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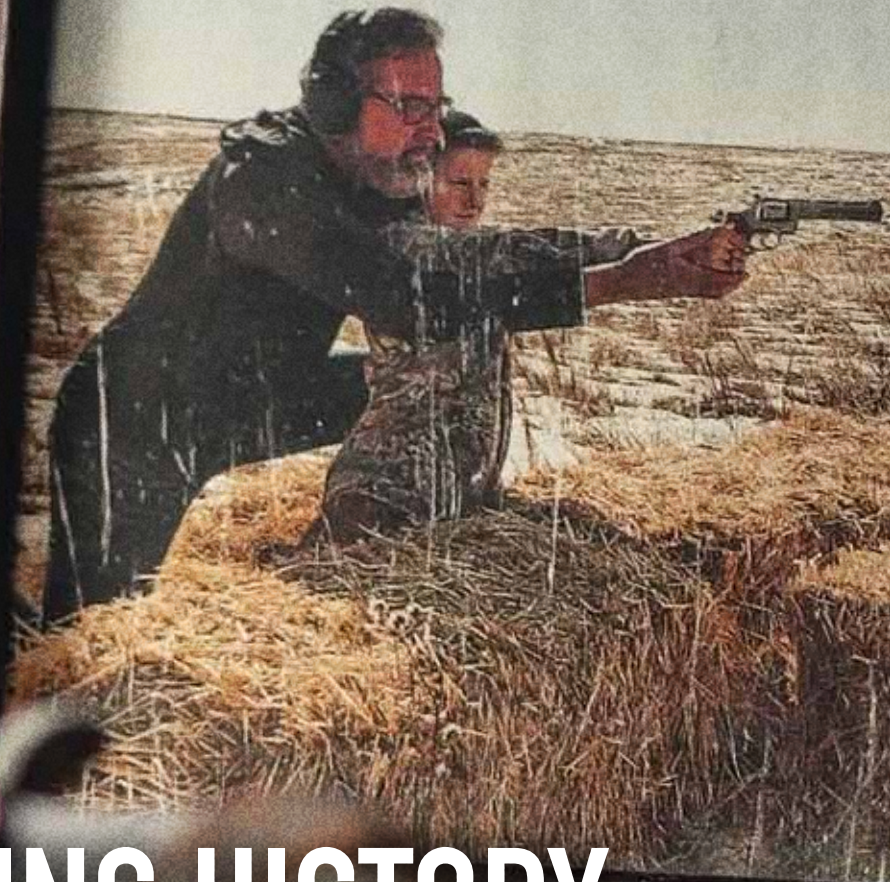
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## WIN HANDGUN OF THE MONTH 58



**TURNBULL RUGER  
MARK IV  
TARGET 10"**

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This year's SHOT Show may have been canceled, but you can still stay in the know with our coverage of the latest guns, ammo, gear and accessories of 2021. From Walther to Savage Arms, Federal to Winchester, Benchmade to Magpul, read our first looks of everything new online at [americanhandgunner.com](http://americanhandgunner.com) and [gunsmagazine.com](http://gunsmagazine.com).



### CARRYING TOO MUCH?

Are you carrying too much, not enough or simply the wrong stuff? What will firearms training look like under a Biden presidency? Host Brent T. Wheat and guests answer these questions and more on the *GUNS Magazine Podcast*. Stream new episodes every Friday on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Amazon Music, YouTube and [gunsmagazine.com/podcast](http://gunsmagazine.com/podcast).

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## WHEELGUN WEDNESDAY

### AMMO SHORTAGE

For gun owners across the country, finding ammo and primers on shelves has been like finding a needle in a haystack as hyper demand has led to a national shortage. What are you seeing at your local dealers? How have your shooting habits changed? We want to hear from you! Send us an email at [social@fmghq.com](mailto:social@fmghq.com) and share how the ammo shortage has affected you.



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## ENEMY TERRITORY

I love your magazine but it's really a struggle knowing the magazine and the Staff is published in an anti-gun state. Why don't you move to a state that supports gun ownership and isn't so wacky left and liberal?

Jim Atwater

Actually, we're scattered all across the country. Our editors are in AZ, MO, IN, CO, and I'm in South Carolina. Our video team is in AZ and our masterful designer is in Texas. I guess we're a national conglomerate! We do have staff in CA who have been there for decades, but we'd have to raise subscription prices a whole lot to pay for them to uproot their families just to move. So, as goofy as CA can be, I suspect we'll have some of our people there for a while. Think of it this way: We've stationed troops in enemy territory ... Sneaky, eh? —Tom



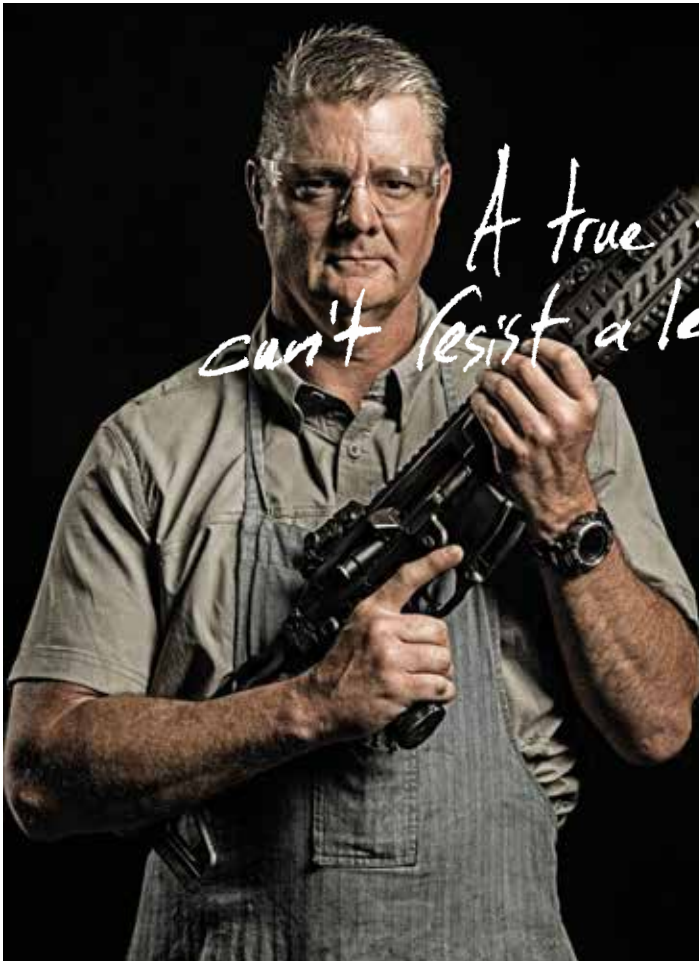
## Kind Words

I have been a reader/subscriber off and on for several years, and have never written, so I want to drop you a line to tell you how much I appreciate *American Handgunner*. I am grateful for all the wisdom and experience you and the other writers pass on. I enjoy the *Insider* column and look forward

to it every month. I also have learned a ton from Massad Ayoob over the years and read every one of his columns. John Connor is another I look forward to, although Will Dabbs is doing good work filling in on the *Guncrank Diaries*. John Taffin is another of my favorites — I love playing around with different handloads with my Smith

and Wesson models 686 and 629, and always find John's columns interesting and educational.

Last week, my family and I visited the Grand Canyon in Utah, and I realized we'd be driving right by Gary Reeder's custom shop. Since John has talked about Gary's custom work so much, we made a brief stop, and Gary



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was kind enough to spend a few minutes chatting with us. I loved his stories about hunting in South Africa with the custom .510 GNR there in the case in his shop, and my kids got a kick out of all the heads of game Gary and Mrs. Reeder have taken. Both of them were so personable and friendly. What a great experience!

Mike Fulton  
Broken Arrow, OK

### Anti-Aging Formula

I'm sitting here in my easy chair, earbuds pumping classic jazz into my ears while my wife watches a soccer match (cut her some slack, she's German) and reading the latest issue of *Handgunner*, and I noticed something a little off about the authors' photos accompanying their articles: they appear much younger than their live selves on the FMG YouTube streams. Either we have a case of "Reverse Dorian Gray Syndrome" [RDGS] where one's image stays young whilst the victim continues to age, or just plain old Middle Age Male Vanity [MAMV]. I suspect the latter. C'mon guys, either show us your true aged, yet still virile selves or go all the way and publish your 3rd Grade class photo. Or maybe some bare bottom on the bearskin rug action. Anything but these "Still-partying-like-it's-1999" pix. You're only fooling yourselves.

Las Vegas Rider

*I'm pretty sure it's a result of the "Miracle of gun ritin' for a career" halting the aging process. It's science. —Tom*

### Guncranks

I've enjoyed Will Dabbs' writings for a number of years, so I was pleased when I read he would be taking over the *Guncrank Diaries*. Usually, his columns show a sense of humor I appreciate in these humorless times, but his "Tale of Two Roys" was something special. It was a powerful piece I think rates up there with Connor's "Little Lizzie" column from a few years ago. Kudos to *American Handgunner* for their excellent taste in writers. Good Work.

Andy Barrett

I had to write to express my appreciation for Will Dabbs' *Guncrank Diaries* (Jan/Feb 21). I found it particularly poignant because my brother was a U.S. Navy pilot who was killed in a plane crash in 1968; he left behind a young wife and a one-month-old baby boy. We should never forget the importance of the constitution and the sacrifice of those who served to protect it.

I enjoy all of your writers, and

*Continued on page 72*



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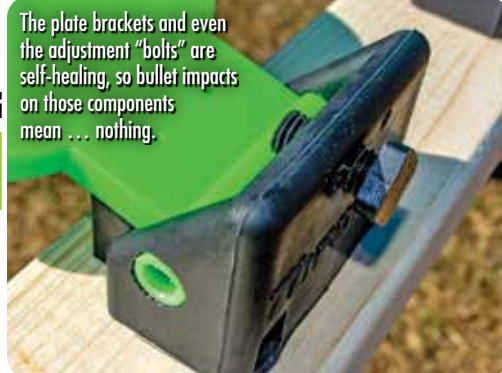


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## UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL-



# THROOM TARGETS

**H**ere's something you can't do with a steel plate rack ... blast away from contact distance with a .44 Magnum.

Okay, so this scenario isn't something we'd likely do anyway, but to make a point, that's precisely what I did with the new Throom Target plate rack system. And it was safe for all involved — including the plates.

You see, Throom Targets, formerly Newbold, are made from Shoot-Throo — a magic polymer material designed to take near-infinite abuse while asking for more. It's a pliable self-healing substance, much lighter than rubber and seemingly more durable. Bullets pass right through and as they exit, the material fills the newly created hole. It's kind of like the liquid metal guy from the movie *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* only the healing is instantaneous. And just like metal man, you can nail these targets with 12-gauge slugs if you want with no visible effects.

Since the targets are pass-through like paper, there is no minimum safe distance required because there is no target or bullet fragmentation. If you want to shoot them from 6" away with your belly gun, knock yourself out. If you want to put them a couple hundred yards downrange, that's fine too. Whatever your preferred distance, be aware caliber doesn't matter. I christened this plate rack with a S&W 629

.44 Magnum from a distance of two feet and ... it just didn't care. Take your pick and shoot rimfires, .50 BMG, or anything in between. Just don't use BBs or airgun pellets as they may bounce back.

Here's what makes them interesting. Since they have substance, even as a "pass through" target, they react, mainly by falling over. This means you can assemble a plate rack or dueling tree

and the "plates" do what you'd expect by falling down or flipping side to side. You'll experience all the joys of visual feedback. What you won't get is the noise or the weight. The targets themselves weigh next to nothing so you can tote around a complete plate rack and dueling tree in your car and set it up most anywhere in seconds.

There's more to love. The Throom

## AIMPOINT ACRO P-1 RED DOT SIGHT

**I**f you value "tuff stuff" be sure to check out the Aimpoint ACRO P-1 Handgun Red Dot Sight. Like most things Aimpoint, this one is built like a tank. Right off the bat, you'll notice it's fully enclosed, providing protection against knocks and dings associated with hard use and even daily carry. There are a few additional good reasons for this approach.

First, the delicate dot projection part of the system is sealed off from the world at large. That protects the sensitive parts from dust and moisture. In fact, the housing ensures this optic is not water resistant. It's waterproof. Big difference. This one can be submerged to a depth of 80 feet. Most of us probably won't be doing many underwater assaults, but like watches, a more rigorous waterproof rating means all the usual stuff like rain, sweat, humidity, gun oils and the like aren't going to cause any problems over the long haul. As for dust, perhaps you've noticed a starburst effect with other red dot sights? This can occur when the lens is dirty or when the dot projection mechanism picks up lint or debris. Not the case here, as all that is sealed within the housing.

There's another hidden benefit to the enclosed approach. In certain lighting conditions (think sun out in front of you) with lesser-quality red dot sights, the glare can show you a beautiful view of the "guts" of your red dot instead of the target through the glass. The enclosed housing of the ACRO helps eliminate this effect thanks to some built-in shading. That, combined with quality lens



You can shoot this plate rack from any distance you like, with no risk of splashback or ricochets.

engineers figured since the material is structurally sound and near impervious to repeated gunfire, why not make the mounting components out of the same stuff? The base units holding the plates are made from Shoot-Thru. Even the bolts that adjust the target angle are made from the magic polymer goo. In fact, while shooting, a bullet passed directly through one of the bolt heads, traveled inside the treaded body of the bolt, and exited the bottom. Upon inspection, there was no visible damage as the bolt self-healed, threads and all. Pretty impressive considering the bolt was barely larger in diameter than the 9mm bullet traveling through it.

