

UNLIMITED

THE RISE OF THE CAJUN NAVY





“ We do better than the government does, when it comes to a disaster.”

THE SHOW



REAL-TIME STORIES FROM THE LIFE - AND - DEATH
FRONTLINES OF AMERICA'S FOLK HERO MOVEMENT,
THE VIGILANTE FIRST RESPONDERS OF THE CAJUN NAVY.

Born of climate violence, a broken social safety net and untamable resilience of spirit, the Cajun Navy is an American grassroots movement of people looking out for their neighbors. They run on donated gasoline and no sleep. They show up on airboats, in pickup trucks loaded with supplies, and sometimes on small planes, with no plan except to rescue disaster victims from the jaws of danger.

As a nascent movement, the Cajun Navy is still loosely knit, with some organizations more established and reputable than others. The United Cajun Navy is one of 3 official organizations to have full 501c3 status, and it is fully volunteer and donation-driven. Its founder Todd has led his team since Katrina.





TODD

FOUNDER OF THE UCN

CHARACTERS

He experienced a one-two punch of family tragedy and total loss of property during Katrina that nearly destroyed him. Instead of giving in, Todd gained a driving sense of purpose and decided to try and help those whose lives would next be torn apart by natural disaster. In every storm of the past few years he's been first to the scene with his family's boats and dozens of other vehicles (water craft, trucks, and even planes and helicopters).

Todd has a brilliant mind for logistics --and not much patience for extended Q+A sessions with the hundreds of people who stream in to join his organization during the hectic main event of a disaster. He makes enemies when he won't let eager civilians go on missions they aren't trained or emotionally prepared for. To him, that's worth the tradeoff of keeping his people safe.

Todd has a temper and he's happy to face-off with anyone who disobeys his direct orders. But Todd also respects authority, and he gets along well with National Guard and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leaders, other official relief groups and local authorities.





SCOTT

CHARACTERS

A career in coastal safety for big industry has perfectly prepared Scott to be the Logistics Director and Todd's right-hand at the UCN. During disasters he works around the clock from a communications center in Louisiana, arranging 18-wheelers full of supplies, coordinating plane drops and sending seasoned rescuers out to fill the rescue tickets that are filed via the UCN's response portal, PERT (Patriot Emergency Response). Scott always answers his phone, keeps his impeccable Southern manners even in the midst of a Category 5 disaster and is capable of running 20 open tickets and 10 crews in four states simultaneously.





SUGGESTED FORMATTING

Begin with 6-12 mini-episodes for social/digital release as close to real-time as possible. Each 5-8 minute digital episode follows the storyline of a different UCN rescue or aid mission.

OPTION: *Engage professional celebrity narrator such as Mike Rowe to lend extra drama and cohesiveness to the series.*

Episodes will all include certain central figures that run UCN logistics in real life and will keep a consistent narrative to our thread of many related stories.

1) THE UCN COMMAND CENTER COORDINATORS
Former military officers

2) SCOTT
Logistics Commander & professional marine safety director

3) TODD
Founder and our narrator



POSSIBLE SHORT EPISODE STORY LINES

ALL BASED ON TRUE STORIES



1 Boat rescue in a flood. Two of Todd's trusted lieutenants convince him to let them bring one of his company boats to a flood zone to rescue victims.

