

MY JOURNAL

Going Home

by A.H. Trimble

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FIRST EDITION

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DEDICATION

To my dear wife who tolerated me through the years it took to write this book. She deserved more of my time and attention. She has to settle for my undying love and appreciation for the incredibly wonderful person that she is.

And to those friends of mine that provided the inspiration that the book's characters are based on. I am grateful for my buddy Matt, his family and all those I call "friend" who encouraged me to get this book into print.

Lastly, I dedicate this book to my country, the United States of America. For a very long time America has been systematically attacked from within by forces that wish to fundamentally change America. However, the change they want is completely inconsistent with the Constitution and God. I pray Americans will rise-up and shake off this terrible evil that for over a hundred years now has been trying to destroy the Constitution and the American way of life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A.H. Trimble is a pen name and not the author's actual name. The real author is still a US Government employee waiting for retirement in 2017. The actual author is a US Navy veteran and served nearly thirty years as a structural and wildland firefighter. He has extensive training in emergency services and has participated in major disasters on multiple continents. The author has served as a Chief Officer in a structural fire department and is currently serving in a federal land management agency as Chief of Suppression Operations for millions of acres of federal and state public lands. Additionally, the author just recently left the Operations Section on a national incident management team where he participated with personnel from different government agencies managing major disasters all over the country. The author is also a certified emergency manager.

In addition to his thousands of hours of formal emergency and disaster response training, the author has taken hundreds of hours of weapons training with SWAT teams and other weapons experts. His professional leadership training has come from a multitude of sources including US Special Forces instructors.

In addition to his day job, the author has responsibility for emergency preparedness for thirteen church congregations spread out over three counties.

A.H. Trimble is dedicated to the patriot community and preparing Americans for the coming disasters that will strike America. A.H. Trimble is also a proud member of OathKeepers.

A.H. believes deeply in God as his Heavenly Father and in His son Jesus Christ. He loves the gospel of Jesus Christ, and although he has struggled most of his life, he strives to live up to the basic tenants of being a good Christian. A.H. is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A.H. is married to a very lovely and wonderful woman whom he has been with for over ten years. They have wonderful dates, including his marriage proposal, at the shooting range. His wife has also taken considerable training in weapons, has her conceal carry license, and loves her custom built AR-15 with which she is very good. A.H. and his wife are currently purchasing land in the southwest United States on which they will build a cabin for a retreat. A.H. Trimble loves to tell folks,

“Keep your eyes wide open, your powder dry and your heart open to Christ.”

FORWARD

This is the second book of a series covering everyday people suffering through the fall of America and the rise of freedom and liberty.

In the first book the economy has collapsed, lawlessness reigns, and the federal government has become nothing short of tyrannical. Western states have moved to leave the Union and a mentally unstable President is threatening violence against them. People are in a panic, families are being ripped apart, and people are disappearing. The good Peace Officers are all but gone, kicked out of their law enforcement agencies or they have simply disappeared. The future of America is bleak and getting worse.

Tim, his wife, and a small group of friends have left their homes and sought shelter in the Desert Southwest. Their small band of survivalists, along with the friendly rancher that has taken them in, are safe for now. But the world around them is falling apart, their safety won't last long.

Events won't let them rest for long. There are other people that need help, other souls in distress, and danger is just outside their little community. As the country slips closer to civil war, there are urgent issues to deal with nearer to their new home. They must act or people will die and young children will have their lives destroyed forever.

All the while, Tim continues to have strange dreams that he doesn't understand. Until one day a man of God is rescued by the group and he helps Tim to appreciate who he is.

And not all of the danger lurks outside the wire. There is one among them that is betraying them, one who has dual allegiances.

Much of this book sounds as if it could be written from today's newspapers...because it was. *My Journal* is written in diary form by the man who lived it.

TERMS

Bishop - Ecclesiastical leader of a larger congregation in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Branch - A congregation led by a Branch President and numbers about 200 people, 50 - 100 or so who are active and participate.

Branch President - Ecclesiastical leader of a smaller congregation in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

General Conference - A meeting of all members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints held twice a year via satellite around the world.

LDS - Acronym for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

NV - Night vision device allowing a person to see in low or no light conditions.

Prophet - Ecclesiastical leader of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Priesthood Meeting - Most male members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints hold a lay priesthood office. The Priesthood Meeting is a meeting of those lay priesthood men joining together to study the scriptures.

Relief Society - Women's organization in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the purpose of which is to strengthen families and homes, and help those in need.

Relief Society Presidency - The women in leadership positions that preside over the Relief Society.

Sacrament Meeting - Main worship service for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Stake - An organization that is comprised of 7 - 13 Wards and Branches.

Stake High Council - A group of twelve men that act as a body to assist a Stake President in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Stake President - Ecclesiastical leader of a group of congregations in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Ward - An LDS congregation led by a Bishop and numbers about 400 people, 300 or so who are active and participate.

Chapter 1

JULY - YEAR 1

July 27 (Tuesday) –

10:15 am - My debriefing with the group is over, the girls are settled in, now I can write down the story while it is still fresh in my mind. And it freaks me out to look back on it at this point. But here goes...

Sunday afternoon I had prepped a “kit” to take with me, laid out my camo, multi-cam top to bottom, the whole nine yards. Got Rancher Bill to move some hay so I could get my truck out, filled it up with gas and filled a spare gas can just in case. Roy saw me; I lied to him. I told him I was just doing some preventative maintenance and going to take the truck for a short drive to keep it in good running order. He didn’t look like he believed me, I didn’t care. He didn’t ask anything else, I didn’t offer anything else.

I got a bit of a nap later that afternoon, but not much of one. Lara and I ate with everyone in the main cabin but I didn’t have much of an appetite. I was anxious to get going. I left the ranch just about 10:15 pm with Max. Before I left Lara handed me a little bundle, a sandwich and a cold Pepsi. She had put one in the spring for me; she thought it would help keep me awake as I made my way to our house in Las Cruces. She loves me, and I am so grateful for her I can’t even tell you.

It was a seriously pitch-black night, with plenty of stars; there was no moon. I wasn’t sure if a moonless night was going to work for me or against me. I still don’t know if it had any effect on what happened or not.

I got to the outskirts of Las Cruces coming in from the west via the Butterfield Stage Trail, just east of Picacho Peak. It was very slow going through the arroyo but it provided very good cover for me, as long as I didn’t run into anyone. I didn’t. What is really great about that way into town is it comes out on the west mesa far enough out of town and high enough to see almost the entire valley. But still easy enough to hide or withdraw unseen if needed. What I wasn’t expecting to see was the shape the town was in.

I could see a lot of burning houses, some smoldering. There were some that were nothing more than glowing embers. There were maybe six or seven full-on house fires, through the roof kind of stuff. It was pretty unsettling but I couldn't wait around thinking about it. It was nearly 2 am and I had to get in and then back out while it was still dark. And time was not my friend, not at all. Not that night.

I headed towards our subdivision trying my best to avoid the bad parts of town and staying off the main streets. But to call any particular part of town "bad" was too much of a compliment. It was unreal; I had a hard time seeing one building that wasn't damaged in some way. In many cases whole neighborhoods, at least whole blocks, had burned. And no people, no one outside, no lights in the houses, no sound of anything; just occasional gunfire. No shortage of that. It all was very eerie.

I had my headlights taped down into little horizontal slits so light would only go a limited distance in front of me. We had long since taken out all the other light bulbs in our vehicles, including the interior lights. I have a couple really big front accessory lights along the lines of freaking jet plane landing lights but I haven't used them in months, but they do work if I needed them. I checked them at the hay barn but what the heck would I need them for? So I put a piece of tape over the switch to prevent me inadvertently turning them on at an inopportune time.

So I just went slowly and crept through town via the streets that I know and had earlier planned to use. I was hearing some civilization occasionally but not as much as you would expect; mostly silence. I didn't see or hear any other vehicle on the streets. Which, considering the serious shortage of gas, is no big surprise. I didn't really have any problems until the shock of my life, or at least the first shock of the night. It happened as I was approaching our subdivision. It is hard to put into words and I mean that.

I turned into the main entrance to the subdivision and immediately saw that every single house had been set on fire, most still smoldering, many still with open flames licking at the night sky. From the west mesa I had seen our houses burning, not someone else's, it was our subdivision. It appeared as if this was all recent, maybe earlier in the day, possibly it had started last night. Then everything got worse, far worse.

Just before I turned onto our street I noticed a body all charred and disfigured. It hadn't been put out there in the middle of the street.

Someone had crawled out of their house while they were on fire and that is as far as they had made it. I didn't stop to investigate. As I look back, I realize I was in a bit of shock. Then Max started this really low whine, it was really unnerving to hear him like that. If this huge fearless dog was freaked out, then I figured that I should be as well. I was mostly just in shock though.

I pulled over and turned off the motor under a large Mexican Elder tree three houses down from our house, or what was left of our house. It was nothing more than a smoldering slab of concrete with some household junk, black as night, sticking up through the ashes. I had a hard time accepting this was our house, or had been our house. Now it was just a smoking coffin of memories; memories of another lifetime. A lifetime that was gone forever.

I got out, finished gearing up, and then I threw my multi-cam camo netting over my truck and pulled a couple large tumble weeds along the side of the truck. Between the netting disguising my truck and the tumble weed going even further to break up the truck outline, it was very difficult to see it in the dark. And I wanted it to stay that way.

I had my night vision on my rifle, which made it really heavy but it would be worth it on a night like this. I moved slowly from shadow to shadow, no moon, no clouds, but plenty of stars. I remember thinking there were billions of stars up there, just little points of light. It took me about 15 minutes to make it about 200'. I wasn't taking any chances, I was going slowly to make it harder for someone to pick up my movement. Max was with me, no leash on him but he wasn't going anywhere. He stayed close enough to touch the whole time. That dog has a sixth sense to him like no dog I have ever seen. I was beyond scared by then, I was terrified but I kept on going. Max was the only living thing around and I needed him, he was my courage at that point.

The house, our house, was a complete disaster, nothing left. A pile of black ash and embers; everything but the fire place, washer, and refrigerator, which were sticking up relatively intact. I crept around to the backyard and found the spot where I buried the PVC, all was safe; nothing was disturbed. I backed off into the shadow of the rock wall, the one that borders the arroyo along the back of the property. I just hunkered down with Max for five minutes listening and watching for any signs that

someone was near or maybe observing me. I was praying that no one was within miles of me.

Whispering for Max to lie down, I left my rifle at the wall with Max and I crawled forward to the burial spot and slowly and very quietly started to dig by hand with my ESEE6 knife. Love that knife! I didn't want to make any noise using a shovel. I was praying the whole time that I would be quiet. I got down to the PVC safe finally, put it in my sling pack and then crawled back to Max. He licked my face all over when I got back to him. He just smothered me as if I had been gone for a month. It never felt so good in my whole life to get all those sloppy wet dog kisses. I love that dog!

It was then I noticed that my next door neighbor's house to the north was damaged but nothing like mine; and his boat, RV and all his vehicles were gone and not burned out hulks. Then I thought about his dwarf apricot tree. Yup, in the middle of all this I thought about a dang fruit tree and that I just had to have an apricot. The thought of fresh fruit was overwhelming. And I will admit I was a little over confident of how I had performed so far. Perfect example of Competency Bias. But off I went to the apricot tree that was 50' away. Yes, very, very stupid!

It took me a few minutes to slowly crawl over there with Max, both of us being very quiet. Max out in front, he was walking point. I did manage to find a couple of our decorative cactus plants in our yard along the way. Not that I was looking, and not appreciating finding them at all. Man, those things can live through anything, including a house fire and the end of the world as we know it. I didn't receive any major damage from the cactus but I still have a couple of the hair-like thorns in my arms. And as a bonus I managed to find every single sharp-edged granite rock as I went.

Needless to say, there were no apricots. Yeah, I know, how could there possibly be? I am an idiot but then something happened that has changed my life completely. And maybe that was the main reason (possibly the only reason) for me to go to the house after all. Max started to growl, a very low kind of growl from very deep inside his chest; just loud enough for me to hear. He was warning me. I was petrified at that point. I was looking into every shadow, ever corner; anywhere that might hide the bad guys waiting to kill me.

I just laid there trying to hear something other than Max, but I couldn't. There was no smell, no movement, no light, nothing at all. Well,

nothing but Max's growl. I asked Max "What is it boy? What's going on?" He stopped the growling and started to move forward in a slow predator crouch stalking walk, eyes fixated on something. His stare never wavered. I couldn't see anything of concern in the NV but I wasn't going to let him leave me behind either. I too started a very slow crawl towards the neighbors open garage door, or rather what was left of his garage and door.

We came around the corner and Max stopped, laid down and looked me right in the eyes. OK, so it was dark but I was right beside him and I know he had to be looking me in the eyes. I brought up the NV and swept the somewhat burned out remains of his garage, nothing. Crumbled up in the corner I could see a body behind a workbench kinda partly slumped over but sitting down with a leg bent back under him. There was no question that his leg was broken in at least one place. I hadn't been using my NV illuminator until now to avoid detection by other NV devices but I needed a better view of this body. I switched it on. I could feel my heart pounding and my breathing sounded to me like a freight train in my ears. I was really scared someone would hear my heart trying to thump out of my chest. But I honestly doubt that they could hear, it was all my nerves. Did I mention I was scared?

So I am staring at this body and realized it is my neighbor, now dead. He had a pistol in his hand, a revolver, small, probably a .38 snub nose or something similar. I was just lying there staring at him through the NV when Max nosed me. No, I am not kidding you. He put his nose into the side of my face. I about crapped my pants. I turned my face to his and couldn't see anything but this back shadow outline of Max and I could feel him breathing on me. I could swear he was telling me to get the heck out of there. But I didn't.

I looked at Bruce again through the NV, I guess just to convince myself of what I was actually seeing. Then I saw it, he moved. It was just the slightest amount of movement, nothing more than a slight twitch. I kept staring and he twitched again. I saw it plain as day. Now I was thinking, what the heck should I do?

So I did the stupidest thing I could think of, the thing that could probably have gotten me killed, I whispered to him, "Bruce." He tried to raise his pistol but couldn't; he tried a couple of times. "Bruce, it's me Tim. Don't shoot, don't try and move,, hold still, I will come to you."

About as weak as a man could, as weak as I have ever heard a man talk, he answered, "Tim, is it really you?" "Yes" I whispered back, "It's me, don't shoot me."

"Don't worry," he struggled to whisper, "I am out of ammo."

I told him very quietly, "I am going to crawl over, give me a second."

I finally got up next to him and could smell how bad he was; he had defecated himself and was sitting in it as well as his own urine. I turned on my Petzel headlamp's red light and could see at least three bullet wounds, including one in the stomach that was barely oozing blood. It was obvious he had been bleeding for a while. A shop rag was stuffed into the open hole in his stomach. It wasn't doing enough, but at least he had tried. He was dying, very slowly bleeding out. A bad way to go.

I offered him some water, he pushed my hand away. Then he asked me if he could trust me. I thought he was babbling so I didn't pay any attention to him and asked him where his family was. He told me that they had taken his wife and daughter. He had tried to defend them but he couldn't, there was just too many and they were well organized from how he described it. Then he asked me again if he could trust me.

I told him, "Bruce I've been your neighbor for three years, never stole an apricot and never called the police on your loud parties or drinking. I think you can trust me buddy."

He leaned over next to me and I could smell death on his breath as sure as I am writing this. He whispered, "the lawn shed."

I had to ask him "What?" I was not sure that I had understood him.

"The lawn shed." Then his head slumped over, he was dead. I bet it was a blessed release for him. I am sure it was now that I think of it. Maybe the only reason he stayed alive to that point was to give me that three-word message.

Max was lying right beside me, actually touching me, laying there along my whole left side. I turned my head and asked Max, "What about the lawn shed?" He licked my face a couple of times and laid his head down on his paws. "Well, Max, let's go have a look at the lawn shed. Those were Bruce's dying words." I whispered to Max, "We owe him that much. Let's check it out and then get the heck out of here." Yeah, I know; I was talking to a dog like he really knew what I was saying. Rough night.

So we crawled out of what was left of the garage through the soot, ash, and whatever liquid junk was all over the floor, around the corner and into

the back yard. We got about 10' from the lawn shed and then we stopped. We just laid there listening, watching, waiting ten minutes for something to happen. But nothing happened; nothing, not even a sound.

"Well, Max, we did our job, let's head home," I whispered to him. But Max didn't budge, he was fixated on that lawn shed, like he was stuck in concrete. He cocked his head to the side and his nose was in overdrive sniffing the air. He was sucking in every last bit of night air that he could for the better part of 30 seconds. Then started the low growl again. Crap!

What were we into now? It didn't take me long to find out. Then life changed. Thankfully, gratefully.

Max started to low walk towards that lawn shed doing his low growl thing. Then he stopped with his nose at the crack in the door sniffing like a madman. I couldn't see a thing he might be interested in but Max wanted something in that shed, so I crawled up there beside him. I started to pull the door open; it should have been easy because it was unlocked. I tugged again but the door would only give a little but wouldn't open. It was if someone was trying to hold it closed. I was being just plain stupid and it was about to get me killed. But right then I was just concentrating on getting that door open. I was suffering from *tunnel vision*.

I laid my rifle down, got both hands on the door and pulled with all my might.

The knife flashed and cut into my arm before I knew what was happening but I never felt the pain. I never felt the pain because I was petrified from the high-pitched screaming and the person swinging the knife up again for another stab at me. I was rolling to one side hoping that at some point my fearless guard dog would step in and help out. He didn't. I was on my own, I had been cut, I lost track of my rifle and was trying to get my hand on my pistol. I was lying on the same side as my pistol holster which made it impossible to get my pistol into action. I was going to die.

Just about then Max did a low "woof." That's it. Not an attack bark, not a back-off bark of a guard dog, just a stinking, friendly "woof." I was going to die while Max tried to make a new friend. How absurd this was! However, turns out I didn't die, obviously. But I could have and that is the real point to this.

After his "woof," I heard this girl's voice cry out Max's name. It was Mickey's voice but I couldn't see her. She yelled out "Max" again and he replied with another friendly "woof." This was surreal, like some movie I

was watching, albeit a very bad movie; a four in the morning kind of movie that nobody ever watches.

“Mickey?” I whispered, “Mickey is that you?” No response, “Mickey, this is Tim from next door. Is that you in there?” Another “woof” from Max.

“Tim, is that really you? Is it really? If not, I will stab you again!” But the voice betrayed her, she was scared and I have no doubt she would stab again. This was just an 11-year old girl and I could tell she was petrified and capable of anything.

“Yes, it is me. I came back for something from the house. I saw your dad in the garage, he’s injured. Are you okay?” Yes, I lied about her dad.

Then all I heard was crying, a low sob from a very frightened little girl. “Come on out Mickey, it’s me, come on out. It’s going to be okay.” Yeah, another lie.

Why is it so easy to lie in situations like this? Is it to try and make the other person feel better or make it easier for you to cope? It didn’t matter, I had a little girl, alive and someone who was traumatized and needed help. My help! Who knew how bad she was hurt, or worse, what had been done to her?

I heard her rustling around as she started to come out of the shed. She crawled right to me, curled next to me, and started to really cry as she hugged me as tight as I have ever been hugged. “I want my dad,” she whispered between heaving sobs. I just held her with one arm as I looked for my rifle with the other. Just about the time I found my rifle I heard Max do another “woof.”

“Max, shush, be quiet.” But then I heard it too and I froze. Another sound drifted our way. But it also came from inside the shed. To make a long story short, out crawls this other little girl, then another. They crawled over to Max and curled up with him. He was doing a lick-fest on them, his show of affection and comfort. It worked, one giggled.

So we stayed right there for about five minutes while everyone finally accepted what was happening. Then I whispered we had to leave. Mickey never did ask about her dad. I think she knew and she just didn’t say anything about it or asked me any questions. We just crawled off with Max in the lead doing his now-famous low-predator stalking walk.

We hadn’t gone 10’ when the girls started to whimper in pain. Max came back and started licking them and I actually heard a giggle from one

of them again. Go figure that a little, sweet human thing like a giggle could even exist in these inhuman deplorable conditions. But I figured out the reason for the whimpers of pain, bare legs. The girls only had on t-shirts, big ones like their dad's t-shirts.

"Don't you girls have any jeans or anything?"

"No, we were sleeping, having a slumber party when the men came. Daddy came running into the room and pulled us out of bed and dragged us to the shed. He gave me the big knife and told us not to make a sound."

Now what to do? "OK, stand up but stay very low like you are in the lowest crouching position you can, like you are trying to hide behind something." That was the best I could do with no more time, "Stay behind me, stay quiet, hold on to each other and stay quiet."

Mickey answered me with, "You said that twice. We heard you the first time. We'll be quiet."

We snuck down the street back to the truck which was still there, still covered, and still in one piece. At least something was going right tonight but that was about it. Little did I know it was going to get worse before the night was over. But right now I've got to get some sleep, I am exhausted. I will finish up tonight or in the morning after I get some rest and get some decent food in me.

July 28 (Wednesday) –

5:00 am - OK, so I feel a whole lot better this morning. I slept for a full 16 hours, I was dead to the world. Well, not so dead that I didn't notice an 11-year old girl slip into bed in the middle of the night and curl up between Lara and me. I can't imagine what was in that little kid's head right then. I probably never will.

So, back to the return trip...We got back to the truck, I pulled the camo netting off, took off my load bearing vest, put my AR-15 on the passenger seat and got the girls all in the back seat. I got my blanket out and told them to use it to stay warm. Giggles, then I noticed I was sweating, it was at least 80 degrees outside already and it wasn't even 5 am. This is summer in the desert and I was telling them to pull a blanket over them. Idiot! They got down in the back seat, Max jumped in the passenger seat and we headed out of the sub-division the back way. I don't like to leave the same way I travel into a place. If someone found your tracks or has been watching you they can pretty much guess where you are

headed. Worse, they can also predict where you are going to exit the area. You are playing right into their hands for an ambush.

So I went the back way, the road was only a little used gravel construction road in the unbuilt part of the sub-division. The houses were planned and laid out, some foundations started but nothing actually built yet. I doubt that they ever will be built now. I headed due east into the arroyo and then out on Mesa Verde Road. Then I figured I would take a two-track into and across the desert to pick up the Butterfield Stage Trail out by Picacho Peak. Well, that was the plan anyways. It was then I noticed that it was getting light, decision time; go on and take a chance of being seen or hold up and wait out the day and leave tonight after dark. Either way it could turn out to be the wrong decision and there wasn't a good option with three little girls in the truck. Besides, Lara was expecting me back before light. What would she think or do? She would be worried about me. That wasn't fair to her. But right then nothing in life was fair.

I decided to make it over to Twin Peaks in the Dona Ana Mountains and hold up for the day. I know a couple different arroyos there with very steep sides and they make a pretty decent place to hold up during the day while easily hiding the truck. But there was no water there and I only brought enough for one person for 24 hours. Now there were four of us for at least 16 more hours and half of my water was already gone. The temps would be in the 100's with no clouds, no relief. It was going to be a bad day. But the water problem could well have been the least of our real problems if someone spotted us.

I found the arroyo I wanted in about 35 minutes, backed in, covered the truck with the Multicam camo netting and put a little awning out for us to sit under while we shared a little breakfast. As it was, it's not much fun eating a Beef Teriyaki military grade MRE for breakfast and sharing it among the four of us. Yes, Max would have to go without, the girls needed the food. I changed my mind and opted for a granola bar, Max got my share.

After we ate, and had a "sip" of water I told them we were moving off to another location and leaving the truck. They weren't crazy about the idea but I told them it was easier to spot the truck than us and we didn't want to be around the truck if people were poking around. I got my gear, I cut a chunk of the camo netting off, threw some tumbleweeds around the

truck and then off we headed to another arroyo; me, Max and three 11-year old little girls wearing only their dad's white t-shirts and barefooted.

I found a good place in the shaded side of a steep slope that would last until about noon. I strung the camo netting up using a cactus and a big mesquite bush. I had the girls rub sand and dirt on their t-shirts to reduce the whole bright white thing. They were thinking I was pretty crazy by then but I was the adult with a big black gun. To their credit they did exactly what I told them every time. I think that was the first and last time that ever happened, even with my own kids.

The girls were asleep in about three seconds and Max not long after. I was on guard duty by default. I struggled to stay awake. After about an hour I broke the monotony by going back to check on the truck about 1/4 mile away. Max guarded the girls while they continued to sleep. The truck was fine. When I got back it was my turn to sleep, but only about an hour. It was so hot I couldn't get comfortable and our situation wouldn't let me relax even a little bit.

The girls woke up as the sun was hitting us directly. I told them in about an hour we would move to get in the shade of the opposite side of the arroyo. But for now we just had to do the best we could. It was a scorcher, thank goodness for the camo netting, at least it provided us a little relief. The last of the water was gone by about four in the afternoon. The last of my granola bars by 6 pm. Not a lot of happy campers, but they never really complained, or cried. Their silence worried me, creeped me out a little bit.

Right at dusk I had them wait while I went back to get the truck; I watched it from a little high spot for about 30 minutes to make sure I wasn't walking into a trap. No way was I getting myself killed and leaving these little girls to the desert and who knows what else. I got the truck all ready, including dumping the spare can of gas into the tank and then went for the girls and Max. By this time the girl's feet were a mess, a real bloody mess. I cringed looking at them. They never complained, even with bloody feet. They walked like they were walking on crushed glass but they kept walking.

I had them get in the same place in the truck, the back seat on the floor. Not that it was safer that way; I just didn't want anyone to see that there were kids in the truck. Even if I was stopped by good guys it would look real suspicious. If I was stopped by bad guys they would want the girls. Talk about a rock and a hard place!

So off we go towards Butterfield Stage Trail again; we actually made decent time. There were no clouds and no moon but a billion stars were out. There was enough light to see the two-track road without my lights, so we were running dark. I was not driving fast, I couldn't see very far in front of me so I had to leave room to stop before hitting something. Also, I didn't want the fast movement to catch someone's attention or the dust to be kicked up and leave a trail for someone to spot us and follow.

There were no problems getting back to the trail, pretty easy going actually. I relaxed a little, which was my first mistake.

My second mistake? Well, remember me mentioning that you need to use different routes when going and returning from somewhere? That applies to the entire route. I had traveled most of the way from the ranch to the west mesa outside of town via the Butterfield Stage Trail. Then made sure I took a different route in and out of town. But I should have figured out a route other than the Butterfield Trail for the return trip back to the ranch. They were waiting for me, but now it was "us," and not just me, they were waiting for "us."

So I was crawling through the wide rock arroyo making sure I didn't get the truck hung up. It wasn't too difficult in most places because, after all it had been a stage coach line as recently as about 100 years ago. But some places it was kind of rough and I wanted to make sure I didn't get the truck stuck or run into a rock. If I had been on my own I would have been less careful to be sure. If something had happened I would have just walked out of the canyon and back to the ranch. Yeah, a long walk, and a long time to get there. But it would just be me. But now it wasn't "just me," and so it wasn't an option. I had to keep ALL of us safe so I was being extra cautious.

For about the first 30 minutes or so everything went along just fine and we were making decent time. I had to use my head lights at one point; the steep arroyo was dark, very dark. The stars didn't help much. There are a couple places where the arroyo gets pretty narrow, one right at a place where it turns sharply. Coming around that sharp narrow bend is where I almost ran into the Jeep, a red Jeep with brown blotches of paint.

My lights caught it in time for me to stop just short of hitting it. My mind was having a very hard time computing what had just happened, that I had just encountered a Jeep. I was sleep deprived, mentally and physically exhausted. Both my hands were on the wheel and stayed there

because now there was the barrel of a shotgun about three inches from my left ear. The window was down.

Then a big, ugly guy moved into the lights of the truck between me and the Jeep. He carried either an AR15 or an M16, 30-round clip, black gun with some kind of red dot scope. But his rig wasn't military and neither was he. He looked more like a homeless bum than anything. But that gun made him look larger than life. He was still ugly, gun or no gun.

I never thought twice, never really thought at all; never opened my mouth never hesitated, never even thought it through. I had my hand around my Sig P220, it was pointed at the man next to me, I pulled the trigger and sent a 230 grain Golden Saber brass-jacketed, hollow point into the man's face that was standing to my left. A hole appeared on the bridge of his nose surrounded by black soot. The second shot sounded like the echo from the first round. Both rounds had been fired in less than a second. Both rounds caught him within a two inch circle centered on his bridge of his nose. The second round entered his left eye socket. I always did have a tendency to pull to the left on my second shot.

Both rounds had been an instant kill shot. The second round removed whatever was left of his brain. The remaining rear of his skull that the first round hadn't already splattered across the desert floor was turned into a pink mist. Since it was a head shot within the orbital region, he never had a chance to pull the trigger on his shotgun. I was lucky, or all that range time paid off.

The guy in front must have been rather surprised by the sound of a .45 caliber pistol in the close confines of the arroyo. Or maybe it was seeing his buddy's head explode like a watermelon being dropped on the sidewalk. Then again maybe it was the fact it was far less than three seconds from the time the first bullet was fired and the front bumper of my truck crushed the ugly man into the side of his Jeep right above his knees.

He might have lived through the violent effects of the crash and resulting traumatic injuries. However, their Jeep had gone through a custom lift job. In addition, it had some very large tires making it much taller than normal. Now, couple that with the brush guard on the front of my truck, well, you had in-effect a meat grinder. As the front of my truck started to go under the frame of the Jeep it ground him into a pretty quick, albeit painful, death.

Not a shot fired. Maybe he had the safety on, maybe he just didn't think to pull the trigger. Maybe he was trying to figure out how he got himself into being killed like that. Maybe he was just a moron and wasn't thinking at all. No matter the case, he died right then and there. His body was twisted, broken, crushed, his legs almost severed, and his face distorted with pain that I can't imagine. But he was dead, we weren't. I was just glad we were safe.

I backed up, got out, walked over to the big, ugly guy with legs that looked like they belonged to a different body. His face was all twisted up like it had been painful. I put a 230 grain .45 caliber slug into his face just coz I wanted to. I was mad. He wasn't a human, not to me. None of them are to me anymore. I hooked up the winch from my truck, pulled the Jeep out of the way and we went on our way. I made sure I drove over the dead body of the big, ugly man as we pulled out. Seemed appropriate at the time.

I never heard a peep from the girls. It was almost like they weren't there. I had to reach back between the seats and feel for them. They were still there, they never moved, never made a sound. I didn't say a word to them. All I could hear was the ringing in my ears. I was clearly deaf from the close quarters gun shots.

About 3 am we were ready to climb out of the arroyo that had been home to the Butterfield Stage Trail for 150 years. It was then I felt the truck moving a little sluggishly on turns, it was a flat tire.

What else would I have to deal with on this trip to hell and back?

Changing a spare tire is not a tough thing to do, in the light, on the side of the road, with a good spare tire, and AAA mechanic doing it. But in an arroyo, at 3 am, with only a red light, with a spare tire that hadn't been used in, ahhhhhhh, ever. All the while worried about bad guys, worried about these little girls, worried what else might go wrong, it didn't go well. About an hour later it was done and we were moving again.

Note to self: check the spare tire regularly, remove it from the truck, check the pressure, make sure the crank mechanism used to lower the spare tire works and is lubricated. Preventative maintenance is imperative all the time and can be life-determining in crisis situations.

As soon as we got within a couple miles of the ranch I got on the radio and called in. A couple very long seconds later were the two clicks

acknowledging me. I gave the proper response and headed in. We were driving into the cabin area just as it was getting light.

Max and I got out, Max running straight to Lara as she was coming out of the cabin. Ally pushed passed Lara and rolled Max as she ran straight into him. He yelped, got his feet under him, and almost knocked Lara over jumping up to meet her. The scene was pretty much the same with Ally running up to me. Then it got interesting...

After a couple seconds the back driver door of my truck opened up and out comes Mickey in her dirt-smudged, oversized t-shirt. Most of the rest of the group were coming out of their cabins by now as well. Everyone pretty much not comprehending the scene unfolding right there in dawn light.

Then the other door opened and out comes two more little girls dressed virtually identical to Mickey. Lara was looking between me and the girls like I was some kind of alien from Mars or something. Like I had just run to the mall and there was a "sale" on 11-year olds. Within a couple of seconds all three girls were hugging Lara even though Mickey was the only who knew her.

A couple minutes later the Three Musketeers (Sheila, Mary, and Lindy) had the girls headed off to the shower in the main cabin. But I bet they ate before they showered, they surely need both.

Max and Ally were chewing on each other's necks, Lara was holding my hand. Then Roy walked over to me, never broke stride, never stopped, never said a word, I never saw it coming. Boom! I was on the ground, my jaw thumping with pain. Then he helped me up and walked away. Go figure, I couldn't, didn't, still don't.

Lara walked me back to the cabin after telling Mike that it would be 30 minutes before I was available for the debrief. She told him I needed something to eat and some clean clothes. Although she talked to Mike, Lara never said another word to me. She just fixed my favorite breakfast of Mountain House granola and blueberries with milk. Laid out some clean clothes and a bath size "wipe;" the real shower was obviously occupied. A wipe was all I got and would have to do.

The debriefing went as they always do, full of facts, questions and clarifications. One difference with this one, Mike didn't say a word, at least not until the end. When everyone was done and all questions were asked and answered he finally looked up, straight at me, and then said...

“We are a group, we are a team, and we depend on each other. But more than that, we trust each other with everything - EVERYTHING - always, every time, no exceptions. Tim, you didn’t do that. You let us down.” Then quietly he continued, “We could have helped, we could have been there for you. You needed us then and we need you in the future. We need you in one piece.”

I couldn’t think of a single word to say he was right. We either trust each other or we don’t and I hadn’t trusted them. That showed disrespect. I was wrong and I knew it. I started to say something but couldn’t. I was embarrassed.

Mike walked up to me and bro-hugged me while whispering, “Well done, you saved three precious little girls from who knows what. Well done!! The angels in heaven are singing this morning. God is smiling; He is happy. And so am I.” Then he just left and walked back to his own cabin.

When I got back to the cabin Mickey was there sound asleep in our spare bed (just a mattress actually). She was just lying there, so small but on the verge of becoming a teenager as a prelude to womanhood. But here she was, father dead, mother and sister gone, sleeping in a strange bed, in a cabin that belongs to people she really doesn’t know, in the middle of a situation that she probably can’t even comprehend. And she has no clue what her future will bring. But at least she was sleeping, getting rest; but most importantly, giving her mind and spirit a break from the last couple of days of unimaginable hell.

10 pm - Mike just alerted us that Ken from Hadley caught a person outside of town. The guy they caught was spying on them, they are sure of that. He had a map, a camera and had been making notes on the map. He had a radio but it wasn’t working, the batteries were dead. He isn’t talking, but they are sure that he was spying on them.

July 29 (Thursday) –

7 am - I managed to sleep in this morning. It was weird waking up to see Lara and Mickey working around the cabin together. Mickey was so proud of herself that she had fixed breakfast and then she proceeded to wait on me hand and foot. If I wanted anything she jumped up and got it for me. She was all smiles and talked a mile a minute. On the surface it was nice, but I think it is masking a serious problem under the surface. We don’t

have anyone here that knows about those kinds of things. Love better be enough along with whatever security and stability we can give her. But honestly, what do we do with them?

Last night after talking with the girls, we decided that for now each girl would go with a different family. Obviously Mickey would stay with us, Allison would go with Roy and Tina, Joanie would go with Mike and Susan. Our little *Shit-Hit-The-Fan* (SHTF) family is growing little by little.

11 pm - Mike is reporting that Hadley says their patrols have picked up sightings of a couple more people around the outskirts of town. They are sure they are being watched. They have increased their security and their patrols. Ken (Hadley leader) also asked if we are still going to support them if something happens. Mike told them we would. He was right to do so; we have to work with others that have the same goals, priorities, and standards. If we don't stand together they will pick us off one-by-one. We can't let that happen. If we are going to have any chance of us making it through this we have to stand together.

July 30 (Friday) -

6 am - Got a call from Hadley over the Ham radio minutes ago. They are sure they will be attacked today or tomorrow; probably today. We are headed that way to help them.

July 31 (Saturday) -

5 pm - Where do I even want to begin this...

Two days ago Hadley told us they were being watched and got glimpses of men stalking around on the outskirts of town.

Yesterday morning Hadley told us over the Ham radio of their perimeter being probed. They asked us to put some folks on the ground last night in two different positions and have them in place right after dark. Well, we headed over that way in the evening and held off in this little arroyo while it was still a little light out. We held up there because we didn't want anyone to see us approach the area around town.

Right at dark, twilight, when it's the hardest to see anything, we got to our spots within a couple hundred yards of the outside of town on the west and southwest corners. I had just opened up my MRE and just heated my ChiliMac when our radio came to life. Hadley had just contacted Roy, he

confirmed we were in position and the shooting started almost immediately. The little town was under attack.

No one told us anything other than they needed our help once the shooting started. But they couldn't even tell Roy who, how many, where they were, nothing. All we could hear was the shooting.

Then someone put up a flare (I am assuming from Hadley, I never did ask) and we saw at least 30 people moving against the town. I guess they weren't expecting a flare and the attackers momentarily stopped and hunkered down. I guess Ken got inside their OODA (Observe, Orient, Decide, Act) loop. Guess I might have done the same, if I were that smart. I am just glad we were on the high ground. Then I started thinking that these bad guys might have people on the high ground too. Yup, I had already dumped the ChiliMac and started scanning the surrounding area.

Thankfully nothing; no one was on the high ground with us. No "overwatch" from the bad guys or the town. So lacking any direction or specific orders from the Ken (Hadley ground commander), we held our position and held our fire. We just watched this little battle unfold; we didn't want to get in the line of fire or shoot up any friendlies.

Next thing you know this second smaller group of bad guys (maybe 15 - 20 or so) comes over the hill right between our two positions that Roy's team and mine were holding. They never saw us! Makes sense I guess. We had on something like a Gillie suit, but *poor-boy* style. It was dark and you really couldn't see us unless you were pretty close to us. Those suits are pretty decent. No, we didn't wear them on the walk over, we put them on when we moved from the arroyo to our hides.

Hadley forces were holding their own against the first force but we figured they weren't expecting this group from our side of town. I guess Hadley must have moved their defenders (or most of them) to the other side to reinforce against the main attack. Well, these bad guys were headed straight into town. So Roy called our move, and a great move it was!

We moved each team's primary sniper in a little closer and set them up as overwatch. While they were doing that the remaining team members from each team moved right to the edge of town, virtually intermingled with these bad guys. Roy gave a signal and our marksmen started on them with their .308 AR's, but we held fire. Man, our marksmen are freaking good! Almost each shot was dropping a bad guy. A shot every 30 - 45 seconds (sometimes quicker) and almost each time a bad guy bit the dust.

Well, after a couple minutes or so the bad guys finally got the idea that something was wrong.

The bad guys actually deployed a couple counter-sniper teams to silence our marksmen. But that didn't work out so well for them. One of the bad guys' counter-sniper units walked right past myself and Sheila. We took them out, they never had a clue. Roy took out the other BG unit by himself with a full-auto burst. I don't think the BGs had a clue that it happened from so close in. And there is no doubt they will never have a clue about anything ever again; Roy stitched them up their backs with 4 – 6 rounds each.

Our marksmen by now had repositioned themselves to their secondary hides closer to the main action and opened up again. I had no idea what was happening on the other side of town but I do know a building was burning and a woman was screaming from somewhere, I thought maybe I heard a kid screaming as well. I wasn't sure; my hearing was all but gone by this time.

Our marksmen dropped some more bad guys. I think the bad guys decided enough was enough and a fairly large group of them left the battle going on in the main part of town and headed after our shooters. The whole group of them walked within about 30' of both of our teams. We opened up and cut them to pieces before they had any idea what happened, maybe 10 or so of them dead or injured. I didn't exactly stop to count them.

That got their attention in town. A bunch of the BGs that had attacked the town started to retreat towards the hill. They formed up and headed towards the hill. I guess they thought they would fight through it. Problem was their line formation was against a force in front of them and they were not set-up for action on their flanks. We were on their flanks. We let them get right beside us and then opened up. They had no clue we were that close to them, we rolled 'em up firing right down their line. They never really stood a chance. Fine by me.

They dropped like flies; it was surreal, like watching a movie from behind the camera. This was my first large action. I had been in some skirmishes and smaller firefights but not a battle like this. In about 15 minutes they were down. Roy called for us to move into town; he had contacted the Hadley commander and we were expected. Ken promised they would try not to shoot us as we approached. We were going to leave

our marksmen in place to watch over this side of town to make sure no one surprised us and no BG made it out of town.

We all moved through town and cut down maybe another 5 or so bad guys trying to escape. The Hadley folks were still engaged and Roy said Hadley had taken some casualties. We met up with Ken and he asked us to move on the west flank of the remaining bad guys and attack them once we were in place. Sounded good, we moved out, took us almost 10 minutes to get into place. Guess the bad guys didn't expect the town's people to come out to attack them.

We got into place and the Hadley commander, Ken, told his folks to cease fire. It got really quiet and using a bullhorn Ken hollered to the bad guys and asked if they wanted to surrender. A couple shots was their reply and then one of them yelled for the town to surrender. Ken agreed and asked for the women and children to be spared.

This bad guy laughed. So I guess they were true bad guys. Ken wasn't serious anyways; he was just gathering intel and giving us some more time to get set.

Ken called Roy on the radio and asked if we had a fix on the bad guy leader. Roy told him we didn't. Ken told us to attack in three minutes. We moved forward a little more and got into good firing positions almost on top of these guys again. Then Ken starts talking on the bullhorn again about the terms of surrender. This must have relaxed the bad guys something bad. They had no idea we had crept in so close. All of them were watching the town. At the three minute mark - bam! We cut loose again. And so did a couple fire teams from town. Evidently they had crept up as well but in the middle of the line to our right. We had them from the front and one flank without them having a clue. By now there were only about 10 of the bad guys still able to fight and we proceeded to chop them to pieces.

We never realized by now it was 3:00 am. We had been fighting for almost five hours straight. I had no clue! But it was finally over just like that, we had won. Thank goodness it was over, I was down to my last two magazines. We had all carried a few spares; I'm glad we had made that decision.

We helped walk through the bad guys disarming them. We would find them, cover them and Hadley's women would come over and take all of their weapons and ammo. No one provided a single bit of first aid to

them. The plan was to see what the situation looked like once it got daylight and then make decisions. Over the next hour we heard an occasional shot from our guys on the other side of town still up in the hills. We knew that each shot meant another BG was headed to hell.

About 5:30 am it was light enough to barely see. Whoa! It was a battlefield. I mean it. It could have just as easily been a picture from a Civil War movie. There were probably 10 wounded enough that they were out of action. There was one kid, maybe 14 or 15 who wasn't wounded very badly at all. He was crying like a little baby, all curled up in a little ball and begging for his mom.

All the injured were rounded up to be questioned. If they answered questions they got first aid, if they didn't cooperate they got put into a big dog kennel. Seriously, a big dog kennel at the edge of town.

Turns out this was a roving gang, just going from place to place, raiding towns; living off whatever they could steal. They'd been doing it for over a month. They had hit 7 or 8 towns from what they had said. Little places like Hadley, none of which could defend themselves very well, until Hadley. More on that later.

Well, the ones that had refused to answer any questions were moved from the dog kennel to the little city park. I saw the ropes hanging from the trees and knew what was next. They were hung right there and then. The few that had answered questions were taken to the park next, they saw their buddies. A couple tried to run, they were shot. The rest were hung except the kid. Ken granted him amnesty and a chance to live if he promised to live right. He did, he lived, and we left.

I had never seen a bunch of people hanged before. Actually I'd never seen anyone hanged. They didn't drop them from a gallows like in the movies. They put the noose around their necks, tightened it and then just pulled them up off the ground and tied off the rope. The heavy guys died quick, the skinny ones thrashed around for more than a minute, maybe two minutes for some. It must be very painful and terrifying to be hanged.

I would have done the same thing had I thought of it. I would have hanged them too had they attacked the ranch like that. These guys were all leaches, the worst that humanity has to offer. This scum won't bother anyone any more.

One of Hadley's patrols found their vehicles; two short school busses, and two pick-up trucks, all diesel. They offered us a pick-up as "partial

payment.” We gladly accepted the truck; it was a good one-hour walk to our own vehicles and we were exhausted. We piled in and headed back to our own trucks. About halfway Sheila speaks up and asks, “Hey, if we found their vehicles what if someone found ours?” We stopped about 1/4 mile from our vehicles and Roy’s team walked in from there. They took a position and watched our truck for an hour before calling it clear, then we roared in with our new fancy F250 diesel truck ready for a fight while Roy’s team covered us.

Note to self: This new truck needs a serious cleaning on the inside...it STINKS!!!! The bad guys must never have taken a shower the whole time they used the truck.

We had hidden our trucks in a nice little place and had covered it with camo netting, but that didn't work. Our truck had been found and savagely attacked!!! OK, attacked by cows that were still wandering around in the area. Seems as if cows like to eat camo netting

Roy called back to Hadley on the radio and let them know about the cows. He thought it might be a good food source for them, maybe a really nice town BBQ or something. They deserve it after that fight, they lost more than a few folks.

Now for our casualty, David. On the way back he was riding shotgun next to me in our newly acquired F-250 crew cab diesel that stunk like a gym locker full of dead meat wrapped in dirty laundry. He said he felt light-headed and nauseated. I looked over and he was white as a sheet. He slumped over, passed out. Then I saw the blood stain on his arm and the puddle of blood on the seat. I told Roy and then I stomped on the gas. Sheila tended to him on the way back and Dr. Raymond was ready when we pulled in. I will write about that some other time. We are having a big feast in the hall to celebrate us coming back alive. Don’t worry, David will be fine, not a big issue. He just took a round in the arm. Doc dug out a 9mm FMJ from a fleshy part of his arm. Not to worry.

I am wide awake, but exhausted, I feel 100 years old. But with Mickey buzzing around the cabin like 11-year olds do, it makes me feel younger, like I have a second chance. Maybe this time I can be a better dad. It is good to have the sounds of a child around the house again. Very good indeed!

Now I am off to bed again, I want to sleep for a week. I am getting old, way too old for this crap!

Chapter 2

AUGUST - YEAR 1

August 1st (Sunday) –

8:00 am - Today is Sunday, finally. It has been a long, ugly week. All I can think about this morning is my soul and my humanity. I am thinking I am losing both. I am finding it easy, too easy, to kill. I know it is not murder; I am defending myself and others. But it is coming so easy to pull the trigger. At Hadley I was even “thrilled” when I brought another bad guy down; it was both exciting and satisfying. Even watching those guys hanged didn’t bother me a single bit, not one single bit. That worries me.

Lara says it is the trauma of the violence, like PTSD. It is that, no doubt. But I fear I will become hooked on it like crack or something. I have killed so many people in the last couple of months and I really am kinda OK with it. What other choices are there?

If there was one really really bright spot it is Mickey. She is acting like a fantastically happy 11-year old; all giggles, laughing, arms and legs everywhere, running around. It is really refreshing. But I know at some point she will have to cope with all that she went through, but we will cross that bridge when we come to it. We will get her through it, she deserves that much. She has a life in front of her, a future, and she doesn’t need all this garbage haunting her.

One of the funniest things is to watch her with Max. She really loves him, he follows her around everywhere and he sleeps with her. He was our outside watch dog but now he is the “inside sleep in the bed dog.” At night I have seen this huge, hairy dog sound asleep with this cute, little girl all snuggled up to him, sometimes her leg thrown over him. He loves it, he loves her, that makes life pretty dang-gum great for a minute watching that bed full of sleeping bliss. What really cracks me up is him barely opening an eye laying there and I swear he is telling me not to wake her up or he’ll bite me.

Everyone is talking about taking some time off. We are all stressed out and you can see the gaunt look in some faces, even the “1000-yard stare” at times. We just want to chill-out for a bit, just try something different and find something to enjoy each day. We will be talking about it after our church meeting.

7:15 pm - It’s official, we are going to kick back a little. We will still do security but we are going to back-off of any projects or other work for at least a couple of days. I think it will be good for us, we really need it. The Three Musketeers (Mary, Lindy and Sheila) and the Three Stooges (Mickey, Joanie, and Allison) are going to plan some group activities. There are even rumors of an “Olympics” of some kind. Mickey says for me they will plan a “Special Olympics.” She cracks me up.

Roy mentioned that he would like to have a Bible study time every day and a group opportunity to discuss politics, etc. The meetings would be completely voluntary. I like both those ideas; we need to talk politics, especially the Constitution. And we need more scripture in our life. Mickey has had zero exposure to anything religious so this might prove to be interesting. It is cool that she is always very reverent when we have a prayer; well, except when she and Max are teasing each other.

I can feel a small sense of relief among everyone with the “back-off” decision. We are not soldiers; we weren’t trained for this kind of life. None of us are doing really well with all the stress and you can see it. Maybe this will help to just relax a little and act like real people again.

Roy did bring up the radio traffic that might have been from the Alabama group. That loop hasn’t been closed yet and we’ve heard nothing more from them. I had all but forgotten about them with everything that has been happening, but considering their attitude and problems it was pretty easy to forget.

Speaking about forgetting, I forgot to mention that we have a new family in the group; the Wilders from Florida. It was their RV that had the wheel bearing/axle problem along with the transmission issues on their truck. There was some kind of problem within their group. With a large family (seven of them), they were having problems figuring how to get them assigned to other vehicles to continue the trip. So the Wilders asked us if they could stay; that was back almost a week ago. The dad (Brian) is a machinist from some small aircraft parts manufacturer, the wife (Candice) is a “full-time mom,” the six kids are just kids, nothing special.

The oldest is a boy, he just turned eighteen, then two more boys (fourteen and fifteen), then two girls (seven and twelve). And get this, mom looks like she weighs all of 100lbs. after six kids!! Turns out she was some famous college tennis player back in her day. Nice family, I like them. The mom did become a dental hygienist way back before the kids showed up. That might be helpful but she said she hasn't done anything along those lines for almost 20 years.

Their 6th child is 20; he is on a church mission to Argentina. He was headed back home and there was a problem with a connecting flight somewhere. They think he eventually made it back to someplace in Idaho with other missionaries that got caught in the system, but they aren't sure. They are handling it pretty well; they say he is still on his mission and will be until he is released back to his family. And that being the case, he is entitled to the protection of the Lord. Strong, faithful family AND THEY ARE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH! Lara and I are no longer lone members.

On top of everything else they know David! Is that weird or what? From what they are telling me they were part of the same "prepper group" that had formed about a year ago. David had told me about that but used the term "camping club" whenever we talked. David never told me too much, he wanted to maintain Operational Security (OpSec), but Brian Wilder tells me that they started off with 12 primary people when the crap hit the fan. From what he was telling me it got bad for them and fast. One of the families got busted right away, arrested and imprisoned. The wife really suffered at the hands of the local police. Things got better but then it really got very violent. At some point it just got intolerable and the group kinda reformed from what Brian is saying. That is when Wilders got the feeling that they needed to head out west while they still could. He and I are going to talk more about it. I want to hear everything I can about what happened to David. I hope he is keeping a journal like I asked him to.

John Wayne (rancher Bill's son that was a Marine) was funny, we were all trying to figure out how to get the RV here with the bad bearing and axle problem. The idea that was gaining the most traction was rigging up some kind of dolly to put under the bad wheel. Then John Wayne spoke up, "It's a dual axle RV trailer, right? Why don't you take most of the weight out of the trailer, then take the bad axle completely off? Then use one of our heavier trucks to pull it here with just the one good axle? Take

your time, avoid the big bumps and just take it real slow. Shouldn't have a problem."

You know, there are times when the right solution is the easiest and the most obvious. And in this case the one almost everyone overlooked. I am an idiot at times.

So a crew went and rigged it up and brought it back the day that the rest of their group headed for Glenwood/Reserve. It's parked near the cabins at the southern end. I think the rest of us are going to get real jealous because they have an inside toilet and a shower!

August 2nd (Monday) –

10 pm - What a great day, we just goofed off and did a bunch of nothing. We just hung out. WAY cool ! I think Mickey and Max never spent more than 2 minutes away from each other all day. Here is this "almost 12-year old" (as I have been formally informed) who is all gangly arms and legs, skinny as a rail, cute as a button. Then there is this huge furry German Sheppard / Rottweiler mix that outweighs her, a bigger head than she has, stands with her head about Mickey's chest high. And if Max ever stood up on his hind legs he would dwarf her. So Max looks like this huge monster next to Mickey and she loves every minute of it! I think he makes her feel very safe. She needs "safe."

The highlight of the day was just watching Mickey and Max playing, actually playing. I am so grateful to have both of them in the house. I need it for my own sanity. But Max, well, he is wiped out from all the activity and is now sleeping like a little baby.

Friday will be the "Olympics." I am supposed to be the 100 yard dash person for our team. Ahhhhhhh, question here, *Why me for any kind of running event?* Duh, heart attack city waiting to happen.

There are three teams; the rancher families combined as one team, and two different combinations of the other fire teams. My team will be combined as a team with Mike's fire team. Then Roy's fire team combined with Don's fire team for the third. Add in all the kids and spouses and it will be quite a show. Since the Wilders are new, they volunteered to run the events and be the judges. Mike said he was glad to be on our team with me. He figures it will give us an inside track with the Wilders, me being a Mormon too. I didn't say anything to the contrary; I didn't want to spoil his opinion of Mormons. Especially when it comes to sports and

competition. Thank goodness this isn't a church basketball league - "full contact basketball."

And finally, guess what??? Sheila and Doug are officially engaged. Mike says he doesn't want a long engagement and he doesn't want any "surprises." And why the heck have any engagement at all under these circumstances? Mike asked me if I was an "ordained minister" in the LDS church. I said "Ah, yeah." Well, guess who is going to do the ceremony? Yup, me! In New Mexico any ordained clergy can marry people, so since I am *ordained* I get the job. Doesn't matter anyway, there isn't any license involved since there really isn't any county government in operation. Brian Wilder is an Elder but he is new to the group, he wasn't really an option. This is really an honor. We are going to set up one of the extra cabins for them. Well, to be exact, we are going to free up one of the rooms in the cabin that houses the shop. What a great way to start married life - a small room in a work shop!! But at least they are in love, married, and together. What a great day!

But you know, now that I think about it, why does the county government have anything to do with marriage? And why do they issue a marriage license? What gives them any authority to "license" marriage? Weird!

August 3rd (Tuesday) –

9:15 pm –

Today was spent swimming and on a big group picnic. Now, don't get the wrong impression, "swimming" is somewhat subjective. We were in this really large cattle water tank, maybe 25' – 30' across. But the water was clean, it was wet and it was delightful. The temperature was perfect! Yes, this is the desert but it is well water so it wasn't boiling.

I remember seeing pictures of people in Israel years ago, families on a picnic, or out in the fields, etc. and then you would see some men standing around with Uzi's or other guns slung over their shoulders. It would all be very casual but a stark difference. Well, we live like that now. We were all having fun, throwing a football, swimming, eating our food but there was a fire team ready to respond and we all our had our weapons nearby. What a shame.

I think it started after 9/11, we got into this mentality where we were afraid, worried, on-guard, and then we wanted security. We wanted to be

protected. After that we saw our freedoms and rights eroded; we saw “progressives” accelerate their agenda until they pushed the country too far. Now we have this today and all in the name of security.

“He who gives up freedom for security deserves neither.” Which Founding Father said that?

That is where we are now. We have neither freedom, nor security.

One piece of really good news comes in the form of bitter/sweet. The Middle East is quiet, they have stopped fighting. But I guess hundreds of thousands dead in Israel and over a million dead Muslims scattered around different countries quieted them down a bit. They have stopped but we don’t know why. There is very little news coming across the radio as to what is happening over there.

Maybe they ran out of bullets and missiles, or maybe there is no more fuel for their war machines. But at least they have stopped; hopefully they aren’t just regrouping to start it all over again. But they will probably start up again, the military-industrial complex isn’t making any money if no one is fighting.

On a scary note – King Urkel is still quiet, nothing happening police wise and all government business is being run by Executive Order through new powers granted by Congress. But what I find interesting is the sessions of congress are now being held at a location other than the Congressional Building. And on top of that is the WSCGA Congressional Representatives are not being allowed entry. There is a dictatorship for you, big time! Thank you Barry!

Mike did mention that last night there was quite a bit of disruption in the radio traffic. Some freqs were clear with traffic but other freqs were all static. For the most part he says the western radio traffic all sounds similar to our lives. The eastern radio traffic is filled with people, probably militias (or what’s left of them) trying to band together and support each other. And I hope Mike is hearing it right, he thinks my son David is trying to reach us on one of the HF freqs. Mike missed all of the message for the most part but got the call-sign David is supposed to use. Mike will pay better attention to it on the next schedule contact date.

Did I mention that I am grateful that we have taken this week off and we’re just chill’n out?

My arm is worse today. I thought I had taken care of it well enough, but it looks like it is getting worse. Sheila put a couple stitches into it after

cleaning it out. I am using one of those cling wrap bandages so no one is really noticing. Lara is a bit worried but she hasn't seen it since the first night, I keep playing it off. Without the antibiotics I am worried.

August 4th (Wednesday) –

9:30 pm - Volleyball tournament, triple elimination. I think this is a set-up for the younger people to win! Where is that Aleve again????? We got our butts kicked. It was bad, totally humiliating, completely embarrassing, degrading to us as humans. And all of us loved every minute of it. We were all screaming, hollering and the girls squealing with delight. OK, maybe not when the scores were declared at the end of each game. We were too busy making excuses why we were getting beat every time. Mickey just started blaming it on the “old guy” as she was pointing at me! What kind of gratitude is that???? Kids these days!! Go figure!

I think the highlight was when I got so frustrated after having lost every single game during the day up to that point. And then we had to play Roy's team. At one point I tried to stuff a ball at him when we were both at the net. Well, he put it right back at me, in my face, on my nose, and it started bleeding. I was laughing so hard but he was worried, everyone else got quiet. Then I just started whooping like an Indian and ran over and jumped on his back. You know, like a piggyback ride. He starts running around hollering for help to get this mad man off his back. Then Ally comes running into the scene and jumps at us barking and wagging her tail a mile a minute. Needless to say we all ended up in this huge pile with every dog in camp jumping around, barking, and nipping at us and just plain ol' having fun. That was great! We still lost the game, bummer.

It was just so hot we ended up at the swimming hole again in that tank of cool water. The cows hate us coz they get run off but it sure does feel good. OK my attempt at diving didn't come out so well. Can you spell “belly flop?”

One kinda down note, we have noticed that the spring isn't flowing as much water as it had been. We need to do a flow test on it, but that can wait until after our vacation week.

Roy and Tina suggested we have a big bonfire Saturday night after our evening meal. And we would gear it towards expressing gratitude for what we have and our safety. Everyone thinks it is a great idea. Sounds like a testimony meeting to me.

My arm is considerably worse today, more puss. The area around the cut is very sore, very tender and my whole arm aches. It definitely affected me during volleyball today but I didn't say anything.

Mike mentioned that there were more freqs that had severe static last night. And far less radio traffic overall, almost nothing from the east. Nighttime conditions must be going through a bad spell. I hope it clears up soon; without the Ham radio we won't get a lot of information.

August 5 (Thursday) –

10:30 pm - The softball tournament was toady. Texas Shoot-Out (one pitch: ball = walk, strike = out). I am still sore from yesterday's volleyball. Is this a subtle plan to kill-off the old folks?

It actually was mostly just four games of two teams since two teams were all we could realistically put together. We did mix and match the teams up for each game so it wasn't all the same people on the same teams each game. It was a lot of fun. I wish I had felt better but I didn't feel good today due to my arm. Unfortunately, Roy hurt his ankle about half way through the third game. He left for about 20 minutes to put some Aspercreme on it and wrap it up. He is fine; he was back before it really mattered much. He's pretty tough.

Mike did hear last night that all of Europe is under martial law. EU has voted in a single EU leader. They have also combined their militaries. Well, all countries with the exception of Germany. Germany has opted out of the EU for a long list of reasons. With the exception of Germany, their economies are now completely combined as well as a single currency and central bank organization. England was the last holdout but they have joined as well. Evidently the EU Parliament is not much of a governing body any more. I don't know the specifics of how it works. And I don't know the guy that is now the EU "President;" I just know he is from Greece. BBC estimates that over two million have died in Europe since the upheaval started, but no way to tell for sure. The estimate sounds a bit high to me.

Mike has set-up this really cool system where he records all Ham radio traffic that comes across a specific frequency range. He records it to a MP3 player. But he has it hooked up through a VOX system. So it only records when something is actually being said. Unfortunately it also records when the static becomes noticeable as well. So he has it setup

where he records the important stuff during the night and he can still get a little sleep. He needs more sleep.

While we were playing one of the games about mid-afternoon we spotted the plane pretty far off in the distance. It didn't look as if it was coming our way; it circled way off about 3 - 4 miles or so. We would never have seen it but it caught some sunlight and a flash got our attention.

So Mike checked the MP3 player and guess what? There is the static again just as the plane flies over. We know something is up, we just don't know what. And is the plane observing us? And is the static a by-product from the plane? Or is the static some kind of electronic surveillance and the plane is just the messenger? I wouldn't put it past the Sheriff to be keeping an eye on us without telling us. The most disturbing thing is there are no markings on the plane, no tail number, no paint job of note, nothing.

I am exhausted tonight and going to bed, I don't feel well.

August 6 (Friday) –

6 am - More Olympics is on the menu today. And I couldn't be more sore! Ibuprofen and Aleve are my friends. I think I might be running a little fever as well.

Everyone has been enjoying themselves immensely. Lots of laughing, joking, back slapping, and high-fives all around! And we are eating until we are stuffed. Rancher Bill donated an old cow that they turned into hamburger for today's feast. I am glad they have that heavy-duty meat grinder.

9:15 pm - Remember that the Olympics were scheduled for today? Remember all the hype and excitement????? Well, can you spell "practical joke?????"

The first event of the day was strangely enough the 100-yard dash which was my event and they somehow turned it into a 200-yard dash. So there we were, all excited. I was warming up trying to get pumped up since I was feeling so bad. Stretching out my old-guy muscles. I was wondering where the competition was. Trying to figure out who was I running against.

And here comes Jarred, Doug, and Candice Wilder (yes, as in the Wilder mother). Wilders weren't even supposed to be in the games. So here are these two young studs in the prime of their lives and a former star female tennis player lining up against me in the 200-yard dash. Yup, you

bet I was starting to think something was just a little fishy. But nope, I wasn't going to say anything. After all, I am a macho man and ready to do anything to prove it. Dumb!

So Brian Wilder comes up to start the race for us. The 200-yard course is marked with flags at the end and a crude starting line scratched in the dirt. So he starts the countdown; on your mark...get set...go!

OK, real funny ya'll. Real freaking funny!

Jarred ran track in high school, Doug played wide receiver for his high school varsity team and Candice...well, you already know about her. Soooooooo there I was about 10-1/2 yards off the starting line and these three clowns are crossing the finish line. Everyone else is laughing so hard that I think some of them probably needed to change their underwear.

I still ran my heart out like it really somehow mattered. To add insult to injury the three of them came running back to me while I am huffing and puffing towards the finish line. They get to me, turned around and raced back to finish the race for the 2nd time. Yes, far far ahead of me AGAIN! They won twice to my single last place finish.

So it turns out that the whole day was about this one single event, or rather this one single practical joke. I did the required complaining; I showed the proper amount of righteous indignation. And of course I swore revenge on everyone on a biblical scale. I played it up quite well I must say, very dramatic. It was an awesome practical joke! I am proud of them. Now, next time, it can be someone else. And then it will be even funnier.

Mike said the Ham radio reception was all but impossible tonight but he was able to pick up a report that Oklahoma arrested all federal government officials still functioning within their state borders, including federal law enforcement officers. They seized all federal property by state court order of *imminent domain*. Their state legislature, with the full support of their Governor, declared itself a free and sovereign state. The general in charge of the Oklahoma National Guard announced that they have become the state militia and they have all sworn allegiance to their state constitution.

I think the line in the sand has been drawn, civil war is now inevitable. What happens over the next few days will determine the future of America and exactly what state is on which side.

I finally asked Sheila to come over and tend to my arm. She was not happy with me. She cleaned it the best she could but she is going to get Dr. Raymond to come look at it.

August 7 (Saturday) –

1:15 am - I couldn't sleep, or rather I woke up and couldn't get back to sleep. I hadn't made a journal entry for today because I am just plain worn out again. The Doc says it is because of the infection in my arm. Seems that my field dressing was OK, but we hadn't really done a really good cleaning of the wound after I got back. I had rinsed it with BandAid Antiseptic Wash but that wasn't enough. He said I should have had someone do it for me, but most importantly, I should have used topical and oral antibiotics. We dipped into the fish and bird antibiotics for my arm on doctor's orders. Sorry fish.

Yes, the antibiotics for birds and fish. Absolutely nothing wrong with using them on humans. He said I could have gotten by without stitches before, just "butterfly" closures. But now he had to actually cut away a very small amount of "meat" due to the infection and now it definitely needed stitches. Sheila will see me each day to clean it and change the dressing. Lara had offered but Sheila would not have any of that. She said I was her team leader and she would tend to it. They exchanged a little bit of a "glance," not real friendly, but Sheila is young and possessive. Thankfully Lara is very understanding and mature. There is just that combat bond that Sheila and I share; Lara understands that. I'm glad.

10 pm - Today was just a day off, goofing around and picnics, all 3 meals were picnic, even breakfast. Kinda cool actually.

And now to state the obvious - Lindy and Jarred have become a "thing." As if we hadn't seen it the last few days. Those two have been very close and good "pals" all day long. I would imagine it won't be long and those two will be engaged also. It is strange, all this romance stuff. But I read about it during WWII, so why not now? Actually I think it is a good thing. Young people, very tough times, uncertain future; why not get involved? A bright spot on an otherwise bleak landscape! Yup, why not?

Mickey is being a pure joy for us; it is almost scary how good she is being. She is really great, I enjoy her tending to me, I feel very pampered. Well, until she tears into me and scolds me about something. She is as funny as they come. She has a wicked sense of humor to her, kinda beyond

her years really when I think about it. But I enjoy our bantering. But she never goes to bed without thanking me and giving me this huge hug. I can just feel a special a bond and spirit then. And she is still climbing into our bed about every other night. Lara and I have talked about it and we think it is due to her being insecure. That breaks my heart; I still can't imagine what is in her head. Lara is being such a great mom! She has really blossomed in that.

I did find out that the "slumber party" at Mickey's had been going on for several days. Evidently the other girls' parents found out that Mickey's dad had been a sheriff's deputy. The families thought their daughters would be safer with him. At some point something happened to the two girl's families, I am not exactly sure, and I am not pushing it. But I think the families ended up dead or taken. I know that Allison was the only child of a single mother, but that is all I know. At some point we will have to sort that out more but for now we will let it slide. No need to bring up ugly nightmares, they have enough to deal with. And so do we.

Mike reported hearing some traffic about a South American alliance with some dictator in control. They combined their militaries, but there are large numbers of people that have starved or are starving in those countries. How sad. South America has so much agricultural capability; no one should go hungry there. But you know, honestly, I don't care a single bit what is happening down there. We have so much to worry about here in our own country that I just don't care. I probably should.

I wonder if we, as a country, had cared a little less about policing the rest of the world, and we had just spent more time on "us," would we be better off now than we are?

We do have an issue with the spring fed water supply, it is dwindling. It is going to be the first priority item come Monday morning. Seems there is always something.

August 8 (Sunday) –

7 pm - Our church meeting was incredible this morning! There was such a spirit that it is very hard to describe. I think having this week where we could rest and rehabilitate ourselves physically, mentally, and spiritually really made a big difference.

Our meetings have developed a pattern or routine now. We have a song, prayer, short talk by someone young, a slightly longer talk by

someone older, a song, testimony sharing, song and prayer. The whole thing usually takes less than 30 – 45 minutes.

Wilders and we then do a very short meeting afterwards where we take the sacrament. We have talked about doing that as part of the group meeting. We couldn't think of a reason not to. "Pre-collapse" if a non-member was in a sacrament meeting and partook of the sacrament no one would try and stop them. We just don't know, but we will pray about it. What we really don't want to create is an "us vs. them" mentality. And why pray about something so simple when we already know the right answer?

Well, I did my first wedding in New Mexico; Sheila and Doug are now married. There is no marriage license since the county offices aren't open but we will catch that paperwork up at some point in the future. But they are married and that is what counts. Actually, when you think about it, why should the government be involved in a marriage at all? And who gave them the power to issue a "license?" Isn't marriage supposed to be between two people in the sight of God? So please tell me why government gets involved in that. Or better yet, why not get government out of the licensing of marriages?

We did a small reception. OK, OK, it was just part of the regular evening meal we always have but with a cake for dessert. A cake with REAL frosting. It was awesome!!!! It was well worth them getting married just to enjoy a real cake. Now, if it just could have been chocolate!!

Note to self: Next time we prepare for the melt down of the known world...STORE MORE CHOCOLATE!!!! In any form, any kind, every kind, JUST STORE MORE CHOCOLATE!!!! Yes, I like chocolate, duh! I am a "chocoholic."

Those two newlyweds act so in love, the look in their eyes was more than worth it. We all joked about all chipping in for a honeymoon for them. We thought an all-expense paid trip to the Caribbean and a cruise was fine with us. But one condition, they have to find their own ride to the airport. Everyone laughed; it was a very nice time.

It was cool to see how everyone handled the "wedding gift" part. I gave Doug my extra Sig 229 with five magazines and 250 rounds of .40 caliber ammo. Lara gave them a significant amount of food storage, probably about 2 – 3 months' worth. They also got tools, more food,

camping gear, clothes, etc. from other families. And that extra diesel truck from Hadley now belongs to Doug and Sheila. But the best thing they got was the spare room in the shop. I bet there is a new addition to our group in about 9 months.

On a really down note, the White House has threatened to invade Oklahoma. They say that the state is in open rebellion and is subject to “invasion” to reclaim the sovereignty of the union. I believe there will be open war within the month, if not sooner.

What I don't understand is the Asian rim countries. They don't seem to be suffering at all, not a single bit. No strife, no war, they aren't even hungry from what little we are hearing. Their governments seem to be stable and actually the cooperation among the Asian countries is at an all-time high. They seem to all be on the same page. And that might be good for them but I am not sure it is a good thing for us as a country. But that is just my opinion for what it's worth, and I am paranoid most days now. Or at the very least I am more cynical.

I love ending the day on a high note; Mickey is really enjoying reading and studying the scriptures with us. Candice Wilder has also taken an interest in her and is sharing some Young Women church stuff with Mickey as well. When we pray and bless the food Mickey is not just joining us but she is also saying the blessing about 1/3 of the time. The other night when we were having our evening prayers she asked for God to bless her mom and sister “wherever they are” and to “tell my dad I said hi.” I had tears in my eyes by the time she was done. Then she got up and hugged me again, I thought she would never stop. She hugged Lara and kissed her on the cheek. Then she and big ol' Max trotted off to bed.

Ally loves that Mickey is with us; she now gets most of our attention now vs. sharing us with Max. And she loves that, for a pit bull, she is a big mushy dog.

August 9 (Monday) –

6:00 am - Well, it is back to work we go! There are things to do, stuff to review, and plans to formulate. The first thing on our list is the spring-fed water supply. Then Mike and I will inspect the entire camp layout for potential defense and security improvements. We all feel that one day we will have to defend this area, we can only stay hidden for so

long. Sooner or later someone is going to find us and we don't think it will be the good guys.

Mike thought he heard some radio traffic from the Alabama group. He thinks but he is not sure. Which would surprise me, we thought they were staying put or going a different route. Mike swears it was them but their signal was very weak. We are concerned; we really didn't want to get into an argument with them because they just weren't listening. I am sure they are decent people, just stressed out with little preparedness or survival experience. I hope nothing has happened to them. I just don't think we can help them.

9:15 pm - Texas has declared its intention to secede from the union as per their original statehood agreement with the United States. They said it was their right and they were going to exercise it if Washington didn't immediately stop what they were doing. No word from the White House but Urkel will never stop this madness. His ego won't let him.

There is this rampant rumor on the Ham radio that the military is all but fed up with BumbleBarry. Unofficially, they are being very vocal about their opposition to his administration. They are not talking about an overthrow or anything. But if what we are hearing is true then they are making it very clear to the White House that they will not lift a single finger to assist him in any action whatsoever against American citizens.

It is also being said over the radio that military leadership feels that the National Guard units becoming state militias is a state matter. They say that they quit supervising or controlling the National Guard units when they went under state control. Therefore the National Guard units are not subject to federal military authority.

WOW! Talk about a huge blow to King Barry! He must be spitting nails right about now. But not a single word coming from the White House, not a peep. I am not sure if that is good or bad. I am betting "bad."

We have problems with the spring. The reason we have such a low water flow is due to the fact that the spring is drying up; there just isn't enough water coming out of the spring. We are going to talk to Rancher Bill about tapping back into the well. That will mean using a generator to power the pump. Probably run it long enough to fill up a tank somewhere, then shut down the generator and pump. Then we use the water from the tank, filling it back up once it gets low. All our water will have to be filtered and purified at some point. We have plenty of Monolithic Ceramic

water filters on hand so we aren't worried about that part. Not going to be an easy thing no matter what.

We do have a couple weaknesses in our security that Mike and I saw. The main one is the approach opposite of the ranch house area. It is a long approach but someone could come in really close before we ever knew it. Then they would be right at our door step resulting in a close-in ugly fight. We are going to look at options to better protect that approach. Mike and I didn't get our entire inspection done but most of it. We'll finish it tomorrow. We are going to ask John Wayne to look us over as well.

Weird piece of information on the Ham radio today, for several years before the collapse the President was releasing a few of the Muslim prisoners from Gitmo. Evidently it was way more than a "few" and they were some bad characters that he let go. Word is starting to pop up that that some of those Muslim terrorists are being seen in the US; specifically around the Detroit area. What the heck is that all about?

Also, Oklahoma has joined the Western Governors organization. Kinda weird, they also declared they weren't a state any more. I don't understand that move or what it actually means.

Well, you can certainly tell that our vacation is over! That's too bad; it was really enjoyable for the whole week. This would be a nice way to live if there wasn't the constant threat of bad guys, and it wasn't the end of the world.

August 10 (Tuesday) –

8:00 am - A little late this morning but we had to hold a meeting based on the radio traffic from last night. Mike picked up the Alabama group on the radio last night. It was very weak; they say they are using a handheld from a vehicle vs. a standard mobile Ham unit. I guess that makes their transmissions weaker due to less power along with maybe a smaller or shorter antenna. Transmitting on a handheld from inside a vehicle without an external antenna doesn't work so well.

The word is they tried several ways to cross Texas and each proved to be really bad, then worse, and then horrible. They decided to head our way since no one else is left to help them even though we told them not to come this way. Evidently they have been ambushed at least once and their overnight camps attacked a couple times. They had taken plenty of injuries

and several fatalities. They are now begging for our help. Dang it! What else can we do?

They are somewhere northeast of El Paso; they think near Odessa, TX. That would put them in the middle of nowhere but right in the line of drug smugglers coming out of Juarez, a corridor for the cartels as they head north towards the Dallas area. Not a good place to be, right in the line of fire.

