



# MEMBERS UPDATE

October 2020

## HOW TO STAY SAFE DURING A RIOT

Spectacular Prepper Utopia  
Flops You Can/Learn From

13 Predictions for Life After COVID-19

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## Stay Safe in a Riot

Things are heating up in America when it comes to politics, racial tensions, and quarantine fatigue. Unfortunately, these frustrations are boiling over in a highly dangerous and destructive way in cities across the US. Will yours be next? Refer to these tactics in order to keep your loved ones safe in the event that your community is the next to be engulfed.



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## 13 Predictions for Life After COVID

With COVID-19 and its impact on everyday life taking center stage, it can be hard to imagine what life could be like after the virus has been subdued. Will there be a vaccine in 2020? Will enough Americans get the vaccine if, in fact, it emerges? In this article, we share our 13 boldest predictions for how life in America will adapt.



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## Prepper Utopia Flops

When it comes to botched social experiments, the self-reliance movement is far from immune. Billed as self-sufficient utopias, these communities are often just the opposite. There's just something about the drive to build self-reliant communities, sealed off from the "mainstream," that often leads to outlandish, ruinous, or even deadly results.



# HOW TO STAY SAFE DURING A RIOT

Protests are part of our constitutionally protected rights. In fact, they had a lot to do with how the United States came into being.

But what happens when a peaceful airing of grievances devolves into chaotic mob violence? More often than not, you're going to see a huge police presence, complete with all sorts of shields, helmets and body armor. What makes it worse is how rioters and police officers seem to be aiming for each other.

No matter which side you're on, a riot is quite simply bad news. You don't want to get caught in one. However, there are times when you won't have a choice. Now that you're in one, though, how do you survive it?

## HOW DOES A RIOT START?

It doesn't take much for a peaceful protest to turn into a riot. In fact, it's often just one or two provocateurs who break ranks. Before you know it, it leads to a full-scale riot. Watch for the telltale signs of a riot and be prepared to leave immediately if things get out of hand.

Be alert as soon as the two sides come within shoving distance of each other. As soon as the protestors begin trying to push against police barriers, things are getting dangerous. If anyone picks up an item to throw, even if it's just an empty water bottle, you can know that the odds of a riot starting just escalated very quickly.

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As soon as you see any of these signs, you should leave the area. If you wait for an actual riot to break out, it may be too late. As you move your way out, avoid going toward the police lines. Instead, move away from the police and go toward your car, if possible. Just remember that as the riot gets worse, no one is going to want to let you get in your car. Therefore, it may be necessary to get out on foot.

## WHY DOES A RIOT START?

In many scenarios, the people are calling for change to a social injustice. This is a good idea, but it's often executed in the wrong way. Think of them this way: Riots are a reaction to long-standing anger. In other words, it only takes a bit of kindling to get this fire roaring full blast!

Because some groups are actually planning for a riot from the beginning, you should always be cautious around large gatherings, especially if they're aggressive or agitated. As soon as a riot breaks out, they're very hard to stop. In fact, they're often self-sustaining and will get much worse before they get better.

Beware of them starting up again, too. As soon as the police leave the area, there's a 50/50 chance that rioters will take to the streets again. And, of course, there's absolutely nothing you can do about it. You can't reason with a mob, and that's definitely what you'll be facing if a riot starts.

# DEALING WITH A RIOT



If you're stuck inside the riot, there are many things you can do to get out safely and quickly. Follow the tips provided below, and your odds of clearing the riot before you get hurt will be high.

## Stay Calm

One of the most important things you can do is stay calm. After all, intense emotions will be at the height of everything that's happening. If you can think rationally, you'll be one of the few people in the crowd who has your head screwed on right. This one simple action could save your life.

## Grab onto Your Loved Ones

If you're not alone, then you'll need to grab on tightly to your loved ones. This is especially important if you're with a child. In fact, if the child is small enough, lift them into your arms to protect them from being trampled. Otherwise, link arms or grab onto their hand to prevent losing them in the melee.

## Remain Neutral



**3** It doesn't really matter what your personal thoughts about the riot are. Whether you're for or against it, your primary objective is to survive without getting

struck by rioters or the police. To this end, keep walking and work to slowly move your way out of the crowd. At all costs, do not get involved in the rioting. Because as soon as you do, it'll be much harder to extricate yourself.

## Move Away Slowly and Carefully

To get away from a riot, move with the flow of traffic. Never go against the traffic because this will make you stand out. As the group continues to walk, slowly make your way to the side of the riot. Then, as soon as an opportunity presents itself, move down a side street or an alley. Wait until the riot has passed you by before you make any other moves.

## Blend in as Much as Possible

If you're involved in a riot, you'll want to blend in with the other non-rioters in the area as much as possible. Basically, you want to look as non-violent and non-confrontational as possible. This may be enough to keep the police from unleashing pepper spray on you.

## Steer Clear of Highly Trafficked Areas

To reduce your odds of getting into a riot in the first place, remain clear of highly trafficked areas. Avoiding major roads will make it much easier to stay away from riots. Of course, there are some situations when you have to take major roads, even if rioting has been happening frequently. During these situations, pay close attention to your surroundings so that you can hopefully avoid a riot.

## Don't be a Hero

Listen, we all want to be a hero, but this is not the time to do so. Instead, your sole focus should be on getting yourself and your loved ones to safety. Other than that, leave the policing to the police.

