

Podcast #221 Transcription – 5 “Convoy Of Death” Bug-Out Lessons

- Jeff Anderson: Hey everyone, it is Jeff from Modern Combat and Survival, welcome to podcast episode number 221. And this week's broadcast really goes out with a heavy heart because I've been seeing these horrific stories that have been coming out of California's Campfire tragedy which is now the deadliest wildfire in California's history. At the time of this recording, there are over 60 dead and still over 600 people missing. But the worst part for me as a survivalist and a protector of my own family is listening to why people die and knowing that they didn't have to die if they were prepared.
- Jeff Anderson: And I wanna make sure this never happens to you and I have five critical lessons learned that I wanna share with you in this episode as well as an opportunity for some additional free training I tell you about at the end of today's show. And now, let's get started.
- Jeff Anderson: Like you, if you've been following the news like I have, I've seen and I read a lot of stories that are coming out of that campfire tragedy over the past several days in California but one in particular really broke my heart and I think it really shows you, our listeners, not only how critical it is to prepare now for any kind of a disaster but also the biggest mistakes that people make that cause their own death needlessly. And I wanna share that story with you now and then give you the lessons. And again, stay tuned till the end of the broadcast because there is gonna be another free workshop that's gonna be happening this week that I wanna tell you about and I wanna make sure you get in it. Okay?
- Jeff Anderson: All right, so let me tell you this story. So it really happened at the very beginning of the wildfire which began on Thursday, November 8th. And there is a man, Greg Woodcox who was with his dogs, he was in his jeep, he was in Paradise, California which is where the fire started and he was with this dogs, he has two little scrappy dogs. And he was in a local park when he smelled smoke. And he investigated it and he saw the fire, he spotted the fire, he saw it coming and he responded quickly. He jumped in his jeep and instead of just hightailing it out of the woods and getting away from the fire, he went ahead and made sure that other people knew what was coming. He didn't want them to get trapped by the fire also.
- Jeff Anderson: So he started knocking on doors to warn people about the danger. Now, he has friends in this area, this is the area that he lives in and one of his friends is a paraplegic, unable to take care of himself and he lives with his mother who is an elderly woman. And he went ahead and knocked on their door and told them that they need to be ready to leave immediately. Now, in the meantime, while they were getting ready, he went on to knock on other doors in the area, just to make sure that people knew and to be able to get out. And that he was going to

leading a convoy out of there and that they needed to be ready right away, they needed to grab their stuff and go.

Jeff Anderson: When he went back to go and get his friend, so eventually everybody got together and there was a convoy of five vehicles that left. But by the time that he returned to his friend to go pick up his paraplegic friend and his mother, that fire was blocking one of the directions that they had out of the area that they live in. Now this is kind of back in the wood sort of area, it's not in a major residential area that they were in, there were very few avenues out of where they live and the fire had already moved to block one of those paths. So they were down to one left.

Jeff Anderson: So Woodcox got in his vehicle and he'd led the caravan of four other vehicles behind him, trying to get out of the hillside neighborhood that they were on. Now, they had been going along the road with the fire around them when they reached a metal gate on the road. Now, obviously, this was a backwards road that went to somebody else's land that, when you have land, what do you do? You put up gates, right? You put up fences. Well, on their way in escaping the fire, they went to this metal gate and Woodcox immediately got out of the vehicle and tried to figure out how to get past the gate, he was trying to figure out how to unlock it, should he just charge through it. He was trying to figure out, how do I breach this obstacle here?

Jeff Anderson: Now, at that time, when he was there at the gate, he turned around and the fire had already moved up to where all of the other vehicles were and had started to consume the vehicles that he was leading out of the fire. Now, he didn't even have time, there was no place for him to go, he was surrounded by flames, his dogs were in the back of his jeep and there was nothing for him to do. He climbed over the metal gate and ran as fast as he could, down the hill and what's odd is that he was running after a fox that was also trying to escape the fire, right? So he runs down the hill and at the bottom of the hill is a stream and he managed to jump into the stream, basically get himself inside of the water, it wasn't enough to actually escape the forest fire itself. In fact, the flames for about 45 minutes, were burning all around him, burning his clothes, burning his back as he was trying to stay in the water and get the fire to basically just not kill him.