Once you have the targets, you build your own stand using cheap and easily replaceable 2x4 lumber. I just cut

a bunch of 4-foot sections to serve as legs and crossbars and screwed the plate bases directly in place. The angle brackets are made from the same self-healing material, so they'll last 75% of forever as well — just replace the wood segments when they get shot up.

You can buy individual targets and assemble any type of shooting gallery you like, or you can purchase the components (less the wood) for the plate rack and dueling tree you see here. If you want to convert your plate rack to a swinging target setup, just flip the crossbar assembly upside down and you won't have to worry about resetting the targets.

For more info: [ThroomTargets.com](http://ThroomTargets.com)

coating, gives you optical clarity in all lighting conditions. In the worst-case scenario, the same housing provides a course sighting option by simply "aiming through the tube."

The ACRO has adjustable intensity settings selectable via buttons on the left side that give you six daylight and four night vision compatible options for the 3.5 MOA dot. The windage and elevation adjustment turrets are flush with the body, so once zeroed, you won't be knocking anything out of place. The battery compartment is accessible through the side of the unit, so every year and a half when you have to swap it out, you won't have to re-zero the ACRO.

The Aimpoint ACRO P-1 sealed housing provides not only extreme durability but visual benefits as well.



For more info: [Aimpoint.com](http://Aimpoint.com)

# Dillon PRECISION XL 750



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## BANISH (AND PREVENT) THOSE SCRATCHES!

Everyone hates a scratch. A scratch on your car, a tabletop and especially your gun. Scratches not only look bad, they can lead to rust on guns if left untreated because they can expose raw steel, so fixing them is important.

Repairing scratches can be easy to complex depending on the depth, location and underlying material. Pistol exteriors may be carbon steel, stainless steel, or polymer. Small parts can be steel or aluminum. Most of the time, scratches show up on blued carbon steel or stainless-steel pistols.

## BLUEING SCRATCH REPAIRS

The first thing I do is look at the depth of the scratch, see if any surrounding area has been damaged. That damage needs to be addressed *without making a larger repair area.*

If the scratch is small, I de-grease the area with some acetone in preparation for application of a small amount of instant blue. I like Brownells' liquid "Oxpho Blue" because it works well and is easy to use. It goes on like water and turns carbon steel blue to protect it from rusting.

I like to go one step further than Brownells' instructions. I have a small butane torch on my bench, which I use to heat the scratch area. This removes

all moisture from the metal, dries any solvent and opens the pores of the metal to better accept the instant blue.

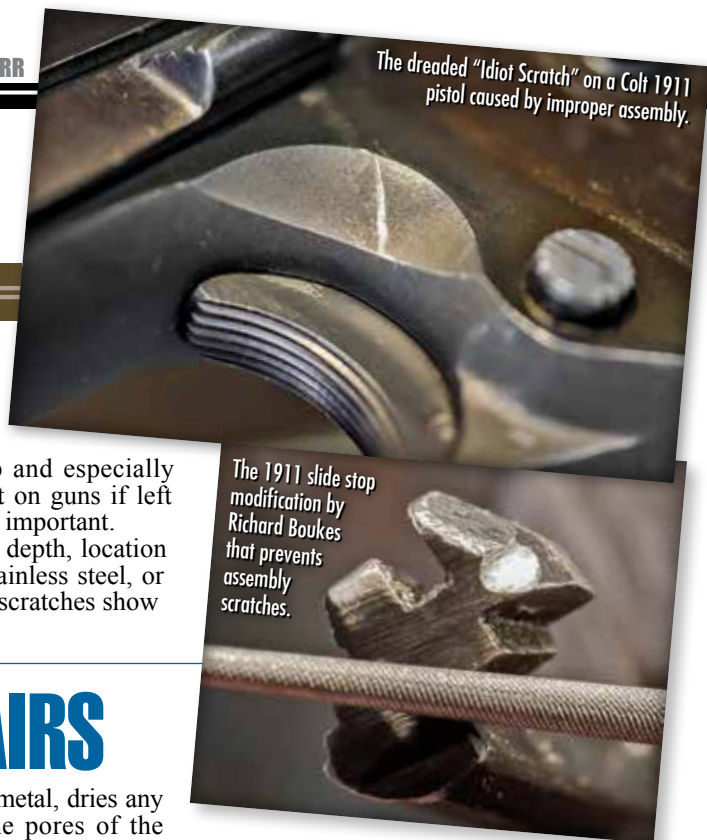
Once the area is clean, decreased and heated, I use a number of tools to apply the "cold blue." I don't want to just wash the area with cold blue. I want to only treat the smallest possible area. Washing can change the color of the surrounding metal and make things look worse. Sometimes for a small scratch I'll use a small needle-like pointed tool to apply a tiny bit of blue to the scratch itself. For larger scratches I

## STAINLESS & THE BIG OOPS

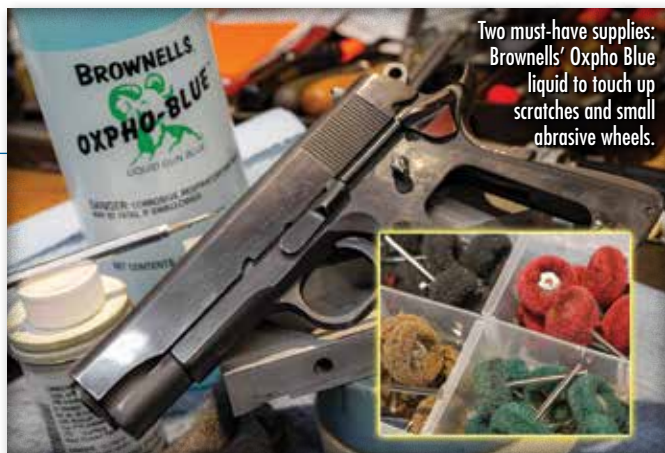
Stainless scratches easily. The only real way to hide it is to refinish the scratched area. So, if it's a small part, a few strokes with 400 or finer sandpaper can erase the scratch. For matte finish areas, a light blasting with fine glass beads or aluminum oxide will hide most blemishes. For deeper scratches, some file work, a Scotch Brite pad or wheel might be needed. I found a variety pack of small abrasive wheels on Amazon, which are color coded by grit. They can get into small areas well.

Then there are scratches on large flat areas like a 1911 slide or frame. For these I first remove all the parts that will allow me to work freely around the area. I use various grits of sandpaper sheets on a flat surface and drag the frame or slide across lightly. Start slow and work with just enough pressure to remove the scratch — not the rollmarks or serial number. Use finer paper as you go to match the original texture on the pistol. This will require a re-blue job.

You might consider prevention strategies to avoid scratches like the legendary 1911 "Idiot Scratch" caused by dragging the slide stop pin across the frame during take-down



use a 000 hobby paint brush or even a Q-Tip. Once the blue starts to affect the scratch, I wipe it off. I don't want the scratch to be darker than the original blue. If my repair is too light, I start the process over again until I get a good match. Apply oil to the repair as soon as possible once you're satisfied with the color.



or reassembly. Richard "Log Man" Boukes came up with a great modification for the slide stop. By making a small notch on the lug at the back side of the slide stop using a round file, the slide stop can easily be inserted in the frame, slipping past the spring-loaded detent straight in without dragging against the frame. To do this Richard uses a small 1/8" round needle file. I start with a triangle file for the first cut to avoid the file slipping out of position and finish with the round file. I show clients this modification and the proper way to insert the slide stop. Their reaction is priceless. 

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## HOLSTER DRAWER WARS

**A**mong those of us who carry, the collection of unused holsters is a universal problem. For me it's four drawers, stuffed to the gills. As an instructor and gun writer, perhaps my collection is ... excessive.



These three Bullard Leather Company holsters handle David's favorite carry guns (left to right): medium-size double-stacks, Government 1911s and Commander 1911s.



### Drawer 1: LEATHER

The first holster I pulled out was my cowboy by Triple K. Complete with leg tie-down and hammer loop, it fits most SA revolvers.

Next is an OWB Bianchi made for .38/.357 revolvers — ideal for cross-draw appendix carry. I'm wondering why I don't do that more often because I have some nifty revolvers. With the resurgence in revolver popularity, I may throw one of these in drawer four for a while. Next up is an MTM Custom Leather for a 4.25" 1911 — one of my favorite guns to carry.

The Milt Sparks Summer Special is an IWB holster that's received rave reviews for years. Mine is cut for a 1911 Commander, and it's canted so it wears best at 4 o'clock. Also in this drawer is my dad's FBI snubby holster made by Bucheimer Clark. Dad was a game warden, carrying an S&W Model 10 in this holster. I'd love to wear it, but it was made before the advent of wide holster belts.



This Triple K leather holster fits many SA cowboy guns.



### Drawer 2: KYDEX

The Kydex drawer has my first carry holster, a CrossBreed for a Taurus 24/7 Pro. It fits many other double-stack semi-automatics. There are several CrossBreed holsters in that drawer, some with leather backing and some with horsehide. There are two almost identical rigs made by White Hat holsters: a red, white and blue one for semi-automatics and a black one for a revolver.

Several Alien Gear holsters are in here, and I like every one of them. My earliest Alien Gear has leather backing; the later ones have a soft, pliable backing. Although I've worn IWB most often, I no longer work at a downtown office, so I can comfortably carry OWB when I want to. One I picked up for OWB is a compact model made by Phalanx Defense Systems. The packaging said it would fit over 150 different guns.

I've got several OWB paddle holsters in this drawer. When Texas started allowing open carry, I used these in class to demonstrate various retention methods. One of these, branded by SIG SAUER, has a retention device that pops into the trigger guard when the gun is holstered. Drawing the gun requires pushing and holding a button on the outside of the holster — what we call Level 2 Retention. Another, branded by SIG but made by IWI, is a Level 3 Retention Holster. It has the trigger guard retention plus a hood that snaps over the back of the slide. Drawing requires pushing a lever button with your finger while pushing a plunger button with your thumb. It takes a lot of practice to be able to do it quickly, but nobody is going to be able to grab the gun.

### Drawer 3: CATCH-ALL

I've a couple of N82 Tactical holsters and I love the backing. The one that works for me has an elastic pocket for the gun with a belt clip that is sewed on.

You'd think I was an Uncle Mike's distributor by the number of their holsters in my drawer. They're

in my truck and stashed in various places around the house too. Uncle Mike's holsters are inexpensive, come in various configurations and do what they're designed to do.

This drawer is home to ComfortTac belly bands, fanny packs and ComfortTac holsters in various sizes. The ComfortTac holsters have foam and some type of retention material between the layers of fabric in their holsters, so they hold their shape nicely.



The Bianchi 101 Foldaway holds an amazing number of small and medium-framed handguns.

### Drawer 4: THE REGULARS

First up is the Bianchi 101 Foldaway — a life-changer. I get up in the morning, put it on my belt, and I'm ready for the day. Want to carry a .38 snubby? Stick it in. How about a 1911 Commander, G3, G19, a P229, M&P, Shield, XD or XD-M? Sure. Whatever reasonably sized handgun I want to carry fits in the foldaway and is easily covered by my shirttail.

Sometimes I want IWB concealment and use a Bullard Leather Company Dual Carry (IWB or OWB) leather holster. I have three: Commander, Government and one for double-stacks.

Sometimes I carry a Taurus 856 UL in a DeSantis Nemesis pocket holster. The rubberized exterior grabs the pocket and keeps the holster in place on the draw. There's also an extension keeping it oriented upright in the pocket.

There you have it, one man's holster collection — developed through plenty of trial and error!





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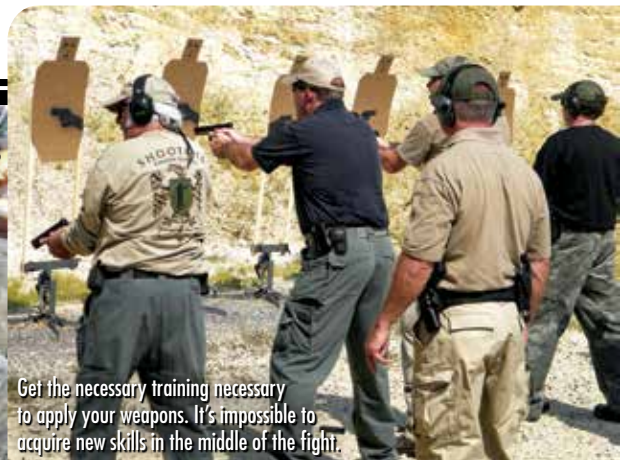
# BRAINS OVER BALLISTICS

Both of my grandfathers were lawmen, one a deputy sheriff. My mom's dad was with the Huntsville, Ala. police department; he eventually became assistant chief. Times were different then, especially the equipment officers carried. I still have their revolvers, badges, aluminum "knuc's" and yes, black-jacks. And yet, while much has changed, the principles to victory are still the same. It's all about being mentally ready. This is even more true for self-defense.

Concealed carry is a more contemporary concept. In the "old days" not many people carried firearms for defense. Sure, lots of folks had a pistol at home, but few carried them concealed, ready for protection. In lots of states, it was difficult to obtain a carry permit. All began to change in the mid and late 1980s. Those who did carry usually had a small frame revolver — a J-Frame Smith or a Colt Detective — shoved into a pocket. It was extremely rare to see a semi-auto in a holster.



Modern gear, while impressive, is still limited by the operator's will and decision making.



Get the necessary training necessary to apply your weapons. It's impossible to acquire new skills in the middle of the fight.

