***WHAT YOU CAN DO* NOW *ABOUT THE THREAT OF AN EMP ATTACK?***

Any who are reading this who live along the Southern coast or in “Tornado Alley,” already know the basics.

***Every*** American should consider doing the same in case we are ever hit by an EMP attack.

Safe water and food are your starting point. If you already buy bottled water, save the bottles and recycle them. Simple enough, just refill with filtered water, seal, and put in the basement or a closet so that you have at least a week’s worth on hand, though the more you have stockpiled the better off you are. Canned food is great, just remember to check expiration dates, I tend to buy an extra few cans of soup etc. now whenever I am in the market. If you have friends who are Mormons, ask them, they’re the experts on what to buy and how to safely store it! Do not use recycled milk containers, unless you sterilize them, otherwise you’ll have problems.

The longer you stock pile for, the better off you will be, though even a week or two of supplies could be crucial. Again, this is something anyone in a hurricane, earthquake, or tornado zone is already aware of.

You can also reference numerous websites for survival packages. Just be aware that much of it is overpriced and with a little research and effort you can make your own at a fraction of the cost.

***Medication.*** The usual first aid kit supplies for common injuries. Infection and infectious diseases which the day before an EMP were trivial concerns now could be deadly. Downloading from your computer NOW and learning basic survival treatment skills is essential. There are numerous websites devoted to what I would call the “Boy Scout Level” of First Aid training we should all be familiar with. For any of us on necessary medications, the collapse of a national infrastructure could mean that you might be cut off for weeks at absolute best, most likely far longer, maybe forever.

If you have life threatening concerns, NEVER let your med supply drop down to only a day or two before refilling. If there is a way for you to safely and legally have a supply of several months on hand of crucial medication, do so now. It just might buy the time needed for survival.

***Climate survival.*** This is a tough one. I live in a rural community, have the wood stove and wood supply in place and extra propane tanks for cooking. I realize that is impossible for most, especially in urban environments. Safety is a key thing here with heat sources such as kerosene space heaters. Study up on it before preparing. A darn good investment is Coleman or propane fueled lamps, along with candles and old fashion kerosene lamps. The more on hand, the better.

***Other survival needs.*** Sanitation produces from antibacterial soap, to knowing how to set up a portable toilet with household items, to, embarrassing as it might be for this guy to talk about, feminine products. . . (you don’t want to be facing some of the issues your great grandmothers dealt with, including possible infections). Again, the more you stockpile the better.

***You are on your own***. . .for weeks, maybe months. Those of you living in Louisiana, Mississippi and coastal Texas know what I mean. Don’t count on the government to come to your rescue in a post EMP America. Consider yourself on your own from “one second after,” the event. Those who realize that now have the greatest chance of survival.

***Personal Security.*** This is a tough one to discuss. In 1999 I kind of chuckled at some friends who were convinced Y2K was going to wipe us out and I think were slightly disappointed when it did not. I am not some right wing gun fanatic who sees conspiracies lurking around every corner, but I do take personal security seriously. This is a personal choice you will have to make on your own, I can’t advise other than to say this:

There is a percentage of our population who will view a post EMP world as a paradise, where their system of survival, their personal greed, their willingness to use any means possible to survive will come to the fore. Yes, it is a plot point of the novel, but it is also a harsh reality. There are places in this world, at this very moment, where someone would kill you for a can of food. Someday, that could be America.

If you do not own a gun but should decide to do so now, please get the proper training. I was fortunate in that my father was a firearms instructor during WWII and my training from him was the best, a training I have passed on to my daughter. Always remember the valid statistics that a weapon in your house is an increased danger to you and your family, especially without proper training of all family members and not just yourself, but on the other side, it might be the crucial factor of survival in a post EMP world. If you are unfamiliar with firearms but decide to purchase one, talk to the experts, you will find your local police are great guys to point you in the proper and safe direction. I have a permit to carry a concealed weapon. I know that in some areas you can not obtain that. If you can, the training to get the permit is superb and again crucial to your own safety and that of your family and does ensure that your having a loaded weapon on you is legal.