Jeff Anderson: Eventually, the fire did pass over. Like I said, it took about 45 minutes for the fire to pass over him and when it was all done, he got up, everything was smoldering around him but he was out of the major threat that he was facing which were those flames. He went back to the convoy of vehicles and he did find that his jeep had all the plastic ... you know, detailing around it and everything was melted. Ironically or fortunately, his dogs in the back of his jeep were still alive. However, all of the vehicles behind his jeep were all charred remains.

Jeff Anderson: In fact, he did a video, he took out his phone and did a video of what he came back to in hopes to show other people just how important it is to be able to

prepare these things. And it's really horrific. I mean, think about it, his friend is there and in fact, I'm not sure how long the video will be up because it is mature topic and it is very graphic material. He does go over to where the vehicles are and one person did try to get out of the vehicle and run, was engulfed in the flames and is charred remains on the ground. His friend, his paraplegic friend and his friend's mother are both still inside of their vehicle and basically are charred skeletons. I'll go ahead and put the video on, as long as they're gonna have it up, on to our website where this podcast is. So if you wanna go check it out, you can see it there. Just again, just know that it is graphic material in what you're going to see.

Jeff Anderson: But, the whole point is of that video and why it was done wasn't for entertainment purposes. It was to show people just how deadly these things can become and how quickly they can become deadly. So, I'll go ahead and put that up there. But everybody was dead that he went back to. And there are some critical lessons to be learned from all of this, right? Actually from the entire tragedy that's happening out there. But, I wanted to share five quick ones with you right now that, I think, are really important lessons learned that a lot of people just do not even know about or pay attention to. And I wanna make sure that this does not happen to you. Okay?

Jeff Anderson: So lesson number one is emergency preparedness. People know that term. Well, emergency preparedness is about being prepared. It's about being prepared and being prepared is you're prepared ahead of time. And it takes time to prepare. It takes time to get your gear together, your plan together, your response plan together. It takes time to do all of that. So if you are a procrastinator or if you've never really thought that you need to worry about survival type things because you're never gonna get lost in the woods and you don't live in area that has hurricanes, well, wildfires are a good example. Of course, they happen very often on the West Coast, right?

Jeff Anderson: But, they can happen anywhere. I live in Texas, we've had deadly wildfires around the area that I live. So any disaster can happen anywhere. So you need to be prepared. So, if you are one of those procrastinators out there, just understand that it does take time. And for God's sakes, if you have not started, if you keep saying, "Yeah, that's right, I need to put together a survival kit. Yeah, I really should have a bug out bag, yeah, we really should keep the gas tank filled, not let it get below a quarter of a tank." If you've been saying, "We should, we should, we should," for God's sake, people, the time is now to get past the I should.

Jeff Anderson: Start doing something. Just start making incremental changes. I know, a lot of people get overwhelmed and it's like, "Oh, there's so many things to prepare for, I don't know where to get started or there's just so much." The journey of 1,000 miles begins with one step. One step. And I'm gonna tell you what that one step in some training that's going on this week but again, I'm gonna tell you about it at the end of this broadcast. But I like to make things super simple for

people. All right? Super simple. I've got some additional trainings gonna be coming up to make that a reality, okay?

Jeff Anderson: But, realize that the time to prepare is not when disaster's already at your front door. Now, this is especially true if you have mobility problems. Now, in our New World Patriot Alliance, I do one on one coaching with our members and I can't tell you how many times I talk with people about ... They might call me about firearms training or self defense training and then, all of a sudden, I'll throw a zinger at the end, like, "Let me ask you, how prepared are you for ... You know, you live in Florida, let's say, how prepared are you for a hurricane?"

Jeff Anderson: Well, Florida is not a really good example because people are really getting the clue in Florida now, right? But let's say South Carolina which doesn't always get hit. And you know, people always say, "Yeah, yeah, I know, I've been meaning to do that, I've been talking with the wife and we need to start putting just something simple together." Well, I can tell you that most plans stay in that we should mode and I can tell you that one of the biggest reasons why people tell me they haven't started it is, "Well, what am I gonna do? I have mobility problems, I'm disabled, I have an elderly parent that I take care of." It doesn't matter.