In the meeting we were holding John Wayne said he will go investigate and try to make contact with them. He says he will go alone and try to bring them close enough for a couple of fire teams to meet up with them. But he doesn't want a whole team to go; he says he can do much better on his own. I believe him. All that long range marine recon training makes him a pretty bad dude and very competent at this kind of thing. He figures it will take him up to three days to get there. He will figure out a plan on the way or after he meets up with them based on what he finds. Who knows how long it would take for him to return here with their group. I would not want that job. I simply couldn't do it. He says he will leave after dark tonight.

Mike is reporting again that he is getting no radio traffic of any kind from Russia. We use to on occasion, but nothing now. We have no idea if that is due to our radio not working right, the conditions at night not being right, or whatever the problem might be. But not a single word from Russia. Tells me that we sure could have used a whole lot more training on Ham radios before all this happened. We are almost, but not quite, clueless. That is a very, very bad feeling to have. I don't know what we are going to do if we have a serious problem with the radio or if we need to do something special with them. We don't even have a single decent all-purpose book about Ham radio operations. We sure blew this part of prepping!

And the daily update from the White House, finally. They have declared Oklahoma and Texas to be in rebellion. Duh!! They say that this is now treason and all the leadership of both states are subject to arrest and trial. They reminded everyone that the penalty for treason is death. Yeah, that sure makes a good impression. It sounds like BumbleBarry is acting out; throwing a temper tantrum like a spoiled little petulant 4-year old. But he is a very dangerous 4-year old.

Every state west of the Mississippi has joined the Western States Conservative Governors Association (WSCGA) with the exception of Oregon, Washington, and California. There is a rumor on the radio tonight that there are more states ready to join Texas and Oklahoma in leaving the Union. But there have also been some riots in western states from protestors objecting to the states taking a stand against King Urkel. They say that we should be more supportive of his agenda and it will be best for the country in the long run. Some of the riots have gotten pretty out of hand. Like the Tories during the American Revolution, they support their King vs. their freedom and liberty. Well, I sure don't support anything this despot is doing. I am ready for us to create a separate country if we can't throw BumbleBarry out of office. I am sick of playing around, let's get it on and get it over with.

Mike and I finished our inspection today. That approach is definitely our weak link and it worries us. We have to make a plan to some way protect it better. And there is one other issue, something that Roy is going to follow-up on. While we were out we both felt like we were being watched, we kept looking around and trying to figure it out. We never saw anyone or any tell-tale signs but Roy is going to check it out. The last thing we need is someone scouting us.

August 11 (Wednesday) –

12 noon - We are paralyzed this morning. In shock is about all I can say. Mike started hearing about it last night while he was monitoring the Ham radio. There are serious gunfights going on between militias and law enforcement back east. Actually, from what we are hearing it is mostly the National Police Force (NPF) but some local law enforcement agencies well. And the word is it's mostly a slaughter in NC, VA, OH and MI. The NPF is raiding all these groups' locations and going in guns blazing, MWRAP, Humvees, Stryker vehicles, helicopters, SWAT teams, armed drones; the whole nine yards.

I always knew that one day all the excess military equipment given to the police departments would be turned on the civilian population. It was obvious what they were doing. The warning signs were there, folks were yelling out about it. But all the politicians and LEOs said that there was nothing to see here, nothing to worry about, just move along. Yeah, yet another spoon-fed lie from those wanting more and more power. But

“power” is a finite item; for one group to get it, another has to lose it. The American people have been “losing it” to the police state for a very long time.

If what we are hearing is actually true, there are not any offers of surrender, no search warrants, nothing. Just the NPF along with local law enforcement agencies are wreaking havoc on these militia groups. The militia members are given no chance to even surrender. We have been plastered to the radio since we got up, most of the group anyways. Scattered reports keep coming in but the reception is horrible, way more static than normal according to Mike. But the radio operators have worked out this scheme where they change to different freqs regularly to see if the new freq is any clearer. It seems to work for a while on the new freq then it gets bad static on that freq as well.

We are talking about how this might affect us here and when it will befall us. This is becoming all too real to us that we might end up in the same boat as all those poor folks back east.

I wish those groups of people that are being slaughtered by their own government would have been able to make it out here to the west. They might have had a better chance and our numbers would have been greater. Back east the area is so small compared to here, there is just no place for them to hide.

August 12 (Thursday) –

7 am - We have to be hearing this wrong. The radio lit up overnight that ISIS (Islamic State) has been seen in the Muslim communities around Detroit and Minneapolis. We’ve been hearing for some time now that Muslims have been trying to set up a Muslim country in those areas with only Muslims living there. But ISIS? Word is the rioting is pretty severe and a whole lot of non-Muslims getting killed. I wonder if that has anything to do with the reports we heard not long ago about the Gitmo prisoners that were released had been also seen in those areas as well. Why would the President let out really dangerous Islamic terrorists from Gitmo to begin with? What is the benefit or the advantage to doing that? He treated Israel like crap for all those years but yet bowed and kissed the ring of King Abdulla, a Muslim king. What’s going on?

3:15 pm - No word from John Wayne last night, he didn’t check in by radio as he was supposed to. I am not worried about him, this guy is a

snake eater of the highest level, he can take care of himself. And if needed we can and will take care of his family no matter what.

More bad news - militias in FL, WV, PA, and IN are getting pounded. The militia slaughter that started yesterday is all but complete, almost all are casualties or in custody. And “in custody” now means *special camps* for these folks, not your normal prison facilities. Sounds as if the camps are run by AmeriCorp under FEMA control. Not sure though. It is really kinda horrifying to see what is happening. How in the heck can we have fallen so far so fast? I mean just seven months to get to this point!!

Radio rumor has it that Montana and Idaho will announce that they are also joining with Oklahoma and Texas in seceding. My guess is that shots will soon be fired. We can never put that genie back in the bottle once it starts.

My arm hurts like crazy; the wound/scar is drying and pulling the skin tight at the stitches. Sheila shows no mercy when she comes in to clean it. It makes Mickey and Lara laugh. OK, more like giggle. Mickey tells me to quit whining. I bet a little moisturizer might help with the drying and resulting irritation and pain. I’ll ask.

Things are confusing right now. We have this great group of people, although not without the little daily problems. We have a pretty decent little village out here that is basically self-sustaining if you consider we still have a very decent supply of fuel. So this part of life is pretty dang nice right now.

Then there is the other side of it. We have bad guys roaming all around ready to steal, kill, and rape. Society has lost its morals, its bearing, and its sanity as a whole. We have this group La Rasa that is just flat out crazy; they want to take south Texas, all of New Mexico, and Arizona and make some Hispanic paradise out of it. And they’re actually doing it. Then there are a number of gangs that just want money and power as they spread their version of evil. And lastly, but not inconsequently, we have the country on the verge of civil war. Or maybe better put, American Revolution II.

So you wake up each day worried about personal security, the security of the entire group but then you enjoy the immediate daily life that surrounds us. It is difficult for the mind to process it all. And I am struggling with that, as well as the taking of life that I have done lately. I

am on emotional and mental overload; a roller-coaster. If it were not for Lara and Mickey I would be completely lost, insane or dead.

August 13 (Friday) –

6:15 am - More word over the Ham last night about the rioting in Detroit and Minneapolis. CAIR has declared Detroit a “Christian-free zone” and warning any remaining Christians to leave or they will be crucified. Word has it that there are thousands of people dead, mostly Christians, many beheaded.

There was no word from John Wayne again last night. Now we are worried. Even as good as he is there should have been some kind of radio contact by now. It was a heavy lift mission, should have taken some time; but by now he should have made contact somehow, someway.

As if we didn’t have enough to worry about - Roy found another single set of tracks outside of our cabin area (outside the wire). He found them just below the ridge line to the southeast. We’re being watched by someone for some reason. Not knowing we were being watched is the most worrisome. No, actually, that is not true. Roy finding the watcher’s spot just below the ridge line in a good “hide” is even more worrisome. The fact that he knew enough not to skyline himself and hide just below a ridge indicates that he knows what he is doing. We have got to keep on our toes. We are increasing our Alert Level.

The spring has all but dried up. There is nothing more than a trickle; maybe a couple of gallons a day and the water has an odor to it also. We are bringing the ranchers well online with one of our generators. We are going to move an unused plastic tank from the barn area and move it up higher on the side of the hill. That way we can pump into the tank maybe once per day and then let gravity feed the water from there.

What is interesting is the number of people we have to provide water for. AMAZING! We don’t actually have an official list or total count of the people in our group. We never thought of it before; that seems strange to me that we never counted everyone or made a list. It was never a topic of discussion. Weird!

A 250-gallon tank of water should last several days or more if we are only using several gallons of water per person per day; which is generous, for drinking and everything. If we had to reduce water consumption to just survival mode we would be looking at one gallon per person per day. If we

had to we could get by on half a gallon per person per day but that would be physically depleting to a person. About 10 days of that and we would start seeing health problems. After several weeks people would be getting really sick or maybe dying. We have to maintain a water supply, without it we are dead.

Mickey said the bedtime prayer tonight for the “family,” which is how she referred to us. I have mixed emotions on that.

August 14 (Saturday) –

Still no word from John Wayne. Everyone is very worried; strangely his wife isn't. She says he will be OK and he can take care of himself. Now, is that confidence or wishful thinking?

We have started a discussion of a search and rescue operation (SAR). But Don brought up a really good point, *Where would we go to search?* That is a very good point; we have no idea where he is. How did that happen?

Roy's team has been out beyond the wire every day now and no luck finding the watcher. They are finding some tracks but they appear to be random. Is the watcher doing that to throw us off or is he covering his tracks that well? Either way it is a problem that will have to be dealt with at some point. Sooner or later whoever he is working for is going to do something, then what?

My arm is doing much better. The moisturizer is really helping; Palmers Coco Butter is the miracle drug of the week as far as I am concerned. Actually, having a good supply of skin moisturizer on-hand for the end of the world is not a bad idea. The first line of defense that the body has is skin. And the healthier your skin is the more likely it will keep out germs, viruses, bacteria, etc. Moisturizer can help a whole lot with this issue. And I love the way Palmers Coco Butter smells.

Several people in the group have developed the “runs,” more medically described as diarrhea. The people who have it are not in the same family or on the same fire team. We also don't think it is anything from the group evening meal. Thankfully there is plenty of Pepto Bismol to go around!

Wilders boy, the 14-year old (Justin) broke his leg on one of the dirt bikes that we took from the cattle rustler guys. Dr. Raymond says the break isn't bad. Doc set it and then used chicken wire for a splint since we

don't have anything for a real cast. And he wants to be able to look at it each day to see how it is healing. In normal times Dr. Raymond said Justin would have gotten pins in his leg. But he assured everyone that there would be no long term or lasting negative effects. Yeah, no long-term affects if a 14-year old can stay alive in this day and age.

So why did civilization start using pins if good ol' nature could handle it?

The Ham radio is really having problems; the static is really bad. But it is not on all the freqs all the time. Just the freqs that get busy seem to get the most static; after a while they become unusable. But the word we are getting is not good from around the west. Montana and Idaho have joined Oklahoma and Texas in leaving the union. The pot is boiling.

But I guess it could be looked at as good, depending on your point of view or the side you are on. But what I keep thinking about is the end-state. What is this whole mess going to look like when it is over? And don't doubt for a minute that it won't be over at some point. And what happens between now and then? Just how bad does it get and what price is paid?

Too many questions, it makes my head hurt.

Mickey didn't climb in bed with us last night, first time. Lara and I enjoyed the extra room and the lack of disturbance in the middle of the night.

August 15 (Sunday) –

10 am - Short church services today, nothing noteworthy. Still no word from John Wayne, nothing, not a single word of any kind over the radio. The SAR has been organized, they leave after dark, Mike's team is going. They are going to head north of Cruces and then head east passing north of El Paso. Once passed El Paso then they will turn south to where the last "guessed" position of the Alabama group was. Don's fire team will accompany Mike's team to a drop point east and north of Ore Grande and hold up there. There is a really steep and rugged canyon that is invisible from the air in one spot due to an overhang. One way in and one way out gives them the ability to defend it, although impossible to escape. But they are looking more for "hide" factor than anything else. Ultimately, it's their choice. They will stand-by there to assist Mike's team if needed.

They will leave the wire just before dark and try for Ore Grande tonight under cover of darkness. Mike thinks if they are lucky they might even get east of El Paso. I don't like any plan that depends on "lucky" as part of the plan. Luck is not a plan!

It actually might be a good thing that they are leaving, that will give us a couple of fire teams outside our wire in case we get hit by the watcher's group. Whoever they are is still unknown. Well, the fire teams would only be helpful if they could get back to us in time. At least the whole group won't be in the same place at the same time if we are hit. We can't all be taken out at once if we aren't in the same place at the same time.

Roy's team did find more tracks. Tracks made by two people traveling together moving around our perimeter. Based on how they approached and where they were hidden we're sure we are being scouted. We have a couple plans on how to deal with any potential attack on us. But we had wanted to run those plans past John Wayne for his input and ideas. I mean he is the SpecOps guy and he can find any flaws in our plans pretty easily. We think we have it covered but we are amateurs at this compared to him. I would rather he find the problems with our plans than any bad guys.

Whatever is giving us the runs is getting worse; about 1/3 of group has the runs now. Thankfully I am not one of them, neither is Lara or Mickey. No fevers with it, no other symptoms, just the runs, and they are plenty bad enough from what they are telling us.

It is almost comical; a couple people want to get rid of the dirt bikes. Yup, they want us to take them somewhere and just dump them. They think we shouldn't have them around. Something to do with the dirt bikes belonged to the guys we killed. Bad "juju" or something I guess.

Mike said the Ham radio was all but unusable last night; the static has gotten to the point where it is almost too much work even trying to use it. But it is our only solid information line to the outside. AM radio is almost worthless; the only news coming over AM is very pro-Urkel crap. FM is only playing music now, nothing else. What Mike did manage to pick out was Wyoming joined up with the other states that are opposing King Urkel and that they seceded too. If he heard it right they are referring to themselves as the Patriot's States for the Constitution. Sounds like too much of a mouthful to me.

Mickey was crying in her sleep last night. Ally woke me up whimpering. I went into Mickey's room. You know that kid can look so small, so vulnerable. She was crying, Max was laying there with his big ol' head just staring at her and shifting his eyes back and forth from me to Mickey. It was like he was saying, "She is hurting, please make her feel better." I could tell he was upset. All I could do was stand there for a minute to see if she would stop, hoping like heck she would, but she didn't.

I sat on the edge of her bed and stroked her hair lightly for a minute; she started to move around like she was waking up. Then she woke up with this really weird scream-like noise. It wasn't real loud, almost stifled, like she was screaming during a nightmare or something. When she woke up enough to realize what was going on she literally jumped into my arms and started bawling her eyes out. Huge heaving sobs, it broke my heart. I held her rocking her for almost 10 minutes while she continued to cry.

By then Max was sitting up watching us real intently. Ally was sitting by the door watching and Lara had come in as well. When Mickey calmed down enough we had a prayer together. After the prayer was over she said she thinks her mom is with her dad and she wishes her sister was with them too. She looked kind of guilty saying that last part but I think I know what she was getting at. I told her it was OK, that God would welcome everyone into his arms and they would enjoy peace and love. I had just told her that her parents were dead. But I think she already knows that.

She didn't want to come sleep in our bed. Max climbed up next to her and she snuggled him. I sat there in the corner chair until she fell asleep. I sure do love that little girl; my heart hurts so much for her. If anything would ever happen to her I don't know what I would do. She means a lot to me, she sure does, that little *almost* 12-year old girl.

Life sure isn't fair sometimes, it sure isn't. Sometimes it just plain sucks.

August 16 (Monday) –

Mike's group, along with Don's group, made it outside the wire last night and they are back already. Actually they made it back by 11 pm, with John Wayne. Evidently John was holding up about four miles from here until it got dark. He didn't want to come into the ranch while it was still light for fear of being followed. That would be showing the way to our camp if someone had been watching.

What the amazing thing is the fact he came back injured, badly injured. He found the Alabama group. But on the way back he was holed up sleeping during the day. He was only traveling at night to avoid detection. Well, he evidently is a pretty sound sleeper. He said he woke up to the sound of a dog growling about 10' away from him, then two dogs, then three; all pit bulls. As he was getting his knife out to deal with the dogs the first bullet tore into his leg.

He didn't give us all the details but evidently the group that jumped him was La Rasa. They are patrolling all over the place around El Paso looking for ranchers and other people who live out in the boondocks; but only white people. John said earlier he had found some ranches that looked they had been converted into communes, but not like ours. He is thinking that La Rasa finds a ranch that is occupied by whites, or at least non-Hispanics, and they kill whoever is there. They take over the ranch and turn the ranch into some La Rasa commune.

How did this group La Rasa fly under the radar for so long before the collapse? I mean they have been around and known for their hate of white people. And I mean serious racism stuff! This group is a radical bunch of very violent people who have very racist ideology. The extreme violence aspect of La Raza seemed to have been invisible to everyone.

So John took a bullet to the leg, and a fairly minor wound to the arm, and a really nasty looking dog bite to his left forearm. Seems one of the pit bulls charged him right after the bullet hit him, and he put up his left arm for the dog to bite while he knifed the dog with his right. He slit the dogs throat by the sounds of it. After sharing that he just kinda got quiet and didn't want to talk about the rest of it. Fine by me.

I asked him if they had followed him after the encounter. He said "no, not possible." I took that to mean exactly what it meant, they were dead, all of them, probably the dogs too. Too bad, I like dogs.

The really sad part came when he told us about finding the Alabama group. They were northeast of El Paso in a canyon bottom; evidently they had been camping there waiting for the right time to come through El Paso with help from us maybe. He said it had been a good sized group, maybe 100 or so, about 20 - 30 families he thinks, he's not sure.

He said they had been attacked 2 or 3 days before he had gotten there. The bodies were still laying there on the ground; the birds and coyotes had worked them over pretty well and the heat had made them bloat and stink

badly. He said he was able to follow the smell for the last mile to their location. Before he picked up the smell he had followed the birds circling overhead.

What he noticed was there were no bodies of males under 12, or women under 40 as best he could tell. The adult male bodies that were there had their left hands cut off at the wrist. All of them had been savagely beaten and shot multiple times. He thinks they had been shot to cause disabling injury, then beaten, then their hand cut off. After all that then they had been shot close range multiple times to make sure they were dead. He thought a couple had been burned alive.

Later when no one else was around he mentioned to Mike and I that the bodies of the babies and toddlers were there as well. He didn't want to mention it around the women. He said all the bodies had been abused, abused very badly. The look in Mike's eyes scared me as we were listening. Seriously, it actually scared me at the time. I think Mike would have gone on a rampage right then if he had someone to take it out on.

John was really worried about how they appeared to have died. He said when he was in Africa on an operation he had seen this happen. Turns out that the male children over eight were made to watch the attackers beat the adults and then the children were made to shoot the adults to kill them. It was part of their indoctrination to crush their spirit, dull their senses and make them child soldiers; all under the age of 12.

We all knew why the women and girls were taken but nobody wanted to state the obvious. We just don't talk about it anymore.

Earlier in the day Roy found more tracks, nothing around the original hide. We think they are going to different spots each night to scout us. That indicates that these guys may have some serious training, and that is not good for us. What I thought was even more worrisome was Sheila was convinced she saw a person last night with the night vision from OP1. She said it was a long way off and she couldn't verify it 100% so I didn't get the reserve fire team up to go investigate. I should have. I hope I don't regret it.

We are talking about laying a trap to catch these guys. We aren't sure how to do it but we are thinking about catching whoever these guys are. We have a couple ideas, not sure which idea we will eventually use or maybe we will come up with some hybrid idea.

Funny thing is it was Don who brought up the question of what will we do if we catch them. No one had really thought about that part, we had just talked about catching them. He brings up a really good question, *What will we do with them?*

My arm is way better, it is healing very well. The scar will be there forever but I think the stitches are ready to come out. And the scar just makes me look tough, badder, more battle ready. Yeah, uh huh. I am such a nut case!

Now the really bad news, almost everyone in the group has the runs to one degree or another. And we are getting low on Pepto Bismol. That pink stuff has kept us operational but if we run out of it we are in a world of... ah...you know you thought I would say it but I fooled you! We would be in a world of hurt. Dr. Raymond says he has some stuff (Bismusal) that is pretty much the same as Pepto but just in veterinarian quantity. He has a couple gallons of it; they use it on calves that get the scours. But I am more worried about why we have diarrhea in the first place and how we are going to get rid of it.

Wilders have a new project that they asked to do. They are proposing to strip the dirt bikes down to their frames. They will clean and fix anything that is wrong, then dull the chrome, paint everything in a camo pattern, and then reassemble the bikes. I think it is a good idea; it will renew the bikes and hopefully break the “bad juju” associated with them. Plus, I think he felt guilty that it was his boy who took the bike and got hurt. I think they also needed more to do during the day to keep them busy.

Mike did get a message from David in Florida. It had come through multiple relays but at least it got to us. They are in bad shape, lots of fighting. Things aren't going well for them. I didn't have too much to say. I told him to get his group here if he could and to be writing in his journal. I hope he can just stay alive. He did mention that his “girlfriend” is now more than that. He didn't say exactly what that was. He likes playing those games like I do. Sounds like he still has some sense of humor left. We are going to communicate a bit more. I like that idea.

Mike said it almost wasn't worth listening to the Ham radio anymore, says it is almost all static all the time. He was able to pick up the news that Arizona and New Mexico joined in with the other states. It appears this State Patriot movement is growing and getting some serious energy behind it.

What bothers me is this stuff is going on at the state political level but I am not sure how much the state citizens are getting involved. We don't have any interaction with Santa Fe. But who does? Not that I am objecting to what they are doing but we just seem so removed from the decisions and the action. That's all I am saying.

Mickey was crying again last night; pretty much a repeat of last night. I spent about an hour with her until she fell back asleep. She has stopped sleeping in our bed. Mickey says the only thing that calms her down at night is our prayers together and me sitting with her. Well, that and big Max cuddling with her. She says after a prayer she relaxes and in her mind she sees this "old guy with a beard with a beautiful face" in a long robe with his hands reaching out to her, palms up. Says it makes her feel peaceful and then she can go back to sleep.

She had the same dream about her family again. It just breaks my heart to hear her cry so much. I can't even imagine what she feels like inside or what she thinks about when she is alone or having her nightmares. It's just not fair to a little kid! Why would people be that evil to give little kids such nightmares?

August 17 (Tuesday) –

6:20 am - Had a short meeting with Mike over a cup of hot chocolate. Actually the hot chocolate tasted pretty good even though it is summer. We still have enough chocolate for such luxuries, kinda nice. We have several cases of Thrive Chocolate Brownie mix in storage as well. Gotta love it! Anyways, Mike was telling me that Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) has declared the great-Detroit area a Muslim "nation" for Muslims only. They are calling the "Islamic State in America," or ISIA for short. They say they no longer recognize rule by the US government and all Christians have 72-hours to flee, convert to Islam, pay a 90% tax or face death. And the White House is absolutely silent about it. Not a peep coming out of them. There is a pattern here with this President, and it is not good. But plain as day for anyone willing to pay attention.

9 am - The trap didn't result in anything last night. Roy had scattered his team around thinking that they might surprise the watchers and catch them. I wasn't thrilled with the idea and told him so, but he went ahead anyways. Today I am going to suggest something a little different. I

remember watching movies were they tied a goat or sheep to a tree and waited for the lion to show up. Hopefully they shot or captured the lion before the lion got to the tied up animal and ate it. I think that idea would work in this case as well with slightly different bait of course.

If someone was going for a midnight swim in the cattle water tank we use for a swimming pool that might be a good attraction for the bad guys to go after. They wouldn't want to just shoot the person from a distance because I think they would want the intel or something else that person might have. The tank is far enough from camp that they would feel comfortable approaching it without having to deal with all of us back here. Additionally, we will let whoever goes to the tank use the Polaris so it is real obvious what is going on. And if the bait is attractive as well, then the set-up might work doubly as well.

There are 2 or 3 low spots around the water tank that if we can do about 15 minutes of work on we can dig in a little and be fairly close to the tank. Then we post an overwatch with NV. While there is not a full moon, there is about 2/3 of one so there should be enough light for the NV to work really well. I think my plan will work but I will see what others have to say first.

So for the fun part, fun for Sheila and Mickey, I got my stitches out early this morning. My arm feels really good but I am going to have this mammoth battle scar, awesome! But no reason to be telling anyone that I got it from an 11-year old girl.

So who had the fun again? Oh yeah, that would be Sheila and Mickey. Sheila asked Dr. Raymond if she could take the stitches out. Of course he said "yes." She is more than qualified and competent to do so. But at my expense! Not that I am a wimp or anything but dang gone it! I think she went out of her way to pull them out the wrong way (the knot pulling through the skin) just to enjoy my pain, suffering, and complaining. Which I might add I did a very good job of the complaining part.

So why did Mickey enjoy it? Well, about halfway through this non-delicate operation Mickey asks Sheila if she could take out one of the stitches. Of course Sheila said "yes!" So before I could do anything other than show shock on my face Mickey starts with this "please please please" on me. So guess what my answer was? Yup, you're right on the money. Like I am going to say no. So she starts in on me and takes out the rest of them. She actually did a very good job but I played it up with whining and

wincing; they loved every minute of it. So did I, actually. Those girls kill me when they get together. Besides, Mickey got some good medical experience in.

The funny part is, once she started taking the stitches out she didn't say much until the very end. Then she looked at me with this angelic smile. "Maybe next time you won't sneak up on me." Up to that point I had completely forgotten the fact she is the one that had stabbed me with the knife in the first place. But she hadn't forgotten. She is such an imp at times!

10 pm - There is a very good note to include tonight, we figured out that the plumbing is what's making us sick; or I should say the tank and plumbing. It is ridiculous that it took us this long for any of us to figure it out. Actually, it was Rancher Bill's wife that figured it out. She told us to drain almost all of the water out of the storage tank, put a couple gallons of bleach in it and then scrub it down and let it sit for a couple of hours. Then we should flush all the plumbing with the bleach solution. Once that was done we should flush with clean water. Then flush the system once more time with a diluted bleach solution. We're thinking it will work, it all makes sense in retrospect.

Mike is a real trooper; he keeps listening to the Ham radio. He gets about three minutes of news each night from about three hours of listening. He is getting frustrated due to the static and may end up just turning it off altogether at some point.

But what he did hear last night was interesting - North and South Dakota have become the latest Patriot States. The numbers keep growing but nothing from the White House, at least nothing that we know about.

And he also heard that there is now an oil embargo by the Middle East against the US. I don't know how much difference that will make because there is really no oil coming from them and being delivered to us that I know about anyways. And even if there was I don't think there are many refineries open in the US right now that is making fuel. Well, maybe for the military and federal government use, but that is it. I will ask Mike to try and find out if there are gasoline supplies back east where the Feds control everything. That is if Mike is going to keep listening.

August 18 (Wednesday) –

Whoa, what a night, our trap caught two “spies.” We are calling them spies because it gives us more moral flexibility on how we treat them. Remember during times of war you are allowed to execute spies.

They aren’t talking right now and we don’t have a clue who they are associated with. They had no identification on them of any kind and they won’t give us any response to any question. Well, that is not entirely true. One of them did call us “stupid” when we asked him how they found out about us. He said they didn’t have any idea that we were there until they saw the glow from our big bonfire awhile back. I think he would have said more but his partner told him to shut up, and he did.

Note to self: Next time we take prisoners we need to separate them immediately. It would make it easier to question them.

We are in a bit of a moral dilemma. They know a whole lot because they have been watching us. So that gives them superior operational intelligence. They also know the terrain pretty well. So they have that advantage at the moment as well. Those are two pretty powerful pluses for them, or I should say for their group, gang or whatever they are. The only thing we have going for us is that we have these two spies.

A couple of the group members want to question them “as needed.” They want to do whatever is required to get information from them, whatever it takes, and I mean *whatever* it takes. I am somewhere in the middle. I am opposed to just hurting someone to make them talk. At the same time, if they had taken Lara or Mickey and these guys knew where either of those two girls were, I would do anything, and I mean anything to get that information. So now what?

I want to relate just a little bit about the trap and give Mary some credit here. But it also points out a problem that Mary might be suffering from. And how unstable she might become if that problem isn’t resolved, or at least addressed. She volunteered to be the one to “sneak out” to the tank for a swim last night. Yes, she was the *bait*. No one really objected to her volunteering but since she is Roy’s daughter it was decided that it would not be his fire team to spring the trap. But he did ask for my team to go if he couldn’t. I was alright with that, but what a huge responsibility that is.

We got out there while it was still light figuring that the bad guys wouldn’t come close until dark anyways. We dug out some shallow spots

nearby the tank in a couple of areas that were already naturally low from the cattle. We were in our *wannabe* ghillie suits and pulled some brush on top of us as well. We did maintain the ability to see but we had to take different “fields” of vision (also fields of fire) to ensure we could watch the whole area. I asked for Don to act as overwatch to supplement our normal fire team members. I asked for Don because he is such an awesome long-distance shooter. I also didn’t want to tie up anyone from my team since there would be two of the bad guys. That would give us a 2 to 1 ratio for advantage; but Sheila is one of our four. I was trying to be safe and keep our advantage solid. Wilder and I would be the closest and we would take primary responsibility for each of the bad guys. Sheila and David will be our back up and assist as needed. We are fortunate that there are five stun guns in camp, Sheila and David each had one.

So there we were in our “hides” dealing with the flies that come along with a large numbers of cows and the associated dung. It was hot, it stunk, the flies were miserable, and I hadn’t made a large enough hide so I was really cramped. One good thing was the bug spray, wipes actually. We had a really good supply of no scent BugX wipes in individual packets that you just wipe on the bug repellent. It really made a huge difference. I honestly doubt I could have handled it with all the bugs and no BugX repellent.

So about 30 minutes after dark Mary comes roaring in with the Polaris Ranger, the lights on; the bright beams no less. She pulls up and just sits there in the Ranger eating a sandwich and drinking something. She walks around a bit and then she really surprised me for the first time of the night, she walks over to this bush and goes to the bathroom. Yup, I couldn’t see much other than her dark form in the low light, and some other vague details (sound of splashing), but it was obvious what she was doing. Felt just a little weird about then.

She then stripped off her shorts and t-shirt top; thankfully she was wearing her bathing suit. Then she climbs into the water tank. She was paddling around, splashes around a little bit; she seemed to be genuinely enjoying herself. But no one came around and Don said he couldn’t see anything with the NV but swore he had heard something.

So Mary gets out and turns on a flashlight, a white light flashlight, and pokes around in her bag. Out comes a hair brush and she proceeds to brush her hair really animated. She has this super black hair about half down her

back. Still nothing after about 10 minutes of that. She cursed kinda quietly, got out another sandwich and I heard her pop a can open; that unmistakable “click and swish” sound. She eats that sandwich and drinks whatever was in the can and then goes over to the bush to go to the bathroom again. It didn’t bother me at all that time; just doing her job.

So the three-quarter moon is getting close to being straight up and nothing is happening. But into the water tank she goes again. She made no effort to not splash or be quiet; I swear they could have heard her in Hadley! But nothing, absolutely nothing, we were all getting a little frustrated. And to make matters worse the cows must have been attracted by the noise she was making. They had gotten curious and they started coming over the little hill to the north towards the water tank. Don still sees nothing, hears the cows and swears there is something else he is hearing but can’t spot where it is coming from and really can’t even identify the sound or what it might be.

So no big deal right? Ah, you forget we are in these little dugout indents in the dirt around the water tank, the cows’ water tank. We hadn’t thought about the possibility of the cows coming up to the water tank. So there we were, about to get stepped on by these 1,000 pound cows! Oh, did I mention there is a bull in with the cows? Oh, yeah, I forgot to mention that little fact didn’t I?

So Mary starts laughing as she sees what’s about to happen. So just loud enough for us to hear she says, “It’s all or nothing, it’s now or never.”

I had no clue what she was getting at until, well, ah, uh, she kinda took matters into her own hands. She took her bathing suit top off and threw it at the Polaris. Then she started bobbing up and down in the water tank singing. I am really glad Roy wasn’t there, really glad.

To make it far worse, the cows had approached the tank and then they just stopped. They must have smelled us in our hides or they were just watching her trying to figure out what was going on. When they got close to Sheila they started sniffing at the ground near her. Then the same thing started happening to David. It was just a matter of minutes until they got to Wilder or me. Then the radio clicked, clicked again, and clicked again. That was Don’s signal that he had spotted the bad guys. Then two quick clicks telling us that there were two of them. But we couldn’t see anyone, just the cows and Mary acting a fool splashing around topless singing a really bad impression of Phil Collins doing, “In the Air Tonight.”

So over the radio I whispered to Don for more info. Yeah, maybe not the smartest thing to do but we needed more intel and quick. Real faintly he whispered that the two men were mixed in with the approaching cows; about in the middle of them. He even mentioned a white-face cow that one of the bad guys was near. That cow I noticed was close to Wilder. Now I had a cow also sniffing at me. Cows have huge noses, really big nostrils to smell with. And this cow near me was getting kinda skittish. I figured I was about to be trampled. Add to the mix that Mary had no idea what was happening with the bad guys getting so close. The situation was getting WAY out of hand, and that can be very dangerous running an op like this. We had lost operational control. But I had an idea...

I took my OC spray (mace) and put a shot of OC spray right up the nose of this cow thinking it was a good idea. It seemed like a good idea at the time but maybe I should have thought it through entirely before I did it.

Well, this cow jumped like I had hit her with a cattle prod. She bellowed and I was figuring I was about to be tromped into the dust. Right about then I wished I had kept my brilliant idea to myself and my OC spray in my vest pouch. But luck was with me, this cow jumped backwards, whirled around, and took off at a dead run. And the rest of the cows thought it must have been a good idea as well, off they went running after her. It was a full-on stampede at that point.

Now let me keep this picture going for you while it is still fresh in my mind – so standing where the cow herd used to be were the two guys all by themselves, one of them having gotten knocked over. Mary sees them for the first time as she is standing in the water tank topless. So she lets out this serous scream while she tries to cover herself with her arms. The bad guys are welded to the ground watching her trying to figure out their next move. But it was too late.

Sheila jumps up and stun guns one guy from behind; she was about 6' away from him. He never heard her; he never had a chance - zaaaaaaaaap - right in the back of the neck. He falls to the ground like a sack of potatoes. But his partner saw her; rather he probably saw a swamp monster ghillie suited creature that had just dropped his partner. So the second guy is lifting his rifle to defend his buddy. But never made it. Wilder tackled him like an all-pro linebacker, put him in a choke-hold and just like that it was over.

We zip tied their wrists and then their elbows behind their backs after searching them. Then loaded them into the Polaris' dump bed and tied them in by their necks. If they decided to jump out they would be pulled along by the Polaris via the rope around their neck. Probably not a good idea on their part. Wilder drove with David and Sheila watching these two clowns. Don, Mary, and I would get the opportunity to walk back if no one came back to get us. We hadn't thought the transportation part through either.

So Mary is dressed by now, thankfully, and we start walking back. No one is saying anything. Finally I said "Mary, we won't tell your dad anything, we'll leave that up to you." But was I surprised, I won't get the words exactly right but you will get the idea...

"Tell him anything you want, you enjoyed the show and so did Don! All of you did, all of you guys do! That's all I am good for!"

To say I was stunned is an understatement for sure, but she wasn't done, "You know what you are thinking and so do I," she wasn't screaming but she was really loud and over the top. "I don't give a damn about any of you. Who cares, we are all going to die anyways. I just don't care!"

Then she just ran off, full tilt towards the cabins about a mile away. Don started to run after her, I stopped him and I told him not to chase after her. He and I talked about it for most of our walk back to the cabins but we had no idea what had just happened with her. We would talk to Roy and Tina about it and let them decide what to do about her. The girl was troubled; they knew it and had been trying to work with her. Obviously with no success.

I am not going to write about that conversation with Roy and Tina that Don and I had. It is very personal and should stay private. Mary was keeping a low profile after returning to camp a couple hours later. Looking back we should have probably gone after her for her own safety. But hey, we're not perfect.

When we got back (yes, we walked all the way) I noticed that they had chained the spies to this really heavy duty railroad tie that had once been a corner post of a fence or something. These guys weren't going anywhere and they were uncomfortable out in the open like they were. Especially when people would walk by them in the dark and shine flashlights in their eyes and then not say anything to them. I think it creeped them out. I didn't pay it any attention, I just wanted to get back to our cabin and make

sure Lara and Mickey were safely asleep. Then go to bed myself, I was tired.

Oh, on a positive note – almost everyone is over the runs now. The plumbing and/or the water tank was the problem. We are probably going to flush and bleach the system again in 10 days or so just to make sure everything is ok. We also walked the entire line to make sure nothing was seeping into the system. It all looked good. And we are going to do a better job of filtering the water we use to cook with and drink.

When we got back Mike updated us on the fact that Nebraska, Kansas, and Nevada joined the Patriot States. But Iowa, Missouri, and Louisiana released a statement saying they will not join and did not support what the other states were doing. They pledged allegiance to the President. Notice, not to the “Constitution” or even to the “country” but to the *President*.

Also reports that all the prisoners that were previously held at Gitmo have been released and Gitmo was closed. Not just the prison, the whole base. And evidently no one knows for sure but the rumor has it that a bunch were released in the US. And they are saying they can prove it because they have recent pictures of them in the US.

Mike did more than normal complaining about the radio static. He said it is really unusual how the most used freqs get the most static just at the time when Ham operators are using them most.

August 19 (Thursday) –

8:45 am - We got together after breakfast and started talking about the spies that we have tied up in camp. Then it really hit us, we realized “they” may come looking for those two guys. But who are “they?” What threat are “they?” What capabilities do “they” have? How much immediate danger are we in? How are we going to be able to avoid and deal with that threat? How soon can we expect that threat to materialize?

These are all very real concerns and they must be dealt with and soon, very soon.

Also, a short cryptic message from David. He says they are “going dark” and there probably won’t be any more message from him. He wished me well and said good luck. I don’t like the sound of that. But I also don’t have clue to go on as to its real meaning.

9:20 pm - What a weird world it has been around here for a couple days. This afternoon the county Sheriff paid us another visit. He shared a number of things with us, none of which was really very encouraging.

First, La Rasa is taking control wherever the Barrio Azteca gang hasn't already taken over. Both groups are actively working to gain control of areas. Barrio Azteca from a criminal perspective; they want money and power. But they want power just so they can get more money. And they don't tolerate any resistance. They want to control their area with an iron fist.

La Rasa sounds more like a political operation setting up a sovereign area of control. Basically their own country. They are motivated by the quest for power. But it is all based on their version of morality. So while they are motivated by a somewhat higher calling than the Aztecas, they are still ruthless in their operations. We have seen firsthand what they will do to non-Hispanics as well as non-cooperating Hispanics. While their cause may be noble in their eyes, it is still in direct opposition to our goals.

The Sheriff said both groups were actively scouting the county for any areas that are unoccupied or weak enough for them to run-off (which probably means kill). The Sheriff doesn't have the ability to do anything about it because he doesn't have the manpower, the fire power, or the will to go up against them.

What the Sheriff did relate to us was he has established a compound outside of Cruces in a large ranching area in the Corralitos (a small mountain chain west of the city). They have a main compound and a couple ranch complexes within a mile of it. They have hardened the outlying ranch complexes but I guess the compound is very secure to any ground threat. He has no immediate worries about his situation but thought it might be advantageous to have a mutual aid agreement between his group and our group.

I kinda like the idea because it does give us some legitimacy should there ever be an issue later. "Later" as in after all this upheaval gets settled. And one day it will be settled, one way or the other. I think at this point we might be real smart to consider his offer.

He did look at our prisoners and he thinks they are part of a black market cattle rustling group, a pretty large group he thought. They are locating cattle and other livestock, taking it, and then selling it to the gangs and anyone else that has anything of value to trade. Part of that includes

slavery which is becoming more prevalent. The cattle rustlers have also been known to abduct young women as well as cattle. To them it is one in the same - meat. One thing he wanted us to understand was this black market group is very well organized, very well armed, and could well have ex-Mexican Army soldiers (Zetas) in their midst. He said they are a group to be worried about, very worried. One thing he said was we shouldn't let these guys go under any circumstances because they will go straight back to their boss with the info. Then we will be attacked. The Sheriff wasn't at all sure that he could handle assisting us in something like that.

So much for mutual aid!

Well, we didn't tell him about John Wayne (the Marine Recon snake eater) or any of our other little toys. No need to share more information than is needed; we will keep our little advantage to ourselves. However, we should be worried about this new threat. We don't need a full-on battle on our doorstep. One of the things that has kept us safe so far is a low profile and handling problems as far away from us as possible. There is some wisdom in the idea of "the best defense is a good offense," at least when you are threatened with being killed. Then again, avoiding a fight is sometimes the best option. Especially if you don't know if you can win.

The Sheriff just left us kinda standing there trying to digest all the info he brought to us. That is just one of the many problems in these circumstances - information overload. Then trying to process it into a plan of action is the next challenge. Just too many variables and potential outcomes if you are not careful, so easy to make a mistake. Too much information can lead to "paralysis by analysis," part of the "fog of war" thing. I am glad we understand that concept along with the OODA loop. That is the decision cycle of observe, orient, decide, and act.

You have to be able to sort through the information that is important/relevant and then come up with a good plan of action and then take action. While all the information may apply, you normally only need a small subset which is truly relevant. The rest is just clutter and creates fog. And the fog makes it difficult, sometimes impossible, to see the real situation, which then prevents a decision or promotes a bad decision. *Situational Awareness* is paramount.

On another whole side note, and I am not sure of the importance – South America and Mexico have joined the Middle East in the oil embargo against the US. So now what does that mean for the fuel supply and how it

can paralyze the country? Or, maybe I should restate the question - *Does it really impact the crappy condition we are already in?*

Man, I gotta tell you if it weren't for prayer, scripture reading, and Lara and Mickey I am not sure what state of mind I would be in. But I can tell you this, it would be far worse than what it is now, WAY worse. Those four things are keeping me grounded.

August 20 (Friday) –

8:00 am - This morning is not a good morning; stuff is going downhill on several fronts.

The spies are still here, tied up to the big ol' fence post, and still not talking. We are thinking about separating them and starting to question them a little more vigorously. But we are broken into two camps: group #number 1 wants to do the questioning with a 2x4. The other group wants to talk nice, gain their confidence, show them the error of their ways. Then they think that we can get them to make amends by telling us what we need to know to save us from a potential attack.

I am not clear how I feel. I mean I want the information that they have but I am not crazy about just taking a 2x4 to them hoping they will tell us something of value. At the same time if their gang is going to attack and one of these miserable creatures could prevent something happening to Lara or Mickey, then I would beat them to death with a 2x4 myself. And not think twice about it.

And that sounds like a really good Christian doesn't it? But, I am capable of it and that scares me. I have been praying about it but I can't seem to hear the answer and time is growing very short. I hate this predicament! But what scares me more is something happening to Lara or Mickey.

9:20 pm - We might have just gone from very bad to much worse. The plane flew overhead this afternoon. It was at a high altitude; they circled back, and then came in lower. The OP's caught sight of it first and they both were asking if they should shoot it down. Roy was the duty officer and he yelled at them to hold fire. It only made a single pass at the lower altitude, maybe 1000 – 1500' and then flew on. It never waged its wings or anything in any kind of acknowledgement.

Now we are debating about shooting it down if it flies over us again. We have no idea who it is, we have no idea what their intentions are. We

have no idea what they are going to do with the intel they got from their “fly over;” we don’t know a DANG thing!!

And once again Mike caught the burst of static. He has had about two-thirds of camp listen to the recording of the static and nobody has any ideas. Everyone hears a pattern but no one recognizes anything. With my tinnitus I have a hard time picking out the little differences in tone so I am not much help at all.

I am starting to feel like our little canyon of safety and security is a coffin closing in on us. I just can’t figure out the plane and why it keeps showing up. Why doesn’t it try to make contact?

Mike heard on a rouge AM station this afternoon that King Urkel put a 10-day time limit into effect for the Patriot States to: 1) disband their organization, 2) surrender their governors to federal law enforcement, 3) return the National Guard units to federal service, 4) surrender all guns owned by all civilians in their states.

If the states don’t comply he is saying all of the political leadership are guilty of treason, the leaders will be arrested, tried, and executed.

What it sounds like to me is the feds want to settle this thing without THEIR blood on the front end. But then the feds will spill everyone else’s blood once the citizenry is disarmed. I think it is a crock!!! BumbleBarry hasn’t told the truth since running for office, if ever in his entire life! There is not a single shred of anything to prove he isn’t lying now. And once the guns are confiscated there is no hope for any safety from retribution from the federal authorities. The people will be completely defenseless! And no law enforcement at the federal level has acted to protect people. They are acting only on the behalf of the government to hurt people. And the federal government is not kind or gentle when they come after people. Just ask the folks that the FBI burned to death in Waco, Texas at the Davidian compound. The feds will seek retribution, they’ve done it before.

August 21 (Saturday) -

Two things from the Ham radio today; 1) some patriot folks in Michigan, close to Detroit, are saying that they have proof that at least 11 of the Muslim terrorists that had been at Gitmo are now in the greater-Detroit area. They say they have video of several of them cutting the heads off Christians that had been caught hiding in their homes in defiance of being ordered to leave. 2) This morning OP2 definitely spotted someone

crossing the ridge line in the distance. When the reaction team patrolled they found evidence of a hide where at least two people had been staying and watching the camp. It got worse when they tried to track them. About one mile out they were fired on. No one injured but it turned them around and they came back to camp at a dead run. I have a bad feeling about this, a very bad feeling. We are going to hold a planning meeting late tonight. In the meantime, we are putting an extra fire team on-duty. One team in each OP with their Fire Team Leader in the CP to coordinate. I hope it is enough.

August 22 (Sunday) -

5 am - Not much time this morning. We are on a war footing. No church today. We expect an attack at any time. We are on pins and needles. Everyone is tense and worried. I don't know that we can defend an attack. But what choice do we have? Run?

Please God...help us. Please.

Chapter 3

SEPTEMBER - YEAR 1

September 1 (Wednesday) –

4:00 am - So much to catch up on, so much has happened. All of it bad. But I want it all recorded; at least as much as I can remember. But a record needs to be made, we can never forget. Damn them!

Roy and his team found Joanie last night, unfortunately she is dead. I won't go into the details; I hope you will understand why. They found her up a small narrow canyon about six miles from here. They don't know for sure but it appears she was strangled based on the intense bruising on her neck. She had been dead a day or two they think. Based on what Roy told me the last hours of her life were not good ones. I hope she was unconscious for it. I won't talk about it anymore, it breaks my heart and her last hours on this earth were hell at the hands of animals. But they will pay a price, I promise they will.

There are two basic problems now: 1) Joanie was taken during the raid somehow or she ran off to hide, was found by the attackers and then taken. 2) There were at least three bad guys that took her and they are still out there. I will deal with that. I have made a commitment for justice, and justice will be served! No longer will I stand by and watch evil people get away with evil deeds. No more! Not as long as I can breathe. I will serve out justice and they will die for what they did!

I will write more about that after I get back from visiting with the Sheriff. I will leave tonight after dark to meet with him; I will take David with me. I am not going to allow these things to happen anymore. If I can't prevent them, then justice will be served after the fact. I have no problem doing that, evil people deserve to die. And people who abuse little girls are evil, pure evil.

Let me cover a couple other things before I get into the attack. Mike was able to hear a bunch on the Ham radio last night. Turns out Iowa, Missouri, and Louisiana are all occupied states now. New governors that were put into place by King Urkel. Their state legislatures were disbanded

and they're being run under a state of emergency by Executive Orders (i.e. effectively martial law). The radio rumor mill is reporting that Arkansas is in jeopardy. They're next on the President's hit list.

Seems that Arkansas is vulnerable and King Urkel means to have it under his iron fist. Arkansas had thrown in with the Patriot States but it appears they will fall. Evidently, the National Police Force (NPF) has blocked all interstate traffic into that state. They won't allow any supplies of any kind in; effectively starving them into submission. For almost a week they have been massing NPF troops in a number of staging areas just to the east of them, ready to enter that state.

Many of the Arkansas National Guard, but not all, joined the Arkansas State Militia, so there will be a fight. That being said, whatever happens will still come at a steep price of Americans suffering. When will it be our turn?

Something interesting that Mike did find out was the origin of all that Ham radio static. Turns out the freqs were being jammed by the NSA. Yes, that "NSA," the one that has been spying on Americans for years outside of the Constitution bounds. But the static was from some kind of electronic warfare operation of theirs. But these guys in the Arizona State Militia (former National Guard) figured it out and did two things: 1) they counter-jammed it (no, I have no idea what the details are). 2) A small group of SpecOps folks mounted simultaneous nighttime raids against the two NSA jamming sites. They destroyed every single piece of equipment there was and they took the technicians prisoner. They are now in some Tucson jail or prison. During the raids the small NSA security force that were protecting the sites decided to die defending their posts. All the better.

The NSA has been a sleaze bag operation for a very long time. They spent most of their time spying on US citizens. The decent American folks that 30 years ago would have been considered model citizens became their targets. The liberals, Progressives, and neo-cons had cranked up the propaganda machine and all of a sudden veterans, pro-Second Amendment, anti-tax, pro-life, Christian, Constitution loving people became the new *enemy* of the US government. At first they were identified as "potential domestic terrorists." Then the FBI and other federal agencies named them outright "domestic terrorists." The Southern Poverty Las Center, a radical Progressive hate organization, was behind it all. And the feds ate it up.

And King Urkel loved every minute of it; it matched his radical Marxist upbringing. And the most hated and feared group that was at the top of the list of NSA (as well as the FBI) were straight, white, male, Christian veterans. How disgusting the NSA became, along with the FBI, they were trying to do nothing but destroy everything that the Founding Fathers worked for through the cloak of “homeland security.” Notice how “homeland” in relation to America, sounds seriously similar to “fatherland” back in the days of Nazi Germany?

What thrilled me was the ability of the Patriot States to operate on that special operations level with the whole electronics thing. And it was simply amazing to put together a SpecialOps team to conduct the raid. I guess I never thought about SpecialOps outside of the regular military but evidently these guys had been SpecialOps folks on active duty and then went into the guard units or had retired. From what I am hearing now is all the former National Guard units are looking through their ranks for former SpecialOps people to form more teams. That could be a monumental advantage should this escalate. And I am sure now that it will escalate.

So Mike tells me that on the radio last night, on the designated “Mormon Freq” someone representing the church called us and gave us the signal to turn to our pre-arranged frequency. While not secure, it does cut down on the average person listening.

Mike was telling us that the person stating they represent the church wants us to escort and provide security for a “high value resource” that will be traveling our way. It will be our job to meet them in the vicinity of the Mexican border and transport them to the border with AZ. We will then hand the *resource* off to the Arizona group. They didn’t say so but I would imagine the Arizona group would then transport the resource to the border with Utah or something to that effect. I know in southern Utah there is a serious militia group called “Trackers.” They are very highly trained and no one to mess with. I am pretty sure that I took some training put on by the head guy a few years back. If it is him, I wouldn’t want to mess with that group.

Mike asked them what the “resource” was, they wouldn’t tell him. He asked them where on the Mexican border, they wouldn’t tell them. They told Mike for us to give them our answer first and then they will provide the details. Oh man, what a way to do business!

Wilder and I are in (obviously), but Roy, Mike, and the others want to talk about it. They are not happy to be dealing with a shortage of information about the mission. And that is putting it mildly on both accounts.

Tonight I am going to meet with the Sheriff. I will write more about it when I get back. If it goes as I hope it will, it will be time to breakout a little Orrin Porter Rockwell frontier justice.

7:30 pm - We finished the assessment on the food storage left in camp. The results are not good. We lost almost half of our food storage in the attack. Mike's family lost all of theirs in the fire, every single bit. Every family lost some and that includes Lara, Mickey, and I. We just don't know how badly for sure yet.

We had most of ours stored in our cabin, as did all the other families. We had the idea of stacking it around the outside walls of the cabins kinda like insulation and sandbags. We thought it might help keep the cabins cooler in the hot weather and warmer in the cold weather. And it would double as protection if the bullets ever began to fly. Well, the night of the raid the bullets were flying like crazy and the cases of food storage did their job; it stopped a lot of bullets. But the bullets still penetrated the cans. In some instances went clean trough several cases and kept on going.

So we have a whole bunch of food cans with holes in them, and some with the bullets still in the can of food. We are trying to figure out if the food is ruined or tainted or some such thing. Some of the cans that we opened to assess the food inside was weird. You could actually see where the food was burned by the bullet passing through. Maybe some were tracers. I don't know to be honest. But the bottom line is we don't know if the food is still good or not. Well, some is obviously ruined, other cans we are not so sure about. We have to do more research. But for now I have to get ready for my little night trip.

September 2 (Thurs) –

9 pm - I am ready to write a bit more, and I even got a little sleep before Ally woke me up licking my face.

You are now reading the words from the newest county Deputy Sheriff. I have in my possession a document giving me authority to act in the name of the Sheriff anywhere in the county. And I am empowered to *“act according to law where possible, with common sense when and where*

needed.” I specifically asked about situations and people that I arrest for crimes. Crimes where I personally witness it, the person confesses to the crime, or in cases that I personally knew people who had witnessed a crime.

He asked me to define “crime” so I defined “crime” as any act that resulted in property damage, bodily injury or death. The Sheriff laughed and said “Hang ‘em!” I thought he was kidding, he wasn’t. He said there are no operational municipal, county or state courts. As well as there being no prison or jail systems still operating in New Mexico. He said the judicial system gets its authority from the people. Since the formal system is no longer functional, the citizens have the right to conduct trials and meet out justice according to the Constitution as far as he is concerned.

Then he said, “let your morals and conscience be your guide.” We talked for another few minutes and he basically said that if the Patriot States win this tug of war then all is well with what we do to the bad guys. If we lose then King Urkel will nail our coffin shut with his personal version of tyranny. He said if that happens then it didn’t much matter what we had done to the bad guys, we would all be swinging from a tree anyways.

That’s all I needed to hear. I asked him if he had ever heard of Orrin Porter Rockwell. “Of course!” he smiled. I told him if it was ever a matter of life and death just call for *Orrin Porter Rockwell* over the Ham radio on our common frequency. I said he would get all the help he needed, if at all possible.

Then he got very serious, looked me dead in the eye, “You clean up every last bad guy you find. Send them all to hell. The courts will never touch you and God will thank you.” He walked over to his desk, rummaged around for a few seconds then threw me a deputy’s badge that read “Major.” Imagine that, me a cop!

“That means you are my third in command in the entire county. The Southwest District is your part of the county now. Make me proud boy!”

“Boy”????? I’m probably as old as he is. What’s up with the whole “boy” thing anyways? He sounded straight off the Dukes of Hazard TV show. I had to laugh.

But I am telling you this, justice will be served with a heavy hand to those that deserve it and I know the first ones on the list that are going to taste it. I am going to serve up some justice to some scum that need it

So, as promised, back to the night of the raid...

We knew we were in trouble after spotting the guy running over the ridge and finding the hide. It was confirmed when the tracking Fire Team was fired on. When they got back to camp we had a meeting and upped all the security. They hit us the first time that Sunday night.

The night of the real attack over a week later was the worst. We had finally won and we were trying to regroup in camp and see just how bad everything was. We had just duck taped the new prisoners at the elbows and wrists behind their backs. Then we marched them off to the same fence post where the original spies had been tethered. Actually, we had to untie the dead spies before we could tie-up the new prisoners. The spies had died earlier that day; no idea when they were shot or who shot them, but they were dead. And I really didn't care then or now who or when.

We were just standing there, a little dazed, the new prisoners were secure and I should have been more anxious to get moving to find out how Sheila was. Just about that time Tina comes walking up to Roy and I heard her say she would like some help. I turned around just as Tina was hitting the ground. She had a t-shirt tied around her hand. It had started out to be a white t-shirt; it had turned deep red, and was dripping. She was out cold, although for a second I thought she might have died.

I was on my handheld radio in a heartbeat calling the ranch house for Dr. Raymond and explaining what had happened with Tina and mentioning Sheila's situation as well. I wasn't able to tell him much about Sheila since I didn't know anything other than I saw her tumble down the hill after the burst of automatic gunfire. Then I headed back to find Sheila after asking Roy if he needed my help. Lara was on the way to Roy with a trauma bag.

When I found her (5 minutes or so), Sheila had been shot in the leg, right across her thigh. I can't believe her luck, the bullet cut a 4" gash across the side of her thigh about ¼" deep and as wide as a pencil. It was nasty, laid open, red meat, with plenty of blood all over the place. But David had gotten to her first and had done a good job of cleaning it. He was just about to staple it up when Dr. Raymond talked to him on the radio. He told him to leave it open. Told David just keep it clean for now, put a 4" Israeli battles dressing on it and he would look at it later.

Candice Wilder ended up sewing it together after Dr. Raymond had looked at it. David wasn't sure he could do that, Wilder said she had no problem doing it. It helped that she was a good seamstress with a strong

stomach. Dr. Raymond gave Candice the stuff and told her what to do; she did just fine. Sheila is going to have a nasty scar for life but she will live. And she'll have a visual aid when telling stories in the future about the night of the big attack during the early days of the revolution.

Oh, on a separate note – Mike told the church rep earlier tonight that we would do the escort duty. We will get instructions later on with all of the details; all very “hush-hush” for now.

And good news is now that we have the law in camp, the trial starts tomorrow! Yup, the trial for the prisoners we have in custody. Since I am the law enforcement I won't be involved in the trial other than security. Roy and Brian Wilder are the judges, Mike will defend and Candice Wilder will prosecute. I expect this will be a quick trial.

We will have a jury; it will be everyone else in camp, including the kids. Should the prisoners be found guilty I have no problem carrying out the sentence. It is the least I can do as the local law enforcement officer; a Major no less.

September 3 (Friday) –

3 am - I am still not sleeping very well. To say I am having nightmares is an understatement. I am haunted by the people I have killed since the grid went down. I see their faces, I feel their presence, I can feel the squeeze each time I pulled the trigger. Then I see death. It is not their dying that bothers me, it is something else. I don't know what it is, but I wake up afraid, and to some degree I am terrified. I just don't know afraid or terrified of what.

Once in a while I can fall asleep pretty quickly but not often. My first nightmare came just before midnight; I screamed out as I squeezed the trigger again on another bad guy. I actually felt terror. It was a horrible feeling, beyond description. I was so afraid in my dream that I woke up into that semi-sleep/semi-awake state.

Then I heard a familiar sound, a welcomed, very welcomed sound. Pitter – patter, pitter – patter, swish, swish; then the movement near me. Ever so lightly, ever so slightly, hardly a sound or real movement. Intentional, not concealed; no attempt to conceal the sound or movement. Then her arm over my shoulders and then, “It's OK Dad, its OK. You're all right. Shush, go back to sleep.”

It was Mickey. She had climbed into bed with us and she was comforting me. She had heard me scream out; she had also heard me on previous nights as well. She knew I needed help, she was there. She was there for me.

I hope this means that “our” Mickey is back, I have missed her. She’s had some real problems since the attack and Joanie’s death. Thankfully, she fell back to sleep quickly as well. It was way too early for her to be getting up. It was kinda funny, when I went to get up a few minutes ago Max was right there on the floor beside the bed. Max, the ever faithful Mickey guard dog, never far away. Max and I have a lot in common.

Tonight I did have a different kind of night. I should say I had a different dream tonight. One of my dreams was weird, I was laying on the ground, there was a light coating of white ash on the ground, I was by myself, and I was sick, very sick. Everyone had left me, I was alone and I was digging a grave. I think my own grave but I am not sure. I was digging it with a very small object, bigger than a pack of cigarettes, but not much bigger. It was light outside, but I didn’t recognize where I was, there were big trees, as tall as I could see. Then I was laying there and I kept getting sicker and sicker, I could tell that I would not recover from being sick. I kept digging, like I had to for some reason. But I don’t know the reason why. Then there was this flash of light and I couldn’t hear anything. Just like that the dream was over. But it was not a nightmare, not at all, quite the contrary. I felt really good throughout the dream. Yeah, I know, I said I was sick in my dream and I was really sick. But even though I was sick, I felt good. Weird dream.

I didn’t mention that yesterday the plane showed up again. It is keeping its distance and it never stays very long. Mike recorded the static once again. It is a little different each time, but the pattern is the same. Brian Wilder is going to work with him on it. They are going to try and get serious about figuring this out. Only a couple people left who haven’t listened to the static, and they are all Rancher Bill’s family. We have lost hope that there is anything recognizable to the static but it seems to have some kind of pattern. I just hope that Brian and Mike can come up with something. Mike also got a check-in from David. The coded message tells us it isn’t going well for them. They are not sure how long they can hold out. They are continually on the move. Their group is strong, well-trained,

well-armed, and ready to take care of business. But they are only human and they are vulnerable. They can't get out of Florida.

September 4, (Saturday) –

6 am - Nightmares again last night, but fewer of them and not quite as intense. But the weird dream came back to me, but more of it this time. It was the exact same stuff as last night but this time before the ash began to fall there was a big explosion from a volcano. I could see the big flash from it and then I felt the heat as it erupted. Again I was digging in the dirt with something about twice the size of a pack of cigarettes. The rest of the dream was just like before. But I want to make it clear, this is not a nightmare, more of a dream. And I find myself being very comforted by the end of it. It is hard to describe, like I belong there and it is a very warm and friendly place. Yes, even with the volcano. No, I don't understand it, none of it. So contradictory on the surface, but something uniting about it when I am in the dream.

Mickey said the family prayer last night just before bed. She was very sweet in her prayer. She says she wants to talk with us, family meeting, after church service tomorrow. I wonder what that is all about. She says she needs to fast and pray about something in her life. An 11-year old with something that heavy or important! The most she should have to worry about is which pair of sneakers to wear to school or what her hair looks like.

9 am - Mike cornered me a few minutes ago. Couple things; first, the Patriot States have threatened to cut off energy supplies (i.e. natural gas, coal, etc.) to the Union if King Urkel continues to stop the food supplies from reaching the Patriot States. And the tension builds! Second, there are reports, maybe a dozen or so, where Mike says that LDS chapels have been burned down from mob and gang violence. And it is all based on this church position thing on King Urkel. The rumors are that church headquarters in Salt Lake was preaching to members to support the government of President Hewsane. That we are bound under any and all conditions to obey the government, support the government and not rebel against the government. I still don't know what to think. I can't get an answer to my prayers. Should I stop my participation in the rebellion or not? It is becoming very frustrating. I don't know what I should do. Why can't I get an answer to my prayers?

The worst of it is the fact there are a few people on the Ham radio that are fanning the flames against the church. They want persecution. No, they are outright demanding violence against the church for their position in favor of the President. Why can't everyone just shut up and leave us alone?

9:05 pm - Well, well - guess what???? Lindy and Jarred Wilder want to get married. Imagine that! No, really, I think everyone saw this one coming even before they did. Since Lindy is of age and no parents here (Roy is only a figurehead dad), there is nothing to hold her back. Jarred is 19 and can make his own decision but Brian Wilder has no problems with it. I think everyone has the idea that time may be short and we should not hold people, especially kids, back in these matters. Matters of the heart, love. I am sure the whole surreal situation is adding to the intense feelings, passion and desire; it's to be expected. The heart will do what the heart will do.

Sheila is throwing up regularly the last couple days. By early afternoon Dr. Raymond got her calmed down and resting. At that point she stopped throwing up. She looks even more pale than normal and I think she is getting more and more dehydrated. We are all worried; we are all keeping her in our prayers.

Here is the best news I've heard in a long time - the prisoners have been found guilty. The jury was together on their verdict; as were the judges with their sentence of death by hanging. Well, they were actually found innocent on the cattle rustling charges since we had no actual evidence, let alone proof, of actual rustling. And they wouldn't admit to it of course. The spies admitted to their group rustling it but they are dead and obviously couldn't testify against these two. Oh, and since a couple of the kids were well hidden and never were in direct danger during the raid the charges were reduced to 15 counts of attempted murder, from 20 counts of attempted murder. We are an honest, generous and compassionate group.

Since I am the local law enforcement I have the honor of carrying out their sentence. Tomorrow is Sunday and we don't want to hang anyone on Sunday so I am going to do it tonight. At 10 pm I will take them over to Wildcat Canyon. There is a large old gnarly Alligator Juniper that will work just fine as a hanging tree. I will take a 2' stool. It will all be just

fine. Justice will be served tonight. Kind of like a horror thriller movie but with a good ending, the bad guys don't win this one.

Let me try and share what happened the night of the attack. I doubt I will get it exactly right, it might sound a little out of sequence or I might be just plain wrong but this is how I remember it.

I will give a brief overview of what happened during the week that we were being stalked and then attacked. It was the strangest thing I had ever experienced. I had never heard of anything like what happened. I am just glad we came out of it as well as we did. But it was still bad, we still lost life and had people injured.

After we saw the two guys scramble over the ridge we sent out a fire team to track them. They were fired upon and rather than engage in a firefight with an unknown enemy force, they disengaged and came straight back to camp. We had already started to beef up security but when they radioed back that they were being shot at we went on full alert. I hate to say it, but I didn't send anyone out to help the fire team that was under fire. I didn't want us to get suckered into anything. We had used a similar tactic against the gangbangers back in Cruces and I didn't want it used against us.

The other strange thing happened. Immediately everyone just assumed I was in charge. It had never really been discussed before and the need never really came up. But it did, they did, and I accepted because who else would? I would rather John Wayne be in charge but he is at the rancher house and technically he is not part of "our" group. As soon as someone else stands up they can have the job.

So the fire team made it back in one piece. We stayed at the ready all night thinking we would be attacked. We weren't. The next morning we started getting back to normal. Well, as normal as we could. We were all tired and strung out from the adrenalin high the night before. Just as we started moving around they started to snipe us. They were either too far away or not very good shots. They were hitting the cabins and Wilder's RV trailer but no one got hit. But you can imagine the effect it had on us.

Then they hit Rancher Bill's house. Not exactly "hit" it but really opened fire on it. The family was returning fire selectively and about every minute or so you could hear the big .50cal sound off. That lasted about an hour of them getting shot at. We stayed put and kept our heads down. Don wanted to go after whoever was out there and flank 'em. But I kept saying

no, we needed to stay put. We didn't need to go running off and get out in the open where we could be shot up.

So then the sun set and then they started really sniping at us. While it was light I think they sighted in all the cabins. And then at dark they just started plinking away at us. They kept up a steady stream of that crap all night. The fire teams were all in the OPs and CP hunkered down. One fire team was held in reserve, all the families were in or under the cabins. Wilders had to abandon their RV. We knew we had to do something or eventually they would just pick us off. And I was not going to get suckered into going after them. I think that is just what they wanted...split us into two groups with the shooters outside the wire making the cabin area easy pickings. Nope, not gonna happen. Not everyone thought it was a good idea.

The next day we laid out a plan to reinforce the crawl spaces under the cabins. The first thing we did was pull up enough boards to get through the floor in the middle of the cabin. Then we started to scrape out little divots in the dirt which then became decent sized holes. We pushed the dirt up around the holes like embankments. They were almost 2' thick at the base. Then out came the pillow cases and we filled them with dirt, sand actually, and stacked them around the holes in the cabin floors. That's when I brought out my bundle of 100 flat dark earth sandbags. I got a couple un-nice glances but "oh well!" I am sure they were wondering why I hadn't brought them out before. On top of the sandbags stacked on the cabin floors we then used the floor planks and some other wood to make a kind of roof over the hole. We put sand bags on the boards that made the roof. There was a crawl opening into it. Overall, they were pretty decent little "bomb shelters" or such. I am glad we did it.

So for the next several days they just kept sniping at us. We really never returned fire because we didn't want to give away our fighting positions, OPs and CP if they didn't already know where they were. We could see their muzzle flashes at night and we didn't want to return the favor making us easy targets.

Then one night when the moon was almost completely hidden behind the clouds they really pour the rounds into us. I mean it sounded like a bloody battle going on. We just put our heads down, watched the perimeter and held our fire. I bet it really confused them. Then about 4:30 am they hit the ranch house and our southern entry at the same time. It didn't seem

like a real attack, more like a probing action to see what we had. Mike's Fire Team fired back just enough to keep them outside of the wire. Everyone else held fire and held their position. By sunrise it was all over. Well, all over for that night.

After it got light we did the needed to do some chores and we kept our heads down. Everyone was feeling the stress and tension. Some folks were starting to "crack" a bit. I think that is what they were trying to do to us. Rancher Bill and family came through with a couple very minor injuries. Having that .50cal is a very big dissuader for them. It is good that we have radio communications with them. We even had worked out a very basic code system to keep others guessing what we were really saying.

The next night is when it really cut loose. We were all in-place by sunset. We had all worked out a kind of routine to make sure food was eaten, water was drank, and potty requirements were met. We even started to sleep during the sniping. But this night it wasn't all about sniping. Sure, it started out just like all other nights, then it changed right about 3:30 am. They must have thought we were the weakest then. When they started the sniping we had planned a little tactical maneuver. We needed more information on who, where, and how many. We couldn't get that being inside the wire. So Don and his fire team were headed outside of the wire to get us the info we needed.

When they started sniping at us we would unload on the sniper position like crazy, bringing most guns into play. That put their heads down and made them think we were tired of it. Truth of the matter is we were going to move Don's team out under the cover and distraction of our return fire. It worked. Don took the little arroyo out of camp unnoticed. The sniping almost stopped about an hour after they had gotten out of camp. Don gave the signal over the radio that he was OK and in place. Another 15 minutes and it was dead silent. That was like our clue that something was about to happen. Little did we know.

Just before 4 am they came in force. They hit us and the ranch house at the same time. I still don't know for sure how many there were but based on the number of bodies we found I would say maybe 30 - 40 hit us. And we had a little special surprise waiting for them. They did this weird kind of "rush" at us. They had snuck in fairly close. Well, actually, there was no "snuck" to it; we had them in our sights almost the whole way. We were just waiting for the right moment when our fire would be the most

concentrated and effective. We weren't going to win any 500-yard shootout but we could cut 'em down fairly close in. So we waited.

They were only about 50 yards from our OPs when our folks opened up on them. I don't think they were expecting us to have fully automatic weapons capability. Well, technically we don't. But we did have several "bump-fire" or "slide-fire" stocks. On top of that we have a Beta-C Magazine for each OP for the designated "bump-fire" weapon. At the worst possible moment for the bad guys they ran into 90-rounds of full auto 62grain 5.56 rounds. We had every other round a M855 armor piercing round; the other rounds were regular M193 lead-filled rounds. Our fire was withering and pinned them down pretty tight.

On the north end, closest to Don's team, Don moved his team into action. After making sure there was no enemy reserve force near him he moved to the enemy's right flank and started taking very targeted, slow methodical shots into the bad guys. It was really effective and the bad guys really didn't know what was happening on their flank for a long time. By the time they figured it out it was too late for them, they were essentially an ineffective fighting force. The south end was a different story.

It wasn't until the enemy moved against the south end that we realized there were more of them than we had first thought. And they appeared determined to get inside the wire. They were really, really determined to do so. The folks in the OP were doing a good job and the "automatic" fire was effective but there just too many of them moving against the perimeter and the terrain wasn't quite the same to pin them down. While the team in the OP was pretty much safe from getting shot, they couldn't effectively cover all the fields of fire that they were responsible for. Too few people, too cramped of space in the OP and the terrain wasn't properly scouted by us. The bad guys moved in close, really close. The OP was about to get overrun and the RIT was basically pinned down by sniping fire. That is where surprise #2 came into play.

See, before everything went down the "government induced crapper" of gun control, magazine restrictions and ammo limitations, I had managed to purchase a Siaga 12 shotgun and a couple of large capacity magazines. Mike had done the same. One of those shotguns was now sitting in their OP waiting for just such an event. A semi-automatic shotgun with AK reliability and a 20-round drum magazine full of 00 buckshot was the reception committee in addition to the rest of the OP firepower. I gotta

give Brian credit he knew just how to play it. He knew they were not going to be able to hold out and we had been talking on the field phone that the RIT was pinned down. So he took matters into his own hands and played them as chumps perfectly.

Brian had his team one-by-one cease firing at the bad guys. The bad guys naturally thought they were taking out his team members. So all that was left was Brian shooting, then he stopped. Well, here they came trying to rush right past the OP. Not so fast, Brian brought the Siaga into play along with a fresh mag in the bump-fire. They absolutely tore them up. I mean 189 .32cal balls from the Siaga and 90 5.56 rounds is nothing to sneeze at...I don't care who you are!

However there were just too many to stop them all, some of them got into the camp. Maybe 8 - 12 or so. That is when we went to work. I was at the CP with my team and we just lit into them. But we had to be really careful because we might accidentally fire into the cabins as well. So we came out of the CP and the RIT team joined us. We moved through camp tracking down each bad guy. We obviously didn't get them all. Three made it deep into camp and somehow snatched Joanie. You know the rest from there.

September 5 (Sunday) –

5:15 am - I hung the prisoners last night. They dug their own graves first; I didn't feel like anyone else deserved the work. They are buried in Wildcat Canyon by the big Alligator Juniper tree. They were placed in unmarked graves. They are in hell this morning. It's over.

I am tired of talking about the nightmares that won't stop; they haunt me all night long. Or at least until I have "the dream," then I am calmed by the end of that particular dream. And I got more of the dream last night. Everything was as before but this time after I feel the heat from the volcano eruption, then the sky becomes filled with arrows, black arrows. Thousands of them, or so it seems, they almost blot out the sky. They are arcing towards me, some falling from the sky, some still approaching their zenith. Then I feel some of them piercing me, I feel them piercing my skin. But they don't hurt, not a bit; I don't feel any pain at all. I am so confused by the dream but I keep having it, and it keeps longer and longer.

Church services were actually very nice. We are getting pretty good with singing. I didn't take the sacrament; my hands looked *dirty*, my soul felt worse.

After church services we held our family meeting that Mickey had requested. She opened with prayer and it was very sweet as she asked for the spirit to guide our decision. Ah, what decision? Then she said she had a request for us. I joked and told her "No!" She couldn't get married like Sheila and Lindy. Lara stifled a snicker and I was laughing but Mickey just gave me "the look." If you are married or have a teenage daughter you know what I mean when I say "the look." I swear girls go to some classes or something to all learn the same thing like "the look," it's got to be true.

She said she wanted me to be serious, and then she asked if she could be baptized. Talk about shocked! I couldn't believe what I was hearing, although I guess it shouldn't really surprise me. She has a very sweet spirit, says awesome heart-felt prayers, reads her scriptures, and talks of her testimony. So I don't have a problem with it, neither does Lara. But, we are not her parents, one is dead, the other is missing. We can't give her permission and she is too young to make the decision herself.

I explained the situation to Mickey and she looked me dead in the eye and said, "You are my Dad now. You can give me permission and you can baptize me."

OK, what do you say to that? She was dead set on it and she let me know it. I told her I would try and find out what we can do. She said I will be baptizing her next Sunday, period. And that I should be ready, "I saw you didn't take the sacrament, work it out, and soon." Again, what do I say to that?