## Car Notes: Drive Very Carefully

If you happen to be in a car after the riot breaks out, you'll want to drive slowly but decisively. You're in the position of power, after all, and you can drive right through the crowd if they don't listen to you. Of course, this is something you want to avoid, but you do want to honk your horn at anyone who

blocks your path. Additionally, you do want to keep moving forward as this is the only way you'll get out of the riot.

### **Don't Get Pinned In**

You are just as likely to be killed or injured while pinned up against a fence as you are by being trampled. Steer clear of this madness by staying away from buildings and tight spaces. Don't let the rioters break your bones or even suffocate you.

### **Look for an Enclosed Area**

The vast majority of riots happen on the streets. With that in mind, it's always a good idea to look for an enclosed area. Get off the streets and into safety. Move away from the windows and doors to avoid getting hit by bullets. After this, just stay put and wait the riot out. One thing to watch for is fire, though. If this happens to the building you're in, go out the closest exit.

### **Use Social Media to Track the Riot**

You can easily use social media to track the riot's movements. Doing so will give you a big advantage when it comes to steering clear of the riot and all of its participants.

## **WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU GET STUCK IN A RIOT?**



Getting stuck in a riot is difficult enough, but it will become even worse if the police are near. You should not, under any circumstances, start directing traffic or trying to assist the police. They may not understand your actions, or you may anger those who are closest to you. Again, your best bet is to act

calmly and do not get confrontational with anyone. Despite your best efforts, you may be pepper sprayed.

### **What Does Tear Gas or Pepper Spray Feel Like?**

The only good thing about tear gas spray is that its symptoms go away in about 30 minutes. However, unless you take action, those 30 minutes are going to feel like a lifetime.

If you take a direct hit, you're going to feel an intense burning in your throat, eyes, and nose. You'll also begin coughing and involuntarily closing your eyes. Nausea and vomiting are possible, as are mucus secretion and an increase in blood pressure.

Pepper spray feels even worse because the side effects can last for 45 to 60 minutes. There are also five delivery methods, whereas tear gas only has one. You may experience pepper spray by a stream, which has the largest range, cone mist, a fogger, foam, or gel.

A direct hit by pepper spray will cause extreme burning of the nose and eyes, uncontrollable watering of the eyes, temporary blindness, burning of the skin, sinus and nasal discharge, and a rise in blood pressure.

As you can see, neither of these "non-lethal" weapons feels very good. And, in some rare instances, they do actually kill people.

### **How to Remove Tear Gas from Your Body**

As soon as tear gas is released, you'll want to hold your breath and, if possible, close your eyes. It's also absolutely imperative to get out of the immediate area. Next, you can rinse your eyes. If you wear contacts, be sure to remove them before you begin. Wash your hands to prevent recontamination and change your clothes. Finally, take a cold shower. It's important not to take a hot shower, as this will just allow the tear gas to work its way more into your pores.

## How to Remove Pepper Spray from Your Body

Do not touch the affected areas. Next, blink rapidly to help make your eyes water. This may remove some of the pepper spray. Grab some soap and lather up to remove the oil that makes pepper spray work. When it comes to your eyes, use a “no tears” shampoo to help remove even more of the oil without causing any undo pain.

Another thing you can do is keep medicated wipes with you. These are made specifically for wiping pepper spray from the body, and they are more effective than the tips listed above.

## Avoiding Tear Gas and Pepper Spray

Aside from not being in the riot at all, the best way to avoid tear gas and pepper spray is to avoid the front of the line, as well as watching out for any sudden movements such as running.

## OTHER WAYS TO GET OUT OF A RIOT

You want to get away from the rioters, but unfortunately, you're inside and don't see an easy way out. If this happens, you'll want to protect yourself as much as possible, including being prepared to deal with tear gas or pepper spray.

### Wear Long-Sleeved Clothes



Whenever possible, wear long-sleeved clothes to protect yourself from tear gas/pepper spray and any other weapons. Don't look like you're wearing a uniform because rioters will mistake you for the police. At the same time, don't wear a black hoodie,

either, because this is the number one signal of rioters around the world.

## Prepare for Tear Gas and Pepper Spray



We've given you tips above about how to deal with tear gas and pepper spray. Be prepared to put them into use during a riot. Even if you're not doing anything wrong, you could simply be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Prepare for anything, and you'll always be on the right side.

Other things to do include:

- Do not wear sunscreen or oil-based moisturizer. Wipe these things off your skin before getting near a riot.
- Remove your contacts and put on glasses.
- Consider wearing swimming goggles or even a gas mask.
- Place several wet bandanas in plastic bags. Then, if one of the gasses is released, you can wrap it around your mouth. You will need to replace it frequently as it will soak up the gas.
- Wear latex or vinyl gloves.
- Carry spare clothes with you inside a plastic bag.
- Never rub your fingers or hands into your mouth, nose, eyes, etc. after any type of chemical exposure.

## Always Have ID with You

Whether you're arrested or rendered unconscious, you need to have your ID handy at all times. It's also a very good idea to keep an emergency contact number with you.

## Carry an Extra Burner Phone

It may seem a bit odd to carry an extra phone with you, but you're going to be glad we suggested it if your main phone gets taken or broken. Keep one phone in your pocket and the other in your bag.

