formulate your plan. That's because emotions will get in the way, and you'll be pressed for time. Without that much-needed time to truly plan things out, the odds are high that you'll make a mistake. Take a lesson from my total eclipse mistake and make sure you know how to quickly leave your area in every applicable direction.

Of course, you should also have your bug out supplies ready and stored where they can easily be accessed. It's always wise to keep some extra supplies in your car in case you're not home when disaster strikes.

## **Steer Clear of People by Leaving Early**

If you're properly prepared, you won't have to spend an extended amount of time gathering supplies before you can leave. This will save you precious minutes that will make it much easier to get out of town before the roads become a gridlocked mess.

If you're unable to do this, turn to your evacuation plan to determine if there's any viable alternate route that won't be as jampacked. Here's an important tip: try out your escape routes before they're necessary to ensure you're fully familiar with them and you know about any major potential issues that could block your path.

Sometimes, there's nothing you can do, and you'll get stuck in a massive herd of people moving in the same direction. This is something that should be avoided at all costs, though, because large crowds become anxious, which can easily lead to trouble.

## **Consider Going Off the Beaten Path**

The best part about my eclipse 2017 experience wasn't planned at all. Getting off the highway and going to a small town with a population of only 4,000 turned out to be the best decision I could have made -- well, aside from leaving a lot earlier.

When people are freaking out due to an incoming storm, a massive power outage or any other issue, you may need to think quickly and adjust your exit strategy on the fly. Heading off the beaten path can get you away from the crowd, but it could also put you into danger unnecessarily, depending on the exact situation. Always be careful, consider the pros and cons of your choices and do what feels right to protect your family.

Remember: if you get off the highway and don't want to stay where you've ended up, you may at least be able to travel less encumbered for a few miles before attempting to rejoin the herd. Also, I don't know about you, but I'd rather take my chances on some country backroads than end up stuck and not moving at all.

Of course, you'll have already scoped out at least some of these roads to see if they're in good enough repair to safely take you where you need to go.

## True Safety May Come in Smaller Number

A lot of people assume that the best way to survive a disaster is by gathering together with a large group of humans. This may allow you to share resources within the bigger group, but it also means that those resources are going to dwindle much more quickly.

Areas with tens of thousands of people will inevitably deal with tempers flaring and a lot of differing opinions and personalities. As the recent demonstrations nationwide have shown us, some groups of people are just too different to peacefully coexist in the same space. When you add guns and fear into the mix, you're going to have some incidents and probably a few deaths.

Meanwhile, my experience in Cornelia showcased that smaller groups of people are more able and willing to share resources, and they're also able to keep tempers and egos at bay more readily. This is just basic human psychology because you're not going to feel as threatened when you're around a couple of dozen people as you will with a couple of thousand people nearby. It's easier to keep an eye on everyone in a smaller group, and most people will feel less desperate about hoarding their supplies, at least initially.

We've seen a lot of cooperation during the Houston rescues mandated by Hurricane Harvey. This spirit of cooperation is likely to be very prevalent in a small group located off the beaten path. You'll all have the same goal, survival, but

the group dynamic won't be so large that people instantly become defensive and feel the need to try to take charge.

Use this to your advantage. If necessary, your training and prep work should make you

an ideal candidate to become the group's leader.

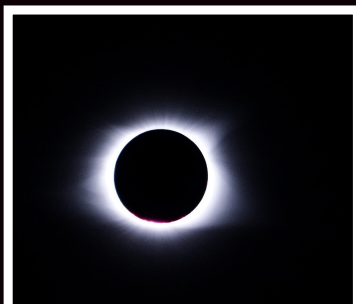


Photo by Tracy L. Crider

## The Power of Conspiracy Theories

Some conspiracy theories are actually true, but a lot of them come from people who have vivid imaginations and way too much time on their hands. For example, some people actually believed that the solar eclipse was fake. There are also people who honestly think that the government controls the weather and chooses where to cause natural disasters as a form of eugenics and population control.

If you're shaking your head right now, we're on the same page. But it's imperative to be aware that some of the people you'll encounter during a natural disaster or other emergency are going to believe stuff like this. This can make them everything from overly complacent and unwilling to help themselves all the way to delusional and dangerous.

It's not wise to spend a lot of time trying to convince these people that the danger is real or that the "real" source of the danger isn't worth fighting over before you find a safe place to ride everything out. Walk away from these people to avoid unnecessary entanglements that could prevent you from reaching your ultimate goal: safety.