The problem is not limited to just like not taking the sacrament today; I don't feel clean enough or worthy enough to perform a baptism. I have a lot to think about and find out by next Sunday. Trouble is I am leaving as soon as I am done with this journal entry. I am going hunting.

Sheila is still throwing up and getting more and more dehydrated. Dr. Raymond says if she is not better by tomorrow we have to take her to the clinic in Hadley. I won't be here so whatever they need to do they will just need to do it.

I doubt that I will be back for a couple days, lots to think about, and some vermin to hunt down. Justice will be served.

September 8, (Wednesday) –

10:30 am - I got in about 5 am, dead tired, mission accomplished. At some point I will explain the whole hunting trip but for now just understand that there are now three more dead bad guys and two more young girls in camp.

My dream came back again last night while I was gone and sleeping under the stars. Same dream as before, just more of it. It starts with me running, then I am jumping, or rather diving, behind a log with rocks on the ground, the rocks hurt. My left arm doesn't function like it should, something is wrong with it, maybe because I am sick. There is ash falling from the sky, some already on the ground. A volcano erupts, I see the flash of light and I feel the heat on my face and hands. I have something in my hands, like a shovel, but I'm not sure.

Then I am digging a hole, scraping in the dirt with a metal box bigger than a pack of cigarettes, but not much bigger, maybe twice as large. I have no idea why I would be digging with a box. Then the sky is filled with thousands of black arrows flying towards me, some hitting me. I can feel them hitting me and going into me but they don't hurt me. I don't feel any pain from the arrows. I think I already had a couple arrows in me before they started flying in the sky.

What really freaks me out in this dream is the fact that at this point in the dream I don't feel any pain. I have arrows in me, a volcano is erupting near me and I am strangely calm and peaceful. Then there is another eruption very close by after I stop digging the hole with this metal box. The eruption is much closer but I don't hear it, I just know it is there. And a light, not a flash of light, more like a steady bright light. Like a nuclear explosion in brightness, but it is neither nuclear nor harmful to me.

Something is happening as I see this light but I can't tell what it is. I feel there are people around me, but I am not one of them and I can't interact with them. And I don't want to be around them, they "feel" dirty. Then the dream ends, just ends, and that's it, nothing more. I wake up at that point and I just feel really good.

Yesterday Dr. Raymond and Doug took Sheila to Hadley. No word on her condition, we're all worried. We probably should have sent more security with them.

7 pm - Lindy and Jarred Wilder were married late this afternoon. Brian Wilder performed the ceremony. It was a nice simple ceremony, lots

of hugging and crying. We are all trying to figure out how to rearrange housing to make allowance for the new “couples” thing in camp and the burning of Mike’s cabin.

Mike tells me he is hearing over the Ham that there are thousands of families flocking to the Patriot States. Sounds like a mass exodus or immigration from the east. I have no idea what this means for the future of any of those people or the places where they are going. It is just more information. It seems as if there are a thousand different worlds, all are smaller than they used to be. Pockets of people are living in isolated worlds just trying to survive.

We got word from Hadley over the Ham radio about 20 minutes ago on Sheila’s condition. She is pregnant! Mike is beside himself proud! Everyone in camp is excited. They should be back in the morning. The women and girls will be out of control for the next week, I just know it.

Late this afternoon we got the call for church’s “high value resource” escort. We leave after midnight. It was interesting how they got us the location information and the date/time info as well. Obviously they didn’t want a whole bunch of people to know what was going on so they encoded the message. I won’t go into the details so as not to break OpSec but it has to do with the calendar and the scriptures plus one more variable that they knew I would know. Kinda like, “Bond...James Bond 007” stuff. But we will be gone tonight and tomorrow and back late tomorrow night at the earliest. If everything goes well. Any more, you never know.

September 10, (Friday) –

Noon - We got back in a little after 5 am and I didn’t get much sleep, maybe a couple hours’ worth. I don’t feel like writing much with one exception.

I didn’t have my dream last night. Well, I was on our mission to the border to retrieve our “high value resource” and didn’t sleep while I was gone. But this morning while I napped I had it again. And again, more “story” to it than the last time. Everything is the same as the last time I wrote about it. But this time after the second eruption I know there are people around me, they feel “dirty” and I really don’t like the feeling of being around them. It just feels like they are really, really dirty like sewage or really nasty smelly garbage.

But someone else is there, I can't see or touch this other person but I sense him and it is a "him" as in a male. Now here is what I don't understand, he is family. But my dad is long dead, I have no brother. I have a sister who I love dearly but no contact with her for a long time. Too long. I do have a step-brother but I have had no contact with him for 20+ years and I don't much care for him anyways; he's kind of scummy. But this family member is for sure family. I can't see a face, can't see a body but I want to be with him. That was real clear to me. But something is holding me back, like an anchor or something, I am tied down. No, that's not it, more like I am tethered to something behind me but I am trying to get to my family. I am reaching out but I can't go anywhere. Then it is over, I wake up and I feel great.

I am going back to bed after I eat. Our "resource" is sleeping as well. We even managed to get him a shower. He was grateful for that. So were we, he stunk from too many days on the road with no bathing and lots of sweating. The last time I saw them the women are all working together for a really special evening meal together in the main cabin. It should prove to be an interesting evening. But we will see.

Tomorrow is September 11th. I don't like that date. I don't like remembering. But I will never forget! It will always hurt.

September 11 (Saturday) –

3:15 am - Another rough night of it. Fewer nightmares but I am not able to sleep for very long. I am very bothered by that, and worried. Something has to give. I am too old to sleep just a few hours a night, especially with all the physical and mental exertion that is required of us in this kind of life. If you want to call this living.

In one way it is not bad at all. You are focused on what is important; not many minor distractions during the day. And no Smart Phones!!!!!! And you are dealing with more emotions that draw you closer to the people around you.

On the other hand you have to worry about actually staying alive and keeping those around you alive as well. Then there is the whole injury thing; a minor injury or illness can get you dead since first-rate medical care is no longer available anywhere nearby. Actually, I am not sure where there is anything more than a doctor. I haven't heard of any hospitals that are still functioning.

Life is now a two-edged sword to be sure.

My dream again last night, pretty much the same thing with a couple exceptions or I should say additions. After the whole arrows thing I can feel the dirty people and also the family member and then I feel very, very tired, completely worn out, void of almost all energy. I feel like I am not so much sleepy, more like utterly exhausted, as if I had carried a heavy pack for days of hiking in the mountains. Exhausted is the right way to try and explain it, but there is no pain or discomfort involved. Then I know I won't see anyone in our little multi-family group anymore and I get very lonely. And I mean that is a very intense feeling of loneliness at that moment. VERY lonely without our group around me. I feel like I was left behind, abandoned, isolated. Then I wake up and I feel good; almost refreshed.

Last night after our meeting I prayed about Mickey getting baptized, nothing. I pondered it and thought that it would be OK to go ahead under these circumstances. And I get no confirmation that it is the right thing to do. So, am I not hearing? Am I not worthy to baptize her? Should she not be baptized? What is going on here and why can't I get an answer?

So I guess I will take it to the Lord with a "no, she shouldn't be baptized" and ask for confirmation of that. I really hope that works, otherwise, what the heck do I do?

Well, I guess I should talk about our "escort" trip to the border and back. It seems it might help fill in the blanks a little bit on what is happening now. As I wrote on the 7th we headed to the border that night. I had an idea we were headed that way for a *person* even though they kept saying a "high value resource." Well, I was right, and so were they - high-value to be sure!

However, that being said, we were all asked to avoid using any names when referring to this person and to not make this experience a topic of general conversation. So, my journal is not a "general conversation" and I won't refer to his name. I will tell you this, if something was to happen to the Prophet and something happened to the person we were escorting there could well have been a disruption in the succession of who would be the next Prophet. I won't say any more as to his ID, you should get a pretty good idea from what I just wrote. I will tread lightly on exactly what I write as per their request.

So we headed to the border with the standard three vehicle system; a fire team in the #1 vehicle, me driving #2 vehicle, I would drive the “resource,” and a fire team in vehicle #3. No one was with me to make sure we had enough room for whomever or whatever we were retrieving. The extra fuel was in a couple of gas cans in the bed of vehicle #3 surrounded by sandbags on the sides. We had 3 options for our route there with several places we could move from one of the routes to another. For OpSec purposes we would hold off making the decision for the return route until after we got to the border.

We had no real problems getting there, we didn’t encounter anyone. But we traveled at night, slits for lights, and occasionally no lights just using our NV equipment only. I am not real thrilled using NV to drive by, especially being Vehicle #2. You get the worst set of NV, sometimes none. When you get none you have to simply concentrate on the tiny little speck of red light in the middle of the #1 vehicle. It is stressful.

We didn’t use a single route to head straight for the border; we switched it up a couple of times to throw off any bad guys. A “tracker” doesn’t necessarily have to follow you to catch you. Sometimes they follow you just long enough to get a logical idea of where they think you are heading. Then they take an alternate route to get there before you. You show up, they are lying in wait and you get caught in an ambush.

We got there, stashed the vehicles, camo netted them, put some brush around them, staked out a couple of guards and then the rest of us headed the last half a mile to the meeting place. Don was up on a high point as lookout and overwatch, we had scouted an escape route or two and we had a couple rally points in case we got separated. And of course our Alamo Point. That is the point that if we come under attack and everything is going down the crapper, we get there and make a stand. It is never something you want to use, but something you better have in your plan.

We were there less than an hour when Don picked up some movement; he told me later if he hadn’t had the NV he would have probably missed it. This little truck was traveling very slowly with their lights off. We got into position; Don kept his eyes open for any other movement or presence. Luckily, there was nothing; we didn’t want or need any surprises.

In any operation there is a time for quick thinking and rapid reactions, then there is also time for patience and stealth. We waited, stayed hidden,

we watched their parked truck, and then waited some more. After about an hour we saw no other movement, no vehicles, no other people, nothing. They were alone and no evidence they were being followed. We moved in on them. Fortunately, we signaled to them as we got to within 50' or they probably would have shot us.

There had been a smaller guy and two really big guys in the back of this little pick-up truck, not sure what make or model. There was also a driver and the passenger. The driver and the three in the back got out; the two big guys from the back of the truck took up a defensive posture each taking a side to watch. The smaller guy stayed in the bed of the truck acting as kind of a lookout. All were armed.

The driver started the truck back up and turned it around, obviously positioning himself for a quick escape should it be needed. I respected that, good move. The driver and passenger both stayed in the truck. One of the big guys melted away into the dark. Don tracked him the entire time with NV, he was never out of our sight.

As I said, we waited until we were sure that all was OK, we didn't want a set-up to walk into. So who gets to make the approach? Me of course, lucky me. And no, I wasn't about to flash my shiny badge and yell "freeze!" I had no idea for sure who these guys were, but I was thinking they must be the folks we were supposed to meet. I mean honestly, who else could they have been?

After making myself known by softly calling out to them but while staying behind cover, I kept surveying the area and listening for anything unusual. My Situational Awareness was in hyper-drive. They acknowledged me and I moved forward slowly, but only me, everyone else stayed in-place watching for any potential threats. As I got closer Don whispered over the radio to me that the big guy that had been in the shadows was maneuvering around to my right to form the second leg of the "L." A classic defensive maneuver to put someone at a 90 degree angle from me. I couldn't shoot whoever was in front of me and the guy directly to my right before the second guy would drop me like a sack of potatoes. These guys knew what they were about, but we were better; we had a NV scope and rifle on both guys the whole time.

So the driver gets out of the truck and takes a position where I would have three lines of fire aimed at me. They had covered me very well; very professional. The passenger still wasn't out of the truck. The driver asked

me a couple identifying questions to verify I was their contact. I got the answers right and I provided a code word to let them know I wasn't under duress. The passenger then got out.

"Brother Tim, how are you doing?" the older man was saying as he approached me. I couldn't believe my eyes, I was stunned. All I could think at the time was...Yeah, talk about a "high value resource!" Now I understood the need for stealth, secrecy, and the whole *James Bond* thing.

"Ah, Brother Tim, that is you isn't it? Brother Nelley described you pretty well to me. Based on his description you are missing a few pounds since he saw you last but I am pretty sure you are the person I think you are." He was extending his hand to me as he approached. He was a little wobbly on his feet but one of the big guys was right beside him in a split second providing a little needed assistance.

"Yes sir, I am me. Sorry about losing the weight sir. I apologize." Yeah I know, I sounded like an idiot. I was caught completely by surprise. I was expecting someone from the church that needed help but I was not expecting this person; never in a million years. Nope...not here...not now...certainly not with me.

He just chuckled a little bit, "Brother Tim, I put my pants on one leg at a time just like you do. Actually, at times one of these fine men has to help me, especially lately. Please, relax, I am in your debt and I thank you for helping this tired, old man out of a jam."

"Yes sir!" Yup, that's all I said. My brain would just not go back to functioning; the lights were out and no one was home.

"Well, Brother Tim, are you going to fix us breakfast out here or do you have some other place in mind that would be a bit better? I am thinking Denny's or IHOP would be wonderful!"

Inside I thanked him for the humor; now my brain finally started to function again. I gave the "clear" signal on my radio; within 60 seconds I heard the first truck start up. We moved away from the little truck that they had driven up in. The big guys were still on alert and in "guard dog mode." I gave them both a 15 second briefing on what to expect and they relaxed noticeably but they still hadn't talked yet. They were really into just nodding their heads.

Did I mention they were big? These guys were every bit of six-foot-six, maybe more. They were built like two really big, muscled guys that could knock out any NFL linebacker with one punch. I don't normally feel

short at six-foot-one, but tonight I felt very short, almost puny next to these human mountains.

I could hear the other trucks start up; they were already in position to move out so all that was left was to load up. I told the Mexican driver to not move his little truck, not even start it up, until we had been gone for 30 minutes. He nodded, I was not at all sure that he would follow the instructions. I was never introduced to the driver and he never spoke a word. I really didn't want him driving off at the same time so we kept as low a profile as possible. Plus, I wanted a head start and make him a better potential target than us.

Let's call our special guest, our high value resource, Brother Elder for ease of writing and for OpSec. So I explained to Brother Elder what we would be doing as I was walking him towards my truck. He would be riding with me.

To the towering hunks of muscled human flesh he softly said, "Boys, why don't you let me ride with Brother Tim. You won't be insulted if I ride with him alone will you? Of course if that is OK with you Brother Tim?" These weren't questions, they were very polite instructions to all of us.

I answered "fine with me" with little thought as to any other viable option. I mean, come on, I am going to object or something? The big guys just nodded as they each headed for the front and rear escort vehicles. Brother Elder and I headed for my truck which was sitting with the doors open, motor running, ready to go. Nice to have good help around.

"You know those wonderful young men don't talk very much. They are just fantastic men. I love them dearly. But I have to make up for them not talking much. Or is it the other way around?" Of course he was smiling, it was meant as a joke. I was liking Brother Elder more and more. Before we all saddled up he asked if we could have a prayer. He asked if anyone minded if he said it. Silly questions; however, very polite and with no malice intended.

Talk about a prayer, my gosh, it was as if I spent several minutes looking into heaven. And that was only a prayer for our safety while we traveled. Imagine what he could do if he really got into it!

I helped him into the truck and off we went. We didn't talk at all until we got back onto the main two-track; the drivers, including myself, had to concentrate in order for us to follow the roads with NV on and lights out.

“Well done Brother Tim, your little band seems to know what they are doing. I appreciate that, and I appreciate all the trouble you are going through just for me.”

I laughed out loud and told him how much of an honor it was to be of assistance to such a man as he. He chuckled muttering a thank you. We did some small talk for a bit, he explained how he had been stranded in South America when all this broke out. There had been tickets on a commercial flight to Salt Lake City until his flight got canceled. Then there was a private jet arranged; it got stolen less than 15 minutes before they were to board. At that point the church leadership made the decision to start moving him overland towards Salt Lake City. It was obvious he had been traveling for weeks.

The two big guys are as you have already guessed his personal security detail. There had been four; two hadn't made it this far. One was dead and the other was injured and then captured as they passed through Costa Rica. Brother Elder got very despondent talking about that part of the trip. Some of the experiences sounded very common for perilous times; more than a couple sounded miraculous to say the least. Brother Elder got tears in his eyes at one point as he explained that during one segment of the trip the security guys took turns carrying him on their backs. He explained that his “old legs” just couldn't keep moving due to arthritis.

He is old, up there in years and somewhat unsteady on his feet at times. They hit a stretch where they were passing through mountains and that is when he just couldn't walk any more. They carried him on their backs for hours at a time, sometimes running to evade trouble. You could see he was deeply touched and grateful for them. He made me promise that when we got to camp they would be well fed...WELL fed. He said they had lost quite a bit of weight. What?!?!?

I had to laugh at that and he snickered a little bit, “Yeah, hard to imagine. You should have seen them before they lost a bunch of their weight. Unfortunately, fine men like them with their special skills are needed in that part of the world.” I told him that I thought they were now needed in all parts of the world, including the USA. He didn't respond.

We got quiet when we had to switch back to NV for a few miles, almost 30 minutes actually. Tough piece of ground and stealth was needed.

Once we got back on a fairly main road he started right in again, “So, Brother Tim, care to tell me what is bothering you so much?”

Knock me over with a feather, “Sir, I bet you say that to all your escorts.” Yeah, sounded even stupider to me at the time than what it does now.

“Brother Tim, there are times when I have a sense of humor and can be quite funny; this is not one of those times. Would you care to talk about what is bothering you so much?”

OK, and how do you feel about insulting a servant of the Lord? I am an idiot!

“I am sure no offense was intended and none was taken Tim. But please talk to me, you need to.”

Do you have any idea how hard it is to drive at night, using almost no light, talking to a servant of the Lord with tears in your eyes?

I proceeded to pour out my soul to him for the next hour and he never said a word as I spoke. When I was done I noticed he was crying, tears flowing freely down his cheeks, huge tears. He kept wiping them away but the tears kept coming for both of us. There we are, grown men, maybe 130+ years of age between us, sobbing our eyes out.

“Why are you crying Brother Elder?” I asked him.

“Your suffering has been great, your sorrow is unimaginable, your pain unbearable and without the Lord’s tender mercies it will become intolerable and very difficult for your soul. Your Heavenly Father knows you and loves you; he is concerned about you and the ‘Father – son’ relationship between the two of you.” He went on, “but right now two things I ask of you; may I have time to pray about those things you have shared with me? And may I please nap a while? I am very tired?”

And the response to these requests only had one real option. He slept the rest of the way, not a peep out of him for hours. He woke up as we were entering camp. “I have been a bit of a sloth. I am sorry; I wasn’t a very good traveling companion was I? Can my boys get a bite to eat please and is there any chance I can have a shower or a bath?”

Before I could answer Candice Wilder met the truck and several of the women had him swept away before I knew what was happening. The rest of us were left standing there like we were chopped liver. Even the bodyguards were being tended to, but noooooooooooooo, not us, we were on our own. I did notice Mary paying a whole lot of attention to one of the body guards, and he seemed to enjoy it. I went to bed; the first leg of our mission was over. I didn’t know how the word got to camp before we did.

Actually, I never asked, it just slipped my mind. Found out later Roy had called in on the Ham with a cryptic radio message letting them know what was happening.

Well, it is getting light out now and I hear Mickey getting up. I will stop for now and maybe get a chance to make another journal entry later this morning. We are trying to have some downtime right now. Kinda lick our wounds, plan our next move. I did tell Brother Elder about my dream. He seemed interested in it, asked me how many times I had the dream and what were my feelings at the end of the dream? Then he asked me if the dream violated any commandment or church policy that I knew of. What a strange question.

Before I shut down the laptop I do want to mention something - it's cold! I just realized it is cold in the cabin, my fingers kinda hurt. And now that the light is coming through the windows I can see there is some frost on the windows. Silly that I am just now noticing the cold.

Noon - Well, I was able to get back to sleep after Mickey made Lara and I breakfast. I know she is trying to butter us up hoping for a positive answer to the baptism request. Tomorrow is Sunday, the day it is supposed to happen. Oooooopppsssss! No answer yet and time is getting short. Who knows what will happen if I don't have the right answer. Great, just what I need right now, I might just break an 11-year olds' heart. Just great!

Oh, I saw the one bodyguard talking with Mary again, they were walking towards the main cabin. Probably to feed him for the 10th time since they got here no more than 7 hours ago.

Dream happened again. But this time at the end the rope or chain or whatever it was that was weighing me down or more like holding me back from the family member snapped. It broke, I heard this big bang. At that point I was no longer tethered but I also woke up at that moment.

11:15 pm - OK, how do I try and get all of the latest in my journal with so much happening? But I should try to keep it in sequence so it makes the most sense. It's going to be a very long night of me writing in this journal but it will be worth it. It could end up an encyclopedia by the time I am done!

So, lunch time I got up, ate a little and got updated on the situation (SitRep) around camp. Thankfully nothing at all was happening around camp, everything very quiet, we need it that way for a while. Mike brought me up to speed on what is happening on the Ham. Arkansas is under King

Urkel's thumb. It fell; it fell hard. There were a couple large scale gunfights; "battles" I guess we should be calling them now. Lots of people dead that had been resisting King Hewsane's invasion; mostly civilians, some LEO's fighting with them. Mike wasn't clear on what happened with the former National Guard turned state militia. Most of the details were just so unknown at this point. So much confusion.

On a very bad note, a whole bunch of LDS churches have been burned down in the Patriot States, and a significant number of church members killed. This is all based on some supposed support that church has for the President and against the rebellion. Evidently some of the members were trying to protect church property. No one is saying specific numbers; probably no one knows the real numbers yet, probably never will. This Alexis Janes pervert is congratulating those that are "giving the Devil what he deserves," and he is encouraging more of the same saying "it is their duty" to do this crap. The more the better is what he is saying. Sooner or later he will get his due, if not in this life, then the next. He seems to be the primary driver of it.

After the time with Mike I headed back to the cabin to spend some time with Lara and Mickey. As soon as I walk in the door Mickey is asking me if I am ready for her baptism on Sunday. I didn't lie to her, I told her "I wasn't ready yet," and I promptly got "*the look*" again. She is getting good at it! Someone had to have taught her. Then again, maybe women are just born with that ability. Anyways, after *the look* she smiled this great big sweet smile and said it would be her best birthday present ever.

Yes, you read that right, Sunday is her birthday. We never knew, we never asked, she never said anything until just then. I was thinking man-o-man, that hole just keeps getting deeper and deeper that I stepped into. More praying tonight, I was thinking I just had to figure this out, or pack my bags and move to another county.

I headed over to see how Sheila was doing, and then Tina was next on my rounds. Tina is resting but everyone is worried about the possibility of infection and how she will adjust to being two fingers short on her left hand. Fortunately, the two missing fingers are her pinky and ring fingers. If you can associate "fortunate" with that situation. Sheila won't stay still, she is like a caged tiger wanting to get up and walk around. Her new husband is acting like a hen-pecked new husband; and he is beside himself

with worry. Oh well, he wanted to marry her, now he can deal with her. Yeah, but she is worth it from what I can tell.

Then about this time Brother Elder comes out of his cabin to stretch his legs. We chatted about a couple things; then he asked about the possibility of a meeting tonight with everyone. I told him I didn't see a problem and that I would get it lined up. He headed off to check on his "big guys." I bet he wanted to make sure they were being fed. Those guys can eat! They are making a big dent in the food storage.

That evening we had a big meal together, more like a feast. It was fantastic, everyone eating together and talking, lots of activity, and people laughing. We needed that time for sure; kinda like healing and moving on. Rancher Bill's family joined us and it felt good to have them with us. We seldom get everyone together in one spot like that. We don't want it to be easy on some potential enemy to take us all out at once.

What was interesting was Brother Elder himself asked for all of us to be there for the meal. We tried to explain to him about the security, etc. but he wouldn't hear of it. If I can get the words right, "This night there is no need for your guards; there are no guards required. No one will bother this camp. Please bring everyone in to enjoy the food and fellowship that you all so richly deserve." And so it was done, period; not a single person objected, no one.

The meal must have lasted a couple of hours, it was like this million course meal, the food just kept coming and coming. And of course the two big guys just kept eating and eating. It was utterly amazing how much those two ate. And of course Mary was glued to the one guy, and I mean glued. She waited on him hand over fist; no one else existed in her world but this guy. She was very "focused" to say the least! Gee, I wonder what that means? Duh!

The dogs were laying around all over the cabin. I am sure they strategically placed themselves to maximize the food that would *accidentally* fall to the floor.

Then just when everyone thought they couldn't eat anymore out come the pies! We had fresh baked pies! The women had gotten into the sugar, white flour, and canned fruit and of course LARD. Lard makes the best crusts. But there was one last surprise: milk, fresh milk!!

We hadn't known anything about it but Rancher Bill had made a deal for a milk cow and it had calved about four weeks ago and was just now

giving drinkable milk. It was like we had some advanced alien civilization land and show us some kind of new technology. Almost eight gallons of fresh, delicious technology, and so cold it made your teeth hurt. They had kept the milk in a propane powered refrigerator/freezer. We knew we had all died and gone to heaven at the same time, the entire group of us, all at once.

After we gorged ourselves on pie and milk for another 45 minutes or so, the tables were cleared, dishes washed, Mike had one of his last smokes. We just sat around talking about how full we all were. There was such a fantastic feeling in the cabin with the group. Life was good right then. We needed it.

The dogs all looked like they were asleep or close to it. I really think they were enjoying the closeness with all of their people. And yes, as always, Max wasn't more than 2" away from Mickey at any one time. And Ally never far from Lara either. I thought I use to have a dog, evidently not any more.

Then Brother Elder asked if he could say a few words and everyone either nodded or quietly said, "of course."

Now, I can never in any possible way relate the next hour. He just spoke, quoted scriptures, related stories and at the end he bore a testimony of Jesus Christ. I am not talking just a testimony; I am talking a 100% surety of Christ as our Lord and Savior. When he said the Christ was the literal Son of God you knew it was true, there was no doubt in anyone's mind.

There wasn't a dry eye in the house, people were hugging each other, tears flowed and some were openly sobbing. But it was a feeling of joy - pure, clean, clear, unrestrained joy - like I have never felt before in my life.

But here is the strangest part. Within maybe three minutes of Brother Elder saying "amen" there was a knock at the door. Yes, I said a knock at the door of the main cabin where all of us were. We had closed the door because it was cold outside once the sun went down.

Everyone was in shock and no one moved to answer the door. I did see a couple others, besides myself, reach for their pistols. But no one else moved, we just stared at the door. Then the knock came again, stronger this time, purposeful.

Finally Roy went over and opened the door and there stood an older man, probably in his 70's, I'm not really sure. He asked if we were the

“militia folks.” Roy just told him “yes” and invited him in. And now the second biggest surprise after the knock; in comes his wife and 6 young girls. His wife looked to be about his age, the girls ranging in ages 7 – 16 or so.

The first thing I noticed was the smell, they all smelled really bad. I mean you could smell them from all the way across from the room.

Next thing you know Tina and Candice was shushing everyone out the door, giving orders to the other women and girls. Plates were coming out of the kitchen and then I was out in the dark with all of the men except Brother Elder.

Just in case we went ahead and put out our normal security, plus a little extra. These folks were no threat but they may have been followed.

So much for a normal night. Or was this the *new* normal where nothing is normal anymore?

I gotta take a break, then I will get back to writing.

2 am - (so I guess technically it is September 12th, so sue me)

I am back from my “break.” It is very cold tonight; I wouldn’t be surprised if it is at or below freezing. A big difference up here in the mountains compared to the desert floor where we were living before everything went belly up. It would be kind of nice if we had some kind of way to know and track the weather. Anyways, back to last night...

So nothing else really happened, quiet night. I learned later that this older couple had this whole group of girls. One of the girls, the 14-year old I think, is their granddaughter. The other girls all know each other from their church group; they’re Methodists, went to Sunrise Methodist church in Las Cruces if I understood it right. The older couple had a place on the outskirts of Deming and when things started going bad the girls’ families asked if the girls could stay with the older couple just until it got better.

Well, things never got better and the families never came for the girls. Actually there were seven girls to start with but one got sick and died. A diabetic by the sounds of it. It is then that the couple started thinking about what they should do. They had heard about our group through the grapevine. They got a message to the sheriff and asked him if he had heard of us. The Sheriff gave them directions to find us. That was nice of him. Really????

He gave these folks directions to find us ! ! ! ! ! So who else knows where we are and who else did he tell and who else is going to find us?????

For crying out loud, the man is an idiot!! Let me think this through - he gave people our location, then directions on how to find us ! ! ! ! ! OK, sorry, you can tell I am not real happy. However, that being said I am glad that this particular couple did find us, they really needed some help. I better stop before I bust a gasket.

So this morning we woke up to frost on the cabin windows again; it felt really cold last night. We had a breakfast in the main cabin, not everyone but most folks. It was interesting talking to the older couple. The new girls really didn't talk at all; it is almost as if they are in shock or they're just real scared. We know enough to not try and force them into conversations. The other girls in camp will engage with them at the right level and at the right time; it takes time.

The older couple did talk about a real problem in Akela Flats, east of Deming about 20 miles. Evidently, some of the girls in the area have been abducted and a gang of some kind has turned up in Akela Flats. We've known for a long time that girls and younger women have been forced into sex-slavery but we never knew of a specific location, now we do. They gave us some details, as much as they knew. Now, what do we do about it, if anything?

We got a little worried about the security of the camp so a team did a long patrol to look for signs that anyone is watching us again. Thankfully, nothing turned up. Our "tattle tales" were swept and reset. Another patrol will check them again tomorrow to look for fresh signs of people in our area.

The rest of the day was spent mostly visiting; some work on cabins, and other kinda normal daily stuff. We decided that nothing major work-wise would be attempted for a while unless absolutely necessary. I am wondering if this is a "feel good" thing from Brother Elder being here or what. But it *feels* so good around camp right now.

Speaking of which, Brother Elder has had a steady stream of people visiting with him all day except during his naps. He's taken something like four naps today. And yes, we're counting. He seems to have been worn out by his months long ordeal and is now comfortable enough to relax and recuperate. What's interesting is there no discussion on when we transport him to the Arizona group, and that is just fine with me. I like having him around.

Just to keep you up-to-date, the bodyguard (still don't know his name) was seen with Mary a whole bunch today. It was kind of nice to see her in a totally different frame of mind, almost normal. And I can understand the attraction he would have to her, she is very pretty.

Later in the evening we had our "9/11 Remembrance Service." We had been planning a little service to remember that day. Seems like that day was the real start of the serious downfall of the country. I mean "downfall" as in the Patriot Act, the NDAA, NSA spying on our own citizens, and all of the Executive Orders. And let's not forget the militarization of the police around the country with all the military equipment given to the police departments. I think I can see where stuff started to go bad on 9/11 and accelerated to lightspeed once Hewsane got elected.

Anyway, at the service we had everyone there (except security) and a couple of songs were sung, a prayer or two, and then I talked (they wanted me to since I used to be a structure firefighter). Nothing too heart wrenching, I just talked about the actual 9/11 day. I had just come off duty and told about how I returned immediately to the fire station and how our department handled it. It was just a nice little service. Afterwards, no one really wanted to leave. We just kind of sat there quietly talking amongst ourselves in small groups. I knew how I was feeling; I was wondering if anyone else felt the same. Some did.

Finally, Mike expressed what the rest of us were thinking; he asked Brother Elder if he had anything he would like to share with us. Brother Elder is so funny, he leaned back in his chair and said, "Weeeeeeeelllllllll, I didn't have anything planned but maybe I could muster up a word or two."

It was a little less intense than the other night, more along the lines of a grandfather sharing loving stories with his family. Then about one and a half hours into it he stopped and asked if we could have a prayer and for all of us to have the spirit to be with us.

After the prayer he began to speak again, but this time he spoke directly to us and about us as a group. He relayed to us the gratitude that Heavenly Father has for the work we are doing at such great personal expense. He said we were not done, there was more work to be accomplished, more souls "desperately" needed our help. He encouraged us to not fail those that needed us and that we would be blessed greatly in this life and the life to come if we came to their aid.

Then he paused again, I think he was getting more inspiration fed to him. He said this trial of ours would not last much longer, but at least a season. That the Prophet himself would tell us when our mission was complete and then to come home. He did tell us that not all would make it home, that there would be some of us that would fall and there was more suffering to endure. But that new spirits would join us, our posterity would be blessed as they grew in numbers, that the church would be blessed and enriched by our mission and what we accomplished here on this earth.

He got very quiet for a minute, then was sullen, somber...

“A great trial will come upon some of you as individuals, you will see dark skies. Your very souls may be pierced and you will feel the heat of hell. But your pains will be eased, your suffering will then be as naught. It is then that the Lord will reach out to you, He will strengthen you, He will welcome you. Release yourself at that moment and bask in His presence and in His love, for He is the Son of God, your Brother. He shall never fail you.”

We all sang “How Great Thou Art,” then those of us that are members started singing “We Thank of God for Prophet.” Some of the others joined in, we had sung it before from those little hymnals. Mickey ran over to the cabinet and got the few little hymn books out and passed them around. She got them passed around about the time the song was over but we started singing it again, then a third time. I think we were singing it more towards Brother Elder than anyone else.

We kept picking song after song after song. We must have sung for an hour. Someone would just go to their favorite song and start singing it and then everyone would flip to that page and join in. There was probably 30+ people singing. To us the Mormon Tabernacle Choir never sounded this good. Brother Elder never used a book at all, he would sing along as soon as someone would start out singing. He was belting out the tunes, I mean full voiced, full out singing. He really has a great voice, just a little shaky at times. You could tell he was incredibly thrilled to be there. Even the new girls sang a little. That was good to see. That night they changed, not a lot, but enough. I am not sure they ever will.

The last song we sang was the National Anthem. Everyone was standing with their hand over their heart. I don't know anyone that wasn't full out crying by then. What a night!

We headed to bed about 11 pm, you can tell I didn't sleep long by the time I got up this morning. But now I am headed to bed after I pray about Mickey's baptism again. God please help me get this right.

September 12 (Sunday) –

6:30 am - Obviously I slept in, but that is easy to do when you stay up so darn late! It got very cold last night; hard frost on the windows this morning. It's time to start up the little wood stoves in each cabin at night I think. Church is today and still no answer to my prayers about Mickey's baptism. I am a dead man!

1:15 pm - You know, even though some people are young, even the kids that are 12 years old, they can still have very old and wise spirits; it's amazing! In this case I am referring to Mickey. She came to me first thing at breakfast, kinda like Christmas morning asking to open the presents. She asked me how I was going to baptize her since we didn't have an actual baptismal font. I hadn't even thought about that detail.

I explained to her that I hadn't gotten an answer but I had tried and tried. She asked me if I had "pondered it" correctly and were my prayers with a contrite spirit and sincere heart. I told her yes and that I was very sorry that I couldn't get an answer. Then she surprised me and impressed me.

"Well, maybe that is the answer. Will you promise me you will fast about it next?"

I told her I most certainly would.

Our church services were wonderful and very, very uplifting. Brother Elder asked to address us for our short little service. The first thing he talked about was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and how the sacrament was part of that. He asked if we all understood how that worked. Everyone was nodding their head, even the kids. He asked if we had any bread available and would someone be kind enough to get some bread and a glass of water as well. About two minutes later it was sitting on the table in front of him.

He asked for us to have a prayer and partake of the sacrament. This man, this giant of the church, a man that could well be the next Prophet, then knelt down and blessed the bread. Brian Wilder passed around the plate for all to take a piece. Next Brother Elder blessed the water and it too was passed around. When it was over Brother Elder

instructed that we should do that each week during our services. He explained what the power of the priesthood is and that Brian Wilder and I had that priesthood authority.

Next Brother Elder asked for us to bear our testimonies of God and His Son Jesus Christ as the spirit moved us to do so. Candice Wilder was the first to bear her testimony, then Mickey, then one after another many others bore their testimony as well. However, I held back. It had been nearly 17 years since I bore my testimony in a formal testimony meeting. If you could call this “formal.” The spirit would not let me sit there and keep my testimony to myself. I got up and shared my knowledge of God and Jesus Christ; it poured out of me. While I was doing that much of the darkness that had infected me left.

Brother Elder concluded the meeting by talking of blessings and how they worked, who they were from, by what authority they were given and that all blessings should be welcomed. He said that while he was here he would be honored to provide formal “hands-on” blessings as needed. He asked if Brian Wilder would handle the scheduling for the blessings.

After the service there was a line 15 people deep to talk with Wilder to set-up blessings. Brother Elder said he needed to rest and read a little. He retreated to the Wilder RV that they had so graciously provided to him and his bodyguards.

We all just drifted back to our families; our extended and expanded families. That is why I am writing this, I have a little time and it is still fresh in my mind. Later we are going to review our food storage to try and figure out a plan for stretching it and how long it will last.

Wilder is at the door...gotta go!

9:15 pm - Talk about an emotionally draining day. The reason Brian was at the door was Brother Elder wished to see me and him together. To make a long story short he formed our group as a Branch of the church. And I was to serve as the Branch President. When I tried to turn him down, he got this incredible stern look on his face, “Brother, you bore testimony that God lives, Jesus is the Christ and that we are led by a Prophet did you not?”

Before I could even answer, “Of course you did, I was there, I heard it, I was there. Brother, when the Lord calls you there is only one correct answer and that is ‘yes.’ Haven’t you learned that by now? You served as a Bishop did you not?” These were not questions, this was me being

chastised. “I believe at some point you have raised your hand to the square and sustained the leaders of the church. Do you not do so now? Brother, I extend this calling of Branch President to you once again. What is your answer?”

“Yes, of course I will serve,” was my response just barely above a whisper. And I swear Brian Wilder was trying his best to suppress a smirk.

“Then it is done, I will set you apart as the Branch President of the newly formed Patriot Canyon Branch. I will carry that information back with me to Salt Lake and have it entered into the records of the church. Brethren, you have your work cut out for you, this is your flock now given to you by the Lord himself, the Great Shepherd. You are the sheepdogs set apart to protect and nourish this flock. You are to make decisions as the spirit directs. You are remote from church headquarters but not remote from the Holy Ghost, use it, and let it guide you. It is done. Would you please be so kind as to ask Mike to join us?”

To shorten the whole day a bit (maybe I will go back at some point and write more if time permits) I will consolidate the entries. Mike joined us, Brother Elder asked Mike to join the church as soon as possible. He explained what had just taken place and told Mike that the Lord needed his help and Mike needed the blessings. Then Brother Elder asked Mike to join us in giving Mary, Roy’s daughter, a blessing. Mary was asked to join us as well as Roy. It was a beautiful blessing, but I will write none of it, it is private. By the fruits of her tree you will know of the blessing she was given.

At the conclusion of the blessing Wilder said that he believed that Mary had something she wished to ask her father. She did, and she asked. She wanted to know if she could marry the bodyguard. She said his name but I can’t even begin to spell it because it is Samoan. Let’s just call him “Bob” because I can spell that. Roy said yes through tear-filled eyes. Brother Elder asked if he could meet with me alone for a minute or two, everyone else cleared out.

The meeting had so many pieces to it that I should have taken notes. Bottom line, the Lord loves me, period. And for me to accept Him and my mission and to not worry about the things to come. That my posterity would be blessed for the sacrifices we were making. I explained to him that my three adopted children could be dead as far as I knew. He just looked at me for a few seconds and said, “Doubt not the Lord.”

He went on to explain that it is imperative that we go to Akela Flats and rescue the young women. “They are held against their will in that evil and wicked place.” He said, “Ask the Lord for guidance and he will show you how it is to be done. Do not fail in this mission,” he told me. Heavenly Father’s daughters are being held, controlled, and used by pure evil - Satan himself. You and your group can’t save everyone but these you can save. We can save these precious girls through your faith. Leave tonight after midnight, return by noon tomorrow. I will take them and the other young girls with me to Salt Lake, there they will be cared for and nourished back to health. There is one among them that is important to you, do not leave without her and do not fail her. There is another that depends on her safe return; her very membership in the church depends on your success or failure. Do not fail.”

OK, wow, is this Lehi and Nephi time or what???? Go get the plates...

No, we didn’t forget, we celebrated Mickey’s 12th birthday at dinner. What a wonderful opportunity. She is such a great child, we love her so much. She and I have a special bond, it is hard to describe, and I feel like her father and brother but so much more. It is as if I have known her for a very long time. There are times when she hugs me that I feel her soul and I feel overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude from her soul for saving her that night. What would have happened to her I cannot imagine. What I would do if something would happen to her now? I pity whoever tests that!

I look forward to the days ahead as she grows into a woman, finds the right man, and brings wonderful children into this world. I can die an old, happy man knowing she is joyful and that her life is filled with love and family. I will rest peacefully knowing that has come to pass. I hope this world settles down enough for that to happen, that is my prayer. She deserves it. How blessed Lara and I are, our chance, last chance, to be parents.

It is so comforting to have Lara by my side, she is my strength. And she is so full of common sense, and love for me. How do you ever express enough gratitude for such a blessing?

September 14 (Tuesday) –

3 pm - It’s hard to know where to go with this experience, there are so many things to relate. The bottom line is we were successful and we

followed inspiration. I really want anyone that may read my journal to know what can transpire when you do follow the Lord.

We left camp on Sunday night (9/12) just after midnight. It was an extremely dark night, clouds blotted out the moon and any stars. We knew where we were going, it was no secret. What we didn't know is what we would find when we got there or how to deal with it.

We weren't in our normal fire team configuration; too many injuries, etc. for that to happen. Plus, this was going to be a different kind of mission. I was determined that no one was going to get injured or die on our end, and that all the girls would come back alive and unhurt. We put together the people that we thought we needed; and John Wayne was going. We needed his long range reach with the .50cal.

We drove straight there; no issues on our way there. It does surprise me how open the roads are. Originally, there were gangs that tried to set up roadblocks, check points, etc. But there were too many gunfights at these locations and too many people getting injured or killed. People were just plain determined to get through and it was no longer worth the price for gangs to try and block their way. Out on the interstates it was different in places like El Paso. The Aztec Barrio gang was able to place some very significant firepower at their choke points. Anyone stopped was robbed, enslaved or killed. Outside the cities in the boondocks no one cares to risk their life setting up roadblocks and there isn't enough reward to make it worth the risk. Bottom line - a lot of the roads are open but you have to be careful and have the fuel.

So we arrived at a good staging point about two miles away from our target, up a pretty deep arroyo. We stashed the vehicles, broke out the camo netting, put some bushes up against the sides, and then we held our final briefing. We left two people to watch over the vehicles from a distance; they would be a reserve for us as well, just in case. We never leave people in the immediate vicinity of the vehicles. Why? Vehicles are easy to spot even with camo; so we don't want our people to be right there with the vehicles if the vehicles are spotted. That way they can mount a defense with the element of surprise and the safety of distance. In other words - the vehicle watchers can control the encounter not the other way around.

Once the briefing was over and the vehicle watch was set, John Wayne and I headed towards the target. The remaining folks moved off to a safe, but nearby position to rest and even sleep if they could. Few did.

John Wayne and I made decent time, it could have been better but I couldn't keep up with him. He is an animal in the field; he had to slow down considerably so I could keep up. When moving in enemy territory (when you expect contact) you can only safely average one mile per hour or less. When in unfamiliar territory with little threat potential you can only average about 1 mile per hour or so safely. It took us about 2-1/2 hours to travel the two miles to the target. By now it was almost 5 am. We made the decision to lay up and watch the target until daylight.

It appears that there is steady traffic in and out of the place, no shortage of customers to be sure. That realization made me ill. We got a good feel for the routine: vehicle drives up to the main gate, guard challenges them, an exchange of words takes place, the guard radios to someone, the gate is opened, the vehicle drives in and parks. And then the vehicle occupants enter a construction trailer, leave within 2 – 4 minutes, go to a series of other construction trailers (4 that we counted) and enter one. They normally leave within 20 – 40 minutes (never more than 55 minutes), return to their vehicle and exit the property.

There are at least 1 – 2 roving guards around the construction trailers. There is at least one guard in the first trailer, and someone placed on the roof of the adobe house. It appears that the house is the main headquarters (HQ) and appears to be defended by two guards (1 inside and 1 outside). Based on the appearance of the rifle that the roof person has (BIG scope) we suspect him to be a sniper that is the overwatch for the front gate.

The compound was a construction office and equipment yard at one time and has a basic chain-link fence around it topped with barbed wire. The gate is reinforced steel tubing and appears that it could withstand any attempt by any of our vehicles to crash it. We are pretty sure that in addition to the 4 – 5 guards that were plainly visible, there has to be at least another three or so, plus whoever runs the place. We heard dogs but were unable to see any or ascertain the number of dogs.

This is no easy target. We don't know exact number of defenders, they are spread out, and they move around. Their movements are mostly unpredictable in both location and timing. We also don't know how the inside of the buildings are laid out, guarded, reinforced, etc. In other

words, we know a bunch but we don't know nearly enough. And that is how you get dead doing a mission like this.

John Wayne and I talked about it and decided that a direct attack would have a high likelihood of disaster for us. We don't have the numbers for one thing and we are seriously lacking enough good intelligence on the place. However, we came up with a tentative plan; we agreed that we'd run it pass the whole mission team and ask for feedback. The more minds that can think through a plan, the better. Nice to remember some of my Team SA training.

So we got back to the mission team, pulled in the vehicle guards and talked about it while we ate some breakfast. We talked about it for almost an hour before coming to a decision, and then we all prayed about it. It was unanimous that we had the Lord on our side for this one. David and Mike headed back to the cabins to retrieve our trade goods. Yes, they were traveling in broad daylight but that was unavoidable. But that was going to be far less dangerous than what Brian Wilder and I were about to embark on.

He and I got the most beat-up of our mission vehicles, revamped our personal look to resemble a couple of scumbags. Then we finished readying ourselves waiting to get the "go-ahead" from John Wayne. He took about two hours before calling in over the radio that he was ready. We acknowledged him and headed towards the target.

We got to the front gate, the guard approached just as we had observed before, but a different guard this time. He was friendly enough but cautious and trying to read our faces. Wilder was not going to do the talking, he is way too "pure," a lifer in the church. Me on the other hand, I was not that far away from the lifestyle that would not be out of place around people like this, or a business like this.

The guard had never seen us before so while being cautious he was trying his best to be a salesman. After some discussion and some colorful language that made Wilder blush, we were headed through the gate to the "toll booth" as they called it. There was no attempt to disarm us. But then again, Wilder only had his pistol showing and me, I had my Sig220 on my side and my AR laying on the floor of the truck a little under my seat.

At the "toll booth" we were asked what we were looking for. I told them just the "basic" which brought some laughter from the scumbag that appeared to be running the place. I told them my buddy had lost his wife

and was looking for some companionship; I just needed to be with a young woman. I asked him for an idea of how young the girls were and what the price was. I was trying to sound like a normal scumbag customer.

This really big burly guy laughed again and said young was not going to be a problem; then they offered me girls as young as 10. It was all I could do to both keep from throwing up and putting a bullet in his head. But there were four guards in the trailer plus two guys that looked as if they were the brains or storekeepers. I said that I would take the 10-year old while Wilder lined up his own companion. The pricing was strange, they asked what we had. We had brought some silver and they were fine with that. When all was said and done it was \$20 face value in silver dimes, in advance. We paid, but I just wanted to start shooting. However, that would have gotten Brian and I real dead, real quick.

We were told which trailer to go to and then to the right or left when we got in the door. We were handed a token and told to give it to the guard inside the trailer. Yeah, “take a number!” So now we knew there were guards inside each trailer. The place was well-staffed and well-armed. Wilder and I were not headed to the same trailer, that did make me a little nervous but we had an alternative plan to deal with that.

Wilder got to his trailer first, me about 50’ later. I opened the door and the trailer stank, it was horrible. Most of the stink came from the bear belly guard with brown teeth and an evil smile. He had to be a meth addict. He took my token and waived me to the door on the left, “Like ‘em young do you gramps!?”

I didn’t mind the prospect of killing him later if it came to that.

I walked through the door to a room that had a nasty mattress laid on the floor. And there was this little waif sitting there, 1000-yard stare, skinny, unwashed, unkempt, broken spirit. A precious daughter of God reduced to this. My heart started to break right then and there. My desire to sweep her up in my arms and run for the truck was only stopped by the sure knowledge that we would be dead within seconds if I tried that. For us to succeed I had to stay alive. All I could do is smile at her; she didn’t even acknowledge me, never looked at me, she just laid back and stared at the ceiling.

Within a couple of seconds Wilder was into his plan full force. I heard him yelling, heard the guard yell, and that is when I went outside with my guard shouting, “no refunds” at me as I went out the door.

Once outside I watched the guard from Wilder's trailer toss him down the stairs into the dirt with a big guy holding a shotgun on him and another guard running around the corner of the trailer. There was yet another guard coming out of the "toll booth." I went to Wilder as he was brushing himself off; he blinked once to let me know he was ok. The guy from the toll booth told us that we had to leave. We didn't argue.

As we drove out of the compound we compared notes. The guard laughed at us as we passed through the gate, we never slowed down. I felt dirtier than I had ever felt in my life, and that is saying something.

We took the long way around to get back to the rest of the team. They had waited for us, but they did so completely out of sight. Our guys are good, we couldn't see anything of them anywhere around. You would have never known they were anywhere nearby. I thought to myself at the time, what strange skills we have perfected in the last 8 months.

Everyone was a little worn out, David and Mike weren't back yet, and it was decided that we would all rest a bit. I know I was exhausted and could use some sleep. Yeah, that's right, sleep; even in the middle of the day. Besides, it was a beautiful day, sunny but not too warm, just what the doctor ordered. Sleep came easy. So did the nightmares.

About 4 pm David and Mike got back with their load, transferred it to the truck that I would be using the next day. A pretty heavy load for the little truck but it was hopefully worth more than gold to us and those girls.

Mike is here to see me, I will start back up when he leaves.

OK, Mike is gone, long talk, more to consider for the group. More than I care to think about right now so I will get lost in my writing. It is a comforting escape and I need to finish the story.

David and Mike returned and we moved the load from their truck to the truck I would be driving back to the compound. We set out security and rotated out with some folks that kept an eye on the target. They were watching for their routines and any other weaknesses but we felt confident that we knew enough. Our SA was pretty high. At least we felt we knew enough for what we had to do; although we decided it was best to go at them in the early morning. They are the typical "night life" kind of people, sluggish in the mornings, not at the top of their game. And we would need every edge we could get.

It was interesting that we all slept well that night, I think most of us were catching up on sleep that we had been missing night after night. The

night was cold, colder than I like it to be out in the open. I had my camo poncho with the heavy black liner. It was always in my pack now whenever I left camp and that liner made it pretty toasty all things considered. Had it gotten any colder I would have broken out my emergency blanket and used that under the poncho on top of the liner. Or maybe I would have used a couple of those chemical hand warmers placed up against me. Either would have made it just fine.

We ate but we ate a half mile away from the vehicles. And we slept about a quarter mile away from the vehicles and away from our dinner location. In the field we never sleep where we eat, and we rarely slept with our vehicles. Those mistakes made it far too easy to be spotted, caught, trapped, and ambushed or whatever you want to call it.

About light we got up and shook off the night's frost, then ate a hot MRE. Yum, teriyaki chicken again for breakfast!

We had a group prayer and Wilder asked for a special blessing on me that I could perform my very best. And a *performance* is exactly what it would be. The girl's futures would be at stake, and my life also. But at least the mission team members would not really be at risk, which made me feel better. Well, that and knowing John Wayne would be watching my back with that .50cal cannon he shoots with pinpoint accuracy.

At 7 am I headed off for the target in the truck which was filled to the gills with our "load" and me as nervous as I have ever been in my life. I was afraid that I wouldn't settle down enough to be convincing. John Wayne and two other of our best distant shooters left about 5:30 to get in their positions. They gave their "ready" signal on the radio about 6:45. John Wayne also gave the "all clear – all is normal" signal as well. Meaning everything appeared normal at the target.

I am sure I am not going to get this exactly right, especially the words. But I will try and relate what happened the best I can; or at least as I want it to be remembered.

I pulled up to the same gate as I had the day before with Wilder but the guard this time was the clown that made the obscene comment to me in the trailer the day before; the comment about liking them young. I had instantly despised the guy, and it hadn't changed overnight. He had that same crappy grin on his face this morning; it grew larger when he recognized me. I would love to wipe the grin off his face, permanently. Maybe today I would get lucky.

I got out and walked up to the gate and he made a comment that I don't want to repeat here. He started opening the gate to let me in but I told him to get his boss out here, I wanted to talk only to the boss. He laughed and told me to get in my truck and come in or leave before he kicked my butt right then and there. I looked him dead in the eye and told him he was five seconds from dying if he didn't tell his boss to come out and talk to me. He called his boss on the radio, one of those little family radios. I was glad he used that kind of radio, it seems everyone has them and they aren't the least bit secure. Wilder would be scanning ours for their conversation and to listen in to what was going on.

His boss said he wouldn't come out but would send "Fred." Whoever that was I had no clue. Within five minutes Fred pulled up to the gate, walked over to me and cussed at me, to me, about me; he even disparaged my mom. He basically wanted to know who I thought I was and what the heck I wanted.

He was not the boss, he had been in the toll booth trailer the day before. I knew he was maybe 2nd or 3rd in command but I wasn't really sure. I told him he wasn't important enough for me to talk to. He started to go for his pistol; but yeah, like I was born yesterday. Before he even touched his weapon I had my Sig in my hand pointed at his belly. But in the other hand I had a pint of Wild Turkey whiskey. I told him we can get along and work through this or I can kill him right on the spot, right now. He made the call to the boss, I handed him the bottle of whiskey. He took a very, very long swig.

Within minutes the "boss" shows up. He also cussed at me and asked what the heck I wanted bad enough to bother him at this time of the morning. Good, we had them at the time of day that they weren't used to dealing with problems. And I was a problem for them, they just didn't know it yet.

I told him that I wanted to make a purchase and that I could pay well, very well. He looked at me with new interest and told me, "go on." I explained to him that I had 200 pounds of canned food, 500 pounds of fresh beef, 5 bottles of Chivas Regal premium scotch, 4 cartons of Winston cigarettes, and 3 pounds of silver to make my purchase. By the look on his face I had his full attention now.

Before he could say anything I got the two clicks over my earpiece that I had been hoping for. John Wayne had their roof top sniper in his

sights and our other two shooters had the “boss” and the original gate guard in their sights. If any shooting started, at least I knew three bad guys would be dropped dead within a second or two. And probably me as well if my luck runs out. I doubt I could draw my Sig and put two shots center mass of the “second-in-command” guy fast enough. Hopefully it would never come to it, we wanted the trade to work, but you never know.

The “boss” asked me what I wanted to “buy.” My answer was simple; I told him I wanted to buy all the girls. He misunderstood and thought I meant just to have sex with them all at once, he was all agreeable to that. I explained “no, I want to actually buy them.” It was weird, he looked at me like I was nuts, as in “completely insane,” but he was no fool. He started to look around to see if there was anyone in my truck or hiding somewhere. He saw no one. Over his radio he also asked his sniper if he saw anyone. Evidently not.

He was cautious but told me he thought I had spent too much time in the sun. He then asked, “What stops us from taking what you have and watching you walk away with nothing?” I told him that would hurt my feelings and he would be dead before he touched the truck. He squinted his eyes trying to figure me out, I saw doubt flash across his eyes. The plan was working. Would it work well enough?

He told me to look around, there were three of them right there and only one of me. I told him that they would all be dead if they made any sudden move of any kind. He looked around again; his men were smiling, one chuckled. The boss got serious, he wasn’t laughing, I think he was getting worried, maybe mad. I didn’t know which. I didn’t care.

Then with no small amount of bravado he told me, “I have a man that has his crosshairs on your chest even as we speak. One word from me and you are dead before you hear the sound of his rifle.” He was trying to work this out 100% to his benefit with zero risk to his operation. But how wrong he was and he didn’t even know it. He had no idea how bad it was for him right at this point. I was ready to do anything to free those girls; anything, especially killing him.

I told him, “Buddy, your man that you have on the roof of your house has to make a 200 yard shot, my guy has to make a 600 yard shot. My man is a Marine-trained recon sniper with a .50 caliber sniper rifle ready to punch a softball-sized hole through your man on the roof.” I was not

exactly sounding like Clint Eastwood, but I was trying, “Your call, start the party whenever you want.”

He just stared at me, he wasn't sure if I was running a bluff or not. Time for me to play another card, “You can walk away with everything you have, plus everything I have in the truck, plus the truck. But I get the girls. Or you can die here today on that spot and I still get the girls.”

His goons were telling him to let them kill me but he kept them under control. By now he was getting the uneasy feeling that I was serious. “I don't think you have anyone out there let alone some Marine super-sniper. You are bluffing and you are about to get your hand called. You're gonna die moron.”

Well, it was time for me to get serious, “No, I'm a Mormon, not a moron. That is your role. Now, you stay real steady for the next few seconds. Don't make any stupid moves. I am about to prove I mean what I say.”

Before he could reply I moved my left hand ever so slightly that if someone did see me they would think I was just flexing my fingers. How surprised they would be. The “boom” was loud even from that distance but it was unmistakable. “Check with your man on the roof, see if he thinks I am serious.”

Three attempts on his radio brought no response. His goons were fidgeting and moving away creating a little distance between them and me. They must have been worried that I was some madman. Right then, right there, they were right.

“You killed my man, you killed him! What the...” he ranted on for a full minute; then threatened me for another full minute. I simply told him I didn't care if I lived or died, made no difference to me. I was prepared to die today because I just didn't care anymore, which more truth than I care to admit. But one way or another we were taking the girls with us, period. I reminded him of the truck full of booty but he was mad and he had been made a fool in front of his men. He wasn't thinking straight but he was nobody's fool either.

“I am going to kill you for what you did!” And based on seeing his men pouring out of the trailers kinda brought some credibility to that statement. I felt like I was gonna die within seconds.

But I was in no more mood to negotiate or even talk; time for another show. “You see that big, rude ignorant pervert?” as I pointed to the bad

guy that I hated from the beginning. “He will be dead in 3 seconds unless you agree.”

The pervert began to run, “three, two,” he wasn’t stopping me, he wasn’t saying anything, “one”...BOOM! The pervert dropped as he ran. Dead, most of his chest was gone and what had once been inside his chest was now spilling out all over the ground. It was a bloody mess.

Here is the best move I made all day, when they all looked to watch his man drop I pulled my Sig and put against the side of the boss’s head. “Believe me now?” I just wanted to pull the trigger. “I will consider it a deal or I will have them keep killing your men one by one,” he was glaring at me with a cold death stare. If he could kill me right then he would have had his men peel my skin right off my body.

All he said was “done.” To shorten this I will cut to the chase, by now all his men were out of the buildings, along with the couple of customers that were still there from previous night. They dropped their weapons, then part of our team drove in and started locating the girls. A couple didn’t want to come with us; they were over 18 so we didn’t force them. The others were almost in a coma-like condition but we just wanted to get them in the trucks and get out of there before something went sideways.

We flattened one tire on each of their vehicles before we left. I told their boss that they had 48 hours to be gone. And they had to burn the buildings before they left. If they didn’t burn ‘em and leave, we would will burn the buildings ourselves, and with them inside. I promised them we would come back and make sure they were gone. I do believe he knew I wasn’t kidding.

It was a weird trip back, but for now I have to go get something to eat. I have to share the highlight of the mission in regards to one of the girls; maybe the one part of the mission that meant the most to me personally. What a day and it was only getting started. And it ended on one of the few really good notes we had experienced lately.

6 pm - Full belly now soooooo where do I pick up the events of the Great Rescue Mission...

The trip was uneventful on the way back. Our female team members tended to the girls to make them feel more comfortable on the trip back to camp. We figured they had been captured by men, held captive by men, abused by men and we didn’t want them to think that this was just another

horrible event in their lives with men. Mary and Lindy did an excellent job!

As we approached the camp, about four miles out, we gave them a heads-up on the radio that we were coming in. What a sight for sore eyes that was! There was a big banner put up that said, "Welcome!" Our group's women and girls were all out in the open in plain sight clapping and cheering as we pulled in. Any of the women who were old enough, and trained, all had pistols on their sides. All of this was a very smart thing for them to do considering who we were bringing into camp. Let those poor girls know that this wasn't like where they had just left.

And once again the girls we brought in were all swept up by the women and younger girls. Evidently, they devised a way for hot baths in galvanized tubs, boiled water, BUBBLE BATH and such. Freshly laundered clothes had been prepared and of course a meal fit for a king, or I should say a meal fit for queens and princesses. Not that we men were ignored, but they got the fancy spread.

Now here is the most awesome thing of the whole mission, talk about fate, talk about inspiration from Brother Elder, talk about the Lord's hand in our lives. Even in the toughest of times the Lord does not forsake us, He knows our needs, He knows the needs of all His children and He does not fail us!

This next part was related to me by Lara since the men weren't allowed around the new girls just yet. So the newly arrived girls were eating, they already had a bath and fresh clothes but were still pretty subdued. The food was being brought out to them; Mickey was one of the servers. Then one of the newly arrived girls yells out, "Mickey!!" Mickey was so startled she dropped the bowl of dried apple slices she was carrying. Everyone looked at the girl that had just yelled out Mickey's name, nobody said anything, including Mickey. Then this girl jumped up and ran to Mickey giving her a huge hug and they both started crying.

One guess who this girl was. Come on, think about it...

Yup, it was Mickey's sister! A very small world indeed. They were inseparable for the next couple of hours while they talked and cried, then talked some more. The one depressing aspect of the reuniting of the sisters was Mickey learning that her mother was dead. She evidently was killed at some point by the men who ran the sex-slave operation we busted. That has sealed their fate for me; I will go hunting tomorrow.

That evening we had a group dinner planned, then some singing and then of course Brother Elder spoke. It was a good time, even the new girls relaxed a bit. You could see there is some serious damage done to their spirits and minds, I am glad they are going to Salt Lake with Brother Elder. They need the help, professional help.

In addition to the professional help, the girls need a lot of spiritual help as well. There has been so much damage done to them it is hard to fathom. But the much needed spiritual help started that night with the group meeting we had. Brother Elder gave each one of the girls a blessing before the end of the meeting. I have no idea how it will help, the girls are in such a deep hole. But the healing had to start somewhere, so why not here and now?

Yes, Lara and I immediately started to think how the appearance of Mickey's sister would affect our "family" now that her sister was here. What would they want to do? How would they want to handle this situation now that they were back together as a family? After all, the best I could figure is Mickey now had a legal guardian vs. our impromptu family.

Yet again, Lara and I could feel our hearts breaking but we had to remember it was all about Mickey and what was best for her. Funny, Lara was more of a strength for me in this, I have become very attached to Mickey. Maybe due to the fact of the rescue or just that we had a bond or whatever, I am not sure, but Lara saw it. She was very comforting and reassuring. It will come out what's best for the girls, that's the way it "should be and would be" Lara said. I had to trust Lara on this one.

Everyone got to bed about midnight, Mickey and her sister shared a bed together in our cabin. Max wasn't real happy; he had to sleep on the floor. But he remembered Mickey's sister from when we were neighbors so he was pleased all the same. Maybe because he now had two to protect.

So that pretty much concludes yesterday; now getting to today...

I had to get up early, it was freezing cold in the cabin, and someone had to start a little fire to warm it up a bit. I can't believe how cold it is getting at night now, and I mean below freezing kinda cold. At this elevation fall comes real early I guess. Something I am not use to.

It was nice having the two girls with us last night, bigger family. But I could see the growing gap taking place between the girls and us. I mean they were nice and polite and such, but a definite separation was there, you could feel it. It made me a little jittery and sad.

About noon today a mission team will head to the Arizona meet; they will escort the girls and Brother Elder (plus the two really big guys). The team will be gone about 4 to 7 days we are thinking, but that will depend on what they encounter along the way. While they are gone I will go hunting as I mentioned yesterday. Brother Elder asked if he could see me before he left.

I am growing suspicious of Brother Elder, every time he wants to see me or talk to me I end up, well, how do I explain this? It's just that I end up getting told stuff, asked to do stuff, sent on a mission, or he lays my soul open for me to see. And that, my friend, is a little scary.

But I better head over that way and see what he wants to "see me" about...

Wow! Brother Elder talked to me about my dream. Well, kind of. I think he talked to me about my dream but I am not sure. Let me lay out a little of what he said maybe it will remind me of something later and I can finish it up. Yes, I am becoming a little obsessive about this dream, it is very important to me.

So, at his request I related the dream again to Brother Elder with all the content, at least the best I could remember. He asked if we could have a prayer. I am use to his "requests" now, more like instructions or gentle commands.

During the prayer, which he said, I felt very, very strange. It is hard to relate in my journal in words. The closest I can get is I felt like I was sitting in the Celestial Room in the temple and having a personal one-on-one session with the Temple President or the Prophet. Something along those lines.

He read a scripture to me. Then we talked some more. He told me it appears to him that the dream is one of symbolism vs. an actual event; but the symbolism relates to a future event. He started to say something then hesitated, he read me another scripture. He talked about blessings, our group, our family ties, and our current condition. He was very aware of the meeting with Brother Nelly and the Stake President months ago. I mean he knew the details. He told me point-blank that we would be leaving this place before spring. When I reminded him we were in the mountains and the weather lent itself to cold and snow he simply told me it would be summer weather when we left. But he validated that the call for us to "come home" would come from Salt Lake and that we couldn't wait or

delay our departure for any reason once we got the call. He said there is a *reason* but he wasn't privy to what that reason was.

He talked a little about families being together. And we should be serving others with everything we had and everything we would be given and everything we had been given. He especially mentioned our lives dedicated to serving others through the Lord. I am not even going to try and say I understood all of what he told me but at least I listened, I just obviously didn't hear it all. He told me to continue to pray about it but to accept the Lord's will and understand that my whole life (past, present, and future) has been consecrated to serving others.

He asked me if my life had been one of ease or trial. I chuckled and told him it had been anything but ease, one trial after another; much of which I had failed miserably. He had this most gentle expression on his face; he assured me that the Lord knew of this. And that He had been there with me all along, even when I had stumbled far off the path.

He asked me if I remembered the story of the Iron Rod and the people in the building and those trying to stay on the path, etc. I told him that I did remember. He looked me in the eye as he told me I was never one to hold to the rod for very long but I was also one that could and would always find my way back to the path. He kinda joked and said he thought that I was "allergic to iron," but he said that I was a stoic and faithful child of God regardless of my shortcomings and failings.

Then his eyes welled up with tears and he took my hands in his (we were sitting across from each other,) he was trembling, he told me other things, special things. Those things that I never thought we could know in this life. They were amazing. They were also very personal and I don't feel this is the time nor place to share them.

What I can relate is that he told me that I was one that had it tougher than many other spirits because we were in the service of the Lord. Yet, we had to have the spirit with us to remember who we served and why. We had to use the spirit so that we didn't become lost along the way. He told me that I would not become lost again, in this life or the next, regardless of those trials that I would face. I will tell you that I was crying my eyes out at this point. I was shaking like a leaf in a hurricane. I have no earthly reason why, I just was.

He told me to be calm, to remember who I served and why. To place my trust in Him, to draw upon His strength and love; to ask Him for help whenever I needed it. A calm entered into me.

He told me one last thing, “Brother Tim, when it comes time to serve, as you will be called to do from time to time, do not hesitate, do not shrink from it, do not doubt, and have no fear. Trust that when the final trumpet will sound you will be found on the right hand of the Lord. Your posterity and the church will be blessed for untold generations to come for the service you have given and yet will give to the Lord.” (That is almost word for word, the part I put into quotes).

I was an emotional wreck by then. He let go of my hands and then said something to the effect, “Let’s make this day a grand one, ask Mickey and her sister to come in and join us. I am sure that will pick up your spirit. And please ask your lovely wife to join us as well.”

I rounded everyone up; Mickey was very concerned that I had been crying. Lara saw it too but didn’t ask anything; she held my hand all the way back to see Brother Elder.

Once we all were with Brother Elder he took command of the situation with this very calm and gentle love. He didn’t even ask, he just opened with prayer. He asked Mickey’s sister how old she was. She responded, “18 almost 19.”

“Well, you know you are now Mickey’s legal guardian, don’t you?” he prodded.

“No, I didn’t realize it but I guess with mom and dad both gone I am. Why?”

“You know that Tim and Lara here have been taking care of Mickey since the night Tim rescued her.” Brother Elder was talking calmly, gently, but somewhat firmly, “Do you think you are in any condition to care for Mickey as she should be cared for?”

He was speaking to Mickey’s sister but I was watching Mickey and her eyes showed she knew what he was asking. Instantly I knew exactly where he was going with this.

Mickey’s sister gave the only answer she could honestly give, “No, I guess not.”

“Would you like Tim and Lara to continue to care for her until you are able? If you do, we need you to write a little note saying that. Could you do that for us, if it is OK with Mickey?”

Mickey answered before his last word came out of his mouth, she pleaded, “Please sis, please?”

By the time we left the room, I was holding a signed note from Mickey's sister, granting us legal guardianship until Mickey was 18. Mickey was giddy, Lara and I were over-the-top happy. Mickey's sister was relieved. Brother Elder winked at me as we left the RV, “I told you it would pick you up. I think you have a baptism coming up real soon, yes?”

Oh how right he was!

I have to finish writing for now, we have to finish preparations. A mission team is taking all the folks to hand-off to the Arizona group as I mentioned earlier. And I have to get ready to go hunting. I will write more when I return.

September 20 (Monday) –

The *hunting trip* was successful. Lara thinks I should write about my “hunting trips” to make sure people understand what I did and why it is being done. She wants folks to be clear that what I am doing is within the law and why I did it. I might write about it at some point but not now. Maybe later when there is less going on or when I am ready to live through it again.

The “escort team” isn't back, nothing to worry about yet; we thought it might take as long as a week and that is if nothing happened along the way.

Actually I don't feel like writing much right now. But I will relate a couple of things going on that troubles me.

- 1) There is 1” of snow on the ground and the water is frozen solid.
- 2) Arkansas has totally fallen to King Urkle's NPF and it got really ugly and bloody. Looks like there was a bunch of revenge killings of Patriots by law enforcement. Like SWAT “hit teams.”
- 3) Nebraska may be next on Urkel's list, maybe Kansas. It's not real clear at this point.
- 4) There is plenty of fighting going on back east in some of the stronger, more patriot leaning states (i.e. Carolinas, Florida, Ohio, and Michigan). You know, the states with the fewest Liberals and Progressives.
- 5) Reports coming in over the Ham radio is Gitmo prisoners that were being held there and then released by BumbleBarry have turned up in

Minnesota and Dearborn, Michigan. It is being confirmed by some group of former GITMO guards. There had been rumors that they were being released but only to countries overseas who were supposed to “watch” them. So how and why are they showing up in the US? And along with that there is supposed to be some Senator from Minnesota that is now leading some Islamic States of North America. Weird stuff; how much of it is true?

A couple things that do excite me, I will sleep in a bed tonight, I am home with my family, I will get cooked food that is hot when I eat it, and if I can figure out how, I might get a hot shower or at least hot water for a wash up.

(The above is in no particular order; I am just flat out excited to be back!)

September 21 (Tues) –

11 pm - What a day, never a dull moment anymore!

Woke up this morning with more snow on the ground and more coming down. Freezing cold again this morning, water frozen, no bath or shower yet; I stink. Body wipes can only do so much. Lara and Mickey say I have to move out tomorrow if I don’t get washed up.

Escort team got back in late this afternoon. They were going to hold up until after dark but they were beat down pretty bad. The cold got to them. North of here it is far worse; both colder and considerably more snow. We need to breakout all of the heavy duty cold weather clothing. Especially the Minus33 stuff. They make the very best wool underwear that feels like you are wearing silk.

Roy brought me a message from Brother Elder; Roy was told to tell me exactly this, “It is not ash, it is snow and whatever event the dream is supposed to represent symbolically, it will occur before the spring.”

The returning team is pretty beat up. They encountered some low-level bandits as well as severe weather on the way back. Roy said, “Hell got a few more tenants on the way back.” I am all in for that. He will tell me more after they eat, sleep, and warm up. I am no longer the only one in camp that really stinks.

And yes, Mickey talked to me about her baptism. It will be on the 25th.

I am dead tired, I gotta get some sleep.

September 22 (Wednesday) –

5:15 am - No, I didn't wake up on my own. Mike came running over to the cabin, pounding on the door to wake me up. He surprised the dogs, if they didn't know him really well I wouldn't need to provide dog food for a couple of days, he would have been their main course. They went nuts initially but settled down once they saw who it was. But they sure woke everyone up.

He had good news, over the Ham radio it was announced Brother Elder is back in Salt Lake City. I was surprised they sent that message in the clear; I would have guessed they would keep that confidential for security purposes. But it is not my call and they didn't ask my opinion on it. Seems as if no one ever does ask for my opinion on much of anything. Gee!

I have one priority, as do we all, that is to get the water unfrozen and flowing again. Or I have to move out as I was reminded again by Mickey already this morning. She got up when I did and she started the fire in the stove to warm things up a bit. It's nice not to have to do everything.

I look funny typing on the laptop. I am all bundled up in my warm clothes and down coat with wool gloves on my hands. But the fingertips of the gloves cut off. Referring to my gloves (I think), Mickey asked me if I use to listen to Michael Jackson. Funny part is, I did. Maybe I should practice my moonwalk routine for a little demo to the family one night. Hummmmm, there's a thought!

9:30 pm - Success!!! We got the water flowing, but don't give us too much credit. The sun came out this morning and it got nice and warm. We had the black plastic pipe only about 1" below the surface. We will have to bury it much deeper or risk having it freeze again. Fortunately there were no breaks in the line. For me it's now bedtime, gotta get up early to work on the water line some more.

September 23 (Thursda)–

8:15 pm - Only thing of note is the freaking plane! One of the most worrisome things about being here was the plane flew over us again. It circled several times over our cabin area in the canyon and the ranch house, and the close in field where we have the breeder cows penned up for the rancher.

Sheila was at OP2 and said clearly she could see a Mexican flag painted on one of the wings. She swears it's what she saw. But it was small and "dulled out," not bright, colorful, or easily noticeable. Had she not already been glassing the ridgeline she would never have been able to see it without the binoculars.

My question is, why is there a Mexican plane flying unmolested in American airspace?

On a side note, the plane had been coming every 13 – 15 days, this time it was 21 days since the last fly-over.

Mike hasn't heard from David's group the last two check-ins. Now I am worried.

September 24, 2010 –

6 am - Slept in, it's really cold outside, too cold to get up. Mickey was nice enough to start a little fire before I got up. She said it was the least she could do for the "old man." I am not feeling the best, cold is getting to me. We have to find a way to keep the cabin warmer. I don't feel all that great.

There is so much going on that I am not relating much of it in my journal. Most of what is happening you will be able to read about in the history books. It will either be true or not depending on who wins this epic struggle. I am betting that it won't be Hewsane writing the history; he will go down as the biggest villain this country has ever seen. Maybe even the country's biggest mass murderer on the scale of Stalin or Mao. He is evil incarnate.