Jeff Anderson: In fact, if you have mobility problems, if you're older, all the more reason for you to prepared to evacuate and start doing it now. And a lot of people think that, "Well, I'm not gonna evacuate because being in my home is the safest place to be." Well, as we can see, if there's a wildfire headed your way, no it's not the safest place to be.

Jeff Anderson: So unfortunately, not everybody is ready. Right? Which brings me to number lesson number two here because what I didn't tell in the story that when Woodcox went around, knocking on doors saying, "Hey, grab some stuff, get in your vehicle right now, we're gonna convoy out of here," one of the people in the convoy wasn't ready to leave because she had to put her makeup on. I'm gonna give that a few seconds for that to sink in right there for you, okay? She had to put her makeup on. Now, some of you may have heard me talk about this before but cognitive dissonance is something that I think is really ... It's one of the worst mistakes you can make from any, it doesn't matter what it is, whether it's a natural disaster, whether it's a robbery in a parking lot, it doesn't matter what it is.

Jeff Anderson: Cognitive dissonance, if you don't know, is when people are so ingrained in their own beliefs or philosophies that they don't really either recognize or care when there's evidence to the contrary. So, a very common example of that is smoking. We know smoking causes cancer, right? Most of us have had ... My father died of lung cancer when I was 11 years old, he was 36 years old and you know, a two pack a day smoker died of lung cancer. My grandfather smoked cigarettes since he was like four and lived to be 92 years old.

Jeff Anderson: So, we know that it does cause cancer, smoking does cause cancer. But, how many people say, "Well, yeah, but my grandfather lived to 92 and he smokes since he was four years old, right?" Well, yeah, some people do. And some people die at 36 and leave behind an 11 year old son who misses his dad for the rest of his life, right? So the whole thing is that even when there's evidence to the contrary, people still, they find justification for their own beliefs.

Jeff Anderson: And the biggest thing that where I see this come in in consulting with people when it comes to survival is, "Oh, I'm sure everything will be fine. Oh, that's never gonna happen here. Oh, we'll be okay. Oh, the government will take care of us. Oh, the first responders will help us. Oh, I can cross that stream," ... You know that I'm in Texas, we have flash floods, "Oh, it looks like it's not quite deep enough, I can still cross the road." And all of a sudden you're turned over, upside down in the stream because you got washed away and your family is dead.

Jeff Anderson: So I go over a lot of these stories actually in our workshop, also, talk with you about it at the end of the show but I give some really illustrative stories about that a lot because I want to wake people up out of their cognitive dissonance. So this woman who got their door knocked on and said, "Hey, you need to get out," is like, "Oh, okay, yes, I'm going to evacuate but I'm sure we have time, I'm sure everything will be fine, I'm sure we'll be able to get out okay, let me go just put on a quick makeup, let me just go ahead and do that, right?"

Jeff Anderson: No, people. Seconds count. Seconds count. Think about getting to that gate, right? What if they'd just had five more minutes before they get engulfed in flames? Would Woodcox have been able to breach the gate? Possibly, right? It would have given them more time. There's no telling what was up ahead in the road that they wouldn't be able to get to. So, you wanna make sure that you are understanding that bad things do happen to good people and the worst can happen to you. So realize that seconds count.

Jeff Anderson: Lesson number three, other reasons why people didn't leave were that they were sticking around, there were two things actually that they were trying to get together. I wonder if you can figure out what they are. Those of you who have been in my workshop, you know, you people know. But it's documents and photo albums. So people run around, trying to put together, where did we put the marriage certificate, where did we put the kids' birth certificate? All of that stuff. Those are the most important things, right? They're not even grabbing food, especially in this type of a situation, they know wherever they're going, it's a localized disaster, they're gonna be able to get food somewhere.

Jeff Anderson: So they're looking for the things that are really important like photo albums and documents. Well, let me tell you folks, both can be put on an SD card. An SD card, if you haven't seen it, these little one inch by a half inch or so, it's a secured digital card, this is what the SD stands for. It's a little tiny card, you put them inside of cameras, they are these little chips, right? But they can store a massive amount of data on there. They can store film on there so you can have

all of your home movies or you can have all of your ... And/or. You could have all of your photographs, scanned, put on that little tiny SD card. You can have that with you. And that way, you've got it all ready, it's in your survival kit, it's ready to go, you grab it and you go.