## Be Armed and Ready

As previously mentioned, at least one person in Cornelia was fully prepared for whatever might come their way. Having your concealed carry weapon with you at all times is imperative. After all, it's impossible to predict how people will act during a natural disaster or any other type of emergency.

Imagine for a second how people might respond if something truly insane happened such as aliens landing or another nation deciding to start a war on U.S. soil. You'd have mass pandemonium with the crowd screaming, running in multiple directions and pushing others out of their way.

In this type of situation, you need to be able



to defend yourself. During the eclipse, the best aspects of humanity were on display when people shared their glasses and came together to share an amazing experience. Remember that the exact opposite could happen if people feel truly threatened.

Of course, you can't just whip your gun out and start threatening people – or at least you shouldn't. But having your CCW with you will give you the peace of mind associated with knowing that you could take action if necessary to keep your family safe.

The eclipse went well and people cooperated, but it's naïve to think that this is how these events will always be. For example, the next total solar eclipse to hit the U.S. will be in 2024. At that time, the social and political landscape of the nation will once again influence how everyone reacts.

## Looting Madness

The 2017 solar eclipse didn't lead to looting or other issues, but Hurricane Harvey did. That's something else to always keep in mind; even if most people are helping each other, there will always be a few bad apples.

Therefore, if you have advance warning of an impending disaster, take precautions to protect

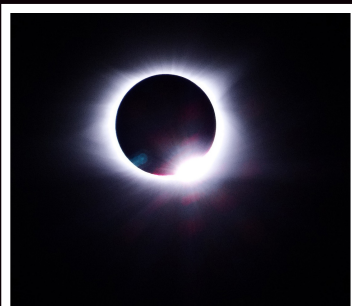


Photo by Tracy L. Crider

your property. Even people who were right in the line of totality would have been smart to ensure that their property was locked up tight and defended from people who might have started acting edgy when the eclipse hit.

If you're properly prepared to bug out, you shouldn't need to put your life on the line by looting and salvaging for supplies on your way out of town. Reinforcing your locks and, if applicable, putting boards up over your windows will help minimize the risk of your home being invaded by criminals and otherwise good people

who weren't prepared to deal with an emergency situation.

## Conclusion

Even though my eclipse plans didn't go as expected, I'm really glad that I made the drive to an area of full totality. Some things, whether they're good or bad, are so monumental that you truly need to experience them for yourself in order to have a full understanding of what happened.

When these events happen, though, you can be prepared to act in the safest, most logical manner because you were smart enough to put life-saving plans in place.

A person wearing a dark, heavy jacket and light-colored gloves with green palms is holding a handgun in their right hand and a crowbar in their left hand. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# TRUE HOME DEFENSE STORIES

If you're anything like us, you've repeatedly practiced home defense drills to ensure that you know exactly what to do if someone breaks in. If you haven't done this yet, it's time to get on it!

Make sure your house is set up like it always is, with your weapons in the usual places. Next, lie down for a little while and set an alarm to alert you when it's time to get up. When you hear the alarm, it's go time! Get up as quietly as possible and roleplay what it would be like to actually defend your home. Make sure that you fix the errors you find in your approach and then roleplay the scenario again.

Doing this until you feel fully comfortable and equipped to deal with a home invasion can make the difference between you and your family living and dying. This isn't something you can save for another day because there might not be another day after today if you don't take the necessary precautions.

This is something that some people have learned from terrible personal experiences. In fact, 266,560 Americans are injured or killed every single year by a burglar. To make matters even worse, 3.7 million home invasions actually happen on an annual basis.

Out of these incidents, it's estimated that someone will be home during 1 million annual home invasions. This means that almost 25 percent of criminals who are planning a burglary are desperate or stupid enough to break in while you and your family are home.

The good news is that fewer than 27 percent of homeowners and family members are injured or worse during these break-ins. However, that's still way too high of a number for you to take any chances with.

There are numerous news stories about people getting killed or hurt due to the criminal actions of a home invader, but what about the people who are able to save themselves? We want to focus on them in order to celebrate their accomplishment and to show you some tips for how it's really done in the heat of the moment.

Please note: Not all of these survivors followed what we would call safe or standard home defense tactics. Be aware that emulating them may not have the same positive results if you're ever in the same situation.



# MOTHER DEFENDS TWINS IN GEORGIA

The scary reality of a home invasion came to life for a woman in an Atlanta suburb. According to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, someone knocked on the woman's front door and she told her twin children not to answer it. Unfortunately, the knocking soon turned into repeated ringing of the doorbell.