## Have a Bit of Chocolate



Yes, as silly as it seems, carrying a bit of chocolate with you may actually keep you going. The adrenaline of the situation will drain you of energy quickly. Nibble on some chocolate to get your energy back.

## Be Prepared to Improvise

The thing about riots is that no one can predict how far they'll go or what areas they'll affect. In some cases, a riot only spans a couple of blocks. In others, it eventually breaks out across the entire city. As a result, what works in one riot may not work in another. Always stay calm and keep a close eye on the size and scope of the riot. That way, you'll be in the best position to take whatever action is necessary.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Protestors are fighting for something they believe in, whether you do or not. For this reason, they should be left alone to wage their protest. However, as soon as the protest turns into a riot, police force will be necessary.

One thing we've seen a lot of in the news recently is the police aggressing against the crowd too soon. Sometimes, the police even seem to cause a riot by pepper spraying a crowd that was doing nothing wrong. This is yet another reason that you cannot stay in a large crowd of people. Whether it's started

by the police or the people, you can almost guarantee that a big fight will break out soon if the police seem poorly equipped to handle it.

Another thing to remember is that even the most rational seeming people are prone to violence. So, make a plan to get away from crowds, and always keep a close eye on your surroundings. You never know when an otherwise peaceful group is going to break out into rioting and looting. By following this rule, you can avoid the worst of a riot, including being arrested.







# 13

## Predictions for Life Beyond COVID-19

Only eight months after we first heard the term COVID-19, it's difficult to envision a life without the coronavirus protocols we've adopted. But the reality is that it will either come to an end or become weakened to the point of being a seasonal disease. To best learn how to live with it and past it, we've put together this helpful guide. While everything we mention might not come to pass, the odds are high that you'll see everything listed in this article (and then some).

As of this writing, we've already had millions of cases and hundreds of thousands of deaths. You can argue however much you'd like about how dangerous this virus truly is, but the facts are in: It's a bonafide virus, and it's killing Americans every single day.

Now that we know COVID-19 is a genuine disease and not some half-baked conspiracy, you're probably wondering what to expect when we get to the other side of it. Well, the first thing is to determine if we have an effective and safe vaccine. The next hurdle to brace for and get over is whether people are willing to take it or not.

### COVID-19 Prediction 1: "We Need Herd Immunity"



Pretend it's 2021 if you will, and a vaccine has become available. The first thing to consider is that it will not magically provide herd immunity (a high percentage of society immune to a disease) for quite some time. Unfortunately, it takes several months, and sometimes years, for this process to hit the 70 percent tipping point number fully.

Knowing this, it's imperative to keep pushing people into getting the vaccine once it's available. After all, some people may still get sick even after

taking the vaccine since a large percentage of the U.S. population hasn't caught the novel coronavirus yet. Regrettably, that's how herd immunity works. Until we get to 70 percent or more of the U.S. population, we can continue to see large numbers of people getting sick or even dying at the hands of COVID-19.

Love it or hate it, the best thing we can do is accept the science. The biggest reason we're in this mess is because politicians in charge decided to question the knowledgeable scientific and medical advice instead of simply following their best advice. Yes, science isn't always perfect, but leads to the most sound decisions. More importantly, it would have been easier to get past a smaller outbreak in the beginning with the help of science versus the full-blown pandemic we are experiencing now after not doing enough to curtail it.

At present, we find ourselves in the clutches of the pandemic. Because of this, we have no choice but to look to the scientists as the leading resource of the country. They won't always get it right, but they do have a much better handle on hard science than politicians whose primary objective is to go with the best spin that gets them reelected.

## COVID-19 Prediction 2: "Collective Thinking will Change"



You would think the nation's collective will would be the easiest way to make progress in stopping the virus, but it may end up being the hardest aspect of making the pandemic come to pass. Our citizens love their freedoms, and they form the collective will of the country. Many of them also believe in blaming science for their woes, and that mindset must change to come together and finally overcome COVID-19.

Only 50 percent of Americans plan to get the COVID-19 vaccine if one materializes from a research system that's not exactly built for haste. That's a far cry from the 70 percent or higher needed to develop herd immunity from it.

Another recent poll indicated that more people might roll up their sleeves, though. Survey results from that poll found that 31 percent said they weren't sure if they'd get the COVID-19 inoculation. Only 20% said they'd flat out refuse to take it when asked.

A big part of the skepticism most likely stems from the uncertainty of a new vaccination, one that might have lingering side effects. Among people who say they wouldn't get inoculated against America's version of Sputnik V, 7 in 10 said they worry about safety.

*"I am not an anti-vaxxer," said Melanie Dries, 56, of Colorado Springs, Colorado. But, "to get a COVID-19 vaccine within a year or two ... causes me to fear that it won't be widely tested as to side effects."*

Speaking of anti-vaxxers (and those that market to anti-vaxxers), they can oftentimes chime in and influence the vaccination debate, the same with conspiracy theorists. But no matter what stance you take on the topic, everyone needs to put their beliefs aside, do their part and shoulder past this crisis.

People still have time to change their minds, and the odds are high that, the longer a vaccine takes, the more likely people are to simply get it. After all, there's a big difference between how people feel at the six-month mark and how they feel 12 months later. Add on even more time to this, and the vital message just might get through to enough people to make a difference.