## OUTGUNNED, NOT OUTSMARTED

Concealed carry is much more common today, and the hardware has evolved. Semi-automatics are the norm, especially small, compact pistols which are easily concealed and extremely reliable. But some things never change. Defense is still about being smarter than the threat. Sure, sometimes force is necessary. Solving the problem, as safely and efficiently as possible, still involves using your brain.

I remember my mom and grandmother telling the story about how bootleggers hoped to ambush my grandfather late one night as he returned home. (He refused their bribes.) While they sat outside the house, armed with Thompson machine guns, Gramps, one of the smartest men I've ever known, simply slipped around the back alleys and snuck into the house through the basement. He left the same way, the bad guys never aware. Outgunned? Sure, but not outsmarted.

Responding to danger is about problem solving, often at high speed. Trouble appears. You're forced to make life-and-death decisions in fractions of a second. The entire fight will probably only last a few seconds total. The key is Boyd's O.O.D.A. Loop.

## ACTION STRATEGY

Many consider Boyd, a fighter pilot, to be the Sun Tzu of contemporary times. His sphere of influence was enormous, but he's best known for the O.O.D.A. Loop: *Observe, Orient, Decide, Act*. Pay attention, all of this applies to everyday life, too.

You "Observe" a problem. Next, you "Orient," gathering details about the situation. After considering possible actions, you "Decide," choosing the appropriate response. Finally, you "Act." In a conflict, the person who makes the quickest decisions and acts is the one who wins.

Most people agree action beats reaction. Which is true, but only on a very simplistic level. Fighting is not a simple act/react sequence; it's more like a chess game. White always moves first, but this doesn't mean they win.

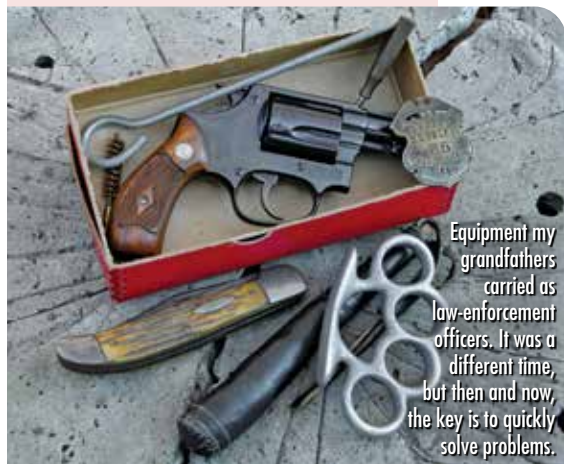
Initially, you're reacting — they started the fight. As soon as possible you have to make the threat to react to you, force them back to the beginning of their loop, the "Observe" stage. Moving

is one of the best ways to achieve this. This buys you a little more time to gather another detail or two and immediately apply your next action. The goal is to never let the opponent get back to the "Act" phase of their loop.

When it comes to hardware for self-defense, yes, things have evolved. Today it's rare to see someone carrying a revolver. Yet, wheelguns are still an outstanding choice for defensive use. When you look at the data on defensive shootings — not counting law enforcement engagements — the most common numbers of shots fired are three and four. It's unusual to see high round counts; often just the presence of a firearm, along with verbal commands, solves the problem.

The point is, it's all about the software side, or the state of one's mind and heart. Having the ability to mentally solve the problem, and the willingness to do the "hard thing" is much more important than what you're armed with. Who knows how weapon technology will evolve in the future. Or, if the gun control advocates have their way, devolve or dissolve. We may all be carrying wheel guns.

Regardless of what the future brings, it will still be the person behind the weapon as opposed to the technology in front of them.



Equipment my grandfathers carried as law-enforcement officers. It was a different time, but then and now, the key is to quickly solve problems.

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## .25 ACP: LABOR OF LOVE OR INSANITY?

I like to push my reloading hobby to extremes. Most reloaders don't bother with the .25 ACP, but if you incorporate a few tips, you can make accurate and reliable baby cartridges.

### THE AMAZING (OR NOT) .25 ACP

Sometimes, just for fun, I go to my local range or gun store and talk about the terminal effectiveness of the .25. While I've carried a .25 ACP as a third gun, it's not exactly my recommended defensive cartridge. Let's fuel this fire.

As a police officer, I've had plenty of cases where mouse guns were used in a crime. Two such cases stand out. One was a drive-by where the victim reported to the hospital with a bullet lodged near his heart. It was definitely a .25 ACP bullet, but had flown through the steel doorpost of an '80s-era vehicle and his bicep near the shoulder, until it stopped at its not quite fatal position. I was thinking the same thing the emergency physician voiced: "A .25 Auto did that?"

The second case was a man shot five times in the chest after his ex-girlfriend lured him out to an orchard to shoot him. He telephoned dispatch and calmly directed an ambulance to his location. He recovered and walked out of the hospital the next day.



Handle the case as little as possible. Lindsey uses a Redding T-7 turret press and Lee Pour Thru Expanding Die. He only touches the brass once from empty case to completed round.



Sort your brass. Several .25 ACP manufacturers make non reloadable cartridges. No one likes to find "decapper killers" the hard way.

## RELOADING SECRETS FOR .25 ACP

Handle components as little as possible. If you don't have a turret press, this is your encouragement to get one. There's no single tool that can reduce cartridge handling besides a dedicated progressive machine, but many accessories, like automatic case feeders, don't work with .25.

The Redding T-7 has outstanding rigidity, and the open area gives plenty of room for fumbling hands like mine, but its greatest quality is the sensitivity — you'll need it for priming the .25. The Lee Precision Carbide 3 Die set I use comes with a powder through expanding die, a critical component of .25 Auto reloading.

If you've been reloading for any length of time, you can see where I'm going. *Put the brass in only once.*

Size, then prime on the downstroke. Index to the expander die. Expand, then drop in your powder while the brass is fully inserted into the die. Index to the seating die. Seat a bullet.

The .25 ACP brass is tiny. You don't want to overhandle it.

When I load .25 Auto, I use two scales: beam and digital. If we used conventional reloading rules like, "Begin at a recommended weight. Increase the load in 10% increments," a single increase could be disastrous. For a .25 Auto, use increments less than 5% only. You'll need something that can distinguish tenths of a grain. The digital scale is for monitoring and weighing the finished product.

Measure using volume, inspect with weight. I have an old Redding powder measure similar to the current Competition Powder Measure. It has a micrometer adjustment that, once set, can throw more accurate loads than I can trickle into the pan. I set it to the desired weight, then continually check the throw. For my .25, I used Unique, which is a lot harder to meter than something like AA#2. I measure with my beam scale, set the powder measure, and spot check often.

### COMPONENT CHOICES

When you choose a powder to use for reloading a .25 auto, you'll almost always need to use a fast powder. There really isn't a lot of capacity for a slower powder, nor do most .25s provide enough barrel for a complete ignition of a slower powder. *Fast powders and a small burning chamber can be a recipe for disaster.* I picked Unique because it is relatively fast burning but gives the user a wider margin for experimenting. Most .25 Auto loads will get you to around 90% case capacity, which is one reason why .25s are often consistent across a chronograph. You're looking for speeds around 725-770 fps.

There are even fewer manufacturers of bullets or molds in .25 Auto. My "go to" place for bullets when I'm not pouring my own is Bear Creek Bullets in Waterford, Calif. makes a 55-grain LRN that loads, feeds, and stabilizes well. Their proprietary lube is unique, and they've catered to competitive shooters for three decades. Bear Creek's owner Steve will tell everyone he taught me to shoot. If he wishes to claim my poor shooting, I'm okay with that.

One must really love reloading to tackle the tiny .25, but believe me, it's worth it. 

More info: [BearCreekSupplyBullets.com](http://BearCreekSupplyBullets.com)



For this batch, Lindsey used Unique, new Prvi Partizan brass, Bear Creek Supply bullets and CCI #500 primers. The results were outstanding.



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## HORNADY HANDGUN HUNTER PERFORMS AFIELD

Hornady's Handgun Hunter ammo is available in popular handgun cartridges, all featuring Hornady's Monoflex copper bullet.

It's not every day new products are introduced for handgun hunters. As a matter of fact, handgun hunting often takes a back seat to home and personal protection guns and gear. So, when new firearms, ammo, or any other handgun hunting-related items hit the radar screen, inquiring minds want to know more.

Recently our friends at Hornady have launched a new line of Handgun Hunter ammunition. I couldn't wait to get my grubby hands on some. This new offering from Hornady is available in 9mm, 40 S&W, 10mm Auto, .357 Mag., .44 Mag.,

454 Casull, and 460 S&W Mag. The new ammo utilizes a copper alloy Monoflex bullet with elastomer material inside hollow point cavity of the bullet.

Don't ask me what elastomer material is but Hornady experimented with a lot of stuff to get it right. According to Hornady, this elastomer interior expands rapidly upon impact, causing the copper jacket to mushroom compliments of the pre-cut petals or skives. Deep penetration results with massive energy transfer.

## HUNT PREP

I had the full intention of giving this ammo a serious trial run during a handful of hunts, but no thanks to the coronavirus, several of my hunts were canceled. Due to travel restrictions and other pitfalls, these hunts just didn't materialize. Thankfully, I didn't have to get tested for the virus before hunting whitetail on my farm — and the property was open for deer hunting business. Best of all, I didn't have to wear a mask!

Long before season I took the .44 Magnum Hornady Handgun Hunter ammo to the range. I would be shooting

This high-racked 8-pointer fell victim to Hornady's Handgun Hunter .44 Mag. from a Freedom Arms Model 83.



a Freedom Arms Model 83 with a 10" barrel. This is a serious hunting revolver with great accuracy. If the ammo didn't shoot well in this Freedom

Arms, I would have reservations. The .44 Mag. offering comes in a 200-grain Monoflex bullet. Five shots over the Oehler 35P chronograph revealed a velocity of 1,428 fps. After sighting-in at 50 yards, I marched the target out to 100 yards. The results were not disappointing. Several 5-shot groups were inside 3". Put this revolver in the hands of somebody who can shoot a revolver well and the groups would be tighter.

I was more than pleased with the accuracy but was anxious to see how the bullet would perform on game — like a big whitetail buck.

## LOOKING FOR LOVE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES

Opening morning found my wife and me sitting in an elevated blind, hoping for a mature buck to appear in the food plot we were watching. The rut was in full swing and the first big 8-pointer we saw was chasing a doe so fast we weren't able to get a shot. *Bucks get crazy searching for gratuitous sex.* My wife usually gets the first opportunity to fill her tag, so I had to wait a couple of days before she connected on another dandy 8-point — who was also looking for love.

It was later in the season when my opportunity came along. The wind was howling early in the morning and I wasn't expecting much activity. Well, that's when it usually happens — when you least expect it. The high racked 8-pointer came past my stand while trolling for chicks. He stopped momentarily behind a small cluster of brush and I couldn't see him. At least I had time to get my earmuffs on and a sandbag up on the window ledge. I cradled the Freedom Arms in the bag and cocked the hammer. When the buck appeared from the brush, he was on the move. A few short

grunts from the grunt tube and *he froze in his tracks — just 38 steps away.* The buck was slightly quartering toward me when the hammer fell. Immediately I could see the front shoulder was hammered as he disappeared quickly into the woods. It was an easy and short follow-up. The 200-grain Monoflex bullet had broken the shoulder, plowing through the vitals and making an exit on the opposite side. No bullet recovery possible.

Out of curiosity, I wanted to see what velocity some of these other cartridges achieved. On a chilly 37-degree morning, I set up the Oehler 35P and ran five rounds of 10mm thru a Springfield Armory 1911 TRP Operator with a 6" barrel. Average velocity was 1,352 fps. Next up: .357 Mag. in a S&W Model 686 with a 6" barrel obtained 1,338 fps.

In the coming months I look forward to more hunting with Hornady's Handgun Hunting ammo for black bear, hogs and plains game in Africa. I have no doubt it's going to work well.



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Serena firing a Tanfoglio Defiant Ltd. Master with JoAnna Wilson of Patriot Defense.



Competitive shooter Athena Lee (left) and instructor Shelia Hoekstra (middle) coach Serena on proper grip at the She Never Quit event.

## IT'S NOT A RIFLE... GET A GRIP

I don't remember the exact words, but I do know my immediate response was an affirmative head nod, followed by a silent "yes, ma'am." I gripped the 9mm Beretta 92F S Elite more tightly and pressed my left thumb against the pistol frame. Ping! The steel rang.

The 2020 *She Never Quit* fundraising event, run by the Women's Outdoor Media Association, brought women from across the country to have fun, shoot and learn from one another. Over the course of three days, each participant had the opportunity to fire 51 different firearms while being coached by professional instructors and competitive shooters.

I came to volunteer (help in the kitchen), take photos and write about the event. To my surprise and delight, after several hours cleaning a bloodied fridge (someone left meat to defrost with nothing underneath it), I was told to report to the range the next morning.

Fittingly, the first guns I fired were rifles. As cliché as it sounds, shooting them felt like home. My head rested naturally on the stock. I pulled the butt into my shoulder. I relaxed. Pistols came next.

The steel targets were close, perhaps five yards away at most. The paint had already chipped off, so only the satisfying "ping" of a bullet striking steel revealed the fate of each shot. Approximately half of my first few shots announced their arrival at the correct and final destination. The instructor at this station advised me to grip the gun more tightly and to press my left thumb (I'm right-handed) against the left side of the pistol frame. I carried these tips through the remainder of the event and was successful most of the time. It was a confidence booster.