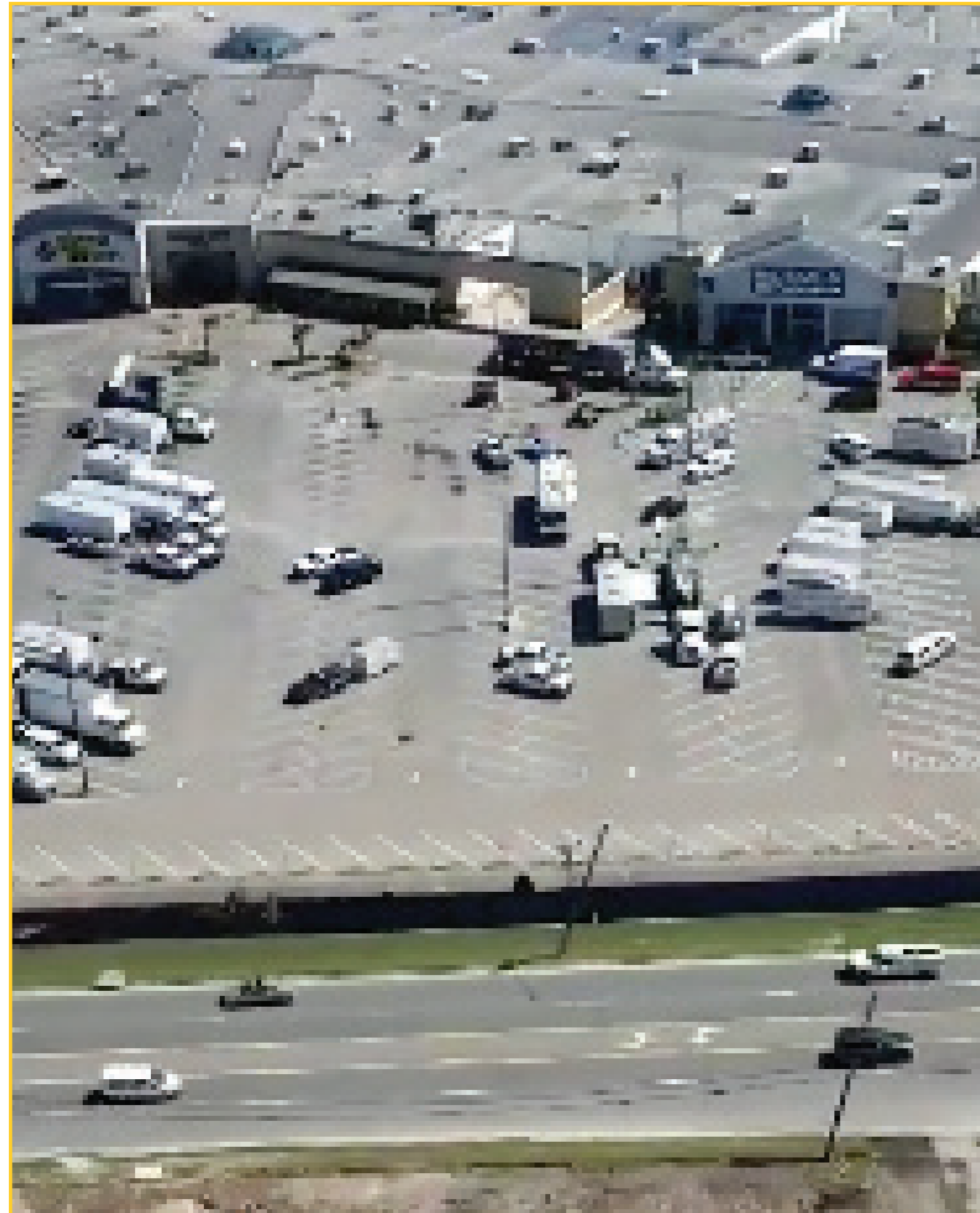


2 A call comes in from the mayor of a tiny rural town. The mayor has risked her life to get within sat phone range to put in an emergency assistance request – none of her 1000+ constituents has been able to make contact with the outside world for 5 days. She begs the UCN to bring in water and medical supplies. They'll have to chainsaw through backwoods roads covered by hurricane felled trees to get there.



3 A UCN Unit Leader named Dave challenges Todd's authority and demands control of UCN Mobile Command during a hurricane. Todd refuses, because he knows Dave wants to send UCN volunteers into a mandatory evac zone that the government has locked down. Unfortunately, Todd does a terrible job explaining his decision in the moment. Infuriated, Dave storms away to work with another vigilante group from Arizona. When that group tries to rescue a chronically ill person from his tornado-destroyed home the next day, they're mistaken for looters and arrested by local police.

4 Todd and his crew organize helicopter drops of insulin into the Florida backwoods – a place that is unreachable by boat or truck after a storm – where several people suffering from diabetes will die if they don't get the shipment soon.



5 Animal Patrol. When Robert, one of the young combat veterans who suffers from PTSD, is on rescue/recovery duty after a hurricane he rescues a traumatized pit bull. The dangerous looking but totally sweet dog immediately imprints on Robert who decides to adopt & bring the dog home to the Carolinas, with the help of a raspy-voiced local animal rescuer who transports dogs in the back of a 1980s station wagon.