One of the better things that happened last night, Mike and Sara asked to be baptized. We kinda wanted it scheduled with Mickey for next Saturday, October 2nd to happen all at once. Mickey agreed to the delay thinking it would be nice to have this big deal with Mike and Sara. Sweet girl! I will baptize Mickey, Wilder will baptize Mike, and then we will confirm Mike, bestow the priesthood on him and ordain him to the office of Priest. And then he will baptize Sara. Our little branch grows. One of the few good things to be happening right now.

Still trying to figure out the right place to actually baptize them without falling over from hypothermia.

10 pm - Mike was talking to Roy and me earlier today. He is hearing that there is a lot of trouble overseas right now. Europe is basically at war

but not between countries, not yet anyways. There are huge groups of socialists that are objecting to the conditions over there. They are rioting, burning, looting, destroying, killing, and ransacking. Then the police try to break it up and gun battles erupt. Cross-border fighting is a major issue as well. If what we are hearing on the Ham radio is correct, seems like organized bands of para-military gangs are raiding other countries across shared borders. They go in and steal everything they can of any value, especially food. If there is any resistance it turns into a blood bath. And the women, including young girls, are savaged every time. It seems as if Satan took a very sexually oriented corrupt culture and turned it into a way of life of violence and degradation. Europe was easy pickings for it, they forsook God. Then again, what has the USA been doing for decades?

From what we are hearing Muslims are establishing sanctuary areas now. But only for Muslims. Anyone and everyone else is being expelled or, more often than not, being killed. Jews are being killed wholesale by Muslims and neo-Nazis. Any Jews that are left in Europe are trying to figure out how to get to Israel, but they are not being too successful from what we are hearing. You can hear different groups of Jews pleading for help on the Ham radio at night. No one answers them except an occasional response from Israel and the responses are seldom encouraging. Israel must be in rough shape. Thanks Urkel!

There are no reports, not a single one, of problems coming out of Asian countries. I don't know if they aren't having problems or reports just aren't making it out. The reports of the Middle East are conflicting and confusing to say the least. It does sound as if oil production has all but stopped. Muslims and Jews are still fighting but in more limited engagements, probably due to the shortage of fuel. There are no additional reports of nukes being exchanged since the big blowout a while back. The Muslims in the Middle East were the source of so much hate and death. Maybe they would calm down a bit if they get a good dose of their own medicine. Islam has killed millions of people since their leader started their world-wide blood bath 1,400 years ago.

No one in camp wants to stay up late anymore. I wouldn't be up this late except I can't sleep. I have so much on my mind right now, too much. It's getting to me.

September 25 -

6 am - Cold again last night, right at freezing, about an inch of snow. We're using up our wood supply at an alarming rate. We have to go get wood cut soon. We are worried though because hauling the cut wood back is leaving long trails of foot prints in the snow making it easy to track us back to our camp from the air or the ground. I took up another notch on my belt this morning. I think I am almost losing too much weight, Lara is worried too.

Noon - We didn't go for wood; our work party was just too tired. Something is wrong with us as a group. We either don't have enough energy or we are all depressed. We have to try and figure this out or we won't make it through the winter. And I hate the concept of staying in these mountains through the winter.

Mike told us an interesting bit of news, there is an announcement circulating on the Ham nets that the "LDS Prophet" will speak via Ham radio about church's position on the current circumstances in America tonight at 7 pm. Guess where our group will be tonight at 7 pm?

There is also another interesting bit, rumor really, that Alexis Janes has been exposed as working with and for the federal government. Evidently, the government was paying Janes to get people all worked up about stuff that was either not true or only partially true. That way people would get focused on the wrong things or expose themselves for the government to be watched. I have no idea if it is true but it is interesting to hear.

9:30 pm - What an interesting evening to say the least. At some point you will be able to read about it or hear the Prophet's talk he gave on the Ham radio. I will give you my idea of the highlights:

First, the church is not a political organization; it is the Church of Jesus Christ.

Second, the rumor that the church formally or informally supported the actions of King Urkel is untrue. And that those rumors were being spread by enemies of the church.

Next, the church believes the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence to be the works of man, inspired directly by the hand of Divinity.

Next, simple oppression of people is one thing, but the wanton killing and withholding of basic necessities is not a mark of a Christian or a righteous leader.

Finally, the church doesn't support the current actions of King Urkel's administration and is urging the federal government to begin a healing process guided by the basic principles that Christ set forth 2,000 years ago.

Then a warning - the Prophet stated clearly that the Constitution now hung by a single brittle thread and that the church membership should support any and all actions to avoid that thread being broken. He stated clearly that the church membership should do whatever it takes to defend the Constitution and to prevent the thread from being severed. Notice the use of the term "church membership."

So that put to rest that major issue of the Church's position in this matter. Too bad the church can't cure all the problems in America that easily.

September 26 (Sunday) -

8 am - Mike told us this morning that Nebraska and Kansas are now under King Urkel's complete control. They both fell pretty easily once the food supply was stopped. What Patriot state is next? Will they try for another easy state or two or go for the "big kill" on a major state? They might think that would scare the smaller weaker states into submission.

There is a hard rain this morning. Lots of mud and slop, no fun outside. At least the cabins are dry.

Gotta get ready for Church services.

9 pm - We reviewed our diets this evening. It looks like we are not getting enough calories, or the right balance of vitamins and minerals in our diet. All the packaged food and the basic food storage items are not giving us enough to keep us as healthy as we need to be under these super stressful and physically demanding conditions.

At times we are burning 4000 – 6000 calories per day and not taking in nearly enough calories or the essential stuff. We have a supply of multi-vitamins and other supplements but we have been holding off on using them. We were thinking that we should wait and only use them when times got really bad. Evidently, those times are now, and we should have been doing it all along as a preventive measure.

We are going to pass out the multi-vitamins and start using them. Plus we are going to do more spouting of wheat and beans. It was also decided that we need to see what vegetables we can grow in cold weather. Fresh food is going to be very important. "Trash can potatoes" start tomorrow. Also we will send out a team for Pinon nuts. Another team goes hunting for fresh meat besides beef, which might help. The pregnant women and the kids are getting the fresh milk; we are holding the dry milk until hard winter sets in just in case.

September 27 (Monday) -

2 pm - Yeah, I know, it is mid-afternoon. Our fire team got back early and will take over security in a little bit but I wanted to write in case I am too tired after we get off guard duty.

About mid-morning guess who shows up? Nope, nope, YUP! Mary's man Bob showed back up at camp. How he got back here so quickly I have no idea. It is obvious he was motivated. Mary told Roy that they want to be married as soon as possible and the SOONER the better was her message to be exact. We will try to do a brief service tonight at dinner. No point in waiting, there are no big weddings around here anymore and certainly not any honeymoons! So why wait? Yup, exactly, no reason to wait.

Had an interesting conversation with Mickey a few minutes ago. She is really changing. Yes, I know she turned 12 and is now going on 28. But there is something else happening; I think she is growing up or maturing. I think maturing beyond what she should be. In my old fashioned ways I am thinking she should be playing with dolls or playing softball or something. But she is acting old way beyond her years and that has me concerned.

Well, what she asked me to do surprised me and worried me at first but now that I think about it I understand it more. She wants to be a "sniper." Not a hunter, not a marksman...a SNIPER. And she wants to be assigned to a team.

I have tried to think through this and look at it with an open mind. First, look at the conditions we are living in, life and death on a regular basis. At least more than anyone should be forced to deal with. Next, her family was attacked, killed, kidnapped, and forced into slavery. Why wouldn't she want to be able to protect herself?

Now imagine you weighed like 80lbs, or whatever she weighs and you knew that the people coming after you might be full-grown men. You would have no desire to go toe-to-toe with them if you were smart. It would be appealing if you could stay hidden and at a distance be able to bring down your enemy with little to no threat to yourself. Hummmmm... doesn't that sound like a much better idea than going toe to toe!?

So I am going to teach her. Maybe I should have talked to Lara first about it but I understand Mickey's desire to want to protect herself and her new family and the entire group. In these times people are seeing the world through a whole new set of eyes; eyes that are far more primitive than what they use to be.

Lara is working on a wheat sprout garden and she is planning on adding both wheat grass and wheat sprouts to our meals. Lots of Vitamin C!! She said once we get use to that she will start on some bean sprout ideas. Yum...yum!

I just hope we can figure out how to get us healthy again and keep us that way through the winter. Funny, we have all lost those few extra pounds that we were carrying around before. Actually, most of us look far better, weight wise, than we have in a long time. Lara is a stone-cold "fox" in her jeans!

September 28 (Tuesday) –

6 am - Mary and "Bob" were married last night and I performed the ceremony. It was funny, it came time for me to ask each one if they take the other as their husband or wife. Well, there is no way I could say his name. I couldn't do it even with him standing there repeating it to me 8 times! So I just gave up and said "Bob." Thankfully everyone got a big kick out of it, including Bob. So that is what everyone is calling him now.

We had the ceremony at dinner and some of the women had prepared lots of really good desserts. When it came time to "cut the cake" Mary and Bob were nowhere to be found. One of the kids had seen them leave earlier. I think it might be a couple days before we see them come out of the "shed." The "shed" is their temporary home until we can get all the housing issues figured out.

We did make a couple decisions yesterday. Since Mike's cabin burned down during the raid it has made everything confusing and out of

place. So we had to figure out what to do for this situation. The decisions are:

1) We are going to reallocate housing. That means there will be multiple families in some cabins. It can't be helped.

2) We will build a shed that is just for food storage. It will be made more out of heavier materials, like logs, etc. We will have different sections of the food shed for the different families. It should be more secure that way and easier to protect and less exposed to the line of fire should another battle hit us. Or I should say "when."

3) Mike and his family have almost no clothes. We have scrounged up some stuff but we need a larger supply for them. We will make a run into Hadley; they had a small store with clothes, plus they had set up a barter point for stuff like that. We just have to figure out what to take with us to barter. Maybe we'll go into town, talk to Ken and see what they want. When I come back I let others know and get it to happen. I don't like that idea because it keeps us away from here more and on the road more. And anytime you are moving you are vulnerable. And when we are gone those left behind are more vulnerable.

Mickey's sniper training will start today. I will use Lara's POF 308 to train Mickey. It has a good scope on it and is in great shape. It is an awesome rifle, easy to shoot, and little kick to it. It should work out well for Mickey. She will learn how it works and then how to take it apart and clean it until she is sick of it or really good at it, whichever comes first.

Lara suggested again that I relate what happened when I went to hunt down Joanie's killers. Maybe I will do that tonight.

9:30 pm - We made some progress on the food shed today. We are going to make the lower walls out of logs, the thickest we can find and haul in. That way the food will be better protected from stray bullets, etc. should we ever be attacked again.

And I am thinking that the plane that has flown over will bring visitors, unwanted and unfriendly visitors. Why do I think that? Well, Brian and Mike have been working on figuring this whole plane thing out. They have a bunch of the static on an MP3 player. They had everyone in camp listen to it, including Rancher Bill's family. One of their kids said it sounded kinda familiar and asked to fool around with it. No harm in that, let's see what he comes up with.

OK, so on with explaining my hunting trip for Joanie's killers...

First off, I really was tore up back then, just wore out, and very distracted. I hope I will remember the timing right. I can see the events in my mind; but the timing might get a little weird coming out of my head.

So I pulled out of camp just before daylight (in case anyone was watching the camp I didn't want anyone observing me leaving). It was just me and three days' worth of supplies. Well, not three days of water just 1-1/2 gallons; 1-1/2 day's normal ration of water, three days if I had to stretch it. I do take my MSR Sweetwater filter with me when I go out overnight. It is very compact, very light, and extremely good at filtering water. I also put sanitizing drops in the filtered water if I have any concerns at all. I only wish now that I had bought maybe 5 more replacement filters and a couple more silt filters when I could have before Amazon and the whole Internet collapsed. Or I should say, "got taken over by the federal government and shut down." Note to self: one is none, two is one, three is a good start. Always buy for worst case, then a little more. And also, NEVER trust the federal government about anything anytime. FFC and their "Internet Fairness and Freedom" regulations. Yeah, right!

So I headed out. I can't really walk like some of these animals in our group due to my lungs, heart, or whatever gets me out of breath when I push it too hard or climb up steep slopes too quickly. But I can walk all day at my pace, which isn't bad for an old guy carrying about 20lbs in my pack and another 20lbs of weapon and ammo. It took me almost 5 hours to get to the canyon where Roy found her. He had protected the scene very well and not just trampled all over it. He had restricted his team's access so his men wouldn't ruin the evidence or any tracking sign just in case we came back. Not that it was going to be hard to follow these guys; they weren't hiding anything.

I held up there to eat a snack, water up, and get my plan in my head. I looked over the map I had and tried to guess where the most likely place would be that they would head. I could see their tracks but I wanted to get a "feel" for what they might have in mind. After almost 10 minutes of "figuring and cogitating," I thought I had a little idea developing so I prayed about it.

The answer was clear enough to get me started. I would have to make a slight adjustment the next day but nothing wrong with adapting to the changing environment. Getting too locked into a plan of action can be fatal if you refuse to be flexible and adaptable.

I tracked them until it got too dark to really make out their sign that they were leaving. And they were leaving plenty of sign. They either had confidence or stupidity working for them. But I could follow their sign without much trouble; they made no effort to hide it. I could have but I didn't want to follow them at night, too easy to be ambushed.

I slept really well that night. I mean way harder than I should have. I pulled up at dark, ate a hot MRE, drank some water, buried my trash, covered it up in a hole really well, hid it with a couple of rocks and then moved on to my sleeping location almost a mile away. I have already explained why I don't want to eat and sleep in the same location. People and animals are drawn to the smell of food and trash. I don't want to be there if they show up; better to be tucked away safe and sound at least a mile away.

So I settled in and it was actually a really beautiful night, there were billions of stars out and it was just fantastic. Sleeping under the stars like that always soothes my soul. There is something very special about it, makes me feel physically closer to nature and God. And with no artificial light coming from anything it was VERY dark. But I like that too, I have since I was a kid.

However, when it comes to sleeping, I mean actually sleeping, I like something over my head for some reason. Yeah, weird. At least "weird" is what Lara says. So I have this little half shelter I can take with me when I think I am going to be gone long. The half shelter is in addition to my poncho that I use to wrap myself in when I sleep. Remember both are a multi-cam camo pattern, poncho and shelter half too. I don't use solid colors because it will always create a "blob" of solid color which sticks out to the human eye. Multicam camo pattern is the best all-purpose camo pattern for our situation. The best overall in my opinion. I would have gone with A-Tacs pants if I could do it over again.

So I woke up before daylight, but I just sat there very still not moving. Yes, I said "sat there." When I am out I normally don't lay down to sleep; I seldom, if ever, lay down to sleep when I am by myself out in the wilds. It makes it way too easy for animals and even snakes to get cozy with you while you sleep. It also takes longer to get into action if you have to get up from lying down. And finally, I have a bad back and the hard ground makes me really suffer, especially if it's cold or damp.

So after waking up, letting my eyes get functioning and slowly scanning my immediate area I got up. Slowly and quietly packed up and moved out. After tracking for about 30 minutes I stopped and ate, watered up and did what anyone has to do that early in the morning. But I bury any and all trash and waste. Then I hide where I buried it with brush, twigs, rocks and dirt to make it look natural as the surrounding area.

I was tracking really pretty good, had found their camp, then found the remnants of their handy work. Actually, it wasn't hard to find it, I just followed the birds. Lots of birds flying around an area usually means there something for them to eat. These two scumbags had come across a family that was hiding out, camping out, whatever you want to call it. There was 4 or 5 of them; mom, dad, little boy, and at least one girl, maybe 2. Dad had died quickly and in his sleep, mom lasted long enough for them to abuse her. The little boy had been tied up and he had been bashed in the head with a rock at some point. The bloody rock was still beside him.

I didn't have time, the energy or the desire to bury them. They were just lumps of half eaten meat at that point. They were barely recognizable due to the birds and whatever other animals had been working on them.

Again, the bad guys' tracks were plain as day leaving that camp site. It only took me about five minutes to figure out there were two girls with them. Based on my guess of their mom's age they had to be fairly young. I found out later I was right. I looked at my map and they were still on track to what I was guessing was their destination, an old ranch that was still showing an active spring. I was maybe two hours from the ranch, the men and girls were maybe 1-1/2 hours in front of me.

I got to where I figured I was maybe a mile from the ranch, I stashed my pack, stripped down to just my tactical gear, and weapons. It was then I realized I had not brought any night vision equipment. Stupid move on my part, force multipliers are invaluable.

I moved on the ranch from a direction that was 90 degrees from my original line of travel. In other words, I had been tracking them from the SW so I moved around to the right until I was coming at the ranch from the SE. I like to do that because if I had to leave in a hurry and they were going to follow me and had seen me come in they would immediately think to head SE. But then as soon as I was out of their line of sight I would then take an intersecting course 90 degrees from my original line of travel back

to my gear which was actually to the SW. I never really knew if it made sense or not in the real world but it sounded good in my world.

So, just as it is getting dusk I finally get the “ranch” in sight. Well, it is a water tank, a falling down line shack, a couple very old, very large mesquite trees and that’s about it. I pulled up in a concealed position to observe. I have learned that when you approach a “target” you are best served to pull up and watch the target for 30 – 60 minutes; longer if you have the time to spare. The more severe the threat, the longer I tend to observe. Most people will show you their location and habits within a pretty short time period.

By the time it was dark I had seen these two characters plus the girls. The girls appeared to be maybe 10 and the other maybe 13, give or take. The light wasn’t at all good to tell for sure. What worried me the most was I couldn’t tell where they were going to sleep for the night. They cooked in a decently concealed area. Well, decent for amateurs. But I couldn’t tell where they would sleep, and going in blind was not a good idea. I would prove that true the following morning.

So I stayed there as long as I could in the dark, listening and trying to see anything at all. I couldn’t see anything after it got full dark, there was little to no moon. And I wish I hadn’t been able to hear as well; it wasn’t pleasant. It made me enraged! But there was only one of me, they knew the ground, they might have superior fire power, they had the numbers and they had hostages. I had to stay put or jeopardize getting myself captured or killed. That would do no one any good.

After a while I crawled off into an area I had spotted coming in. It was about 500 yards away from where they were but in a well-hidden little draw. I ate a couple of granola bars, drank some water and wrapped up in just my poncho. I didn’t sleep much; ugly nightmares woke me up a couple times. It was all I could do to not creep back down there and into their camp. I couldn’t be stupid or impatient, but I would prevail. I had to be patient. That night I prayed the girls would be able to block out of their memories what was happening to them and that they would be able to heal.

I didn’t pray for the two men. Hell would have their souls soon.

Before dawn even began to lighten the sky I headed back to the area of the men’s camp. I didn’t go back to my hide from the night before. If they had somehow found it, not only would they know they were being watched they could also set an easy ambush. That is not going to happen to me if I

can help it. Not doing stupid things is your best defense against getting killed.

So I am in my new hide when the sky begins to lighten up and I start seeing the familiar objects; the water tank, the falling-apart shed, etc. But as it got lighter I saw the dark shadow made by an entrance that went back into the hillside. I didn't see it last night due to the lighting conditions but this morning it was pretty easy to see from this angle.

There were no sounds coming from their camp and I feared for a brief second that they might have slipped away in the night or killed the girls. But then I remembered the Lord's assurance about my mission.

While looking intently at their camp I picked out an area outside of the cave or mine entrance that must have been a pile of tailings or something of the kind. I figured it was suitable enough to conceal myself behind it and surprise the bad guys as they exited. I picked two different routes to get there and two different routes to exit the area should things go badly. I then chose the best path in and headed that way.

I got there in just a matter of minutes and well before any decent amount of daylight began to show. But that wouldn't have mattered much because they had covered the mine opening with a blanket evidently to keep it dark inside or to conceal that they were there. I settled in and began the toughest part - waiting.

About an hour later I heard some muffled talking, then a really loud smack, then a young girl crying. Then the other younger girl, screaming. Each one of the men came out hauling each of the girls by the arm; roughly to say the least. The girls were completely naked, filthy, bruised, and looking like survivors of a concentration camp. The men pushed them both towards a tree and told them they could "go do their business over there."

Now the plan was right there in my mind, I could see it. Both men were armed, but only with pistols, I had my POF .308 with an ACOG. I had them out-gunned and the element of surprise would be mine, plus I had a concealed position with decent cover. It was now if I wanted the advantage.

The girls moved off to the tree about 30' away from the men, that was all I needed.

"Freeze or I kill you both where you stand!" I had my crosshairs on the chest of the man I thought was the biggest threat. I chose wrong. "I am a deputy sheriff and I am arresting both of you."

They both actually did freeze, but I also saw them looking at each other. I couldn't quite see their eyes to know if they were trying to figure out a plan.

"Deputy, there is one of you and two of us, you can't get us both." He was looking in my direction and I could tell he saw me but it wasn't the one I had my sights on. Before I could answer they made their move.

I dropped the one that had been wearing my crosshairs on his chest. He was dead before he hit the ground. A 168gr Sierra Match King bullet will do that. The other guy had dived back into the mine. I had no clue where he was, it was just too dark to see even though the blanket had been torn down.

Both girls were frozen in place just screaming. I stood up to motion to them to get down, then a bullet whizzed by my head making that "cracking" sound. If you have never been shot at, you don't know what that sound is. Once you hear it you never forget it and it always creeps me out.

I hit the ground as flat as I could get myself. Now he had the advantage. Being in the dark looking out into daylight is far better than being in the daylight trying to see into the dark. The one good thing was the fact that the girls had quit screaming and were hiding themselves the best they could behind the old juniper tree. Not the best cover, but any cover is better than no cover.

It was then I realized that he was hiding in a hole in a rock. I wasn't sure how big the hole was but I knew the hole was in rock, solid rock, and bullets ricochet off of rocks. Plan B had just popped into my head.

"I will give you one chance to come out otherwise you will die in there." I had to get him to talk just enough to make my plan feasible.

"Yeah, I think I will stay right here and kill you the second you get up to leave. Then I will have both of those young things to myself." He had told me enough about what kind of man he was and how he was laid out in the hole in the rock. He was not too far inside. Perfect!

"Your choice!" and then I opened fire with that big .308 pulling the trigger as fast as I could and moving the muzzle around the mouth of the hole in the rock. Bingo! He screamed out in pain, hit by a ricochet; how badly I didn't know.

As I was changing magazines I gave him one last chance. He was going to die, I was just giving him a chance to die in the sunlight instead of

the cave's darkness. But he didn't know that. "Come out now and you will make it easier on yourself or you will bleed to death in the dark all alone."

His answer was to cut loose with what sounded like a semi-auto AK. His shots were wild but he did exactly what he shouldn't have, he tried to make it out of the cave and towards the girls. Maybe he thought he could take them hostage and talk his way out of it. I didn't know and didn't give a damn what he thought. I dropped him with a round to his back, he wasn't dead, but he wasn't moving much either.

I got in his blind spot behind him and started moving in on him never taking aim off his upper back other than to do a quick scan around the area. If I squeezed the trigger I would blow his heart apart from the back if he tried to move for his rifle. As I got within 10' I told him not to move or he was dead. He told me he knew he was dead anyways. He said he couldn't move either of his legs or his right arm, the arm closest to his AK. He asked me to help him, I told him I was going to help him in just a minute.

I kicked his gun away, took his pistol off him, patted him down quickly then walked over to the girls. They were terrified of me the camo paint, dirty camo clothing and a huge gun. I walked over to them, told them to go get whatever clothes on they could and then meet me over by the bad man.

While they were gone I returned to the bad guy who was now trying to get himself moved around to do something, exactly what I don't know. But it was obvious that my bullet had done some serious damage to his back. I suspect I partially paralyzed him. He asked me what I was going to do. A simple answer would do just fine. I told him I was going to place him on trial, find him guilty and then release him on his own recognizance. He just kinda snickered at me. When he snickered a little blood bubbled out of his mouth all frothy. He was hurt and hurt bad, probably a round through a lung. He was drowning in his own blood.

The girls came back over to me, hiding behind me. I asked them if they had anything to say to the man before I judged him for the murder of their parents and brother and for abusing them. They didn't say a word but they came around from behind me and started to flail on him with their fists. When that appeared to have little effect on him they started to kick him and I mean kick him hard. Some of it right square in the face, a couple in his eyes. One, the bigger girl, stomped on his nose.

I let them continue their discussion with the dirtball until they got so tired they couldn't kick him anymore. I told them to go wait over by the tree, they refused. Fine by me.

I asked this pervert if he had anything to say in his defense. He cursed at me and told me where I could go. I explained to him that he would be there long before I would be. I told him that by the legal power vested in me by the county and as a free man under the Constitution I had found him guilty of murder, rape, and child abuse. The sentence was death, but I would not kill him or take him prisoner. I tied his relatively good arm behind his back to his belt. Made sure both his legs and free arm were useless. Then I told him he was free to go if he chose to. He cursed at me again. I was smiling, really, really smiling. I felt good inside.

I gathered up all their weapons, ammo, etc. and cached them in a pile of old junk building materials. Cleaned up the area the best I could so the casual observer wouldn't find the newly hidden weapons cache. Then I gathered up the girls and we spent all the rest of the day and most of the night walking back to our cabins. They never said a word the whole way, I never had to either, and I didn't want to. I had killed again, righteous indignation or not, I had killed again. How many more times would I kill? How many more times could I kill? I was guessing the answer to those questions was "enough."

September 29 (Wednesday) –

5:30 am - The dream is back, the one with arrows and volcano. Not scary, just there, very clear this time. I was living it. It is me in the dream and there is no doubt in my mind about that.

We are headed into Hadley this morning. My team will provide security, and then there are the "worker bees." Lara would smack the back of my head if she heard me say something like that. If she reads this entry she will whack me anyways, even if no one else heard it or reads it.

I'm looking forward to seeing Ken. He's a squared away ex-Army guy. Yeah, he retired a freaking officer, but a nice guy all the same.

More snow on the ground this morning, it is coming regularly now and way earlier than I am use to. Actually, in Cruces we rarely got snow but even for up here in the mountains it seems to have come early.

The snow could be a blessing or a curse and I worried about which it might be. We have to keep on doing our daily responsibilities but our

tracks in the snow (foot and tire) makes it real easy to know people are around. And those people are us. From that plane that has flown over us the tracks all lead to here for quite a distance around. To and from both our OPs and CP, etc. It would be obvious to the pilot what is going on. We still haven't decided what to do about it if it flies over again. Almost everyone says shoot it down! Everyone that is except Roy and me. I don't want to cause a conflict. Roy says we should just leave it alone because it hasn't caused us any problems.

Mike wants to spend some time in a big team leadership council today or tomorrow. He is hearing stuff on the Ham that is getting him really worried. I can understand it. There is little choice now that you really have to admit to yourself that what is happening. Right now in the US we have a civil war or another American Revolution. But it is not being fought with armies; it is a "police action" and the police are being brutal. But they have been working up to that for about 15 years now. Why did we ever let our police become militarized!?!? Stupid is as stupid does. We were stupid.

I just find it so hard to believe that the American military is refusing to be drawn into the fighting. They are staying 100% out of it! Don't get me wrong, I am grateful that they are. If they got involved they would crush people under their might through sheer numbers and technology. But Mike thinks they have other problems. A bunch of US Navy ships have gone from the Atlantic Ocean into the Pacific Ocean. And there are reports of long convoys of Army vehicles and soldiers heading to the west coast via I-10, I-20, and I-80.

To me that adds up to one thing, but I will hold off my speculations until we get a little more solid information. But we have noticed that the Asian part of the world has not been reporting problems like the rest of the world.

Mickey is riding along with my fire team today to Hadley. This will be the first time around any kind of town since her rescue. Should be interesting to see how she handles it. If they have any kind of fast food or ice cream shop going I am going to get her whatever she wants. She deserves it and I love to see her get excited about stuff. When she gets excited she reverts back to the child that she really is. She has been deprived of that for months now.

When did it become OK for kids to grow up so young? So early in life they now have to worry about crap like this, who thinks it is even

remotely OK? When did the adults decide that kids had to stop being kids? Will anyone ever be held responsible for all of this? Me, I doubt it. The adults have never been so far out of control, never have been as far back in history as I can remember.

Oh, and yes, that means that Max is going to town as well. If I tried to leave him behind at the cabin with Mickey in the truck he would chew the tires off the rims.

10:15 pm - Wow, talk about a surprise and a mixed blessing! Hadley was empty, not a single person there. All gone, everyone!

Yes, you read that right. I am saying there wasn't a single person in Hadley when we got there. The first clue was evident when we approached the town and their outer OP's weren't manned. And then we saw their road checkpoint had no one at them either. At that point we went into fire team mode ready for action. I am glad my team had the responsibility for security.

The work party pulled up and established their perimeter security while my fire team made a quick plan of action. We have a couple standard action plans for some basic scenarios to reduce the time it would take to make a plan up. We trained for them via Immediate Action Drills. We made a quick adjustment or two and then headed into town.

It was almost anti-climactic. We went building to building, clearing each one as we went. After the first four it became routine and boring; that is dangerous. We were too relaxed, too complacent. Each building, house, etc. started resembling the rest of them. The buildings were all intact; nothing damaged or destroyed, nothing ransacked.

It took us hours to clear it but we found absolutely no one, no dogs, no cats, nothing. So we just went shopping. We inventoried everything we took and which family would receive it. Then we consolidated the list and I signed the list saying we received it and would trade, barter, buy, or return it. We left the note on the door of the community center, and then we loaded it all up and left.

It was actually kind of funny; we really had no idea what to do about the situation, we had no plan for something like this. After having talked about it amongst ourselves we still couldn't really think of what to do next. We still don't have any ideas on how to handle the Hadley situation. I think we are just in shock that we found the town completely empty.

One thing we figured for sure, they hadn't been gone for more than a couple days at most. Since the main and most of the secondary roads are asphalt there are no real tracks to speak of that we could follow. And Mike had never heard a thing on the radio about it. They are just all gone.

September 30 (Thursday) –

7 am - More snow last night, real cold as well. Winter seems to be here with a vengeance.

There are a couple things on my mind about the onset of winter. First, we are going to have to bring in massive amounts of wood for the cabin stoves. The cabins are not insulated and they were never designed for extended winter use. The wood burning stoves that are in the cabins are not very efficient and they burn wood very fast. If you shut them down as much as you can, bank the fire and stuff it full of wood the heat will only last until about 2 am. Then it cools off very quickly in the cabins. There are usually some coals left in the bottom so it is not hard to get a fire going again but it is real unpleasant to build a fire at 2 in the morning while you are trying not to wake up. But you're freezing your butt off.

Mickey's training is going well, she is a natural with the rifle but it looks like it is WAYY too heavy for her. I think I will get one of my AR15's out and let her work with it so she can see how she likes it.

Mickey wants to get use to field work. I made fun of her. I told her with the weather like it is, she was too "girly" to endure the snow and cold. And went after her again saying she would be afraid of the dark too. Well let me tell you something, that was the wrong thing to say, a VERY wrong thing to say. So how wrong?

Well, after about 30 minutes of arguing I agreed that tonight after dark Mickey and I can head out to the field by ourselves as if we are going on a mission. That's how wrong I was! She got that "dead set" look to her and I knew I had lost before she ever said a word. I am just hoping she is up for it. Lara is not happy with me. She reminded me that Mickey is only 12 and these are dangerous times to say the least.

I poked around camp and got some gear together for her that is the right size; including boots and some really warm Smart Wool socks. The best wool socks ever made; they keep your feet warm even when soaking wet inside boots. If you get the extra thick socks for hiking your feet will

love you forever. Mine do! And to top it off I found her some Minus 33 wool underwear. She should be good to go.

My dilemma lies with Max. In most missions you would not take a dog. Yes, I had him along several times already, including when I found Mickey. So he will probably go with us tonight when we leave after dark, in the cold, in the snow. Are you thinking what I am thinking?

I hope I don't back out at the last minute. How would I explain that to everyone? How would I maintain my pride? A 12-year old girl was willing to go but I backed out! Yeah, that would play out real well for me – NOT!

Chapter 4

OCTOBER - YEAR 1

October 1 (Friday) –

10:15 pm - Mickey and I got back just after dark. Yes, I am trying to teach her more than just shooting. She has to learn to conceal her movement whenever possible. And you don't want to come back into base camp in daylight leading any potential trackers right to your camp. Duh!

She was over the moon excited when she got back. She couldn't wait to tell Lara all about it. Lara listened attentively and expressed the right emotion at the right point in the conversation. But I know Lara, and I knew what was happening; Lara and I talked later. She is not all that sure that I am doing the right thing. She doesn't mind Mickey knowing how to shoot but she isn't real crazy about the whole stalking part. She thinks it might be too "dark" of an art for a 12-year old girl. She might be right, but I will let Lara explain it to Mickey if she wants to. For now I will keep training Mickey, I want to stay on her good side. I hate getting yelled at, especially by a 12-year old.

It was kinda funny last night, there we were, we decided we had done enough for the night so we pulled up and had our MRE meal. Yum, beef patty! At least it was hot. But there really should be a federal law against the beef patty meal. It is like a brick when it hits your stomach. Almost as bad as the vegetarian omelet MRE.

So we ate and talked for about an hour and then it was time to move to our sleeping location. We found a decent place, pretty well concealed with decent enough cover. Thankfully, we stayed up high in the timber country. We found a nice little stand of pines, got some boughs, and made a little pallet of them. She asked where our tent was. I just snickered. I told her to get out her poncho and liner. She didn't quite have it figured out until I started to wrap myself up in mine. She never said a word, just wrapped up and had Max snuggle up to her. Yeah, she got the dog for extra warmth. Life just ain't fair.

About an hour later I woke up to look around a bit and there was Max wrapped up in her poncho with her. And then about two hours later I woke up as she AND Max were snuggling up with me trying to get under my poncho. There were the three of us all snuggled up together with the snow falling in the middle of a beautiful pine stand. It was almost surreal had it been any other time in my life.

By about 2 am we were all shivering. I got into my pack and pulled out some of those chemical hand warmer packs. But these were big enough to be body warmers not just hand warmers. I activated four of them, gave two to Mickey and we tucked them inside our coats, everyone shuffled around for a few seconds, Max closer than ever and then we were all sound asleep again.

We started to wake up just as it was getting light. I explained to her about how to wake up; motionless, scanning surrounding area, getting your bearings, all before you really move around. She wasn't thrilled about that part of the training because nature was calling.

We spent some of the day hiking, tracked some deer and then we headed back to the cabins. I put her in charge of leading us back. She was better than I thought she would be. She started us back in a straight line for the camp which told me she had a pretty good sense of direction. I explained to her that you really shouldn't travel in a straight line unless you really have to or there's absolutely no danger. Then I talked to her about the concept of anticipating (i.e. guessing) where someone is headed.

We looked at the map and I asked her based on what she knows about us right now and if she was tracking us what would be our likely destination. She picked out our camp and Hadley, with Hadley being the most likely destination. She was right. I asked her how she would then figure out that our destination would ultimately be our camp. Right again! She said she would have to follow us to a point on the map which would be the most likely point that our intentions would be known - one way to Hadley the other way to our ranch/camp. She was right once more. She is really picking stuff up quickly. Maybe I underestimated the intelligence level of my neighbors the whole time we lived next to each other. I always thought they were a little on the dumb side as well as the dad being a drunk. Evidently not; or at least this kid wasn't dumb.

It was really a nice outing. It could have been nicer without the snow, but maybe that is what added to the adventure of it.

After we got back to camp we had an impromptu discussion within the group about using the stoves in the cabins at night. They do smoke quite a bit at times plus there is the smell. Anyone downwind of us would easily pick up on the smell and the smoke is easily seen when it is clear.

I am not crazy about how noticeable the smoke and smell is, but it is also very cold at night, well below freezing. So I could make a case for it either way. But we need to make a decision and all of us be onboard with it. But then what will Rancher Bill and his family do? They are still using their propane gas furnace, so right now it isn't a problem. But it could grow into one if they start to burn wood when we are going to great pains not to.

We have almost 12" of snow on the ground right now. And while we aren't getting any weather reports, I would bet my money on more snow to come. So here are the problems that I am thinking we have about right now:

- The snow makes it increasingly difficult to get around. And it also makes it increasingly easier to follow our tracks back to and around the inside of our camp.

- With the cold temps there is an increase chance of our water system freezing again.

- It is tougher for us to stay warm at night. And the colder it gets, or the longer it stays cold, the more wood we will need to heat the cabins.

- The colder it stays the more calories we will have to burn to stay warm. We will probably have to increase our caloric intake to 3000 - 4000 calories a day, more if we are doing hard physical tasks like chopping wood.

- Then there is the morale thing. I have no idea how that will be affected. If we get multiple feet of snow and become cabin bound, "cabin fever" will not be easy to deal with especially without TV.

Mike is telling us more and more about the outside world, it is not looking good. Europe is a mess and more rioting somewhere over there every day. The lazy liberal socialists are being denied their European welfare so they are being more hateful than normal. They are burning banks, government offices, police stations, etc. The European anarchists are going to be the winners thanks to the socialists. The only place where the rioting and anarchy isn't quite as bad is still Germany. And quite honestly, Germany could end up being the strongest country to emerge

from all the crap over there. And then what happens with them after that? Germany was already opposed to bailing out all those countries in the beginning of the problems last April and May. How will they handle what is yet to come? And who will they bail out or simply take them over?

The Middle East is at war again, just less mechanized. Since there is such a fuel shortage for everything from tanks to jets to trucks they have decided to kill each other with more and more ground troops plus those dang little Hamas rockets hitting Israel every day, all day. I am not sure of the outcome, I wouldn't bet on it either way. The technology edge was always Israel's but without that advantage I am not sure they can stand up to the sheer numbers of fighters that Islam can throw against her. But don't count out Israel, ever!

Russia seems to be struggling enough on her own and if they are having an early winter I am sure there is going to be food shortages. They had been using their oil and gas exports to pay for their food imports; but will they be able to get the food is the big question. Actually, who would they get the food from is the more accurate question. If they can't, millions will starve to death this winter and millions more will probably riot. Russia is use to starving its people, but how will they handle any potential rioting is a big question. I'm betting on them handling it with tanks. Yeah tanks, just as we do now in the good ol' USA.

South America seems to be all but fallen to the Socialist/Communist coalition. It is not completely hopeless, but close to it. I am more than a little concerned if they would get a little too organized and a little too ambitious, and then moved north. If they took Mexico they would have wrapped-up ½ of the oil and gas reserves in this hemisphere. And then what would stop them from continuing north?

Canada is kinda weird from what we are hearing. They are struggling but without so much violence outside of the cities. Their cities, like every other country, are trashed and getting worse according to the Ham operators. But the rural areas seem to be fairing much better. Hard to tell though, I hope they are doing OK. They are decent people even if they are far more socialist and liberal than I like. French Quebec is supposed to be all but autonomous now. It also sounds like Muslims have isolated a large section of Toronto and the area is considered "Muslim only" and everyone else has been kicked out. Police won't go anywhere near it. Sad.

I want to ask King Erkel, “What are you going to do if you lose this struggle?” Maybe a better question would be, “What are you going to do if you win?”

What I am getting at is - what is King Hewsane thinking he will do if he loses this internal national struggle? I don't think he has the intellectual capability to figure out what the next step would be. Or does he even think he can lose?

Then here is the tough question, if King Hewsane wins this struggle how does he think he will heal this country or will he even try?” The partisan feelings will still be dividing us but there will also be the frustration and a lot of resentment as well. How in the world does he think he could overcome it and get the country functioning again? Could anyone?

So that brings me to yet another question, what external factors from the rest of the world will effect what is happening here in the US? Since we are so vulnerable, I am speaking mostly of an attack. Or how do you get the economy started back up here in this country or anywhere in the world for that matter?

Actually, I wonder how any of this can get worked out and do I want to be around when the effort comes?

October 2 (Sat) –

1 pm - Mike was telling us that this afternoon he was getting reports of serious fighting in Nebraska, Kansas, and Arkansas. Texas is setting up significant defenses to repel a federal NPF attack if the radio reports are right. Texas knows they are a target at some point and they are preparing for it. The city of Austin is a mess; the liberals there are trying to create a sense of anarchy and havoc. An Alinsky “Rules for Radicals” tactic; pretty much the standard procedure for a bunch of extremists like the liberal left and Progressives. But they won't succeed long term, evil never does and never will. But I want to forget all that for now, there is a baptism to perform !!!

9 pm - Well, our little Branch now has three new members. I baptized Mickey, Wilder baptized Mike. We were going to then confirm and bestow the priesthood on Mike then let Mike baptize Sara...but...No Way !

Let me back up a little so you understand what I am getting at. We don't exactly have a full-blown chapel here with a baptismal font and hot water. So we had it figured out that we had to use the cattle water tank, it was our only option. Uh huh, you guessed it. It was the only body of water that was deep enough to use.

Well, Rancher Bill, or one of his family has to go out a couple times a day and break a hole in the ice so the cattle can drink. Do you get where I am going with this? So we piled into a couple of our vehicles and headed that way. We left two vehicles running with the heater on high so when we got out of the water we could hop in the truck and not die from exposure. Mickey and I were first.

I got into the tank, I couldn't breathe, it just took my breath away. But I stood my ground and waited for Mickey to climb in. It was tougher for her, she is much shorter and way skinnier. The water came up to her waist and I could tell she was having a hard time, a really hard time, but she hung in there.

I was lucky, I got the words right the first time, down she went, and back up. She was already blue and gasping for air. I scooped her up in my arms and almost jumped out of the tank with her. Lara had a big, warm towel ready and threw a blanket over her as we headed for the truck. I got us into the truck and started rubbing her arms and legs to get her blood flowing again. Up to that point she still hadn't talked yet. Lara got in on the other side and poured some hot chocolate into a cup and handed it to Mickey to take a couple sips and you could see it helped. Chocolate always does!

Within another five minutes Mickey was OK again but she started to cry. She finally just looked at Lara and then over at me and whispered, "thank you" to us. She hugged my neck for the next 10 minutes sobbing her eyes out. I never felt so helpless in my whole life.

Next time, we bring a goose down sleeping bag! Yes, it was that cold!

I never did see Wilder baptize Mike but I hear they did OK. But they talked about it for a couple seconds and decided that Wilder would baptize Sara because it was just too cold to do the original plan. I guess Sara suffered as badly as Mickey did. It wasn't as bad for Mike, he has a little more insulation than most.

We got everyone back to the cabins, Lindy had stayed back to keep the fire roaring in the main cabin. We got everyone in there, warmed

everyone up with some more hot chocolate, did some confirming and bestowed the Priesthood on Mike.

The blessings that were given at the time of the confirmations were pretty amazing, incredibly spiritual. At one point when I was confirming and blessing Mickey it was made clear to me that these three are very special spirits. And then it got a little weird for me. I had the clear impression that had times not taken such a turn for the worse in this country and things happened the way they did, they may have not been presented with and accepted the gospel. So times had to get bad for these spirits to realize who they are and where they need to be.

So if that is true for these three, who else? Not just with our little group but are there others scattered around the world with the same thing happening to them? What an interesting thought, bad times bringing people to Christ.

By the time we left the post-baptism festivities it was the coldest I have ever felt it here. Way colder than anything since I was in the Antarctica on the U.S.S Independence. But our hearts were full and our souls had been warmed, and I can't tell you how proud Lara and I are of Mickey. What a sweet, sweet girl. Lara and I are very lucky, we're like a couple very proud parents!

October 3 (Sunday) –

7 am - I am grateful for Sundays. It is a day that I can refocus, or more fully focus, on things more spiritual, relax a bit, and not feel guilty about sleeping in until seven in the morning. I am finding myself more and more tired each day. I think it is a combination of things but mostly I think I am just wearing out. These days seem far more suited to young people – meaning anyone under 40.

I know I am not getting enough sleep, probably not enough rest as well; there is a difference. It is decent weather but a little chilly during the day, the sun is out most of the time and that makes it nice. But at night it is really cold, below freezing, and it is zapping calories just to keep warm. And if you want to go out at night (i.e. security detail), you have to dress very warmly. In the OPs or the CP it gets really chilly. It seems warm when you first enter, but then the cold takes on a dampness and it penetrates to the bone. We are trying to figure out a way to heat them but I am not sure we are going to come up with a good solution.

I think part of why I am a little more focused on the cold today is the fact we went ice swimming yesterday. Yes, I am talking about the baptism. But it was worth it! You should have heard Mickey's prayer last night - wow! Later Lara and I talked about it and we are amazed at how far she has come. I mean she was a decent kid as a neighbor but we really didn't know her very well, to our detriment. Evidently, she is an old spirit with a young physical body. I think as time goes on she will grow into a powerhouse. For now, it's nice that she is mostly just a full-of-energy 12-year old girl. That's really nice to have around. Lara and I enjoy the time we have with her. But I am not real sure that Lara and I are ready to raise a teenager, I think we are too old. Actually, I hope Mickey grows old enough to become a teenager. I am becoming more and more concerned about our group's safety. I can't quite put my finger on it. But I have a real *worry* inside of me, and it is growing.

I remember clearly my original dream a long time ago, maybe three years ago now, that brought me back to church. That dream made it very clear what was coming and it has come true almost exactly as I saw it in the dream. But the one thing that has me concerned is not that I clearly saw us helping people to make the journey to the mountains but I didn't see us in that place of safety. I didn't see us among friends and family at the end of the dream. Actually, I should be more accurate, the dream ended as we were still in the general area. But I can't identify the place where I thought we were, but it wasn't here. I hope that this doesn't indicate that we have even more safety concerns than I first thought.

But that is what it is - safety concerns - and I will just have to wait to see how it unfolds. For now I need to wash up a bit before church, Mickey is already building up the fire and Lara is warming some water for us to "bathe" with.

8 pm - We held church service today, it was fast and testimony Sunday. It is kinda funny, some of us are members of the church, most are not. But it was fast and testimony meeting for EVERYONE!

We fast for different things as a group. Today it was for the health and welfare of those girls that we sent with Brother Elder to Salt Lake. All of them need the Lord's help. It will be a long road back for them mentally and spiritually. I am sure it will affect their ability to have healthy relationships with men in the future (i.e. marriage). Especially if they don't get some help and some tender mercies from God.

One of the things about church today that was awesome, and I mean fantastic, was that Mike passed the sacrament. We asked him to bless it but he said he didn't feel he was ready for it. He wanted to pass it a couple times before he was "trusted" to bless it. Mike is blessed spiritually but I feel that something is holding him back. It is like seeing a single dark cloud in a beautiful blue sky.

I did decide that I am going to pray about my concerns about our group's safety and what my original dream means. I want some clarity, maybe more like direction on what we should be doing or preparing for. Or maybe we should move to a safer location. I am just not sure. But it is weighing heavily on me.

We did get more snow today, 3" to be exact. That is about a foot total right now with what melts during the day.

October 4 (Monday) –

10 pm - Everyone is sick and I mean sick! We all have the runs again, and it is bad. It started about 6 pm. We are struggling to keep people hydrated. No fevers, no other symptoms other than a few people are also throwing up. It makes everything we have to do 100 times harder, but we still have to do all of our other responsibilities like security, etc.

What I wouldn't give for a couple gallons of PeptoBismal right now! Or even the veterinarian Bismusal. Anything!

October 5 (Tues) –

3 pm - People are still sick with the runs, more people are throwing up now. Keeping people hydrated is a huge problem. Since everyone is sick, everyone needs hydration. So some lesser sick people have to look out for the more sick people. It is tough but the powdered Gatorade we have is helping.

We thought it might be food poisoning based on the symptoms, we were right. One of the younger kids was helping out in the kitchen for our lunch yesterday. We had decided that morning since it was so cold and miserable that we would have lunch together and enjoy the company. A couple of the kids helped fix lunch.

After talking to everyone we realized that a can of chicken that had been used had a "domed" top. It evidently was bad, no one spotted it and

we didn't get it hot enough or cook it long enough to overcome the problem. We aren't even sure that we could have made it usable. At least we know we just have to wait it out and stay hydrated and keep something passing through our system for some calories and nourishment.

We will inspect all our canned food first thing tomorrow morning. We have to make sure there aren't other bad cans of food in our storage. Kids can continue to help out but must be supervised pretty closely from now on in the kitchen.

October 6 (Wednesday) –

7:15 pm - More bad news, it just keeps coming at us hard and fast. What we found was all canned food with water was frozen to the point the cans have bulged. Some are frozen solid; about a quarter of all our remaining food storage ruined, gone. The bad part was most of our vegetable and fruits were in cans. We have some dehydrated stuff; but we are growing increasingly worried that we may be eating too much dehydrated food stuff; too much heavily processed food. We think that the frozen food might still be good but we don't know. And other than eating it, we don't know how to test it.

The other thing that worries me is we didn't heat the food storage shed. I have no idea why not. Not a single person thought about it. So I am thinking that our ability to think logically and reason our way through problems may have become compromised. If we can't think through the obvious problems and issues, what else are we missing? What else have we already missed?

I know that in stressful times (i.e. life and death stuff) that your mind goes into "fight or flight" mode. This is brought on by the release of adrenalin; it is physiological in nature and almost impossible to overcome. In other words, it is virtually unavoidable. Your ability to think logically and use reason goes right out the window. Muscle memory through training stays with you and may be the only thing that truly helps you in bad situations. And we may be in a very bad situation.

The question is, is this happening to us as a whole group? If so, what are going to be our options? If not, what else drove us to not think about heating the food storage shed? We all know that canned food can freeze, yet we didn't do anything about it. It never even came up for discussion. That lapse in even thinking about it is what worries me the most.

It seems as if some people are not quite as sick as they were. Or they just have nothing left in their system. Everyone is now showing signs of real weakness. We can't keep any food down, and almost all the liquid comes up or "out" almost immediately. I am not sure how much longer we can keep this up.

October 7 (Thursday) –

8 am - Mike is telling us that Nebraska and Kansas are hard and fast under King Hewsane's iron fist rule. The same old story, anyone who is serious about resisting is getting rounded up and put into detention camps. The police are being brutal to anyone they consider a threat, calling them "domestic terrorists." Many people are now labeled, "potential domestic terrorists" for even questioning government authority or decisions. However, most people, by far, are offering no resistance. There seems to be some offering of food to lay down and roll over to King Hewsane. They are also offering food to turn in people that are suspected of belonging to the *resistance*. Many are being falsely accused just to get food. There are some small skirmishes taking place but the NPF and local police are dealing quickly and harshly with those folks. I fear that when they hit New Mexico that we will end up in those camps we are hearing about. There is some talk among us, quiet talk that we will not go. Not that we won't go quietly, we just won't go, period.

That would be an easy decision for me to make because how I feel about my country and what is happening. But there are other people to consider besides myself. Lara has already told me she is with me in whatever decision I make. She told me several times it is a decision that she can't think about nor make, that it was my job and she would support me. But there is also Mickey to think about.

The thought that Mickey wouldn't grow up to be an adult, a mother, a wife is just unfathomable to me. That precious gem needs protecting whatever the cost, as does Lara, as does the rest of the group. They are my flock, I am their sheepdog (I'm no shepherd), I have a job to do, I cannot fail, they cannot be harmed. I must keep them safe, whatever the cost.

Mike also mentioned that there is some chatter from some Pacific Rim countries that there are huge military and naval exercises going on. In their respective countries they are being told that these are training exercises.

Training? Really? Seriously? Right now they would be training with everything else that is happening in the world? I don't believe it.

Also, a Ham operator from China is saying there was a huge bloody riot that was crushed by the Chinese military. Mike thinks they're talking hundreds, maybe thousands were killed. He thinks that Thailand may be in the same boat. He said it is very difficult to get any solid information, and then he can't verify that if any of it is true or not.

If it is true, then what I think is happening, what I fear is happening may put the whole country in jeopardy. Then what?

Physically, I feel a little better this morning, so does Mickey. Lara a little but not as much. We gotta get better! We gave up trying to man the OP's or the CP for security, we just couldn't do it. If someone were to hit us now we would be wiped out, or at least the men and boys. I fear what would happen to the women. We have to get better! For now Rancher Bill's family is providing a person to stand watch for us.

October 8 (Friday) –

9 pm - All of Rancher Bill's cattle are gone with the exception of the close-in herd he is saving for breeding purposes. We did spot tracks, semi-truck tire tracks, in some of the more remote pasture. When I say remote I mean like 2 to 4 miles from here. This just ratcheted up my concern even more. There are more cattle thieves, very organized cattle thieves out there. Or they are some branch of the government or some such thing just taking what they want. They always have; just being more blatant about it now. None of it bodes well for us.

I am feeling pretty decent, but that is only relative. We found some surplus cheese that had been in some old rations that Don had stored away. We made some sandwiches out of it. Someone thought that eating cheese would plug us up. I hope it does. Also Rancher Bill says he and his wife take "probiotics" every day. Says it keeps them "regular" and their digestive systems functioning better. He will bring some to us later tonight. We are going to make a drink out of it and give some to everyone; most of it will go to the pregnant women. I really hope this helps. We are all getting extremely weak. Lara mentioned she heard apples were good to stop the runs. She is going to try and research it. I wish I had stored more Pepto and some probiotics.

October 9 (Sat) –

Physically, I am feeling almost human again. So are my girls. I am grateful. Lara was right about the apples. They contain “pectin” and that evidently is very helpful for what is ailing us.

Mike has picked up that there are whole dairy and beef herds being shipped back east. Silos are being emptied into trucks and those too are headed east. And it is all coming from the states that have recently fallen to the tyrant Hewsane. He is offering “incentives” to people for providing information about stored food. The people that were storing it are placed in camps “for their own good,” say the government goons.

So what do they expect the people to eat in the areas where the herds and grain are being taken from? Are they going to be left to starve? Is this the penalty for resisting Hewsane? Nice guy, real nice guy! At least his true colors are showing. And they aren’t red, white, and blue that’s for sure! Well, maybe “red” but in a whole other context.

Mike is starting to hear rumors that there is some additional massing of NPF forces to strike the next state on the list. Mike thinks their target might be Texas. I have a very bad feeling about this. If Texas falls there is nothing to stop them from marching right into New Mexico and stomping us into the dust.

October 10 (Sunday) –

This morning Mike was telling us that he heard overnight that the Michigan and Ohio militias are raising serious resistance. The militias are actually attacking the NPF forces and succeeding in some areas. It remains to be seen if they will be able to make any headway, but from a selfish perspective at least it slows King Hewsane’s NPF from moving against us.

Seems as if the NPF is bypassing Detroit and Dearborn, Michigan areas. That is where there are large Islamic strongholds and that “new country” that they are bragging about. So tell me again how good of an idea was when Urkel let hundreds of thousands of Muslim immigrants into the country. Please tell me again how good an idea that was.

What is really troubling, Mike is he is hearing of large numbers of people being killed in Nebraska and Kansas. One report said there was a large attempted escape from a detention camp for violent offenders (i.e. militia members and Oath Keepers). Another report was talking about a large scale prison riot and escape where lots of prisoners were shot. So

who knows if either, or both, reports are right? But my common sense tells me that there is always some truth to these stories, maybe not a lot, but some. The key is to figure out how much truth there is and how it affects you. Situational Awareness on a macro scale.

It is almost a disconnected reality; we have our own group of people, our struggles, problems, blessings, meetings, basically our own little world. Then there is the world right outside our group's door and that world is occupied by gangs, criminals, and LaRasa that is trying to violently take back this part of the country for Hispanics only. If we go too far away we can be killed, women taken and forced into slavery, even kids brutally murdered. Then there are the states back east that who knows what's happening because we aren't hearing anything, or very little, from them. Then there is the murderous tyrant King Hewsane that is destroying this country and raising up an elitist socialist world where only he and his power-mad politicians benefit. All the while the rest, the majority, will struggle under their thumb of Progressivism oppression.

What is reality anymore? Or is it just me? Am I the disconnected one? Am I the one that is, or has been, the problem? Am I the one not fitting into the new world? OK, STOP! I gotta stop thinking this way!

On a good note, we are all feeling better now. We are all weak, some more than others but at least we are functional once again and on the mend.

Lara and I had a running conversation for most of the day. We started this morning at breakfast, then more after church. Mickey picked up that it was a pretty serious conversation so she joined in with us after church. We were talking about the current state of affairs of everything.

We all agreed that life is very different, so much so to the extreme. We also all agreed that life is much tougher now; everything is just more difficult, more demanding and far, far more dangerous on every level. Simple sicknesses can kill, more than a couple miles from the ranch can get you killed or kidnapped. People, gangs actually, attacking the camp. More than just a simple home invasion like in the good old days!

At one point Mickey got really quiet and then began to quietly cry. We finally got her to talk about why she was crying. She said she didn't want to become a sex slave and be forced to have sex with men. She said she would rather be dead than forced into something like that. Lara held her and reassured her that we wouldn't let that happen. Mickey begged us to promise that we would end her life rather than let her be kidnapped or

captured. Lara just continued to try and soothe her. That statement had a devastating effect on us. I can't think straight about it.

Lara broached the subject of us trying to get to someplace safer; she even mentioned St. George. We know people there and my ex-wife and her husband lives there. We have a standing invitation to come join them there since before it all fell apart. The guy that runs onPoint Tactical lives there and I know he has things squared away.

We also talked about hooking up with the Arizona group and form a larger more secure group together. But then what? See, that is the question, what is the end-state to all of this?

We can talk all we want, we can plan, we can live day-to-day, we can make all of this out to be some grand adventure. But in the end, where is it all headed? If there is no goal to re-establish a free and secure society, then what is the point to it all?

I gotta pray about this and try and see what we are to do, it is not just critically important, it is everything!

One last thought - I think back to those two girls that were with the bad guys, the bad guys that killed Joanie. Those girls had been sexually abused, beaten, tormented, tortured, and humiliated beyond what anyone should ever be exposed to. So, I ask myself, if I couldn't defend Mickey to prevent that from happening to her, then what? If I had two bullets left, how would I use them? And how would God look at me from that point forward?

I gotta stop thinking this way. I am glad those two girls ended up with Brother Elder going to Salt Lake. I don't even know their names. I am getting too calloused.

Life seems very dark right now. How did we ever let this country, how did we ever let ourselves, get into this condition? We should be ashamed of ourselves to have let the Progressives bring socialism and Communism into this country. They pushed God out and brought evil in. We are living in a present-day Dark Ages because of it. We are ruled over by global elites who are the ruling class. And the NPF has become their thug enforcers. This sucks!

October 12 (Tuesday) –

Almost everyone is completely over the food poisoning; a few residual effects but not too bad. Another few days and I think it will be all good.

Mike did bring us some weird and maybe very bad news from the Ham radio briefing this morning. He heard that Texas is requesting people to become part of their state militia to defend the state against the NPF. The word is the NPF will be striking Texas soon. Their hope is to crush Texas and then they think the other states will just give up. Texas wants anyone who can to help. They say more information will be coming as to the when and where.

So what will our group do? Will we respond and help? Can we take the chance?

The one thing I did was I prayed a whole lot yesterday. Many small prayers, some long and heartfelt. I also started a fast last night. I was praying for confirmation that we were to leave for a better place of safety. I got no confirmation at all –none- not even a whisper.

But last night I had a dream of Indian Summer. Indian Summer-like you remember as a kid when the cold time of the year would have a break of a few days, maybe a week. And the weather would get just flat out beautiful; clear blue skies, bright sun and warmer temps. It would be those days that you would go out and just play all day long.

In my dream the weather was just like that; there were no leaves on the trees, there were no flowers, but it was kinda chilly but not cold. And I was a kid again, maybe 7 or 8 years old and we were packing the car. But the scene was very different than most of my memories as a kid. Dad wasn't drunk and mom wasn't drunk whining and complaining. We were just loading up the big Plymouth station wagon with lots of suitcases. And I mean LOTS of suitcases. Seems as if we just kept shoving them into the back of the station wagon and tying them to the roof.

Finally we got in and headed down some road singing; yes, singing. I have no clue what it was that we were singing, but it "felt" good to be hearing it. Then I woke up. If this was some kind of inspiration I have no idea what it means, especially in light of my fasting and prayers resulting in no confirmation about leaving. So now what?

October 13 (Wednesday) –

I had a talk with Mike today about my conversation with Lara and my concern with our group's safety. He was very attentive; he listened to everything I had to say. He too expressed concerns, especially in relation to his unborn grandchild. He and I agree that more than likely everyone feels

the same way. But he, like me, has no clear idea on how to deal with it or what exactly to do.

We have handed off groups to the Arizona folks in the past; but that doesn't mean we could safely get everyone there now. And then, could we get everyone on to St. George or wherever else that would be safe?

In the middle of the conversation Brian came walking up and joined us. His main concern right now is King Hewsane and the NPF; probably because he hears about it almost every night talking to Mike.

I did ask Mike about the amount of sleep he was getting. He simply said, "enough." He has a point, if he doesn't listen to the Ham radio, who else would, and be that attentive?

So the conversation drifted the "resistance" direction, specifically how far would we go in resisting? What would be the trigger point that we would give up? Who else, as in what other groups, are thinking the same thing? And the same troubling old question, what is the end-state going to look like for our group? And more importantly, our country. Far too many questions when all we are trying to do is survive each day.

Tina brought to our attention that Don's wife is all but shut down. She is talking very little and had almost no desire to get over the food poisoning. Tina thinks she is very depressed; which is understandable since Don was killed. But I asked what we could do for her as a group. The only answer Tina gave us was to try and engage her in conversation and get her involved in family type activities. What else can we do?

I need to talk to Lara about it. We have the committee that handles group activities and we have the start of a Branch that appears to be handling the spiritual aspects of life. Maybe we need to get a Relief Society President called. What I don't want to see is a competing organizational structure between the group as a whole and the church Branch. I have seen far too many times where members of the church think that just because they have a calling that they are somehow an expert at everything, or even most things. They aren't, period. They are just serving in a position of God's choosing for His will. *Knowing* His will is the key, which means listening to the Spirit.

And how many times have I seen an Elder's Quorum President not even be able to get 20% of the home teaching done let alone be able to run a group camp like ours.

Then again, if someone is humble and open to the promptings of the spirit they can work wonders and miracles. OK, that is a whole other conversation for another day. For now we have more pressing matters.

October 14 (Thursday) –

Last night David swore he heard something and a little while later saw movement outside the wire. He used the NV and he is positive it was a human form. He can't say for sure what he heard exactly, just that he did hear something. So security has to be reinstated fully.

Also, Mike heard on the Ham that it is official, Texas is on the hit list and there are solid reports of a buildup of NPF in New Orleans. Texas is vowing that they will not let NPF inside the state of Texas under any conditions for any reason. "If it is war they want, they shall have it," is what Texas is saying.

Mike said he was pretty sure he heard a report that King Hewsane's Press Secretary Grubbs told reporters that Texas was looking for a repeat of the Alamo. A defeat this time just as bad for Texas as the first one.

Then a reporter reminded Grubbs that the defeat at the Alamo led to a battle a few months later that Texas won. And that win resulted in the independence of Texas from Mexico. It appeared that Grubbs had no response and got really flustered. No surprise to me, liberals seem to have selective memory and forget that there are consequences to actions. Liberals are no students of history, that's for sure!

The head of the Texas State Militia said he is asking for as many well-armed and trained people as they can get. But if people are going to come they need to come organized by states or counties. They don't want people to just show up, it would be too disorganized and that results in confusion. Confusion normally ends up in defeat.

We had already decided that when the call came we would respond. We have to talk to Rancher Bill's group and see if they want to participate. If their two fire teams go, we will take all but one of our teams; leaving one back for security. We would also take a support team along. Support teams are invaluable for logistics, medical care, etc.!

Our support teams are also fully capable of providing security for our vehicles, camp, etc. They are all good shooters but they are also medical, mechanical, etc. They relieve our fire teams from support tasks for more offensive and tactical action. One question that hasn't come up but will,

even though they are members of the fire teams, will the pregnant women go? I really don't want to be around for that discussion.

Here is one of my main concerns about this action in Texas - aircraft. What happens if the NPF brings in armed helicopters or worse yet, armed fixed-wing aircraft?

On any given day a single Cobra or Blackhawk helicopter could decimate a group. Ten of them could wipe out 1,000 people and all their vehicles before lunch and not break a sweat.

Some of us have .308's which could do some damage; John Wayne has the .50cal. But our weapons are only semi-auto with the exception of our SAW. However, that SAW is only 5.56 caliber and I am not sure how much damage that could do against a military grade helicopter. So what do we do? Pray! Maybe that is about all we have on our side. I hope it is enough.

October 15 (Friday) –

Wow! It came earlier and faster and harder and more lethal than I expected. And it was a devastating encounter, we never had a chance, we were completely wiped out before it ever really got started. Yes, of course I am joking around again!

Would you like to know what "it" was?

Last night at dinner the discussion came up about Texas and us taking our fire teams there. Well, we no sooner got into the discussion when Sheila and Mary stood up, they asked for our attention; they got it. Here is my paraphrasing of what Sheila said...

"We are on the verge of losing our country to a tyrant, a despot of historical proportions. The very existence of freedom has never been this close to being completely and forever extinguished from the entire face of the earth. Many freedom-loving American citizens have lost their lives. Many others have freely given their life trying to stop this wicked and evil disease that now infests our government. Many more good people will give their life or have it taken from them, probably by the thousands, maybe more. Do not, I say again, DO NOT think for a moment we will stand by and let others fight our battle or see our brothers and fathers go into battle without us standing beside them. Fighting the fight with them, the fight that this country is facing. Do not think for a minute that we want our future children to live under the iron fist evil. We would rather be

buried with our unborn children in Texas alongside our brothers and fathers than shun the fight sitting in the safety of our cabins. We are going to Texas. There is no discussion. We are going.”

Mary didn't say anything, she was crying. Lindy got up, looked around at a very, very silent room. “As you can tell, we will go, and we will win. Should anyone, or all of us fall in this battle, people will lose liberty and freedom. And we must be free! It is God's plan for this country - freedom and liberty. We are going, we will do our part. Should we die, we die fighting. We will not live and grovel on bended knee to a tyrant or to evil. If we die, we die on our feet beside our fathers and brothers. But I say, it is better let them die for their cause, than us for ours. We will win!”

There wasn't anything else to be said...the discussion clearly was over.

You could see many people crying, myself as well. Mickey was hugging my neck as hard as she could with tears streaming down her cheeks. Lara was holding my arm, squeezing it tightly. Mickey whispered to me, “I know you will never let me go no matter what I say. But I will pray the entire time you are gone. I want you to come back safely. Please, I can't lose another dad. Please come back to us.” Lara squeezed my arm even tighter, she couldn't speak, she was crying too hard.

How in the hell did we ever allow this to happen? How could we allow someone like King Hewsane and the rest of the despicable liberals and Progressives bring us to our knees? How poorly have we run our lives, our government, and our country to make our wives and children plead with us for such things?

We can't “redo” the past but we can do everything in our power to fix the future. And fix it we will. We must not lose.

October 16 (Saturday) –

Remember Captain Anderson, the guy from the National Guard Armory we visited with just before they pulled out for Santa Fe?

Well, he is now Col. Anderson in the New Mexico State Militia. He came rolling right up to the ranch house with three Hummers, all with mounted .50cal machine guns (MaDuce). That set off a security alert like you have no idea. We thought this was the end. We were in our defensive

positions in less than three minutes and we were scared to death. We would be no match for those 50's.

After a couple of minute's discussion with Rancher Bill they had it sorted out. Col. Anderson was here to see us about Texas.

I won't give you the whole 1-1/2 hours' worth but the bottom line is simple:

1. The military has evidently contacted the various state militias and has said they won't get involved in the Texas conflict if there are no army or militia units present. That means that if any former National Guard unit shows up or is seen in the encounter then the regular Army has no choice but to get involved.

2. The military has absolutely no intention of allowing BumbleBarry to draw them into a domestic war of any kind. As long as no military unit threatens any government body, the regular military will leave any "direct action" to the NPF.

3. The military's Judge Advocate General has ruled, and made the ruling public, that the original agreement between the Republic of Texas and the United States gives Texas the right to secede any time they want. And that being the case, the military has no right or responsibility to try and keep Texas as part of the USA. It goes on, if the military is ordered to suppress any secessionist movement it would be unconstitutional. And any government official ordering them to do so would be violating their Constitutional oath of office. Ouch! That just told King Hewsane that the military was not available as his personal army to slaughter United States citizens.

4. The New Mexico State Militia will not officially be going to Texas. However, there are a number of Militia folks that will be taking annual leave soon.

5. Col. Anderson personally asked our group to go to Texas. He said they need folks like us that have seen a lot of this unconventional action. His troops haven't even seen any action at all; they have been camped outside of Santa Fe as a home guard for the state capital. In other words, guarding the politicians.

That's about it other than his *vacationers* will be coming through this area and that he would give us a head's up on the radio prior to their transiting. It is also his intention to work over the gang in El Paso on the

way so they won't be a problem for us or anyone else coming through. He said New Mexico and Texas have a mutual aid agreement and they are going to help out Texas with the El Paso gang problem.

Oh, lest I forget, he unloaded three long boxes for us. He handed us a manual and told us to get familiar with the operation but not to use the contents until Texas. Yup, you guessed it, three Stingers!

I have already fired one a couple years ago at McGregor Range over on Ft. Bliss. They are surprisingly simple to operate and incredibly effective. Sweet! What weird times we live in that we have a Stinger. Remember when the anti-Constitutionalists were banning high-capacity mags? They would be having strokes now, eh!

He is thinking maybe a week or less until we move out for Texas. He did ask us how we were set for fuel. We didn't explain anything to him; we just told him we were OK for now. No need for him to know more than he needs to know, if you know what I mean.

October 17 (Sunday) –

The whole day was used for planning purposes; there is so much to figure out and assignments to make. The logistics will be far more complicated and important than the battle that awaits us. The fighting, while dangerous, is relatively simple compared to the vast logistical side of getting us there and back and caring for our needs along the way. We did decide we will take a dedicated medical support team. It will be the vet and two other qualified helpers. They will be held in reserve (i.e. hiding) until they are needed. I pray we don't need them. I am grateful that Lara is not going.

The Ham radio is lit up with talk about a Civil War, American Revolution II, Battle of Bull Run, Remember the Alamo, etc. It is confirmed that there are other locations where NPF is building up preparing to move against other states. But Texas seems to be the key to it all. General Wester Clark, yup, the whack job, the incompetent Army general, the far left progressive that BumbleBarry put in charge of the NPF will personally be in charge of the Texas operation. That is the best possible news, for our side.

There is so much to do, not any time to write in the journal, I hope you understand. Mickey is already fasting for our safety. Church services were

very subdued today, just a quick service. We are all too preoccupied with Texas.

October 18 (Monday) –

7 am - Some people are sick again. Dr. Raymond has been called in. We don't need this right now...not NOW!

It is similar to the food poisoning but appears there is a fever this time as well. It just can't be food poisoning, we've been very careful!

10 pm –

Just about everyone is sick, fevers are hitting 104. We are passing out aspirin like crazy, drinking lots of fluids. The powdered Gatorade is almost gone. Dr. Raymond thinks it is a flu bug. How the heck could we catch the flu?

October 19 (Tues) –

8 am - Everyone is sick with whatever this is. Dr. Raymond is convinced it is the flu. He brought up that the military guys came around the other day. They could have brought it in with them. Since we are fairly isolated we could have zero immunity to some new flu strain. The one bit of news that is good is he says if it comes on fast it usually leaves fast. In other words we won't have it for long, and we can't afford to. Any day we might have to leave for Texas. Trouble is that nobody can do anything productive.

9 pm - Everyone is sick. Wilder and I went around and gave everyone a blessing. But it was too late for Rancher Bill's wife, she died earlier this evening.

October 20 (Wednesday) –

7 am - The younger folks started feeling somewhat better last night. Mickey is much better; almost over it. I think Lara and I are better as well, but just not over it yet. We're at least well enough to continue our preps for Texas. Mike can't seem to relay to us all the info that is pouring in over the radio. The whole western US is on the move it seems. I wonder if this is the big showdown.

10:30 pm - Seems as if everyone is feeling better. Man, this hit us hard and fast; no fun at all. Seems like the worst life has to offer just keeps

coming at us from every angle. No wonder so many people died so young in the pioneer days!

Roy said he wants to be baptized before we leave for Texas. Done! We do it tomorrow. All preps are made, we are just waiting for the word to leave.

October 21 (Thursday) –

9 pm - Everyone appears to be over the flu, eating again, looking much better. Roy was baptized earlier today. He asked me to do it. I was thrilled!

Something big is happening, I can feel it. There is something coming our way. I talked with Mike and Wilder, they feel it to. This is it. Is the whole deal is coming down to two basic things, saving America by defeating the NPF and King Hewsane?

We have to, my God, you can feel this. It is tangible, it's coming. Am I ready? Can I do this? Can we do this? We decided to start a fast tonight, we need it.

One very cool thing happened today, John Wayne comes up and all the fire team leaders got together. He had a couple great ideas about the convoy configuration. He was well trained and knows convoy work. So here is the outcome:

- We will utilize two dirt bikes for “scout” vehicles.
- Each truck will have a Fire Team or the Support Team in it.
- The 1st truck will have our Siaga 12 semi-automatic shotgun mounted on it. It will have the 20-round drum magazine preloaded. The first 5 rounds will be 00 buckshot, then 3 rounds of slugs, and alternate that until the drum is full. That gives us incredible firepower in the first vehicle. We have several spare 20-round drum magazines for it.
- The 2nd truck will have the SAW mounted on it.
- The last truck will have an AR15 mounted on it. But it has a “Slide Fire” on it making it virtually an M-16.
- The three most interior trucks will each carry a Stinger.

I really like this idea, plenty of firepower to protect us while transiting to Texas. We also went over some Immediate Action Drills for different scenarios as well. If all goes as planned we will get a little training time in before we leave.

October 22 (Friday) –

2 am - About an hour ago we got the call over the Ham radio. NPF struck hard and fast, they drove straight through to Houston in one massive push that started late last evening. Mike had heard some of it but couldn't confirm it. But it is now confirmed, it has started.

As soon as the Arizona group gets here we are moving. They are due here about daylight if they don't run into any trouble. We all are praying they get through to us and we can get on the road. What we are hearing is tragic, NPF is employing a scorched earth policy! It is so disgusting to see what fellow Americans can do and are doing to each other. Maybe we should start calling the government forces "Amerikans?"

The New Mexico "vacationing" state militia members have already rolled through. They contacted us and told us they would clear El Paso for us and anyone following. Seems they are bringing in a couple of choppers to mess up the Aztec Barrio gang over in El Paso. Yeah choppers that must be "civilian" version of Blackhawks. Love it!

I am going to take my laptop with me. I can use the maps and such to stay oriented. I will try to keep up with the writing as we drive but I am not making any promises. Please hang in there as you read this, I only hope I can complete relating whatever happens. My fear is that some of us won't make it back.

7 pm - We are on the road, Sheila is driving so I have some time to write.

We met up with the group from Arizona in the morning and several groups from northern New Mexico came in about an hour later. We had rallied at the rest stop just west of Las Cruces. We did a little briefing, went over some organizational matters, coordinated communications, programmed radios with our RT Systems radio programming software and then we headed to Texas pumped up. Maybe a little too pumped up.

We were asked to take the lead of the convoy. Seems as if we had the best "mounted" fire power and were pretty organized compared to the others.