A vaccine needs to happen as soon as it possibly can; however, it should not be rushed through its clinical trials. If you ever want to find out the worst that can happen regarding a drug with inadequate safety testing and oversight, then Google thalidomide and learn about the devastating human wreckage it left in its wake.

What this boils down to is that everyone has an important role to play and our collective will should lean toward doing everything in our power to stamp out the pandemic. In order to hit our 70 percent vaccine rate, we're going to need everyone to work together.

### **GDP Prediction says, "Investment to Bring Businesses Back"**

As of July 30, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) hit a terrible new low. At that time, the U.S. GDP was 33 percent below the average line, and this is more than double what the country experienced during the Great Depression. Because of this, rebolstering the GDP will obviously take a herculean effort. And it most assuredly won't happen overnight.

To get the GDP back above the Great Depression numbers, we'll have to get the majority of Americans back to work. But how is this possible in a world that's seen the permanent closure of 60 percent of small businesses?

One thing we could do is invest in bringing these businesses back. Obviously, this won't be beneficial until after the disaster is under control. However, once we've achieved that milestone, giving people small business loans (or, even better, small business grants) with a low interest rate and a long time to repay should get the majority of companies back in the game.

### **Unemployment Prediction says, "Things will Get Worse and Then Better"**



Not only will the unemployment rate keep increasing but it won't recover nearly as quickly as it needs to. The reason for this is that people who no longer

have unemployment benefits do not count on the unemployment scale.

What will things be like a year from now? In some respects, things will have gotten better. We still won't be anywhere near the previous unemployment numbers, though. And that's a real shame as it means that every other number on this scale will continue to be suppressed.

How long can we continue to expect sky-high unemployment numbers to last? Unfortunately, the answer to that is at least two to three years, with some analysts pointing to a time frame of five years or longer. No matter how you look at the actual situation, a lower than expected employment rate for up to five years is a devastating consequence that none of us are prepared for.

### **Entertainment Prediction says, "It will Evolve"**



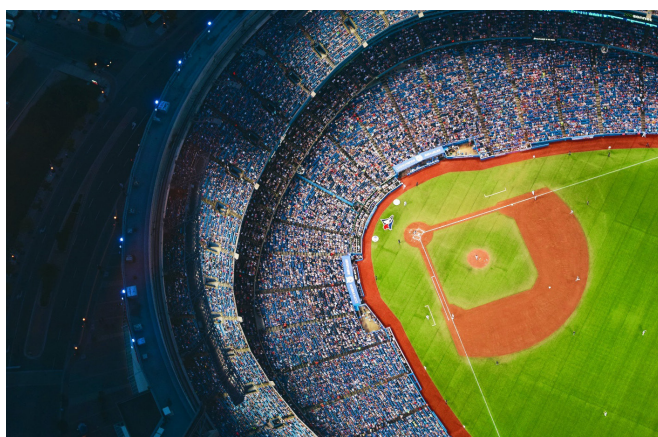
How can we restart a normal society without entertainment? That's the problem that many are wrestling with now but solutions to the problem are challenging. There have already been talks about using as many mannequins as possible on TV sets, especially when it comes to kissing.

On the other hand, what happens when we want to see an event or venue? One can only take so many virtual versions of them. If you can't safely bring together a larger crowd, will concerts and festivals put on by megastars go to smaller venues with social distancing measures in place? Or will they just fizzle out and not happen at all?

The answer to those questions is multi-faceted, and during the pandemic we've already seen the entertainment sector test out different formats on at the movies and on the silver screen. Reality shows and animation abound on the fall TV schedule, in case you haven't noticed.

Our go-to sources of larger entertainment venues will certainly stick around, too, but they won't be able to fill their usual role for at least a year. When entertainment does fully make a comeback, look for it to be a very different animal than in the past.

## Sports Prediction Says, "Get Used to Virtual Events"



Baseball was back for less than a week when teams started shutting down. This wasn't for just a day or two, either. As of early August, the MLB Commissioner was already discussing pulling the plug on the entire series. What makes it even scarier is the fact that baseball isn't even playing in front of any fans.

Other sports will face the same thing, and they're just as likely to need to shut down very quickly. Does postseason baseball even still exist by the time you're reading this? We hope so, but we're not optimistic. With that being said, it's going to be a long time before baseball, or any other sport, is playing live in front of a packed audience.

## School Prediction Says, "Get Used to Online Classes"

According to the CDC, no setting besides a child's home influences their health and well-being more than their school. Because of that, and the link

between schools and the economy, the government is trying to re-introduce in-person education as fast as possible.

However, as one school recently showed us, being open for even one day has consequences. In fact, the school wasn't even open for a full day before several students had to be quarantined for 14 days. Also, there are CDC experts that don't believe school should be in session in areas of the country where COVID-19 hasn't been tamed.

Schools worldwide are also beginning to see the same thing. Yes, even in areas where the coronavirus was once thought to be under control. So, it's fair to say that the U.S. won't be able to have regular school nationwide for a long time, and many are turning to hybrid or even full online classes to mitigate the risk of infection.

When all is eventually said and done, though, students will return to the classroom for in-person education. That's what we've always done, and it's what we'll return to. The question is how long will it take until we get there?

## Business Prediction says, "More Working from Home"



Some business spaces are open right now. However, there are a lot of differences incorporated that make it much less cozy than it used to be. Will this trend continue?