POSSIBLE SHORT EPISODE STORY LINES

ALL BASED ON TRUE STORIES

6 Annah Lindberg, 22 years old with only 3 months of work experience and no LEO training has the almost-impossible job of being personal assistant to Todd Terrell as he helicopter-drops supplies into Ground Zero of a disaster zone. Her parents, who are both former Navy officers and UCN command center dispatchers, expect her to shine as Todd's right hand while performing first responder responsibilities in the hardest-hit areas of the disaster theater.

7 Driving the Mobile Command Truck through the backwoods swamps of Georgia to join the main group in the Panhandle, the team is on high alert. The vehicle is cumbersome and loaded with expensive gear and they are constantly worried about getting flash flooded, flipped over by storm winds or worst of all, carjacked by looters lurking in the area.

8 At the UCN North Carolina staging area, an urgent call comes in requesting medical supplies in Florida. A team of UCN volunteers load an 18-wheeler with expensive supplies while another person from the team races to pick up a volunteer whose trucker's license makes him the only one in their group who can legally drive the precious cargo from Wilmington to Panama City. We'll be right there with him – along for the ride to save lives.



9 Retired Lieutenant General Honore – famous for coordinating military relief efforts during Hurricane Katrina and for speaking out about the poor U.S. response to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico – visits a disaster zone where the UCN is deployed. The general's notoriety means that supply donations triple and the lower-ranked UCN volunteers are run ragged trying to manage their staging area.

POSSIBLE SHORT EPISODE STORY LINES

ALL BASED ON TRUE STORIES



10 Mobile Command drives to a rural community and comes across a man walking on the side of a highway, desperately trying to get to his elderly parents who haven't been heard from for a week. The UCN team changes their plans and gives the man a ride. The next morning they hear the man they helped went to the hospital ER during the night – suffering chest pains. Doctors say that he would certainly have died if he'd continued the trek to reach his parents on foot.



POSSIBLE SHORT EPISODE STORY LINES
ALL BASED ON TRUE STORIES

12 In the aftermath of a hurricane a small-town 911 hotline gets a terrifying call from someone who's threatening to shoot himself because he's lost his family and home in the storm. The local police chief tries to talk the person down on the phone while other officers and a group of UCN volunteers try to pinpoint his location. Suddenly gunshots ring out nearby. Is it looters – or is it the caller?