We will meet up with at least a couple groups in the San Antonio area, where we will hold up for orders. We are all very nervous about this; we are hoping this is not some kind of set-up. But we have pretty reliable sources from all over as to what is happening in Houston with this NPF. It

has to be stopped. We are hoping that this will end it, something has to. The country can't keep going on this way.

The military has been incredible during all of this. They said they would stay out of this because it was a domestic issue and not anything for them to get involved with. They have their hands full with regrouping after being kicked out of Japan, South Korea and Germany, and having three wars going on. Although Iraq isn't much of a problem anymore, but Iran is. I can't believe how the military seems to almost be on auto-pilot without King Hewsane trying to tell them what to do. If the military had been responsive to Urkel's demands to "put down the rebellion," I have no idea where we would be right now. But I can only imagine it would not be good.

But the National Police Force (NPF) is bad enough, far more brutal than what the military would ever have been. And once they absorbed the local, county, and state police forces along with the SEIU they were over-the-top mad with power. Every good "peace officer" was kicked out, killed, imprisoned, or quit. So all that remained were LEOs, the worst of the worst, and that was plenty. But we have to stop them and that is the only reason we are leaving the ranch. But I honestly fear the outcome, not the fight, but what happens if we lose.

The plan is pretty simple, patriot groups from around the west are going to hit the main groups of NPF and push them out. Those groups are centered in: Houston, Memphis, and St. Louis. If St. Louis is successful then they will push the NPF towards Chicago from the north and south and clear that city. The plan is to stop there and get them to agree to leave the west alone. The Western Governors Association has been adamant that they will not be bullied by the federal government. I hope they keep their nerve.

I have to tell you, we at least look like a pretty potent force. Most folks are ex-military; everyone appears to have been bloodied already. Some of the fire teams, especially the sniper teams, look really, really "bad," *snake eaters* I think. I would hate to have them hunting me. It is nice that we are considered one of those teams as well. But we will see, it might make it worse on us getting tougher and dirtier assignments.

I am hoping for sleep tonight but I am not counting on it. We are tired but we are also "hyped-up" and itching to hand the NPF their butts.

October 23 (Saturday) –

Mike was up almost all night waiting to hear something from David. Nothing. Florida is quiet from a patriot perspective. I fear David is gone.

Got up really early, checked my gear, checked the truck, put my pack together again for the third time, unloaded and reloaded my magazines as well. I joked with myself about wearing out the brass on my ammo unloading and reloading it into my magazines so many times.

Arizona groups got in a little later than we thought yesterday but we were waiting on the northern New Mexico groups and they got to the rendezvous point (RP) earlier than we figured they would. So it all worked out. Arizona brought more men than we thought; northern New Mexico came without one of their groups who backed out at the last minute. No one spoke badly about that group. Heck, I think any of us would have been glad to back out if we could have. All totaled we have about 150 or so people. All frontline fighters from the appearance of everyone. Obvious they're a bunch of ex-military.

There were about 30 vehicles in the convoy; including one school bus that carried a bunch of folks. The bus was still bright yellow when they showed up. But a couple people immediately went and found some green, tan, and brown paint. An hour later the bus looked like a camouflaged hippie-mobile.

We did bring along our fuel truck thinking no one would have really thought through the fuel issue. Well, some actually had, but we are still taking the truck. The agreement was made that we would be paid (barter really) from what is left over after we're done for the fuel that we "donated" to the group. We really don't expect anything but we didn't want to appear to just rollover on it either, we'll barter for what we can. "Barter," really? But no one wants to take old fashioned dollars anymore. No one trusts them.

We pulled into San Antonio after midnight. We had called ahead on the Ham radio and an escort met us and took our group to a bivouac area. What we hadn't told them was about one-quarter of our convoy (including the fuel truck) had pulled off the interstate before we got to the RP. We didn't want all our eggs in one basket if it was a trap. It wasn't, everything went fine; the reserve group joined us about 3 am.

No one set up a tent, we just all laid out a sleeping bag and went to sleep as soon as a perimeter was established. I used my air mattress; more

than a few folks snickered at me. Oh well! We also put out a group to bed down outside the perimeter as a fire team if the main group was attacked. We weren't attacked, all was quiet, and we slept well until daylight.

In the morning we had a briefing; two people from each group attended, Mike and I went. Now the fantastic part, there were over 100 people at the briefing representing almost 1,000 militia members. I'm impressed!

The plan was simple: set up a small blocking force on each road on the north and south, then move into Houston from three different routes from the west (Hwy 59, Hwy 209, and I-10). The intent was to drive all the NPF out of Houston via I-10 to the east and then secure the city. We would turn Houston over to the Texas groups and then head back home. Pretty as you please, easy as pie; uh huh.

Assignments were made; I noticed that the weaker groups were assigned to the holding actions on the NW and SW sides of the city. Just as well, no need to get a bunch of people hurt. I did see that some of the toughest sniper teams were headed towards I-45 and Hwy 7 on the north side of town. They wanted to hold those roads and keep the NPF headed east. We were assigned I-10, smack in the middle of the action. Tip of the spear kinda thing. When we had our operational breakout briefing session no one volunteered to head in first, the REAL tip of the spear. Yup, after a few seconds of no one volunteering Mike's hand went up when no one else would do it. I bought off on it and put my hand up with his. We just bought a big bucket of crap. Oh well, someone has to do be first.

We said we would send in some recon folks that night, the folks in charge agreed and provided maps and some previous intel notes. These guys doing the briefing and organizing knew what they were about, ex-military to be sure; not so sure about the "ex" part.

We got back to our team, held our own team briefing and recon headed out about 1300hrs. Plan was the main group was to meet up with them in Brookshire, just west of Houston about 20 miles. We printed some maps from my laptop and settled in for the afternoon getting some sleep. We would pullout about 1 am and head east.

About 7 pm word got passed around that a meeting, service actually, at The Alamo. Some of us headed over there, we were surprised to say the least. There must have been about 500 people there and they kept streaming in. It was kinda strange, everyone was armed to the teeth and

wore camo clothing for the most part. A Baptist preacher gave the opening prayer and asked for divine help. Then the guy heading the operation spoke (I won't give his name in case this operation doesn't turn out so well). He is a "retired" Marine General - VERY gun-ho. The highlights of his talk –

- We were going to make history.
- Other groups were making their move tomorrow as well.
- We had over 2,000 people there with us, not the 1000 we were told earlier. There were two other groups besides ours.
- I found out one group was going to be held in reserve, another had a "special mission" of some kind.
- The guy that was heading the NPF there in Houston was none other than the bumbling idiot retired General Wester Clark. A real idiot of the highest order and a rabid liberal/progressive.
- Our Marine General reminded us of the Alamo and assured us that the Alamo would not be repeated tomorrow. We would win!
- He did talk about that spirit those Alamo fighters had when they faced down the Mexican army. He said that we would need to have that same undefeatable spirit when the first shots were fired in the morning.

A Methodist minister said a prayer and asked for a blessing on everyone, "including our Mormon brothers and sisters." Yup, he said that. Could some healing be taking place? Hope so!

We headed back to camp to do a gear check and take a short nap before we headed east. Everyone was on pins and needles; I prayed like I had never prayed before. I just kept thinking about the good-bye we all endured as we left camp. Lara and Mickey were so sweet and solid, at the end Mickey couldn't even talk. Lara just hugged me for the longest time. Then Lara slipped me a Pepsi. I thought we were out of them, evidently not. There is just so much in my heart right now...I just...

October 29 (Friday) –

11:30 pm - We're back. Most of us, not all of us. We left some there. Most of those we left there will never come back. I am having a hard time with the losses we took and the damage that was inflicted on us. We lost, we lost so very much. I am really struggling. I have no idea how the soldiers handled it during the Revolutionary War or the Civil War.

Seeing your friends and family dying, seeing your country torn apart, the destruction all around us. Was it worth it?

I'm still not talking much to Lara and Mickey, I just can't. Every time I start to say anything all I want to do is hold them and cry. That freaks them out so I am just staying to myself until I work it out. The questions are...What do we do now? Where can we go? Who else do we lose? How much more death and loss can we take?

October 30 (Saturday) –

I am going to try and write about what happened starting on the 24th. The 23rd is the last entry I made; we had just gotten into camp in San Antonio and went to the big, religious meeting. Maybe writing about it will help me move past it, and get over our losses. Maybe we can look to the future on what to do next. I hope we can.

On the 24th, we headed out of our camp last. The holding groups headed out first, hours before us since they had the furthest to go and then set up. Then the strike teams for Hwy 290 and Hwy 59 headed out. Our group and several others (I won't mention which ones for security purposes) totaling about 300 headed out about 2 am, we drove to our RP in two hours, no problems or issues. We were on pins and needles but nothing happened. We did a standard convoy configuration with our scouts looking for roadblocks and a rear guard about 5 miles behind us. Not a single issue. It kinda creeped us out.

Our Fire Teams along with our whole group held up and waited until 5 am to start moving again. We didn't have radio contact with anyone; we were supposed to maintain radio silence for security purposes. We felt very exposed and completely isolated. It was very unsettling to not talk to anyone else over the radio. If the other groups didn't get into place in time or didn't start when we did, well, it would be a bad day, a very bad day, for us.

It's not like we were hiding anything from anyone, the NPF knew we were coming and from where. They didn't know our exact tactics but they had an idea I am sure.

We encountered nothing until we hit a road called Hwy 1960; I don't remember if it had a name or not but I remember that George Bush Park was on the south side of the road along with a pretty good size lake. On the north side of the road was another lake but much smaller. We picked up

some sniper fire at that point; but nothing very effective. However, when the scouts got to the eastern edge of the lake on I-10 some pick-up trucks suddenly pulled across the interstate.

Of course the scouts and an advance unit engaged them. BUT, they forgot to tell us what had happened and what was going on and what their intentions were. Situational Awareness took a dump right then and there! Since we were the first unit behind them and since we really had no idea what was going on up ahead we drove right into a firefight. Not a heavy one but a firefight all the same. Mike and I looked at each other and he yelled over the radio to keep pushing through.

Normally under ideal circumstances the advance guard would immediately inform everyone that they had encountered a problem. Then we would hold up while they assessed the situation. The whole idea of an advance guard is to prevent the whole group from becoming engaged in firefight and everyone dying all at once. Obviously, it didn't work this time; probably the rush or excitement of the moment pushed them to lose track of the real mission AND TO FORGET TO MAINTAIN COMMUNICATIONS!

Well, other than not communicating, the advance guard did exactly what they were supposed to do at this point - lay down as much covering fire as possible. And once we figured out what the problem was, our secret weapon came into play: a 5-ton 6x6 army truck. A group from Arizona had brought it. It had this massive steel bumper and grill guard thing right out of Mad Max. Well, they hit those NPF trucks dead center where they had pulled them together. All we had to worry about as we sped through was some sheet metal on the pavement from the truck wreckage. All the units got through with only a few bullet holes and one shot-out windshield, no reports of injuries; or at least none that anyone would admit to.

Every overpass had NPF shooters, not many but it was harassing fire for the most part; nothing very effective in stopping us. We developed an "on-the-fly" solution. The lead unit, us now, would keep going and focusing on what was ahead. When the advance approached an overpass they would slow down and the next two vehicles in the convoy would come racing around, pull ahead, stop on the side of the road and put down as much covering fire as they could. The convoy would roll through and the covering fire team would join the convoy's rear. As the convoy rolled under the overpass the last unit in the convoy would stop and lay down

covering fire as a rear action. That would give the original covering fire teams a chance to mount up, get moving to catch up to, and join the main convoy. It worked extremely well.

We got shot up a little. Every vehicle had some damage and a couple injuries, all minor. It didn't take long for our windshield to get shot-up and we ended up kicking it out so we could see. Yeah, fresh air!

It surprised me when we passed under the main beltway 610 without any resistance, not a single person seen or shot fired. We thought for a second that it might have been booby-trapped but it wasn't. I don't think they expected us to get that far that quickly. And I am sure I was hearing gunfire, lots of it, off to our north but I couldn't tell for sure, just sounded like it.

One day there will be a memorial plaque placed at Exit 765A for all those that died. Exit 765A, is where they hit us hard. We had already reconfigured to an advance unit of three vehicles and we were about one-third of the way back in the convoy by then. They had given us a break, we needed it. Our nerves were fired by then since it seemed as if we were always out front. The sound of bullets whizzing by or impacting your vehicle can be really unsettling and downright scary over a long enough period of time.

As we approached 765A they took out our advance units in an opening salvo of concentrated small arms fire, some of it automatic weapons. I don't think anyone in those vehicles lived through the first 5 - 10 seconds, it was pretty devastating. I keep thinking it could have been us but none of us talked about it.

Our other vehicles in the convoy, including us, did exactly as planned, some broke right off the road, and others broke left. Everyone headed towards the service roads. Several units forged ahead as planned, a couple units held our back door to prevent anyone from getting in behind us. Then it got ugly and deadly.

The units that kept going came under intense fire and stopped, dismounted, and laid down wicked return fire. The units that had broken right and left out-flanked the NPF quickly and then dismounted and engaged the NPF from both the north and south. I think a couple sniper teams even got to their rear. The firefight lasted about 45 minutes or so. We took some casualties, a couple fatalities, but for the most part stayed healthy. Unfortunately, this is when we lost both the Wilder boy and Dr.

Raymond's boy. Man, they were shot up so bad. Neither one of them ever had a chance. You almost couldn't recognize them. Youth shouldn't have to die that way, or any other way. War sucks!

After about 45 minutes the NPF just up and surrendered, just like that, without a warning, nothing, just surrendered. A group from Texas went in and took them prisoner and said they could handle it. There were about 120 or so NPF, about half wounded. We left a couple of fire teams at the exit and relocated everyone else to Lawrence Park just a little north of there. We ate a little and watered up; then fueled up the remaining vehicles from gas cans and siphoning the last of the fuel from the shot-up, non-working trucks.

About that time the group we left at the exit called over the radio that we better get back to the exit real quick, but that is all they would say, no details. When we got there we found out what the problem was, the NPF prisoners were all hanging from the overpass. The Texas group had hung them, even the injured. They said they had tried them and found them guilty of treason, attempted first-degree murder, and first-degree murder. A few people complained but the Texans reminded them that the NPF had invaded Texas. They had dealt out Texas justice. There was no more discussion.

In my opinion, the NPF got what they deserved, what they asked for when they took up arms against their own countryman. Call me anything you want, I may be wrong, but that is my opinion.

The three task forces met up about 5 pm after all of the groups having slugged it out a couple more times that day but nothing as deadly that day as the 765A Exit firefight. We held up at Sam Houston Park for the night. We staked out several small fire teams outside the perimeter and got everyone bedded down. No one was interested in sleeping; everyone stayed up, most talked and talked. The vets didn't, they just listened to the "boots." The *boots* (derived from "boot camp") are what we started calling the new guys that hadn't really seen much action before today. About midnight or so everyone except security was finally asleep.

Early the next morning we laid out the next day's plan and talked about the hanging. Seems more hangings took place with the other two forces as well, all by Texas groups. We decided to not interfere in Texas business, it was their state, they had jurisdiction. They were in charge of prisoners and could convene any court they wanted to hold and meet out

any justice they wanted to, it was their state. Right or wrong, that was our decision. I've never lost any sleep over it. They deserved to be hung for what they did. Period!

The groups that had been holding on to the major arteries out of town had stopped a number of NPF units trying to leave or relocate. Maybe they were trying to flank us, I don't know for sure. They were stopped, that is all that matters. It was agreed that the holding units would start pushing into the city towards us, tightening a noose if you will. Once those units reached predetermined points we would start moving east again, generally pushing the NPF out of the city towards the east out of the state.

We got up that morning (October 25th) and you could hear the moans and cries from the wounded. They should have put the field hospital further away. We had a couple people there in the hospital but they said we had to get them this morning to go with us. They said they would need the beds by the afternoon. They knew something we didn't.

While we thought we had some big victory we had no idea what the real picture, the big picture, was looking like. Evidently, yesterday was a skirmish. The NPF didn't think there would be that many of us, or that we would be that well-organized, or that well-trained, or that well-armed. They had plenty more people ready to fight but just hadn't brought them into it due to lack of planning and lack of decision making by their leadership. Sounds like idiot Clark, he can't do anything right even when it is all stacked in his favor.

Right after we ate, as we were cleaning up, about 6:30 am, "vacationing" Col. Anderson showed up and took two of the three Stingers he had given us. He quietly told us to get our folks away from camp as soon as we could get into our vehicles. I told him we hadn't been given any orders yet. He grabbed me by the shirt and TOLD me to get our people away from camp right now, for our own health. So we loaded up.

Some of the other folks saw us loading up; a few asked us if we were headed home. We told people that we were going to get a better spot to rest until we go our orders. It was not really a lie, we just didn't mention Col. Anderson's warning. I regret not telling everyone.

Just as we were approaching the perimeter of the camp we heard the first explosions. They weren't loud at first, but they were explosions, you could tell. Then we saw the plane.

A twin engine Beechcraft type under-wing plane came flying low over the camp just to our left kinda angled at 45 degrees across our path. Then we started seeing the little puffs of dirt and debris jumping into the air from the explosions.

Looking back on it, it was almost a Keystone Cop moment, something so bizarre and amateurish that it was almost incomprehensible. This plane was dropping hand grenades on the camp as it flew over, simply unreal. Kinda like Cognitive Dissonance. But it had the desired effect, people started running in all directions. Then came the next plane.

Another similar plane came over the other side of the camp, well, not exactly. It flew to our right, again about 45 degree angle making a large 90 degree “V” right in front of us maybe 50 yards. And again people started to run, but now they were running into the open part of the “V.” A decision I am sure that I would have made as well. And I would have turned the truck that direction had one of our trucks not been hit by a hand grenade. Well, it didn’t hit the truck directly but it hit about 10 yards off the driver’s side rear door and just a little more to the rear.

Then Bob (Mary’s husband) started to scream and man did he scream! It was the most noise I ever heard the man make in the entire time I had known him. I really couldn’t take time to look back at him, I was trying to maneuver the truck around to get to the perimeter. I heard a loud explosion at that moment. Later I found out it was a Stinger bringing down the 2nd aircraft. Then I heard the choppers.

Two helicopters popped up over some trees at the open end of the “V.” The only way I can describe the scene is based on a movie or TV show. Have you ever seen a movie or TV show where they have SWAT team members hanging on the outside of a helicopter standing on the skids? Well, that is exactly what this was. They must have been tethered to the ship in some kind of harness to keep them from falling. I could see them firing automatic weapons into the crowd that had been running to escape the planes dropping the hand grenades. They were mowing people down like wheat. It was a turkey shoot.

If people had just stopped and turned their weapons on the helicopters their collective combined would have put up a wall of lead and dropped those choppers in a heartbeat. But people were just running around. We were trying to drive our way to some safe spot away from camp so we weren’t much help.

Then an explosion and a chopper just kinda vaporized into a fire ball fed by jet fuel. While the other chopper tried to turn away, I think to escape, I could hear a number of automatic weapons start to fire. Evidently, the vacationing state militia folks finally got their weapons into the action. The remaining chopper went down hard and exploded.

So now we had a bunch more wounded and dead on our hands, including ourselves. The only person wounded in our group was Mary's Bob. His left forearm was shredded like hanging beef in a butcher shop. We headed him straight for the field hospital. That was a mistake.

As we approached we saw that the choppers had come in first over the field hospital and opened fire on it. A whole bunch of the medical staff were now wounded or dead as well. This NPF bunch was a real piece of scum, just like their boss, just like all socialist/communist regimes have ever been. I made the decision right then and there, I too would personally hold trials and execute judgment should I come across NPF prisoners. You clean the germs out of a toilet, you don't coddle them and fawn over them - you kill them.

To shorten the story, we found Bob a nursing home that had been converted into a clinic. It was too obvious what the hospitals were, so they were moving the field medical operations to places that would have a lower profile and might not be so obvious to the NPF.

After we dropped off Bob, we headed back in the direction of where camp had been; we were looking for leadership and orders; we wanted payback!

We found our guy and his staff; mostly intact but they had taken some casualties as well. Some other units were driving up at the same time so we all got a quick briefing.

Turns out that all over the area the NPF hit back and with some pretty devastating results. We were told that we would have to make a decision - cut and run or stay and face a potential defeat.

Mike cussed, I mean **CUSSED!** Then he said, "I didn't come here to run. I didn't come here to lose. I came here to win or die. Those are my options. You can do what you want. Just point me in the direction of the NPF!"

We all chimed in and it was game on!

Our boss did tell us that the NPF was now winning at every location where they were engaged, and that was almost everywhere I mentioned

earlier. He said at this point we are losing the battle and unless something significant happens we will lose the war. But it was up to us to do something significant, a game changer. I could have used a little more encouraging pep talk at that point. But he was a realist.

So by now it was only about 10 am. We divided into new larger strike teams made up of fire teams. We were basically given the assignment to push east into the city with the other strike teams running parallel lines to each other with a couple blocks separating us. We would mutually support each other should one team hit a problem. We headed out after setting a communications plan into place.

I wish I could tell you we had great success that day, and that we pushed the NPF right out of Houston. But I would be lying. We only got about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile into our area. We had run into pockets of NPF but routed them out fairly easily. We didn't take any prisoners. We didn't expect to be taken prisoner. So be it.

About at the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile mark we hit stiff resistance; we called for help. But everyone else had encountered the same thing. There was no help coming. We had walked right into a trap. They suckered us into a trap by giving way in the middle then forming a horse shoe around us, then they cut us off at the rear. We were basically surrounded; well, not basically, we were surrounded. They were several blocks, maybe a little more, away in every direction.

One of the other larger fire teams had this guy just a little older than me. He had been in the 101st Airborne. While we put our heads together he sensed the stress in our voices. He said, "Hell, when you are airborne you get use to fighting when you are surrounded, that's our job. Come on, we're lucky, we can shoot in any direction and hit the enemy! They're making it easy on us!"

We laughed. We actually laughed. He broke the tension and we put together a plan. First we had to establish two rings of defensive perimeter; and while that was happening we had to get some overwatch to high ground. That meant on the tops of the buildings around us. Roy's team and my team got two out of the three assignments for overwatch.

David and I were the first shooters, and Sheila was our security, spotter, and support. We would rotate jobs and locations every hour. The rest of the day was spent keeping the NPF from closing in on us. We knew

that if we could keep alive until dark we would have a chance to break out or link up with one of the other strike teams.

I can't say for sure how many NPF we sniped that day. We kept a count using a stone and scratching a mark for everyone we dropped at each shooting location. We moved shooting locations randomly that day to avoid letting them get a fix on any given position which would allow them to counter-snipe us. Before we left that night we had counted over 60 marks all together. I wish there had been more.

We didn't see anyone during the hour prior to dark. We think they just pulled back and decided it wasn't worth the risk anymore from our snipers. We were taking a terrible toll on them. Every time they would try and move in on our group of buildings that we occupied we would pick them off one at a time. Then the folks on the ground would take on any larger numbers of NPF if they tried a strategy of direct engagement.

Sheila gets the medal for the day! The NPF had set up two counter-sniper teams; evidently to try and find and kill us. But we didn't know that at the time. We expected it to happen but we didn't know for sure when or where. So Sheila is on-duty as a shooter when she saw a scope flash, located it, and zeroed onto it. This NPF counter-sniper team had somehow figured out Roy's team position. They were setting up getting ready to fire when she dropped their sniper at 800 yards with a Spikes .308. Yes, 600 yards!

The sniper she shot still squeezed his trigger but his shot went wild. But the noise did get the attention of Roy's team. To say they were a little surprised and real grateful would be a huge understatement. I am glad she laid down the law to us that night back at the dining hall telling us that the pregnant women were coming. She and her baby are good shots! You know that baby will have to be a sniper now! Whatever sex it is I am sure it will be an expert marksmen. And it went on its first combat mission pre-birth!

We pulled out about 45 minutes after dark. We waited until we had scanned and rescanned and scanned again for anyone the NPF may have left behind. We were right. Just as we were pulling out someone opened fire on us. If they were using NV they weren't used to it. They never hit anyone. Some stone chips splattered us though, but nothing else hit close to us. But when you have about 34 people turn at one time and open up on

the spot everyone thought the shots came from, well, let's just say there were no more incoming rounds.

We made it back to a make-shift camp with the other strike teams. We were the luckiest, or the better trained; we hadn't suffered a single casualty. But the other teams did. It wasn't bad when you think how it could have turned out. An MRE for dinner, a sleeping bag for a bed. I had lost my air mattress along the way. I didn't sleep well after that. We dispersed everyone to avoid a repeat of the previous morning. As we settled in we heard on the radio that we were losing, and losing badly. Tomorrow it would be sink or swim. I was guessing we would be looking for a lifeboat or we would be fertilizer, worm food. I fell asleep so quickly it amazed me. My team didn't wake me up when it was our turn for security, they let the old man sleep even with all the tossing and turning. I am glad they let me sleep. I needed it.

October 31 (Sunday) –

It felt good writing all that yesterday, I feel better today as a result. I joined Mickey and Lara for family prayer right before bed last night. Lara said it, she asked for a special blessing on me. I needed it, she knew it. When it was over I was crying again. I just can't handle all the "ugly" in the world right now. Lara and Mickey hugged me for 5 minutes, I felt better afterwards. About midnight Mickey climbed into bed with Lara and me. She said she was cold, then she said she was scared. I think she just wanted to be with us. It was nice having us all together, close to each other. I needed the support.

This morning I do feel better, not "well," but better. I am going to keep writing about the rest of the Texas mission; it is helping me and I want everyone to know what happened to us and what happened to the country during those precious few days.

On October 26th just before daylight David woke me up real quietly. They had done their security thing that night and had just gotten back to sleep but something kept bugging David; that's when he woke me up. Seems that during their watch they had heard some vehicle sounds and what sounded to him like a toy model airplane flying around. He had reported it to the watch commander but it wasn't followed up on. To me it spelled trouble. Little pieces of information that by themselves didn't amount to much and could easily be dismissed, but added together they

were VERY concerning for the simple reason they were out of the ordinary. When things happen out of the ordinary during situations like this, there is DANGER! Good Situational Awareness is paramount during an operation.

I told him to wake the team immediately. I walked 20 yards away to another of our group's team, and gave them a 10 second briefing. I repeated it another 30 yards away with another of our teams. We were all up and ready within five minutes.

As we started to move out a couple other team leaders talked to us, I explained what I felt was happening and they were moving back to wake their teams as well. Unfortunately, it was too late for most of the camp. I still regret not sounding a general alarm, I should have. That's twice. I still don't know why I didn't. My gut feeling tells me that I knew I could get our teams away from the perceived danger but not if the whole camp was up and clamoring around. Maybe they would have just attacked us quicker if I had sounded the alarm. We all lived. I can handle that.

We had completely cleared the perimeter and could see a few other teams close behind. Before we had bedded down that night we had laid out three clear routes out of camp. Three options, two easily traversed, two easily seen and recognized; one almost hidden. That is the one we took that morning. I am glad we did.

There were some muffled shots that came from the general area of the OP's that had been quickly set up last night, then more shots. Not muffled. Maybe 3 – 5 people exchanging fire. Then it all broke loose, not so much for us, but the rest of the camp was going to suffer.

We kept heading out of camp staying low, moving fast, keeping our eyes open, our mouths shut, and our heads clear. We made it, the people coming out behind us weren't so lucky but it was their fault. When the shooting started our rear guard said those trailing folks evidently stopped and tried to assess the situation. They may even have tried to lay out a plan to return to the main camp and engage the attackers. That was their undoing, they had the lack of intelligence component and they were missing the element of surprise. It was all working against them, they paid the price, not us. We knew better or just got lucky.

Once outside the wire I huddled up with the other two team leaders to talk about what to do next. Our teams fell in the well-rehearsed practice of

setting up parameter security; we had guns pointed in every direction. Plus a rapid reaction force, we had learned our lessons the hard way.

We made the decision to head away from camp and not try and engage the attackers. We knew it was the NPF, but we didn't have any idea how many, what kind of weapons, etc. We weren't going to engage in a sure loss but we just couldn't stand by and let the whole camp be overrun either. We could tell by the intensity of the shooting that the camp was putting up a stiff resistance by now. For how long, we didn't know.

We had participated in a quick briefing the night before and knew that the leader's intent was for us to fall back this morning. Then tie in with some other forces to create a larger element and then re-engage the NPF with some "plan" that was still in the works. Well, the plan had obviously been overridden this morning. We decided to move around behind the camp to the route that was going to be used to maneuver out of the area (fancy term for retreat) and link up with the other forces. Our plan was to engage any NPF from three sides and catch them by surprise between us and the camp defenders. Once we had that accomplished we would have a corridor secured for the camp personnel to escape through our door as we covered them.

It worked. We completely surprised the NPF forces that had been engaging the camp at that point. We basically opened up a single street back door. We didn't take any NPF prisoners even though once they realized what was happening about 30 of them tried to surrender. We didn't let them. I have no intention of taking prisoners until this whole thing is over one way or another. I am no doubt very wrong with that decision but they will suffer judgment in this world regardless of anything that happens to them in the next. I am sick of it, I am sick of what they are doing to our country. I won't take it anymore, no prisoners. They can fight until they lose if they wish. I will expect nothing different when my time comes.

We got most of the camp folks out before our door collapsed. Most of those left were wounded with medics attending to them. I wish the medics had gotten out with the others but I understand they wanted to tend to the wounded. But they were the wounded that wouldn't live to fight another day. We won't have as many medics now and almost no medical supplies. We heard the next day that the NPF had gone through and shot everyone, then mutilated their bodies. War sucks!

We gathered up about one mile away in this housing project that was fairly defensible, security was established, and team leaders were called to a briefing. Some gal told us she was in charge and sent to organize a “fighting withdrawal.” Yeah, it all went over real big. First, some female in charge of us that none of us knew anything about, then being told we were going to “withdraw” (aka “retreat”) and having to fight as we retreated. No thank you! It didn’t go over very well and a couple people even mumbled about taking off on their own.

Well, she heard it and it got ugly quick. She (Kim) heard them talk about heading out on their own and she started talking about working together, covering each other’s back, etc. One of the guys that had been grumbling told her to – well, let’s just say he cussed at her. Wrong move on his part, I mean really wrong! She jumped up, covered the three or four steps that had been between them and she was in his face with a finger about 1” from his nose. She told him she was in charge and he would listen to the plan and he would follow her orders or she would drop him where he stood. I took it that she would kill him. I was wrong.

This Kim was about 6” shorter than the guy who she is yelling at but she was standing toe-to-toe with him. She was either crazy or insane, no other option. He took a step back and said something to her, she was already stepping into him still sticking that finger in his face. I saw him start to bring his hands up. His hands never made it past his waist. I can’t say I really saw what she did but I heard every ounce of air being forced out of his lungs as he was crumpling to the floor. I did see her lay a right hook to the side of his head on the way down. He was a sack of potatoes curled up in a ball moaning on the floor, white as a ghost. But she wasn’t done.

I heard the safety click off of a Model 1911 that was in her hand and pointed at the side of his head. She was pushing it into his temple, must have hurt. I never saw her draw that pistol, she was unreal fast! No one else was moving.

“Your team is going with us and they are going to follow orders. *My* orders.” She was almost whispering but you could hear the command in her voice. And for the first time I was picking up a subtle accent in her voice. She went on, “You can lead and be with your team or I will bury you right here on this spot with a bullet in your head and someone else will lead your team. Your choice.”

Well, first things first, I accepted her as our leader and I wasn't going to grumble about anything. Second, the beat down team leader made the right choice. But it still took him about several more minutes and two people to help him to his feet. He was embarrassed but alive. No one questioned her after that, and it proved to be a very wise choice on our part. She was an incredible leader and tactician!

So let me explain who this Kim lady was, as I found out later she was a member of the IDF (Israeli Defense Force). Actually a member of some Special Forces element of the IDF. She had been here in the US training with our Navy Seals when the serious problems started. Then war broke out between Israel and the Muslims; she wasn't able to get back to Israel so she stayed and joined the patriot movement. She chose to side with the Constitutional loving, freedom fighting side; that would be us. She had figured out who King Hewsane was and would have none of him or his tyranny. She thought it was only fair since her grandparents had immigrated to Israel from the US to help Israel during the wars of the 60's and 70's. She figured she was repaying a debt.

Once we all learned her background we respected her immensely and kinda feared her a little as well. She had a temper to her and the combat skills to frighten anyone.

The bottom line strategy for the day was we were going to fall back in a standard kind of leap-frog maneuver. Each team would cover the team in front of them as they pulled back. We would keep falling back until we could hook up with some other groups and mount another offensive with a larger force. At that time I doubted that we could mount any kind of offensive at all, I thought we were beaten and just trying to get away to save our lives.

Well, we got organized and briefed our folks and just about the time we were starting fall back the NPF hit our forward-most element (our rear guard nearest the NPF). It started as scattered rifle fire but then broke into a full on firefight. The team behind them got set and then the lead unit fell back; other teams were running to the rear to a fallback position to set up for their turn. It wasn't long until we were falling back as quickly as we could jog. We did that for about four hours, trying desperately to not engage the NPF in a firefight for too long at any one time. To do so would give them the advantage and waste precious ammo that was dwindling fast.

They had all the numbers on their side, we didn't. We had to stay alive by falling back and getting the heck out of there.

At about the 4-hour mark we were exhausted. I mean it! We were dead tired. Thankfully, we were retreating right into another patriot group that had already been set up. As we fell back our teams were able to drop behind their defenses and get some water and food in us. They had set up pretty well and held off the NPF with some very effective sniper fire. They had a small ammo cache as well. Most of the spare magazines and ammo cans they had in their cache had blood splatter on them. It was obvious where they had come from.

I am telling you this, if our patriot group members had not been good marksmen and snipers we would have been wiped out. One thing I am grateful for, there were lots of good marksmen living in the west prior to King Hewsane's takeover of the US government.

We rested about 20 minutes when word came that a larger group of NPF was heading our way to reinforce the existing NPF unit that the snipers had pinned down. We were told that all over Texas, as well as most of the mid-west, the NPF was pushing the patriots back and taking a pretty bad toll on our people as it happened. We were lucky, or rather I should say that Kim was determined not to get us killed retreating.

Our group, now calling ourselves "Kim's Boys," set up to take defensive cover positions for the group we had joined up with (Texas 4th Militia) so they could retreat. My team and Mike's team were out at the head again. We did OK, no one hurt or killed, at least not right then.

We spent the rest of the day doing the leap-frog retreat and losing some folks along the way. Everyone was getting depressed. We were getting our butts handed to us as we were retreating. At one point we wanted to make a stand and just fight it out. A slug fest with the NPF, a "winner take all" kind of thing. Kim told us to trust her, to just keep falling back. We had to make it through the day and then the tide would change. We trusted her by now without any hesitation. Besides, no one wanted to end up crumbled in a ball on the floor with a gun poked into our head so we just kept falling back.

Dark came early and everything quieted down. I think the NPF was getting tired of all the action too. We had fallen back about 7 or 8 miles or so. I'm not real sure. We finally pulled up to eat, water up a little and refill magazines. We always refill our magazines first. Kim called team leaders

for a meeting. She obviously had something on her mind, I could tell she knew something but she wasn't spilling the beans right then. She did tell us we would be falling back all night. We had to make it another "few" miles and there was no option or alternative.

It was going to be a long night, it had already been a long and deadly day. The worst of it was their armor. They had all those MRAPs, up-armored Humvees, and a couple other styles of armored vehicles as well. Don't believe anyone that tells you law enforcement won't turn military vehicles on civilians. They will and they did. There are plenty of graves to prove it. Why wouldn't people listen to the warnings?

Finally about 4 am we were told we could stop for the night and rest. We put out some security, not enough but no one complained, not even Kim. Daylight would explain why, but we didn't know it at the time.

So, I will pick up on October 27th (Wednesday) - As I said, we bedded down about 4 am. That is a very loose term, bedded down, we had no vehicles and we had no real logistics. All we had was our 3-day battle packs and tactical vests. And the food was all but gone, and I was sleeping in my poncho and liner. I had it better than most.

Just before daylight they started waking us up and Kim called a team leader meeting. At some point late yesterday we had combined with another group of fire teams from Arizona. We actually had a pretty big force of people but that was about it, people. I was down to my last 3 magazines of ammo, about 84 rounds. Others were in a similar situation. I figured we had ammo for about 10 hours of retreating or about 10 minutes of a firefight. I didn't care for either option, but *it is what it is*.

Kim pointed out a spot on the map -Westheimer Air Park- about 30 miles west of downtown Houston, about 4 miles from where we were. She wouldn't tell us why the air park was so important, just that we had to get there as fast as possible. I thought maybe someone would fly us out. Then I thought how stupid that sounded. What planes? I am glad I didn't say it out loud. Mike brought me an interesting piece of information. Over his portable Yaesu FT-897D that he had been monitoring he swears he heard David's secret call-sign. He tried to answer him, but nothing. I just can't imagine it was actually David. But no one would know his call-sign. Mike said he would try him next time he set up the radio.

NPF hit us before we got moving but it was nothing new, our security held them off while we started up the leap-frogging again. But it was really

slow going this time. The NPF had almost tripled their forces so we had to double up the fire teams that were holding as the rest of us retreated. We were bone tired, whipped, and dragging. I actually heard a couple people talking about giving up.

We got within a mile of Air Park and picked up some radio traffic that another group like ours was headed there as well. They were about the same distance away but on the north end. They were getting hit way harder by the NPF than we were. But we were both in big trouble. *Maybe this airport was going to be our Alamo* went through my mind over and over.

The closer to the air park we got, the heavier the smoke was. At a mile away it was fairly thick but as we continued to fall back closer to the airport it got very heavy. About half mile out it was so thick you couldn't see but about 20 - 30 yards, maybe less. We got to the cement runways, taxiways, parking areas, etc. and Kim gave a very simple, loud, stern and clear command "Everybody DOWN!"

We hit the ground. no one even asked for clarification. We dropped like lead weights.

Holy moly! Automatic weapons fire cut loose and I am glad we had our faces in the dirt. At first I thought it was coming at us but I was wrong. It was coming from in front of us, the direction we were headed. In the smoke the NPF had advanced on us further than we thought. They had gotten within about 50 yards of us and we had no idea. Whoever was on the automatic weapons cut most of them down like wheat, any NPF that could, retreated. Not many did. We didn't raise a gun, didn't shoot a round, we just kept eating dirt. No one wanted to get shot by our own people whoever they were.

About 10 minutes of all that and it was over. The smoke started to clear and we were hearing vehicle motors, a lot of them, starting up and driving off towards the NPF. Another 10 minutes or so and Kim called us to a hangar, all of us, not just team leaders.

In the hangar there must have been about 600; maybe a 1/3 injured but still walking. Every one of us looked ragged, tired, hungry, trashed, absolutely trashed. So here stands this general, he was the first general we had met up with in San Antonio. He had his arm in a sling and blood soaking through a bandage covering his shoulder.

He explained to us that we had been beaten, our force had been outnumbered and outgunned by the NPF and that we were going to be

wiped out. He had picked up intelligence a couple of days ago that the NPF had been given orders by General Clark to “take no prisoners,” Clark wanted every last one of us dead.

We kinda looked at each other trying to sort out what he was saying compared to what had just happened less than 30 minutes ago. I mean we knew we were getting beaten, that was obvious. We had been falling back for 2 straight days. But he was quiet for a minute, then two. He asked this Air Force Chaplin to come up and offer a prayer of thanksgiving. I had no clue what was happening, Mike had nothing to add when I looked at him.

The Chaplin said his prayer, I don’t remember all of it or even most of it. But I do remember him asking for a blessing on all those who died (later I learned it was about half of some units who started out with us). Then he started to get choked up. He then offered thanks for those brave men and boys that had come to help us. They had come out of the mountains from all around the west. He went on to say that the Constitution had been hanging by a thread and may have just been preserved by the additional forces that had joined us.

After he was done the general got backup, it was obvious that he had been shedding a tear or two. He said that all reports were coming in that we had been beaten and that the NPF was going to wipe us out to the last man. He had been trying to negotiate a surrender to lay down our weapons and be spared. The NPF said they would spare our lives but we would be interned in camps back east. But as he tried to talk to them they had shot him. That was yesterday afternoon. He was able to retreat back to his staff with only a shoulder wound. They escaped and tried to figure out what to do next.

Then word got to him that from all around the west, Montana, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, western Oregon, Dakotas, huge numbers of men (ages 14 – 60) had literally poured out of the mountains in very organized units. These units were headed to each location where the patriot groups were engaging the NPF.

The plan was that the patriot groups would fall back to a certain point where these men and boys from the mountains had set-up fixed positions. Then, without the NPF knowing it, the mountain boys would engage the NPF just as the NPF thought they were going to wipe out the patriots.

In our case, not sure about the other groups, it was a clear surprise and the NPF was decimated, some managed to retreat. Not many. The

mountain boys were close behind giving chase. He wasn't positive but the reports he was getting from all the other areas was a similar story to ours. The NPF was in full retreat and the mountain boys were full on chasing them down.

He offered us an option, we could eat and water up and he would find us transportation back to a safe staging area where it would get figured out how to get us home. Or we could resupply food, water, and ammo; then join the mountain boys chasing down the NPF.

It was deafening, you couldn't hear yourself think. It was like the sound of thunder in your ears, everyone was shouting, "*Chase 'em down... chase em down!*"

We were moving within 30 minutes with a full battle load of ammo, full water containers, and yes, more MRE's!

We caught up to the front lines and joined in. I will spare you the details but we chased the NPF all the way across the Mississippi River. We didn't cross the river but we did let the last of the NPF go across. We were at the bridge late that evening just watching what was going on. We saw our general was handed a radio. Then, over the radio, he told the NPF to never cross the river again. He said that from now on west of the Mississippi was "Free America," the real United States; and we would live free as our Founding Fathers intended us to.

Then a slick move, some very military-looking young men drove these commercial gasoline tankers to the bridge and parked them across all lanes of traffic with either a front loader or a dozer behind each one. Pretty good idea. The tankers are a huge bomb so the NPF can't shoot at them. And since they are blocked in by the heavy equipment they can't move them without exposing themselves to intense fire from patriot forces. If the NPF tries to get close to them to haul them off all you have to do is put a tracer round into one of the tankers. So at least for now this bridge over the Mississippi River was secure. We effectively separated the west from the east. It was the Civil War all over again, just different accents. But for now we lived in a free America once again. What we talked about that night around campfires, how long would it last? How long would we be free?

About midnight I was asked to report with Kim to Houston; Mike came along. Early in the morning we pulled into Houston; one of the

benefits to the current situation is traveling interstates, you can speed like crazy. At times we were doing 90+.

So we pull into this pretty dang-big logistics area and our vehicles were in one spot waiting for us, just where we left them. I didn't realize how badly they had gotten beaten up and shot up in the last few days. Actually, it was cumulative abuse since we moved to the ranch. I could tell right away that most of the rigs weren't going to make it back to the ranch.

So this bean-counter looking guy, Ben, comes over with some even more geek-looking nerd, Ray, and Ray says, "Your vehicles are not road-worthy. Do you agree?" He sounded like a very typical bureaucrat that has some power under his belt.

Before I could say anything Mike piped in and said, "All but that blue Toyota Tundra." Mike's truck.

The guy makes a note on the clipboard he was carrying, shoves a form under my nose and asks me to sign it; then he muttered, "please follow Ben" as he walks away.

Twenty minutes later we were entering a huge parking garage. I noticed right away that all these vehicles appeared really new, I mean REALLY new. So Ben says, "here you go," as he hands me a bundle of keys each with a tag on it. "Sorry, no license plates for them but each windshield has a number on it that corresponds to a key tag. I hope you guys enjoy them."

He starts to get back in his golf cart but before he could drive away I asked him to explain this. Turns out that a bunch of vehicles come in through the port of Houston and it is a huge staging area for imported vehicles. Seems that soon after the problems started the Texas state militia goes to these staging areas and to new car dealerships and "acquires" all of the vehicles they think will be, or might be, useful. So they had thousands of vehicles that they were storing in these parking garages under heavy guard. Since we essentially lost our vehicles defending Texas they felt it was the least they could do was to replace them.

Ben was funny, he started to drive away but stopped and turned around, "Yeah, don't expect a title or warranty work for them. But then again, who is going to ask you for registration and insurance card anymore? Thanks again guys. Really, thank you." Then he just drove away. A nerd Ben might be but he is one of the good guys to be sure.

Kim was on her radio; seems that they had school buses bringing all the people back except for the militia folks who were manning the bridges and other points along the river. They understood that we needed to get back home and were doing everything in their power to make that happen. She gave us the location where the buses were headed to get back together with our people and to show off the new vehicles to our folks. I noticed at that point she was less stressed and a very attractive woman without her war paint on.

Our guys had a hard time believing our good fortune. Roy wasn't real comfortable with the "no title" and "no license plate" things. But after a couple very brutal minutes of teasing he gave it up and enjoyed sitting in his new ride. As we pulled out of the parking garage there were gasoline and diesel tankers available to fill up the vehicles. I guess it pays to have refiners in your state.

An hour later we had found a mostly intact Wal-Mart. Well, almost mostly intact. We acquired some sandpaper and spray paint. We had the new paint shine dulled and some creative camo painting completed. And I use the term "creative," well, *creatively*.

We headed over to a high school that had our wounded, picked them up. Well, we picked up all who could travel, those that would be going back with us right then. There would be some that would never go back. There were some empty seats on the return trip. There were high schools all over Houston just like the one, turned into hospitals. War sucks!

We talked about staying in Houston to rest up, but no one wanted to stay, even for the night. We hit the road right then. The driving was easy, the road relatively clear. Some traffic, mostly new vehicles headed west. Their occupants looked much like us. Strange, I said to myself that we hadn't had a shower since we left the cabins. There were no real problems on the road until we reached San Antonio. We had thought about going the back way, it was the more direct way than through Austin, but we were told to stick to the interstates. There were still some pockets of NPF resisting, especially sniper teams.

The traffic had backed up at the East Commerce Street exit on the east side of San Antonio. It all seemed a little strange, kinda like old times but no cops acting like big shots controlling traffic. Everyone was stopped and we heard some sporadic gunfire but nothing to get alarmed about. We kept walking forward to see what the deal was. As we approached we saw an

H2 turned over on the side of the road, barely missing the cement abutment. A guy was walking back towards us so we asked him what the deal was.

“Too bad, some really good-looking chic took a sniper round through the windshield. Got her right in the head. Not so good-looking now. Must have been the snipers we’ve been hearing about. I heard they captured him and are bringing him down now. Caught him trying to escape. He was running through Martin Luther King Park over to the south about a mile. They caught him though.” He walked on.

I walked over to the overturned H2. I threw up.

Mike came over to me and asked if I was ok. All I could say was “Kim.”

He asked me, “what?”

I yelled at him at the top of my lungs “KIM!! Damn it! It’s Kim in the H2!”

Sure enough, Kim had been in the brand new H2 driving back to somewhere when the sniper picked her to kill. She had made it through all of the crap for the last week, she was trained Special Forces, and a sniper gets her after it is all over. It just didn’t seem right. But snipers can be random in who they kill. It was her time, the sniper got lucky. I was sick and I was mad. It wasn’t right. Just not right!

I heard Mike say that they got the guy and they were bringing “her” over to the H2. I looked up, she was wounded, a little bleeding from her arm and a cut on her leg. She looked hard, spiteful, mean. I resolved her fate. I tried her, found her guilty and there was only one thing left to do.

I walked right up to her, there was a man on each side of her holding an arm, her wrists were tied behind her back. I never said a word, I just stared her straight in the eyes as I covered the 50’ between us. She never broke our stare. When I got about 10’ away I pulled out my Sig 220, took three more steps and shot her right in the head. The muzzle was right at her nose. She was dead before she could blink.

No one moved but me. I just holstered my Sig, turned, and headed back towards our vehicles. No one said anything until Mike caught up to me. “You got to her before I did.” His hand rested on my shoulder. We were brothers.

I didn’t answer, I didn’t even try. I was shaking inside. I couldn’t put a cohesive thought together if I tried. If I had tried to respond to Mike I

would have fallen apart. I realized I was now willing to kill women, women that were prisoners, in custody, and their hands tied. How far I had fallen. How much further could I fall? What dark atrocities was I really capable of? At that moment I didn't care one bit!

We met up with our fuel truck an hour later; all was intact thanks to our driver and his security person. We drove straight through to the ranch; we got back on the 29th (Friday).

Now maybe you can understand why I couldn't talk to anyone when I got back, especially those two special women in my life. The ones that keep me alive. The ones that keep me going. The only reason I have to live anymore.

I am going to ask to be released from my calling as Branch President and ask for a church court. Then I will turn myself into the Sheriff for the murder of that woman.

My life just took a serious turn for the worse. I've let down Lara and Mickey. I've let down the group, my extended family. I've let down God.

Chapter 5

NOVEMBER - YEAR 1

November 1 (Monday) –

6 am - I feel much better this morning, except for the cold. The cold is penetrating this morning, our fire feels good but I am still sitting here in my coat with the finger tips cut out of my gloves so I can type. Lara is already fixing breakfast; she is cooking some of the smoked canned SPAM. That is really good stuff, I like it. Yes, I know that makes me kinda weird, a Spam lover, but when you are this far along that path, what is a little more weirdness? Too bad she mixes in the powdered eggs, which kinda ruins it. But she adds canned cheese to it sometimes and that does improve it a whole bunch. I really like it when she puts some Jalapenos in it, or salsa on it. That brings back the good ol' spicy days! What I wouldn't give for a green chili meat burrito with creamy green chili enchilada sauce right about now! There is not much spice these days, we should have stored away a lot more.

Speaking of food, we are going to have to take another food inventory. We are thinking there is a problem with the quantity and quality of food we have left. It looks like we have stacks and stacks of food. But when we start really calculating caloric needs and balancing a diet, the stacks of food (mostly wheat, rice, and beans) fall far short of what we actually need. True we have cows in the field but they belong to Rancher Bill and they are his stock to rebuild the herd. We are talking about a big hunting trip but I am not sure how productive that will be. Based on what we are seeing a lot of the game was hunted early on by people and the game that wasn't killed early on has moved to the more remote country. But we will see. For now, I want to get back to the NPF fight. I need to "unload" the rest of the story. But I will work on relating the rest when I get back to the cabin. I am going to get together with Mike for a little while and talk about a couple of things.

November 2 (Tuesday) –

6 am - Sorry about not writing any more yesterday, things got a little crazy. While we were gone they heard over the radio some bad things about LaRasa and a move they are making on Deming. Mike has also picked-up from the Ham radio last night that there is a Chinese fleet headed towards Hawaii. What!? But that would explain the equipment and US troop movements over the last few weeks headed west on the railroad. So now what is happening?

Also, we do have food problems and we are going to take another inventory. We obviously have plenty of meat at this point should we choose to kill the cows as we need the meat. And we have plenty of rice, beans and wheat. But we are short of everything else based on the number of people we have in our camp. We simply don't have enough balanced food stuffs to make it very long. We are in deep trouble. But we are working on some options. Well, some others are. I am going to let someone else come up with a solution. I am going to write as I have time.

2:30 pm - I had a talk with Lara and Mickey earlier this morning and I also had them read the journal entries of the Texas experience. I explained to them what I had to do; they fully support me in anything I feel is right.

They are fantastic, we cried some. I wish I could cry more.

I have prepared a short message to the First Presidency that Mike will send out tonight via Ham on the church's frequency. As soon as I finish this journal entry I will turn myself over to the Sheriff over at his compound.

I think I have crossed that line, the one between light and dark. I will now depend on the Lord for both justice and mercy. Mickey said she would pray for me. I hope that tender little spirit can endure what I have done and what will come next.

Here is the message that Mike will be transmitting to Church headquarters –

“Dear Office of the First Presidency:

Several days ago I shot a prisoner who was in custody and who was being physically restrained by guards. There had been no charges, no civil or military trial and no sentence rendered against the prisoner. The prisoner was a female. The prisoner died. There are multiple witnesses present that can provide statements to that effect.

I am resigning my calling as Branch President and request a church court to be convened to assess the status of my church membership.

November 2nd (Tuesday) –

11:45 pm - I am a little dazed, confused and quite honestly, somewhat relieved.

As soon as I gave the message to Mike to send to the church I headed to the Sheriff's compound, Roy drove. He said he didn't want to see us strand a vehicle there when I was arrested. Bob went along as well; said he was going to provide security. His arm is mangled, it's in a sling, he has no use of that arm and never will, he lost maybe 30 pounds and is weak. And he is going to provide security?

I should have seen what those two were planning, but I didn't. The meeting with the Sheriff went pretty much like this...

We got to the Sheriff's compound about dark and we were stopped by his security guards. They were wearing some ragtag uniforms but had their badges on even in this weather and in these times. The guards didn't know me so they wouldn't let us in. The Sheriff himself had to come out to the gate to identify us. As we were being let in he asked what this was about. I gave him the same brief explanation to him as I had in my message to the First Presidency. He simply said, "follow me, all three of you." I tried to explain that Roy and Bob had nothing to do with it but he just waved his hand at me in dismissal. He was not happy about any of this.

Once inside the main building I noticed how warm it was, their furnace had no problems keeping the cold at bay. And they hadn't finished eating dinner too long before we had gotten there, you could tell the smell of real food. My stomach rumbled and told me I was hungry. I hadn't eaten since yesterday.

We went into a room that served as his office. I had to explain everything again to him and his second in command that was in the room with us. While I was doing this Roy and Bob waited in another room.

They didn't ask me a single question; they excused me when I was done talking and asked Roy and Bob individually to give a statement. Then he had all three of us back into the office. The Sheriff said that there was insufficient evidence to press charges against me and I was released. He said that was "final" and he was also a judge now so that was the end of it.

I didn't agree with him and said so. He didn't look thrilled about that. I said I needed a judge to decide that not him. He reminded me that he was a judge, that I was still his Deputy and I was skating on thin ice. I was insistent. He said, "suit yourself, follow me."

We walked out of that building over to another building that looked more like a guest house. They had it pretty good here. Way better than our living conditions. He knocked on the guest house door - the door to the Circuit Judge. We were ushered in, more real food smells, my stomach was churning at that point. I don't know if I was hungry or just plain scared.

He talked with the Judge for about five minutes by himself. Then the Judge asked to see Roy and Bob alone. That lasted about 10 minutes. Then the Sheriff came and got me. We all sat in what used to be a formal dining room but was now set up more like a judge's chamber -minus the pomp- but the American flag was there.

The judge asked me if I had anything else to say. I replied, "no." Strange, in normal times I would have said, "no sir." Anyways, I won't get the words right but you will get the idea of how it went.

"This court is now in session. Tim you have been charged with murder in the first degree, I enter a not guilty verdict for you. I have heard all the evidence in this alleged murder and have considered the statements for and against your character. I hereby rule that there is not sufficient evidence to bring a guilty verdict against you. There is no evidence of wrongdoing the way I see it. You are hereby found 'not guilty.' You may have acted a little quickly and, justice, while served, it is usually a little bit slower of a process. You have been judged by a jury of your peers, me. These are unique times, we are placed in unique circumstances, we make decisions and do things that we would never have dreamed of had times been anywhere near normal. Whatever normal is anymore. Should the feds or the State of Texas decide to charge you with a crime we will cross that bridge when and if it ever presents itself. In the meantime, you are released. An entry will be made in the judicial records of this county that a trial on charges of murder was held and you have been exonerated. You are free to go with the thanks and appreciation of the court for the service that you render to this county, state and country. Court dismissed."

Everyone but me got up and headed for the door; my knees just didn't seem capable of holding my weight. Bob came over and put his big paw under my arm and stood me up and ushered me out the door.

Bob is a big man. Even with one arm gone he is strong as an ox.

As we were getting into the truck to leave the Sheriff came walking up to us. He handed me an item and said, "You saved Texas the time and expense of a trial and the cost of the rope. The judge wanted me to give you this to compensate you." He smiled, turned, and took two steps, he looked back at me over his shoulder, "don't forget to give me weekly updates Deputy."

I looked down at my open hand, it was a 230grain Golden Saber .45 caliber round. The same kind I carry in my Sig 220. The same kind I put into the head of the sniper that killed Kim. It was quiet in the truck all the way back to the ranch.

When we got back I explained everything to Lara and Mickey. Lara cried. Mickey simply said, "I told you so" and went to bed.

About 15 minutes later, as I was tucking her into bed, she explained that she had prayed that the Lord would understand my heart and let me go. I told her it wasn't a good idea to pray like that. She asked me, "Why?" I didn't have any good answer right then, tears were filling my eyes. I kissed her on the forehead and told her thank you.

How do I deserve all of this goodness in my life?

November 3rd (Wednesday) –

11 am - Spent the morning puttering around the cabin. Lara and I stayed up until about 4 am last night just talking, talking about almost everything. Mostly just about life in general. I tried to convince her that I could well lose my church membership through excommunication. And that would eliminate any chance of being sealed in the temple. She just held my hand and told me to trust the Lord and it would all work out His way, in His time, and she would love and support me no matter what happened.

About 9:30 this morning Mike comes running up to the cabin and hands me a sheet of paper -half sheet actually- we are trying to conserve all our resources. (Should have packed away more small notepads). He had received the message over the radio less than four minutes earlier, here are the contents of the note...

Dear Brother Tim,

Your message was received and prayed about. Witness statements were obtained and reviewed. Contact was made and the murder trial transcript was obtained from your county judge. Your situation was brought up to members of the Quorum of the Twelve and the First Presidency of the church. Due to the seriousness and urgency of this matter it was reviewed at our regular prayer meeting in the temple this morning at the insistent request of Brother Elder. Here are our findings and response to your message –

1. In the absence of a criminal court conviction on the matter you presented, your request for a church court is denied.

2. Your request to resign your calling is denied.

3. You are to remain as Branch President until such time as the Lord releases you through the proper priesthood channels.

4. You are encouraged to review the General Handbook of Instructions in this and all future matters prior to communicating with Church Headquarters.

5. You are encouraged to lead your flock as the spirit directs you through earnest prayer. They need you and so does the Lord. Lead them. You are their shepherd.

In these perilous times, as in all others, the Lord sees all, nothing escapes Him. His judgment will be meted out through justice and mercy in His time and as He sees fit. We must strive to do all that we can, and we must do our very best, in our life to serve Him. Then, in due time, the Lord will provide for us where our weaknesses fail us. Do not doubt the atonement of Jesus Christ.

This matter is closed and resolved as of 08:00 on November 3rd. May the Lord bless and keep you safe always. His will be done.

The First Presidency

I went and found Lara; Mickey was at the Wilder's. We sat down at the kitchen table. I tried to read the message to them but couldn't. Lara had to read it for herself. A few minutes later Mickey walked in. She read

the message to Mickey. When she was done Mickey stood up, walked over to me, kissed me on the cheek and whispered, "I told you so" and went back outside. Lara just sat there and cried with me. I am crying too much lately.

I went over to Mike's cabin and got the rest of the story. Well, turns out that Mike sent the message as I had asked. But he also sent another message with all the information to Brother Elder. A little while after Roy, Bob, and I had returned, Brother Elder contacted Mike directly on the radio. Brother Elder asked for Mike to relate the whole story to him; then for Wilder to do the same. Mike also had told him the outcome of the meeting with the Sheriff and the "trial" in front of the Judge.

What strange times we live in. I am exhausted.

November 4th (Thursday) –

11:30 am - Well, we held a situational report meeting this morning. Seems as if everyone is getting their head back into the game again. Even I am more "with it" this morning, just tired. I had been so wrapped up in my own issues that I had ignored the group and the group's needs. I can't do that again.

We are OK with food but not great. We don't have any fresh food. There is some of the good Mountain House freeze-dried stuff but not enough to live off of. We have some meat; some of it is freeze-dried, some of it is fresh. But it is not nearly enough for the winter and next year while we wait for news calves to fatten. We don't want to kill anymore of Rancher Bill's breeder cows so I think we are going to go on a hunting expedition. We have more than enough rice, wheat and beans; actually enough for years and years and years and years...plus a little more. Figuring out how to better use them is going to be the challenge.

Our security is a serious issue. We are experienced fighters by now and we feel we can hold our own against any reasonable situation that we expect we would encounter. But we are still few in number, too few. We are going to rearrange the fire team configurations to mix the skills up to the right balance and plug the holes from those that are no longer with us. Bob is funny, he insisted that he be on a team. Even with that bad arm he is still no one to be messed with.

Fuel - plenty of it at this point. We moved the remaining fuel from the trailer to the truck and the truck is full again. Don't have a clue what we

are going to do with the trailer. We are all grateful that we have the fuel, very grateful!

There are the injuries to deal with, especially Bob, his arm got pretty mangled. But it is healing and Dr. Raymond is attending to everyone, Sheila is helping him. We brought back some medical supplies that they gave us as we were leaving Texas, and those were a blessing! They needed those supplies as much as we do but they were thinking of us and our sacrifice for them. Good folks in Texas for the most part. The Austin liberals suck, but they are almost all gone now.

Lara and Tina are planning a little memorial service for those we have lost. I don't want to attend, it hurts my heart. It hurts deep inside to know how many we have lost, too many, and it brings back the nightmares. From the beginning we started a tradition when we bury someone from the group. In the casket we place a bean, a bullet and a Band-Aid. Universal symbols for preppers.

Our biggest worry now seems to be LaRasa; and we know virtually nothing about them except that they are out there and taking over very large chunks of US soil and claiming it as their own. We need more info on them and soon. We may not be able to handle that threat. You have to know when to fight. But we won't surrender!

10 pm - Lara and I took a long walk this evening. We didn't say anything for a long time, just held hands and walked. At one point I told her I loved her and I was glad we were married and that she was my best friend. She said similar things to me as well. Then we walked some more.

After a while we talked about more things -spiritual things- about being sealed in the temple for all eternity. It is important to both of us, we want to be together forever, we have a special commitment to each other. We look forward to that day. Lara cried a bit, she was worried that we not might make it to the temple. I told her we would. I hope I am right.

We had been walking for about an hour, just ambling along enjoying the almost full moon. We stopped by a really cool juniper tree, a very old alligator juniper. It was a beautiful night, chilly to be sure but nice. The love we felt right then was overwhelming. We made love right there under that old alligator juniper tree like a couple of young kids. Silly actually, but just one of those moments in your life. One of those rare, beautiful moments in life where everything in life seems right, very right, almost sacred. It was an incredible night together.

We walked back home and talked about how good of parents we would have been if we had met earlier in life, actually had children together and had raised a family. We joked and joked about it. We decided it was WAY better that we hadn't had kids, we would have made terrible parents and I mean terrible! We would pity the kids that would have had to endure us as parents. Their life would have been so weird. So very, very, weird.

Next thing you know we were back at camp. What a beautiful night. I am a lucky man! Tonight I touched heaven, maybe it touched me actually. Tonight we enjoyed eternity for a very brief moment in this very ugly world.

November 5th (Friday) –

1 pm - You know, I couldn't be more blessed with the women in my life. I mean it! Between Lara and Mickey what more could a man ask for?

I was up early this morning, stirring about 3:45 am. Just couldn't fall back to sleep. So I thought I would build a little fire in the stove to take the deep chill off the cabin before the girls got up. So imagine my surprise when I turn around and "Boo!" There is Mickey up and dressed watching me put wood in the stove.

She wasn't saying anything, just standing there. I thought maybe she was trying to scare me. It worked whether she was trying to or not.

A couple minutes later, after the fire started to crackle, Mickey and I were sitting at the table just talking about stuff, life mostly, just chatting. She is pretty amazing with her maturity. She has to be an "old spirit" in that little girl body.

So the talk turns to finding a boy and getting married. She starts talking like it won't ever happen because of the "war" and everyone dying. She wants to be a wife and mother; she wants to be part of her own family with a good man at the head of it. She was getting really worked up and building up some emotion so I did the only thing I know, invited her on a walk.

So here we are at 5 am, colder than all get-out, bundled up like a couple of Michelin Men, heading out the door with Max looking like he would like to chew our arms off for getting him up so early AND making him go outside in the cold.

Bottom line from our little walk-and-talk: she is scared. Mostly scared that she is going to die like those she has seen die around her already. She

is scared that she won't have a chance to get married or have children. She is scared, just plain old scared. Just like the rest of us. I didn't tell her that part.

I did my best to calm her down and reassure her that life can be good and that it will get better, even in these times. She called me "unimpressive when it came to lying." I told her I was serious but I couldn't guarantee her anything. All we could do was our very best with what we had been dealt.

We were joking around a little and we had a couple good laughs as we watched Max chase a jack-rabbit. But halfway through the chase Max stopped, froze in his tracks. He just started this real low growl, all hunched down, and then slowly he crawled over to us. We froze as well and crouched down to lower our profile, making ourselves a smaller target. I pulled my Sig from the Serpa holster.

Mickey pulled her Sig 938 and moved off to my left about 20' really slowly as I scanned the area. I couldn't see anything but we were all "feeling" something out there. It was tense, Max got beside Mickey and stopped growling, he sniffed the air. After about three or four minutes Max relaxed and that prompted us to relax a little as well. I am not sure that it was a good idea for us to relax, there was a threat out there somewhere.

I don't remember teaching Mickey to move like that and form an "L" by creating space between us. Wow, what weird habits kids pick up in these times. I guess kids do learn from observing others' actions.

We made our way back to camp and checked in with Mike's security detail; they hadn't seen or heard anything but us, even with the NV. But there was something there, something that was bad enough to make Max nervous and protective, very protective.

Later in the morning Mike came in the door of the main cabin where most of us were gaggled up enjoying the fireplace, he had some news about China. If the news is correct, China now has complete control over Guam and the Philippines. It appears that those two countries have now "joined" the Asian Rim Alliance. Probably joined whether they wanted to or not.

Everyone knew at some point that China would make its move. We knew that even before Urkel brought down America; China was going to make a move against us one way or another. And now they are on the march. What does the US do about it? What can we do about it?

9:30 pm - This afternoon Roy's security detail sounded the intruder alarm. This person approached camp, then stopped, laid down their weapon, put their hands up and waited.

We let them stand there and wait about 20 minutes to see what might happen. Nothing did. Roy went out to talk to him while we covered him. Mike's team had slithered away outside the wire to look for others and to provide an overwatch. Mike didn't find anyone; evidently this intruder was right when they said they had come alone. Good thing too, we were in no mood to be messed with.

Turns out, if what he is saying is true, that he is LDS too and a member of the Alamogordo Second Ward. A father of 6; 4 boys and 2 girls. He and his family had a cabin hidden away up in the Sacramento Mountains about 30 miles away. They are hardcore preppers and had it all planned out, prepped and everything. But about a month ago things started going bad.

Two of his boys were out hunting and got jumped by a couple of men who took their freshly killed elk, rifles, ammo, and knives. The boys got roughed up a bit but not seriously hurt. Then about two weeks later they had a fire in their cabin that destroyed over half of their food storage and other supplies. It was then that they realized that even with the 7 of them they were still too small, too few, and too vulnerable.

They had been hearing us on the ham radio but they only had a receiver so they could never talk to us. He had been searching for a week trying to figure out where we were. He got close enough to finally track us down based on our smoke. He had an idea we might be in our little canyon; he had a good set of topo maps on a laptop. Said he would have chosen this valley himself, if it had been an option. What he wants is simple; he wants his family to join us. He will throw in his food, ammo, weapons, etc. He says he figures they will never survive any of this ordeal on their own. They need to be part of a group, a community.

Everyone is skeptical, seems like skeptical is the "new normal" anymore. He *talks the talk* to be sure, knows all the right words, and says all the right things. We want to believe him, it would add to our little band. He says his boys 13 – 19 (including a set of twins) are all good shots, skilled, trained, dependable, and able to fight. That would definitely help us.

I joked, “Yeah, but can your wife do something with wheat and beans?”

Turns out she was some position in Relief Society and knows a 101 things to do with beans and wheat. If that is true, I say they’re in!

We invited him to stay overnight and attend the memorial this evening. He agreed. I think that is a good move on our part, we can get to know him better. And that is important if we are going to approve his request, we better be sure we can trust him.

The memorial tonight was simple, to the point, proper, and moving. I really don’t want to talk about it. I will let someone else write about it. I cried, it hurt. I miss each one of them. It will always hurt. War sucks!

November 6th (Saturday) –

As if things couldn’t get any worse China has threatened Hawaii. China claims Hawaii was illegally taken from Japan, and that Hawaii should be a free country as part of Asian Rim Alliance. I am not entirely sure of my history but I thought Hawaii had nothing to do with Japan. I thought that Hawaii was more Polynesian in culture and history. I could be mistaken, but in any event, I don’t think that is the point. I think the Asian Alliance is looking to expand into the western hemisphere and show the US who the new boss is.

I am sure that is the reasoning for the troop movements that we were seeing headed west for months. But how far the conflict will go is beyond me. I am having enough of a struggle just keeping up with what is happening in our part of the state let alone the country or the world. But I think this could turn into a major conflict, maybe another world war.

What I worry about is China’s numbers. I know we have superior military technology in many aspects but they have the sheer numbers on their side. There is only one weapon we have that can deal with large numbers. Once that genie is out of the bottle where would it end? Or would it end?

Mike told me early this morning that there is a recorded message being played on the Ham over and over. It is King Hewsane declaring all leadership of the member states belonging to the Western Governors Association to be in rebellion, treasonous, and subject to arrest, trial, and execution. Notice it goes directly to the punishment! They are going for

the intimidation factor as liberals and progressives always do. They have no concept of debate, only intimidate and demonize.

There are also calls for a show of non-support from the citizens of what is happening within those states coming from the White House. Grubbs is talking about how people in those states need to “stand up for America and our President.” Yeah right, whatever! But there is also rumor that negotiations are taking place to reunify the country but that there are “other options” as well. My question is, what the heck is “other options???”

We met at lunch today and talked about the Williams family proposal. We accepted their proposal but we have some concerns. But there is basically nothing we can actively do about our concerns, just be aware of them and watch for indications validating our concerns and then take action. I think the family is going to be just fine and we need the extra numbers and shooters. I am becoming ever more concerned about our security, our safety, and our vulnerability.

November 7th (Sunday) –

Church services today (Fast and Testimony Meeting) were pretty subdued. It is increasingly difficult to fast. With the cold weather and the high energy output due to our activities, it is tough on us. You can feel a draining of energy throughout the day when not eating. We continued to drink water, we have to. Dehydration is real and very deadly. It may have broken the spirit of a complete fast but we had the health of individuals to consider. I hope Heavenly Father sees we were trying for the spirit of the law vs. the letter of the law. I hope it doesn't show lack of faith.

I could easily try and rationalize it. Would a medically performed IV on Fast Sunday would be considered breaking a fast? How about being told by a doctor to drink fluids on Fast Sunday? But we are not trying to rationalize it; we simply made the decision and will live with the consequences. Besides... oh never mind, no one needs to read about my thoughts on this stuff. Who cares?

I think there is a lot brewing below the surface with everyone. We have been living “on-guard” under stress now for months. We've been in more firefights than most soldiers or police ever encounter in their entire careers. We have changed our diets, struggled with food supplies and water purity, sicknesses have claimed lives, and we have lost so very, very

much. The stress and tension is getting to us. If it were not for the spiritual aspect I am afraid that many of us would not have made it this far. But what is our end-state? I keep trying to envision that. I just can't.

There is no question actually that group members are becoming stronger in their faith and belief in God. Many people thought they would lose their faith when times got tough; the opposite has happened with us. I think it is the concept that "There are no atheists in a foxhole." And I think it is very true in our case.

I do know that Don's wife is barely functional. Since Don's death she has been very distant, I can see she is losing weight, she is not taking care of herself, and is seldom seen around others. I think she has lost it and is just waiting for the end, even encouraging it at some level.

We have to develop a plan for an outcome to all of this. Without a goal people are going to begin to falter or lose faith that we can survive. We gotta figure this out. Maybe it should be a matter to discuss with the whole group.

We are planning a scouting mission for LaRasa. There is a huge threat there. A threat that the group is gaining considerable strength and acquiring more and more territory from what we hear on the radio. They are simply taking over ranches and small rural communities. They are ruthless and dedicated to their cause. The real problem is that there is no force strong enough to resist them with any hope of success. And worst of all, we have no hard intel on where they are or where they are headed next. The scouting mission will hopefully shed some light on both those issues.

I think we might be solving the Hadley community disappearance mystery. We picked up some radio traffic from Colorado. Mike is thinking that they are talking about how the Hadley folks ended up there. He asked for confirmation but his request is being met with some skepticism. They probably think he is some kind of government spy or something. If they only knew Mike!

We will be sending two fire teams out to escort the Williams family in. They will take three vehicles with trailers, escort vehicles and a lot of fire power. The Williams have a big ol' diesel 1-ton pulling some kind of RV. I think it is a goose-neck or 5th wheel based on their description; supposed to be big enough for all of them. I sure wish we had something like that; it would have made the whole living-conditions thing far easier to endure. Don't get me wrong, I like the cabin. But, an RV could have made

it far more comfortable. And it would have had an indoor toilette and a shower. Oh well, maybe next time the end of the world hits we will consider it.

November 8th (Monday) –

Before light our teams went out, two for the Williams escort, the other to scout for LaRasa. The Williams team should be back fairly soon if all goes well, before dark for sure. The LaRasa team won't be back for days, maybe a week, more than likely. They have a lot of ground to cover to get a good idea of what is going on. They are under strict orders not to engage with them, simply observe, document, and get back in one piece without being discovered.

What I am not comfortable with is three fire teams gone at the same time. I didn't realize it until I walked around this afternoon and realized how vulnerable we were if we were hit right now. It would take a fair number of bad guys to overrun us. It would be impossible to defend the ranch right now against any serious threat. This is something that has to be discussed and avoided in the future. I wasn't paying attention.

Something is really bugging me. I am edgy and it is showing. Mickey is also very quiet the last couple of days. She won't say anything is wrong but I can tell something is up. Lara made a comment at breakfast that we (Mickey and I) both need a slight attitude adjustment. She's right.

November 9th (Tuesday) –

Good news...bad news...

Williams family made it in without a hitch other than coming in before dark. Not sure why they chose that move (coming in before dark) but they are safe and assured us they weren't followed.

LaRasa team has still not been heard from. They were supposed to check in regularly by radio but communication continues to be one of worst problems, and probably will stay that way. There is just no reliable way to have consistent communications outside of "line-of-sight." The Ham does well at night on HF but mostly for longer distances. The other radios we have are good for "local." But outside the wire communications at any distance it becomes hit and miss. We have an antenna up on the tallest peak and that helped a whole lot but doesn't eliminate the problems. I wish

we would have had a good Ham radio expert in the group prior to TSHTF! If we had taken the time to do the research we could have bought a Yaesu FT-8800r and turned it into a cross-band repeater but we just got around to it.

One thing we have decided is a hunting party is absolutely needed for meat. We have got to supplement our diet with some variation of meat and more energy dense food. We are burning an amazing number of calories each day, a lot of it just to stay warm. We are talking that the animal skins from the hunt could prove to be very useful over time as well. I think our best bet is to set some large and medium-sized game snares. If we do that then we have hunters out there 24-hours a day and the snares don't use any ammo.

