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# SURVIVAL

GUIDE

Vol. 6 Issue 3



## MYKEL HAWKE'S EXCLUSIVE DEBRIEF

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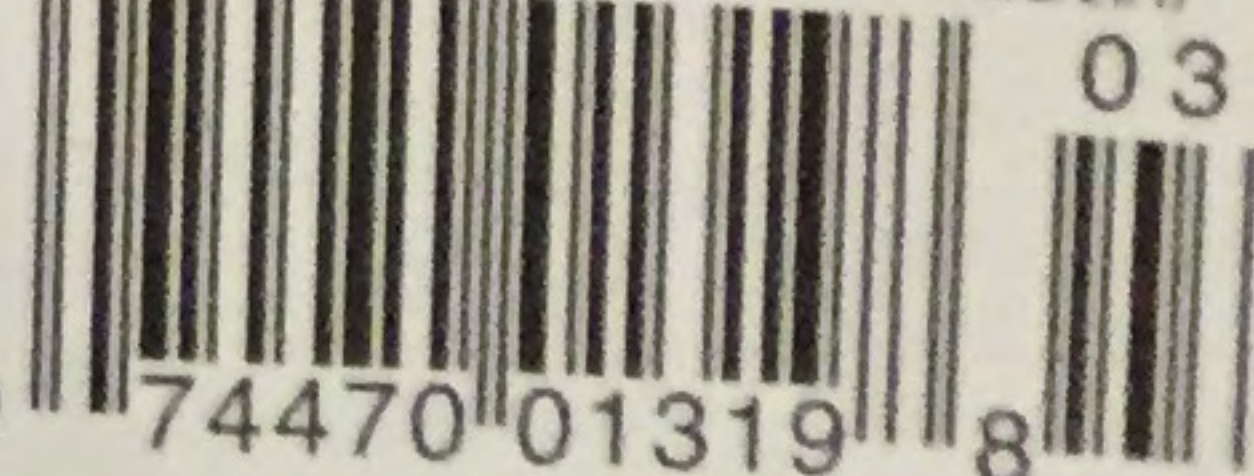
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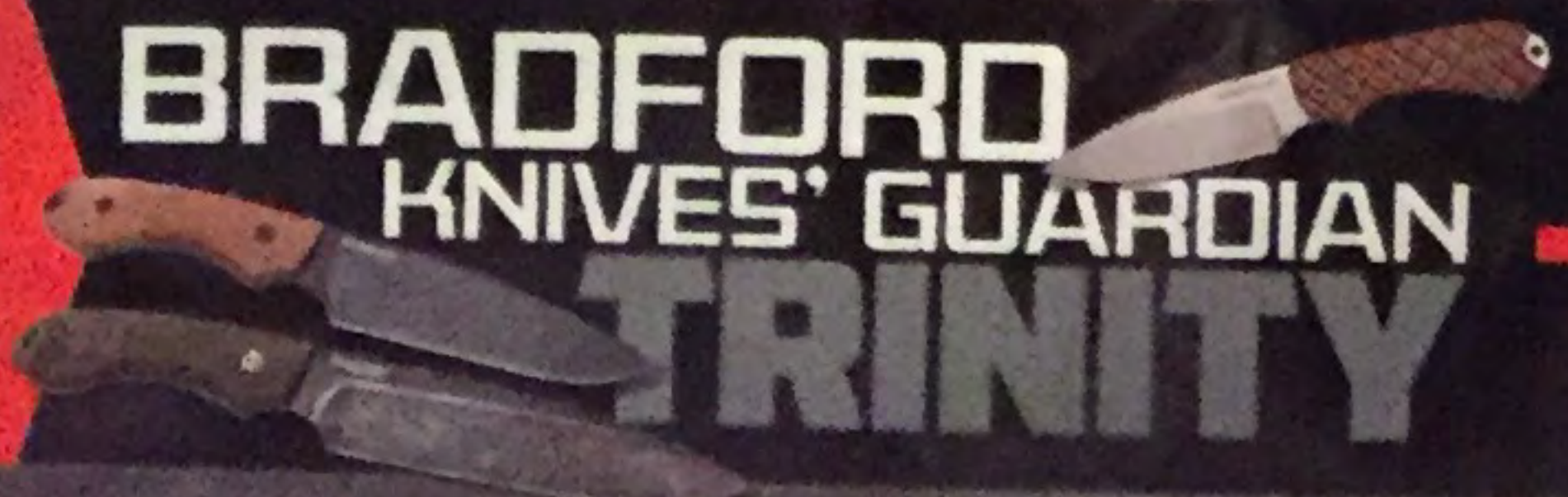
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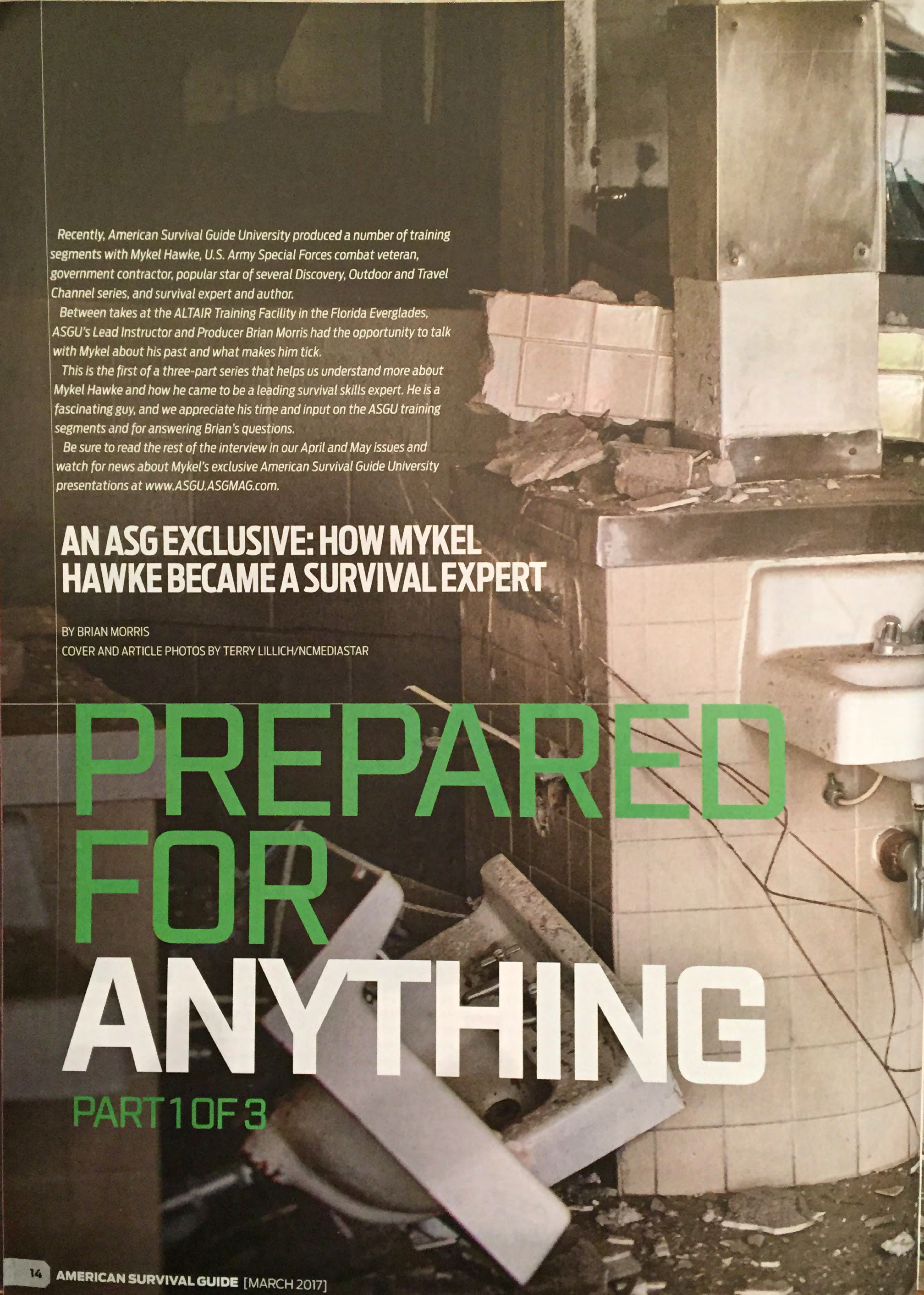


GEAR

**BRADFORD KNIVES' GUARDIAN TRINITY**

**GATOR-TAIL'S BAYOU BOATS**





Recently, American Survival Guide University produced a number of training segments with Mykel Hawke, U.S. Army Special Forces combat veteran, government contractor, popular star of several Discovery, Outdoor and Travel Channel series, and survival expert and author.