Instead of falling for this common home invasion trick, the woman grabbed her kids and hid. She was also able to call her husband and let him know what was going on before sealing everyone up in the crawlspace. This was a fortuitous decision because the husband, Donnie Herman, immediately called the police and asked them to go check on his family.

Meanwhile, Paul Ali Slater broke into the family's home. The heroic mother knew what to do, though. She steadied her .38 revolver and prepared to shoot if the burglar found her hiding spot. Shortly after becoming fully ready to defend herself, Slater pulled open the closet that sits in front of the crawl space.

As he tried to explore the closet, he found the .38 revolver pointing directly at his face. Before he could do anything, the homeowner shot six bullets. Five of them hit Slater in the neck and face, but none of them



was enough to make him pass out. Even though all six of the bullets in her chamber were spent, the woman convinced Slater that she would shoot him again if he didn't allow her and the twins to leave the house.

The bluff worked, and the family survived. Interestingly, Slater was able to leave the house, get in his car and drive a short distance away before getting caught by local police. When they apprehended him, he asked to be taken to the hospital.

## LESSONS TO TAKE FROM THIS HOME DEFENSE STORY

The easy moral of this story is to always trust your instincts, stay away from the door when someone unexpectedly begins knocking and always know where to hide in an emergency. The other thing this family did absolutely correctly was ensuring that a weapon was available in their hiding spot.

# ELDERLY MAN STOPS HOME INVADER BY USING A GUN AND A LASER SIGHT

It's dangerous for anyone to assume that someone's age makes them a better or worse risk of having a weapon that they know how to use. One home invader learned that harsh lesson when he made the decision to break into Joseph Grayson's home.



Grayson reported to local Indianapolis news channel WTHR that he and his wife were asleep when the sound of their house alarm woke him up. He was disoriented but knew instantly that something was wrong. Grayson knew he had to find

out for sure if someone had illegally entered his home so that he could defend himself and his wife.

The elderly man slowly and carefully made his way through the house and managed to spot the intruder without being seen. He noted with horror that the intruder not only had a gun but that it was out and ready to shoot. Moving with a level of stealth that only someone who is in their home environment can summon, Grayson was able to grab his own weapon.

Next, the homeowner began stalking the burglar and eventually found him on the other side of the house. The intruder was entering the back patio when Grayson caught up to him again. Instead of taking an unnecessary gamble in the hopes that the man was going to leave, Grayson turned his laser sight on the burglar.

Despite this, the home intruder was able to get away without having his identity discovered. Grayson was happy he was able to defend his home without resorting to pulling the trigger, though.

### **LESSONS TO TAKE FROM THIS HOME DEFENSE STORY**

Grayson was clearly familiar with how to make his way through the home during a home invasion scenario. He also knew where his gun was and had it equipped with a laser sight. These are both things to emulate, but it's best to ensure that there's a gun you can access from your bedroom instead of having to go hunting for it.

Also, if you don't want a burglar to get away, it's wise to communicate to anyone else in the bedroom with you that they should quietly call 911 while you go on the defensive. Additionally, Grayson allowed the man to leave after having him in his sights. It's understandable that he didn't want to kill someone, but if you need to stop someone who has a gun, always put your own safety first.

We're really glad this homeowner lived to tell his story, but he did put his life in unnecessary danger by not pulling the trigger. Keep in mind that shooting someone in the knee is a good way to hobble them and protect your family without having to kill anyone.



## **APARTMENT DWELLER SURVIVES TWO HOME INVADERS PHYSICALLY ATTACKING HIM**

At approximately 9 a.m., apartment renter Daniel Williams answered a knock on his door. The Maine resident became instantly suspicious of the woman who was on the other side because she began telling him a bogus story about knowing the previous tenant. Fortunately for Williams, he actually knew the previous tenant and knew the woman was telling him a lie.

His suspicions were proven to be accurate a few seconds later when two men rushed the door and pushed it open. Williams was thrown to the ground, punched and had a knife stabbed in his direction several times. The only injury Williams suffered

from the knife was a slight abdomen cut, though, so the intruders clearly didn't know how to use their weapons.

At this point, Williams' roommate, Luis Ramos, came out of his room brandishing a guitar as a weapon. Sadly, Ramos wasn't able to maintain control of his makeshift weapon, and it ended up being used to bash Williams in the back of the head.