Jeff Anderson: So, make sure that ... And there are services out there now that will do all of this for you. If you don't, then just find some 15 year old kid with a computer that wants an extra job of scanning all of your photos and putting them into folders inside of the SD card and you've got them there, okay? All right. That was lesson number three.

Jeff Anderson: Lesson number four is going back to when they chose to evacuate. So by the time they got on the road, one of their ways was already blocked out of their location which only gave them one other route. Now I can tell you that I've seen this also. For those of you that don't know, a few years ago, my tiny little Texas town experienced a 500 year flood and it killed a dozen people, local people. To me, it came in the middle of the night without probably any warning and there was another situation where our city manager was running around, people were running around, knocking on doors, trying to warn people at 2 o'clock in the morning that there is a massive wall of water, almost literally, a wall of water headed toward our town and you need to get out of your home now.

Jeff Anderson: I share some of those stories in our workshop but one of my friends who lives down near the river where this was happening, there is only road in and out of where they live. It goes right by their house but they live in a dip and then the road goes up on the left and it goes up on the right. And then on the other side of those ups is another down. So, one of those was more down than the other so trying to get out, away from his house, discovered that the water had already crossed over the road once he got up over the hill and he went, started to go down again, noticed that the water was already over the road, it cut off his one exit. He went back the other way, guess what? That other dip was cut off by the time he got there, also.

Jeff Anderson: Fortunately, he survived inside of his home which did and barely survived, I'm talking like we're up in the attic, trying to stay just as the water was rising inside of the attic, trying to stay alive in there. But, the point here is that you wanna make sure that you have your evacuation routes planned, okay? You wanna make sure that you have an alternate in a different direction than where you're at. So when you're planning, go ahead and get out a topographical map and get out a road map, so everybody should have a topographical map of your area so that you basically know where land formations are, very easy to read, not that hard to figure out. Just by looking at it, you can usually tell where water ways are, where hills are and mountains, things like that.

Jeff Anderson: But that gives you information that a road map doesn't. But, you need to have multiple directions out of where you're at, just in case something happens. And it might not be where you get flooded or a wildfire closes it off. It could be that people are on the main road, trying to evacuate, there's cars that are broken

down, it's become a virtual parking lot and fortunately, you know of where railroad tracks go, that there's a service road along the railway tracks and you're able to use that road right there to be able to get out of there.

Jeff Anderson: Or maybe there is a prominent waterway that's near you that, instead of taking your vehicle, if you have a boat, maybe, you can go ... Or a neighbor has boat or somebody has a boat that you know, maybe you can boat out of the area a lot faster than you could get the vehicle out of there, right? So there's lots of different options that you can have but it really comes down to being creative and looking at your own personal environment and your own situation and figuring out your primary, your ultimate routes of how you're gonna get out if you were forced to evacuate, okay?

Jeff Anderson: All right, finally, lesson number five is the people in Woodcox's convoy were stopped by a gate. A metal gate, people. Okay? A metal gate. Now, who knows if the road would have been okay if they kept going on, it seems like that was a safe direction because that was where Woodcox ran also, even though the fire wasn't out there. But we know they died behind that gate, right? At least on the other side of the gate, it didn't look like they were going there which is why they were trying to get past the gate. So they were stopped and killed by ultimately a gate. So, in your survival gear, you really should have some breaching tools that you can depend upon, just in case you do find that you have to take an alternate route, but you don't know what's along that route, maybe it is a service road along power lines or something.

Jeff Anderson: But there is also a fence that you hit. And now all of a sudden, you're trapped and a wildfire is headed your way or a flood is headed your way. You just wanna make sure that nothing stops you from your movement. You need to keep moving. Now, I go over several different ways to be able to keep moving inside of the workshop. However, you wanna make sure that you have breaching tools because if Woodcox had breaching tools there, now, listen, I can pick a padlock in about 10 seconds and I tell people, "Lock picking really is a valuable skill for you to have, it's a valuable survival skill for survival purposes, escape and evasion purposes, there is reasons why you should pick a padlock or any kind of a lock." I can pick one in about 10 seconds.