## ASK AN EXPERT

When I returned home, I consulted George Harris, co-founder of the SIG SAUER Academy. Though I've yet to meet George in person, he's a dedicated mentor to me and someone I consider family. I wanted to understand why a minor grip adjustment seemed to make such a difference.

We arranged a Zoom call, and he took a look at my grip with my Kimber Micro .380 carry pistol. My hands were for the most part in the correct position. George has a way of instructing that makes sense; he's able to explain the why and how behind things I observe on the range.

Putting light pressure against the frame with my thumb stopped the gun from going to the left when pressing the trigger. He also recommended I keep my support hand index finger tight under the trigger guard to brace the pistol. This keeps the muzzle from dipping when I pull the trigger.

## GRIP

One thing I still failed to understand was how tightly to grip the gun. To my chagrin, there's no hard and fast answer. To my relief, my thought process wasn't completely off-track.

Countless shots downrange with dedicated competition rifles have given me muscle memory and an automatic firing process. The rifle should rest in the non-firing hand. Clenching your hand tightly around the fore-end increases muscle tension which increases inconsistency. Natural point of aim is a product of muscle relaxation. To this same end, I would grip a pistol more tightly with my firing hand than my non-firing hand, not realizing I needed both to build a steady position.

George clarified control of a pistol depends on surface contact. Gripping the gun too tightly can not only tire you prematurely, but limits index finger mobility.

Why can gripping a gun too tightly be a detriment? Again, think surface area contact. Too much pressure can cause the palm and fingers to wrinkle. Picture the raisin-like ridges on your fingertips after a few hours in a swimming pool. The spaces created by these wrinkles are places where your hand no longer contacts the firearm, making it

Serena putting some new tips to the test with a Beretta APX.



more likely to slip.

Also, your index finger needs to be able to move freely for proper trigger control. A death grip can limit index finger mobility. To test this, hold your firing hand in front of you as if holding a pistol. Then take the index finger of your opposite hand and pull back on the webbing between your thumb and index finger of your firing hand. Try to move your trigger finger. You'll find it's more difficult to move it with the extra pressure than without.

Understanding why something works — or doesn't work — is key to improving. That's why I never stop asking questions! They open doorways to new knowledge.





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## SINGLE-ACTION



These are Duke's 3rd Generation Colt SAA .44-40s for which he searched out .44 Special cylinders, turning them into "convertibles."



This Ruger New Model Blackhawk Convertible has 9mm and .357 Magnum cylinders.

## VERSATILITY

It's odd how some things stick in your mind and others fly away as in a stiff wind. For instance, I can't remember to whom about 40 years ago I sold a 6"-barreled S&W Model 19 .357 Magnum. (I'd like to have it back.) However, I clearly remember a magazine article Skeeter Skelton wrote over 50 years gone by. In it he related in his youth

he somehow got his hands on a Colt SAA Bisley Model stamped .41 Colt. But it was minus its cylinder. He took it to the local gun expert who put a .38-40 cylinder in it and said, "There, now you have a .38-40 because .41 Colts and .38-40s use the same barrel bore/groove dimensions." (Or something like that. Remember it was over 50 years ago.) The young Skeeter was confused then as was I being a young reader.

## CYLINDER SWAP MEET

Right now on my desk is a 1904 vintage Colt SAA .38-40. With it is a .41 Colt cylinder that fits and times perfectly. What's more the old sixgun shoots fine with proper ammo from either cylinder. According to a factory spec sheet dated 1922, Colt used 0.401/0.402" for groove diameter for all their .41s and .38-40s. Factory loads for .41 Colt at that time had 0.386" soft lead bullets with deep hollowbases, so they would expand to grip rifling. Factory .38-40 loads used 0.400" bullets.

Such a capability is one of the single action genre of handguns' best benefits. As long as barrel bore specs are the same, switching cylinders to a different cartridge is a cinch. All that must be done with traditional SAs is half cock the hammer, open the loading gate, pull the base pin and drop out the current cylinder. To install another just reverse the process. With Ruger New Model single actions just start with opening the loading gate.

Ruger still catalogs their .357 Magnum/9mm Luger and .45 Colt/.45 Auto New Model Blackhawk Convertibles, along with their .22 Single Six Convertible with .22 LR and .22 WMR cylinders. I've owned or used them all. Once I was loaned a rare New Model Blackhawk .38-40/40 S&W convertible that shot superbly. However, I totally missed the .30 Carbine/.32-20 New Model Blackhawk Convertible.

Colt made a small run of their 4" barreled "Storekeeper" Models with both .45 Colt and .45 Auto cylinders and sold many more 3" barreled "Sheriff's Models" with both .44 Special and .44-40 cylinders. I had one of the former. With the .44 Special cylinder in place, I still use one of the latter with shot loads as my primary rattlesnake revolver during warm months.

Perhaps the most unusual dual cylindered single action I've ever owned was from the now defunct United

Duke once owned this rare U.S. Firearms "Battle of Britain" single action.



It was caliber stamped .45 Automatic but also came with a .45 Colt cylinder.

States Firearms Company. They called it their Battle of Britain Single-Action. It was full blued, beautifully crafted with 5½" barrel, lanyard looped in the butt and caliber stamped .45 Automatic. Of course, it also came with a .45 Colt cylinder.

## VERSATILITY PAYS OFF

These last few years I've been picking up good Colt SAAs if the price is reasonable and inevitably my storage area was getting crowded. Then one day I got a brainstorm, "Why keep my two 3rd Generation .44 Specials? Why not sell them and let the money raised finance .44 Special cylinders for my 3rd Generation .44-40s?" I did just that but must say the search wasn't quick or simple for I needed one nickel-plated and the other blued. I spent months searching classified ads on websites or gunbroker.com auctions, but eventually my persistence paid off. The blued one had to be engraved with a gold line inlaid around it. This wasn't a problem as I knew the SAA's original engraver. It just added time and money to the project.

Now some very intelligent reader is thinking, "But, your .44-40s are factory sighted for 200-grain bullets and will shoot high with the 240/250-grain bullets normal for .44 Specials. Correct! But it just so happens I have a nice four-cavity bullet mold for 200-grain round nose .44 bullets of 0.430". So, my self-made convertibles are easy to hit with using either cylinder.

In a time when handguns are becoming increasingly utilitarian, I appreciate single actions for their gracefulness and versatility.



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The modern Daisy Buck 105 on top is the obvious heir apparent to the storied original Will bought for \$7 back in 1973. Adjusted for inflation the current version is half the cost of the '70s-era gun.

My favorite sixth-grader found the new Daisy Buck 105 to his liking.



## THE CIRCLE OF LIFE:

# DAISY BUCK 105

I pursue firearms like a weasel stalks a hot dog. The hunt imbues me with a certain singularity of purpose. I meticulously plan my conquest and then pursue it like a hellhound until I've made it mine. However, during a recent trek through Walmart I experienced some serendipitous spontaneity.

With the horsepower of 11,484 stores, Walmart has the clout to keep prices low. It was this more than anything that first caught my eye. There nestled amongst the stove fuel, life jackets, archery supplies, and deer lure was a bare-bones Daisy BB gun for a mere \$17.96. Just glancing at it brought back remarkable visceral memories.

### In The Beginning

I grew up in the Mississippi Delta, the son of a college football star and a beauty queen, and we were well acquainted with the outdoors. Weekends were spent in a modest travel trailer kept parked on the river side of the levee. Hunting, fishing and scampering about terrorizing the countryside were my standard weekend fare.

At age seven, I formally announced I wished to buy a gun. There was a lever-action Daisy repeater on the wall at the local Otasco for \$7 calling my name. I held out little hope for success.

Much to my amazement, my folks acquiesced. Mom seemed reticent, but dad was forever the bad influence. He even offered to pay half, but \$3.50 was a veritable king's ransom back then.

I gutted my piggybank and tore the house apart, searching for loose change. At the terminus of my quest, I beheld exactly \$3.50, mostly in pennies. I secured my fortune in a brown paper sack, planning to strike out for Otasco



What started out as a 5-shot 12-meter group eventually became a 50-shot 12-meter group. It's tough to show restraint when ammo costs \$3 for 1,500 rounds.

the following day with my dad.

We arose early and got to the hardware store when it opened. In my exuberance, however, I lost my footing somewhere near the power tools and fumbled my paper sack. The bag exploded and pennies rolled everywhere from Clarksdale, Miss., to Budapest, Hungary. My dreams dashed, I descended into a fit of less-than-manly sobs.

Ah, dads. It was just one of those priceless moments. He hefted me to my feet with his granite-like grip and smiled.

"Find what you can," he said. "I'll take care of the rest."

At that moment, I learned a great deal about the fine art of parenting well.

### This Guy's First Gat

The gun was all cold blue steel with a plastic woodgrain stock. In point of

fact, the weapon was actually painted blue. It ultimately launched untold thousands of BBs. Along the way, I enjoyed some extraordinary feats of marksmanship. You do something long enough and amazing things inevitably happen. *That's the inimitable power of random.*

I once killed a bumblebee in flight. I also dropped a sparrow on the wing with a single shot from the hip. We'll not discuss how many times I attempted those things and failed. I used the little gun to launch a few venomous snakes to their eternal damnation and ventilated enough disused beverage cans to populate a proper WWII-era scrap drive. I shot the gun until it just wouldn't shoot anymore and then retired it to its place of honor on the wall. The little blue Daisy BB gun sparked a career that has led all the way up to this very moment.

### Today's Generation

The modern iteration is delightfully accurate. The trajectory it describes becomes parabolic out beyond about 30 meters, but that's half the fun. My chronograph averaged 273 fps. Shooting off the back porch, I can arc BBs into stumps out in the lake all day long once I get the elevation right. Bracketing distant targets is more akin to adjusting artillery than basic rifle marksmanship.

I have dumped some obscene amounts of money on guns that required special papers or were wielded in places most remarkable. I have also dropped a 20-spot, taking my kids out for burgers. Trust me, even as a graduate-level gun nerd \$18 at Walmart for the ultimate backyard plinking machine is money quite well spent.



For more info: [Daisy.com](http://Daisy.com)

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# LAW ENFORCEMENT'S DOUBLE ACTION ONLY RATIONALE

**H**ated by Jeff Cooper, loved by police liability lawyers, double action only (DAO) duty pistols are a breed all their own.

From the late 1890s on cops were trained to cock their service revolvers to light-pull SA on the range, and reserve DA shooting for emergencies. This lingered with some departments even as late as the third quarter 20th Century, though most figured out long before then almost any line of duty shooting was an emergency, and the emphasis had to be on DA.

About half a century ago, LAPD became the first major agency to render all service revolvers DAO, for two reasons. Under stress in gunpoint situations, it was easy to unintentionally fire a cocked revolver. Second, it left officer and department alike open to false allegations of negligence the hammer had been cocked even if it wasn't. Miami PD, NYPD, Montreal, Canada Police and more followed with DAO revolvers.

Factory S&W DAO Model 64 (left) could not be cocked like the Ruger GP100 (right).



## HYBRID DAO PISTOLS

**W**hen cops stuck with DAO autos clamored for easier triggers, SIG and H&K answered with similar-but-different designs. Each bypassed the "exact same trigger pull for every shot" feature. The DAK (Double Action, Kellerman in homage to its in-house designer) had a relatively long but super-light 6.5-lb. pull from rest or full reset,

## DAO AUTOS

**T**he '70s and particularly the early '80s saw the "high capacity nine" becoming the gun of choice among cocaine cowboys and gangbangers, and police unions sought firepower parity. Fearing cocked and locked guns, chiefs who adopted autos mostly limited them to traditional double actions, which self-cocked after the first shot and required a decocking lever to be hit when the shooting ended. Cops unaccustomed to these guns occasionally fired in the line of stressful duty and forgot to decock, creating a safety problem setting the stage for negligent discharges. The solution? The DAO semi-auto.

When in the late '80s through early '90s the two largest municipal police departments in the U.S. finally authorized semi-autos for their rank and file, both went DAO. Then and now, NYPD's 36,000 officers have been limited to the S&W 5946, the SIG P226 DAO, and the GLOCK with super-heavy (12-lb.) NY-2 trigger. Chicago PD's 13,000 sworn pistol packers were initially limited to

and a shorter reset option needing a bit over 8 lbs. of pull, both in the same pistol. The LEM (Law Enforcement Modification) was described by the late, great Todd Louis Green as an SA auto with a long trigger take-up for the first shot. It's been my experience H&K fans like the LEM more than most SIG fans like the DAK.

Law enforcement has trended toward the lighter weight, lower cost, and ease of shooting that comes with polymer-framed, striker-fired pistols like the GLOCK, which has been the single most popular brand. Even those have a bit of a "DAO legacy."

We've mentioned NYPD and the NY-2 trigger. When St. Paul, Minn. became the first large PD to adopt the GLOCK 17, and Miami PD soon followed, both issued them with 8-lb. triggers. When NYSP became America's



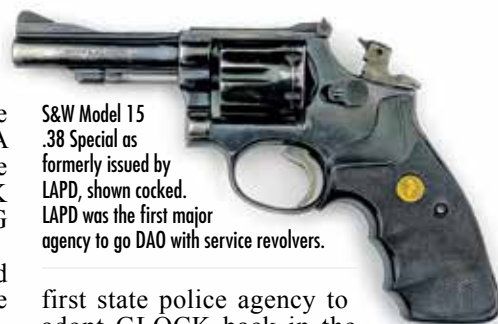
Two classic DAO 9mms: S&W 5946 (left) and SIG P226 DAO (right).

DAO hammer-fired guns by Beretta, Ruger, SIG and S&W, with GLOCKS and other striker guns not authorized until considerably later.