One problem with the whole hunting party idea is Mickey thinks she should go. And you can imagine how Lara and I feel about that. Actually, I would be OK with it under different circumstances but as it is now - NO WAY!

Mike picked up a weird message last night; one we seriously question. The Ham operator from small pacific island was saying that a large Chinese fleet was spotted heading right at Hawaii, and they were close. And that we (the US) detonated an EMP in the vicinity of their fleet. They said the Chinese fleet turned around and limped away. From what he was saying a couple of their ships had to be towed.

So here are my questions: 1) How could a civilian Ham operator know that a Chinese fleet was spotted near Hawaii? 2) How would they know that an EMP device had been used? 3) If an EMP device had been used, why was his Ham equipment still usable? Critical thinking and the ability to reason out scenarios is absolutely necessary now.

But here is the real #1 question: If it is true, does that mean we are now at war with China or all of the Asian Alliance countries?

May God have mercy on our souls if we are.

November 10th (Wednesday) –

The LaRasa team got back just after dark. Coming in after dark is actually the best idea; helps conceal their movements from any potential camp watcher. Their report is not good; LaRasa is firmly established and widespread. Any non-Hispanics or non-cooperating Hispanics are enslaved

or killed, mostly killed, except the women and girls. Yes, that is blunt but not as bad as what they are actually doing.

We heard for years, maybe an entire decade or two, that LaRasa was a violent far-left racist organization that had a mission to take away parts of the USA for their own exclusive use. But like so many things at the time, we ignored it or chose not to believe it. Well, we are paying the price now. Ah, the curse of Normalcy Bias!

What just slays me, Sataman, Hewsane's first SCOTUS pick was a huge supporter of LaRasa! And the Senate still confirmed her! Go figure, it makes you wonder if the Senate was that stupid or if there was a lot of complicity on both sides of the aisle in the events leading up to the King Hewsane crash.

And the really bad part about LaRasa being so firmly established is the fact that we don't have a realistic defense against them at this point. The state militia is all centered on protecting Santa Fe. There is virtually no county law enforcement, and the regular military is pre-occupied with China. So the citizens are on our own. And there are not enough of us, we are too spread out, and we aren't an organized unit. In other words, we are in serious trouble. This all ties back into my growing concern in regards to our big picture goal, what are we going to have when this all settles down?

The Williams family is settling in really well so far. Adding 5 more guns to the mix is a real boost and helping out on camp security gives us a little break and better coverage. More eyes are a good thing. More guns are a great thing!

I think I already mentioned that they are LDS church members. Well, technically they were "inactive" members. Seems they left the church about four years ago after being ridiculed in a church Sunday school meeting because they were into being "preppers" and preaching about it to others. They got their feelings hurt. I don't know all the details and I don't have to; you can see the resentment and hurt from that experience. They say they have no bad feelings against the church, they just didn't want to be part of that congregation anymore. They just didn't feel welcomed. We will see how it works here for them.

Their names for the record:

Brian Williams (father/husband)

Nicole Williams (mother/wife)

Ed (son – 19)

Emily (daughter – 17)
Doug and Donny (sons – 15)
Trent (son – 13)
Lisa (daughter – 12)

November 11th (Thursday) –

Mike reported this morning that he was hearing about sabotage occurring in California; seems as if it is all focused on the infrastructure. That almost seems ironic since there is so little infrastructure left that really is consistently, reliably working anywhere here in the west. But infrastructure attacks are standard practice among guerrilla type organizations. So who is doing it and towards what end?

It is almost comical, if they started that tactic here we would never even know it. We are completely off the grid right now. It would affect us if they were hitting the road system but everything else is already a non-issue to us. Being off the grid is kinda cool, but a hot shower and an indoor toilet is not a bad idea either, along with central heat now and air conditioning in the summer!

This morning the hunting party left. They took a couple of the best shooters, a couple big boys and Candice Wilder went along as well. Seems she knows something about preserving animal skins. Normally we wouldn't have worried about preserving the skins but things have changed and we are looking at the longer term more now than before, looking at it way more. Everything is a resource now.

Lara and I are getting along really well. We are reading scriptures together and really talking. It's like really getting to know her more than just as a wife, more than just as a person or friend. Something different is taking place. And based on my past relationships, most of them regrettable, this is really cool. We are growing very close.

That doesn't mean we are leaving Mickey out of anything, quite the contrary. She is closer than ever to us, like a child we never had. A great child, a good girl, no trouble to speak of. OK, well, today was a bit rough; she wanted to go along with the hunting party. When we told her that wasn't going to happen she got pretty dang mad about it. Or maybe I should use the word "upset," but she was a lot of whatever word you want to use. The only way I could calm her down was telling her we could go

hunting together at some point. Actually, I think it would be an awesome time going hunting with her. She has turned into quite the outdoorsman!

The plane again today. Mike radioed to me as soon as it was reported. I listened in with Mike. We watched “his” actions while the plane flew by. I am as convinced now as Mike about his involvement. It kills me to think it. But at some point we gotta deal with it. I think our next step is to bring Brian in on it. In the meantime we have to be very careful and not take our eyes off of “him” for a second.

It is so weird how some things right now in life are really good and some are very, very dangerous. This a time of dichotomies to be sure!

November 12th (Friday) –

OK, now Mike is telling us the Ham is lit up with reports of riots in the Asian neighborhoods of San Francisco and some other California and northwest states. Seems it is Asian on Asian violence and such, like burning stores and other businesses as well as houses of other Asians. I always thought that a bit strange; rioting and destroying your own community’s property. Maybe I just don’t know enough of what is going on there.

But here is something way cool, I had a dream last night. A new dream, a more comforting dream. But one that is unrealistic, probably just symbolic or pure fantasy. But here it is...

I had been in a Sunday school class, it seemed as if it never ended, just kept going on day after day. I would attend class, then walk to a mountain and meditate, and then sing in a choir for a while. I always wanted to sing in a choir but I was never really any good. Even in the dream I think I sound bad. So after singing then I would be back in Sunday school class; the class time seemed like a very long time overall, but not really. Not boring and the time flew by.

Then after one of the classes I am walking into a temple. I am not sure which one but one I had never been to or seen before. I waited in a room, not the Celestial Room or sealing room but a room of some kind in the temple. There were others there with me, I knew them but I can’t tell you who they were because I don’t remember. But I knew those that were there with me. It seems as if we waited there for a long time, but then again it seemed as if the time went by quickly.

After a while a temple worker came in and escorted me to a sealing room. When I walked in I knew the three men that were there; but again I can't tell you their names. I don't know the names but I know the men. They were VERY solemn and very spiritual, and I was honored to be in their presence. I didn't (or couldn't) talk to them but I could feel them welcoming me and they were glad I was there. One was pretty choked up and had tears in his eyes.

A couple minutes later a woman came in, it was Lara. But she was kind of different and I hadn't seen her in quite a while. I can't tell you how she was different, but different. Like a 25-year old Lara. The spirit about her was incredible and I mean incredible, she seemed so different. I was kind of embarrassed to be there with her, like she was so much more beautiful and better than me. You know like the dork and a cheerleader. But you could feel the love between us, it was tangible. But we didn't speak to each other.

The next thing I know there is my cousin Bill; he was older than the last time I saw him. I haven't seen him since the spring when Lara and I were married back in Las Cruces. He was kneeling at the alter in the sealing room. Then I turned my head slightly and there was Betty, my first wife. She was there kneeling across from my cousin Bill and they were holding hands. I was surprised to see them being sealed together because both are already married and sealed to someone else. But hey, it was a dream.

The sealing ceremony was going on but then the door opened again, a really cool light was coming through. Whoever it was on the other side of the door I knew them but I couldn't see them. But I felt very glad they were there. Then I woke up. When I woke up it was about 2 am. I felt wonderful, I mean really good. I got up and went outside for a minute. Duh, yes it was cold, it's November for crying out loud. When I came back in I looked in on Mickey, she was sleeping soundly and Max was curled up beside her. No, there wasn't any room left on the bed, none at all. That dog is HUGE! Then back to bed. Lara stirred, asked me if anything was wrong. I told her no, kissed her on the cheek and went back to bed. I slept really well the rest of the night, I mean I was out of it! I slept in a bit; Mickey was already up and built up the fire a little, the water was on for hot chocolate. That was nice to wake up to. Lara hardly ever

gets up early, even more so lately. Mickey and I are the early risers in our family. What a wonderful night's sleep!

November 13th (Saturday) –

Wow!!! It has been a busy day, real busy. Here is the run down...

A family by the name of Smith has contacted us via radio. Mike talked to them but gave them no information about us. When Mike asked them how they got our name they said it was through a mutual friend but wouldn't say who that mutual friend is. They said they are another family that is struggling to make it and they are too few in numbers and they are running out of food. Then they asked for a meeting.

Well, Mike is nobody's fool so he agreed to a time and place well away from here; a half a day's worth of travel to get there. Mike said they seemed surprised at the location, as if they weren't expecting it. But the meeting is set up.

But Mike said his hair was standing on end the whole time. He said it doesn't feel right at all, like they knew too much about us and they wanted a meeting with us too badly. At first they talked about sending the mom to meet with us here. They said that dad was sick and he would stay with the kids. Mike said they seemed really anxious to meet us in our camp.

After Mike told us all the details, none of us feel good about this. We all feel as bad about this as we felt good about the Williams family. It just doesn't add up right. This would be the second family in less than two weeks. They wanted Mike to transmit our location to them "in the open" over the radio. No one in their right mind would ask someone to do that in this day and age of danger and uncertainty. We are going to have to think this through. Luckily we have a couple of days.

Then the hunting party returned without any meat. But they ran into another hunting party from another patriot group. The other group had no meat either and they were kind of shocked to run into our folks. Evidently, they seemed friendly enough and on the up and up, but you never know.

Now here comes the interesting part, they had heard about us, heard about our fighting capability, our part in the Texas mission, our - well, they had heard about pretty much everything. They seemed to know a fair amount about us.

Here is the kicker, they don't want to live in our camp but they want to come under our leadership like a satellite camp. Turns out they relocated from their original camp that was up in the mountains at a considerably higher elevation. Seems that the snow and cold is much worse there and they were losing it so they relocated. The place they are now is some large abandoned ranch, "homestead" is the term they used. It had been vacant for a couple decades they figure but they squatted there and seem to be doing OK now considering the circumstances. They gave our people a LAT/LON and it shows on the map as an old ranch with a well, spring, and tank. It is about 7 miles from our place but on the other side of the mountain.

What they want is just to be associated with us and look to us for leadership should things warrant a joint operation. That seems reasonable and non-threatening. But, here is the second offer in two days. That is just too much coincidence. Something is going wrong here and we better figure it out. And quick!

Now, if they are being honest and open with us, which is exactly what it appears to be, then it would be nice to have a group supporting us within walking distance while being geographically remote from us. We would be each other's back doors in one respect.

On a completely different note, Mike also told us that there is absolutely no discussion on the Ham about reunification concerning the country. The split is there, it is real, it is obvious, it is complete and decisive. And it doesn't appear that anyone is going to, or even wants to, resolve it peacefully any time soon.

Now, for some great news, Mary was baptized by Mike late this afternoon. I had heard she was talking to Mike and Sara about the church, seeming to be interested in joining. But I wonder how much this has to do with "Bob." It doesn't really matter, we all join the church for different reasons at different stages of our lives.

So be it, we have a new Branch member. I wonder if I should be asking Salt Lake to make us a Ward yet? Just kidding, just kidding,

November 15th (Monday) –

I had my temple dream again last night. But this time it took up almost where it left off. The door was already opened and this little kid was walking in led by a very sweet older lady, maybe a temple worker, I

am not sure. The kid was a toddler, maybe 3 or 4 years old. A cute little boy, blonde hair, blue eyes; really, really blue eyes. I knew this kid, he seemed very familiar to me but I didn't know his name or how I knew him. He was brought to the alter and sealed to Betty and Bill. Everyone was crying a happy cry, even the little boy. I started feeling like I knew him even more but I still didn't know his name. After the ceremony was over everyone was crying, everyone was still kneeling, then I knew the little boy's name - his name was "Tim." Then I woke up.

OK, so who is "Tim?" Was it me as a little boy? Was it just someone I know? Is it supposed to be someone that I should know? Or is just me having a dream?

This time the dream was a little unsettling but also not discomforting, just a little weird.

We are starting to have the water problem again. Not the unsanitary problem but the freezing problem. It is getting cold outside, really cold at night. Luckily I am not on the project to deal with it, I am grateful for that. I am tired.

Tomorrow is the meeting with the Smith woman but we have a little surprise for them at the last minute. We aren't as stupid as I look!

November 16th (Tuesday) –

Strange day! And I am worried about it. So many things happening, so many moving pieces. It just seems to be so much to keep track of. It is tough enough for us to worry about keeping our water from freezing, making sure we have enough food, providing security, dealing with other people and other groups, etc. Then there is the local stuff and right now that is LaRasa and their extremist racist violence. Then we have the country effectively split in half, or close to it. King Hewsane is breathing down the collective neck of the west; he has already completely subjugated everything east of the Mississippi River. They are living under martial law with King Hewsane making law through regulation and Executive Orders. Those orders and regulations are coming through his ever-present "Czars" with no Congressional oversight or approval. Since when were government "Czars" legal? They aren't mentioned in the Constitution but that doesn't seem to stop any president from using them to control us. And they have virtually unlimited and unchecked power over the citizenry. Seems appropriate that they were first used by President Franklin D. Roosevelt!

There was never a more socialist, progressive elitist president than him. Well, until President Hewsane came along and set a whole new record for Progressivism.

Add on top of those issues the fact that we might well be at war with China or with all of the Pacific Asian countries and you have massive turmoil and conflict raging on every side. How do you possibly keep track of all of it let alone deal with it?

And all because King Hewsane wanted to “fundamentally change America!” Well, in all reality it started way before him. President Bush didn’t exactly do our country any favors (either one of them) but you have to go all the way back to President Woodrow Wilson to see where “they” started the slow destruction of the country. And their ultimate goal is pretty obvious now, they wanted to turn the average American into a serf for the benefit of the elite. And the elite being those with money or power; because it has always been about money and power to those people, the politicians and government officials.

We were to have our meeting with the Smith woman today. And in a way we did, she just doesn’t know it. At the last minute we canceled it and I mean at the last minute. But we had moved two trackers into position near the meeting site. Interestingly, she had already showed up early with some company. Now don’t get me wrong, we would have done the same thing; there is no way we would have sent someone in alone without some back-up (i.e. one or more overwatch). However, she had represented herself as being with a family and no one else. And that she would be at the meeting alone; therein lies the problem. She wasn’t.

She shows up but our trackers had been in-place since before dawn so they were able to watch her approach. She knew what she was about, she even had radio communications with someone, there was an air of confidence about her. Obviously a leader.

Then we put the radio call into her and told her we couldn’t make it and that we could reschedule if she was still interested. She wasn’t real happy but held it to herself, revealing nothing over the radio. However, our people saw a lot of animation on her part that pretty much let us know she was really ticked off at us. So at the end of the radio conversation she gets ready to leave the meeting site and out comes 6 people, all between 20 – 35, all males, all built like athletes, all sporting weapons, and all Hispanic-looking.

Can you spell LaRasa?

So now we know what this is all about, just as we suspected it might be from the very beginning. It was all a set-up for the beginning.

“Bob” brought up a good point when we were all talking about it later. He asked the question, “Could they have picked a better last name?” He was referring of course to Joseph Smith, the founder of the LDS church. It did seem a little coincidental or we are getting really paranoid. But if “Bob” is right then they know about our religious affiliation and that means they have more intel on us than we knew about. And way more intel than we have on them. The whole thing tells me we don’t have nearly enough information on them. And we better get more, and real soon.

When we canceled the meeting the radio conversation was interesting as well. She stated that they had plenty of food, seeds, fuel, etc., indicating that they had plenty and would share all of it with us just for us allowing them to join us. The ol’ “too good to be true” gig was playing out before our very eyes. So at least we have more information, now the problem is coming up with a plan on how to deal with them. And that plan is going to take some time, and a lot of smarts.

As a side note, but important, Mike was hearing two main items on the Ham last night. 1) There are lots of confirmations of an EMP and the Chinese fleet story, we just don’t know how valid they are, 2) There is a rumor that the country is going to be split in half making two separate countries. I don’t believe that for a second.

November 17th (Wednesday) –

The military released a statement over multiple Ham radio frequencies that they did detonate an EMP weapon against the Chinese fleet. The fleet did turn around and disengage. The Chinese intentions are not known and the military is watching the situation closely.

None of that really surprises me, especially based on the Ham reports we have been getting. What bothers me, how will China retaliate? And make no mistake about it, China will retaliate. Yup, they are not going to just go away. They will have a plan, they will regroup and will do something. What will it be and how will it affect us and the rest of the country? We could easily be looking at another world war on a much larger and potentially a much larger and devastating scale.

On another note entirely, today we really started talking seriously about the plan dealing with the Smiths. The talk ranges from ignoring them to a pre-emptive strike against them. Obviously neither of those two options are good in my opinion. Somewhere in the middle is the solution. Coming up with that solution may be a little challenging.

Mickey is still mad at me at times, all about the hunting trip. She keeps telling me that they would have come back with a load of meat if she had gone along. Lara tells me it is the teenage girl syndrome, something about hormones and such. I just get a headache over it. So to get her to stop talking about it I told her she can go with me once the weather gets a little better. I am not sure that is pacifying her; I think she still has her heart set on going. At times I just don't understand her or the obsession with her going hunting.

November 18th (Thursday) –

Woke up to some serious snow coming down this morning and it hasn't let up since. There is 2' of snow on the ground and it is still coming down. Actually, in a way it is kind of nice because we normally just stay inside when it gets like this. I spent a bunch of time reading scriptures this morning, then reading a novel this afternoon. Tried to walk the dogs. OK, maybe I just opened the door for them. They really didn't want to go out. Ally especially didn't want to go out being she is the short-haired dog.

Oh, did I mention that Lara made a couple little sweater-vest thingies for Ally? Yup, to help keep her warm outside when it is cold like this. We already had made the dogs some leather boots to protect their pads from the snow. They hated them at first, tore them off, ate a couple. But now they are OK with them. I bet those two dogs figured out the alternative - raw, sore, ice-crusting feet!

We are really going through some firewood today trying to keep it warm inside. I have no idea what the temperature actually is inside but we are all bundled up. We have a pot of thin soup (from bouillon) on the stove and about every couple of hours or so we drink a cup with some Mountain House pilot bread to help keep us warm. But man, it sure is cold!

Lara was really sweet to me this morning but this afternoon she is almost like a different woman. Not that she was mean or anything, just a little cranky. We are all suffering from cabin fever I guess.

I think I am going to read Glenn Beck's Overton Window out loud to Mickey this evening and start a discussion with her on it. It would be good to get her thinking about things such as "critical thinking" and getting her just to think through stuff. That would make her ahead of about 99% of everyone else her age. When did it become fashionable or "cool" to be an idiot and incapable of thinking for yourself? Well, public school system sure figured out how to accomplish that!

I figure it started about the time that liberals and progressives took over the government education system (formally known as the public school system). When the states took more control away from the local districts the locals (moms and dads) started losing control of their kid's education. Then the federal government got involved at that point then the parents lost all real control of the education that their children were getting. Well, unless they got their kids into private school or better yet, homeschooled them. Once again, through money the elitists gained control of the educational system and then gained power over our children's minds. Same ol' story - money and power!

And people would have figured that out if they knew the origination of public education in Europe and that a rabid socialist, John Dewey, brought that same system here to the US. Sick!

November 19th (Friday) –

Continuing to snow. Weird, it's snowing and cold at night but during the day it is actually decent outside if the sun is shining. I am worried about this much snow, there are so many downsides to it. It makes it harder to move around for things like hunting or simply traveling. Funny to think about there being no automobile club you can just call thinking they will come jump-start your car or pull you out of the snow bank.

We are reevaluating our situation and a couple things we realized that we have no back-ups for; we have no spare car batteries, or really any spare parts for any of the vehicles. We also have no snow chains for any vehicle. Even the taller 4-wheel drive vehicles won't be able to get around if the snow gets much deeper. And last time I checked, no one is likely to come around plowing the roads.

We prepared for long-term, grid-down vehicle usage to some degree but we didn't really even come close to getting it right. Especially the snow chains; they're cheap and they can be used in sandy desert or muddy

conditions as well. But nothing can take their place in snowy or icy conditions. We blew that one!

I am not positive on how the snow would affect the defense of the ranch if we are attacked again. Some aspects would be positive like being able to see better at night if someone was moving in on you. But it also makes it harder for us to move around and our tracks/paths around the cabins make it real easy to see where we go, including to and from the OP's and the CP. I just seem to be concerned about everything right now. But why would we not be attacked again? We have resources, people want resources, some people know where we are. It only seems logical that we will be attacked again at some point in time.

On the food side - well, we are OK on the basics, pretty good actually on things like wheat, rice, and beans. But the things that can turn those into meals are starting to get a little scarce. Rancher Bill has told us that we really don't want to slaughter any more cattle for food since we would be dipping into his breeding stock. I completely understand his view but I don't share his optimism. I don't believe for a minute that he is going to ever be using that breeding stock. I think things are going to deteriorate in this area to such a degree that he will either be run out or buried.

Since our hunting party came back empty-handed we are going to have to organize another one really soon. While we still have some wild game meat and beef, we don't want to run low and really "need" it. We would rather have some amount put away in case we have really bad weather or poor hunting. Either way we have to go hunting and the weather is not cooperating.

One bad note on the food front, one of two electric wheat grinders has broken. One of the grinding wheels cracked and fell apart. We have no spares and the two electric grinders are not compatible so we don't even have one we can cannibalize for spare parts. We do have a manual, hand crank, grinder but no one is looking forward to having to use it. Some kind of bicycle modification might be rigged up to work, we'll see. Maybe that is a task for our engineer!

We are also at a stalemate on the "Smith" family, we simply can't decide what to do. We are really worried about what might be happening that we don't even know about. Our intelligence is just not adequate, pretty crappy actually. No, more like non-existent.

Thanksgiving is six days away and we really aren't talking that much about it. We have a whole lot to be thankful for but we also are not in the best of positions either. The two best things we have is our faith and each other. And that ROCKS!

Now a more personal note, I am feeling very uneasy about things. Apprehensive is not the right word but neither is scared. It is somewhere in between. I just *know* something is up, something isn't *right* but I can't put my finger on it. There are just so many moving pieces right now that it is hard to process it all. I pray about it but just get the feeling that everything will be alright, take one day at a time, and be prepared.

Yes, I get frustrated with that. We really have no choice but to live one day at a time; and we are as prepared as we can be under these circumstances. We began preparing two years before King Hewsane got elected and we've never stopped. I just have to take comfort in the "everything will be alright" part I guess.

I am a man of action, a problem solver, a "fixer." I have been my whole life. To just sit here in the snow waiting for the next issue to come up is frustrating and the stress bothers me. You can also see it in the rest of the group as well. It's like we are just waiting for the next crisis to occur, and that implies we are victims. And there isn't a single person here that will tolerate being a victim!

November 20th (Saturday) –

Mike gave us an update on the latest he is hearing on the Ham. One thing for sure is the difficulty to make out what might be true and what is just more dis-information or what might just be someone's fantasy world. The government and media were always bad before in giving us the truth, now they are horrible at it.

It sounds like China has retreated back to their side of the world; at least for now. I still find it hard to believe they thought they could just walk into our house and think they can just take something. But they have openly stated their true intentions and feelings for a very long time. It's just that most people chose not to hear and see it because we were trading partners. They had low-priced goods that we sold our soul for. Yeah, sold out our middle-class working folks for their factory workers' comfort. NAFTA turned out to be one HUGE sell-out against the American workers who made up the middle class. Progressive trade policies help destroy the

middle class, turning most of the middle class into the lower class. And how ironic, the Progressives kept spouting off how they were the champions of the middle class while all along advocating and implementing the very policies that destroyed the middle class.

But I can tell you this, if China was brave enough, or crazy enough, to try it once they will try it again! They are not going to give up that easy, that's for sure.

There is a military tactic called, "probing actions." Essentially one side attacks the other, not really with the intention of a major battle but just to see what the other side does and how they react. So you can learn their defensive tactics, where their forces are, how they use their reserves, etc. So maybe China was trying to figure out how we would react by probing us. I am sure they see a weakness due to our domestic problems. And I would imagine they would see BumbleBarry and his complete and total ineptness as a leader as an opportunity to strike. Besides, BumbleBarry also despises the military and has cut personnel and funding since the first day he came into power. I am sure that China saw that as a huge opportunity, even without the others problems we ended up with.

Whatever China was doing, I will bet you a dime to a doughnut that they will be back, and far better prepared to deal with us next time. Will we be ready?

There is very little chatter about what is happening domestically since the widespread defeat of the NPF. It is common knowledge that they got pushed back to the eastern shore of the Mississippi. It is just as well known that would not have happened without the huge influx of reinforcements that poured out of mountain areas. Somewhat less known is the fact that most of those individuals were LDS, not all by any stretch, but most. And a lot of those LDS members were missionaries that had not been able to get back to their homes.

What we are hearing is the eastern part of the country is essentially living under martial law with state governors that have been appointed by King Hewsane and report directly to him. Also, the congress has granted broad executive powers to him as well. The irony to that is BumbleBarry had exactly ZERO executive level experience prior to him becoming president. Bottom line, he is ruling the east more like a kingdom than a Constitutional Republic. Yeah, it's working out really well for us to have a former community organizer now acting as a monarch, a king; but yet

knowing nothing about being a leader. How's that "hope and change" working out for us?

Food is not so much an issue in the east either. Seems as if there was plenty of undistributed food in warehouses and such. Plus HUGE amounts of food was taken from here in the west and shipped east. Whole dairy herds, entire grain silo storage complexes, and beef herds were moved via train and truck back east. I guess they figured they had the right to pillage like they were the victorious conquerors. But that stopped once we got the NPF back where they belong.

Speaking of the NPF, they got pushed back to the east but they can be seen along the river reinforcing buildings and where there used to be ferry crossings. The bridges are all shut down. Evidently, there are local defense forces on our side of the bridges stopping any civilian western movement to the west and NPF on the eastern ends of the bridges preventing movement. Kinda like the North and South holding each other at bay in Korea all those years.

Yes, there are completely different rumors about what happens next:

1. That there are negotiations taking place that will reunite the United States as a union again.
2. That there are negotiations in the works that would permanently separate the states into two separate countries.
3. That King Hewsane is stalling while he gathers sufficient forces to invade the western states and force us to submit to his tyranny once again.

We have had lots of discussion about those ideas, we keep throwing it around and everyone has expressed opposition and agreement to all three ideas at one point or another, including me.

Idea #1 would be nice, put the USA back the way it was so we can be a great country again. However, we would never accept King Hewsane as president. He is a petty dictator and a horrible leader as well as being an incompetent fool. Maybe this idea could gain traction if another president was elected that we trusted or at least had some faith in.

Idea #2 sounds really good if we could get together enough states to form the new western country based strictly on the original Constitution and rid ourselves of all the government BS that has been piled on us for 130 years. It would have to be based on individual rights, minimalist federal government, reasonable state and local governments, and a HUGE reduction in the tax and regulation burden.

Idea #3 was actually discussed at length. When put in the right perspective it sounds pretty good, as long as the winners were those of us in the west. If King Hewsane did invade again using the NPF we would beat them again. This time we could march them right back into the Atlantic Ocean and then throw out the corrupt politicians in Washington. But we are worried that the military would get involved if we pushed it that far.

So we just keep talking about it and hope that the brainiacs on our side can figure this all out and peace can come back into the land. Because that is what 99% of the people want, peace, period. You know, that kind of peace where you can raise a family and work and enjoy the weekends. Just good old fashion peace, free of government telling you what to do, where to do it and how to do it, and then penalizing you for not doing it fast enough.

There is more but I feel I am rambling but, I have saved the best for last...

Grizzly Adams walked into camp late this afternoon. And if you are reading this and you don't know who Grizzly Adams is, you just plain haven't lived. Back in the 1800's there was quite a few mountain men. Lone men that would live most of their lives in the mountains (Rockies mostly) trapping and living on their own. They would mingle with each other and civilization rarely, usually just to resupply on the things they couldn't make, shoot, trap or steal. In the 1970's (I think it was) they made a TV series about a guy called Grizzly Adams. Pretty cool show if you liked the outdoors and stuff.

So, this mountain man comes into our camp and boy did he stink. But yes, he walked in, didn't try to sneak in. Just walked up in the broad daylight, pretty as you please. That told us that he probably didn't have evil intentions. And he didn't stink solely because he needed a shower, but he REALLY needed a shower. But he was also hurting. He had an infected arm wound, his feet had rotted flesh on them, and he had two severely rotted teeth that must have been killing him.

His story is pretty simple, he saw the coming problems with the economy, the elections, society in general, etc. So he cashed in his retirement money, bought all kinds of survival gear, and rigged himself a little place in the mountains as a hide-a-way.

He says he headed to his mountain hide-away right after BumbleBarry got elected. Says he was pretty happy living like that. From what he is

saying he was up in the “wilderness” of the Gila National Forest pretty far from everyone. He was far enough from everything including the occasional sport hunter and from where any city folk would dream of going

But trouble started for him when a tooth got bad; then he started getting foot rot because he wasn't keeping his feet clean and dry enough. Then came another bad tooth. He said the arm wound came from a mountain lion. He said we was taking a rabbit from one of his snares when he was jumped by a mountain lion. Sounds a little bit like a “tall tale” but the wound sure looks bad enough whatever did it. While it is possible I find it a little hard to believe. He is a pretty big man and mountain lions usually only go after something they can kill easily. No mountain lion wants to run the risk of getting injured. So I find it a little hard to believe he was attacked by a mountain lion. Especially when he says he was able to fight it off bare handed. Sounds like a “fish story” to me.

Anyways, Dr. Raymond is attending to him as well as a couple of our “nurses.” Dr. Raymond has been holding some medical training classes for some of our group members. He is teaching them some para-doctor, quasi-nursing skills. After what we have been running into he wants people around that can help him do surgery or do it themselves if they have to. Mostly things like taking bullets out of people and suturing.

I had to laugh, none of these “nurses in training” were thrilled with the idea of taking care of ol' Grizzly Adams!

He says he has some information for us but we have to fix him up first before he will tell us. We are a little skeptical that he really has any information that involves us. But we would have helped him anyways so we are playing along. One thing we have noticed is he isn't asking any questions about us, our group, supplies, defenses, or anything of the sort. That can indicate a good thing but he did know where we were. And that we had the ability to provide medical care. That alone concerns me that he knew that much about us. Seems as if we are no longer invisible or unknown to the outside world. I don't like that idea at all.

Lara was cranky again with me this morning. She apologized to me this afternoon but I am thinking she needs to get out for a walk or something. Being cooped up is getting to her. Mickey on the other hand is quiet and staying to herself. For a girl her age that is not good. Something is up.

See, it's always something these days! Where is the quiet and serene life anymore?

November 21st (Sunday) –

Ah, Sunday ! ! ! Sure isn't the quiet, church-going, sometimes football-watching, sleep-in, take-a- nap, enjoy-the-family Sunday anymore. On Sundays we try not to do anything that isn't actually required of us. But the required stuff is plenty. Bring in wood, fix meals, stand security watches, and some minor tasks; nothing major and nothing outside the wire if we can help it.

What I consider a real treat is the church service. We actually are a reasonably-sized congregation. We sound decent enough when singing, although the Mormon Tabernacle Choir we ain't! But the talks are usually pretty good and very spiritual. Even though not all of our group are LDS, all attend a single service. Well, not everyone; Don's widow is still pretty isolated and withdrawn. She comes once in a while but never participates, barely moves, never sings.

Church services usually recharge my batteries; and I need that recharging, believe me. I think that is why everyone attends, to find some kind of hope in all this. Hope that life will get back to some kind of normalcy. Well, actually the hope is life will get good not the "normal" that infected this country the last 20+ years. And just for the record, I am not talking about the "hope" that this presidential imposter has been forcing upon our country. All his brand of hope brought was debt, financial ruin, food shortages, racial divide, and then his civil war.

Yes, I said civil war! That is exactly what it is. It may not be the full-blown civil war that occurred in the 1860's between the North and the South but it is American vs. American. Actually, what is going on is more between two radically different political agendas. It is Constitutionals vs. radical left-wing socialists. Those that believe in limited vs. those that think the answer to every problem is government. The winner is yet to be determined.

We decided in our usual social hour after church that we would hold a big "feast" for Thanksgiving. While there's no denying we have suffered, there is also a lot to be grateful for. It is kind of interesting, we have all this food that is the basics but not a whole bunch of the "extras," and very few sweets or treats left.

Note to self: when preparing for the next global end-of-the-world crisis pack more chocolate bars, more PopTarts, more Payday candy bars, and all the other good stuff. Oh, and honey too. I hear that you can make some pretty decent candy type stuff with honey. For me, anything sweet!!!!

Anyways, we will do a feast, then a little dance and just enjoy each other's company. We also invited Rancher Bill's clan. They will be joining us. That is a nice thing. While we occupy ground in close proximity to each other, and we mutually support each other's defense, we are still two separate entities. So occasionally holding combined social events helps keep us close and reduces the chance of some division developing between the groups.

We also decided we are going to have a common theme "fast" in December. We are going to fast and pray about what our long term goal, our strategy, and what the end-state is going to be. Turns out just about everyone has been feeling as uneasy as me in what is going on. A feeling that something is "brewing," an unsettledness. Some folks talked openly about the group heading someplace where things are more stable, or at least where there is less chance of violence. So fast and pray we will. BUT, we are not going to do it for our Fast and Testimony meeting. That is for bearing testimony of Christ and the gospel. We will hold a separate meeting to discuss the outcome of the fast.

And now, Grizzly Adams; at least he doesn't stink now. Well, I should say he doesn't stink as much. He had to take two showers and then a bath. Mike even cut his hair, no one gave him a mirror to see the results. Mike is not exactly a well-trained barber.

Grizzly still does smell a little bit but that is mostly due to his feet. His feet still have dead skin and meat on them. Dr. Raymond has his students scrubbing Grizzly's feet every four hours to remove dead skin and clean the deeper infected areas. Using hydrogen peroxide to help remove the dead meat and skin, not as an antiseptic but for debridement. The arm wound isn't looking too bad once Doc got it cleaned up. If the wound looks good today he will close it up with some stitches. He wanted to make sure there wasn't any serious infection before closing the wound; he also was letting it drain the puss out. His teeth are a whole other matter, there is some serious and probably painful work that needs to be done.

I reminded him that the deal was he would give us the information that he felt was important to us in exchange for the medical help. He reminded

me that he hasn't gotten all the medical attention he needs yet. There was no malice in his voice, just resolve and determination. I get the feeling I can trust him but he is also a man to be reckoned with. He is secure in who he is, confident in his information, and someone I would not want to be enemies with. At least not out in the deep forest somewhere.

You know, for the first time in a long time I am excited about something, our upcoming fast. That has me encouraged and hopeful! Today was a good day.

November 23rd (Tuesday) –

It is hard to know how to write about this; all I know is I must record this event. I don't know if it is for me to read later, in memory of Mickey or for something else completely. At this point it is an unknown reason. I just feel an overwhelming need to write about it, to remember Mickey by. I will just write what my heart tells me to, then whoever you are that may eventually read this, take it for what it is and figure out the "why" on your own.

I woke up before dark to Mickey stirring around the cabin as she sometimes does. It was very cold, not as cold as it has been, but cold all the same. With no insulation the cabins get cold quickly once the little wood burning stove dies down. Normally I get up early and throw some wood in the stove to get it going again but I would always jump back into bed to get warm again. This morning was different but not unique.

I heard someone moving around, then the stove door open, it was Mickey putting some wood into the stove. I was pleased and told her so. She whispered that she couldn't sleep very well and thought she would beat me to the punch and get the cabin warmed up. She said she was going to bring in some more wood from the pile outside then crawl back into bed for a couple hours.

I was very grateful and felt she was maturing; she was thinking about us not just herself as some young girls her age do. I just rolled over and went back to sleep; it must have been about 4:30 give or take, maybe earlier. I remember thinking I liked the thought of getting to sleep-in for a change. Now I wish I would have gotten up, so much would be different now.

About 6:30 I woke up, I was surprised it was cloudy, maybe another weather system coming in. The cabin wasn't as cold as it normally would

be when I would wake up but it was still a little chilly. That surprised me considering Mickey had thrown some wood on the fire only a few hours before.

Ally was whimpering and obviously had to go outside to potty. Lara was still sound asleep as she normally would be. Lara is not a morning person, Ally is but only to go outside then come back in and lay by the stove to warm up. I feel sorry for that dog, too short of hair for the mountains to be sure.

I let Ally out, and gathered some wood for the fire. After a couple of minutes the fire was roaring pretty good on the coals left over from Mickey's work earlier in the morning. I was letting Ally back in when I noticed Mickey's heavy down coat was missing from the hook beside the door. A feeling of dread immediately came over me. I can't explain it, I just felt this dread. Something was very wrong.

Now understand it would not be unusual for Mickey to be up and outside this early, she is an early riser like I am. She might be taking care of her own toilet needs or over at the main cabin visiting with other early risers or getting some food item from the supplies. But the dread was still there, it was so thick I could feel it. Something was very, very wrong.

Within seconds of scanning the main room of our cabin I realized her cold weather boots were also missing as well as her heavy winter hat. I checked her room and her rifle was gone, so was Mickey. And wherever Mickey is, Max is there was well. Max was gone. With her rifle being gone I knew why I had felt such dread a few minutes before, she had gone hunting. Gone hunting by herself.

She had planned it out really well. Up early, feed the stove, get me back in bed to sleep-in. Then the reason for her to be going in and out would supposedly for more wood. But she had dressed, gathered her gear, took her rifle and was gone. I knew why she was gone, I just didn't know where. I got an incredibly sick feeling in my gut and a hurt in my heart. I just wanted to throw up, I felt fear.

First thing I did was wake up Lara and told her there was a problem. While she was waking up I was dressing for the cold. While I finished dressing I was telling Lara what was happening. While I was checking my weapons she threw some food together for me. It seemed like a lot of food for one person for a couple of hours, it made me think that Lara was more worried than I was. Lara told me she would alert Mike as soon as she was

finished dressing; I had told her that I could handle it but just let them know I would be outside the wire for a while. I headed out the door within 10 minutes of realizing Mickey was gone. It was none too soon for me, she had at least a 3-hour head start.

OP #1 had seen Mickey headed out towards the mountains, the same direction that we had gone before on some ventures and the same direction we had talked about for going hunting. She had checked out with them via radio just like she was supposed to. She told them everything was fine and they believed her.

Looking back Mickey had been furious that she couldn't go with the last hunting party and she made it clear that if she had gone along they wouldn't have come back empty-handed. I guess she took me literally when I told her she could go hunting at a later date. I just had meant with me.

It took me about 5 minutes to pick up her trail outside of the wire and headed out after her. She had a good head start but she has shorter legs. Then again I am an old man. I was huffing and puffing within minutes. I had to slow down if I was going to catch up to her, and I had to be smart.

Within about 45 minutes I had a pretty good idea where she was headed, an area we had hiked in before and we had also seen elk sign in that area. There was a low saddle that cut through a mountain range that she would pass through. If I could get up on the ridge I could cut the time in half and maybe cut her off. But once I caught up to her then what would I do? That is if she didn't accidently shoot me if she saw me first and thought I was a bad guy.

The snow was fairly deep and that would work in my favor, I could walk through it easier than she could but only because of my longer legs. But if Max was going in front of her he was probably making it easier walking by cutting a trail through the snow for her. At the time I wasn't worried about the outcome but there were so many moving parts in this situation I was concerned about what would happen between now and then. I pushed on at a steady pace for the next hour.

Taking a break I got out my map and made sure I was headed where I thought I should be. Turns out I was one ridge over, I was off-track, but I could fix that. But then I started to worry more about Mickey, what if she changed her mind, changed direction? So much could go wrong. Little did I know how wrong it could go!

I headed over the ridge and was back on track; heading higher, this time on the right ridge, hopefully closing in on Mickey. I walked steadily for another hour, then another quick break for some granola, water, and another map check. It is amazing how much water you have to drink when hiking, even when it is cold and there's snow on the ground. You still need the water and you need to eat things like granola or power bars regularly. You need to eat food like that, not just for energy but to help your body absorb the water and utilize that water to the maximum benefit. Few people know those little facts, and usually pay a price for it.

I pretty much calculated that if she was walking at her normal pace, reduced for the snow, and based on my closing speed, I was maybe another hour or so away. Hopefully, that is if I had guessed her route correctly. I pushed on. The sky was low and the bottoms of the clouds were now starting to get dark, more snow was on the way. Just what I needed, another moving piece to this already bad situation even worse.

A little more than an hour later I could see the saddle where I would hopefully intersect her and head her off. Then I could take her back home with me by her side. I had no desire to yell at her, to preach, teach or moralize; I just wanted to hug her and be grateful that she was safe. I just wanted her to be safe. That is all I cared about right then. But that was not going to be the case. And I would regret it for the rest of my life.

I knew before I got to the saddle that I had missed her, which was the bad news. The good news was the fact there was a clear set of fresh tracks leading up and through the saddle. The tracks were hers, I was just behind her some unknown amount of time and distance, but at least I was on the right track.

I need to take a break from writing for a couple of minutes then I will start it up again.

I am back. Sorry, I got kind of choked up and needed to stretch my legs a bit; the fresh air did me good. It is always hard to lose a special spirit like we did yesterday. Death of those close to you hurts. I can't tell you how many tears I have shed, my heart broke yesterday, again. How much more can we lose? How much more violence and death do we have to endure? Why can't we all just have our lives back again!?!?!?!

Sorry about the ranting, it just hurts so much. Back to what happened yesterday...

I made it through the saddle and got the map out again. I was sure I knew where she was headed but I wanted to see what points there were where I could intercept her. I found the spot I was hoping for, the main trail did a long sweeping turn to the north around a low set of hills. The hills were low but I was betting there was a cow or game trail that would cut through some pass through those hills; I just had to find it.

I knew she would be staying on the main trail because to the southeast was a very steep slope that rose up to a long chain of granite ridges and I knew she would have no reason to head that direction. I knelt in the snow and prayed to my Father in Heaven that I was doing the right thing and that I was headed the right direction. Then I pleaded with God to please do everything possible to protect her until I could catch up to her. Once I got to her I knew I could protect her, that I knew for a surety, protect her with my life if need be. But I had to be with her to protect her. I just needed God to watch over her, to provide protecting angels until I got there. I pleaded with all my heart. It never hurt so much in my whole life to pray so desperately, feeling it wouldn't be enough.

I headed off to find a trail that I had hoped was there. Ten minutes later I found it. Prayers were being answered; but the price that would be paid that day would be devastating. I just didn't know it at the time.

About 45 minutes later I had just topped a ridge and started to scan the canyon bottom below me and there she was! Max was running around like a puppy about 30 yards in front of her bounding through the snow looking like he was having the time of his life. Mickey was walking strongly. That surprised me actually and it also explained why I had missed her earlier. It is hard to tell you the pure joy that was in my heart at that time. I had to wipe the tears from my eyes while watching those two through my binoculars.

I figured they were about half a mile away. I had considered shouting to them but a wind had come up, probably blowing in the snow from the cumulus clouds I had seen earlier with the dark flat bottoms. But I could easily keep cutting the corner and catch up to them in no time at all. I was thrilled, all I could think of was hugging that little 12-year old girl until she squealed telling me to stop. I headed off just thinking this day had turned out so well after all. Then reality started to set back in once again and it would get so much worse. Death would strike again.

I had been walking about 20 minutes or so, I'm really not sure. I had closed the distance to about 300 yards; but trying to call out to her was still futile, the wind was blowing directly into my face. While it was not a strong wind, it didn't have to be strong to stop a voice within about 50 yards. Besides, why give any potential game or other human any advance warning? I would wait until I got closer then give her a shout. And hopefully she would have her safety on and not shoot me.

I climbed over a large ponderosa pine that had fallen a long time ago, its rotted bark crumbling from its once large trunk. As I looked up in the direction of Mickey and Max something was wrong. I didn't know what it was but something was very wrong.

Mickey was still walking along the trail at a determined pace. But Max had stopped running around, he was standing perfectly still and sniffing the air. At first I thought he might have picked up my scent but that would be impossible, the wind was blowing my scent away from him. It couldn't be mine. Then the hair on the back of my neck stood on end, something was wrong, Max smelled it. I didn't know what it was but I thought that something, or someone, might be stalking them. Stalking my little girl!

I could see Max continually sniffing the air and he seemed to be paying particular attention to their 11 o'clock position. Mickey was clueless that he had the scent of something and based on his body language he wasn't real thrilled about it. Then Max went into serious guard dog mode.

My binoculars were in my pack and not real easy to reach without taking my pack off so I just brought my POF .308 with my 3 – 9 x 40mm scope around. I started to scan the area Max was looking towards. There was a tree line with a steep drop-off towards them and it was above them by about 20' feet from what I could tell. The tree line was maybe about 40' from them with open ground between them and the tree line other than the snow which was about 16" - 18" deep +/-.

Max had moved into a crouch position, still sniffing the air but looking at a particular spot in the tree line. I concentrated on scanning that area through my scope. If Max was that worried about it, then I should be as well. But I couldn't see a thing. I scanned over and saw Mickey; she had stopped and it looked like she was talking to Max who was about 50'

from her. Whatever she was saying it was having no effect on Max, he was concentrating on that tree line.

I scanned back over to the tree line trying my hardest to see something, anything that might explain what Max was so focused on. I actually thought about firing a shot just to let them know I was there and maybe run off whatever Max was so concerned about. I wish I had, I really wish I had. Maybe there would be one less death to write about today.

Just at the edge of my field of vision through the scope I saw the smallest movement and swung the scope a fraction of an inch to get a better look, but it was too late. A large mountain lion was already in full stride headed directly at Mickey.

My brain couldn't process that Mickey was being attacked, about to be mauled to death by the largest mountain lion I had ever seen. Time slowed down to a crawl. The lion was too fast and there wasn't enough time for me to line up a shot. By the time I could flip off the safety I would have been shooting at the mountain lion and Mickey, jeopardizing shooting her. I had failed, I hadn't done what I had sworn to Mickey's dad. I had promised her dad and Mickey that I would protect her with my life if I had too. I had pleaded and prayed to God for His help to allow me to do this one thing. I had failed all of them. Another death, another body to bury, but my heart would not be able to withstand this hurt. I just couldn't lose her. And I was a witness to it all, a helpless, worthless witness.

As the lion took his last stride before leaping on her a blur entered my scope from the other direction. I never actually saw what made the blur, just the aftermath. It was Max.

All of Max's 100 pounds hit that mountain lion full on. With their two closing speeds and their combined weight it must have been an incredible impact. They collided less than 3' from Mickey. They rolled through the snow to land about 18' or so from her. The mountain lion had obviously been surprised by Max's charge; but he recovered quickly. They were engaged in a fight for their lives against each other. One driven by fear and hunger, the other driven by instinct and devotion.

I know Max's heart, he never gave a thought to what his job was. He never hesitated, he could only do one thing, he was only capable of only one choice, protect Mickey. Max would protect her at all cost, whatever the price.

I had them both in my scope, my sights laid right on Max and the mountain lion. I could have shot both with one bullet but that was the problem. I have no idea how long they were fighting but it was vicious, each trying to kill the other. I started to see blood on the snow and a lot of it. I remembered Mickey and swung my rifle over to see if she was ok; she was. She was trying to get her rifle into action but it had been slung over her shoulder and it was caught up in her pack at this point.

I moved my scope back over to the raging fight taking place just a few yards away from her and it was an incredible display of animal vs. animal; arch foes. I could basically tell each animal had been wounded but a mountain lion has far more tools for killing than a dog does. Dogs have to work in packs to bring down something the size of a mountain lion. The outcome of this fight was genetically fixed 10's of thousands of years ago, it was inevitable, Max was going to lose. But Max had one advantage, me. It was up to me to save Max and ultimately Mickey. I would fail.

Try as I might I couldn't get a clear shot at the lion. I had thought about shooting anyways, it couldn't get any worse for Max. I could now see large gashes on Max, they were gruesome and bleeding profusely. He was losing and dying but still in the fight; he would not abandon Mickey, he couldn't, it was just not in him to give up and let the lion have her. I was hoping that the lion would finally give up and run off; but that lion was staying in the fight, or Max wasn't letting him leave. Either way Max was going to lose if I didn't do something quickly.

I was lining up a shot that I was going to take no matter what when the fight slowed way down, then stood still. The lion had managed to get Max by the throat. Try as Max might, legs flailing, body thrashing, the lion had him. But the lion was now standing still. I never heard my own shot, I never even thought about it. It was pure instinct. I was concentrating on a second shot if it was needed. That is a huge advantage of a semi-auto hunting rifle, one advantage that will never let me buy a bolt action rifle again, a quick second shot.

As I watched the mountain lion tumble over like it had been hit by a freight train. The 150gr Remington bronze tip .30 caliber bullet ripped into that lion's chest cavity and blew his heart apart. Most of his heart, large chunks of his ribs, a large piece of his lungs, and almost a pint of blood had exploded onto the snow behind him. The lion had been dead before he ever

felt the pain of the bullet piercing his skin. I shot him one more time. The lion ceased to have a head.

I broke into a dead run toward Mickey who was now cradling Max's head in her lap, I could see several large gashes in his side. One exposing his ribs right to the bone. At least two more small gashes in his legs. His neck was bloody. The ground was soaked with his blood. He was bleeding out. But the worst of it was his breathing; it was more a gurgle, a rasping sound. His throat had been crushed. Max was dying, he didn't have much longer.

I sat down beside Mickey in the bloody snow. We petted Max, we stroked his head. We told him how good a boy he was. We thanked him over and over again for being so brave. His eyes darted back and forth between us, looking at us. He knew. But it felt like he was begging for one more chance, just one, he couldn't, wouldn't abandon Mickey.

Mickey was saying a prayer mostly to herself but I could hear her. Her voice was trembling and tears were streaming down her face. She was asking God to make Max feel welcome and comfort him as he passed from this life to the next. I was watching Max as his eyes began to glaze over, they were getting cloudy. He licked Mickey's hand one last time. Then with a quiet rasping exhale he died.

We just sat there for a very long time. We smoothed his fur, stroked his head and cleaned the blood off him. We thanked him for keeping Mickey safe, for defending her, for being her protecting angel. We talked about all the things he had done over the last months and how silly he could be. We talked about how he could act like a puppy at times, this 100+ pound dog, and how you could scratch his belly for hours. And he would fall asleep while you did it. But if you would stop he would wake up and whimper until you did it some more. Then he would fall asleep again.

We sat there for a very long time. We shared a very sacred and solemn time with one of God's greatest gifts to us - Max.

It must have been almost two hours we had sat there; both of us were now cold and shivering. And we knew we had to deal with Max's body. Mickey said we shouldn't take him back to camp, she said it didn't make sense and it would be a constant reminder to her to see his grave around camp.

We buried Max under a large pile of rocks. The ground was frozen and we had no shovel. We treated his body with gentleness and reverence;

this was a good creature, a special friend and a close companion. He had died doing the only thing he could in that situation, protecting those he loved. He was buried with dignity. He was buried with all the love we could give him. Each of us said a prayer when we were done. Tender words were spoken, pleading to God for his comfort, and a request that God would scratch Max's belly until he fell asleep. We cried until there were no more tears. We headed home, just the two of us. We left a good friend back there. We didn't talk walking back, we just walked. There was only one thing I could say but I choked on the words every time I tried to say them to Mickey.

Finally we stopped for dinner just before dark. We heated up our MRE's in silence, just doing what we both knew we had to do to prepare our food. As my meal was warming up in its packet I looked over at Mickey and saw her wipe away a tear, she was holding a dog biscuit that she had brought along for Max. I finally got the words out, "I am sorry that I didn't get there quicker, I should have."

Mickey never said a word to me, she just bolted to me throwing her arms around my neck and started sobbing again. She must have cried for 10 minutes, huge heaving sobs as she held on to me. She pulled back, wiped her tears, and looked me straight in the eyes. She smiled at me, then told me she loved me. She opened the left breast pocket of my coat and dropped Max's dog biscuit in it. As she was closing my pocket she said, "Max would want you to have this."

We both started to cry again, we left our uneaten MRE's on the ground and finished our hike back to camp in complete silence. Most of the way she held my hand. We left the lion where he had died, neither of us wanted anything to do with it.

When we walked back into camp later that night no one asked us a single question; there were just hugs for Mickey and gentle eye contact with me. Every dog in camp came up to us and sniffed and sniffed. They could smell Max's dried blood on our legs. Eventually, each one had their fill and walked away, they could smell Max, but they also knew what death smelled like. Each one walked away, except one.

Only one dog didn't leave us, Ally. Ally stayed next to Mickey the rest of the night. That pit bull mutt never left Mickey's side the rest of the night. When I looked in on Mickey later back at the cabin to see if she was

sleeping, there was Ally. Ally was curled up on Mickey's bed snuggled so close to her you would think they were one in the same.

Ally raised her head, gave me a look that made me think she knew exactly what her new job was. I turned and walked away knowing a little girl had her heart broken that night but when God closes a door He always opens a window. God loves us and He provides protecting angels; one was named Max, now she had Ally.

November 24th (Wednesday) –

Yesterday was a long day. It took me hours to write down what had happened to Mickey and Max. Mickey is, and has been, very subdued; she keeps telling us she is OK. She knows we are concerned about her. Ally has been wonderful; she won't leave Mickey's side. Every once in a while I do see Ally going over and sniffing our boots, the one's we were wearing when Max died. I am sure she can pick up his scent and I would imagine she can smell his death as well. She is an excellent dog, a real sweetie. Very expressive and "in tune" with us. I am glad she is sticking with Mickey.

Last night, sometime after dark, it started to warm up. A warm breeze started coming in from the south. You can hear the dripping water from the snow melting on the roofs. I bet it is going to get muddy as all get out. But it feels good to have it a little warmer. That is another one of those modern "perks" that we no longer enjoy - weather forecasts. It just seems so strange really, but on the other hand it is one less thing to worry about. The only thing to be concerned about when it comes to the weather is what is happening when you walk outside. I guess we were ready for, and wanting, a little more simplicity in our lives. We just didn't know it.

The women (yeah, I know it sounds sexist) are starting to get ready for tomorrow, cooking and cleaning. You can see the "buzz" starting. The excitement building about what we will have to eat and how much. What I will miss the most is the football game. Not that I care about who wins or even who plays, it's just tradition or habit to eat a big meal, watch football and fall asleep, then get up and eat more pumpkin pie!

Reports over the Ham are saying that all sporting events have been cancelled until the "hostilities" are over. They say they fear guerilla attacks

are likely from the extremist separatists and violent militia groups. I guess that means us.

They think there will be attacks against civilians, BUT, I think it is just another way for the King Hewsane regime to restrict movement and rally people against those of us in the west. Calling us “extreme separatists” is ridiculous. We are the patriots, the ones that want America to be great again. Yet, they have the nerve to say we will be the violent ones. Duh, isn’t the NPF, King Hewsane’s National Police Force, the ones that started all the violence in the first place?

I guess truth has no place to a President whose mentor and hero was Saul Alinsky! Typical move on their part, right out of the book Rules for Radicals. The liberals and progressives are so very predictable and despicable; no morals, ethics, or honor.

On a more spiritual note, everyone is excited about the upcoming fast. It is amazing that there is so much buzz over it. I am hearing that people are going to fast the Sunday before, praying to be receptive to inspiration for the day they fast about our longer term goals. For me one fast a month is good enough, I love to eat!!! Besides, God already knows what He wants us to do, it will be up to us to hear His answer. Well, that and having the guts to act on it. Whatever “it” is.

Lara was cranky again with me this morning; I mean really short, kinda snappy actually. I just let it go, no need to push it or complain. Might even make it worse. She was sweet as all get out later in the day. Gotta love that guilt-trip feeling!

We have got to deal with the Smith family issue, it is not going away. They call us each night on the Ham. Mike is great, he acknowledges them but does this whole routine that imitates interference and signal problems. He is encouraging to them but never gets a complete message received or sent. Seems that he just “loses” them before anything of substance can be decided, requested, or even really discussed. But they have either already caught on or will, they aren’t that dumb. Trouble is, what do they want to do to us? I have my ideas, so does everyone else. And it isn’t anything good.

I heard from Roy that Grizzly Adams spilled his guts finally. Not that his wounds are perfectly healed but I guess they are good enough. Roy says it’s important but not an emergency or anything. Says it could well affect our Smith family issue. I asked him what got Griz talking. Turns

out that he has been alone for quite a while and no women around at all. Seems that when our women really paid attention to him and did extra nice things for him, well, he just started to crumble.

It's kind of funny, us men are so predictable and mostly pretty easily manipulated as well. It must be a genetic thing.

One last note before I turn in, my prayers have been getting very long and somber lately. I have our family prayer and I pray at night with Lara. But I am also having my own prayers, praying as the Branch President just like I did when I was a Bishop. And at times those prayers are almost dreadful in a way, hard to explain, just kind of tough on me. I want my prayers to be a time to relax, recharge, commune with my Father in Heaven but lately they are kind of rough. I wonder if that is a message or a sign itself. Always something to worry about I guess.

November 25th (Thursday) –

Thanksgiving! We are alive, that is enough to be thankful for! But I woke up in the middle of the night crying. I had my temple dream again.

The dream started where it left off, there was a bunch of people in the sealing room; Betty my first wife, Bill my cousin, Lara, and others. This time I recognized President Jaynes, he had performed the sealing. I am not sure who the other men were. I knew clearly that this little boy's name was "Tim" and I had this feeling that I knew him; like he was related to me somehow and to Lara. But I didn't know how we were related.

In the dream I looked over at President Jaynes and he was looking straight at me. Without speaking I heard him congratulate me and the same thing to Lara. But neither Lara nor I said anything to him in return, as if we couldn't for some reason. President Jaynes kept telling me not to be confused or frightened. Then Lara and I looked at each other and knew this little boy was "our son" and his name was Tim.

Of course this dream is really symbolic of something important but I am not sure of what. Obviously, he is not our child since we don't have any children and we are way past those years, Lara is in her 50's now. So what does this mean? Maybe just pure fantasy or wishful thinking on my part. Or maybe more, I will think this one through. But what does it mean and is it important to just me or the entire group? What does this *symbolism* mean?

In the dream, without any hesitation, I bent over and told this little boy how proud I was of him and that I loved him very much. Then Lara bent over and told him that she loved him, she told to grow up strong, and be proud of who he was.

Then the dream just faded out and I woke up crying. I was so sad when I woke up, I just missed the little boy so much. I felt very lonely at that point. Maybe it is something I am eating at dinner that makes me keep having these weird dreams. But this dream left me so very lonely. I hurt so much when I woke up, a deep hurt, soul deep.

But the big feast was great!! Everyone got dressed up in their finest. Both the quality and quantity of the food was incredible. And there really wasn't much left over. Even Grizzly Adams joined us. He is doing much better, and no smell. I think the regular meals, electrolytes, and the women fawning over him is having a healing effect on him.

Roy and I had a chance to talk about the info Griz had for us. Roy hasn't shared it with anyone else but me. He did record it on a MP3 player and we listened to it twice so far. We talked and we are concerned. But what exactly we are going to do is a whole other story. We are now trying to figure out if we bring it up as a temporal or spiritual matter. That would determine exactly who hears it first and how it gets handled.

Just when I thought everyone was healthy and doing well it appears that we might have a problem. So far it is only one person, Lara. She threw up this morning. She thinks it was just her nerves and excitement about today. She says she is really very concerned about what we are going to do. We talk about it at night but all we can really do is talk about it. I mean really, what can just she and I do about it by ourselves?

Mickey was better today; she was pretty sociable at the *feast*. She was a "waitress." All the young girls decided that they would be the food servers today. It was sweet, they did an excellent job. And that wasn't an easy task considering the numbers we have now. I think she will be fine within a few more days. That almost seems like a stupid statement when you consider all the things that girl has been through already in her short life.

I think of a few folks that thought that these last days might be exciting and some big adventure. Some even looked forward to them. Well, I wonder what they are thinking now. I mean, if they are still alive and not imprisoned and have enough to eat. An "adventure," yeah, right.

We decided that the info from Griz will be talked about openly with the whole group tomorrow. We think it is important enough to get everyone involved and get everyone's opinion. And it is both a temporal and spiritual issue.

One nice thing today, it warmed up a whole bunch. But I did see a pretty good system building up over the Sacramento Mountains. Now, question is, rain or snow?

November 26th (Friday) –

Two issues were resolved today: Smith family and Griz's info. They were and are related, not so good for us. But before I get into that, Mike came over really late last night, woke me up. He handed me a message from David! David is alive and their group is OK. They've been cut down a lot in size. A lot of the original group is dead, some new folks taking their places. David is no longer in Florida but he didn't want to say, OpSec. David is alive!!

Griz had been poking around up in the mountains and came across a LaRasa hunting party; there were four of them. To hear him tell it, he just walked right into their camp one night while they were sleeping; they had no guard posted, they had built a fire, cooking their food over their fire. He said they there were as loud as a college fraternity party earlier in the evening while he was watching them.

He said he tried to wake them up real gentle but evidently that didn't work out so well. He shot three of them dead as they went for weapons. The fourth evidently wasn't so brave; actually, he said the guy took a dump in his pants right there in his sleeping bag. Well, Griz questioned this guy for the whole day and the guy talked his head off. I don't blame this poor guy for talking when you consider he was right there in camp, still around the fire, and his dead buddies bleeding out right there next to him. It's understandable. And Griz has a certain *way* about him.

Seems all the rumors about LaRasa are true, they are hell-bent on taking over a whole lot of the southwest, including our area. During the conversation this guy brings up our group's name and situation. Seems that LaRasa knows about us but they don't know exactly what our location is. They know we are a pretty potent force and they think that by defeating us there will be little, if any, resistance left in the county. Folks would just kind of give up. He could be right.

As we thought all along, the “Smith family” deal is part of it. What they are intending to do is plant this family with us to find out all the details of our group. Then use the intel as a basis to strike us and do away with what they feel is a stumbling block in the way of their agenda. Roy asked Griz what he did with the guy after he was done questioning him. Roy said Griz got a menacing grin on his face and said the guy went for a gun when he turned his back on him to go to the bathroom.

Well, Griz would never turn his back on some prisoner unless the prisoner was secured, well secured at that. Roy and I both think we know what happened and honestly we don’t care. When you run with a group like LaRasa you get what you have coming.

So the plan is we are going to meet with the Smith woman, agree to take them in, and then take them to another location, spring a trap on them, and then it is interrogation time. I am fully prepared to get rough with them if needed but I think subterfuge will work even better.

Once that is accomplished we will secure them well enough at that spot and then leave them. We will make it possible for them to get free in a couple hours after we leave, just not too easy. And if bears, mountain lions or other bad guys find them before they can get free - oh well, too bad, so sad. We will “inadvertently” give them some information that they think is valuable and that can be used against us. Problem is -duh- misinformation. We are going to give them info that will lead them right into some smugglers we know of but who are camped well away from us. Should be interesting.

Did I mention that Lindy gets baptized tomorrow? Yup, she has been struggling for a while, since we got back from Texas, but she is doing better now. I have noticed lately a little more sparkle in her eye. I am glad too, she is good people, a good soul.

Speaking of good souls, Lara is not one of them today. Man, she threw up again this morning and I simply asked if there was anything I could do. Well, I am the devil. I kill and eat little kids and I am personally responsible for the end of the world!

That is what you would think if you had heard Lara unload on me. She tore me up. I just stood there and took it. When she had run out of steam I just walked away. I had no idea what to do or say so I just walked away. I heard her throw up as I was walking away; I momentarily stopped, then thought better of it. I kept right on walking.

I did tell Dr. Raymond about it and he thinks since it's only her it is just nerves and stress. But he did promise to check in on her "unofficially." I thanked him for the *stealth mode*. I don't like getting yelled at. Lara did apologize to me later, seems she is having a rough time lately. She said she doesn't feel well, she said she is tired and her food hasn't been sitting well. I don't like the sounds of that. No one else is sick so it isn't a food poisoning or a flu thing. What we really don't need right now is some major medical problem. I have no idea what we would do if she has a stomach or gastrointestinal problem. There is no functioning hospital anywhere within 300 miles of here that I know of.

Mike and I finally confided in Wilder our thoughts about the plane. He had a hard time believing that someone from within the group was involved. He thought we were nuts at first, but Mike has the evidence and it is pretty clear, not perfect, but pretty close.

Same clouds again over the Sacs; I think it is snow. Yes, the clouds broke up a bit and there were white caps on all the peeks. Yup, I could have been a meteorologist. Maybe in this new age I am already qualified to be one. Who did that routine where the weatherman comes on and says, "it will be widely scattered darkness tonight followed by increasing light in the early morning hours followed by sunny conditions by mid-morning?" It still cracks me up!

November 27th (Saturday) –

What a nice, uneventful day! It is nice to have a day once in a while where nothing bad happens, no emergencies, no crisis, and just a nice, easy day. Today was that day. Lindy was baptized; Mike did it. And interestingly, the Williams boy is showing interest in Lindy. And even more interesting Lindy is returning the interest. That is if my eyes are not deceiving me and I am not a total moron.

Speaking of which, and as a nice little bonus, Lara wasn't sick today, she was nice to me. She made me waffles and bacon for breakfast! And that doesn't happen often. What a pleasant day! Canned bacon is a miracle, a wonder of modern technology; wonderful, wonderful technology.

Our Branch Presidency has decided to pray every night this week as a group to ask the Lord's blessing as we prepare for and then fast for guidance on what to do. We are going to need all the help we can get. I

think that during services tomorrow I will remind everyone that if they feel the need, they can get a priesthood blessing as well. Wow, listen to me, I am starting to get some of that old spiritually back to me. Feels good, I've missed it.

November 28th (Sunday) –

Another day of relative ease and completely uneventful. If this keeps up we are going to be getting lax and lazy. But that is going to change. The clouds over the Sacs are really ugly this morning. I bet we get snow tonight. You can feel a chill in the air and you can tell the weather is getting ready to change.

Mike scheduled the meeting with the Smith woman for the 30th. We have the location picked out and the plan mostly figured out. This is a little too complicated for my liking. Every moving part gives four ways for a plan to go wrong. "Simple" is a good thing! And maybe the only way to plan a military operation to be successful, at least on our level.

Church services were good, nice actually, nothing major, several speakers. Everything about the basics. Just good, solid gospel "stuff." The coolest thing is we are singing pretty decently; at least "better" to be sure!

Mickey is almost her old self again. She is "loving on" Ally big time! And Ally is eating it up. You can see Mickey get solemn once in a while but she snaps out of it pretty quickly. I am sure she is thinking about Max. We all do. I miss him. I miss him a lot.

Lara was GREAT today! The old Lara is back. We went for a walk tonight, it was great, we held hands, talked, and just enjoyed each other. But it does feel weird to go for a walk with my wife at night, armed. Not just a pistol, but my AR. Times change, but people stay the same.

Chapter 6

DECEMBER - YEAR 1

December 2nd (Thursday) –

We have a problem and it is worse than we expected. We have some hard decisions to make and soon, very soon. Let me give some background on the last 2 days, it's important.

As I wrote earlier we had been approached by a woman claiming to represent a family by the name of "Smith." They wanted to throw in with us and had a lot to offer from what they were saying. But from the very beginning we thought something was fishy about them and their offer. Then Grizzly Adams (no, not his real name) gave us some hard intel on what was really happening. We arranged the meeting with the Smith woman and sprung a little surprise on her.

Something that keeps me impressed is how "thinking" can be a tremendous advantage when dealing with unknown but potential violent encounters. And people are pretty predictable for the most part. Using a little brain power and people's predictable nature can give you an upper hand. Only in the movies can you go in with guns blazing and come out alive and unscratched. In real life you have to have a plan. But not too much of a plan, too many moving parts is a recipe for disaster. Each aspect of a plan gives a bunch of reasons for something to go wrong. When it comes to violent confrontations it only takes one thing to go wrong to turn the whole mess into a really bad day.

So our plan was fairly simple:

- tell her to come alone because our rep would be alone,
- change the place at the very last second to a place where our folks would already be in-place and hiding,
- intercept their ambush forces while they transited from the original meeting location to the new location,
- take them captive when they arrive at the new meeting location.

NOT a simple plan, lots could go wrong, requires a lot of pre-positioning and planning. And assumes that our forces can maintain an element of surprise while preventing being surprised and ambushed.

So we had three teams:

- One team that would handle the actual meeting and capturing her.
- One team that would intercept their covering/ambush forces (assuming they had planned for them).
- One team as a rapid reaction force (RRF) to assist as needed (i.e. immediate action reserves, medical, logistics, etc.)

I headed the team that would intercept anyone that would be their ambush forces lying in wait at the original site or when they moved out to relocate to the new meeting site. Roy and his folks would handle the “new” meeting site. John Wayne would handle the Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) team. Mike would stay back while monitoring and coordinating folks as needed during the operation via Ham radio. He would also head-up security for the camp while we were away.

We walked through it several times, went over the maps, took virtual helicopter flights on the laptop using DeLorme 3D topo software. We did all we could do to plan and prepare a safe and successful mission. The meeting with them was set for 3 pm. We pulled out of camp before dawn on November 30th (Tuesday). Roy’s team headed straight for the new meeting site, my team headed in the general direction of the original meeting site but we would hold up at the ambush site we had identified earlier on the map.

John Wayne’s team headed to a position fairly accessible to both of our locations. Yes, it is nice to have a team in reserve, a must actually. But due to distance there would be nothing “rapid” about them responding to assist either team. Fortunately, there would be a field decision made that would save our bacon.

We figured that it would take about 1-1/2 hours for a squad-sized force to move from the original site to the new site. The expectation was the Smith woman would want to ensure she didn’t miss the meeting and she wouldn’t want to get there after dark so she would head out after being informed of the location change. We guessed that a couple people would travel with her for security. We also figured that any main LaRasa ambush force that was already dug in at the original site would take too long to

come out, get organized and move to the new location before dark. So “Plan A” was to capture them.

Our “Plan B” - Kill them. If they moved out as a group then my team would allow them to pass through our choke point and engage them from the rear between us and John Wayne’s team with Roy’s team in reserve. Trigger Point: Their meeting and ambush teams traveled as one group vs. two separate groups.

Our “Plan C” – Not show up at the meeting, completely disengage and return to our camp via three separate routes. Trigger Point: Any gunfire prior to the change of meeting location, a combined enemy force significantly larger than our combined force, or the judgment call of any single Team leader.

Yes, we had three plans. Yes, we had predetermined trigger points for each plan. That makes decisions far, far easier under pressure when the bullets are flying. If you don’t have alternative plans, you will fail. The ol’ two-is-one, one-is-none, and three-is-a-good-start! If you don’t determine your trigger points ahead of time you allow the “fog of war” to confuse you, or you allow your enemy to make decisions for you (OODA).

Having multiple plans doesn’t imply that you are “locked into” any predetermined course of action; you just have thought through the original plan a head of time and how it can go wrong. Then you “game it” and how you can react. Never forget that when the bullets fly the adrenalin will start to pump and you will naturally go into “Fight or Flight.” Most importantly with adrenalin pumping into your system your ability to think clearly and logically fades and becomes almost non-existent. That is a medical and physiological fact. Just plan, be ready, and don’t ever hesitate to disengage when the situation goes down the crapper and it can be done safely.

Notice that none of the plans included having any of our people at the original meeting site. We didn’t want to risk them being seen or captured. We knew LaRasa would be there and if they were going to travel to the new site they would most likely pass right by my team’s location. We would have to make the determination on them traveling as a single group or two separate groups. And then let everyone know what is happening and whether to engage or not. Either way we were OK with it and we could always disengage. We felt secure in our plans, maybe a little less so in the execution.

So by 2:45 pm we were all dug in and waiting. Waiting is always the toughest part. My nerves are always on edge during the waiting. I am just impatient by nature and I always want it to get started. If it is potentially a “bad” situation I just want to get it over with. Yes, sometimes I am also scared, this time wasn’t one of them.

My team was broken into 3 groups of 2 people each; I had one of the Williams boys with me, Ed, the 19-year old. Seems like a steady kid, a good hand, real quiet, that is always a good thing. We had positioned ourselves in a triangular formation with our 2-person groups on opposite sides of a canyon just where it makes a fairly hard bend to the south. Our third team was on the “bend” so we had 3 sides with clear fields of fire. We also had them where they would have a hard time retreating – they would have to fight through it due to how we had our folks lined out. We could see each other and provide overlapping fire support for each other should the need arise. We also had a clear and unobstructed view both east and west; up and down the canyon. We were in positions just below the ridge line, dug in, and we had made a couple “dummy” locations. Those dummy locations are important. When the shooting starts and they are looking up to see where the fire is coming from they should automatically notice these dummy locations and direct their fire at them if we’ve done our job right.

And duh, you never take a position on a ridgeline, WAY too easy to spot you!

So we were all dug in, we stayed watered up, had a bite to eat; but not too much. Too much makes you sleepy in the afternoon. But that is also why we chose the timing we did; we wanted to make them move during a time when most people had low energy. It just might make them a fraction of a second slower pulling the trigger or dull enough to not spot us. You have to use every advantage you can when you plan this non-conventional stuff. But eventually you have to just go do it.

We heard Mike’s transmission to them about a problem with the meeting site and time. He gave some BS reasoning that the security guy who was with our group’s rep had sprained his ankle and they were not going to make it. Mike didn’t propose a new location right away, he wanted to make them want it. Mike is sharp, he understands social engineering.

They were really mad that the meeting wasn't going to take place again. Mike was very apologetic but insistent that the meeting couldn't take place due to the injury. Then it happened - the woman offered to meet us wherever they were right now. Got 'em!

Mike said he would ask and would get back with the answer as soon as he could but that he "doubted that would happen but he would try." Mike, turned to another Ham freq and called Roy. If they were doing a directional finder it would actually show where Roy was; that is exactly what we wanted. It would verify part of Mike's story. And I will tell you later how we are able to mask our base station's location. Mike and Roy talked openly in the clear about what was happening just in case the bad guys were listening in on our freq. After 10 minutes of back and forth Roy "agreed" to the meet.

Mike got back with the Smith woman and confirmed that they could in fact meet but they would have to travel to our folks as offered since one was injured. Mike even asked if they had a medical person with them. She said yes and they would be glad to help out. How sweet of her! Mike is kinda crafty when he wants to be. Remember our rep and their rep were supposed to be alone? Well, she just admitted she wasn't. And we tipped our hand as well. Weird, eh?

We figured we had about 45 minutes for them to pass us. Then we would make the judgment call on what plan to execute. I was voting for Plan B.

So 40 minutes goes by and here she comes pretty as you please with this really big guy with her, just the 2 of them. Plan A it would be, capture them.

I need a breakfast break, then I will pick it up again.

Ah, full belly and a nice visit with Mickey and Lara. Lara is headed out to go do some laundry, Mickey is heading out to, well, I am not exactly sure what Mickey is going to do. She just seems happy to be doing it! That's good enough for me.