Like we are seeing with schools, the next few years see a huge emphasis placed on working from home. After all, if everyone isn't sharing the same workspace, then there's not nearly as much risk of spreading the virus.

And really, who needs to be together in an office to make things happen? As long as you've got your Zoom chatting software and an instant interface for sharing ideas, there's absolutely no need to spend every second together. In the long run, this might prove to be such a good idea that a lot of businesses will not go back to the traditional office setting.

## Politics Prediction says, "The Outcome is Anyone's Guess!"



Love him or hate him, President Trump is fighting a decidedly uphill battle for re-election and the betting odds are against him. That is, unless there's somehow a miraculous change in the way that we fight COVID-19.

Trump's handling of the virus is not viewed favorably by large swaths of the electorate. His biggest mistake in dealing with the illness was to try to minimize it early on. That hasn't worked out so well, and it will probably lead to a nation ready to elect someone else. This actually isn't an indictment of his skills as much as it's merely the result of an unpredictable and highly contagious virus. A pandemic tells us a lot about the future, and this one is telling us that Biden and other democrats will likely get their chance come election day.

Then again, Trump wasn't projected to win in the polls, and he didn't win the popular vote before, right? If he does pull it off in November, all bets are off regarding our political predictions.

If the democrats win, they will do well at first since the virus won't be here forever. Once the power of the coronavirus has been contained, the people will

slip back into their traditional roles. Therefore, you can expect Republicans to be back in power within four to eight years.

## Other Predictions

Here are a few other things we see happening during and after a COVID-19 existence.

### Family Life/Community

After a long break without extended families, it's easy to see how this structure may change completely. Before the pandemic, we cared about our extended families, but we didn't usually see them very often. Now, though, seeing grandma or grandpa every weekend may be much more important than going off and doing our own thing.

This sense of a larger community may also come into play with our kids. Some of them may choose to never go back to traditional school, but that's going to be okay. In fact, they may get watched by neighbors and family who view them more as their responsibility than they did before the pandemic. That's a good thing as it means that the total family will extend beyond more recent constructs.

### Cooking



If there's one thing almost all of us learned about, it's how to be a more efficient cook. Even now, as we do get the occasional takeout food, we're noticing how much saltier everything is. Combine that with a large need to just eat something healthy, and you've got a cooking bonanza on your hands!

One thing we're going to see more often is neighbors sharing meals. We're also going to experience a wider list of options, which will give those who are obsessed with a single food more options to choose from.

## Hygiene

People may have asked you in the past if you knew how to wash your hands, but the odds are that you really didn't. Of course, everyone has seen the public health videos now, so it's no surprise that our hygiene is way better than it used to be.

Aside from hand cleanliness, you can also expect a better understanding of how to get – and stay – clean.

## Clothing

Lastly, comes clothing. We've all zeroed in on what we really, truly want to wear on a daily basis. And guess what? It's not anything you'd wear to an office.

Even jeans have been skipped over for something more comfortable, and this trend isn't expected to go away any time soon.

You may see some companies try to make money on this. The question of whether or not they'll succeed is due to how demanding businesses try to be. If you see them require a return to our old look, you'll find many people wearing much more comfortable jeans and dress pants. On the flip side, if we all relax our standards a bit, you're going to see people coming to work with their dress sweats on.

## Final Thoughts

None of this is going to be easy. Fortunately, we will get to the other side of the pandemic, and all (or most) of these things will come to pass. It may seem impossible at the current time, but we will get there, and we will be alright.



# SPECTACULAR PREPPER UTOPIA FLOPS YOU CAN LEARN FROM

We get it, almost everyone wants to either live in or build a better world. Unfortunately, history is riddled with utopia projects where people have tried and failed in their endeavors. They are often cases where people get in over their heads; preppers included, and for some reason or another couldn't make their vision a reality. Now, NRSA is not saying that you shouldn't be prepared – since being prepared is the number one driving aspect of a prepper's mission. However, don't get carried away or you might wind up in the same boat as the orchestrators of these outrageous utopia flops. If you do, we could possibly read about you next.

## URBAN LABORATORIES



A massive and futuristic city stands and bakes in the Sonoran desert, a testament to the lofty goals of the architect who designed it. Called Arcosanti, this trippy structure located in Maricopa County, Arizona, was intended to be a desert utopia; an urban laboratory where everyday activities could be powered by the earth's natural resources.

Paolo Soleri was the original eco-warrior, and he is the architect behind the creation of Arcosanti. Soleri saw the growing reliance on cars, the increasing appropriation of natural spaces for housing developments, and the negative impact they have on the human spirit and the planet...and he didn't like it.

Because of his feelings toward urban sprawl encroachment and its negative impacts to society, Soleri vowed to do something. His efforts yielded "arcology," a term which equates to architecture + ecology. Arcology is also meant to be the opposite of urban sprawl, and he decided to go ahead and make his utopic vision a reality. The city of Arcosanti broke ground in 1970, and it was one of the earliest attempts during modern times that is vertical, packed with a multitude of uses and was "Green" before Green became a modern catch-phrase.