Beretta, SIG and S&W were the main purveyors of police duty pistols, and they all saw the rapid ascent of their new arch-competitor GLOCK — in part due to ATF classifying the GLOCK as DAO. S&W designed the one with the best trigger — light, smooth and relatively short, but lacking second strike capability because the slide had to cycle to re-set the trigger.

The DAO Beretta, the D-series, had a long but lighter pull thanks to a lighter mainspring. It had second strike capability, that is, it gave a chance to light off a misfired cartridge without racking the slide. SIG took a similar approach with their DAO variation of the P226, followed by HK with their first such variant of the USP. Unfortunately, these latter had trigger pulls most found sub-optimal.

H&K and SIG got the message which led to hybrid, quasi-DAO service pistols.



S&W Model 15 .38 Special as formerly issued by LAPD, shown cocked. LAPD was the first major agency to go DAO with service revolvers.

first state police agency to adopt GLOCK back in the '80s, they mandated a firmer trigger pull, and the New York Trigger now known as the NY-1 was born.

The good news is those "old school" DAO autos departments traded in for striker guns sell for comparative chump change on the second-hand shelves in the gun shops. Being DAO, they sit lonely like unwanted stepchildren, so there are deals to be had.

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## SAGE ADVICE FOR A GRIP APPRENTICE

It was a typical day at the Lewis & Clark Rifle and Pistol Club. On the pistol range every bay was in use. Shooters of various skill levels were firing at targets from three yards to a daunting 25 yards. The pistol range has target stands at 50 yards as well, though they mostly remain in pristine condition.

The Senior Member was sitting comfortably with coffee and a Stephen Hunter book in the shaded area well back from the firing line. In his day the Senior Member had been a good competitive shooter, winning hundreds of ribbons, medals and trophies. Age and stiff joints had gradually ended the competition years. Now his main shooting interests were maintaining skill in defensive handgun shooting. *But the range was still his happy place.* Sipping coffee and reading a book was more fun to a background of gunshots and shooter talk.

### THE YOUNG APPRENTICE

Looking up from his book the Sage noticed Rodney Patmore carrying his gear bag from the parking lot. Rodney was a new member, but the Senior Member approved heartily. He was pleased to see Rodney pitch in and help on cleanup days. The Sage noticed such things. He especially liked how Rodney showed respect for his elders. Seeing he would have to wait for a bay on the pistol range, Rodney walked over to chat with the Senior Member.

"Greetings, young fellow. I've been meaning to congratulate you on your shooting. It has improved markedly since you first showed up with your first handgun."

"Thank you!" Rodney was pleased. "I still have much

room for improvement. Tell me, you were a good shot at one time ..."

"I still am a good shot," the Sage said coldly. "I just can't run and jump anymore."

"Er, yes, of course. I've been reading different views on how strongly one should grip the pistol. Some say 40% with the shooting hand and 60% with the support hand. Some say grip it with about 60% of full strength and others say grip hard enough to crush the grip panels. What do you say?"

"I say we should go over to the workshop and lend a hand repairing shooting benches."

At the workshop Rodney joined the work crew nailing on new supports and braces. A half hour later they were back in the members' area.

nail squarely, which you did. Most of the time."

"So, what are you saying?"

"Just this. Your grip on the hammer was strong enough to keep it under full control. Yet it wasn't so

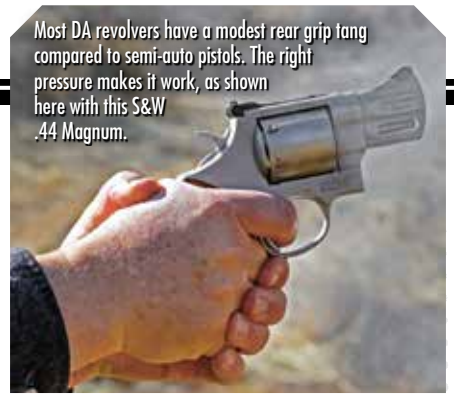
stiff and rigid as to lose the flexibility to strike accurately. And you figured it out without a lot of overthinking about strength percentages."

Rodney thought this over. "Are you saying I have some sort of inborn natural instinct in using a hammer?"

"Not at all. It's a skill you learned. How did you learn to drive nails? From reading magazines? Taking lessons?"

Rodney had to think a minute. He hadn't given five seconds' thought to how he had learned to use a hammer. "I guess I watched my dad, and then I just started doing it, getting better with experience."

Most DA revolvers have a modest rear grip tang compared to semi-auto pistols. The right pressure makes it work, as shown here with this S&W .44 Magnum.



Two key elements of a proper grip: web of hand pressed firmly against the grip tang and trigger finger squarely across the face of the trigger.



Fast strings of fire really reveal any lack of consistency in grip.

### SAGE ADVICE

"You did well driving nails, young Rodney," the Senior Member remarked. "Tell me, how strongly did you grip the hammer? Were you using 40% of your strength, 70%, 100%?"

"I haven't the slightest idea. Never gave it a thought."

"And yet you must have got it right. The hammer didn't slip out of your hand and go flying. There was enough flexibility in your wrist and arm to make tiny corrections to your aim in order to hit the

"You learned by experience. Learn to grip a pistol the same way — strongly enough the pistol doesn't shift in your hand while firing, and with enough flexibility to correct small errors even during a fast string of fire. You learn by shooting, not reading."

"What are you saying, Old One, do novices need no instruction at all?"

"If the novice is lucky, there'll be a coach to point out obvious errors. The most common error this old-timer sees with beginners is taking too low a grip on the gun. Sometimes there'll be a gap between the web of the shooting hand and the tang on the rear of the grip. The web of the hand should press firmly against the grip tang."

"Why is this important?"

"It helps form a consistent grip, and consistency, as you know, is the key to accuracy. And it helps control recoil, so the gun doesn't shift in the hand while shooting. But enough talk youngster, I see a shooting bay just opened up and you better grab it quick!"



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## ROCK ISLAND ARMORY

These RIA .22s are built for heavy outdoor use.



New from Rock Island Armory, and made in Turkey, a pair of rimfire DA revolvers.



John tested both revolvers with a wide variety of rimfire ammo.



**M**ost shooters, especially if they began at a young age, started by shooting .22s. This was certainly my experience, and I also carried it over when teaching my kids and grandkids to shoot, and if I live long enough, I'll do the same thing with my great grandkids. I find myself at this age shooting more and more .22s and enjoying them almost as much as I did when I started shooting more than 70 years ago.

Consider all that's happened with the introduction of new .22 pistols in the past few years. Ruger modernized their series of Mark .22 pistol to the easy takedown Mark IV, brought out the economy priced single action .22 Wrangler, a semi-automatic Model 57 chambered for the 5.7 x 28mm, and for concealed carry the easy-to-operate .22 LCP II. From S&W we have two new .22s, the Victory semi-automatic pistol and a new heavy duty .22 Magnum sixgun, the Model 648. KelTec recently introduced semi-automatic pistols in both .22 Long Rifle and .22 Magnum. Both GLOCK and Taurus are now offering excellent semi-automatic .22 Pistols. Heritage continues to produce their line of very reasonably priced SA .22s including the new Rough Rider Rancher, featuring a 16" barrel and rifle butt stock.

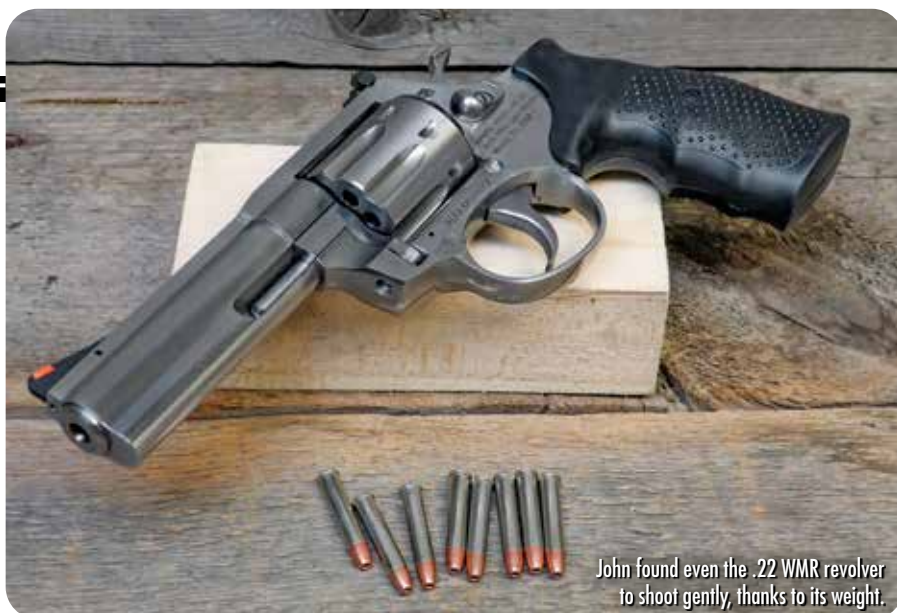
And this brings us to the .22 test guns at hand from Armscor Precision International/Rock Island Armory.

# LR AND MAGNUM TWINS

New for 2020, Rock Island Armory is importing a new line of revolvers. Available in stainless steel and blue finishes, RIA is offering .22 LR and .22 Magnum versions available in barrel lengths of 3", 4" and 6" with adjustable sights.

These .22 revolvers are marked with three company names: RIA for Rock Island Armory, APINTL For Armscor Precision International, and a third marking indicating manufacture in the Czech Republic. The model numbers are AL22.1 for the .22 LR and AL22M.1 for the .22 WMR.

At first glance these two revolvers are identical. Except for the chambering and caliber markings, "22 Lr." and "22 WMR" found on the left side of the barrel below the front sight they indeed could be identical twins. The only other difference is the cylinder capacity — nine rounds for the .22 LR and eight for the .22 WMR. These are definitely not lightweight sixguns as the use of all stainless steel results in a weight of just under 39 oz. for these K-Frame-sized sixguns. The stainless steel



John found even the .22 WMR revolver to shoot gently, thanks to its weight.

matched with rubber grips equals a .22 suited for heavy outdoor use with no worry about weather — neither rain, snow, sleet or dark of night will hamper their use.

When I first examined these revolvers, it appeared to me they had a heavy underlug barrel. I soon found the barrel is actually a two-piece affair consisting of a barrel proper and a shroud, with the heavy underlug design enclosing and protecting the ejector rod. This is a well thought out design and I had to look carefully (actually read the manual) to discover this fact.

## READ THE MANUAL

I should have also read the manual before trying to adjust the rear sight as it would have saved a few minutes of chasing my tail. Like other European revolvers I've encountered, the adjustment of elevation is just the opposite of American handguns. To raise the elevation, turn the adjustment screw clockwise.

This is a very good-looking revolver. Finish of the stainless steel is nicely polished, and it is just as it should be. I should note the sights, consisting of a fully adjustable rear sight and a front sight with a red insert, are not bright stainless but rather are black and easy to see.

Once the gun settled in, John was able to get solid groups with the .22 Magnum sixgun.



John had no trouble exceeding the manufacturer's test target claims at 15 meters with the .22 LR revolver.



## HANDLING

The grips are well designed and will fit most hands quite well. Consistent with the weather beating revolver finish, the grips are black pebble grained rubber with finger grooves and provide a secure and com-

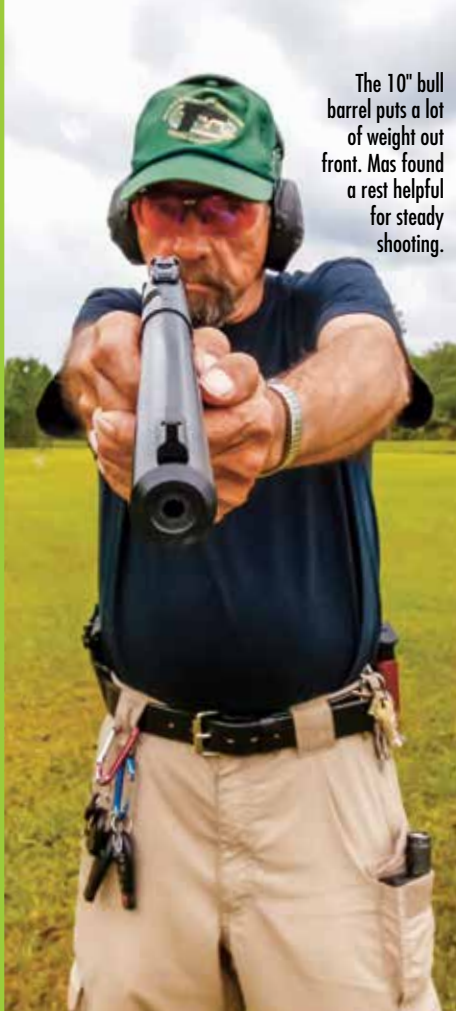
fortable feeling. I found it interesting the grip screw is not one long screw going all the way through, but rather each grip panel has its own screw and is completely supported by the abbreviated grip frame. This is also an excellent idea. If you install custom wooden stocks, there's no danger of tightening a grip screw to the point of cracking the grip panel.

These sixguns are traditional DA, meaning you can fire them simply pulling the trigger or, if for a more precise shot, by cocking the hammer first. The trigger can be advertised as "smooth" in two ways. First, the face of the trigger is smooth with no irritating grooves or checkering, and this is matched up with a smooth SA pull, measuring 4 lbs. on my Brownells

*Continued on page 70*

The RIA .22 Magnum revolver holds eight while the .22 LR carries nine.





The 10" bull barrel puts a lot of weight out front. Mas found a rest helpful for steady shooting.



