

# Be very, very unafraid

Paul Cockram wants to get the bunk out of bunker

So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is ... fear itself — nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.”

Franklin Delano Roosevelt said this when he took the Oath of Office as President of the United States. It is as true today as it was in 1933. So why are our leaders now the ones who are encouraging us to be afraid.

My grandfather lived in fearful times and by the time he returned to Australia from the battlefield in France twenty million people had died. Twenty-five years later my father too went off to Europe and fought in another terrible war that killed more than fifty-seven million people in six years.

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At the end of the Second World War humanity entered the nuclear age and there was a very real fear that all life could be blown off the face of the planet if there was a Third World War.

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The official fear of nuclear attack persisted through to the 1970s.

Included in this issue of *BWD* is a reprint of a Civil Defence booklet with the ever-so-droll title: *'Householders' Handbook for Nuclear Warfare'*. I got hold of a handful of copies from a Dad's Army-type office in Sydney in 1976.

I don't think they were ever distributed to the general population with any degree of enthusiasm. The whole scenario as described in the booklet raises far too many questions for a government to satisfactorily answer.

As you can see (unless someone has

ripped it out) on the cover of the booklet the 'householders' are looking cheerful even as they go about stocking their under table or closet bomb shelter with fourteen days' worth of supplies.

It is hard to reconcile this 'down-home' approach to civic safety with the likely scenario that, should these conditions have come to pass, an area the size of Sydney would have been flattened — instantly vapourised.

A torch, a radio and a sanitation bucket will do you no good at ground zero.

Younger readers may not know the fear of nuclear annihilation. It doesn't make the news any more after the British stopped nuking Central Australia, the French tired of blowing up islands in the Pacific Ocean and the Russians and Americans stopped blowing up bits of the sky, the sea and the land.

For a while there, old battleships and fake towns were being destroyed by all sorts of bombs that could be 'delivered' by Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles — atom bombs, hydrogen bombs and even neutron bombs.

I remember the sales brochure selling the merits of a neutron bomb. It gave off only a small bang but accompanied by an intense dose of radiation. The claim was that it would kill a tank's crew but leave the machine unscathed. Research, I'm pretty sure, was discontinued when it was realised that neutron bombs transgressed one of the basic tenets of modern warfare — the mass destruction of expensive stuff.

Anyway, after a while even the most recalcitrant warmongers could see that in a world capable of MAD, Mutually Assured Destruction, nuclear weapons are actually useless.

I'm not wanting to make you scared — quite the opposite. The point I'm trying to make is that we're coming from a time where the risks and the casualty count were far greater than they are now.

Why should we be afraid in Australia

in 2016? Of what should we be afraid? We are not going to be invaded by foreign soldiers whose military authority will then trump our legal protections and rights.

It's unlikely that conscription will be reintroduced to force our young people to fight in foreign wars. The threat of nuclear annihilation has ebbed and as stated earlier, there's little can be done about that anyway.

Let's cut to the chase and mention the big 'T' word. Terrorism is the new cold war; it's that ever-present threat to which there is no defence.

There is a real danger that disaffected or religiously indoctrinated persons will commit random acts of violence somewhere, someday in our peaceful suburbs. It will be tragic for the victims and confronting for the rest of us. The media will err, as usual, on the side of sensationalism and nationalistic tub thumping.

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The real danger in state-sponsored fear lies in the level of deliberate deception and distraction. What would we be thinking about if not preoccupied by terrorism?

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Climate change and environmental destruction are issues that struggle to make headlines as seductive as a story about a wayward nong with a knife, a gun or a bomb. The lone wolf or the small activist cell is given the status and fear factor of a worldwide movement out to kill us all.

Ironically, if there is a well-organised clandestine group out to destroy the world it surely is the fossil-fuel lobby. Global warming from continuing the burning of coal is causing planetary grief more in keeping with the MAD nuclear doctrine.

To be afraid of the atmosphere warming to a 'tipping point' from where recovery will be difficult is a perfectly reasonable fear. Unlike random terrorism and thermo-nuclear armageddon it is, fortunately, something we can work to prevent.

It's time for the government to produce a new civic defence booklet. It could be called, *'A Householders' Guide to Global Warming'*.

Fear is a survival instinct. Rational fear is the bit that's left after what can't be helped is ignored. If we use our fear wisely we will survive.

# Poke it 'til it punches

OR

# Yo man, read my article

Leo Alder promises it'll probably be useful, so like, check it out.

So, you've finished school and you're heading for the big city, or to Canberra, in which case you're headed for the weird, medium city. I've been there, I've done that — almost every young person who has ever lived in Braidwood has. What this means, my young friend, is that I have some sweet survival tips for you, cultivated through the pure desperation of the poor life in the big city. So gather round, and let me impart some of the hard-earned wisdom I've gained.

The first order of business is this — wisdom may be too strong a word for what I'm about to impart. I wouldn't go quite so far as to call the following 'hacks' either, but when you've injected all of your money into an unforgiving alcohol economy, or been foolish enough to buy a textbook rather than rip it from the internet (if the internet fails you, I recommend laboriously taking a photo of every single page of a richer or dumber friend's textbook), then maybe my tips will let you scrape together the shrapnel for another drink, or that all important pack of Mi goreng.

Speaking of Mi goreng — get used to it. For the uninitiated, it's a cheap instant noodle bought in packs of five if you're hitting up the classic Indo Mie variant, and you should be, because it's ubiquitous and has the best flavour to price ratio.

The Cult of the Goreng takes in all newcomers. In my first year out of home, had you cut me, I probably would have bled Mi goreng I ate it so much. It was the foundation of my diet, and, as far as I was concerned, endlessly flexible. Mi goreng omelette, Mi goreng burrito. One all-nighter before an imminently due assignment I added a huge amount of instant coffee to my bowl to create what can

only be described as a Mi goreng death sludge, effective — but not recommended.

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The Young Ones had their lentils — my generation has our Mi goreng. Though nowadays I can't think of it without feeling sick.

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An important factor of your survival is designing your eating habits, and indeed, straight up organising your life around whatever is on special. Mi Goreng is so ridiculously cheap, it may as well always be on special, but there are a lot of other opportunities outside of the humble instant noodle, so always keep an eye out.



There are, however, some specials I would warn against. Chicken hearts — two bucks for half a kilo! But don't be tempted. There's a reason they are so cheap, and it's a good one. Also, paper towels, no matter how cheap, are not a substitute for toilet paper. My roommate and I once bought heavily discounted hand-towels, sawed them in half into the standard toilet paper size and then quickly realised it did not make for a good time. The pain is not worth the spare change.

Speaking of spare change, apart from periodically checking under your friends' couch cushions and quietly pocketing your ill-gotten gains, there is a bunch of other ways to make a bit of extra silver.

If you're low on phone credit, find a pay phone, drop 20 cents in there, call the number you need, and then make sure you can summarise your message into a single word, because you have an opportunity to get just one out before the pay phone remembers that the standard call price is 50 cents and hangs you up, foolishly giving you your 20 back if you hit the coin return fast enough. My friends were so used to me employing this method, that every time they'd pick up their phone to receive a garbled half-scream, they'd just know to call me.

And hang onto your loose change, because there's money to be made with it. I mean, not much, but money is money. Basically, find a vending machine, preferably one away from the judgmental eyes of passers-by, feed a few coins into the coin slot, then, smack that coin return and hope for the best. Very, very occasionally it'll mess up and give you an extra coin. Granted, very occasionally it'll