If you live in a community or on a street where neighbors know and trust each other, do not hesitate to talk about “what if this happens? What do we do?” A few hours conversation before hand might be the crucial difference between your living and dying. Who on your street understands personal security and can offer solid advice? Who is the person who is the gifted “tinker” who might get some things running again? Who has special needs that others can help out with? Who can you trust? And sadly, who can you not trust? It is better to know now rather than later. A street or neighborhood plan can make all the difference in who lives and who dies.

***Personal Health.*** Do your own personal assessment now. Realize you will be living in a world without automobiles, without electricity, without infrastructure or any kind of immediate medical aid. Are you fit enough to survive? If not, take a serious look at this for your own sake and that of your family. Friends of mine who read this will shake their heads because I am in a constant struggle against smoking. Could I walk ten miles hauling a twenty pound sack of rice? Frankly I have to get my act together as should all of us.

***Plan as a Family.*** Think about how far you commute every day. How far away is your child’s school? It might be daunting when you realize it. If we are hit by an EMP, you might have to walk home. How does your child get home? Do you have an elderly parent living close by? How do you pull your family unit back together and then survive? Talk about it now and lay out plans. . . .”I will walk from my office and pick up our youngest at her elementary school on the way back, while you go to grandma’s place and get ready to move her. . .” is crucial now, rather than trying to figure it out when all communications are down. Most of all, everyone should be able to recognize, IMMEDIATELY, if we have been hit by an EMP. The signs are obvious. Power goes off, but beyond that nearly all cars will no longer start, your cellular service is dead, there is a complete blackout. Know the signs and react. He who reacts swiftly and logically stands a far better chance of survival then those who will wait for “them” or “the government” to sort it out.

This might seem off the wall but I’m a dog person. OK, I even lean towards PETA on some issues. In a harsh post EMP world, your dog might help you survive, it is a point in the novel that when writing it, struck me one night. While doing the first draft of the book my yellow lab came out and assumed his usual spot. . .curled up by my feet and I suddenly realized. . .”what happens to him?” How will he and my other dogs survive? Keeping several months of food for them on hand might save you from a very horrible choice. If nothing else on this page motivates you, but a love of your pet or companion hits close to home and starts you thinking about the broader issues here, then let it.

***Communications.*** A simple thing called a “Faraday Cage” is nearly a fool proof protector of electronics from an EMP. You can find the plans on line and purchase the material to make one for just a few dollars from any hardware store. Make sure it is properly grounded. If you then buy a couple of simple hand held two way radios, plus a good short wave radio and place them inside the Faraday Cage (make sure they rest on a non conductive surface such as a ceramic bowl) they will survive even the worst EMP hit. In your family survival kit be certain you have plenty of batteries to support them since you might be relying on these things for months. You now have communications with your family, or neighbors and news from the outside world.

If you are one of those types who is a “handy-person” think further. You have an emergency generator. Don’t plug it in to your home because the “surge” will blow it out. Instead, disassemble any delicate components and put them in the Faraday cage. If a regular emergency such as power failure due to a storm happens, you can always pull them out, reinstall and you’ll have power anyhow. In the event of an EMP, that generator might be a life saver. What about an old moped, or even extra parts for an old car? The few real life experiences of EMP, dating from nuclear tests in 1962 showed that even then, car ignition systems burned out. If you know how to repair these components, get the parts now and just store them away. You might be the only person driving in your community the day after we are hit.

**LOCAL ACTION AND POLITICAL ACTION**

So far, the national government reaction in relationship to EMP is abysmal. One of the few shining lights is Congressman Roscoe Bartlett (Republican—Frederick, MD), who headed up a Congressional Committee on EMP. He too believes this is our number one threat. If you read this and agree, send an email letting him know of your appreciation and support, no matter where you live. Check out his testimony on line by just simply going into Thomas.gov, then contact your own Congressional representative. In some way’s government is very simple. . .the squeaking wheel gets the oil. Right now, concern about EMP has no “constituency.” You and I could name a hundred “causes” which on a daily basis get national attention and national funding, and which pose a threat to only a very few in our society as compared to over 300 million Americans. If over a span of several months a local Congressional representative starts getting letters, emails and phone calls saying “hey I’m concerned about the threat of EMP, you should talk to Roscoe Bartlett,” believe me, they really do check. Remember they need your votes come 2010. All Congressman Bartlett needs is the support of a couple of dozen Congressmen and women from both sides of the aisle and his hope to get this issue off center, and out of committee, and into the reality of planning and funding on a national level will happen.