The 10" Mark IV dwarfs the polymer-framed 22/45.

MASSAD AYOUB

# PLAYING THE LONG GAME

EXTREME PLINKING WITH A RUGER MARK IV PISTOL

**T**he distance was about a hundred paces. The 8" Action Target steel Bianchi Plates looked like tiny dots atop the Ruger's front sight. I supported my hands on a wooden rest. The report was only a tiny "pop" through the 3M active muffs, followed by a "ting" downrange and the slow fall of the last of six plates.

The Mark IV gave me six plates with six rounds of CCI .22 Long Rifle Mini-Mags. I was pleasantly surprised. "Damn," I thought to myself, "Roy was right."

## The 10" Ruger

Ruger had just come out with the super-long variation of their Mark IV

pistol, so Roy Huntington told me, "10" barrel? Make sure you test it at long range." Introduced in 1949, it had looked like "a Nambu and a Luger met during the Axis years and had a postwar baby." With rave reviews in *American Rifleman* and the outdoor sports press, it became one of the great handgun success stories. Combining the attributes of the classic Colt Woodsman with a much lower price of \$37.50, it was favored among serious target shooters. Ruger took advantage of that market with its Mark I target model, which was little more than the Standard Model with adjustable sights.

Over the years Ruger updated the pistol, adding a bolt hold-open lever. The awkward butt-heel magazine release was changed to the more ergonomic and now almost universal side button release. The company offered variations with light polymer frames. In 2017, the Mark IV came out, designed for easy takedown and disassembly, at last exorcising the one curse of the earlier Marks: They were a PITA to take apart and put back together.

The years saw various barrel options: short and long, tapered and stovepipe, light and heavy. During the pistol's Mark II era, the com-



Ruger .22 with its natural prey. Note the far-forward point of balance.



Onlookers sometimes mistook the 10" Mark IV, left, for an integrally suppressed AWC Ruger, right.

pany offered a 10" barrel, drawing yawns from the market. But by 2019, with Ruger starting to go the "new gun of the month" route, the 10" tube was reintroduced at the 2020 SHOT Show.

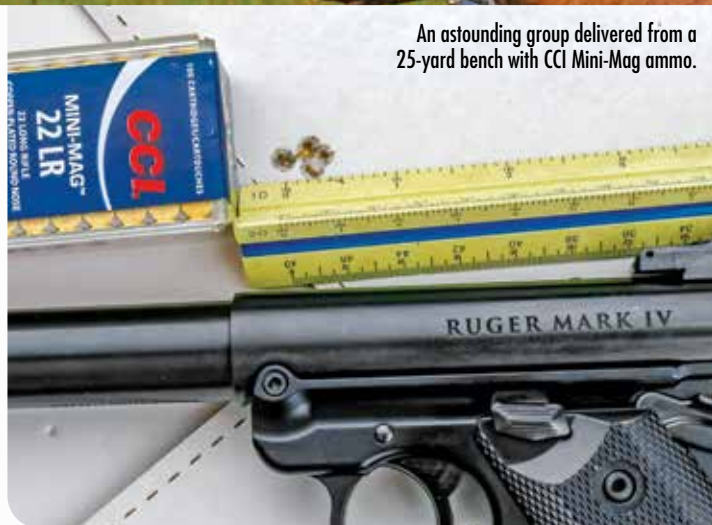
### Long And Heavy

I tested the aluminum frame version, Model 40173, spec'd for 46.3 oz. unloaded. The all-stainless 40174 version tips the scales at 53.5 oz. Overall length for each, with that 10" stovepipe barrel, is 14". Now, I have several Magnum revolvers that weigh in the mid-40-oz. range, and some of my PPC revolvers with super-heavy 6" barrels go over 50 oz. The standard configuration Magnums are comfortable for one-hand offhand, while all the weight on the PPC guns make them a tad wobbly for one-handed work. On the Ruger .22, however, those extra inches of bull barrel put the balance point so far forward that wobble factor is pronounced, and noticeable even in two-handed shooting. It would take a stronger man than me to bring this Long Tom .22 to the 50-yard line at the Nationals and shoot it well one-handed.

The trigger pull, like the pistol itself, was somewhat heavy. Weighed from the center of the trigger on my



The sight radius on the 10" Mark IV pistol is almost as long as that of the Ruger takedown 10/22 carbine barrel.

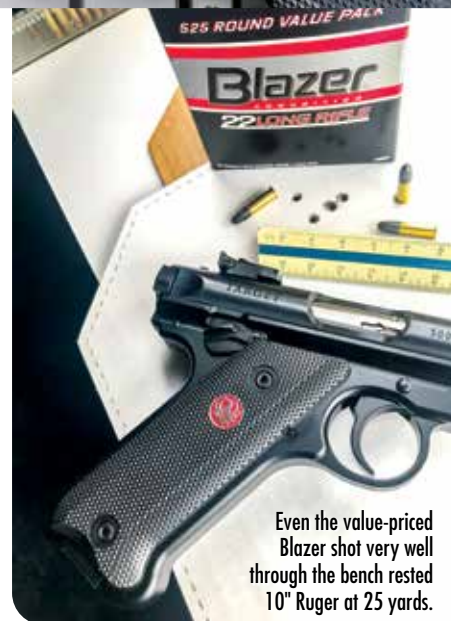


An astounding group delivered from a 25-yard bench with CCI Mini-Mag ammo.

Lyman digital scale from Brownells, it averaged 4.84 lbs. The trigger stroke was long and a bit mushy, with palpable backlash (continued rearward movement of the trigger after the break). The pull weight is actually about right for an outdoorsman's .22 pistol. For breaking in a new shooter, the long pull really isn't bad, either: it's conducive to a surprise trigger break, one of the most important things for a beginner to learn. All that said, though, if I was to compete with it, I'd send it to Clark Custom Guns for the kind of trigger job that Jim Clark, Sr. pioneered so many years ago, or maybe consider an aftermarket trigger from Tandem-kross or Volquartsen.

The inherent accuracy, of course, is still there. I found the 10" Mark IV to group well with just about everything, but the star of the accuracy show was CCI's high velocity Mini-Mag. From a Caldwell Matrix rest at 25 yards, five shots measured 35/100ths of one inch, center to center, four in the proverbial "one ragged hole."

This told me everything I needed to know about the pistol's inherent accuracy.



Even the value-priced Blazer shot very well through the bench rested 10" Ruger at 25 yards.

Sight radius is close to that on my wife's takedown 10/22 carbine. Braced at 100 yards, the more than foot-long sight radius came into its own. Accuracy like that cries out for an optical sight, which of course takes away the sight radius element and leaves the monstrously long barrel

*Continued on page 68*

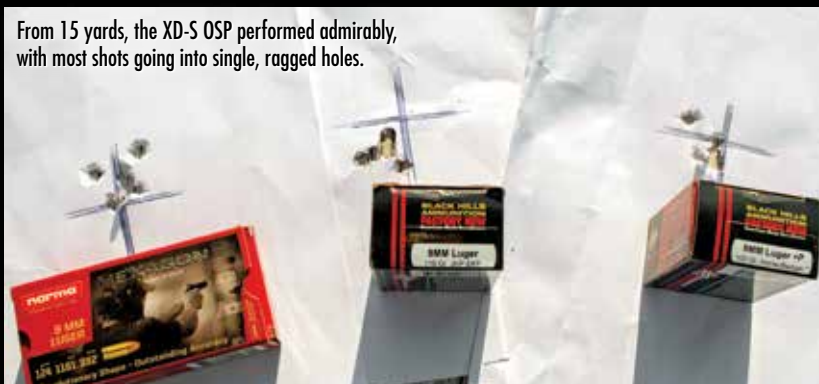
# SPRINGFIELD ARMORY



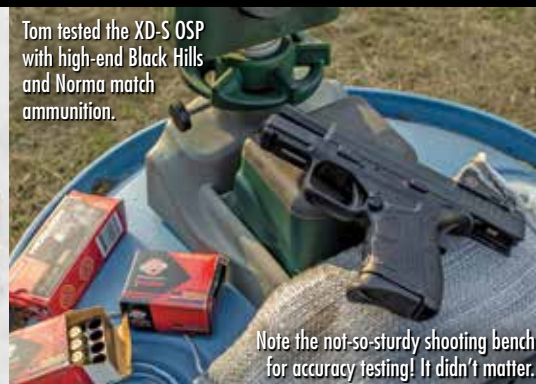
The slender new XD-S sports the Mod.2 design enhancements like revamped grip texture.

## THIN IS IN: SLENDER & OPTICS-READY

From 15 yards, the XD-S OSP performed admirably, with most shots going into single, ragged holes.



Tom tested the XD-S OSP with high-end Black Hills and Norma match ammunition.



Note the not-so-sturdy shooting bench for accuracy testing! It didn't matter.

The Crimson Trace CTS-1500 mounts direct and sits low so you can use the factory sights through the bottom of the glass.



I got my hot little hands on an original Springfield Armory XD-S nearly seven years ago. Sigh ... to be young again. One of the initial attractions was its balance between compact size and being eminently shootable. It had enough weight and grip surface area to tame snappier 9mm defensive rounds while helping the shooter dominate even rapid-fire strings.

### Size Matters

You might ask, why a single-stack in this era of compact double-stacks like the company's own Hellcat? The nifty little pistol is approximately the

# XD-S MOD.2 OSP

**TOM MCHALE**



You can order the XD-S OSP with a Crimson Trace CTS-1500 pre-installed and ready to go or "optic-ready" with slide cut and cover plate.

same height and length but packs 11+1 capacity in its flat-base magazine configuration. The new XD-S Mod.2 OSP leases space to 7+1 with the standard magazine with pinky extension. The gun ships with a second extended magazine offering 9+1 total capacity.

Contrary to what you might assume, the XD-S is actually slightly larger than the Hellcat thanks to its 3.5" barrel (3" for the Hellcat) so overall length for the XD-S is 6.3" instead of 6" for the

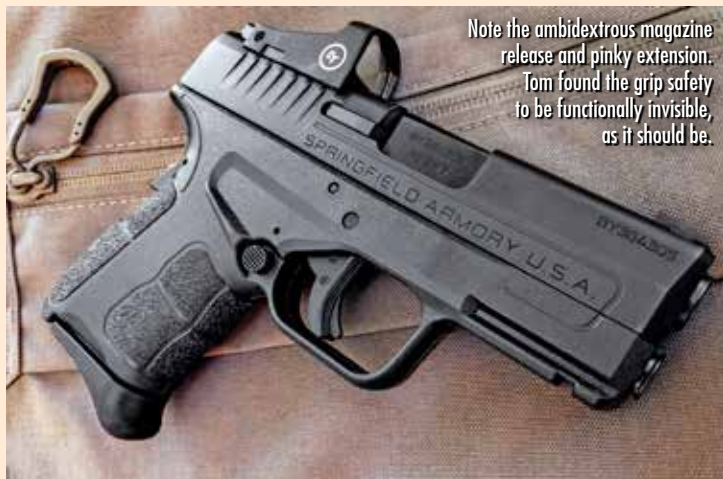
Hellcat. The XD-S is also exactly 0.4" taller at 4.4". Where the XD-S "wins" in the compact size competition is width. It's about 0.1" slimmer than the Hellcat, hence the explanation for the capacity differences.

Is the larger size a drawback? This depends on your criteria. Yes, overall the Hellcat is a "smaller" pistol for concealed carry. For shooting, the slightly larger size and weight of the XD-S is a benefit, at least to me. Given the

choice, I'll always choose a physically larger pistol should I have to put rounds on a target fast. More surface area for the hands, more grip height, and a longer sight radius make the shooter's job easier. Additional weight helps with recoil and follow-up shot management.

So, there's my tradeoff. Do I want something slightly smaller and arguably slightly easier to carry?

*Continued on page 75*



Note the ambidextrous magazine release and pinky extension. Tom found the grip safety to be functionally invisible, as it should be.



Tom's original XD-S (left) is still in the regular carry rotation thanks to its mix of thin design and controllability. The OSP has now taken its place.

# DIY

## THE 80% ARMS GST-9



The GST-9 from 80% Arms is everything the factory GLOCK 19 might be plus a little more.



**WILL DABBS, MD**

# FREEDOM

**T**he GST-9 pistol from 80% Arms is a DIY kit that allows you to build a GLOCK-style 9mm handgun legally on your dinner table. The end result is as svelte as Cary Grant's aftershave, as customizable as Angus MacGyver's Leatherman tool, and as rugged as John Wayne's jockstrap. 80% Arms sells everything you need to go from a box full of parts to ringing steel on the range in less than half an hour.