Jeff Anderson: I can cut through a padlock in one seconds with bolt cutters. So, I'm not saying ... Just put some bolt cutters in the back of your vehicle and have those ready. If Woodcox have had those, he might have been ready to get everybody through there in a matter of just seconds and be able to get everyone out. So you need to keep moving, though. All right? So that comes down to breaching ability, but also how do you get out of being stuck. So it could be a situation where you are in a muddy area, so it's a flood-prone area that you're trying to get out of and you're stuck in the mud, you can be stuck in the snow, there's different ways you can get stuck. And again, you're trapped as long as you're right there..

Jeff Anderson: So, in addition to having bolt cutters there, I recommend that you have a machete, our machete, our guardian machete, we call it urban survival machete

'cause we can literally break through concrete, I've cut through steel with it. It's not your every day machete, right? But it's a great breaching tool which is why we designed it that way with that certain kind of steel and stuff.

Jeff Anderson: But other things that will help you are a shovel, tow straps, even if you don't have a four wheel drive, just having tow straps so that if you are stuck, somebody does come along with a truck or even if it's just a car and somehow, they can get on dry land and help pull you out as you're starting, tow straps are another really helpful thing to have. You can use floor mats to be able to get out of snow or mud or something like that to give yourself some traction if your wheels are spinning. There are also some very compact things that you put underneath the tires that will help you as well but you know, time is of the essence here. Think survival, time is of the essence. So you wanna make sure that you have breaching tools and ways to get unstuck that aren't gonna require you to sit there and try and dig and dig and dig and dig. You want the fastest way out as possible.

Jeff Anderson: So, definitely that. Now, other things you might want to consider, again, in the spirit of keeping moving is you wanna be storing fuel because look, if everybody is evacuating, I can tell you that the fuel lines are gonna be really long for people to get out if they're running low on fuel. And everybody takes more fuel than what they need to when they are there at the gas pumps. They run dry very quickly. All of a sudden, those people are trapped. If you're not relying on a local gas station and you have stored fuel that you can quickly tank up and at least have a full tank of gas when you leave, then you're good to go. You're gonna be that much more prepared and that much, as everyone else is waiting because they're running out of gas or they're out of gas alongside the road, waiting for somebody to come and give them gas. You're gonna be able to blow right by there and be able to get your family to safety, all right?

Jeff Anderson: Okay, well those are just five quick tips that I pulled out of this. Now again, this week, we're gonna be running an encore presentation for our survival workshop and these really are the most critical and they're easy to follow but they're the most critical survival skills that I've learned that will absolutely save your life. In fact, as you go through this, you're gonna recognize that these tips alone would have saved these people's lives. It doesn't matter if you are brand new to prepping or if you are a doomsday prepper, it doesn't matter. There is valuable content that I'm going to give you, inside of the workshop that we're gonna run this week. But it is limited seating so you wanna make sure that you go ahead and grab a seat. It is free, it is online, you can go grab it over at www.mcsmagazine.com/workshop. Go ahead and go check it out now, make sure that we have a spot there for you. And then show up.

Jeff Anderson: I can tell you that people, we get so much positive feedback on the workshop that I do here. And in fact, it's even transformed people that had a spouse that was not survival-minded, even those ... One guy was telling me, he was one of our New World Patriot Alliance members and he said, "I gotta thank you, my wife, she's not on the same page with me when it comes to survival things but

she overheard you giving this workshop and she came running in when it was all over and said, 'We need to prepare now.'" And so listen, there's valuable content that you can really use, I'm gonna go ahead, I'm giving away a free survival guide during the broadcast as well so make sure that you go check it out. The encore presentation. Again, it's over at www.mcsmagazine.com/workshop. Go check it out there now.

Jeff Anderson:

And, until then, I wanna know what stories have you heard? What mistakes or lessons have you seen that have come out of the current disaster from the wildfires in California? Make sure that you leave a comment on our blog for this episode that you are listening to right now and I wanna hear from you. What lessons have you learned? What mistakes have you seen people make and what advice do you have for other people out there that are beginning to prep? Okay? Go ahead and leave that over on the blog. And until our next Modern Combat and Survival broadcast, this is Jeff Anderson saying, "Prepare, train and survive."