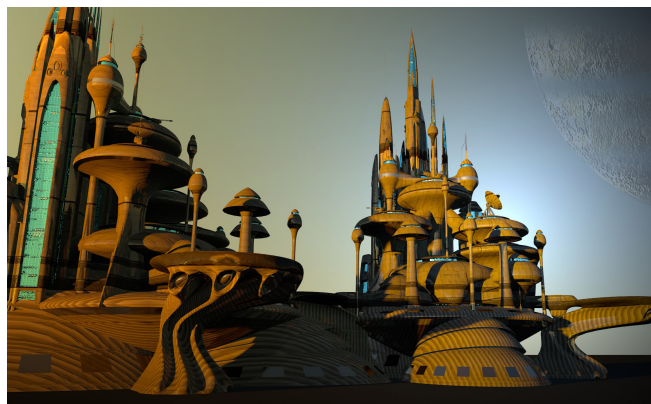
Once Arcosanti was finished, he envisioned that it would operate without automobiles, roadways or air conditioning. And going without air conditioning where Arcosanti is located – while not impossible – is no easy feat. In fact, the Arizona desert absolutely sizzles and makes you feel like you’re melting come July and August.

In retrospect, you have to admire Paolo Soleri’s visionary approach to sustainment, and so did the students, architects, journalists, filmmakers, and others who volunteered to help him bring his futuristic concept of arcology to life. Their help wasn’t enough, though, since many of Soleri’s concepts proved to be too complicated and expensive to build. Eventually, funding and construction on Arcosanti became sluggish and stopped for the most part.

At the end of construction, Arcosanti was meant to house nearly 5,000 residents. Instead, the project is only five percent complete, and only a handful of residents live there today. The design and hippie vibe of the place hasn’t held up well, and it looks as retro as a shag carpet in a 1970s mobile home.

Other large-scale projects in the Southwest that fizzled out and never reached their full potential include Biosphere 2 in Oracle, Arizona, and the gigantic Cabazon Dinosaurs in southern California. While Biosphere 2 was a project designed to allow living in space and the Cabazon dinosaurs were built to attract customers to a restaurant, they were both expensive and massive flops for the most part. Neither have reached their full potential so far.

## ARCOSANTI: THE METROPOLIS BLUEPRINT FOR TODAY



Arcosanti is considered an important and early example of a radical urban plan that enables conservation of land, energy, and natural resources. Paolo Soleri’s urban experiment continues to influence architects, designers, and urban planners from around the world.

Some modern architects have taken a page from Soleri’s book and are creating futuristic science fiction cities from scratch; that way, they can more easily accommodate innovative design in a city’s infrastructure. The way these cities of the future will be constructed delivers services more efficiently to residents than current designs do.

Megaprojects are currently in the works all over the globe that resemble the futuristic vertical cities in the 1927 sci-fi movie *Metropolis* – or the more recent *Blade Runner* – just without all the dark and depressing dystopian aspects. So...there is hope for the future in the sometimes-dreary world we live in. But then again – they just might be future utopia flops. It will be interesting to see how things shake out when it comes to the ambitious concepts discussed below.



## SAUDI ARABIA’S URBAN LABORATORY

The development boom is huge in Saudi Arabia, and today the country has amassed nearly 4,700 large-scale construction projects. Dubai constitutes a hot bed of futurist architecture, and the region leads the wave of oil-led designs. Saudi multi-billionaires and their associates plan to develop innovative cities to go with a stunning, futuristic world.



The most aggressive of Saudi Arabia's megacity plans is Neom, and it will take \$500 billion to make it a reality. Among other things, this city of the future will feature robot workers and drone taxis if it becomes a reality. Last year, several of Neom's influential investors pulled out of the project temporarily after journalist Jamal Khashoggi was murdered. Conversely, the orchestration of Khashoggi's murder has been linked to Mohammed bin Salman, the crown prince of Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, other nations are blurring the line between science fiction and reality. For instance, India is installing digital cubes designed to beam videos to their denizens. A chain of four islands in Malaysia is the future home of a huge forest city with skyscrapers and other buildings that will be covered in trees.

## REVISITING THE CITY OF ARCOSANTI

Arcosanti is now considered a flop for the most part. However, it does provide the stepping-stones for future urban experiments such as the megacities mentioned above.

With the growing threat of climate change and the advent of COVID-19, a solitary city that sustains itself and its inhabitants doesn't seem so bad or far-fetched. In today's uncertain world, it sounds downright desirable if it is designed correctly.

The takeaways: Firstly, it is best to know where ideal places are for building your survival retreat because they are the places to be when the SHTF. Arid deserts aren't ideal because the combination of heat and lack of water makes it hard for even lizards to survive.

Secondly, no matter what size your prepper property is, temper your ambition for building your idea of utopia with a good dose of reality. In short, you'll want to start small with your utopia unless you have a lot of money to burn or you can turn to financiers with deep pockets to fund your own private Idaho.

Even then, as we saw in the case of futuristic city Neom, it's best to be cautious since the grandest and most well-thought out plans can be waylaid.

## RITZY SURVIVAL COMPOUNDS

You only need to know a little bit about celebrities to recognize that many of them are prone to excess and money splurges. Keep in mind that just because you are well off financially at present, it doesn't mean that you can spend large sums of money for possessions and property long-term.

That's because uncontrolled and unnecessary spending usually leads to bankruptcy or worse if your career fizzles out. This notion applies to sinking your money into ritzy survival compounds, too.

Entrepreneurs with billions such as Jeff Bezos are probably set when it comes to not leaving this world as paupers, and he could probably afford several luxe prepper properties if he doesn't sink his earning back into Amazon again. When it comes to survival of the wealthiest, multimillionaires and billionaires probably have their getaway safe havens covered.