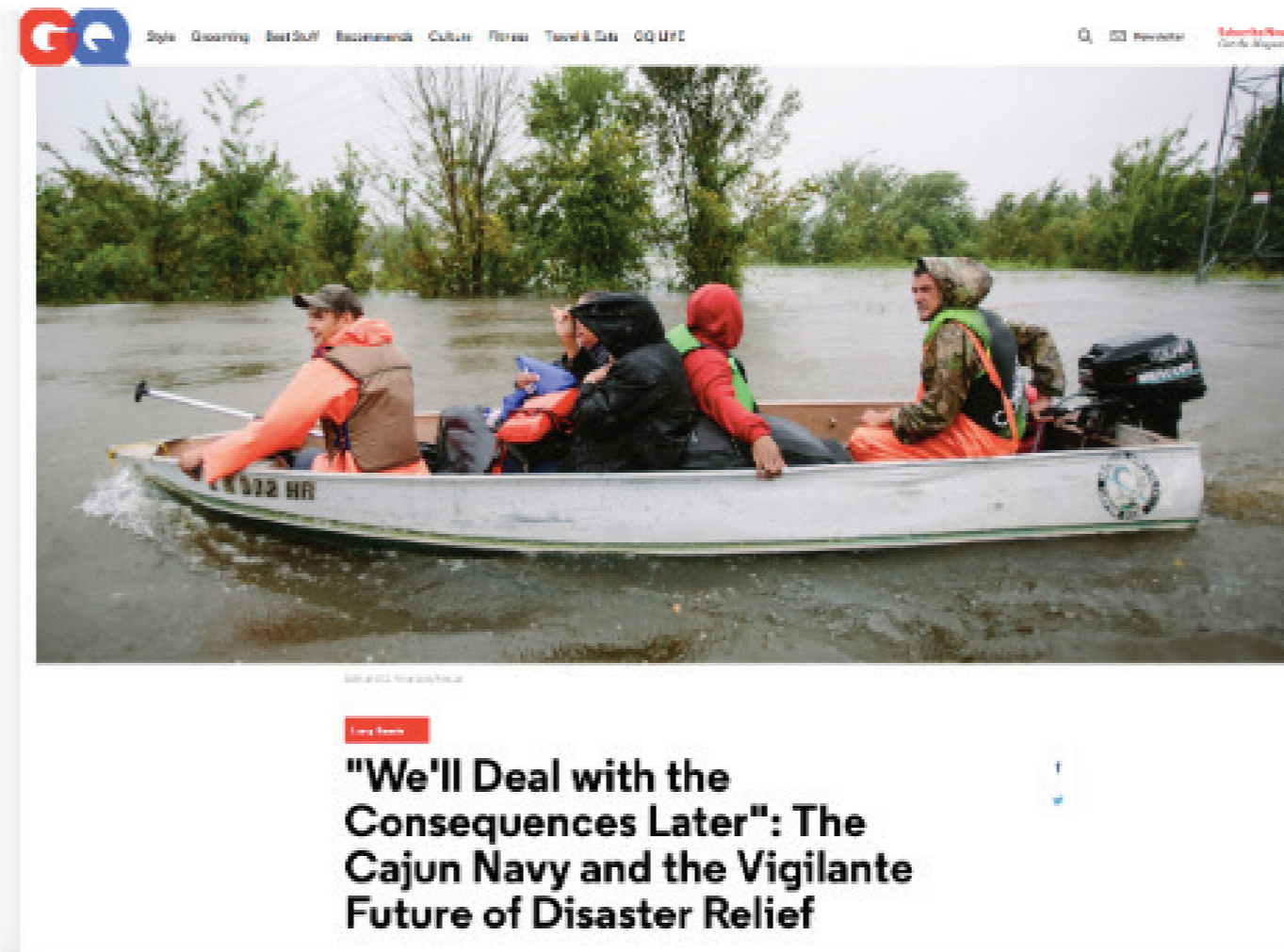
11 The UCN bunks at a small town fire station during their deployment to a hurricane devastated area. An electrical fire breaks out on a residential city block at the hurricane's Ground Zero and the fire fighters head out. One Cajun Navy volunteer, a young EMT named Braden, who has quickly grown close to the local firefighters, decides to ride with them even though he is not locally licensed to do so. Braden saves a young woman's life during the call and it's up to the chief and Todd to figure out whether he's the star of the day or needs to be fired for insubordination.



BACKGROUND

The Cajun Navy first appeared after Hurricane Katrina, when much of New Orleans and the surrounding area was underwater. Local officials put a call out for assistance to anyone with boats. Louisiana Cajuns who lived and worked in the swamps and coastal area showed up by the hundreds. They were uniquely qualified to handle the conditions New Orleans now faced. They rescued thousands with their airboats and survival skills. After that the Cajun Navy really began to make headlines during Hurricane Harvey, when hundreds of Cajuns showed up in storm battered areas of Texas and Louisiana with boats of all shapes and sizes to once again heroically rescue hundreds of stranded flood victims.

GQ Magazine



There are currently 21 officially registered Cajun Navy factions, most of them at odds with each other about everything, from how they fundraise to how they qualify and train volunteers. The different organizations can work alongside each other when the need arises, but with such high stakes in play, and given the conditions that they're existing in on disaster sites, emotions run high and tempers often flare.



But for small communities who feel forgotten, the UCN are superheroes. These folks know that in times of dire need, if they put out the signal, the UCN will find a way to help them. It sounds like Batman but this isn't a movie; it's real life. Our heroes are messy, stressed out, smelly, underfed and overworked. They sometimes burst into tears when what they've seen is too much to process. Sometimes they argue ferociously over fuel donations or other limited resources that are needed by so many. They all battle their own demons—PTSD, lost relationships, the struggle of trying to find a place in life. They're real everyday heroes who have stepped up to deal with danger and destruction in the best way they can.

THIS ISN'T JUST A STORY. IT'S A MOVEMENT. BY FOLLOWING JUST A FEW OF THESE CHARACTERS, WE WILL BE REMINDED OF THE GREAT HEARTS THAT STILL EXIST IN IDEAL-TORN AMERICA.