Unlike many GLOCK knockoff pistols, the

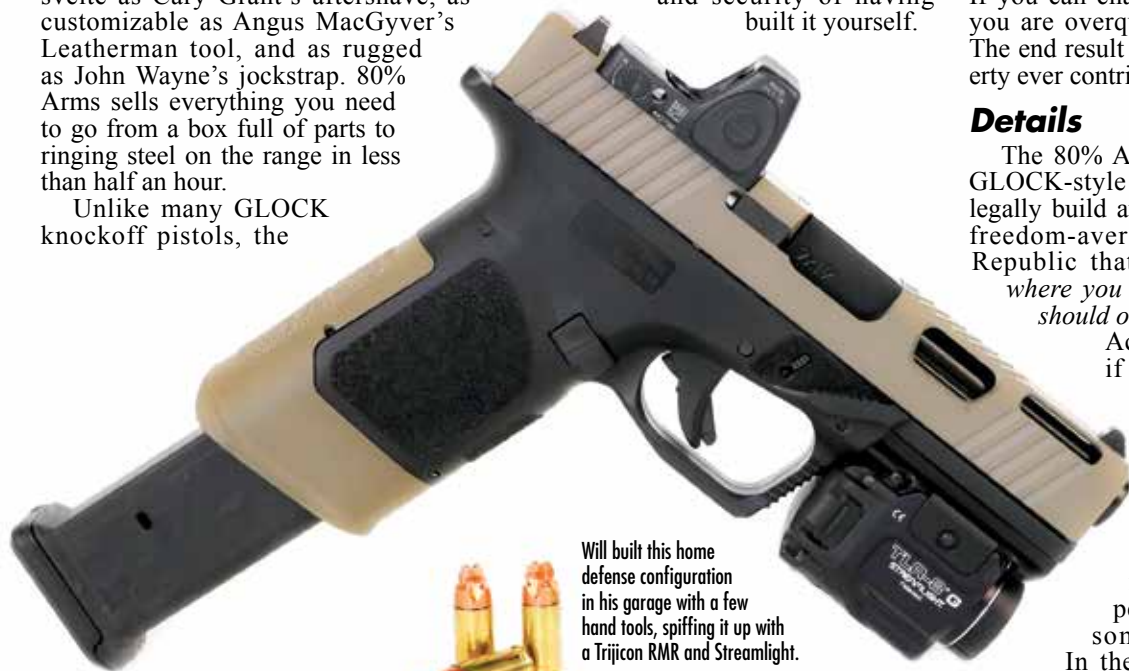
GST-9 really is a top-flight race gun. The cool upgrades you'd typically pay extra for come standard, and the chassis offers certain high-performance options not available in a factory pistol. You also get the personal satisfaction and security of having built it yourself.

Finishing out one of these guns requires a hand drill at a minimum. A Dremel grinder and drill press make things quicker and easier, but you can also complete the project with nothing more than hand tools and a little sweat. If you can change the oil in your car, you are overqualified for this project. The end result is the purest form of liberty ever contrived by man.

### Details

The 80% Arms GST-9 is a top-end GLOCK-style defensive gun you can legally build at home. There are a few freedom-averse states in our Great Republic that restrict such toys. *If where you live sucks that bad you should obviously just move.*

According to federal law, if you build a firearm at home for your personal use with no plans to sell it there is no need to serialize the frame or notify anybody. Don't freak out about that. In our nation of 328 million people there are already some 400 million guns. In the first half of 2020 the



Will built this home defense configuration in his garage with a few hand tools, spiffing it up with a Trijicon RMR and Streamlight.



Will once used this medical hand drill to cut a hole in someone's skull. It's since been retired to home gunsmithing duties.



Snip four of these little tabs back with wire cutters and then smooth down the excess.

You'll need to order the jig kit separately per ATF regulations. But all can be shipped straight to your door — no paperwork of FFLs required!



number climbed by another 19 million firearms. It's not like the criminals will ever have any difficulty arming themselves. The GST-9 helps level the field for the rest of us.

The GST-9 is like a GLOCK 19, only better. The custom slide sports lightening cuts, scalloped gripping grooves, and a rear deck with an RMR cut for a red dot. The frame, however, is whatever you want it to be.

The stippling and contours are perfect. Any less and it would be slippery. Any more and it would abrade. The coolest bit, however, is the removable magwell funnel.

These components are retained via a pair of pushpins. The short version accepts 15-round GLOCK 19 magazines. The longer sort takes 17-round GLOCK 17 boxes. Two minutes with a punch lets you choose between a G19 or G19X equivalent as the spirit leads.

The magazine release and slide stop are perfectly scaled and left-side-only. Holsters and accessories designed for the GLOCK interface seamlessly with the GST-9. The trigger is the standard



You'll have to ask yourself if you're awesome enough to run a gun this cool that you built yourself at home. Not everybody makes the cut.



This semicircular bit in the front needs to come out. That's easy enough with either a Dremel or hand tools.

combat-grade 5-lb. striker-fired sort. Frames come in black, OD green and FDE, while the slides are available in black or FDE.

## Whistle While You Work

Some gun build projects require enough support equipment to manufacture an operational spacecraft along with an advanced engineering

degree. Not so the GST-9. The \$750 kit includes everything but the jig, tool kit and slide rails. The \$30 jig kit includes the other stuff, but the BATF won't let them sell it in the same box with the pistol parts.

I actually built two of these guns for this project. The first I used basic power tools — a modest drill press and

*Continued on page 61*



Interchangeable magwell funnels let you choose between the GLOCK 19 and GLOCK 17 frame geometry.

BOISE, ID  
D14-74747  
GM-9, 9mm



# CHANNEL YOUR INNER GUN DESIGNER



## BUILD YOUR OWN CUSTOM PISTOL WITH THE GSX100

TOM MCHALE • PHOTOS: ROB JONES, THE IMAGESMITH, LLC

**T**here's something inherently satisfying about creating a custom handgun. You know, one built with just the features and components you want. But there's a nefarious dark side to custom build endeavors. Starting with an existing gun means you're throwing away perfectly good parts, or at least banishing them to the bottom drawer in the garage workbench. What a tragic end-of-life story for what once was a brave and glorious soldier. Yes, it always pains me to "throw away" perfectly serviceable components when I upgrade something or another. Fortunately, there's a better way.

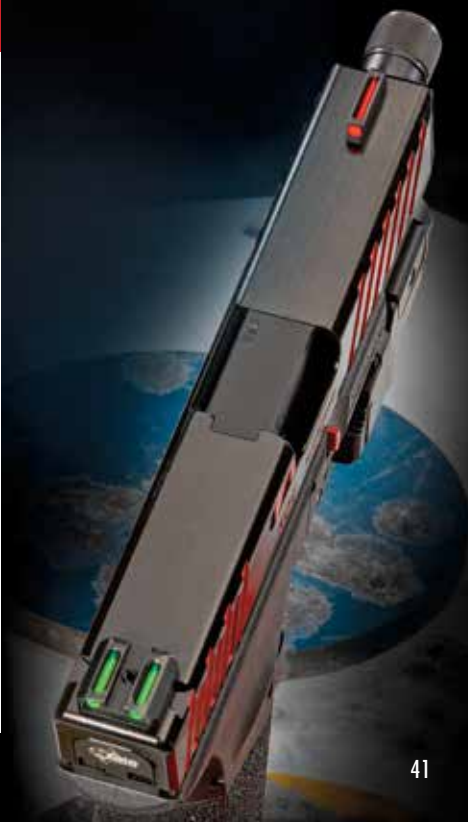
With the advent of popular "platform" handguns like GLOCKS, the aftermarket for custom parts has exploded. Dozens of companies make triggers, barrels, slides, springs and now

... frames. If you want to build your own but lack the gunsmithing tools and gear to smelt and machine your own 1911 from iron ore, you just might consider a ground-up build starting with something like the new GSX100 frame from GlockStore. No longer need to buy a \$500 gun just to start discarding parts when you want a new trigger, side, barrel, or any other performance part.

### **GLOCK-Compatible Frame**

The GSX100 itself is a frame — that's it. Considered the actual serialized firearm, you'll need to have this part shipped to a local FFL for legal transfer. Everything else you add is considered a part and can be delivered straight to your home.

It's a GLOCK Gen 3-compatible frame, so you'll need parts and upper components like the slide from the same family. While most people think "G19"





AMERICAN  
**HANDGUNNER**

# CUSTOM GSX100





you can also build (or upgrade a factory frame) GLOCK 23 and 32 models in .40 S&W and .357 SIG if you like the beefier calibers. While the frame length is G19 compatible, the GSX100 uses a G17 height grip and magazine well, so you'll need to use GLOCK 17 (or similar substitutes for .40 S&W and .357 SIG) magazines. I like this combination of a slightly more compact barrel and overall length with a grip that accommodates all my fingers with ease.

The frame itself is made from glass-filled polymer and sports a standard one-notch rail up front. I would

describe the grip texture as medium sandpaper. It's aggressive enough to stay put in the hand during rapid fire, but it won't shred your clothing or tender parts should you elect to carry it inside the waistband. The grip surface is identical on both sides and the front and backstraps.

At risk of pulling a Captain Obvious impression, you can pick up a GSX100 to spruce up an old and worn GLOCK — like an LE trade in. Or, as in this case, you can build a custom gun from the ground up. At just \$129.99, the GSX gives you an affordable foundation

you'll need to start your design and construction project.

## Adding Bones

Once you've got your hot little mitts on a GSX100 frame, you can start thinking about the bones. I chose a Signature Series slide because I wanted to do some custom engraving later in the process. Hold that thought for a hot second ...

GlockStore offers a variety of sexy custom slides with cutouts and radical designs. Think of the Signature Series as more of a blank canvas with a little more pizzazz than a standard GLOCK factory model. It's made from solid billet 416 Stainless Steel machined from bar stock, not cast. After bead blasting, it's ready for your next steps. The slide features forward and rear cocking cutouts. I hesitate to call them serrations as they are flat grooves about 1/8" wide.

As for the barrel choice, well, I like big suppressors and I cannot lie. So threading was a must. I spend more time plinking on the range than on the competition field, so having an optional quiet(er) mode was high on my priority list. If you're the competitive type, you can certainly ditch the suppressor in favor of a screw-on compensator with that threaded barrel.

The barrel is broach cut from forged 416R stainless steel. It features standard rifling so knock yourself out with jacketed, plated or lead bullets. You don't have to worry about all that rigmarole about lead bullets in GLOCK barrels. The threading on the 9mm version is standard 1/2 x 28, so everything muzzle oriented will fit way easier than OJ's glove. For this build, I requested the black barrel, but you can get them in stainless steel and gold finishes too. If you want something fancier, check out the dimpled and ported model barrels.

## Build Your Own Trigger

Once you've shot a fine trigger, you're ruined forever. After joining the proud ranks of Trigger Snobs United, you'll have zero tolerance for a gritty take-up, a mushy break, over-travel, and uneven or excessive weight. I'm thinking designing your own trigger specs, based on your personal preferences, is one of the greatest advantages to designing and building your very own pistol from the ground up.

For this project, I envisioned a fun range and competition handgun, so I wasn't worried about a trigger safe for concealed carry. With a striker-fired platform like the GLOCK-inspired GSX100, part of the inherent safety design is the trigger pull weight itself.



Pistols like 1911s and others with manual safeties can safely sport a light trigger as the shooter has to consciously disengage the safety before the trigger will operate. *Ipso facto, e. pluribus unum*, a "standard" GLOCK-compatible suitable for defensive or duty use will come equipped with a 5.5-lb. or greater trigger weight. When lawyers get involved, some agencies (we're looking at you New York) dictate triggers like the NY1 and NY2 ranging in pull weight from 8 to 12 lbs.!

For this build, the Performance Center folks at the GlockStore design shop recommended their Basic Pyramid Trigger System. This part consists of a "drop in" trigger face, leaf safety and trigger bar to replace, or in this case, supply, those components.

The Pyramid trigger bar is coated with Titanium Nitride, a gold-finished substance that's extremely hard and friction free — helping to smooth the trigger movement through its length of travel. The face is available in about a billion different colors, as is the safety leaf itself. Do take advantage of this cosmetic bonus as it creates a nice visual accent to any custom pistol build. For this pistol, we elected to go with a red trigger and

black trigger leaf to match the overall pistol design. The Basic Pyramid Trigger will run you about \$139.99 and boy does it make a difference.

You'll also find the Pyramid Trigger adjustable for pre and over travel. Using a tiny included Allen wrench, you adjust pre- and over-travel distance. The tiny Allen screws are set with red Loctite, so you'll need to heat them with a heat gun or lighter before making adjustments. That's a good thing, as they won't come loose during operation.

There are a couple of other parts enhancing the overall trigger operation. We chose the Double Diamond 3.5-lb. connector, a 4.5-lb. competition striker spring and 6-lb. trigger spring. Keep in mind the heavier trigger spring assists trigger movement, so the heavier spring spec weight may seem a bit counter-intuitive. Oh, and the connector is NP3-coated for slick operation over the long haul.

## Trigger Performance

The out-of-the-box Basic Pyramid and connector in this pistol yielded a clean 3.25 lbs. when I measured pull weight from the center of the trigger face. If you want to tweak your pull

*Continued on page 71*

# RESURRECTING



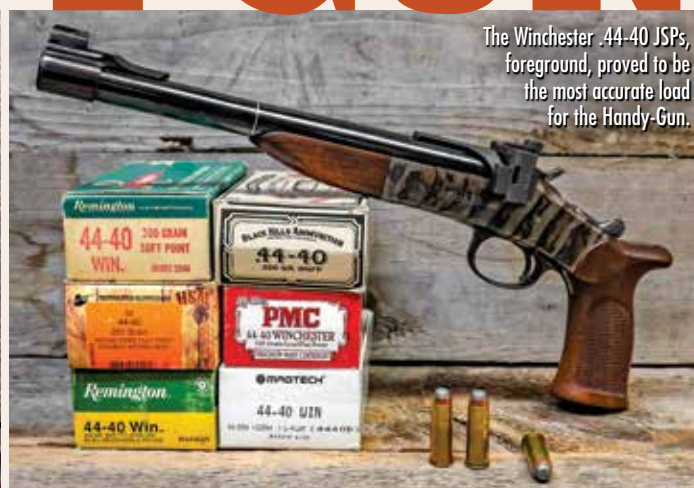
The Handy-Gun is more compact and opens easier than the original Contender.

JOHN TAFFIN

# THE H&R HANDY-GUN



Original markings on the frame of the H&R Handy-Gun.