Between takes at the ALTAIR Training Facility in the Florida Everglades, ASGU's Lead Instructor and Producer Brian Morris had the opportunity to talk with Mykel about his past and what makes him tick.

This is the first of a three-part series that helps us understand more about Mykel Hawke and how he came to be a leading survival skills expert. He is a fascinating guy, and we appreciate his time and input on the ASGU training segments and for answering Brian's questions.

Be sure to read the rest of the interview in our April and May issues and watch for news about Mykel's exclusive American Survival Guide University presentations at [www.ASGU.ASGMAG.com](http://www.ASGU.ASGMAG.com).

## AN ASG EXCLUSIVE: HOW MYKEL HAWKE BECAME A SURVIVAL EXPERT

BY BRIAN MORRIS

COVER AND ARTICLE PHOTOS BY TERRY LILICH/NCMEDIASTAR

# PREPARED FOR ANYTHING

PART 1 OF 3



**American Survival Guide:** Our readers fall under a wide spectrum of demographics. Many are outdoor enthusiasts and minimalists who want to learn primitive bushcraft and survival skills. Others are modern-day pioneers who want to live off the grid, and many more are preppers. They see the possibility of catastrophic events that could undermine America's infrastructure, cause the government to collapse or even bring all-out warfare on our soil—thereby heightening the need to protect themselves, their families and their property. Perhaps the largest group is interested in emergency preparedness and being ready for unforeseen natural and manmade disasters, as a result of which it could be days or weeks before first responders can reach them.

Where do you most see yourself within that spectrum?

**Mykel Hawke:** I have a family, kids and grandkids. I enjoy spending time with them. Likewise, I have spent a great deal of my adult life in war zones and deployed to remote, underdeveloped places.

I have no desire to go live an isolated existence, waiting for the world to end or living in fear of some major disaster. Both can happen and are realistic possibilities. However, my choice is to stay in the world and be part of it, because I spent a lot of time out of it already.

That said, I am a military man; a Green Beret and officer, in fact. And that means I live by a code [stipulating that] if things go bad, I will stand up and step in to do my part to make things better. So, I am somewhere among the preppers, who are ready for anything, the off-gridders, who are ready to be self-reliant as long as it takes, and the minimalists in that I have always taught, in my books, my courses and even in my shows, that we can survive naked, because it's how our ancestors started.

Likewise, with multiple communications and intelligence backgrounds, I am all about geek gadgets that can help and, not least of all, I am a military survivalist. This means I am ready to fight and defend what I love and believe in. How's that for a "political" answer?

**ASG:** American Survival Guide University bases its videos and programs of instruction on the concept of the "Six Pillars of Survival": food, water, shelter, security, communications and health. [Editor's note: For more information about American Survival Guide University's Six

**“I GREW UP POOR, SO I HAD TO SURVIVE A LOT OFF THE STREETS AND IN THE WOODS. THAT GOT ME INTO SURVIVAL.”**

*Pillars of Survival* system, check out our article on page 76 of this issue.] No one pillar is more important than the others until the survivor determines how they need to prioritize them, based on their ever-changing situation.

Can you think of any area we might have forgotten to cover?

**MH:** Yes. I actually believe there is an eight-pillar system, like four legs of a table with four supporting legs. Food, water, fire and shelter are perennial primaries. While they might rotate in order of precedence based on circumstances, they must be addressed in every situation. Next are the secondaries: medical, navigation, communication and tools. Under “communication” is “signal” and everything around it. Under “tools” are “weapons” (as a tool for hunting or defense), but those are important sub-categories, according to my survival strategies.

**ASG:** Let’s talk a little bit about you. Tell us about your childhood. What was it like for a young Mykel Hawke growing up? How did your childhood experiences influence the man you grew up to be?

**MH:** I address a lot of this in the first chapter of my large book, *The Green Beret Survival Manual*. It defines who I became and why I teach the way I do. I grew up poor, so I had to survive a lot off the streets and in the woods. That got me into survival.