And yes, Ally is going with her. Ally is no longer my dog, or my companion, or my friend. I think the only reason Ally puts up with me now is the fact I still feed her in the morning. But for Mickey's sake and benefit that's OK with me.

OK, where was I...

So I gave the “click” acknowledge signal over the radio when Mike gave the code for Plan A. We NEVER use a voice transmission for something like this, just a predetermined click series (short ones at that) to tell everyone what the plan was going to be.

Sure enough about 15 minutes after the woman and her bodyguard passes here comes a group of 7 soldiers. No, not actual military, LaRasa soldiers. I am sure they were complaining the whole time. They looked really dirty, I bet they had been dug in well before dawn and had been waiting to ambush our rep at the meeting sight. Now they had to walk to a new location. They maintained very good security and formation integrity as they moved. They had an appearance that maybe they had a military or police background.

I gave our click signal for our team to proceed with the action, everyone acknowledged. It went into motion. The big question was could we pull it off without a shot being fired. That would make everyone’s day much better, even for this unknown enemy.

Just as the group got to the eastern end of our position, almost on the “X” I decided to do a movie stunt, hopefully it would work. It would be better for them and us if it did.

“Halto! Halto! Militar federal!” I shouted in my best Poncho Via imitation.

Oh they stopped alright, and dived for cover. It was looking as if my impromptu plan wasn’t working out so well.

Then in English I told them they were surrounded and they were to drop their weapons. No response. So one more time I told them they could drop their weapons and come out or we would kill them all and they would never see friends or family again.

He moved, actually pretty well but not well enough to avoid detection. I gave the word and the Williams kid placed a shot right in front of the guy. And yes, he dived back under cover. Then they got rude. They said they would kill each of us, eat our liver, and take our women. I thought that was very disrespectful of them; besides, liver tastes horrible! Yuck!

I told them that our women were ugly and our livers were bad. I told them they would die right here today and then we would leave their bodies for the buzzards. While I was actually telling them the truth, but not about our women. I thought I was being a little melodramatic. It was actually kind of funny in a way, hard to explain. I did say over our tactical freq on

our radios to shoot the next person that moved. And one tried it, he died within two steps.

Then a great blessing happened, they gave up. They just stood up and threw down their rifles. Kinda surprised us really. I was thinking, “now what do we do?”

While keeping our eyes open we went down, gathered up their rifles, patted them down, relieved them of the rest of the weapons they had, and made them bury their comrade. Then we zip-tied their wrists and elbows behind their backs. We learned long ago to secure elbows as well since it eliminates them being able to pull anything fancy. It also throws off their balance a little and makes a zip-tied person feel more constrained.

Just as we were ready to move out in comes John Wayne’s team with the Smith woman but no big guy. Seems he was willing to die for their cause. John Wayne accommodated him.

Off we headed to the spot we had picked where we would interrogate them. Obviously it wouldn’t be our camp, we sure didn’t want them knowing anything about us. It’s called “operational security.”

Lara just asked if I could help out with a water problem so I will take up the story again when I get that done. It is worth the wait. I just wish the bigger picture, called “our future,” would be headed in a great direction as well. Unfortunately, it is headed in the opposite direction and that spells trouble for us! But I will explain that in a few minutes after I play “plumber boy” for my wife.

December 3rd (Friday) –

I was not able to return to writing yesterday, significant problems with the plumbing but we got it figured out and taken care of. But it occupied the greater part of the day and I was too tired last night to do much but enjoy some time with Lara and Mickey. This survival and crisis stuff is a young man’s game.

But even more troubling than bad plumbing is what we are hearing on the Ham. The big rumor now is King Urkel is organizing a very large and very violent resolution to the issue of the states being split. The word is he is planning to use the rebuilt and resupplied NPF as the tip of the spear, and then the military as an occupying force to subdue the rogue states.

Now, in the past the military has openly stated they will not be used in domestic police matters, with the emphasis on “police matter.” By so

stating they are forcing BumbleBarry to go directly against the military by ordering them to assist. That pretty much acknowledges that he isn't really as much in control as he would like people to think. But he is evidently ready to use his "Commander In Chief" card with whatever force he has to.

Here is the kicker, rumor has it that if his military commanders do not follow his order to suppress the civilian "rebellion" then he will have those military commanders arrested by the NPF, tried in some special court and then hung. I am thinking that won't go over very well with the military. Nope, not at all.

So again we are in a position of having to sort through the rumors and potential dis-information. Then we have to figure what is true, then how it affects us, and then if it is *actionable*. Actionable is a fancy term for, "Do we do anything about it?"

See, to me it is all a matter of figuring out the "real" story. Putting out rumors and dis-information is a common trick of politicians and governments, especially this regime. It all adds to the Fog of War concept; trying to confuse, divide, and disorient your enemy. But the government has been doing it since the early 1900's; it's called propaganda. Unfortunately, the politicians have viewed the American public, the electorate, as the enemy for a long time. That being said, they have fed us one lie after another, one half-truth after another, floated rumors galore, and generally treated us with the utmost disdain as if we are simply there to provide them with the financial means to gain power. So our critical thinking skills are extremely important right now just to survive.

A couple years ago when I realized I didn't have sufficient critical thinking skills I went and read books on the subject as well as digesting a couple used college workbooks. Without critical thinking skills the spirit has far less to work with.

In any event, we have our hands full. We could survive the winter here in our cabins because there is enough food to be sure. With the seeds that many of us bought and stored long before there was a crisis we could plant a huge garden. We have already done the calculations and we could grow a series of gardens that could easily produce twice the food needed by our group for the next two years. And by having seed from non-hybrid (heirloom) plants we then have the means to grow large gardens well into the future, should we make that choice.

But all the food in the world doesn't help us if we have potential violence coming at us on two fronts by forces so large that we can't defeat one, let alone both. Sure we could win a battle or two, maybe more. But our group is rather isolated and can't handle a large group like LaRasa who could muster 100's of fighters at a time. Worse yet is the potential that Urkel is talking about. We could be looking at not just a 100,000 NPF force but a million military personnel as well.

To effectively resist that kind of force you better have a force of at least 1/10th of your enemy, plenty of ammunition, food, water, medical resources, and so much more. We don't have enough of any of that. But I go back to the main question that is foremost in my mind: What is our end-state? What I mean is simple, if we didn't have the violence threat, what would we want our lives to look like going forward?

I am not opposed to a "rebuilding" phase where we have to work hard for years to rebuild a society. But you can't do that if you are dead. So, given our circumstances, what is a realistic end-state for us? And that could mean in relation to our location, our people, our actions, our anything. We have to identify what "it" looks like. Otherwise, we have no goal and no way to judge if we are moving forward or backward.

OK, enough philosophy for one day. I need to finish relating what happened to the prisoners we had taken for interrogation.

We moved the prisoners to a spot we had picked out earlier. It was far enough from where we captured them to make it a long walk; a walk without food or water for them. Yes, a little mean but we weren't going to let them die or even get sick. We just wanted them a little weakened and disoriented. If possible, we wanted them scared too.

So we got to our spot, secured the prisoners into three groups: the ones we felt were the weakest, the strongest, and then the Smith woman by herself. We fixed a really good dinner of hot food that had a great aroma to it. We were aiming for the Pavlov Dog affect, they were downwind of the cooking. It worked, they asked if we were going to feed them. Remember each group was separated enough to not see the other groups or hear each other.

Our "mean" guards were assigned to the "weak" prisoners, our "weak" guards assigned to the "strong" prisoners, and Roy assigned to the woman.

It wasn't long until I showed up at the weak prisoner group and royally chewed out the "mean" guards for being mean to them. I yelled at our guards rather convincingly. I made our guards give their food to the prisoners as punishment.

At the same time Roy stopped by the "strong" prisoners and told the "weak" guards they were doing a great job but not to get too close to the prisoners since they were smart, tough, killers, mean, and not to be trusted. Job well done Roy! The "weak" guards acted scared of the prisoners. Sweet!

It took about two more hours for the weak prisoners to start talking and giving good information to their guards. They wanted to be treated well and thought we were easy. About 4 more hours and the weak prisoners were talking about how they had no choice but to join LaRasa. And then by daylight their guards were praying with them and genuinely getting along.

We didn't quite have the success with the "strong" prisoners that we had wanted, but they did provide some information that confirmed what the weak ones were telling us was true. The woman wouldn't talk at all, except to tell us we were all dead. We expected that from her, that's why we separated her from the other groups. It would help reduce or eliminate her influence over all of her men.

We had the intel we needed and then put our "release plan" into effect. We gave food and water to the weak prisoners and released them. But not until we had taken their picture. Then we informed them that we had told the meanest members of their group that they had spilled their guts to us about everything. Thus, if they didn't leave LaRasa and the area, they would be killed by LaRasa for helping us. Yeah, a little ruthless on our part but hey, we let them go. However, we did walk them past the group of strong prisoners, patting them on the back, shaking hands and giving them their food in full view of the bad boys. The bad guys yelled at them and swore to kill them. Mission accomplished. We did give them the general direction to a sympathetic Hispanic group in the Silver City area that might help them out, but they were on their own.

Then we went to the strong group of prisoners and tried to reason with them. They would hear nothing of it. Some of us wanted to hang them right then and there. Yes, we discussed it right in front of the prisoners. We decided that we would not hang them or harm them. We put enough

food for them for 1 day in front of them. Then we tied some knots and such that we figured it would take them 6 – 10 hours to be free of their restraints. We told them we had no desire to kill them in cold blood but if they ever made a move against us we would kill them and feed their flesh to the buzzards. Kinda dramatic I know.

They didn't respond too well to our threat and they figured we were going to kill them anyways instead of letting them go. We had no desire to kill them in cold blood. We did tell them that we had tied up the woman really well and it was their choice if they freed her or not, she was their leader. We made it obvious she not a very good leader or they wouldn't have become our prisoners. If they took her with them, or not, it was their choice.

We didn't give an option to the woman for her to earn her release. We told her the weak group spilled their guts and we released them. We told her it was up to the rest of her men if they wanted to release her or not when they got free from their ropes.

Then we left, simple as that. We didn't really want to kill them. We are growing tired of the killing. But we also didn't want to be foolish either. We hoped that we had chosen a path that was acceptable to God.

About 10 minutes after we had walked off it began to snow, and I mean snow hard. I was thankful we had a couple of really good trackers with us. But a couple people that are good with map and compass would be just as effective. Knowing how to land navigate with topo map and compass is invaluable, and essential in a situation like ours. GPS's are good, but there can always be reception problems, dead batteries, lost or broken. Knowing where you are going is a good thing.

We got back into camp well after dark. 12" of fresh snow on the ground, snowed another 6" overnight. Heavenly Father was kind to us this day, our tracks would be pretty well hidden. Any chance of being tracked and followed is minimal.

So that is it, nothing too exciting about it. The intel is good and that helps us to develop our "big picture" plan.

But for now everyone is excited about the fast. We decided to hold a joint evening meal tomorrow night. Nothing too fancy, we don't want to make it about the food. We just want to enjoy each other, share a thought or two, and then have a group prayer asking for guidance from God. Each

family has said they will return to their cabins and have a family prayer about it tonight as well.

If ever our little group needed guidance from God it is now!

December 4th (Saturday) –

1:15 pm - What an incredible day!

We have our routine duties to perform such as security, preparing food, maintaining our warming fires, and such. But there is a “feel” to camp today, it is tangible. People are outside more than any day I can remember since maybe fall when the weather first got really nice (i.e. cooler). Everyone is saying hi, being extra polite, waving, just being really uplifting and nice to each other. I like it.

Our evening meal will start at 5 pm, just before dark. We will have a good meal but not a fancy one, just a meal for all of us to be together and enjoy each other. A time to start our fast on an upbeat note among people with a single purpose - looking for guidance from God and cooperation from each other. I am looking forward to it! I have just been so preoccupied with everything, just so much going on. But more than anything else I am so worried and concerned that we as a group will survive these times. It is imperative to me that our families thrive, that our children can live without fear of violence and death on a daily basis. That our teenagers get an opportunity to be kids, to enjoy the things that teenagers should be doing, and getting away with it.

I want our children to know less about death and survival and more about joy and laughter. I want future generations of our group to know happiness not strife, to know how life can be vs. simply existing day-to-day. I am determined and committed to do everything I have to, and can do, to make sure that happens. It is my calling, it is my duty. I shall not fail. I can't.

11:30 pm - Oh My Gosh, where do I start to explain tonight?

The meal was nothing too special, good food and a couple great desserts; milk so cold it made your teeth hurt. But that wasn't even the best part. It was the fellowship that made this a life-changing event. It started earlier in the day with everyone being in such great spirits and treating each other so well. Then to start the meal Mike said the blessing. Very moving, so heart-felt, so sincere; people had tears in their eyes when he was done.

But in direct contrast something about Roy is bothering me; Brian has noticed it as well, bothers him too. Just have no clue what it might be.

During the meal all I can say is the conversations were all uplifting and very positive. You could feel something special in the air, things were right in the world. You just knew it. Afterward, the kids cleared the tables and we sang a few songs. We are not the Mormon Tabernacle Choir like I have claimed before but we sound better all the time. Mike is really getting awesome on the keyboard and it is a nice addition to our singing. We even sang one of my favorites *How Great Thou Art*; goes back to my childhood when I attended a Presbyterian church.

A couple folks gave brief testimonies and expressed thankfulness for our group and the safety it has provided, along with “growth opportunities.” Amen to that! We really hadn’t planned on a formal meeting and there was no agenda, everything was just impromptu. So it came time for us to head back to our cabins but we still hadn’t had a prayer to start the fast. After a little discussion the group asked me to share a word or two and then say the prayer. I was honored to say the least.

I spoke briefly about fasting and prayer and how God will hear our prayers, always. But sometimes the answer is not what we want to hear, or it is delayed, or sometimes we don’t hear it for any number of reasons. I talked about how great it was to have had Brother Elder here because he has a direct line to Heavenly Father just as any Prophet throughout most of history. But we were just as entitled to divine guidance for ourselves and our group as anyone, it just depended on what God would see fit to tell us.

I tried to listen to the spirit as I said the prayer. I asked Heavenly Father to please make known to us what we should do as a group. That we would listen to whatever He wanted for us and that we would be obedient in carrying out whatever He told us to do. I also prayed that we would have the patience to hear His will, follow His word, and accept Him as our leader

At one point I was almost overwhelmed with a feeling. I can’t describe the feeling really or its meaning. I had the distinct feeling that the group would act as one and it would be a large change, but there would be individuals where the changes would be even bigger. Well, actually the group acting as one may not be exactly right. I had a feeling of a shadow outside of the group. It is hard to explain the shadow thing, but I felt it.

When the “amens” were said most of us had shed a tear or two, I know I did. Big changes were coming, that I knew to be true. Then we said our “good-nights” and each family went back to their respective cabins or RV’s.

Lara, Mickey, and I had our own prayer back at our cabin; Lara said it. It was pretty much a basic prayer but I could feel the spirit big time! At one point she asked that we would all be kept in safety. I had the distinct, very clear impression that there would be many in our group that would not be kept safe but would be injured in one manner or another somehow, someway. Then I “knew” that there would be some that would not be kept safe at all, there would be death among us. It felt close and personal.

But here is the weird part, there was no sense of dread with any of it. Just the knowledge that death would be there but no dreading it or fearing along with it. I have to think about that one and how to take it. Something to think about for sure.

Lara and I had our prayer before going to bed. It was sweet but Lara was crying her eyes out when we were done. She wouldn’t talk about it. When we went to bed she still refused to talk about what was bothering her. She went right to sleep, or at least a good impression of it. I couldn’t sleep so I got back up and decided to write this. Now I am sleepy, g’nite.

December 5 (Sunday) –

5 am - I didn’t sleep well at all. I had the flying arrow dream last night, all of it. I was very restless. I just felt as if I had to move around. I went outside and walked around camp for 10 minutes, startled security a little bit, I will warn them next time.

I do feel something inside, a distinct impression that our change will be big and major. I can’t put my finger on it just yet, but I feel the spirit telling me to be willing to listen and accept when the time comes for us to know what to do. Kinda like a, “Hurry up. Get ready. Now wait.” message. Sometimes I wonder if I just make this stuff up in my head. Is it the spirit trying to tell me something or just my imagination? If it is my imagination then I could get everyone hurt or killed. Why does this have to be so hard? Why can’t it be as simple as a burning bush talking to me?

Now there would be a real cause to consider your own sanity - a burning bush talking to you. Man, what the heck did Moses think when that happened?

Now I am going to try and go back to bed.

7:30 am - Before I could lay back down Ally got up, Mickey close behind. We went outside and the three of us just sat on the porch and just talked for a while. OK, Mickey and I talked, Ally kept a close on eye on everything as she snuggled up to us trying to stay warm. It was cold but we didn't even care in the least. Well, Mickey got a fleece blanket for that poor short-haired Ally dog. It was just good to talk to Mickey, she's opening back up again. She was kind of emotional and started to hug my arm at one point. We got quiet there for a while, maybe five minutes then she said, "thank you." I asked her for what. She leaned over kissed my cheek and said, "Everything! And you know exactly what I mean," and then she went back inside.

I love that little girl so much it makes my heart hurt. Well, she is not that much of a little girl, she's almost 13. OK, OK, she barely turned 12. But if you ask her she is almost 13. She has seen so much in her young life, things that no child should ever have to go through and endure. But when the time comes she will make a great mom because she knows the Lord and His love; she knows sacrifice and she has a great heart. What a cool little kid! But how do I know she will make a good mom? Will she ever even be able to become a mom in this world?

My life has been so blessed by having her in my life, a second chance at a daughter. God gave me a chance to redeem myself from all the mistakes of my first attempt. I WON'T fail a second time no matter what!

I sat there for another 10 minutes or so by myself just thinking about life. I have been so blessed in so many ways. I have traveled the world, met a lot of incredible people, and done so many things. Granted, a number of those things I should have not done, but the combination of those experiences has helped make me the person that I am today. I am not the best person in the world, I have many flaws. But I have learned some very important lessons in life and I have no unrealistic perceptions of who I am. I have made too many mistakes in my life, lost too much, and done too many things wrong to expect much. I will be happy with whatever comes after I leave this life. For now, I am incredibly blessed and very appreciative and enjoying every single day in a weird kind of way!

1 pm - Church services are over; another spiritual high!

Almost everyone bore their testimony of Jesus Christ; Roy was the only one who didn't. Many said how grateful they were for the group and

the time together. One person after another talked about how they had grown so much since being together. Yes, most talked about how they may never have found Christ if it hadn't been for these times and the spiritual setting that the group provided. No one preached or lectured, no one gave travelogues. No one tried to act like they were receiving revelation for the whole group or anything. It was just a good, solid God-centered testimony meeting. Yes, we sang hymns. Yes, we sound pretty dang good if you ask me. Everyone is still excited and there is a special spirit about our group today. You can see it, you can feel it, it is amazing!

We will hold the, "feast of the fast over" at 5 pm. Again, it will not be anything fancy, but it will be special. I think it is going to be mentally and spiritually exhausting. We will talk about our "decision revelations" at that point and see if we have clear agreement on what to do.

8 pm - I don't want to say it was a letdown or anti-climactic, but it was. Well, I mean in a way, it was. I hope I can explain.

There was no big revelation. Most agreed, actually everyone agreed that there is a big change that will occur and that we need to be ready for it. Also, we need to stay close to the Lord.

So here we made this big spiritual push to find out what the Lord wants us to do and we get almost nothing. I gotta tell ya there are some disappointed folks around camp tonight and I am one of them. I did mention to everyone that maybe this was the point - we had to have faith. Maybe the outcome was the Lord had heard our prayers but chose not to answer immediately. That it was our responsibility that when the time came we would follow His guidance. I think everyone was cool with that but some were still disappointed as you can imagine. I think I am more in that camp myself. I just wanted clear direction to get on with it. So life goes on just like normal. Nothing much has changed. Now we wait.

December 6th (Monday) –

8:15 am - We, the collective group, are somewhat confounded since ending our fast. To say that I am dumbfounded would be putting it mildly.

It is so weird, we are acting like we are zombies. That may be a little extreme or melodramatic but it is not that far off. We had prepared ourselves for our fast, prayed so hard and we felt our hearts were in the right place as well as our faith in God. We really wanted, as a group, to humble ourselves before God and be receptive to His promptings. We

were ready to follow His direction, we wanted His direction, we wanted to know what we should do. But nothing; there is no revelation, there is no prompting, there is no direction for us. We didn't hear His voice or feel that still small prompting of the spirit. Well, that is not entirely true; all of us pretty much felt the need to be prepared. But that is a feeling or prompting that we have had for a couple years, at least most of us. So we are pretty much at a loss as what to do; that includes me.

Williams, Mike, Roy, and I got together and we talked and prayed for almost two hours early this morning after having read some scripture together.

We read a bunch but these were the main thrust:

- James 1:5 “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.”

- 1 Nephi 11 “Do ye not remember the things which the Lord hath said?—If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you.”

- 3 Nephi 28 “And now I go unto the Father. And verily I say unto you, whatsoever things ye shall ask the Father in my name shall be given unto you.”

- And my personal favorite – Mathew 7:7-8 “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”

Then we took turns praying. I was the last to offer up our pleadings to God. I prayed for almost 5 minutes. When we were done Mike had to help me stand up, my knees are just not what they once were. I feel like I am falling apart physically. I'm old.

I asked the others what impressions or promptings they had. They pretty much came up with the same thing I did; *be prepared and be patient*. I had one additional scripture come to mind during our prayers but the other brothers didn't so I didn't say anything.

“Greater love hath no man than this,
that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Of course it didn't come to me exactly like that because I can't remember scripture word for word, never could. But I looked it up later in

my Bible and it is John 15:13. I have no idea why that came to mind but I think it has to do with our group's sacrifices that we have made, including loss of life, to help so many others. I doubt if the groups that came through would have made it without our help. Then there is Brother Elder; how would he have made it if we hadn't been here to help him, then the girls.

There were far more than just us that went to Texas but I would like to think we played some role in that, even if it was relatively minor. We were there, and we did help, and we didn't shrink from our duty. A price for it, a price we paid in blood.

The scriptures we read together were very straight forward - I mean pretty plain - and a promise from God. So why aren't we receiving? Or is He not telling us? Or is He telling us, we are receiving it, but we are not really hearing it right in our heart?

Too many questions, not any answers! I am frustrated!!!!!!

I came back to the cabin after our prayer meeting and I just sat on the edge of my bed and almost cried. Thankfully, Lara and Mickey were out somewhere so I was alone. I just sat there and cried a little. Why am I failing? Why can't I hear God and know what to do? Is this the punishment for all the lives I have taken since this crap began? Am I now to be reprimanded by God with silence for killing His children?

If that is the case then I am willing to accept whatever justice God will heap upon me, I know I deserve punishment. But why the whole group? Why must they suffer for my sins? Why should they have to be made to pay a price for something they either didn't do or they did it because I asked them to do it? I want to believe, I want my faith to be strong, I want to serve God but why am I failing so badly when I am needed the most? Why? Why now?

WHY DOES THE WHOLE GROUP HAVE TO SUFFER BECAUSE OF ME?

10:05 am - Mike just told me that he has received an alert from someone saying they are from church headquarters in Salt Lake. The person evidently used our group's identification code correctly and told us to stand-by for more info tonight at 7 pm tonight.

Now what can this be about? Who do we have to help now? What more can be asked of us that we haven't already done? How much more blood to do we have to spill? How greater a price do we have to pay?

How much more can be asked of us? How much more can we endure until we break?

11:30 pm - I am stunned, I can hardly write. Like most of us, I can hardly believe it. We are going home !!

Well, not exactly “home” but the next best thing. Maybe it will be our new home. But at least we know two things:

1. God heard our prayers.
2. We are headed to a place of greater safety and an easier life.

We don't have all the details but let me write down what we do know:

- Once the church's radio operator got us online and everything set-up and then he gave us the code word that we acknowledged. He turned the microphone over to Brother Elder. I recognized his voice immediately. It was Brother Elder himself on the radio tonight.

- He began reading a long paragraph, sounded like a story or news report to anyone else listening. But I was counting the words and at the exact point, the correct point, he used the verification word that only I would know. It is a *double* check and balance to ensure that I would know that the message and the sender was legitimate.

- Once I acknowledged him he continued by telling us that the “brethren” had heard our prayers through our Heavenly Father. “Brethren” is essentially another way to say the First Presidency, in other words, the Prophet. Many in the group that were listening began to cry quietly; I would have as well but I knew I had to listen to what else he had to say.

- Brother Elder told us that we soon would travel to a place that I knew. He didn't say the place but I knew in my heart and in my mind exactly where he meant. He and I had actually talked about that place when he was here. I won't state the place right now for OpSec purposes. But I knew the place he was referring to as soon as he began talking about it.

- He wouldn't say how soon we would be traveling but he said we must be “prepared” at the earliest possible time. And be patient in the meantime. So there it is, this is why we kept having the feelings about being prepared.

- When I told him that the snow had set in pretty hard and that we were thinking it would be getting worse he told me to read Mathew 21:21 and 2 Nephi 10:2. He assured me that snow would not be an issue for our travels.

- He didn't give us any additional information, he told us to prepare, he told us to be ready, he told us that he would contact us again when the time was at hand. Then he told us to be patient until then.

- He reminded us once again to be completely prepared. Get an idea that there is a theme going on here?

- When he was done he just got quiet for a minute, like he was thinking about something. He then told me, "Tim, you are going home." His voice kinda trembled - what a guy to care so much! I love him.

We all got together after the radio call ended. Mike had recorded it on his MP3 player and he played it for the whole group.

The very first thing we did was have a prayer of thanks. Thanks that God heard us, that He answered us, and we now knew that there was a plan for us. Then we talked and we talked and we talked some more. There must have been 15 conversations going on at one time. You could feel the buzz, the excitement; it was like electricity in the room. It was crazy, but a good crazy; we were all in a mood like it was Christmas.

A lot of things were talked about but bottom line we decided that we are going to get ready to leave, and leave soon. For now I am not telling anyone else where we are headed for OpSec purposes. I know it will be at least a 750 mile trip, but I will use 850 miles as our goal, that gives us a little pad for logistics. I am thinking maybe 3 – 5 days, maybe a week; hopefully not much longer than that.

There is so much to do now, so many things to think about. We are going to let the Planning Section do their job at this point. That is what they do, that is what they breathe; they will do a good job for us. The one question I have for Rancher Bill, will they go with us? If not, will they share the gas needed to get us there?

We obviously won't take anything other than the trucks; the RV's will stay here. I imagine most of the food as well since space will be limited. But I won't worry about that, that's the Planning's problem for now. They are the ones that have to come up with a workable plan to get us all there.

Roy is going to handle security while we travel. Mike obviously will handle communications and put together a great Communications Plan for the time we are traveling. I know he will have us change channels every few hours as well as having our Action Code words for Immediate Action Drills while on the road. You can never have too much security with communications.

Lara is beside herself, she is floating on air. I don't remember seeing her this happy since our wedding reception. We talked about what this means in terms of us going to the temple. We will be able to do that now. I haven't lost the envelope with our paperwork that President Jaynes gave us. And I for sure didn't bury it this time!

Wow, that seems like so very long ago when I had to go back and get that package. The Lord spoke so clearly to me about exactly when I had to go get it. Even though Lara didn't want me to go, I went when the Lord told me to. I listened to the Lord and we are now blessed with Mickey.

I think we are all in shock, myself included. We live in a violent survivalist situation 24/7. But soon we will live in more of a community environment that is far more stable and lots of people. I wonder how all those people around us might affect us when we get there.

Our goal is to be 100% ready to travel 72 hours from now. We could do it faster if we had to but we want to be thorough in our planning. So much depends on us really being properly prepared. We will stick to the L.I.P.S. decision and priority setting guide when making judgment calls. There is a reason why L.I.P.S. was developed and why it works 100% of the time in 100% of all emergency and disaster situations.

At some point I am going to have to get on my knees and ask God to forgive me for having so much doubt and anguish in my heart. I should not have doubted that He would hear our prayers. I guess I have less faith than I thought I did. That sucks!

December 7th (Tuesday) –

In some weird twist of irony today King Urkel spoke to us; we the great unwashed masses. He did a nationwide broadcast over all the AM, FM, TV, and primary Ham freqs concerning the current state of the "rebellion." During the 1-½ hour long sermon he gave (sorry, that gives a bad name to sermons), he spewed incredible amounts of hatred and anger towards conservatives, libertarians, and constitutionalists (like liberal always do, liberals are the most intense haters!). Everyone but liberals he has branded as traitors of the worse kind, calling them domestic terrorists. He came up with one conspiracy after another claiming that conservatives and Constitutionalists have been plotting the overthrow of the government for many years.

He went on about how so-called “domestic terrorists” were hate-mongering racists that chose him as the president to rebel against. He claimed the timing was due to him being the first black president (technically he is the first half-black president). It seems that according to BumbleBarry’s history, conservatives were even involved with Hitler trying to kill the Jews during WWII.

I could go on but suffice it to say I think this guy has gone from being your garden variety megalomaniac to someone who just creates their own version of reality, a true psychotic!

The bottom line is King Urkel has given the western states until January 1st to surrender. He has stated clearly that:

1. The state governors will be put on trial for treason.
2. All state legislators will be removed from office and all their property seized.
3. All former National Guard troops (now called state militias) will surrender all weapons and turn themselves over to the NPF.
4. All citizens will be required to turn over all firearms of any kind to the NPF.
5. Any person that was involved in the battles with the NPF will be put on trial.
6. All states will have a federally appointed governor placed over each state and the state legislatures will be permanently dissolved.

He has said that failure to comply with the January 1st deadline will result in the immediate movement of federal military troops into those states. He stated flatly that any resistance will be “crushed without mercy” and all options are on the table including tactical nuclear weapons.

King Urkel sounded like a little boy throwing a temper tantrum. He was never able to show real maturity in the past; even exploding into tantrums whenever challenged in any way. But this has brought his obvious mental illness to a new height. This man is a maniac and about to become the biggest serial killer in the history of the United States.

So why was this so ironic? Because his speech occurred on the anniversary of the sneak attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor. That attack started WWII for the US that ended up killing 300,000 military personnel. Today will be another day that “lives in infamy.” The day, today, that King Urkel turned the US into a petty third world dictatorship ruled by the a man in the same vein as Kim Jon ILL or Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. And I fear in

the near future there will be more death and destruction in the US than there was in the world under Pol Pot, Stalin, or Hitler. Interesting that those three were socialists as well as Urkel. That should tell you exactly what kind of people socialists are, and BumbleBarry is no different.

At this point I almost don't care. I just want this to be over with, to be settled. I want to have some kind of stable life again. But the question I have now is simple, but could determine our fate, where will we be on January 1st?

Coming back into reality a little bit, we went and talked with Rancher Bill about leaving. They were devastated. Well, actually that is an understatement. Their initial reaction was a feeling of betrayal; but that didn't last too long once the discussion progressed. We invited them to come along; at first we thought they would say yes. But the old man, Bill, gave a passionate speech about the ranch, their family history with it, their hard work, and everything they had in the world was tied to the ranch.

I could see the two daughters-in-law looking sick to their stomach. I had the impression to tell them that their true precious assets were their family members and their love for each other. I did tell them that if they came with us they would have a future. Here on the ranch, nothing was assured other than hard times. My words fell on deaf ears, they stuck to their decision, they are staying.

On a good note, they did say we could take all the gas we needed. They use mostly diesel and have converted their only 2 gasoline vehicles to LP gas. It was easy enough to do and they have far more LP gas than regular gasoline. So based on our estimates we will have plenty of fuel and some left over just in case, plus leaving several hundred gallons behind for them to use or trade.

As for food, man, we have a bitter-sweet situation with our food. We have a whole lot of food but most of it is not easily transported. We have mostly the heavy stuff left such as rice, wheat, beans, etc. So the decision was made to leave that behind for Rancher Bill's family to use, trade, or whatever. We will take enough to get us to our destination with five extra days and no more. We are fairly limited on room and we don't want to overload any of the vehicles. We made the decision to not take a trailer of any kind. It would be too difficult a problem should we need to maneuver or evade, etc. It would also reduce the fuel mileage.

We will take all of our weaponry and all of our first aid supplies. We are abiding by LIPS in our priority setting and decision making.

The fire team leaders got together for our own meeting. We are worried that everyone is maybe starting to concentrate too much on preparing to the exclusion of everything else, including security. We don't know for sure when we will be leaving but in the meantime we have to stay alive. Just because we are leaving doesn't mean the bad guys will magically leave us alone or that LaRasa will decide that we are really "OK folks" after all. Actually, LaRasa could hate us even more if their thugs went back to camp and got an attitude against us for the way we tricked them.

There are still day-to-day worries to consider, and we can't let our guard down. We were told to prepare but not ignore everything else. I think keeping people from getting tunnel vision is going to be tough but it must be a high priority.

On kinda funny note, we would have normally gotten together to discuss King Urkel's ultimatum but no one wants to even think about it let alone talk about it. It is as if our leaving is going to insulate us from it. It is still there and lurking in the dark but no one wants to think about it right now. Everyone just wants to get to our new home.

At dinner tonight Lara, Mickey, and I had a great conversation. We talked about all sorts of things; we were all over the spectrum in regards to topics. But at one point Mickey got a little sullen; she was worried about us getting to wherever we are headed. She didn't ask where we were going but she said she was worried about "us" once we got there.

She is concerned that since we are not her parents, nor family, and there was no court to make our "adoption" or "custody" legal at the time, she is worried that she will be taken away from us and put into a foster home. I hadn't even thought about that, as far as I am concerned Mickey is our daughter, period. I hadn't considered the fact that since a legal system didn't give us custody that she might be taken away. We have her sister's note, but how much weight would that really have?

But just as quickly as that thought came into my head I told her, "You are our daughter. We love you, you love us. No one will take you away from us, period." She giggled, then broke into a big laugh.

I had to ask her why she started to laugh. After another couple giggles she said she didn't have any worries about us being separated anymore.

That “she had seen me in action and they would be stupid to try and take her away.” Well, that settled that - *badda bing, badda boom*. It’s nice when family can count on you. And when others have a healthy respect and fear of you.

We played Pictionary for about an hour after our conversation; Mickey won. One smart kid she is!

Lara and I went out for wood after Mickey went to bed. We spent some more time just talking, talking like a real married couple who has a future now. I swear Lara is like a little kid she is so excited about “getting back to civilization” as she puts it. She even asked me if I thought there would be an Olive Garden open so we could go out for dinner.

That question caught me by surprise, I hadn’t even thought about a restaurant for months. And I didn’t have an answer for her, I don’t know if anything like that will be open for business there. What an interesting question.

Lara went to bed and I had to spend some time recording my thoughts here. I remember not just the Prophet telling us to keep a journal but Glenn Beck was always telling people to keep a diary. He said these were historic times and we needed to write down what was happening. He feared that one day it might all be gone, rewritten by the progressives and liberals into something that it never was. They have so far already rewritten most of the country’s history to suit their own twisted views and agenda. But I am enjoying writing in my journal, I feel connected to history. Strange, I am not sure to *whom* I am connecting, but no one will get to rewrite this.

I don’t even know if I have children anymore so they might never read it. Lara and Mickey are living it so why would they read it. Same goes for me. So when I am dead I guess it will just sit around in some box or sold at some garage sale. I think it will turn into dust from age and slowly just disappear. But if someone is reading this at some point, Who are you? And why are you reading it? Better yet, does any of it make sense? But who are you?

December 8th (Wednesday) –

PROBLEM ! ! ! !

The plane flew over last night around 2 am. Mike’s team was on-duty and he said the plane flew over, didn’t circle. Sounded like it was flying the canyon that runs into ours. He said it didn’t circle or give any other

indication that it had seen us or knew that we were here. He said it just flew on. He thought they had heard it about an hour later but wasn't sure.

This is the same plane that had the flag of Mexico painted on the underside of its wings; Mike is sure of it based on the sound. We are all sure the plane belongs to LaRasa. What we have no idea of is the mission of the plane. Are they looking for us? One thing I am very grateful for is our rigid "black-out" rules at night. There is never any white light to be seen anywhere near our camp, or the ranch for that matter. It would be very difficult to see our little group based on light. If they have infrared or thermal equipment I am sure they could pick up our buildings' heat sources. But that doesn't seem to be the case.

The decision is made, if we see it again and it is in range we will open fire on it with everything we have. Hopefully we can shoot it down. We can't afford to be spotted before we leave. But what would happen to the rancher's family if we didn't take out the plane?

Dang! Just as we were starting to feel like we would survive this ordeal and get the heck out of here, something like this comes up. But we will deal with it and trust in the Lord. But it just breaks my heart to have to deal with the plane and Roy. In a way I wish we would have never figured it out. But we will wait until we get to Utah before we confront Roy. But it has to be done. In the meantime we will watch him very closely.

Our Ground Support folks have been incredible! They have each vehicle prepared for travel. The fuel tender had an extra couple of cases of oil, transmission fluid, and coolant. They have split up most of the supplies among each vehicle so each can check their own each day we are on the road. It is imperative that we maintain each vehicle, especially on the road. And yes, they did ask Rancher Bill if they could take those supplies.

Word is they said, "sure, we won't need it." I think they do have some supplies of this type put away but a couple people think they are "resigned" to some kind of fate once we leave. I hate to think that might be true but I would bet that is far more likely the outcome than anything else. They are just too small of a group with us gone. They are too small to maintain security over this large of an area; simply not enough eyes and guns, or boots on the ground. I wish they were coming with us, but they chose otherwise.

Something interesting that the Ground Support folks did was the paint. They took some cans of green, brown, and tan spray paint and "painted"

the vehicles. It is a strange assortment of “red neck trucks!” Looks like a bunch of “bubbas” going hunting and camping. But that is OK with me! You know how that Hank Williams, Jr. song goes, “...a country boy can survive...”

Several of the trucks have an extra spare tire. All of the spare tires, jacks, tools, etc. will be placed where they are the first thing you can get to other than weapons. Williams has been assigned as the “lead” for the convoy once we leave camp. He is coming up with protocols for almost every possible scenario that could happen to us. Everything from a flat tire, to a medical emergency to a firefight will all be documented and copies of actions to be taken passed out to each vehicle. We will still travel in fire and support team configuration to make sure we have the most effective reaction option for any encounter. It also keeps family members from traveling together. It’s morbid I know, but it will help ensure that if a violent encounter occurs we are less likely to lose a whole family.

This morning the snow started up again. It’s not coming down too hard or fast but steady, couple inches so far. I am a little worried about the routes. I have been working on them and none of them are easy. They all include mountains; one is mostly interstate which I think is just plain stupid. But I am not convinced that the back roads are much better, might be worse. We can make good time on the interstate route but I think they will be watched and probably controlled and I am not sure by whom or how intensely.

There other concerns I have, gangs on the roads, kinda like the old Mad Max stuff. Then there are the Indian Reservations. I have no idea what to expect on roads that pass through any reservation. I am going to try and have four possible routes for us that I can present once I can feel good talking to the others about our destination. Then we will discuss each option and pray about the one we should start out on.

I have already discussed with everyone what I am doing, just not where we are going. I told them that I will maintain the right to override any route decision and make a decision at the last minute on our route. That will maintain maximum OpSec; there is no way that some gang could possibly cover four routes that widespread if we would have a breach of security. I will probably even have a couple variations of routes in my back pocket just in case. In any event, we will have the best maps that MS

Street and Trips can provide. Plus, I have my Delorme Topo map program on my computer as well.

We decided that for the foreseeable future we are going to have evening meals together for gab sessions for families, a social thing. Then each Section/Unit will present their work that they accomplished for the day and ask for feedback. Kinda like our Incident Management Team, Incident Command System strategy meetings.

This much planning is essential if we are going to pull it off, and we have to pull it off. I can't imagine what would happen to the group if we did all of this and then got stuck in camp for the rest of the winter. I think it would be a living nightmare for us, including me. I feel the need of a bit of a "walkabout" coming on. I am kinda of restless and feel like I need to get out and breathe some fresh air and spend some time on my knees out in the woods somewhere. Something is bubbling inside of me and I can't put my finger on it.

It is such a blessing to have my family with me. Mickey is 100% her old self again since Max's death, maybe even better. She seems to be much more secure or confident in herself since Max died. Seems strange to relate the two events like that but I can see it. She is way more mature than her 12 years, and that concerns me a bit. I hope she can go back to being a little girl once we get settled into our new home.

Lara is a pure joy!! We are talking so much now, it's as if we have hope of the future. Before there was so much doubt and darkness in our lives. It was as if we didn't want to talk too much for fear we would get our hopes up just to be disappointed with reality smacking us in the face. But now we have hope!! I am trusting that within a month we can have already attended the temple and be enjoying that blessing in our lives as well.

Life is so much better now than it has been in quite a while, and I like it!!! So much more to come and I am truly hopeful about it now – hope – *real* hope is a good thing.

December 9th (Thursday) –

We are ready to go! Well, almost anyways. Everything that we are taking has been identified. The vehicles have been loaded with the things that exposure to the weather won't damage. The vehicles are 100% ready; there is one minor change, we are taking a fuel trailer. There was just no

way we could carry enough fuel in gas cans in the space available in the vehicles to make it realistic. It is going to take approximately 70 gals of gasoline per vehicle if all goes well. Ground Support folks are allowing for a 20% margin of error in fuel, so each vehicle requires 84 gals of fuel. We are taking 7 trucks plus an Expedition. That is 672 gals of gas we will need. Each vehicle carries an average of 26 gals. Each vehicle is carrying 2 gas cans of 5 gals each to make them semi-independent should a problem occur. We have the fuel trailer set up to carry 400 gals of fuel. That is a lot of figuring and planning, I hope they got it figured right. They say they will monitor fuel usage each day and have set the end of the second day to start evaluating if we need to combine vehicles to reduce the fuel usage. They even have a plan on which vehicles that will continue the trip and which vehicles will be left behind. And how the contents will be moved over to the remaining vehicles and what will be left behind if needed. The plan is to arrive at our new home so that each family will have a vehicle.

They are leaving nothing to chance. I remember the Discovery Channel series called the Colony; a TV series about survival. I remember they were such idiots with such poor organization and planning. But then again it was TV! Besides what would media types know about survival or what depth of planning or organization would be needed when the grid goes down? Duh, NOTHING!

Food is pretty simple, we are taking all the freeze dried food as a back-up plan. It isn't much really, only about 15 days' worth of food for the entire group if that is all we ate. We are taking an MRE for each person for each meal for each day. Even a single MRE could carry a person through each day. We have packed virtually no long or medium term food at all; we are leaving it for Rancher Bill and his family.

Speaking of which, we are really worried about them and leaving them behind. My biggest concern is LaRasa figuring out that they are here and the rest of us are gone. They are simply too few in number and they would be unable to withstand any serious attempt to overrun them. Our fire team leaders are going to address that concern tomorrow.

Now an immediate problem that has developed, a serious problem, SNOW!! It snowed pretty much all night and all day. Not a blizzard or anything but it came down steady and it is building. There is over 18" on the ground right now and no sign that it is going to let up. Fortunately, it isn't freezing cold as well but the snow is bad enough.

What I think is interesting are our evenings now - game playing. Not the bad kind, the good kind. After the evening meal people are playing board games as groups in the main cabin where we eat. It is really cool to see. There is a real upbeat attitude present and lots of laughter; and that is a good thing, a very good thing. I just don't know how we are going to cope with the snow.

December 10th (Friday) –

We moved the vehicles back under the hay barn. By moving a single large bale of hay we can head out in a convoy in a hurry. We are leaving behind a bunch of vehicles; five pick-ups and an Explorer to be exact. They are in perfect running condition and we are hoping that Rancher Bill can eventually use them for something.

It is still snowing outside, over 2' on the ground and still coming down. Tonight at dinner I heard the first comment about us leaving vs. the snow and some speculation about timing. As in when do we leave and can we leave if it keeps snowing. I had no answers for anyone other than our vehicles can't really navigate roads with 2'+ of snow on them. People weren't happy with me, they expected me to have some "feel-good" answer. I didn't have one.

Mike gave us a briefing this morning on events as he heard over the Ham radio. And it ain't pretty. China has launched all kinds of protests with everyone you can think of for us doing the EMP thing on their fleet. North Korea has vowed to strike us with nuclear weapons for such a "naked show of aggression." Almost comical when you realize that the Asian countries were actually coming to attack America with their fleet. I thought we showed great restraint by only using an EMP.

What is weird is BumbleBarry, he is apologizing to them. Yup, you read that right, apologizing. That is bad enough but it raises a far larger issue. If King Urkel is apologizing, why would he apologize for something he ordered? Or the bigger question, did he order the EMP detonation?

Because if he didn't, then the military did it on their own because they had no faith in Urkel to defend our country, or BumbleBarry had already made the decision not to defend America against the enemy fleet and the military did the EMP anyway. So where does that leave our military in the chain of command? That is the real question. If they acted independently

with the EMP, then it is doubtful that they are behind King Urkel and his threat against the western states.

One last question comes to my mind - other than the NPF and the military, does Urkel have some other ace up his sleeve that he can bring to bear against the western states and what would that be?

OK, enough of all that!

On a really personal note I have been really feeling like I should read my scriptures a bunch, and I mean a bunch. I am trying to but there is so much to do. Maybe it will slow down a bit when the preps to leave are complete. Also, I keep thinking if there is anything I need to repent of. Of course there is a long list of things. I understand the concept and promise associated with the atonement, but repentance is a part of that. And how do you repent of taking a life?

December 11th (Saturday) –

More snow, almost 3' now and it still shows no sign of letting up.

We held another discussion about the LaRasa problem today. It is unanimous that we feel an incredible sense of guilt that we are leaving with them being such a threat to the area. With one exception (Roy) it was felt that maybe we should do something about the problem before we leave. We turned it over to the Planning Section to come up with options.

Lara and I talked at lunch today about what's happening. We are really looking forward to going to the temple when we get "there." I told her where "there" is, she is thrilled and excited. To quote church leaders, "marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God and that the family is central to the Creator's plan for the eternal destiny of His children. When a man and woman are married in the temple, their family can be together forever." We want that.

Strange, we are all ready to go and now we wait. This is the hard part. Like being in the military again, "hurry up and wait!"

December 12th (Sunday) –

Well, a message from Salt Lake City told us to stick close to the radio tomorrow, for a message from Salt Lake City. No, they didn't tell us what the message was in reference to, just to stick close to the radio.

Planning called the fire team leaders together and discussed some options for LaRasa. They presented 3 options, only 1 makes any sense at all. We must remember that the #1 priority is the safety of our group. John Wayne has asked to talk to me tomorrow about the problem, he says he has an idea he wants to run by me. I wonder what that is all about. Roy says we should leave LaRasa alone. He is insistent that we do so.

On a really scary note, the western states have given King Urkel a response. "Hell no!" That's it, plain and simple, straight forward, easy to understand and to the point. We are in it now, what lies ahead is the question, what does BumbleBarry do?

December 13th (Monday) –

I didn't write anything yesterday about church services. Basically because they were just average services, nothing fancy, almost boring and everyone seemed as if to just rush through it. Yes, I fell asleep at one point.

It is set, we are leaving. But the message was so weird, like a Twilight Zone moment. The message was simple enough, it wasn't Brother Elder but the guy gave the right code, he asked me to remember the story of my late great-great-great uncle that occurred on a special day almost 170 years ago. I had to think for a moment but then it dawned on me. He went on to tell us to be in the place previously revealed to us on that same day.

I replied that I understood to repeat the event as my great-great-great-uncle had. The response was affirmative. When I asked him when we should leave here and head that way his reply was, "you will know," and he said those were Brother Elder's exact words.

After we signed off the radio everyone was of course a little curious. My sense of humor pushed me to play around with it but the spirit told me to be forthcoming. I did the math for travel time and asked for a prayer with everyone for confirmation. After the prayer I told everyone we would be leaving before dawn on December 20th. A cheer went up!

Then someone asked me where we were headed. I told them I couldn't tell them just yet. I wasn't real popular right about then but they all pretty much mumbled that they understood. I doubt that many did. What I find interesting is no one saying anything about the snow on the ground and how that related to us leaving, or preventing it.

I spoke with John Wayne after the meeting. He presented his idea. I am going to have to pray about it.

I have been reading so much in my scriptures lately. I have just absorbed so much about the redemption that the Lord brings to the world in general and to us as individuals. What an incredible gift He has given us!

John 15:13 is so true, Jesus must be the ultimate friend. Wow!!

December 14th (Tuesday) –

I told John Wayne I was OK with his idea. I am not thrilled with it, but it does make sense in a way. At least it is something I can do to help out with before we leave.

I met with Mike and Brian later in the day and briefed them on where we were headed when we left; I gave them the maps of the routes, etc. I didn't share it with Roy or anyone else. I kept having a "block" other than Mike and Brian. Then I told them of my plans with John Wayne. They were not happy when I told them it was just going to be John Wayne and myself. I tried to get them to understand that I just can't risk anyone else in the group being hurt or killed. They said it wasn't fair to risk my life. I told them the matter was settled. They weren't thrilled. I really don't care.

I talked to Lara about it and she was furious with me. She unloaded on me for almost 15 minutes straight. Mickey heard her and came in, she just started to cry, then told me she hated me.

John Wayne and I leave in the morning before dawn. We should be gone 3 – 4 days. I hope we make it back. Now I have my doubts about the plan.

December 19th (Sunday) –

It is early, 7 am. I am so exhausted I can't think straight. But John Wayne and I got back safely, we were on the run all day yesterday and most of last night. We got into camp just before sunrise. The important thing is we got our mission done. I gotta get some sleep. I will write more later today.

Roy is insisting we delay our leaving. I will write more when I can. Things are a little tense, not good. Snow is still almost 3' deep in places; people are thinking that we won't be able to leave tomorrow; not everyone feels that way, but some do.

December 20th (Monday) –

According to the midnight guards it started warming up about 1 am last night. A lot of the snow was gone by morning. It has been warming steadily all day today; it got up to 62 degrees about 3 pm. Almost all of the snow is now gone around here, but I am not sure about elsewhere. We are leaving in the morning no matter what, if we are going to make it we have to allow for enough time. One way or another we leave in the morning. Roy kept saying we should delay another day. He and I got into a little argument because he wouldn't really give any real reason for the delay. Everyone is nervous, tense, most are kinda scared. I didn't attend church services yesterday, I was sleeping. Brian said it was short, boring, tense, and evidently, you could feel the emotion of everyone. He said it was kinda like "buyer's remorse," remorse that we are leaving all of this behind. After all, it has been home during some very tough times. Lara and Mickey are giving me the silent treatment a little bit for leaving when I did. It was worse when I would not tell them what I was doing while I was gone. How do you tell the two most important people in your life, your world, that you went out killing people? Even if they were LaRasa.

No word from David. He missed his check-in again for the umpteenth time. I worry about him. He is a full-grown, capable man; but I still worry about him. I love David, he is my first-born. I miss David.

December 21st (Tuesday) –

We had a breakfast together as a group about 4 am; a decision was made to start each day singing a hymn; this morning it was *Count Your Blessings* and *How Great Thou Art*.

Time to leave, we are heading to St. George! Betty and Harley have been extremely generous, how many ex-wives (and her current husband) would make space for her ex-husband and his new wife AND a semi-adopted teenage daughter?

The whole group is being welcomed in St. George and that is good, it will keep us close together.

Lara and I had hoped to make it to the Albuquerque Temple at some point but they closed it down a long time ago. I still have the two recommends that President Jaynes gave us the day they left. Those, along with the letter, should allow us to get sealed together as soon as we arrive

in St. George. That has been a long-term dream that is finally coming to fruition; and it has been worth waiting for.

I will keep my laptop handy and try to make entries as often as I can. Being able to plug it into the truck cigarette lighter is a great invention! We are going to try and take good roads but there are rumors that the interstates are all blockaded up with various gangs raiding anyone that tries to come through. We heard that you can get across the New Mexico / Arizona state line going through the reservation via highway 64 in far northwest New Mexico. I can get us that far because I know a lot of those back roads from my wildfire days plus all the planning that I did last week.

The reservation Indians are charging people for safe transit but they only are charging food or weapons and ammo. We still have plenty of both and have no problem bartering safe passage for some food. We are taking some that we had originally intended to leave with Rancher Bill.

While I will be in my own truck for the trip, unfortunately I won't be with Lara. We decided that tactically it would be best to travel in our fire team configuration. That way if something comes up we are better positioned to deal with it. And, should something really bad happen we are less likely to lose more than one member of a family per vehicle. I trust David and Sheila beyond any stretch of the imagination. We work extremely well together and have been through more than anyone should have to deal with, especially kids their ages. But it sure is nice to have Sheila with me; with her medical skills it makes me feel very secure. And at my age good medical attention is a great thing to have close by. Of course the addition of the Williams kid is a great addition as well.

I am a little worried about Lara's health. She got really weak last month when she was throwing up, I still don't think she has fully recovered and the last couple of days she has been not feeling too well again. I will be glad to get to St. George, they have a functioning hospital and I hear it is pretty dang good. Not like it was before TSHTF but better than a veterinarian in Sacramento Canyon to be sure!

It is kinda sad to leave so much behind but we simply can't take it all with us. Maybe someday we can come back and get it or maybe even move back into the area. Better yet, I hope Rancher Bill and his clan make good use of it. With the Mexicans and LaRasa, occupying so much of this area now, it's doubtful. I guess maybe I really don't give a dang about coming back. I am hoping our little adventure just before we left slows

LaRasa down a bit. They will at least have to take time to find new leadership.

I just want to grow old with Lara somewhere warm and watch the grass grow. I am tired, I want to go home.

Well, gotta shut it down, everyone finished packing yesterday except our battle packs, weapons, and immediate action packs.

Midnight - We didn't make it to Glenwood/Reserve, too much going on, too many unknowns happening. We have to stay outside of Bayard. Our outriders earned their keep today. They were able to spot trouble long before the rest of us ran into it. We have two guys riding dirt bikes and they go ahead of us. They keep moving around and watching for potential problems. Watching our rear is no problem, we rotate that duty. We kept our heads down, very low profile.

One thing I didn't like was Mike picking up some traffic on the Ham. People are talking about our little caravan moving. Nothing ominous or anything but they know we were on the move and they are talking about it. Our Ham handheld radios programmed with our various tactical freqs are paying off. That being said, we still kept radio traffic to a minimum.

Cold, dark, silent camp tonight and YUM! An MRE for dinner. Just like the MRE for lunch. Thank goodness for granola bars or we'd all be plugged up big time.

December 22nd (Wednesday) –

5:00 am - We just had a short meeting and discussion about lying low during the day and traveling at night. We agreed that for now the headlights at night would draw more attention than the risk of traveling during the day. I really don't like traveling and spending all day without Lara around. I understand why, I just miss her, plain and simple. I am feeling very alone right now. I am just really, really tired. I can't wait to get home!

This morning we sang *High on the Mountain Top*. But before we sang I asked if I could share my testimony; I just felt the urge that I had too, that it was for me, I don't know why, I just know I had to. I love the Lord so much; I have such an appreciation for the atonement and His sacrifice. If anyone ever needed the atonement it is me; and even then I wonder if it will be enough for me. I have my doubts from time to time when I hit low

places and I am tired. I feel tired and I feel apprehensive about something. I kinda feel as if I am in a low place right now in some ways.

Yesterday afternoon I was not driving and I spent most of the time reading my scriptures. I read 3rd Nephi a lot, then about the sons of Mosiah. And yes, I fell asleep a bunch, I am just so tired the last couple of days. When I get to St. George I am going to sleep for a whole week !!!

I need to talk to Mike and see if he is writing in his diary like he promised me he would. I talked to him several weeks ago about it. I encouraged him to do it so his kids and grandkids would be able to read about him. I hope he is writing.

11:00 pm - It has taken us all day to make it to the Glenwood/Reserve location; we had to take so many back roads. Our outriders kept reporting that there were all kinds of LaRasa people out everywhere blocking most of the roads.

The group that had been in the Glenwood/Reserve area already left a couple of weeks ago, but they had told us how to get to their facilities. We don't know the route they took when they left due to operational security, just as no one knows our route either. We overused a bunch of our fuel supply today but we couldn't avoid that. We have a plan on how to consolidate vehicles should the need arise.

It is getting old spending all day in the vehicles. Oh, except getting to eat MREs for lunch. We all love that! Another cold, dark, silent camp again tonight.

December 23rd (Thursday) –

5:00 am - Well, today we head up to the Indian reservation and negotiate our price of safe transit through their reservation. We aren't all going to just barge in at once. We will send two vehicles; one with Roy and his team to negotiate and my team to cover. We are leaving the other teams with the group; Mike will head up security and we have another team in reserve.

We're going to hold the main part of the group somewhere around Gamerco, just north of I-40. The bike scouts will check out the area well ahead of us to find a place for us to camp. We don't want to wander around looking lost and trying to find a place to hole up until Roy gets us on the reservation. I have kind of a creepy feeling about today. I wish Lara and I could spend some time together during the day.

This morning it was *Joy to the World*. Yeah, I know, it is a Christmas carol; deal with it.

About 10 pm Mickey brought her sleeping bag (wrapped in an emergency blanket) right next to Lara and me. She curled up right next to me, plastered right up against me. She must have been freezing.

I was on watch last night and about 3 am I was overcome with a desire to pray right then and there. I did. I poured out my heart to God to forgive me for all the killing that I have done, for all the sorrow that it has brought to so many families. They all had mothers and fathers, some brothers and sisters, others had husbands or wives, and no doubt some even had children. I felt so ashamed of myself for all the things I have done in my life that have been so wrong, so very, very wrong. I begged that God would have mercy on me and help me turn my life around for the last years that I have left. I told Him that all I really ever wanted to do was be a good husband, a good father, and a decent farmer. I felt such anguish and guilt over my life, I felt as if I was so unworthy and unclean. I just asked for forgiveness over and over. I didn't realize it but I had prayed for almost an hour. I should have been doing better as a guard. But I knew, I just knew, I had to pray, to ask for forgiveness. God heard me. I know He did.

11:15 pm - Not such a good day, our luck ran out. We were going north on Hwy 602, having just passed through the Zuni reservation. We were still well south of Gallop, New Mexico at an exit on I-40. We pretty much thought we would have a problem crossing I-40 but we hit problems before then.

Evidently, there are some roving gangs and then there are some stationary gangs as well. We hit one that is evidently fairly stationary. And I guess I shouldn't call them a gang, they are a group trying to survive just like us. But they have a different approach, steal, rob, mooch, and shoot. Our bikers spotted them first, well ahead of the rest of us. They did their job.

The bikers pulled over when they saw this roadblock, radioed us to hold up and get off the road. Not as easy it sounds with the number of vehicles that we have. But we did the best we could, which wasn't too bad actually. The bikers watched the roadblock for about 10 minutes and then saw the movement, did some scouting on foot and sent us a report over the radio. They said there were only about five of them manning their

roadblock but it looked like they had the road fairly well blockaded. They just couldn't tell for sure on the number of people.

We started up again while they kept tabs on the roadblock for any signs of activity or weakness. We would use our standard roadblock buster SOP, and just so happens it was our team's turn to be "cover" fire team.

My team pulled ahead and got with one of the bikers who laid out the scene in the dirt. We came up with final tweaks to the plan and headed out. Here's the plan, the SOP:

- The bikers do the scouting, stop and observe the roadblock.
- The cover fire team meets with them, gets the updated info, and heads out.
- The cover team takes cover positions and radios the rest of the convoy when ready.
- The convoy then pulls out and heads toward the roadblock with one vehicle pulling ahead. The crash truck will be the 1-ton dually with the heavy bumper and brush guard; 1 person driving, no other passengers.
- When they come into sight the cover team opens up on the roadblock with everything they have making sure to stagger the fire so the entire team doesn't all run out of ammo at once.
- The crash truck does just that, the big truck rolls through the roadblock pushing any blockage out of the way as it goes just a few seconds ahead of the following fire team. We're not necessarily talking speed here, they just get the barrier out of the way.
- The crash truck, or at least the fire team vehicle, passes through the roadblock and continues 100 - 200 yards, stops, take cover, and opens fire on the roadblock from that direction. We would now theoretically have them in a crossfire situation.
- The rest of the convoy (including the bikers) now pass through the roadblock trying to not get shot up by either of our fire teams or the bad guys. They pour fire out of each side of their vehicles at the bad guys. The convoy doesn't stop when they get through, they just keep going towards our destination.
- Once the convoy is through, the original cover team loads up and runs through the roadblock and meets up with the fire team. Then everyone hurries and catches up to the convoy.

At least that is the concept. We practiced it several times with the entire group together. We used it a number of times over the last few

months and it really works. The thing we worry about the most is shooting each other. I am not kidding, when we are running the convoy through the roadblock there can be lots of rounds going down range and the convoy is “down range.” It takes a lot of fire discipline to make sure we don’t hit any friendlies. So far so good.

Well, it worked this time just fine with one minor exception, we lost the 1-ton dually. Instead of plowing through the junk cars, it rolled up on one, a Chevy of some kind and got stuck. We got the driver out and into another vehicle, he was fine, but we lost the big truck but lost minimal gear. I hope we don’t need that truck later.

Oh well, everyone safe and sound, that is what counts. Not so lucky for the other side. I know I dropped one of them on my first shot; you can’t survive a 150gr of .30 caliber bronze tip bullet hitting you square in your chest. I am pretty sure I saw two other dead, didn’t see anyone else. The smart ones probably got hidden pretty quick if they wanted to live. I don’t know how bad it might have turned out if they had any kind of explosives wired to the roadblock. I hadn’t thought about that before.

So here is the spiritual question of the day, How many people does it make now that I have killed? 10, 20, 100, maybe more. Millions if you count all the descendants over time that won’t be born to those that have fallen at the working end of one of my guns. I can tell you this about how many have died, too many. Maybe all of them deserved it, maybe not. But they are all dead just the same. I am afraid “He who lives by the sword will die by the sword,” as the old saying goes.

All that being said, I am feeling more at peace and more confident about the future than I have felt since BumbleBarry first got his party’s nomination. It feels good, I am happy once again in a strange kind of way.

December 24th (Friday) –

9:00 am - A little more delay time this morning, we are getting ourselves prepared to meet with the Navajo. Our bikers made contact with them shortly after sun-up. Roy’s and my teams will head out fairly quickly. We are going to meet them at a place called Twin Lakes on Hwy 491. Man I hope this thing goes right.

Hymn this morning: *The Spirit of God* and then we just broke out singing *How Firm a Foundation*. Wow! Did we sound good, we were

belting it out big time! And *How Firm a Foundation* is Lara's favorite hymn.

Mickey slept right next to us last night, same as the night before. I had the fiery arrow dream last night in its entirety. It was incredibly vivid; I was right there, I could feel the dirt, I could smell stuff, I felt the heat on me, it was so real. I was shaking when they woke me up for our team's guard detail at 4 am. Mickey was awake and holding me trying to comfort me. I heard her saying a prayer. We stood the last watch together, Mickey and me. She never said a word to me, I think she said several prayers. I walked off by myself at one point and I prayed again; I feel like I am loved. Yes, I know I have sinned, sinned far more than the average person, especially the serious stuff. But I still feel the love of my Lord. That is very comforting. But the dream was very un-nerving. After breakfast Lara gave me the biggest hug you can imagine.

Noon - The meeting went well, better than we expected. We paid them about 300 lbs of food plus a bag that held the last of our gold and some silver coins. It is the groups second to last cache of silver. I have no idea what it is worth now but the Navajo might as well enjoy it, they will probably lose it at their own casino. Just kidding!

We're going to hold up just south of Shiprock for the night, hit Hwy 64 first thing in the morning and head for the Arizona state line. The Navajo have told us about a small, unknown road that cuts off Hwy 60 just west of Hwy 191 and goes cross-country coming out just east of Page, AZ. With any luck we will be in Page, Arizona tonight and St. George sometime tomorrow. Home!

I am really starting to get giddy. In St. George we will be in relative safety from what we have been dealing with for months now. There are lots of people there, lots of members of the church. They are still holding services there and everything. But most of all, the St. George Temple!

Now granted, it will be weird staying at Betty and Harley's but that is OK, we will get over it. Then we can relax a little. I don't remember the last time we could relax, not having to be under a guard 24-hours a day and worried about fighting and such. Just to be semi-normal again will be all worth it. And Lara and I can go to the temple - woooooohooooo! ! ! ! ! ! !
! Did I mention the temple?????

10:00 pm - Made it in early, a little more time to sleep tonight. One of the tribal elders met us and told us that there are some people on the

reservation that they don't know who they are. It seems that this group bounces back and forth between the Ute reservation to the north and the Navajo reservation here in northern Arizona and NM.

When I asked if they were Indians or whites they seemed a little offended but it was a legit question. He didn't know who they were but wouldn't rule out that it could be whites or anyone else. They simply don't have the manpower to watch over their whole reservation. Afterward, I thought about it and you know we could have just blown through the reservation and not negotiated our passage. But they need food, they are hurting big time. All of them look skinny and under nourished. I am glad we came this way. I wish we would have brought more food, much more food for these people. They are in desperate need.

We will put the bikers out early and scout ahead. We can handle another roadblock - no biggie! We are almost home!

Hey, it's Christmas Eve, I had lost track of it. What is going to be under the Christmas tree in the morning? Oh, an MRE I bet. At least it will be hot.

Lara and I had a chance to talk this evening over dinner, it was nice. Mickey is acting very strange tonight. She sat right next to me during dinner but really said nothing of any substance. Then every time I turned around she was right there next to me. And she kept her AR on her all night, like she was guarding me. I am worried about her again, something is not right.

December 25th (Saturday) –

!!! Merry Christmas !!!

5:00 am - I had the temple dream last night from start to finish; the one with the little kid in it. It was kinda cool, comforting, and peaceful (vs. the fiery arrow dream). But I also felt very frustrated in a way, hard to explain. I would love to figure out why all those people are there that I know. And why is this little kid getting sealed to my ex-wife and my cousin? I am sure there are all kinds of symbolism in the dream; I just don't know what they are and I am not having much luck figuring it out. I will talk to Lara about it tomorrow once we can get settled in St. George.

We better not draw this trip out too much longer we are running low on fuel. Actually we were done with the fuel trailer yesterday and we left it behind on the reservation. The fuel in our tanks should take us the rest of the way.

St. George radioed us and said they will have a group meet us west of Kanab, Utah. Kevin from onPoint will be there with a group. Just like Kevin, out front getting the tough stuff done. But the best part that sounds really fantastic, dinner tonight in St. George!!!! I guess they have a party of sorts lined up for us after we get in. I hope we are going to be able to shower first so we are presentable when we get to the party. Otherwise, they might make us move on through or at least make us camp outside of town because of the smell! We must reek!

Man, civilization! Dang, it's been a long hard pull but home is in sight now! I think I will take Lara to see the temple as soon as we can tomorrow. That is going to be something special, just to see it. I think I will even steal a kiss right there on the temple grounds. Nah, they won't take away our recommends just for one tiny, tiny kiss. Heck, they probably won't even see us do it.

Kind of a weird night last night. My team let me sleep through the night and skip my watch. They said I looked really tired and thought I could use the sleep. The weird part, they didn't harass me about being the "old guy;" they were really nice about it. And Mickey, she has lost it. She was plastered to me the entire night. I know she didn't sleep much, just stayed right next to me all night. I caught her crying a number of times but she would never answer me when I asked her what was wrong. I think we have to get her some professional help when we get to St. George.

OK, closing up the laptop, gotta get it back on the truck charger before the battery goes dead. And then an MRE for breakfast - yum yum - doesn't get any better than that!

I love Lara so much! I can't wait to be with her, settle down a little bit, live fairly normal. Just to be with her, that is all I want. That and to watch Mickey grow up, have her find a good man and have kids of her own. I will call them my grandchildren regardless of blood line.

8:10 am - This morning we sang *Come, Come Ye Saints*. I was so into it. I know, I need to join the Mormon Tab Choir!!! I gotta tell you I cried, not through the whole thing but I really was overwhelmed with the spirit while we sang. The third verse really got to me. It was incredible to

think about the Saints crossing the plains the way they did. As we sang the fourth verse I got such a peaceful feeling, emotional to be sure, but just a great feeling of calm and peace came over me. Then Lara started singing all on her own, she sang *How Firm a Foundation* to us all by herself. She just stared at me the whole time. What a woman!

When Lara, Mickey, and I had our morning prayer together we all said one, we took turns. It was different than what we normally do but each of us has so much to be thankful for and we wanted to express that to our Father in Heaven.

When the prayers were over I just kept hugging those two girls, I just couldn't stop. I just hugged and hugged. I wanted to bust out crying because I just felt so very grateful for their love and our family. For the first time in my life I feel like I am loved and I am so happy. And in a few short hours we will be safe in our new home. What more can a man ask for? Home!

I keep remembering John 15:13; I am so grateful that the Lord is my friend, finally. I know now I was the one slowing up that friendship. I hope one day, in some small way I can be that good of a friend to others.

Not many miles to Home! "...to see the Saints their rest obtain..." I need rest so badly, I am exhausted mentally, physically, and spiritually. I just want to feel the warm sunlight on my face while I look at the blue sky like I did when I was a kid back in Salem. No cares, no worries, just free from some of the toil and sorrow. Ahhhhhhhh, soon, it is just around the corner. How long I have waited for this. Going home!

Chapter 7

MAY - YEAR 38

May 14 -

Sitting down and reading the journal gives me such a strange feeling. So many things happened, so many lives changed. I have only really read the journal in its entirety once and that was a couple of decades ago. But I need to read it again; I also think it is time to finish it now. I will think and pray about it and see what needs to be added to finish it. Aunt Mickey, has been telling me for years now that it needs finishing, the kids will need to read it at some point. For now, I will just enjoy the great memories while I read it again.

May 15th –

I spoke with Aunt Mickey last night for several hours. She and I talked about so much, many things I never knew. She was insistent I finish the journal. Someone had to; people had to know what happened. It is the right thing for those who might read this in the future. Someone has to let you know what has happened in our country since Reformation Years. That is if you have been living under a rock or not able to watch any of the documentaries of those times. No, not reformation as in religion but as in the reformation of the United States occurred 30 – 37 years ago. So much has happened and I would think you would already know about it. Who doesn't? But just in case...

The USA - It isn't what it used to be, many things have changed. The USA is not nearly as large as it once was. When American Revolution II was finally over the country split along the lines of the Mississippi River. Everything to the west (minus the states of California, Oregon, and Washington) retained the name the United States of America. Everything to the east of the river became the American Union States (AUS) along with California, Oregon, and Washington. All of Minnesota became part of the USA once the Muslims were defeated. Almost 5 years after the war

southern California became part of Arizona by treaty. The USA paid the AUS a fair amount of money; the AUS was in desperate need of hard currency.

Several years after that eastern Washington and eastern Oregon began a “separatists” movement to join the USA. It was opposed for a long time but the AUS had no stomach for the fighting, either at the ballot box or otherwise. Within a year the eastern parts of Washington and Oregon became part of Idaho. The new USA/AUS dividing line was essentially Interstate 5.

At the time of the original split right after the revolution, North and South Dakota became a single state. They felt their interests would be better served as a single large state vs. two smaller states. They are just called Dakota now.

Wisconsin and Mississippi have both petitioned to join the USA but they have been turned down because they won’t fully embrace the Constitution as it was originally written. They want a bunch of entitlement crap written into it and that is simply not acceptable to the USA.

The remaining areas of California, Oregon, and Washington states have basically become a separate country from the AUS. I am not totally sure how they operate anymore, it doesn’t matter they are all but irrelevant other than a port or two.

Alaska joined Canada. They couldn’t stomach the AUS and we here in the USA couldn’t really do much for them with them being so far away. Russia was making military moves on them so Canada agreed to take them in provided that we (the USA) would help “dissuade” Russia from trying to take over Alaska. It worked and Governor Palin (former Governor and Vice-Presidential candidate Sarah Palin’s daughter) really made Alaska a success story beyond anyone’s wildest dreams; Canada made out like a bandit.

Wow, I am now in the groove. I want to write about what happened over the last 37 years since the original journal ended. I am enjoying this; as I get older it makes it interesting to relay in writing all that has happened. I will put more thoughts down on paper and starting tomorrow I will write more about what has happened and what is happening. I am also getting other people’s accounts of Christmas Day, the last day of the original journal entries. It was a pretty awesome story but I want to get it right and that will take input from others. I am excited!

May 16th –

I talked to the kids last night and they want me to write as much in the journal as possible. They like the stories. The oldest even thinks it might make a good book someday. I doubt that; there have been so many books already written about what happened to the old United States, who would want to read another one? But I will keep adding to the journal and I am working on pulling all the information together for the Christmas Day events. I've got most of it already but I am waiting to hear back from two of the original "group" before putting it all together. And what a story it is!

But for now I will keep relaying what has happened since then. It's important to know and maybe I can explain it in some way that will make more sense than the history books.

The Government – When the split took place it was unanimously agreed upon by the western states to re-establish the government under the US Constitution as it was originally intended. Many of the amendments that contradicted the original intent of the Constitution were withdrawn. The most noted one was the 17th Amendment; states legislatures once again have the authority to elect senators, not the general population. That single act alone has ensured a check and balance against a tyrannical federal government such as the one that almost overthrew the Constitution under the King Hewsane regime.

Supreme Court Justices Thomas was asked and he agreed to stay on the US Supreme Court; the others were removed. Eight new justices were appointed, the House of Representatives were allowed to appoint two, same for the Senate and also the states collectively appoint three. The newly elected President was allowed to appoint one. That ensured that no single power group was able to stack the court. But that was not really a worry. To begin with, the entire new USA was of a single mind on restoring the Constitutional Republic.

The federal government is now about 1/10th the size it was under the old system. There are the Departments of:

- Defense
- Interior
- Treasury
- State
- Justice

There is no such thing as the Federal Reserve or any other central bank. The Department of Treasury handles the currency as the Founding Fathers envisioned. About three years after the split a group of bankers tried to collapse the USA's economy and monetary system through some massive manipulation and fraud. Several teams of Special Forces stopped it before it succeeded.

The Defense Department handles just that, all defense matters. There is the US Defense Forces (UDF). There used to be different branches of the military but no more. They were combined to make everything far more efficient and cost effective. It is amazing how much money that single move saved each year. And the Department of Defense is just that - defense. All our overseas bases were closed long, long ago. We don't "project power" or "build democracies" anymore. And countries learned the hard way not to mess with us.

The Department of Interior handles all the government internal affairs. The State Department handles all the external affairs. We only have a handful of embassies, and those only with the most high profile friendly countries (i.e. Canada, Australia, England, Israel, etc.); which are also the only democracies left. So the federal government has been put in its place and it is kept there as it should be and should have been all along.

A couple interesting notes if you have been living under a rock, or you are reading this WAY in the future somehow:

1. All federal government land was sold. The National Parks were offered first to the states and then to conservation groups. Some states, the richer ones, bought the parks that were located in their own states. However, most of the former national parks went to conservation organizations. The federal government kept ½ of all mineral rights. Neither the states nor the conservation groups were, or are, able to prevent things like oil drilling.