It's rumored that Bill Gates has spent millions on underground survival bunkers (we didn't stutter.... bunkers!), so that he can flee to one close to him in the event society collapses. That means that not only did he bankroll one luxe survival tract of real estate, but he secured several. Bill Gates, Jeff Bezo's and other "beautiful people" like them have bug-out bags that are most likely made by HERMES.

That is the exception and not the norm, and ritzy survival compounds are definitely an excessive splurge for most of us mere mortals. For us, there are no guarantees that our income and wealth will stay at the same level, especially if you spend money wildly on lavish expenditures. The same financial philosophy applies for spending wads of cash to cement yourself a place in a ritzy survival compound when you aren't loaded.

Think about it, what do you do when the disaster is over? It's highly theoretical at this point, but money may not even be accepted as currency in



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the aftermath of an apocalypse. When you emerge from your uber-glamorous bunker or survival compound after the worst of it is over, you'll be like a babe in the woods. What do you do then?

We're thinking that any surviving landlords to the bunkers to the stars will be shrugging their shoulders at this point. They most likely won't have any answers to problems in a post-apocalyptic world, even though they were very helpful when they sold you that ritzy bunker with the indoor Olympic pool. After societal collapse, bunker slumlords are the worst!

Also, research any luxe compound THOROUGHLY before drinking their Kool-Aid. In one for the books, one extravagant, doomsday compound, recently went belly up. Before that happened, though, the FBI reportedly investigated them as a possible front for Colombian drug traffickers.

**The takeaways:** get educated and learn everything you can about survivalism and self-subsistence. Next, you don't want to equate dollars with intelligence, and you should always be thrifty. More importantly, your hard-earned money is better spent on a compound without all the useless, luxurious frills. After all, survival is about roughing it most the time. Target your cash toward learning about survival, the best and most reasonably-priced places to live, and similar endeavors.

Also, there are many companies that can add a bunker to your survival compound at a fraction of the cost of what you'd pay for the luxe compounds that include them as part of the design. Doing so allows you to get affordable prepper property without breaking the bank. This puts your backup strategy exactly where you want to live, and it makes accessing it easier when the Fit Hits the Shan.

Keep in mind, too, that you have to sacrifice something for the collective good of society while it stands. That signifies not retreating into your safe-haven hole like a mole, being kind to your neighbors and most of all, not signaling to the world that it's soon to be over. That's defeating, and what we do affects other people.



## BUYER BEWARE BUNKERS

You probably think that if you spend a lot of money for your prepper home or survival compound, that you will be safe. In some cases, there is nothing that can be further from the truth.

As we learned previously in the cases of the ritzy survival compounds, there is no guarantee that throwing a lot of money at something solves problems.

Much like what you get when you hire plumbers, electricians, etc. that provide low quality at a high price, there are some construction companies in the survival and prepper industry that do the same.

People usually find this out the hard way if they don't do their homework on a company before hiring them. Unfortunately, there are companies charging six figures for bunkers that have low quality construction and engineering. Even worse, the shoddy results can be deadly.

Case in point: if you have a generator in a room in your bunker, the last thing you want to do is put the air pipe that filters carbon monoxide exhaust from it out of the room right next to the air pipe that feeds air into the bunker.

An NBC air filtration system isn't going to save you, either, because the only thing it can't filter out is carbon monoxide. Yet, a well-known bunker company designed a system that did this.

Save yourself a headache, and in some cases, your life by thoroughly researching the building contractor you are getting your survival

construction from. Whether it's a building on your tract of land or a bunker, it's always best to hire a proven and reputable company to do it for you.

Do your research and make sure who you contract is a licensed, bonded and established company whose reputation and record can be verified. Keep in mind that all states don't require building contractors to be licensed, though. Other actions you can take include checking with neighbors or co-workers that have used them. Furthermore, look at what websites you trust have to say about them when they post reviews and ratings.

Also, if you can, look at the work they've done and ask about their past experience. Ask for a list so you can see how familiar they are with your type of project. You can also check out their online reputation by googling their company's name with words such as "rip-off," "scam" and "complaint."

**The takeaways:** whether you are building your own private Idaho on your prepper property or building a large-scale survival compound with a bunker, do your research to make sure sketchy building contractors don't take your money and leave you with a useless, potentially dangerous, construction.

## 2. Socialism



In a bid to make a utopic society, Karl Marx created socialism. In Marxist theory, socialism is the transitional state that lies between the overthrowing of capitalism to realize communism. Because of the way capitalism is designed, it gets more expensive every day. That's the way it's designed, and although

not perfect, it beats launching a society into a universal social experiment through socialism and later into communism.

Marx's creation is guilty of fatal conceit because its proponents think the socialist system can make better decisions for people than they can do for themselves.

Every country is a little socialist, especially when it comes to owning some productive assets. For instance, until the 1980s, the U.S. government had ownership in strategic industries such as energy and telecommunications.

The ones that benefit society is something most people can buy into. The Affordable Care Act (ACA), social security and other similar government programs are socialist programs that have many strong points that benefit U.S. citizens.

However, Nancy Pelosi famously said in order to find out what was in the ACA that we need to pass it into law and find out about it then.

