

TEXT 1

Sky Dylan-Robbins is a journalist who has produced short documentaries for among others *NBC News*. *NBC Left Field* is an experimental video unit aimed at understanding human beings through film.

Sky Dylan-Robbins

The Wild Route: Leaving Work and Home for a Forest Life

Transcript:

Todd: I would find myself sitting at my desk, wishing the day was over so I could go home. And then I would wish that it was Friday so I could have the weekend off, and then I wished my next vacation was coming up, and I realized that I was very literally wishing away my life.

Sky Dylan-Robbins: Does life ever feel so crazy, so nuts, that you just want to drop your phone
5 into a toilet and retreat to the woods?

Confession: I have, and yet I'm still here. But how off the grid¹ can you really go these days? Well, I went to the woods in North Carolina and spent time with some people who've left and are trying to figure it out.

Todd: As modern people, we've evolved to this extent where we're not capable of feeding
10 ourselves, clothing ourselves, providing our own water, or even getting rid of our own shit and piss. This place is called Wild Roots – I didn't name it. We don't have policies, and we don't have rules.

Dylan-Robbins: And this is Todd, a former engineer, who's been living in this community the longest.

Todd: Even after eleven years, I get a big thrill every time I go to the stream and just take a
15 drink. It just feels good to me.

Harvest season is over. There's hunters that give us meat. We can it. We did a couple hundred quart jars² of meat this year.

Erica's my girlfriend, and her eight-year-old daughter, May...

Erica: *What're you doing?*
20

¹ *off the grid*: leve uafhængigt af det omgivende samfund

² *quart jars*: 1-liters glas

Todd: They spend a lot of time here.

May: *Smelling it?*

Todd: Then there's a guy who goes by the name of Whip.

May: *Whipporwill!*

25 **Whip:** *Say what?*

May: *I've got one of your beard hairs in my soup*

Whip: *Awesome. Makes it magical.*

Todd: He's kind of another refugee from technology like myself. He was working in cybersecurity.

30 **Whip:** There are other things that come with the bear, like, the claws, or special bones that you can use for different kinds of crafts.

That's a bear skull, covered in a huge amount of maggots.

Dylan-Robbins: Oh, whoa!

Whip: Yeah, I can barely even shake them off.

35 **Dylan-Robbins:** Whoa! My God. I can't keep quiet for that.

Whip: I miss some aspects of that kind of logical problem-solving, but I feel fully engaged with the problems I deal with here.

Todd: Then there's the young woman named Sparrow.

Sparrow: Some people come here, say, "Well, if shit hits the fan³, we can survive."

40 I think that's pretty cool. I've also here because I love how it is here. I think it's really beautiful, this lifestyle.

Dylan-Robbins: Now, this lifestyle, of living off the grid, as we often call it, might seem like it's a relatively new phenomenon, especially as we get more technologically involved. After all, just last year, the average American spent eleven hours, basically half a day, in front of a screen. But
45 in fact, humans have been downshifting⁴, or voluntarily living simply, throughout history to

³ *if shit hits the fan*: (her) hvis det hele brænder sammen

⁴ (her) omstillet sig til et langsommere liv

refute⁵ the norm. Thoreau⁶ went to Walden Pond⁷ for moral exploration⁸ and a rejection of the Industrial Age. Gandhi⁹ took his path as a socio-political act. And, you've got the Epicureans¹⁰, the Puritans¹¹, the Quakers¹², the hippies...

50 But, what unites all of these people across time is the viewpoint that mainstream culture distracts from what's most important.

Whip: Part of my transition is to be embracing an alternative that I feel deeply joyful about.

Radio: "Wednesday, cloudy. A chance of showers in the morning."

Whip: I really do feel a deep gratitude for... for life, you know?

55 For all the trees around and the birds singing... And that the crops grow – I mean the food – it just grows, you know!

Money doesn't grow on trees, but I don't need it if the chestnuts grow on trees.

Dylan-Robbins: And what happens when we shift our priorities? Well, two academics found that people who live in a way that prioritizes intrinsic values, like community, relationships, personal growth – are happier than those who focus on extrinsic ones, like money and status and image.

60 Case in point: Todd.

Todd: Seemed like the more money I've had in my life, the less freedom I've had. My level of freedom is higher, and I have a lot of joy.

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⁵ (her) gå imod

⁶ Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) amerikansk forfatter, hvis filosofiske hovedværk "Walden" hylder det enkle liv i naturen

⁷ *Walden Pond*: sø i Concord, Massachusetts, i USA

⁸ *moral exploration*: moralsk refleksion

⁹ Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) indisk politisk leder

¹⁰ filosofisk retning, hvor mennesket har en fri vilje til at skabe et liv i indre frihed, uafhængig af den ydre verden

¹¹ streng religiøs bevægelse, som dyrker en asketisk levevis

¹² kristen bevægelse, som værdsætter fred, lighed, sandhed og enkelhed