2. The remaining federal lands were offered to private citizens in what can only be described as a lottery system where everyone won. The land all had a fair market price based on the land's capability to produce (i.e. timber, oil reserves, farm land, etc.). All adult legal citizens' names were entered into a system that randomly matched parcels of land with people. The federal government then would, in effect, become the mortgage company at very reasonable 10-year terms. People could do something with their land or sell it to someone else. A whole lot of people

became very wealthy through this system. It was all about people owning the land vs. the government owning the land. The US Constitution never authorized the federal government to own vast tracks of land to begin with. Strange how that Constitutional fact seemed to have been ignored by so many for so long. And then under the socialist-progressive presidents it somehow became accepted, then the norm for the federal government to be a majority landowner in most western states. Now it has been restored to its original intent. The people own and control the land not a bunch of government bureaucrats.

3. All the proceeds from the sale of the land went directly to paying off the national debt. Also, any proceeds from the production of minerals from those lands went directly to pay off the debt. So a bunch of oil and gas production really paid down the national debt quickly; and then that money went to funding only the necessary functions of government.

4. Indian Tribes also sold off their lands. Since the land was all owned by the federal government, the feds could have just sold it off. But, the tribes all agreed to take 50% of the net proceeds for the sales; the other 50% going to pay off government debt. Tribal members became very wealthy and mostly self-sustaining. There is no more Bureau of Indian Affairs and welfare dependency ruining their lives. Native Americans once again have their pride and freedom back.

5. One of the first orders of business of the newly elected government was to withdraw from the United Nations. About five years after that it came out just how corrupt an organization the UN had become. “Evil” is a term that is generally associated with the UN during all those years; even now for the most part. The UN is just a way for all the socialist countries to make speeches against the free-market countries.

May 17th –

A flood of different emotions keeps washing over me as I write this. There is so much that has gone on in the world and as I think of “the group.” it is just amazing what transpired all those years ago. There must be 1,000 members of the church now just as a result of those conversions and baptisms back then. Not to mention a certain Prophet that wouldn’t have had the chance to become a Prophet had it not been for the group and their rescue effort. It is amazing how much history can be affected by the seemingly small acts of people. But let me cover the economy for now.

Economy – It was kind of rough at first. There was all that US debt sitting out there when the states were divided. We, the USA, agreed to take on all the debt up to and including 20-year treasury notes; the AUS took all the 30-year debt. We had ours paid off in 11 years thanks to the land sales plus oil and gas royalties. All of the debt was negotiated for a pay-off amount and terms vs. the inflated original amounts.

To say there were some rough times would be an understatement. But our new leaders were incredible; they knew exactly what it would take to get the new USA back into fiscal sanity and on our feet economically. A single principled move made it all possible, the elimination of any and all income taxes. Actually, it became unconstitutional to implement any “production” taxes at any level of government.

What is almost unimaginable is people allowed a progressive federal income tax to ever be imposed in the first place. Seriously, a tax on production? That is absolutely absurd to even consider. But in retrospect it is clear what the socialist-progressives were trying to do; take money from one group of people who earned it, and give it to another group who had not. Diabolical!

What was implanted is a single Sales Tax system. Everything purchased new was taxed at a rate of 9%. It was broken down: 3% to the federal government, 4% to the state government, 2% split between the county and city governments. There were no other taxes of any kind on US citizens. There were some import duties, etc. but no other taxes on US citizens. The concept was simple: a private citizen or a company has the right to 100% of their income and the right to spend it wherever they wish. It was clear after the split that the government had no right to what an individual or company earned!

Once that was established and companies felt secure that the new USA was here to stay, then companies from around the world flooded to the US. It was amazing to hear people talk about those days and how employment was virtually guaranteed; unemployment was under 1% within a matter of a couple years. And it has stayed that way ever since, even during the “war years.”

What became very obvious through a study of history was the fact that the income tax the federal government started back in the early 1900’s was unconstitutional. Not only that, it was a direct product of “The Committee” – the World’s Elite. The government used the income tax to accomplish

social engineering and create a permanent government-dependent welfare class system. The Committee used it to transfer power to the government whom they controlled. It was no coincidence that the income tax and the CFR (Council on Foreign Relations) came into being within just a few years of each other.

The USA did continue with the dollar as its currency but under WAY different conditions. Paper money was still the common currency but it was backed by gold, silver, platinum, and eventually copper (added 15 years later). Yes, you could go to one of the federal depositories and exchange your paper money for gold, silver, platinum, or copper. The US dollar became the envy of the world's economies and in huge demand around the globe. And today we still produce silver coins and a \$100 gold coin. They are commemorative issues celebrating the restoration of our Constitution.

The USA didn't really become the major global economy; we didn't want it to be. We wanted a strong, secure, independent, robust economy that focused on what was best for our citizens. Some around the world called it "isolationism" based on past bias but it was not isolationism at all. We simply wanted to take care of our own citizens first so we could help others as we saw fit. Many organizations and countries spoke out vehemently against the moves we made; some threatened us militarily. But the whole purpose of government, to take care of its own citizens, not the entire world.

The end result was predictable, most countries in the world love trading with us. We are honest, straight-forward, and easy to work with. But we are looking out for our own country's self-interests first. Our primary form of international trade is "barter." You want some of our food, then trade us some of your "x." We really don't like sending our dollars overseas and, if done correctly, barter comes out better for everyone. Well, better for everyone if you are not an international bank making millions and billions off each and every deal. Yes, the fact that international bankers are behind The Committee was finally acknowledged during the Reformation. And international trade used to be just another way they could control countries via power and money.

But that is another story for another time where I might write about the CFR and international bankers, and what we have come to call *The Committee*. The Committee being the group of unscrupulous mega-rich

elite that were behind all the problems back in the years prior to the Revolution II. Actually, it goes all the way back to Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, plus other elitists that wanted the entire world as their kingdom and us as their serfs.

So the economy is doing great, employment is all but assured, and money in savings is the standard for families. Great things happened when the social security system was done away with, along with all other government welfare and subsidy programs. People were able to keep, spend, and invest their money as they wished. That is called freedom, *real* freedom. Most people are retired or working at what they want by the age of 50, some much sooner. And they live off what they saved and invested, they aren't dependent on the federal government sending them a check. Dependency on government is called "serfdom," the opposite of freedom.

We will never again allow anyone to put us on the road to slavery and serfdom as the liberals and progressives did in the 20th and 21st centuries. We love freedom! It is worth preserving, and dying for.

May 18th –

Welfare – That is a dirty word nowadays in many ways, as it should be. But to the few that actually need it, it's honorable when handled the way it is now, the way it should have been all along. Welfare is clearly seen now for what it was throughout the 20th century and into the early 21st century. Almost without exception it killed the human spirit of those that received it. It would crush a person's self-esteem. In other words, it was a soul killer in many ways.

When viewed objectively, all evidence shows that the more that a person would get for free from the government the less likely they were to try and stand on their own. The real long-term answer was jobs. Yes, that simple, jobs.

Once the income tax, and all but the sales tax were eliminated, business boomed. Businesses that had been located abroad applied to move their business to the US, and many Americans who had the entrepreneurial spirit could finally afford to start up a business. The economy went through the roof. With the change in the currency standard based on precious metals everyone gained confidence in the new US dollar.

That was one of the smartest moves the second generation of founding fathers made was to reset the US dollar to have actual value vs. being a fiat

currency with only taxing power behind it. When something has value it is respected; our dollar is respected everywhere.

Sorry, back to the welfare thing. First, they enacted laws that the federal government was prohibited from providing funds directly to an individual in any form or through another level of government (i.e. state). So no money from the feds could end up in the hands of an individual. That was an incredible move to virtually eliminate the corrupting power machine that politicians can create in the government system. In this aspect, the corrupted political machine was created starting with the progressive presidents in the early 1900's.

True, there are people that are disabled to the point where they cannot work. They are not forgotten; they are respected and given great dignity by people who care about them the most. First, most of those severely disabled people are cared for by their family. Where that isn't possible there are some fantastic charitable organizations that run group homes and hospitals that provide specialized care that was once only dreamt of.

The key to the whole system is work. Yes, people can work and provide for themselves. Most people with disabilities are still able to provide for themselves, and they want to. Regardless of the disability, almost every person has a productive self-sustaining career that he can be found or developed just for them. Training and education is provided. Those people can then live a life of dignity and self-respect as they provide for themselves as a functioning and contributing member of society. And the reason all this is possible, unemployment that is less than 1%.

Many years ago there was a government program called "minimum wage;" strange program to be sure. It was meant to provide a so-called "decent living" or a "living wage" for people, and prevent businesses from taking advantage of workers. Well, that is almost incomprehensible that anyone would actually think that would work. Over and over it was proven in the last century that when the minimum wage went up jobs were lost. The whole concept of a minimum wage is simply Marxist in nature. It is a mammoth effort to redistribute wealth from one group of people to another. Why would intelligent people ever tolerate such a thing? But they did, weird.

The underlying problem all along was government. People in government had power, and they maintained that power through throwing a little money to the people once in a while. Throwing money through

programs like minimum wage, unemployment, student loans, housing subsidies and welfare were designed specifically to maintain power over people. When what they should have done, and what we did, was to drastically reduce the size of government at all levels, eliminate taxes, and let business boom. That creates jobs, jobs produce money, and money creates opportunity for people to succeed. It is human nature to want to work and earn an honest day's pay for an honest day's work.

Government giving money directly to people is "soft tyranny," just another way to control the population. Although "soft tyranny" it is still tyranny.

The military – I could write pages and pages about the military; I already mentioned that they combined into a single entity, the UDF.

To read about what happened initially at the time of the split is kind of weird. The AUS wanted a lot of the military but then realized how much it was going to cost to maintain. Additionally, the AUS is, after all, mostly hardcore socialists and left-wingers who hated the military to begin with. Most of the military wanted nothing to do with the new AUS and simply *relocated* themselves and their equipment to territory controlled by the USA. The AUS protested rather loudly but to no avail. It was pretty funny reading about the AUS wanting more military forces, and they would ask and beg the individual units to come back. None did. Not one.

The one big drawback was naval forces. Until southern California (San Diego County) became part of the USA, the only deep-water ports were in Texas and Louisiana. It worked, but not really well. Since our forces mostly stayed close to home it wasn't that big of a deal but there were challenges that had to be overcome.

Our military is much smaller than it was under the old USA. But that doesn't mean any less effective; they are more effective now actually. We have a simple #1 rule that applies to all countries of the world:

Don't mess with us!

We are friendly to all those that respect us and don't cause our citizens harm. But just ask China, Russia, Venezuela, Mexico, and Iran what happens when you don't respect our #1 rule. While we don't do treaties, alliances or mutual aid pacts anymore, we have given our unreserved support to Israel. They were able to rebuild and create a stronger Israel with our help. Their borders are larger and more secure now and most

Arab and Muslim countries don't mess with her; Iran was enough of an example for any potential enemies to think twice about it.

Our military has two basic forces, conventional and unconventional. Nukes and Special Forces make up the unconventional and everything else is conventional. We don't interfere with other country's business and we don't tolerate anyone messing with us. We are peace loving to be sure but it is "peace through strength" and the willingness to use that strength when pushed ensures our peace. So most countries respect us and trade with us; they like our money, our goods, and our simple outlook on the world.

Our military people are the ultimate professionals; they live a very high standard, they are trained better than any other military in the world, they can earn a decent living and are very highly respected in our communities. I enjoyed my time in the UDF and look forward to reserve duty each year.

One of the most respected moves that our military ever made; or I should say the old USA's military, they never moved against the civilian population during the war. They knew what Hewsane was up to and who he really was and who was controlling him. They refused to take up arms against the populace, which enabled the reestablishment of the Constitutional Republic. We honor and revere them for how they handled themselves and did, in fact, defend the Constitution and upheld their oath.

Wars – I should touch on wars, but again you probably are already well aware of our war history, or relative lack thereof. Earlier in the journal you can read about China making a move against us while American Revolution II was in full swing. An EMP detonation over their fleet turned them back without too much destruction or death. But they weren't done with us; they came back several years later.

Somehow China got it in their head that the new USA would be weak and easy to knock over. And they were completely intent on taking over, at least the west coast. China and their Asian Rim Alliance sent a huge fleet towards the USA again. And I mean huge! The estimates are there were 400,000 troops in the fleet along with 9 carriers plus all the support ships, etc. That is over 1,100 combat and support aircraft. Hawaii fell; there was just no way to defend it. They established a base there very quickly with the logistics capability they had in their fleet. Then they made their move less than 6 months later against the US mainland.

AUS said they couldn't help defend anything; all they wanted was to enter into peace negotiations with China. This was their reaction even though California, Oregon, and Washington states were part of the AUS and China was going to invade them.

But we, the new USA, said, "Hell No!" and went it alone since it was our security at stake. We harassed them first with subs to buy some time but they countered it pretty well with technology we didn't even know they had. Technology that they actually had acquired illegally from us during the Clinton regime in the 1990's. Yeah, the *Clinton Betrayal* is now well-known and documented; many books have been written about it. And Clintons participation as part of The Committee's periphery came out about 20 years ago as the investigations finally came to an end.

Back to the Chinese fleet, we hit the Asia fleet with a couple of air strikes. All that did is cost us a lot of aircraft and some very good pilots. While their jets and pilots couldn't compete with us, their ship-to-air missiles dropped our planes out of the sky by the dozens. When the Chinese saw that we essentially couldn't stop them they demanded our complete and total surrender plus AUS had to turn over control of California, Washington, and Oregon to them immediately. Thank God for President Walker. He told them to stop the military aggression and not move another mile closer to the USA, period. They ignored him, he gave them one last warning.

To hear the recordings of the radio conversation that took place between President Walker and the Chinese Prime Minister is historic! The Chinese leadership told President Walker to immediately surrender or face an invasion and "unbearable loss of life." President Walker simply said, "Turn your fleets around within 15 minutes or we will destroy your ships and everyone on them. The discussion is over; comply or die."

The Chinese didn't believe him. They should have. President Walker pressed the red button. Well, there wasn't really a red button but he unleashed a nuclear missile attack against their fleets while he was on the conference call with the Chinese national leadership listening to them bluster and harass him. The second to last thing he said was, "You have two minutes." The last thing he said was, "You have made your choice. Their blood is on your hands."

The Asian fleets were not really equipped to deal with such an attack; every last ship and man was lost, all of it sunk or vaporized.

The recordings have this dead silence as it dawns on the Chinese leadership that all of their force is lost. Then they start screaming that they will retaliate with a full nuclear strike; they launched five nuclear weapons. One malfunctioned and detonated coming out of its silo in central China. Three never made it into orbit because we had a laser anti-missile 747 over the Pacific, they shot them down. The last one was destroyed as it came out of orbit headed towards the mid-west. One of our anti-ballistic missile batteries shot it down quite easily. Thank goodness for the foresight of former President Reagan.

President Walker told them that another launch would be met with a counter-strike of our own. China didn't launch any more missiles. There was a whole lot of protesting by other countries, including the AUS. But we released a single statement that had just two sentences, *"We have a right to defend ourselves against any threat. We will enforce that right when and where as needed."*

There were lots more protests, condemnations, and calls for sanctions. We ignored them all. The list of countries wanting to do business with us and be our friend grew quickly. They knew where we stood, that we would not be intimidated, that we would not be beat, and that we were honest and open. Countries, as well as people, respect that. Respect is important, very important, for individuals as well as countries.

May 19th –

Education – Wow! Now there is another area to talk about forever. Rather quickly after the dissolution of the US Department of Education there was a big debate over education in the country. There was a very clear distinction drawn between "education" and "schooling." The so-called public school system of the 1900's was seen as a complete and total failure; because it was just that by any objective measure.

Turns out that the public school system was anything but "public"; more appropriate was the term "government school system." The concept of public education started out with evil intentions by European fascists but was soon hijacked by the progressives and liberals in America. John Dewey, who brought the public school system concept to America, was a rabid socialist. The schools turned into nothing more than an education system to teach the kids to be liberals and progressives. That suited The Committee just fine because they needed a population that was easily

controlled and brainwashed. Progressives and liberals are simple to control because they have no capability to think independently for themselves; it is all about “group think” to them.

The responsibility for education went right back to where it belonged, the individual and the family. It was their choice how much, if any, education they obtained. There were a number of studies done correlating education to years of schooling and ability to perform in a given profession or vocation. It was discovered that there was no true direct correlation at all. So a whole new concept was employed; “knowledge.” Knowledge is what really mattered, not simply schooling.

There was a public education system designed but it was at the local level, controlled and funded by citizens in the community. It was voluntary and usually very focused on certain areas such as math, science, a vocation, etc. A family could elect to have their children participate or not; there were no laws requiring school attendance. Freedom means Freedom!

If a child became interested in becoming a mechanic they could learn that. If someone wanted to become a doctor then there was that area of emphasis. School curriculum was readily available to everyone at minimal cost. Churches formed schools, as did neighborhoods, as well as service organizations and professional groups.

After a couple of decades the end result was a very efficient, effective, streamlined, de-centralized educational system. Costs were driven way down to where people could easily afford what used to be referred to as a college education. Of course there were some basic core skills that needed to be learned, but all of the “fluff” courses at all levels were gone. It was all about knowledge and how a person employed it.

The single best thing that happened, other than government losing their control over schools, was the academics losing their lock over educational standards. Previously, academics were extremely self-serving and had a financial interest in forcing people to attend certain schools and take specific courses. They were just as much about money and power as politicians were. And the end results had been almost as devastating as the violence during the installation of liberalism and progressivism in the US.

With the newfound freedom and much improved educational system you could become a doctor by age 25, because you could start training to be one at virtually any age if you wanted to. You want to be a farmer? Fine, that can start when you are in your single-digit age bracket. It was

amazing what happened. Education transformed into “learning” because kids of all ages, as well as adults, were interested in and motivated by what they were doing because it applied to real life. The myth of the “Ivy League Schools” was found to be nothing more than a power and money fraud scheme.

And let me tell you we did something right! People from all over the world came to the USA for health care. It is free in almost every other country in the world but not in the USA. However, it is affordable. It is affordable because a doctor proves his skill and knowledge NOT his education. He proves his ability to perform as a doctor by training to be a doctor under a series of mentors and focused learning. And our medical care is affordable because doctors don’t have to pay off mountains of school debt or pay for liability insurance like they did in the old days.

Knowledge became obtainable through a common sense educational system and freedom to pursue your dreams. The individual had the power, not the government or some pseudo-educational system.

Courts and Legal system – Here is another area of change that really shined. Trivial lawsuits became a thing of the past and almost unheard of within a few short years after the USA was established. The best thing that ever happened was: you lose, you pay. Simple and common sense; you sue anyone you want for any legal reason. But if you lose the lawsuit you pay the court costs and the attorney’s fees for those you sued. Now that is justice!

The other key element to the legal system was the elimination of “pain and suffering” judgments. If someone harms you then you incur damages (i.e. loss of wages, loss of property, etc.) and get compensated for that loss. Pain and suffering was a mechanism by which people were able to get huge, and unjustifiable, monetary settlements that negatively affected everyone. Juries would somehow relate to the victim and decide to punish professionals, insurance companies, corporation, and citizens by awarding the plaintiffs astronomical amounts of money. The only winners were the lawyers, everyone else suffered.

Now, “fraud” is a criminal offense, and a very serious one. And you can’t hide behind a corporation or political office thinking you are protected. A primary concept of law is you are responsible for your own actions. If you are the head of a company, then you are responsible for that

company. Commit fraud and you are going to jail for a very long time. And that is after damages are paid to the victims from your pocket.

The criminal system was a little less clean and proper for a while. There were the “Rope and Tree Years.” Right after the Revolution there was quite a bit of violent crime. States adopted very harsh criminal penalties. Most violent crimes became a hanging offense; hence the term Rope and Tree Years.

If you were found guilty of rape, murder, and a number of other violent crimes you could be sentenced to be hung and many were. The appeal process took about 90 days if the appeal met certain criteria and was justified, then your case was reviewed. Otherwise, many criminals were hung within 72 hours of them being found guilty. That drastically reduced the criminal element in society.

Even prison time was no picnic any longer. If you got a prison sentence you had a tough time taking care of yourself. Tent prisons were not uncommon in warmer climates. All of the prison systems required every inmate to work. They had farms, dairies, and such. They produced their own food and some even met all their operating expenses through prison production operations. If an inmate chose not to work they got very hungry.

No TV’s, no gourmet meals, it was all very basic. But on the other side of the equation there was training and educational programs as well as detox programs for first offenders. If a first-time offender went in, a productive citizen could come out if they chose to. If they chose not to, well, there weren’t a whole lot of career criminals on the streets after a while.

Things are way better now. Oh, once you got out of prison you were deemed to have paid your debt. You got ALL your citizenship rights back, all of them. That helped many a reformed criminal return to society a productive citizen.

There were and still are the criminally insane. They get put away for life, there are very few that can actually be rehabilitated but we still take care of them.

One note about guns, we have no gun laws; there simply are none, period. That means guns are legal. Wear it or not, concealed or not, wherever you want to. It is unconstitutional to regulate guns in any manner just like the Constitution says, and has said all along. But if you commit a

crime with a gun, bye-bye, you are gone for a very long time. Intentionally kill or injure someone with a gun, other than self-defense, used to mean you would be hung within 72 hours. It isn't quite that strict anymore but count on 50 years or more in prison for criminal acts. Violent crimes, you're hung.

Just remember that all children are exposed to guns, gun safety classes and such from a very young age. There are still accidents involving guns but very, very few since almost everyone is trained in their use. Guns aren't a novelty or considered a "toy" anymore.

One thing I love to talk about were cameras used for speeding and red light traps. I did a paper for my education a long time ago, I enjoyed the research. There was actually a time in our past when cameras were placed at intersections to record people that were speeding or running traffic lights. After the Revolution every single one of them was taken down and it was soon realized they were unconstitutional to begin with. It resembled Orwell's "1984" book and no one wanted big brother government to have that much intrusion into their lives. To think of such things as legal and imposed upon citizens is now incomprehensible.

There was a huge gang problem right after the final truce that separated the new USA and the AUS. The gangs were leftover from the previous years of tolerance for gangs, which is hard to understand in this day and age. But there were parts of cities, in some cases entire cities, that were controlled by gangs. They ran drugs, prostitution, extortion, kidnapping, and all other unimaginable criminal activities. Understandably, people were sick of it and once the heavy weight of government was taken off their shoulders and common sense was restored, people took matters into their own hands for a while.

In the 1800's they would have called them vigilantes; in the Rope and Tree Years they were called Safety Committees. Again, simplicity took over. Safety Committees went out and shot gang members, and then burned down their gang houses. If they actually took gang members into custody they were turned over to peace officers, tried, and most of them hung in public. In some of the worst areas, like St. Louis, they would leave the bodies hanging in the city parks. It was ugly to be sure, but effective. After about five years of this 98% of the gang problem was solved. What has kept the problem from reoccurring is education and families. Teaching kids what gangs are really about, teaching respect for others and

encouraging strong families that are responsible for their kids ensured the demise of gangs.

To wrap-up this section I want to make sure that you know we aren't perfect; we still have crime, problems, and challenges to overcome. But our society has become a polite society, a civil society. We respect each other and we even respect our government. That's because we now have a respectable government, not the monster that politicians created a long time ago in the old USA.

Today our citizens are engaged in watching our government; term limits ensure that evil, should it sneak in, can only stay in power so long. And we know that the best source of government power is out our back door, in our local community, not in the state or national capitals. Out our back door where we have direct control over it.

We learn from an early age what and who are were men; people like Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, and Adams. And why they felt about government the way they did, it took us going through the King Hewsane years to wake up again.

We also learned how utterly evil and insidious Roosevelt, Wilson, Clinton, Johnson, and both Bushes were; not to mention the monster King Hewsane. We now learn critical thinking skills so politicians can no longer lie to our faces while stealing our freedoms and money. We see evil and we kick it out of office; and often-times put them in prison as well. If a politician lies it is a criminal offense to which they can end up in prison. If someone dies as a result of the actions, some have hung.

We will never tolerate the likes of the most evil politician of them all, the man that almost destroyed our country, a man that cost 100's of thousands of good American lives, King Hewsane! He is despised and reviled. There is no lower or more disgusting name associated with the Presidency than his name. No legacy that brings more revulsion to people than his. Never again will we tolerate someone such as him.

Never forget - never again!

May 20th –

LaRasa – Going back and reading the journal entries back in “group years,” there was a significant problem with LaRasa invading southwestern US. What is amazing is the fact that prior to that LaRasa was not seen as the terrorist or subversive organization that is was. While they cloaked

themselves in legitimacy advocating for Hispanics, their real goal all along was the violent acquisition of vast tracks of the southwest US.

Shortly after the truce was signed, the state militias of Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico organized under a single command. They mounted a serious campaign against LaRasa that winter. LaRasa was defeated militarily in two major battles and quickly lost any significant influence. However, it morphed into the violent terrorist gang that it was all along. Once militarily defeated they began a terror movement that lasted another 18 months or so.

Ironically, it was not the combined state militias that finally defeated them; it was American citizens that were of Hispanic origin that utterly destroyed them. They decided that there was nothing good coming of the movement and the primary victims of LaRasa were the Hispanics themselves. Another case of Safety Committees, but directed entirely at LaRasa. Little more than 90 days was required to entirely eliminate LaRasa. They were hunted down and killed; there were no trials, no prison time, and no discussion. They were killed. Some did escape into Mexico, but they are smart enough to not even attempt re-entry to the US.

Mexico – Just a quick word or two about Mexico. It is still a sewer pit. In the last half of the 20th century the country fell into control of the narco-criminal gangs. Their government became corrupted to its very core. Violence was and still is commonplace and has completely spiritually deflated the average person of that country.

Many historians make a convincing case that the country has fallen into its current state of affairs based on one over-riding fact - gun control. Mexico had very strict gun control laws for the average citizen. But the criminal elements always had easy access to weapons. The government was given millions of weapons from the old USA government. So the very people that needed the guns the most to protect themselves were prohibited from owning them. Thus falling victim to both an utterly corrupt government and every form of criminal element. The average citizen never had a chance; they became slaves without a fighting chance.

It is hard to imagine a whole society allowing themselves to have gun rights taken away from them. Our founding fathers knew that guns and gun rights were the key to ensuring all other rights. To resist a tyrant or an oppressive government, guns are as essential as a ballot box.

Well, as it got continually worse for the good citizens of Mexico they were impotent to change their predicament. While the government got more tyrannical and the narco-gangs got stronger through money and violence; the average person loss more and more of their liberty and safety. So you have Mexico today, a country of corrupted sewage.

It is almost ironic that reading earlier journal entries you read about an illegal alien problem. Same is true today to some degree. But it is handled far differently today. There is a virtually impenetrable fence separating the US and Mexico; it is manned 24-hours a day. There is an occasional breach but that is rare and it usually ends up with plenty of dead narco-gang members.

On the other side of the equation is legal immigration, which is much easier and almost instantaneous. We have an active para-military unit in Mexico that is there for only one purpose, finding the good people and helping them across the border. While it is subjective and only about a hundred thousand come across each year, it works. And those people that make it across are grateful to be in a country where they have a chance to work and raise a family in peace and security.

I was honored to serve two years in that unit. I won't give too many details on how it works for obvious security reasons but it is incredible to see the new US citizens and how they succeed so well in our country. But they are US citizens, grateful for the chance, and statistically less criminal activity from them.

It is just a shame that we are still technically still at war with Mexico. But it is in name only, they were never a real threat and we dealt with them in less than 30 days many years ago.

So let me touch on one other point while I think of it - race relations.

One of the most divisive occurrences during the reign of King Hewsane was race wars. King Hewsane and other race pimps were able to pit whites against blacks and Hispanics against whites and blacks. Later, during the trials and investigations, it became clear through a mountain of evidence that the race wars were actively encouraged and an integral part of the progressives' plan. By dividing people against each other, they were able to exercise control and influence over each group separately. And it was a money-making venture for the likes of Jackson, Sharpton and others.

The racial tensions prevented the actual members of each group from getting together and finding out that they have much more in common than

what minor differences they had. And the #1 thing they had in common was serfdom. Yes, the progressives, under the influence of The Committee, were intent on turning everyone but the elite few into serfs. Welfare and race wars were as important to creating serfs as was taxes, gun control, etc.

Once again it became all about money and power. Progressives wanted the power to control lives, the lives of the average person. So they would dribble money out to people to make them happy, but those same people receiving the financial handouts gave up huge blocks of rights for a small amount of money. The outcome was always the same, a few people at the top served by the masses at the bottom. Race wars ensured that the masses were more worried about each other's racial heritage than their human bond.

Everyone was able to finally put the whole race thing behind them once the trials were over. Even though they were tried in absentia, the race pimps were shown for who they really were and who they served. They had sold their souls for fine suits, big cars, private jets, and their "posse" to say the least.

In today's world there is no such thing as "race." Any reference to race has been removed from laws, forms, applications, reports, everything. Race is no factor in anything at all; not in jobs, education, loans - nothing. People living in the new USA are citizens, period. Sure there are blacks, whites, Asians, Hispanics, etc., but there is no such thing as an African-American, Mexican-American, Irish-American or any other hyphenated person. We are all Americans and humans. That seems to be working just fine.

Sports - I would be remiss if I didn't briefly mention sports. Sports is a big part of the American culture but entirely different than what it was 40 or 50 years ago. There was a time when the population was sports fanatics and it was a dominating factor in so many things.

Fortunately for us we saw it for what it was - a very expensive diversion. Once it was really looked at in depth, turns out it was another tactic that the corrupted leaders used to control the population. Just like they controlled people in ancient Rome. Then they were called gladiators and they participated in games that included killing man and beasts. In the old USA it manifested itself in spoiled and pampered men being treated like some kind of gods and making ridiculous amounts of money. And

ironically these same spoiled brats usually participated in criminal activity many times more often than the average citizen; even almost twice as much as the average criminal of the time.

Today there are just as many sports enthusiasts to be sure. However, it is kept at the high school level for the most part. There are no professional sports teams; it is far too childish and unproductive. Fans are thrilled to go see their local school teams play or to participate in the large number of league sports all around the country in our communities.

So no more \$50million dollar a year spoiled brats playing a game to entertain people. We are far more likely to play softball on Saturday than to sit in front of a TV all day on Sunday watching baseball or football. It is more rewarding and far healthier to play it, than watch it!

Wrap it up – I need to close this entry, I have taken far too much time and written way more than I had intended. Suffice it to say that the USA and AUS are totally different countries with completely different cultures. And that doesn't even begin to do it justice.

The USA is respected, even feared around the world; no one messes with us or our citizens. We believe in the individual being responsible for themselves in all things. We believe all rights come to the individual from God (or at least a higher power to some people). We believe that small, limited government is needed; mostly to protect citizens from external threats vs. governing internal matters.

The AUS is not respected and regularly gets pushed around by the United Nations of which they are a member and we are not. AUS routinely has problems with all sorts of countries and they try to “talk” their way through all their problems. Usually means they lose whatever the conflict was. AUS is a typical liberal/progressive government with all rights granted to the individual by a huge all-powerful central government. And that AUS federal government is massive. 78% of all AUS citizens work for some government agency at some level. There are virtually no private companies left, and those are only massive corporate entities that I am convinced are cohorts with the government.

In the USA you are required to plan for your own retirement and taking care of yourself in all things. Your family is responsible next and then charitable organizations help out when the family needs it. Government help is only a last resort and then at the most local level (i.e.

city). There is incredible prosperity in the USA, and the economy is very strong. It has been for quite a while now.

The AUS looks like, actually is, a third-world country. Poverty is rampant, ½ of the country is on welfare, and inflation runs 8 – 20% per year. They can barely feed themselves and their economy is government and service-based. Many experts feel that AUS has maybe another decade or two before it simply implodes. When I travel there I see large areas that look like the worst slums you can imagine. Most of their citizens live in fear of criminals and government bureaucrats. Their lives are micro-managed by their laws; it is a “hard tyranny” if there ever was one. The only thing keeping their country alive is a handful of private companies that stay there. They are either forced to stay or they are complicit with the government. Either way, it is unacceptable.

We in the USA are not perfect, not our country, not our society, and not our laws. But we are a free people, the most free of any in the entire world. We see government as a small part of our country; a part that must be kept in check and carefully controlled. Never again will we let the likes of Hewsane ever come as close to destroying and enslaving us like he did back before the Revolution. We are strong, brave, and free. And we intend on staying that way.

May 21st -

I got all the info pulled together now and everyone's input, at least those left alive. I will finish compiling it tonight and finish the journal entry made for Christmas Day all those years ago. It is so heartwarming to read and it brings tears to me even all these years later.

I bet it will be a long night for me but it will be worth it.

One thing I didn't touch on yet are Peace Officers. While studying history I was amazed at the size, scope, and role that the old “law enforcement officers and agencies” had. In the old days there were all kinds of cops; city cops, county cops, state cops, national cops, agency cops, school cops, traffic cops, motor vehicle cops, motorcycle cops, and every federal and state agency had cops. There were even cops dedicated to just giving out tickets for traffic law violations. Can you imagine that? Seems absurd to us today, but back then they were used as huge money-making machines taking hard-earned money from citizens and giving it to all levels of government. Unreal to even think of in this day and age.

Then there were the SWAT teams. Just before the Revolution they were using SWAT teams more than 80,000 times a year. That equates to almost 10 SWAT raids an hour! And less than 1% of those raids ever involved dangerous people. By the time the Revolution hit, police looked more like military special forces than peace officers. How in the heck did people ever let that happen?

The AUS's National Police Force came about as a direct result of that militarization of the police starting in the mid-1990's; and having accelerated post-2001. Looking back at those years it is almost incomprehensible that the populace allowed such a militant police force to be cultivated. Even small police departments had armored vehicles!! Think about it, armored vehicles for police! What were they thinking? Couldn't the average person see what was happening to them? And seriously, like I mentioned, police forces had Special Forces personnel called Special Weapons and Tactics units (SWAT). The concept was sold to the general population that they were needed for a whole host of reasons, mostly the most extreme of violent situations. But police Special Forces?

Needless to say, there were those that sounded the warnings. Authors like Whitehead and Chumly wrote books and even Newsweek exposed the militarization of the police and the growth of the police state. Politicians like Ron Paul gave speeches on the dangerous trend of police militarization. But few listened. And by 2009 it was entrenched, and it was too late. The people were subjugated by power and money-crazed politicians and controlled by power-hungry law enforcement agencies.

It is even strange to say that term. If someone was to suggest that we needed "Law Enforcement Officers" they would probably be tarred and feathered or beat to a pulp. The idea of forcing compliance through police is unimaginable.

Sure, we have Peace Officers but that is what they are for. They investigate crime and pursue criminals but that is about all. And when they pursue criminals they have the help of local "reserves" or "militias." Most counties have only a Sheriff, more populace counties might have a few deputies to help out. Village and towns have a few Peace Officers. The larger cities will have a couple dozen Peace Officers. All are elected. When they need help it is mostly the citizens themselves that jump in to assist. When more formal help is needed they tap the "reserve officers peace officers corp" (ROPOC).

But we are a society now where the individual is responsible for themselves, that includes protecting your family from harm and your property from damage. There is no need for a bunch of wolves to guard a flock of sheep.

I still have no idea how police grew to over a million strong in the old USA without people knowing that they were becoming a police state. And then when their police started carrying around military automatic rifles, grenade launchers, driving armored military vehicles, and having Special Forces units, how could the people not see it? The million+ cops became the “standing army” that the original Founding Fathers warned us about all the way back in the 1700’s. Oh well, another “never again!”

May 22nd –

I wrote and wrote last night until pretty late; but I didn’t like what I had written. It was too “choppy” when I combined all the information and details. Then I just put the electronic versions of the different accounts together and it was even more difficult to read. When I talked to my sweet wife about it she kinda got upset. She told me to write it the way I would want to read it, like a story or book.

Well, I’ve written a few papers while I was getting my education but I’ve never written a short story, let alone a book. But I will study everything I have here in front of me and then attempt to write the story of Christmas Day. I bet it takes me less than a day.

May 22nd –

Here we go...

No one slept well Christmas Eve, and not for the reasons you would expect. It would soon be Christmas Day, and people were naturally excited about that alone, but it paled in comparison to what this day really meant to the group.

Christmas Eve they had a quiet meal together then relocated the group to a sleeping spot for the night. They made sure they never slept in the same place where they ate; never a good idea to sleep where you eat, food attracts two and four-legged problems. They got settled in and Mike’s team pulled the first security watch. Small groups of people were talking about what Christmas had meant in the past and what it would mean this

Christmas. There were a lot of comparisons made to the “best gift” people had ever gotten. It was obvious to them and it seemed fitting that they would finally find safety and peace on the day Christianity celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ.

Soon groups combined and combined again until almost everyone was together and began to quietly sing Christmas songs. They kept it quiet for security purposes but even in hushed tones you could feel the spirit as if you were in the biggest cathedral with the largest choir. People were moved that night to the very core of their souls. People hugged and cried, hugged some more and told each other how much they loved each other. Expressions of gratitude for what others had done for them were shared in abundance. Some acts of kindness had been small; others had been those that saved lives in pitched battles. Everyone remembered Don, he died during one of those battles. He was a patriot, a hero, a friend and he died doing what he knew was right - defending the Constitution and his friends.

When Don’s name came up Mike suggested that a short prayer be said for Don’s wife. Many had never personally known someone who had committed suicide. Her suicide had not surprised anyone really. She had been sullen, dark, withdrawn and lost without Don. Many saw her slipping away, but no amount of kindness, understanding, or prayers had prevented the inevitable. She hung herself the day the group was originally going to leave. The departure was delayed to deal with the situation and hold a brief service and burial. She was a good woman, a tender spirit but she lost her fight with depression and hopelessness. A prayer for her comfort and progression was given Christmas Eve by a group of friends that loved her.

Finally about 10 pm the impromptu Christmas Eve celebration broke up as people withdrew to their sleeping areas. Those areas were dispersed and private; not for actual privacy purposes but to make the camp more defensible should they be attacked while they slept.

At the standard 4 am there were people beginning to move around, fire team leaders mostly, getting up before their team members; always setting the example. Mike and Tim had just finished a short get-together in the shadows about 4:30 just north of the last vehicle. Tim had shared with Mike that he felt uneasy and concerned; Mike had shared a prayer and given Tim a blessing and had asked for Tim to be blessed with comfort as they traveled. Tim gave his friend the group’s common man-hug with back slap that had become so common among the group’s male species. The

two were grateful for their deep friendship that had seen them through so much in the last couple of years. Their friendship was one of those special and rare friendships that happens only once or twice in a lifetime, sometimes never. Tim reminded Mike that Mike had promised to be diligent in his journal writing. Mike had told Tim he would try harder.

Tim walked back to Lara and Mickey in that frosty morning still thinking about the dream he had that night before and the last night. They had been vivid and as realistic as a person could imagine; it had unsettled Tim more than he would admit to anyone. Mike knew it, more like sensed it, and he had tried to comfort his good friend but Mike felt as if it was not enough.

As was usual the group got together for a briefing covering the day ahead, to go over assignments, logistics needs, and answer any questions or issues that had come up over the night. Once the regular business was completed they then moved on to the highlight of their mornings, a song and a prayer before pulling out.

The song was *Come, Come Ye Saints*. The song was sung with gusto and the small band of friends and family sung like a choir blessed by heaven. As they began singing the third verse Mike glanced over to Tim and his family; he watched as Tim struggled to get through the third verse. Tim could fool many people but not Mike. Mike knew Tim was a sensitive guy on the inside, as sensitive as they get, but always the tough guy exterior. That morning Mike noticed Tim was crying during the third verse. Mike would always remember the feeling of dread that swept over him as they sang that song that morning.

Then Lara sang *How Firm a Foundation*. She sang it alone to everyone, but she only looked at Tim. Those two were the only ones that existed at that moment in time. It was a solemn as any time any of them had ever known.

The morning prayer was given, amens were said all around. But before the small group could turn and head to their vehicles for the last part of their trip, Tim called them back for a change in the assignments. The natural rotation for the “lead” had fallen upon him this day but he asked for change that would put Roy in charge of the convoy. There were no objections raised and the change was made. As people walked to their vehicles there were three uneasy spirits in the group. Tim felt unsettled, Brian felt dread, Mike felt like he had just been kicked in the stomach. No

one else had anything in their heart or on their mind other than being in St. George by nightfall.

There weren't that many miles between the group and St. George; not a long distance by any standard and in the old days it would have meant several hours of interstate driving. Not a long time, or a long distance. But today it would be forever. They didn't yet know what would befall this group. This group of friends and family that had endured and suffered so much.

The two bikers headed out first, about a 10 minute lead. They were dressed in their snowmobile suits, each had chemical hand warmers already activated, placed against their chest and keeping them warm against the early morning chill. The chill would burn off soon enough. The days had been sunny and warm; more than pleasant for that time of year. The snow had melted off the roads and most of the group didn't even wear a jacket during the day. The nights had been very tolerable, almost pleasant for those brave souls who like it cold when they sleep. Most had followed a simple, but effective guide, always have two sleeping bags. Use a lighter felt sleeping bag for nights that are cool. Then have another sleeping bag rated in the 20 degree range for the colder nights. For nights that got down into the frigid range you simply put the felt bag inside the heavier bag. Not only did it add extra material for warmth, the trapped air between the bags acted as additional insulation as well. Suffice it to say, the group was experienced and no one was cold either during the day or while sleeping at night.

The rest of the convoy pulled out with Tim's fire team in the lead - Ops Normal.

The convoy had to take a couple back roads early on in the morning but got back on the hardtop road after about 1-½ hours of avoiding the "creepy" feeling that the biker scouts had reported. The convoy had been making decent time. The scouts had radioed back that they had to check out something up ahead. The rest of the convoy held position while the scouts did their thing.

About 30 minutes later they reported a roadblock just up ahead a mile or so from their position. They said it was a fairly light one and made it clear that the group's remaining 1-ton dually should be able to push through it. They reported there were only two people from what they could see but they were very well armed and appeared to be "professionals" or at

least looked like it. The scouts got the feeling there might be more people based on the organized look and feel to it but hadn't spotted anyone else. The scouts didn't like the "feel" to the roadblock but they couldn't report anything solid so they held their silence as they watched intently for any additional signs of danger. They didn't see any.

Tim's team had already rotated to the rear guard position having spent their time in the lead. Williams' team had the lead which meant Brian's team was the "cover" in the standard roadblock SOP. Tim called Roy over the radio that they were bumping up to take the cover position. Roy thought it unusual for Tim to do such a thing. Most would see it as insulting to Williams. But the Williams' team was the newest of the fire teams; their only experience as "cover" had been during walk-throughs, never the real thing. Roy figured Tim was just trying to make sure everything went smoothly and Roy couldn't come up with a good reason to say no to Tim. Williams was smart enough not to raise an objection to the more experienced fire team leader nor the convoy leader. If it was good enough for Tim and Roy, it was good enough for him. Williams held his team in-place as Tim pulled up next to Roy.

Tim told Roy since they only had two people to worry about at the roadblock, they felt pretty confident about the set-up. Tim was thinking what the Navajo had talked about and voiced his thoughts about the unknown roving gang seen previously on the reservation. Tim had decided to just snipe the two people at the roadblock. That would cure a problem for the Navajo as well as defeating the roadblock. Roy couldn't find anything to object to; he told Tim to be careful and turned heading back to his own truck.

Tim met up with the biker scouts and the briefing went normal, no tweaks called for, needed, or implemented. Tim's team moved forward and took up their covering position; he radioed back to Roy that he was in place. The rest of the convoy began moving forward with the crash team moving a little further ahead. Everything was going according to plan.

As the countdown reached zero Roy saw Tim drop the first guy, the sound of the heavy caliber .308 reaching him just a brief moment later. Whoever had responsibility for the second guard at the roadblock missed on their first shot. Within a second two more shots rang out, the guy died while he was glancing over at his buddy who was lying dead on the ground. Now there were two dead bad guys on the ground as the crash team

approached the roadblock. Mike called back over the radio that it didn't appear to be much of a problem and he was taking a second vehicle with him that held the rest of his fire team. Mike reported there was only one vehicle to push out of the way. He said to give him 60 seconds and then come on through. He had no longer clicked off the mic and all hell broke loose.

Unseen by the biker scouts were a concealed firing positions hidden in opposing hillsides. They opened up on Tim's team pinning them down; the gunfire was intense and well-placed. Then the bad guy's positions opened up on the crash team as well. No one could tell where all the fire was coming from. Although Tim's team was pinned down, they were returning some fire at positions, mostly unseen by the rest of the group. The crash team was taking heavy fire but kept moving forward. The key to the roadblock SOP was to keep moving, if you stopped you would lose the momentum and any element of surprise. Mike's team kept pushing on under heavy fire.

While Mike was clearing the path Tim radioed that David was hit; not too bad and Sheila was working on him but that only left Tim and the oldest Williams boy to maintain fire. But Tim and the boy were next to each other competing to see who could send the most lead down range. The boy had guts or just fed off Tim's insanity. To this day no one is sure which.

The crash team had finished clearing the path through the roadblock but took a casualty in the process; Mike took a round in the shoulder and was bleeding badly. They had to get to a safe spot to get him some attention. The crash team moved off about 200 – 250 yards on the other side of the roadblock. Both of their vehicles stopped and they started pouring fire at the bad guys while Mike gave himself some medical attention. But then the crash team came under fire; they were not completely pinned down but it was pretty intense.

The convoy had moved out, passing through the now-cleared roadblock. They made it through with lots of shattered windows, a couple injuries, mostly minor except for Mary. Mary took a round right through the shoulder; the round came through the windshield, then through her shoulder. The bullet lodged in the seat behind her. It was dug out the next day; she has it to this day. It sits on her mantle at home.

Tim's team was really taking fire, heavy concentrated fire, from both of the hidden gun positions. Roy mentioned later that he thought that the bad guys wanted to draw blood from the convoy for the damage that they had taken. The crash team was pouring it on pretty hard trying to take pressure off Tim's team. They were hoping Tim and his team could get moving and make their run through the roadblock. Then they could meet up with the rest of the convoy and get the heck out of the area alive. Roy and his driver had pulled over to join in with Mike's team; Roy is a deadly shot, one shot - one kill.

Roy could see Tim and Sheila dragging David back to their rig and loading him up with the Williams kid covering them. The kid had courage, no doubt about that. They got their truck moving and they got a running start, Sheila was driving. Tim trusted her to do anything, she was the best medic in the group and Tim had always appreciated that. But Tim had always given her a hard time about her driving, this day was no different. The whole time the truck was moving Tim was giving her a hard time until she told him to just "get in, sit down, hold on and shut up!"

Tim was hanging out the passenger window like some movie stunt man shooting up a storm as they ran the roadblock. He emptied his rifle, switched to David's and emptied that one as well. Then he reached for Sheila's AR when the first round came through the windshield and hit Tim. Tim continued to fire round after round at the gun positions as Sheila did her best navigating the last of the path her dad had cleared minutes before.

As Sheila left the last of the roadblock behind, Roy noticed that Tim's truck had dozens of holes in it and more showing up every second along with the metal "clunk - clunk" sound as each round impacted the truck's metal body.

As the gun positions gave up Tim's team as their target of choice, Mike's team came under heavy fire and was now seriously pinned down. To make matters worse, Roy could see a bunch of enemy vehicles moving from a side road upslope from the roadblock. Evidently, they had hidden their vehicles and they were now ready to pursue the group for revenge and booty. Two of the group's fire team leaders were engaging the enemy from a single position; Roy recognized that was a mistake. At least Tim would clear their position and take up another position down the road about 100 yards to establish firing positions. That would allow all those that were

pinned down with Roy and Mike a chance to retreat in a retreating leapfrog maneuver.

But Tim's team didn't continue on as they were supposed to, they stopped to help Mike's team and Roy. They pulled over, piled out, including David, who was already injured. Sheila immediately went to Tim and put a field dressing on Tim's wound and pronounced that he would live. All four of Tim's team joined the fight in less than 5 seconds of their truck stopping. That extra fire power stopped the pursuit vehicles from continuing to come out of the side road.

Roy looked over at Tim at the very instant to see Tim take a round in the thigh; it immediately was bleeding badly. Since Sheila was right there she calmly took out another field dressing, cut his BDU's to expose the wound, placed a QuickClot and then a large 6" Israeli trauma bandage over the hole. Sheila told Tim to stop getting shot because she was running low on field dressings. Tim smiled, apologized and he kept right on pouring the fire to the bad guys. Right after that Mike heard Tim starting to cuss about something.

Right then Mike took another hit and a second or two later David took another round in the same leg that was hit earlier. It was starting to look like things weren't going to turn out so well for the group. Roy made the command decision that they had to leave and leave now while they still could. Roy hollered for everyone to head for the rigs. Then he heard Tim yell out as he took another round. This one was to the gut, must have been a small caliber since Tim was still alive. Sheila immediately jumped over to him and looked at him; she was yelling at him that he hadn't followed her earlier orders about not getting shot.

Right then Tim's truck took a round and caught fire. It was right beside them and the heat was intense along with the nasty smell of burning oil and plastic. It only took a couple of seconds and the brush around the truck began to burn. Ash was falling on them. Roy looked over at Tim and Sheila to get some idea of how serious it was. Roy saw her shake her head at Tim. Roy knew what that meant for Tim. Tim was hit badly.

The bad guys' vehicles were now moving again and making their way out of the side road and winding their way through their own roadblock closing in on them. Roy got to Tim and Sheila, Sheila was crying. Roy saw Tim, then the wound. The look on Tim's face confirmed what Roy already knew.

Tim told Roy he had to get everyone out of there while there was still time. Roy watched as Tim grimaced through the pain. Tim asked Roy for any extra magazines for his AR-10 and he would cover their retreat. Roy didn't argue. Sheila cried. The others were unaware what was happening. Roy laid two extra mags on the ground in front of Tim as the others were getting into the vehicles. Everyone but Tim.

Roy said, "thanks." Sheila kissed Tim on the cheek. They left. They have hated themselves ever since. They left a man behind.

As Mike's fire team, along with Roy, made their way back to the vehicles, Tim laid there pouring one shot after another into any bad guy vehicle that was still moving. The last of the group pulled out hoping to make Kanab. Some were wounded, some bleeding severely. Sheila was crying. Roy was numb. They stopped about 600 yards away to get everyone moving together. While they heard the shots, there was little they could do as the bad guys were pouring the rounds into Tim's position. Tim's truck was burning very intensely behind him; they said it looked like some surreal scene out of a movie. But they had to leave, they had to use the time Tim had bought them, they pulled out to join the rest of the convoy that was stopped about three miles away.

The sound of gun fire slowly faded as they put distance between them and the firefight that still raged. Soon the gunfire had faded into just the sounds of their own trucks making their way back to the convoy.

Tim was never seen again.

That was the end of what anyone knew about Tim until a couple years later. About two years later a family showed up in St. George. A Native American family from the Red Mesa area of northeast Arizona (Navajo reservation). Turns out they knew a little more about what happened that Christmas Day.

The tribe had caught a guy that was part of the group that had ambushed the group that day. They had done some "convincing" that he should talk. Close proximity to fire can make a person very cooperative and talkative. The father of the Indian told authorities the story based on what the bad guy had told them. A local deputy got a hold of the information and knew of the group. He had forwarded it on to the St. George PD. They turned a copy over to Mike because someone on the PD knew him through church.

The renegade gang this guy had belonged to had been looting, robbing, raping, and killing ever since that summer when everything had fallen apart. They had primarily operated in an area known as the “four corners” area. They had ambushed so many groups traveling through that they had lost count. They were selling the women and girls to the Mexican drug cartels for serious money and in exchange for drugs. The food and other items they needed were looted from those they ambushed. As a bonus they had their pick of captured vehicles.

According to the prisoner they never expected much from our convoy when it came through. That was until they saw how the group set-up to run their roadblock. The gang leader was really, really ticked off at how the group had defeated their roadblock and had shot up their men and vehicles pretty badly in the process. Although a bunch of them had been killed or wounded, they mostly felt, “disrespected.” They headed out to take revenge on the group. And as usual they were going to kill all of them, except the women of course. But he had given instructions that the “killing” was to take a long time, and to be enjoyed while teaching this disrespectful group a lesson.

However, they had been pinned down and not able to mount a pursuit. But when they saw the group’s last two rigs pull out they were determined to catch them. That was until they ran straight into some crazy guy who was a pretty good shot. The gang’s leader realized that this group had left behind at least one person to cover their escape. It also looked like they had set a truck on fire to help block the road or reduce visibility.

The guy was well-concealed and just laid there taking out the first three vehicles by shooting the drivers. Then he just poured rifle fire into any vehicle that moved. At some point the firing stopped and their leader ordered a couple people to see what had happened.

As they approached the smoldering truck they saw this guy laid out on the ground, a bunch of empty magazines scattered all around him, brass all over the place. There was blood on the ground, a couple holes in him that they could see. His rifle was partially disassembled, the bolt carrier group had been taken out and the barrel had been stuffed with dirt. Even though his head was down and his face was in the dirt, this guy was using an empty magazine to scratch a hole in the ground, evidently trying to bury his rifle bolt.

Well, one of the bad guys just opened up on him with this automatic rifle of some kind. He just let him have it. He said the guy on the ground just jerked around for 10 seconds while they poured lead into him. He looked like a rag doll flopping around and the guy doing the shooting was laughing the whole time. When he ran out of bullets he walked up, kicked the dead guy in the head then walked away.

Then someone else searched him, going through each pocket. He didn't have anything other than a couple of knives and one strange thing that none of them ever understood. In one of the dead guy's tactical vest pouches he had an old dog biscuit.

When I was old enough to understand, Aunt Mickey told me about the dog biscuit and Max. Aunt Mickey cried. I cried. I still do when I think of Max, Mickey and Dad.

I think about that day that my Dad died alone, all by himself giving his friends time to get away. But my Dad died doing what he was supposed to do, it was his "calling." After having read his journal I don't think he would ever have had it any other way. Dad died doing what he had lived his life for. When I think about Dad that day I keep thinking about Dad's favorite scripture John 15:13.

It's late, I'm tired, I think I will write about Mom in the morning.

I wish I had known my Dad.

May 24th –

Since I used Dad's journal to record what happened to him, it is only fair that I use it to record what happened to my Mom. Dad would have wanted it kept with his journal. But I will just write about what happened, I won't do the book thing like I did yesterday. I don't think it came out too well. I never said I was an author. Maybe Dad was, but definitely not me.

After the roadblock, ambush the rest of the group made it to St. George, they were pretty shot up, but made it late that night. The reception was far more somber than anyone had planned.

Aunt Betty and Uncle Harley took Mom into their home once she got out of the hospital. Mom had been shot in the arm going through the roadblock and some glass in her eye according to what Uncle Mike had said. Mom was out of the hospital in a couple days knowing more than she had ever expected - she was pregnant. She lived with Aunt Betty and

Uncle Harley for the next year until she was able to move into an apartment of her own.

She was less than 6-weeks pregnant when she left the hospital and evidently very, very surprised. Here she was three days shy of her 54th birthday and pregnant for the first time in her life, and a recent widow on top of everything else. Shocked would probably be a better way to describe her condition. She felt alone in the world; a world turned upside down and missing the only man she had ever truly loved.

The pregnancy was very rough on her from what I was told; it is understandable at her age. She delivered me on July 20th the next year. I was a healthy baby and no problems for me; Mom didn't do so well. The pregnancy was rough on her and the delivery was even worse. She was tough and hung in there but she died Thanksgiving Day three years later. I was three years old.

My childhood was strange, I was raised by a couple hundred people it seemed. I lived with Uncle Mike for several years until I was 6. Mike's wife died about 10 years ago. I visit him every week but his health is not good, he is almost 90 now. His mind has started to go, but when he talks about the days of "the group" you can see his youth comes back and his mind is sharp again. He lives those days all over again. He and my dad were the best of friends. Uncle Mike tells me new stories even to this day about my dad.

I stayed with Uncle Mike's family until my "sister" Mickey turned 18, and then I went to live with her and her new husband. I stayed with them until I turned 16, then I joined the UDF. It was great having Mickey for a mom. She was dedicated to me then, and my whole life since. You can't even imagine. Even after she started to have kids of her own she viewed me and my happiness as a "mission" her entire life. Strange, she was more like a sister, raised me like a mom, and I called her Aunt Mickey. But many things in those days were strange.

When I turned 12 Aunt Mickey took me camping; just she and I. We camped at the location of the ambush site. She spent the whole weekend telling about my dad and what he had done for her back then. It was just she and I talking that whole weekend. She had a hard time telling me the stories, she cried so much telling them. She said that she was lucky to have had two dads in her life and I should always be proud of "our" dad. To this day we get together often; now my kids play with her grandkids. Our

families haven't missed a Christmas together since I got back from the military. It is always a special day for us. The best one was 8 years ago when we took both families back to the spot where Dad died. The only thing missing was Mom. It was a trip that we needed and we plan on making sure the kids never forget who he was and what he did that day for his family and friends.

Going back to Mom, she had left instructions that if she were to die, and I think she knew she would, she wanted to be sealed to Dad and me as soon as possible. Aunt Betty was able to do Mom's work, while my Uncle Bill was able to do Dad's work. In Mom's instructions she said that Aunt Betty should have the right to do her work. Since without Aunt Betty, Dad would have never come back to the church and Mom would have never joined the church. So Aunt Betty had the right; Mom loved her for all that she had done for her and dad.

Uncle Bill was actually related to Dad, a blood relative, his cousin, not like the hundreds of other non-blood Aunts and Uncles I seemed to have inherited from the group. So it seemed natural that a family member would do Dad's work.

That day in the temple was very special. Even though I was only 4, I remember that day like it was yesterday...

I was in the temple nursery, they had dressed me in white, and it was so cool in there. The nice older ladies treated me so well, I loved it. It had such a special feel to the place. The sense of calm and peace was overwhelming even at that age.

They took me into this really special room, I was surprised by the mirrors and everyone dressed in white. There was this very nice older man standing there at an altar, his name was John Jaynes. Aunt Betty told me he had known my Mom and Dad from the old days and they had been good friends, special friends. Brother Jaynes was going to do the sealing they said.

There were tons of people in that room, I don't know for sure how many; almost all of them were from the group. At the last minute a really old guy came into the room; he too was dressed in white. And everyone seemed really in awe of this guy; it was obvious that he was someone they all knew. I was told later who he was, but this journal is not about him. You know who he was, the group had taken care of him at one point as he was escaping Mexico.

Aunt Betty and Uncle Bill were kneeling across from each other and I got to kneel with them. Then Brother Jaynes said a whole bunch of really special things; I didn't know what they meant. I don't remember a single word. What I do remember is they made me feel very special. Everyone had their eyes closed, everyone but me, I was looking around at all the cool stuff in the room. Then I saw them.

I saw two people standing there in the room. I didn't recognize them at first, then they smiled at me and they were crying but I knew it wasn't a hurt cry or a sad cry, it was a happy cry, tears of joy. Then I just knew somehow it was my Mom and Dad.

Dad said he was proud of me and that he loved me. Mom told me she loved me very much and to grow up to be strong and to always be proud of who I was. They told me they were waiting for me and they would see me again later.

I was crying by then, I didn't know why, I was just crying. I couldn't understand why no one else was looking at them. I think Uncle Mike saw them but he never said anything to them.

Then it was like they just walked away with someone, not for sure who it was but I have my own idea now that I look back on it. I looked around and everyone was getting up from kneeling and they were looking at me. Aunt Betty hugged me and asked me why I was crying, I told her what I had just seen. She started to cry and hugged me tighter. Then everyone was crying. Uncle Mike held me on his lap for a long time and told me how lucky I was.

The older man that I mentioned came over and gave me a blessing. He said I had good genes and would do many great and wonderful things in my life. At least that is what Aunt Mickey told me he said. We sat there in the room for a long time. Brother Jaynes talked to me for a while. All I can remember is him saying my Dad fulfilled his calling. It was like a big family reunion. Not family exactly, maybe better. But a loving reunion all the same.

May 24th –

The reason I wrote all of this in my Dad's journal is pretty simple really, I am going to give it to my son Tim. I was named after my Dad and so was my first born named after my Dad. I have 7 children, not bad for 35! But Tim III will turn 12 next week.

I wrote this for him to read, and for his brothers and sisters to read as they each turn 12. I will tell him that he must read this journal before he is ordained a Deacon this Sunday. I want him to understand just how bad it got and why the United States is as good as it is today, people like my Dad, Uncle Mike and the rest of the group.

He has read about history but it is time he knows about it personally and how it affected his family. He needs to know his Grandfather and Grandmother and what they went through. How they suffered. And most of all, how the faith and sacrifices of that group, and his grandparents so many years ago made it possible for us to live in a truly free country filled with liberties and opportunities.

My son, like all of us, must know and never forget what happened to our country by those that embrace and promote evil. He must know how each of us, as individuals, can make a difference and how we can make the world better if we just try. None of us can ever forget history or we are doomed to repeat it.

We will never forget!

Chapter 8

This is a letter that I am adding into this journal. It is a letter that Uncle Mike wrote to me on my eighth birthday over thirty years ago. I think it is important and will help explain who my Dad was.

Tim,

This is a tough letter for me to write. Talking about your father has always been difficult other than bragging about all the adventures we had all those years ago. But today, on your eighth birthday I want to write to you about my friend and your Dad.

Your Dad was my best friend for years. We had met in a mutual friend's sporting goods store quite by accident, or so it seemed. We didn't hit it off as friends right away, your Dad was a little stand-offish and slow to get to know. Times were very turbulent back then, the country was falling apart at the seams and people were struggling. After about a year or so a small group of us started having Sunday dinners at your parents' house. Everyone would bring a little something, but your Dad would always be grilling something for everyone. Those were good times, very good times.

After a few years your Dad and I became the best of friends. He helped me and my family put in a lot of food storage, bought "black" guns instead of all the collectable older guns I had. He hated Glocks, loved Sigs and would always harass me about my "wheel guns" I had collected over the years. We went shooting a lot in those days, many times with the other members of the group. Even your Mom was an excellent shot with her pistol or her AR-15. Your Dad was always telling us, "Anyone can punch paper, we need to be able to fight our gun." He was relentless with that. I am glad he was.

I don't think I've ever told you, but your Dad proposed to your Mom at the gun range. A whole bunch of us were there, we all knew what was going to happen, your Mom didn't. You Dad got down on one knee and proposed to your Mom with this really beautiful ring. Your Mom couldn't really hear him very well

because she still had her hearing protection on. After a few uncomfortable seconds your Dad told her this was the part where she was supposed to say yes. Of course your Mom did. What a great day!

One day I will share with you the last time I saw your Dad. I still, to this day, can't talk about it without choking up and shedding a tear or two. For now know that your Dad died doing the only thing he could, giving to others. Towards the end, his favorite scripture that he talked about was John 15:13 "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." When I would hear him talk about it I would always think about the atonement of Jesus Christ. But now I think your Dad knew something was going to happen. He never said anything to us, but that was just Tim to keep it to himself.

Your Dad was not an easy man to get to know. Sometimes, he was not so easy to keep as a friend. Don't get me wrong, your Dad was a great guy and a better friend. But he had a way about him. Sometimes he would get so frustrated with people over little things. It took me awhile to understand that your Dad just wanted what was best for people and he thought he always knew that answer. And he was a little OCD with just a little ADD/ADHD thrown in. When someone got upset with your Dad, or was disappointed with him, or just didn't understand him, your Dad took it very personal. He hated to disappoint people but had a hard time communicating with people at times, me included. But despite his flaws he was my best friend.

The thing that I remember about your Dad the most was his heart, he loved people. It didn't always show but I know he did. Sometimes I could tell because he would go to a widow's house and work in her yard after he got off work when he was bone tired. I remember that one day before the collapse I was telling him about a friend of mine in Carlsbad, New Mexico. My friend was really worried about what he saw coming but had absolutely no money to buy any food storage. I was telling your Dad about it and next thing I know he was buying four cases of food online and having it shipped to them.

And let me tell you this, your Dad loved your Mom like nothing I've ever seen. They weren't married when I first met them. Your Dad wasn't even a member of the church then, neither was your Mom. Actually, your Mom was an atheist at the time I met her. Your Dad got re-baptized shortly after I really got to know him. You could tell he was a "believer" from the very beginning. He never tried to pressure me about knowing his church or anything but he would always share with me little things. When he shared "The Family - A Proclamation to the World" I knew those words were true and directly from God. The day your Mom got baptized was an amazing day! The big room at the chapel was full, probably 120 people there to see it. You could feel the spirit in the room that day. From that day forward you could see your Mom and Dad were joined by the spirit, believing in and being led by God.

I can't begin to tell you how important your Dad was to our group. He had been storing and saving food, gear, equipment, clothes, and everything else you can imagine. He had been doing that for years. I can only guess that it was tens of thousands of dollars he spent preparing for the day the country would collapse. When we finally started to haul all of the stuff to the ranch we just couldn't believe it, he just kept loading box after box into the trucks. But let me tell you, all of that gear and food saved our bacon more than once.

The funniest thing the day we were loading the food was his Pepsi. He had case after case after case of Pepsi stored. And I am ever so grateful that he did! Your Dad, the nice guy that he was, would be a bear if he didn't have a Pepsi in the morning. Yeah, not the healthiest thing in the world to drink but it kept your Dad sane.

When we were on the way to St. George your Dad talked to me again about writing in a journal. I know he was pretty faithful about it. He was really insistent that I did it. I just kept saying, "yes" to get him to shut up. But I am glad he kept on me, I have been writing in my journal since just before we left the ranch. Maybe one day I will share it with you when you are an adult. So

many things happened to us after we got to St. George, you might want to hear it from someone who lived through it.

I don't want to ramble on about your Dad. But I want to tell you one last thing. My daughter lived that day because of your Dad. She later gave me a whole bunch of grandkids. The first boy she had was named Tim, you know him as your cousin. Their second girl was named Lisa after your Mom. Your Mom died a month before my daughter's second girl. I truly feel that had your Dad not held the line at the roadblock that day, many of us, maybe all of us, would have died at the hands of those bad guys. But my family lives, I have grandchildren and I have lived a good life since that day. I owe it all to your Dad.

Tim, you come from great parents, parents that are watching over you. The day they were married by proxy in the temple and when you were sealed to them was an amazing day. I know they were there that day. I couldn't see them, but I could feel their presence. I know they were happy and that they love you. I wish you could have known your Dad. Your Dad was one of the best men I have ever known, he laid his life down for family. We are all family. You can be proud of the man your Dad was. I am proud to call him "friend."

Sincerely,
Uncle Mike

Chapter 9

This is a letter that I am adding into this journal. It is a letter that My Mom wrote to me on my eighth birthday over thirty years ago. This should help you to know who my Mom and my Dad were.

My Dearest TJ (Tim Jr.),

That's what I call you, TJ. My dear son, you have no idea how sad it makes me to know I won't be there with my arms around you when you read this letter. I will not have seen you grow up, with my mortal eyes, into the fine young man that I'm very sure you are today, but I want you to know that I'm not far away. You may not be able to see me, but I am watching over you and I'm very proud of you.

I was so happy to find out that I was having a child, something I didn't think would ever happen. Life was very difficult, then. You were a ray of hope for me in a very dark world – you were my miracle child and my comfort after losing your father. Your father gave his life to protect the rest of us and give us a chance to escape from those who wanted to kill us. He was such a good man – not perfect, but he loved me and was so very good to me. Even though it cost him dearly to do so, he did his very best to protect me and the rest of those with whom we lived. He always felt so inadequate but he was brave and willing to do what needed to be done. I love him so very much. He is also watching over you, I know, and I can look into your future and say with assurance that we are both so very proud of you.

I don't know what stories others have told you about your father. I truly wish you could have known him. Even as a three-year-old, you remind me of him.

I remember that our being sealed in the temple was so important to your father that he left one night to go back to our house to get the paperwork for going to the temple. He had buried it in the back yard of our house. I was furious at him for risking his life to get some papers, but if he hadn't done that, he wouldn't have found Mickey. Your father was led by the Spirit

to do many things, though I don't think he always recognized it. He was very hard on himself because of the mistakes he had made and the fact that he had to take lives to defend us and rescue others. It really bothered him. I'm afraid he thought of himself like King David in the Old Testament...a good man who had made too many mistakes. But, to be honest, I always thought of him like Captain Moroni and Helaman in the Book of Mormon. They were warriors like your father, but they did not delight in the shedding of blood and neither did your father. They only wanted their families to live in peace. That's what your father wanted.

He was so good hearted and kind to those who were hurt by evil men. He wanted children to know less about death and more about joy and laughter and to be able to grow up and live a life of freedom from want and violence and fear. Mickey was like a daughter to us and especially to your father, who had lost contact with his children from his first marriage. He taught Mickey to shoot and hunt and he didn't even mind watching his beloved dogs switch their allegiance to Mickey. He knew she needed those dogs and he was glad that they were of some comfort to her. Later, your father rescued some girls from a gang and one of them turned out to be Mickey's sister. You see, he was often led by the Holy Ghost to do things that helped others.

Your father rescued many people. He could have led us to Utah early on, but instead he helped people who were trying to escape from the violent gangs that were taking over Texas and the rest of the Southwest. He helped one of the leaders of the Church to escape capture and return to Utah. I imagine one day you will probably meet him. You will be surprised at who he is. He helped families and every member of our group at one time or another. They all loved him, though I don't think he understood how much or why. They could see what a good man he was, even if he couldn't. And they respected him for his willingness to defend them to the death.

Your father was the branch president of our little group and he took his responsibility very seriously. I remember he called for a special fast, one week to ask the Lord to give us the

guidance we needed. It was a very spiritual experience and it strengthened all of us, but I think he was disappointed in himself when he got up at the end of our testimony meeting and confessed that he'd not received any kind of special guidance. He really was very hard on himself. But less than a week later we got the call from Salt Lake telling us it was time to head home to Utah. I do believe that this was an answer to all of our prayers, but especially your father's prayers. I think the Lord was pleased with how your father turned his life around and how humbly he returned to the straight and narrow path.

I remember the night before we left our little refuge. He was so happy and hopeful. I remember he hugged Mickey and me for the longest time – like he couldn't get enough of us. He was happier than I think I'd ever seen him. He really did have a very tender side – very loving. But you would never know it if you didn't know him. He always tried to be a tough guy.

The day before we arrived in St. George he seemed anxious and I assumed that it was because we were so close to St. George, just one day away. He asked Roy to take charge of the convoy, freeing him up for defense. His fire team was in the lead that day. They took most of the damage and were fired on the most. His decisions saved the group, but he didn't make it out. We didn't know exactly what had happened for a long time afterwards, but he was valiant to the end. He willingly gave his life to give the rest of us a chance to escape. It was the hardest thing I ever had to do – listening to his team tell of his courage and sacrifice for them and for me, and for you, even though he didn't know I was pregnant.

Now I understand that your father had dreams about you, but he didn't understand them. He saw Betty and your Uncle Bill in the temple with you there and with us there, but it didn't make any sense to him. He had assumed that we would make it to St. George together and he and I would be sealed in the temple. Life doesn't always work out the way we think it will, but it doesn't matter. It only matters that we put our trust in the Lord and follow Him. Your father did that. He was a good man, a

man who loved the Lord and tried his very best to be obedient and do the will of the Lord.

As I write this, I hope very much that life is good for you and that you are surrounded by people who love you and take good care of you. I hope things have improved in our country so you are not in fear for your life. Even if there is still fighting going on, remember that it will only be for a short time. The life of this corrupt world is quickly coming to a close and you will find that life after the Lord comes, again, in glory will be so wonderful that it will help you forget the hard times.

I've saved your father's journal, but I've given instructions that you are not to read it until you are 12 years old. My hope is that you will come to know your father better and learn to love him as I do. I also hope you stay close to Mickey. She is a wonderful young woman and will always be a part of our family.

Today is your 8th birthday. I hope very much that you are planning to be baptized today, or very soon. The main thing I want you to know at this time is that I have a testimony of Jesus Christ – He is my Savior, my Rock and Redeemer, my Lord and my King. He loves each one of us. He loves you so much that He died for you, making it possible for you and me and your father and all those who accept Him to return to our Heavenly Father, to live forever in a perfect world. Your father taught me the gospel. His example helped me to find my testimony of the Lord.

I also know that the Book of Mormon is God's revealed word – a record of a people who were guided by the Lord to come to the Americas to escape a terrible war in Israel. I know that the priesthood has been restored to the earth. I've seen miraculous healings and received many blessings through the priesthood. In a few years, you will be old enough to be ordained a Deacon. This is a privilege and I pray that you will understand how important a step it is. To bear the priesthood of God is to represent Him on earth.

I should have gone to the temple after arriving in St. George. I should have been sealed to your father so you would be born under the covenant. This was very important to your father – to

have his family sealed to him, but I've been so sick that it wasn't possible. I asked Betty to promise me that they would have your father and I sealed, and you sealed to us as soon as possible after I'm gone to be with him. This will make us a *family forever*, even though we can't be together now. There will come a day when we will be together. As your mother, as one who loves you more than life, I pray that you know or will come to know the Lord. I urge you to pray often and read the scriptures. I urge you to take upon you the name of Christ and become His disciple. You may not understand what that means right now, but you will as you grow up.

Life is worth living, life is so precious, even in hard times, but life will soon be so much better than it has been. The time is coming when the Saints will build the City of Zion. The Lord will come to His temple there and it will be glorious. There will be peace in this land and there will be no hunger or pain or sorrow. You will see days of joy and happiness. Have faith, my son. Do the best you can each day and look to the future for the fulfillment of all the wonderful prophecies from all the ages. You will see it all, and you will be glad. Then, one day, we will be together, again.

With all the love a mother could have for her son, I bless you with faith and hope and love. We'll be watching over you. Stay strong and be a blessing to others...

Love,
Your Mother

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Author's Endnote

Thank you for reading Book #2 in this series. This book comes from my heart and is an act of passion for emergency preparedness. Tim is a fictional character but as you can tell there is probably a lot of myself in him. Or at least the man I wish I was.

I hope you can take this book and use it to better prepare for the day ahead. America is in deep trouble. Our country is now in debt enough that there is no actual way we can ever pay the trillions of dollars that we owe. The country is also sharply divided into alienated groups. There is the ruling class verses everyone else. There are the super-rich verses everyone else. There are the 48% that pay taxes verses the 52% that get government handouts. But most of all there are two main groups of people in America that want a vastly different future. There are the Libertarians, Constitutionlists and some conservatives who want limited government to ensure maximum freedom and liberty. Then you have the Liberals, Progressives, and neo-conservatives (a.k.a. RHINOs) who are all statist. Those people want big government, lots of regulations, laws and other intrusions into daily life until all true freedom and liberty is squeezed out of people.

America is losing the battle to remain a Constitutional Republic. America is becoming an authoritarian police state. I feel there is no turning it around, that America is locked into its course with no chance of liberty and freedom surviving. I hope this book will help motivate you to prepare for that day when America finally collapses and the last vestiges of freedom and liberty vanish.

AHTrimble.com is my website that I publish daily articles about emergency preparedness and current events. I would like to see you visit the website and take advantage of the resources it has to offer.

Thank you again for sharing your valuable time with me. I hope you enjoyed my story.