Pelosi's statement sounds a lot like true socialism because her words smack of a philosophy where the government thinks they are more intelligent and can think better than the masses. Maybe her words were not what she intended to say, but her opponents connected the dots and criticized her anyway.

Socialists are fond of saying that socialism has never failed because it has never been tried. Some people actually swallow that falsehood. That's how demagoguery works.

Venezuela's catastrophic experience is one useful lesson of why it has fallen out of favor around the world. In truth, socialism has failed in almost every country in which it has been tried. From the Soviet Union beginning a century ago to three modern countries that tried but ultimately rejected socialism, it simply hasn't worked.

In fact, Israel, India, and the United Kingdom all adopted socialism as an economic model following World War II. Israel is unique as it is the only nation where socialism was successful for a time.

**The takeaway:** Communism and socialism don't make for a better society in modern times or in the event of societal collapse. Don't build this into your lifestyle and philosophy or support or follow others that do.

If you ever ponder what goes into rebuilding civilization the right way after societal collapse, bone up on your political science to find out why social experiments such as socialism and communism trample freedom and buckle under the weight of their own conceit and pretentiousness.

## DANGEROUS CULTS



*Photo Credit: WikiCommons*

They go by different ethereal and folksy names such as the Branch Davidians sect, Heaven's Gate, the People's Temple, the Manson Family and another one that some famous actors belong to. However, make no mistake, they are dangerous cults. They often lure followers in with their special brand of "utopia" and message they are selling.

Cult leaders seem to promise much and deliver little, and easily led and naïve sorts of folk tend to fall into their traps. It's crucial to realize that if things ever start to head south, cult leaders rarely know what goes into the making of a self-reliance retreat, even though they'll try to convince you otherwise.

They are usually too busy brainwashing and threatening their followers to learn too much about self-reliance and survivalism. Plus, jails don't usually provide the right environment for that kind of education.

These narcissists and their compounds may look appealing on the outside at first in order to draw you in, but they usually answer more of the hard questions about food and other necessities lobbed their way with more drugs and starvation, since weak, drug-addled followers rarely question their charismatic, insane leaders.

After the mass suicide of Jim Jones and his People's Temple followers in Guyana, authorities noted that a sign hung above Jim Jones's deck chair near where his body was found. On the sign was a quote from George Santayana: "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

That's telling because we see these avoidable tragedies play out again and again throughout human history. A seasoned prepper or survivalist should never let history repeat itself in this manner, even though it would be easy to fall into this type mindset in a dystopian world.

Furthermore, don't throw your lot in with people you don't know well or trust. And even if you do trust them, don't live with them on their survival compound if they haven't demonstrated proven survival skills and capabilities to you. That's an important piece of information to consider in the next section.

**The takeaways:** History will almost always repeat itself if you join with fanatics, especially when it comes to doomsday cults. The only paradise you are likely to find with these people are on "the other side." Learn to recognize and avoid charismatic cult leaders and their promises of a "better life" or you may or may not live to regret it.

## THE UTOPIA EXPERIMENT

Dylan Evans is a former academic and eccentric who said he always looked forward to an apocalypse. He strongly felt that it would make for a simpler world, and that he would live off the land when it happened. His academic nature led him to put together a retrograde society experiment on the Black Isle in Scotland that had some very interesting results.



Photo Credit: Argie Hadron, Creative Commons

In Evans's experiment he wanted to show that life after the SHTF would be a utopia. In 2006, he led a scattering of volunteers to find out what living in a technology-free, post-apocalypse world would be like. The Utopia Experiment was born, and it was designed to last 18 months.

The Utopia Experiment was created to be a learning and working community. As far as learning went, people with survival and self-subsistence knowledge would mentor others about what they knew. The volunteers would also help out by toiling in a working community.

Unfortunately for them, no one involved in the experiment, save for a few, had any survival skills or inclinations. The Utopia Experiment was a smashing success in the regard that it showed how quickly a global collapse would grind people down and illustrate "survival of the fittest" principles. As far as creating a successful utopian society, it was a dismal failure, however.

In the end, the Utopia Experiment devolved into filth, hunger, boredom and a constant fight against mosquitoes. Even worse, Dylan Evans saw his sanity slipping away and was committed to four

weeks in a psychiatric hospital for his own safety. At the end of his stay in the mental ward, he returned to his followers to announce that the experiment was over.

The volunteers, however, wanted the experiment to continue and renamed it the Phoenix Experiment. The Phoenix Experiment limped on for a while, but eventually it went away.

Shortly after his end of the world simulation failed, Evans acknowledged that he was deluded about his own private utopia. He detailed his experiences in the 2015 book he authored entitled, "The Utopia Experiment."

**The takeaways:** The lesson to be learned here is probably obvious to the experienced survivalist: The participants in the urban experiment were woefully unprepared to survive and didn't have the time, or maybe even the desire, to acquire new skills from others.

Luckily, they had the luxury of escape to civilization when the going got tough. For the best chance of success in a post-apocalyptic world, everyone in the community should be knowledgeable about self-subsistence and be prepared to work hard going into a SHTF scenario, not afterward.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Here at the NSRA, we always try to teach and not preach. We hope that you enjoyed our guide to the outrageous flops you can learn from. In summarizing the takeaways, it seems that the major theme is definitely education. For the biggest degree of success, start by spending your money wisely on your prepper paradise, learn how to survive before the SHTF, and don't follow maniacs that don't know what they are doing.



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