During the struggle, Williams was eventually able to break free. He instantly dashed toward his bedroom and grabbed his .22 handgun and laser sight. This weapon enabled him to scare off the intruders by shooting one of the men in the leg.



Instead of allowing them to flee, Williams ran after them and shot another intruder in the hip. The group still got into their vehicle, though, and began to drive off. Williams was able to shoot the back of the vehicle in what he hoped would make it easier for police to find and identify the home invasion culprits.

By the time police caught up with them, one of the intruders had died from his gunshot wounds.

### **LESSONS TO TAKE FROM THIS HOME DEFENSE STORY**

There is so much to take from this story. Let's look at it piece by piece:

1. The Door – When someone comes knocking on your door unexpectedly, it's wise to either not answer it or to at least leave the chain lock in place. Williams didn't do either of these things, and it almost cost him his life.
2. The Struggle – Williams clearly handled this part correctly as he only suffered from a very minor abdomen wound. Remember to do whatever you can to throw your attacker off guard so that you can gain the upper hand.

3. The Gun – Having a laser sight is extremely helpful. So is having a gun in a place where you can easily grab it. We know, we know; no one wants to keep their gun on them when they're in the comfort of their own home. However, if Williams hadn't been able to break free and run unimpeded all the way to his room, this story would have had a very different ending. At the very least, keep a second gun in the living room somewhere that's not easily visible.

4. The Aftermath – Should Williams have followed the criminals outside? This is a personal choice, of course, but they were fleeing the scene. This means they were no longer posing a threat to Williams and his roommate. It would have been safer to stay inside with the door barred. By going outside, Williams took the risk of letting them get the upper hand again.

## **COUPLE SURVIVES HOME INVASION BUT LOSES VALUABLE OBJECTS AND MONEY BECAUSE THEY'RE NOT ARMED**

On August 24, 2017, a couple living in an apartment in Kalamazoo, Michigan, became home invasion victims after answering a knock on the door. The couple was threatened with a handgun and had no access to a weapon of their own.



In this particular home defense story, the sole goal of the apartment dwellers was to make it out alive. By keeping their wits about them and not doing anything to antagonize the burglar, they were able to accomplish this primary goal.

The couple did lose valuables and money during the home invasion, but no one was injured. As of the time of this writing, this case is still active and the suspect (seen in a nearby surveillance photo) is still at large.

### **LESSONS TO TAKE FROM THIS HOME DEFENSE STORY**

Some of you might be saying, “that’s not a home defense story. They didn’t defend their home at all.” Although this story isn’t exciting like the ones that have preceded it, it’s necessary to look at how to survive when a weapon isn’t handy, and that’s why we’ve chosen to include it.

### **LET’S LOOK AT WHAT THIS COUPLE DID ABSOLUTELY RIGHT**

They quickly analyzed the situation and determined that their best chance of survival was to stand back quietly and allow the robbery to happen. This level of passiveness may make some of you see them as weak, but it actually takes a lot of mental strength to not react harshly to someone who is stealing your stuff.

If the couple had a good way to defend themselves, things would be different. Since they didn’t, they chose the smartest course of action.

### **LET’S LOOK AT WHAT THIS COUPLE DID ABSOLUTELY WRONG**

First and foremost, everyone needs to have some type of weapon handy in case they become the victim of a home invader. Being unable to grab a gun, knife or even a heavy, blunt object is inexcusable.

If the couple had an opportunity to knock the burglar to the ground, they needed to take it. Being smart enough to stay still and quiet was crucial to their survival, but what would have happened if the armed invader had decided to start using his gun?

The next thing they did wrong is such a big one that we’re going to really emphasize it:

### **DON’T OPEN THE DOOR FOR STRANGERS**

If there’s one thing you take away from this article, let it be this: it’s not smart to answer the door when you don’t know who’s on the other side. Way too many people are injured or killed as a result of the

# **OKLAHOMA TEENAGER BLOWS AWAY HOME INVADERS WITH AN AR-15**

Three young home invaders between the ages of 16 and 18 definitely bit off more than they could chew when they forced their way into a home in Oklahoma. The 19-year-old son of the homeowner happened to be home and ready to defend his dad’s property when the three young men, all dressed in black and wearing masks, came in prepared to steal anything valuable they could get their hands on.

The men broke in through a glass door, which made more than enough noise to get the teen’s attention. As the intruders swarmed in, the teenager grabbed an AR-15. And yes, it was loaded and ready to be used!

