

The following article is from a trusted web site, discussing the possibility of harmful human behavior during a crisis, when society breaks down and there is no apparent rule of law. Although not written by us, we agree with its premise. We present the article in its entirety, with minor editing for punctuation, spelling, etc.

## When Does WROL (Without Rule of Law) Start?

<http://beansbulletsbandagesandyou.com/bullets/2019/03/12/wrol-without-rule-of-law-start/>

**P**reppers frequently talk about what they should do under circumstances of "WROL" or "Without Rule of Law." WROL means that normal civil society has collapsed and police and courts will not be enforcing order. It would be up to individuals or small communities to protect themselves.

WROL would be a hard situation in many respects. One of the hardest is recognizing such situations in the first place. **In prepper fiction** it's usually pretty clear cut, with no police presence and violent mutant biker gangs and/or Golden Hordes of refugees spreading throughout the countryside.

**Real life?** Not so clean-cut. At the moment of a mugging or home invasion, there's no Rule of Law (ROL) then and there. During rioting or in the aftermath of a hurricane, there's no ROL for hours, days, or even weeks. In either of those cases the eye of the law will return and scrutinize whatever happened in its absence. What will happen in more extended emergencies? We don't really know.

### A point of view about WROL

I claim no special expertise on this subject. I'm just someone who's thought about it some in the context of how societies have handled such things in the past. What I'm offering is simply my point of view.



*In fiction, the threats are all clear and the heroes never end up in prison later. Real life is trickier.*

Here's my core premise: When forced to defend ourselves, neighbors, or property, we should conduct ourselves in ways that would seem necessary and justified to a reasonable authority. So what makes behavior necessary and justified?

## WROL or no[t], defense is more justified than offense

There's (quite rightfully, in my opinion) a much greater acceptance of defensive actions than offensive. For example, the decision that taking somebody else's stuff is 'scavenging' rather than 'looting' should be a very conservative one indeed. If there's any significant possibility the rightful owner's going to return for the stuff later, it's not 'scavenging' it's 'stealing'.



*"Scavenging" and "looting" look a lot alike. Don't be generous with your definition.*

On the flip side, protecting yourself and yours when looters come, is much more acceptable. Without Rule Of Law, it's your responsibility in fact.

## Warnings before violence

In the prepper **fiction**, the WROL situation's often broken down so far that the Good Guy Davids lay down ambushes and slaughter the evil Goliaths before the defenses of the citadel are breached. It being fiction, we all know that if you just warn them they try to sneak up on you later. **In real life, could you kill in cold blood based on that risk? Should you? I'm a No on both questions.**

Why are threat displays so effective in the animal world? Because they work. The attacker is very often convinced that there are easier pickings elsewhere, and easier is what they're about.

Please note: What I'm talking about here is signs, barriers, verbal warnings, and the like. In the *highly unlikely and highly undesirable* circumstance that someone makes me feel threatened enough that I point a weapon at him, he better not be expecting a warning shot. There won't be one. I don't live in Hollywood, and at that point, it's for real.

## Minimum necessary force

Another expression of 'necessary and justified' is not taking any use of force farther than is necessary. Again, I'm not talking Hollywood expressions like 'shooting him in the leg' or something. If I have to stop an attacker by using a gun, I'm aiming at the biggest target; the one most likely to make him stop attacking.

I am talking about if two people rush you and you shoot one in the front, that's a lot more clearly justified than shooting the second in the back as he tries to flee.

## A guiding principle, not rules

I can't make firm rules for WROL now, sitting in my safe comfortable chair that would apply to any potential ugly future situation. There are too many unknowns, so specific decisions would have to be made on the spot.

I do know, though, that when I have guiding principles in mind going in, it's easier to make hard decisions. They're also more likely to adhere to my core beliefs...and that, in the end, is what I've got to aim for.

There are no guarantees in life, and maybe what you or I do in WROL situation *will* later bring us grief in some way. For example, the authorities that arise afterwards might not be 'reasonable' in our lights. Or a warned attacker might get all Hollywood and come back. All we can do is our best. We'll get closer if we think ahead of time about what 'our best' looks like.

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### Commentary:

The use of deadly force should never be applied without lawful justification. It is not like Hollywood or TV! We've all seen the photos associated with natural or other disasters, where someone spray painted "**LOOTERS WILL BE SHOT.**" In real life, that could present a very serious problem. Deadly force is only justified under certain circumstances. Deadly force in most situations and in most states, is not justified for simple theft [looting]. In order to be justified, you must show a reasonable fear of imminent death or great physical harm. Shooting at looters in most cases could cause you to spend many years in prison. Police officers learn that there is a lawyer attached to every bullet fired. That includes "warning shots" and "shoot to wound." WROL is a temporary condition until government gets reestablished and gets around to restoring order.

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