(Benson Ragnar)



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New and Improved C-4

By Ragner Benson

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New and Improved C-4:
Better-Than-Ever Recipes for Half the Money and Double the Fun
by Ragnar Benson

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Warning

The procedures in this book and the resulting end products are extremely dangerous. Whenever dealing with high explosives, special precautions should be followed in accordance with industry standards for experimentation and production of high explosives. Failure to strictly follow such industry standards may result in harm to life or limb. Therefore, the information in this manual is *for academic study only*. Neither the author, publisher, nor distributors of this book assume any responsibility for the use or misuse of information contained herein.

Tens of thousands of faithful readers have purchased copies of *Ragnar's Guide to Home and Recreational Use of High Explosives*, *Ragnar's Homemade Detonators*, and *Homemade C-4*, and many have taken the time to write to me regarding their experiences with explosives. In all cases, I appreciate these letters and the information and comments contained therein.

One of the most frequently asked questions is whether there isn't something effective out there that one can use in place of horribly expensive and often difficult-to-find nitromethane. "We appreciate," the writers often comment, "the simplicity and relative safety of basic C-4, but we are not able to acquire nitromethane."

Another frequent question involves the manufacture of effective explosives from anything other than nitromethane and ammonium nitrate. "Are there other formulas which are as effective?" they write.

"Many formulas, including yours, are included in government manuals," readers claim, "but usually exact details are sketchy as to how to successfully put these materials together. In some cases these formulas simply

nitromethane, and that's all. A number of skilled explosives people have tried but cannot make this mixture detonate. It is important, readers say, to accurately learn what will and will not explode.

Unconfirmed reports from suppliers of fuel for small model engines, which contain varying percentages of nitromethane, indicate that about three years ago one of the principal nitromethane manufacturing plants in California burned down. Flyers of model planes and drag racers suffered a real tightening of the nitromethane supply as a result. Months went by while California environmentalists fought against rebuilding the plant, but finally the manufacturer is reported to be back on line, and supplies are flowing again. Prices of nitromethane may come down, and its availability may become more general. On the other hand, government regulators could prohibit widespread sales of nitromethane, which some observers claim is already the case.

The challenge for this book, then, is to come up with simple, workable, readily available, generally prudent alternatives to basic C-4. These must use inexpensive, unregulated chemicals that average, knowledgeable citizens can find even if they live in large cities. These components must be relatively easily assembled in an emergency situation that requires high explosives. Government documents relative to recent interest in improvised explosives suggest that most officials consider homemade explosives to be too mild and erratic to be of much value. We must also come up with materials that refute such drivel.

In all cases, the assumption is made that no reader will actually assemble any of these formulas unless faced with an absolute emergency. All the procedures and formulas that follow range from dangerous to *very* dangerous. Because an explo-

Recall Che Guevara, who during his early revolutionary days in Cuba, claimed to have lost "half the people I sent to producing explosives and explosive devices."

Those who have not at least read the three above-mentioned books or who have not had some formal training in explosives deployment should not attempt to deploy any of the explosives listed in this book, even in an emergency. It is always much safer to have learned to handle relatively stable, safe, easy-to-use military or commercial explosives before moving on to the erratic, inconsistent, home workshop ones set out in this volume.

In a related note, a great deal of detailed information regarding what does not work is included in this book. It is hoped that it will keep readers out of expensive and often dangerous dead ends.

During any testing process, it is desirable—even necessary—to keep all variables outside the test to a minimum. For this reason, most detonators used in these shots were commercial ones, rather than homemade.

Double-capped or booster charges, as will be repeated over and over, were often deployed. These are specially assembled primers consisting of a standard, fused cap and two one-inch segments of 50-gram detonator cord taped to the cap. One can easily make up double-strength homemade primer that, in an emergency context, could accomplish the same work, assuming an absolute emergency wherein everything must be improvised.

Boosted primers are often necessary to get some very sleepy but powerful explosives to detonate properly. Readers should not forget that all military explosives are much tougher to detonate than commercial ones.

Homemade C-4 is always the benchmark. Even though



Throughout this manual the author makes the assumption that readers have all the information contained in the above Paladin books or has formal training in explosives deployment. Caution: All of the procedures and devices contained herein are extremely dangerous!

posed of easily found, relatively cheap components. It's like Sears and Roebuck in the old days when they offered good, better, and best merchandise. Often, good did the job nicely at a price markedly reduced from best.

Explosives are necessary to operate a modern economy. It is hoped that readers won't have to use the following explosives to keep their economy afloat. But here they are—just in case they are the only game in town!

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1 Explosives from Nothing

There are believable accounts regarding desperate people in occupied France or even New York City during World War II who constructed crude firearms in their home workshops. Guns produced under these circumstances had limited power, range, and accuracy but were entirely adequate for securing a real, operational weapon from the then enemy. In that regard, these often extremely primitive weapons had great value.

Unfortunately, no close analogy exists for homemade explosives. It would be nice if some relatively wimpy, weak explosive could be used to obtain a better grade of military explosive, but no one can tell me of an instance where this has actually happened. So far, any such tales are speculative, but you can always remain optimistic.

Many readers who have taken time to write me about explosives have asked for a dirt-simple, easy-to-make explosives formula that uses only the most common of compounds. Oddly enough, this is also a question frequently asked by newspaper and TV folks, who seem oddly fixated on the subject of improvised explosives.