***Talk Radio.*** What a powerful vehicle for getting out the message. I know because I hosted my own show for a couple of years. My radio show was once a week and just a fun show about history. It amazed me how sometimes months later I’d be talking to someone in a store and a stranger would come up, ask if I was “the history guy,” and then want to talk about some issue I had raised. Nearly every community has a well known talk show host. Call in. Talk about this issue and voice your concern. Chances are your host might not know about it, but your voice will be heard. This is not some advertising on my part but tell them to read my book and darn it, the hell with the royalties, get it out of the library if need be or find it in a used book store. Tell folks to go on line, get to this site, then go to the links and study up on the subject. Your one call might trigger dozens more and, in the end, action.

***Local Action.*** In researching for this book it would have been impossible to pull it together without the help of a lot of people. The scene in the novel set in the nursing home came out of direct experience when my community was hit by a hurricane, my father was in a nursing home and I was asked to come in and help out because most of the nurses could not get in due to the storm. In fact that night was one of the major triggers for this novel, because I knew help in terms of emergency water, medical supplies etc., were on their way thanks to the fact that a great local talk show host stayed on the air all night giving us updates. But I did wonder. . .suppose this had been an EMP instead and no outside help with water, food, and medications would be here for weeks, months, maybe never?

I’ve interviewed a number of local law enforcement officials for this book. A couple were caught off guard by the topic and I had to bring them up to speed. Several though, the moment I mentioned EMP all but grabbed me, ready to exclaim “thank God someone else is thinking about this,” and the conversation would then go on for hours, both of us expressing our worst fears. In the book I acknowledge Jack Staggs, my local police chief. My hat is off to him again, he is a guy who on a local level is already thinking about EMP and planning for it.

If you know a local police official, first responder, your mayor, whomever, talk with them. You might be surprised that they too are deeply concerned. They will tell you, and this is frightening, that there has been almost zero preparation and training for this kind of threat. Hundreds upon hundreds of hours of training and funding have been allocated on your local level since 9/11 on the “standard” scenarios of terrorist hitting a local school, a chemical or bio attack, a “dirty bomb” even a suitcase nuclear device being detonated, but nothing on EMP.

If local officials know that their citizens are concerned, they will definitely respond. A minimal investment of a few thousand dollars at a local level could prepare your first responders with communications equipment properly stock piled in EMP proof storage areas, an operational plan as to what to do in those crucial first hours after an attack, and how every “first responder” should recognize an EMP strike and then how to report in and start organizing your community to survive.

There is a lot more than can be said on this topic. This is only cracking the door open for you to think, talk, and even reply on this site if you should wish to. In closing consider this story from history. At around 7:00 AM on the morning of December 7, 1941, a new technology, radar, was being used atop a mountain peak on the northern tip of the island of Oahu. The two men manning the radar unit started to pick up a huge inbound “blip.” Their shift was just about over, it was a Sunday morning, a day on the beach beckoned but they decided to call in to headquarters with a report. The officer in charge there. . .well God save and forgive him. . . he shrugged and told them not to worry about it, it was most likely some of our own planes anyhow, so close up their unit and call it a day. They did as ordered. Fifty minutes of warning time was lost. How different history might have been if that officer had reacted, said the hell with “channels” and called for a full alert.

Consider this moment, right now as you read this. Is it 7:00 AM on the morning of December 7th yet again? If you should decide to go to alert now, rather than wait for others to do so. . .what might that mean for you, your family and neighbors, your community. . .and our nation?