But we grew up as white poor in black neighborhoods; we got beat up a lot just for being white. My brother and I could not defend against gangs, but when one gang member tried to fight me alone in 5th grade, I fought back and crushed him. He brought his bigger “cousin” the next day, and I crushed him, too. From that point on, I decided to fight bullies and help others. That led to me becoming a Green Beret. As one yourself, Brian, you know that we fight to free the oppressed—no greater mission!



› Mykel Hawke surveys the location during shooting for American Survival Guide University’s *Six Pillars of Survival* training segments.



› During the filming of a training segment for American Survival Guide University, Hawke makes his way through a debris-strewn building.

**ASG:** Did you have any heroes growing up?

**MH:** Yes; two kinds. As a kid, I had a few men in my life who were my real heroes. Earl, Ed and Pete were the biggest ones.

Earl was my stepfather, a Marine in the Korean War who retired after 27 years as a cop and fireman. He taught me honor. Ed was in Pearl Harbor when it was bombed and then on a glider in Normandy on D-Day. He taught me to be a good family man. Pete was a Green Beret combat diver in Vietnam and then became an Air Force Black Ops pilot of choppers and planes. He taught me what it was to be a warrior: fierce, honest, humble. These were my father figures.

Then, I read the books, the comics, saw the films, and I saw the heroes in those who did what they thought was right, no matter the cost and against all odds. Many times.



◀ While making his way through the dense Florida Everglades, Hawke makes good use of the "Hawkchete" he designed.

**"I HAVE NO DESIRE TO GO LIVE AN ISOLATED EXISTENCE, WAITING FOR THE WORLD TO END OR LIVING IN FEAR OF SOME MAJOR DISASTER."**

they even failed but never wavered. They became my idol heroes—fictitious role models whom I chose to aspire to emulate and make myself what I thought I could, and should, be. [These were] folks like Sergeant Rock, Clint Eastwood, John Wayne, Kirk Douglas ... old school, I know!

**ASG:** What is the most interesting thing about you or your life that can't be found on Google?

**MH:** That is interesting and a fun question. I actually sing and play guitar, and I can dance. Maybe I should take your wife's suggestion and go on *Dancing with the Stars*!

**ASG:** What or who inspires you?

**MH:** Films. A lot of films inspire me. I am a big fan of the Russell Crowe films, such as *Master and Commander*, *Gladiator* and *Cinderella Man*, as well as films such as *Braveheart*, *Rob Roy*, *Equilibrium* and *Serenity*—any movie where people fight against all odds for truth and justice.

**ASG:** If you had to choose five words that describe who you are as a person or what values you hold closest to your heart, what would they be?



◀ Below, left: Hawke crosses a creek in the Florida Everglades with his HASP tool in hand.

◀ Below, right: The ALTAIR Training Facility in the Florida Everglades was the location chosen for filming several American Survival Guide University training segments with Hawke.

**MH:** Philosophical, creative, determined, caring, fair.

**ASG:** At 50 years old, you still look and move like a guy in his 30s. What is the secret to your eternal youth?

**MH:** Happy hormones! I always say, *I live by the rule of no rules*: I do what I believe is right at the time and do not worry about being judged. I make it a mission to try never to harm another, so I have no fears of doing wrong. If I am in a war zone and I want a smoke, I will smoke. If a friend has died, and I want a drink, I will drink. If a jerk acts like an ass to a weaker person, I will kick his butt.

As such, I stay pretty happy, and I do think the lack of worry and stress is a big factor. Too many folks worry about every calorie consumed or how they look in the mirror at the gym! Also, I am sure my mother's genes had a lot to do with it: She was a Greek beauty, so, I can't claim much credit!

**ASG:** Did you grow up hunting and fishing in the outdoors, or did you learn bushcraft skills later in life?

**MH:** Oh man! Fishing was a serious part of my upbringing and is my passion now. We didn't hunt much, because we couldn't afford the weapons to do so. But we did what we could with bows and BB guns: We ate birds and rabbits and squirrels!

*In part 2 of this interview, slated for the April American Survival Guide issue, we'll explore Mykel Hawke's career in the U.S. Army, and he'll discuss his transition to his work in television. ASG*