The 19-year-old exchanged tense words with the three would-be burglars, and the situation quickly escalated. As a result, the teen went into self-defense mode and started shooting the home invaders. As you can probably imagine, this didn’t go well for the masked youngsters, none of whom were older than 18.

In fact, by the time the police arrived, all three burglary suspects were dead. Two had died instantly in the





kitchen, with the third making it as far as the driveway before passing out permanently. Both residents who were at the home when the break-in occurred sustained zero injuries. The getaway driver was later apprehended.

#### **LESSONS TO TAKE FROM THIS HOME DEFENSE STORY**

Make sure your family is as prepared and competent with a weapon as the young man in this story was. Without him knowing how to access and use the AR-15, it's highly probable that this story would have had a different ending.

When in doubt, shoot. You don't necessarily have to shoot to kill as the teenager did in this news story, but don't ever put your life at risk by not taking action.

As always, ensure a weapon is close by so that it can be used for self-defense.

## **CALIFORNIA MAN KILLS TWO HOME INVADERS**

On June 21, 2017, a California homeowner was startled by two men breaking into his home. The Brentwood resident was understandably taken aback by the unexpected appearance of two armed men, but he quickly went into action to defend his property.

When police arrived on the scene, they were surprised to find that one man had taken out two home invaders. This was even more surprising because the burglars both had guns. According to the homeowner, when he saw the armed men enter his house, he quickly ran to his gun and used it for self-defense.

Both of the would-be thieves left the man's home in a body bag. Yet again, an armed, law-abiding citizen was able to stand up to criminals and keep himself, his family and his property safe.

#### **LESSONS TO TAKE FROM THIS HOME DEFENSE STORY**

It's been said a few times in this article already, but the most important thing you can take from this home defense story is that you must always know where your gun is and be prepared to use it for self-defense.

## **STAYING SAFE RECAP: What to Do BEFORE Someone Breaks into Your Home**



You're reading this newsletter, which means you've already got a leg up on many homeowners. Are you taking each of our tips to heart and learning how to utilize them during a real-life emergency, though? It's one thing to have the basic concept memorized, but it's quite another to actually follow through when your life is on the line.

We can't possibly emphasize enough how critical it is to run home invasion drills so that you can discover any weaknesses in your plan. Run these drills until you are 100 percent comfortable with the results, and then practice your finalized result every three months or so to stay sharp.

Of course, the other biggest thing is to practice regularly with your home defense weapon. You have to know it so intimately that, if necessary, you could load it, aim and shoot in the dark. Make sure to keep it properly maintained so that it doesn't let you down when you need it most.

Finally, talk to every member of your household about the very real danger of home invaders. Make sure your spouse and children know not to answer the door unless they're expecting someone. If you have friends or family who like to stop by unannounced, ask them to start calling or texting a few minutes before arriving.

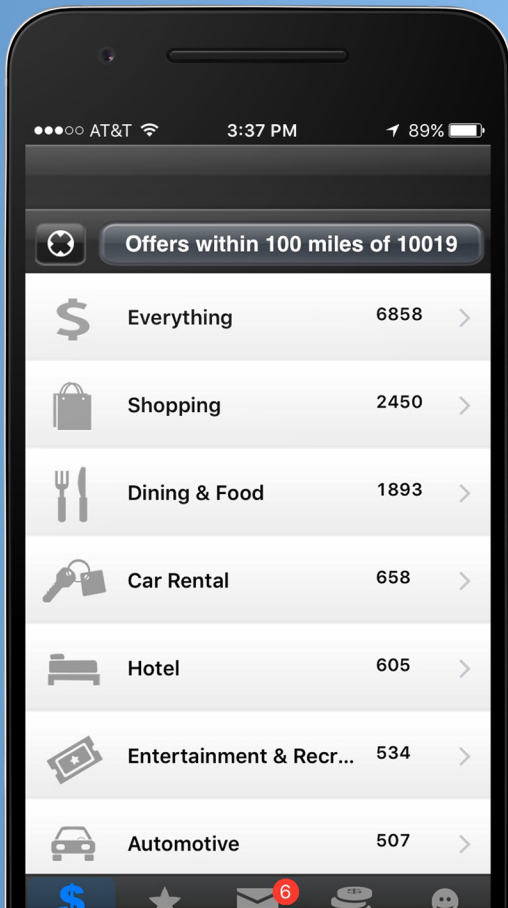
After you get your home defense drill down, you can run through it with your family to ensure that they know what to do, where to go and how to stay out of the way if you have to shoot a burglar.



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