The Winchester .44-40 JSPs, foreground, proved to be the most accurate load for the Handy-Gun.

## FROM THE NFA TO THE FIELD

**I**n between the two world wars Harrington & Richardson offered a very handy gun, in fact it is so handy it was named the Handy-Gun. While it's a pistol, it operates like the first shotgun I ever owned — the H&R single-shot 12-gauge Topper. In recent years H&R offered single-shot rifles based on this

same design and I have heavy barrel versions in .22 LR, .22 WMR and .223. The last one is exceptionally accurate with Black Hills' 68-grain SP load and is good out to 200 yards for both deer and deer-sized game.

The Handy-Gun was produced as short-barreled .410 and 28-gauge shotguns and for easy handling cartridges,

including .22 WRF and .32-20. While the single-shot rifle and shotgun versions continued to be produced until just recently, the Handy-Gun fell under the restrictions of the 1934 National Firearms Act and production ceased. Since the originals were considered short-barreled shotguns, a \$200 tax stamp through the ATF was required.

## A Handy Resurrection

Dylan Stocker of Old Arms of Idaho specializes in old gun parts. His shop has several rooms stocked with thousands of parts. If he doesn't have it, it probably doesn't exist. He recently gathered several parts together and placed them in the hands of my friend, fellow Shootist, and extremely talented gunsmith, Milt Morrison of QPR. Milt has been featured several times in these pages with some of his custom sixguns; however, his latest is totally different.

Milt started with several parts from Old Arms of Idaho and brought them together with the original Handy-Gun action. The 10" barrel is a section of an original Winchester .44 WCF Model 92 barrel. This old cartridge goes back to 1873 and has enjoyed a renaissance of sorts since the arrival of Cowboy Action Shooting. It's mostly referred to today as the .44-40. I don't know if Dylan or Milt chose this chambering, but I consider it an excellent choice for the Handy-Gun.

The Handy-Gun is smaller, lighter and much easier to open and operate than the original single-shot Contender. For sights, they chose a Ruger #1 barrel band front sight with a gold bead matched up with a Contender Super 14 fully adjustable rear sight. I believe that was made by Williams Gun Sight company.

Milt put everything together, and the result is a very slick-handling, pure fun shooting, single-shot big bore pistol. I do not know if the action is strong enough for something such as the .44 Magnum. However, even if it is my hand would probably give out long before the action as this H&R grip was not designed for heavy recoil. It works just fine with the .44-40 and with factory loads can be shot in total comfort.

## Feeding & Shooting

It's not easy to find much variety in the way of factory loads for the .44-40. Going through my stock of ammunition, I came up with CAS loads consisting of 200-grain Black Hills and HSM loads and 225-grain Mag-Tech and PMC — all with RNFP cast bullets. I also scrounged up both Remington and Winchester 200-grain Jacketed Soft Point loads.

The action of this single-shot pistol locks up tightly, opens easily when the lever on the top of the action is pushed to the right. Ejection of fired cartridges is extremely positive, which means they

Shotgun? Pistol? Yes. But it's perfectly legal as a handgun now.



John found the one-of-a-kind .44-40 Handy-Gun to shoot just fine at 25 yards.



This custom Handy-Gun by Milt Morrison is chambered in .44-40/.44 WCF.

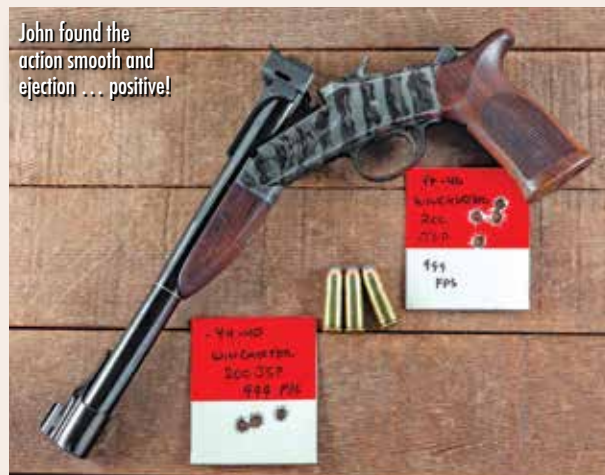
come out when the action is opened and are thrown quite a distance. I learned to just open the action slightly, point it at a wire basket, and then continue opening so the cartridges would go in the basket. That saved me a lot of brass chasing.

Accuracy was excellent! My eyes and bead front sights are not on intimate speaking terms as I much prefer a black flat post on pistols, however I can't complain about the results. My best results came from JSP loads with the Remington's clocking out at 1,040 fps with three shots in 1" at 25 yards, while the Winchester was right at 1,000 fps and a 3/4" group for three shots at the same distance. These would certainly work at reasonable distances for deer and deer-sized game. Dylan uses it as a varmint pistol on what we call in Idaho, Picket Pins or Squeakies. They're also known as ground squirrels. They are about half the size of a Coke can, which makes them a challenging target for iron sights.

This Custom Handy-Gun is a perfect example of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. I am so taken with it I would definitely like to see some company bring these back in such chamberings like .22 LR, .22 Magnum .25-20, .32-20, .32 H&R Magnum, .327 Federal Magnum and even .22 Hornet. They would be exceptionally enjoyable shooting pistols, which would put a lot of fun into shooting. Isn't that what most shooting should be about?



John found the action smooth and ejection ... positive!



.38

.32

.22



Representative hits on a 1" circle by caliber.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF SHOWING OFF HOW TO MAKE CLASSIC

CLAYTON WALKER

You don't need a high-end target gun like this S&W Model 52, but it sure helps!



Good ammo provides the consistency required for precision shots.



# TRICK SHOTS

**F**rom the moment man figured out how to control the simplest of projectiles, feats of marksmanship have captivated us. Odysseus, hero of Ancient Greek mythology, demonstrated his prowess by shooting an arrow through the "eye" of 12 axes in a row. In the fading days of the Wild West, millions of Americans from coast to coast paid to see Buffalo Bill and Annie Oakley's shooting expeditions. Today, living legend Jerry Miculek has more than 150 million views on his YouTube channel. Some things never go out of style.

As a younger shooter, I always found myself awestruck by demonstrations of gilt-edged accuracy, but figured hell

would freeze over before I was able to do any showboating of my own. But as the old yarn goes, you can eat an elephant if you just take it one bite at a time. Now, 17 years and about a hundred thousand rounds later, I often surprise myself



Wadcutters are great: the bigger the better. Smaller, round-nosed bullets have a higher tendency to push some targets out of the way on glancing hits. A .44 next to a .32.

with what I can do on a good day.

Sure, you might need a little luck to pull off the following. But with some solid application of the fundamentals, the most common “trick shots” are within easier reach than you might think!

## The Gun You’ll Need

In all honesty, any gun will work, but you want to make sure your bullets are hitting to point of aim. If you have a quality-made gun with clearly seen adjustable sights, or a gun set up with a red dot, you’re probably good to go! If you find yourself using Kentucky windage with a fixed-sight handgun, the introduction of another variable is most likely only going to frustrate your efforts.

For shots that depend on pinpoint accuracy, you’ll want to make sure you can generally hit your mark if given a few rounds. Don’t think you need to be putting all of your shots through the same hole. Instead, let’s consider a more realistic and generous baseline: if you can hit a 1" target paster at a distance of your choice just a couple times per cylinder or magazine, you’ll probably have the right ratio of attempts to impressive hits.

## The Playing Card Split

Always a crowd pleaser! Now, it might seem the thinness of a playing card offers no room for mistakes. The truth is your margin of error is a circle with a diameter of just slightly less than twice the width of your bullet. If you’re using a .22, you can miss about a fifth of an inch left or right of the card anywhere along its vertical length and still tear it. If you’re using a .45, this increases to a circle with a diameter of about 3/4".

And so, we “trigger” a perennial debate: Is it better to go with a smaller bullet that’s easier to shoot, or a fatter bullet that offers more margin of error at the cost of elevated recoil? Different shooters will have different answers, but when accuracy matters, I personally reach for my Model 41 and CCI Standard Velocity ammo — although .32-caliber options are growing on me!

Once you’ve trashed a deck of cards, you’ll find other “pinpoint precision” shots pretty similar. Hitting a string is exactly like the playing card shot, as is busting an aspirin, shooting the proverbial “fly on the target” (should one be unlucky enough to land there), driving nails into boards, or shooting the heads off matchsticks. If the shot is tricky at seven yards, give yourself an edge at five yards or even closer. Trust me: The payoff will feel just as big!

## The Moving Target

Hitting something on the move with a handgun (or for the truly daring with a lot of open land and a safe back-

The tennis ball: Your humble practice partner for shooting things on the move.



A “fun” gun like this K-22 can help you practice serious stuff like shooting one-handed, making it easier to graduate to something bigger.



stop, shooting a thrown object) seems daunting, and typically our minds want to “lead” the target. Maybe that’s advisable if your quarry is 75 yards out. However, even if your projectile is moving at a relatively sedate 700 feet per second, it would take less than seven hundredths of a second for your bullet to find its mark at typical indoor distances. Ergo, you should have the sights pointed where the target is when the hammer falls.

I developed the ability to track a moving target purely by

*Continued on page 67*



Sharp, clear adjustable sights are a tremendous aid to showboating. Matching point of aim to point of impact is critical.



Model One OD Green

Model One Basic Black

# SOARING HAWKS!

**AMERICAN  
TOMAHAWK:  
USA MADE AND  
FLYING HIGH**

Model One Hickory Handle

Model One Basic Black

**W**hile the general populace associates tomahawks with the American Indians and the frontier wars that have been depicted in Western movies for decades, few are aware these handheld implements were also used by American troops during the Vietnam War. Furthermore, tomahawks also found their way to the Middle East during more recent conflicts in that region of the world.

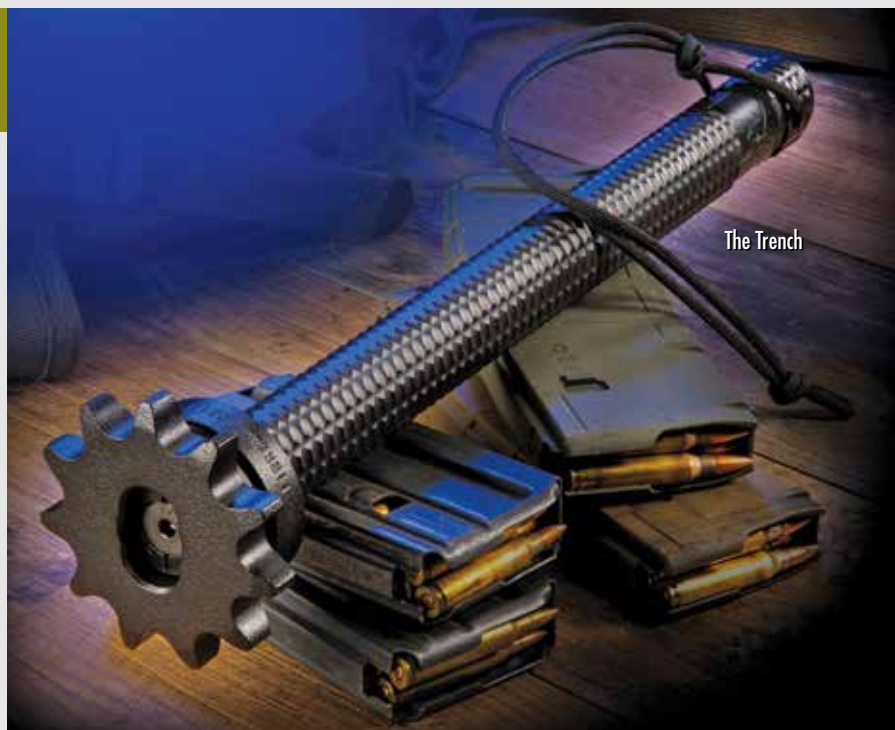
In 1966 World War II Marine Corps veteran Peter Lagana redesigned the tomahawk into a more modern, up-to-date weapon/tool and began producing them for our warriors in Vietnam. Lagana's re-imagined tomahawks are being faithfully reproduced today at the American Tomahawk company in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Ryan Johnson — a noted tactical designer, outdoorsman and founder of RMJ USA — picked up where Lagana left off by designing and producing modern, state-of-the-art tomahawks in 2001 for use by our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. He's the *de facto* expert of the storied genre today. In 2019, Johnson resurrected the American Tomahawk Company and started production of Lagana's original masterpiece. "Our company is located in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and our tomahawks are Tennessee made!" Ryan states emphatically. "We take great pride in crafting tomahawks in a state with such a rich history of what we call *Tomahawk Diplomacy*."

We asked Johnson to give us his insights into why tomahawks are effective both in the wilderness and on the battlefield. "Tomahawks have always been tactical tools, always been survival tools, always been utility tools," Ryan explains, "Tomahawks were popular on the frontier for just that reason. With a tomahawk you can break down an animal, build shelter, and defend yourself. Because tomahawks have a small footprint and are lightweight, they make the perfect multi-purpose tool for someone short on space."

### **Resurrecting The Dream**

"Currently we offer the Model One, our version of the famous Lagana Tomahawk," Ryan informs. While not readily visible to the naked eye, Johnson and crew did make improvements to the original Lagana hawk to take advantage of modern technology, methods and materials. "The Model One is drop forged 1060 Carbon Steel," Ryan notes. "The handle is offered in both Hickory



and a super tough injection molded Nylon. The nylon handle locks in place with the machined eye of the hawk head for a bulletproof fit that won't come off without a hydraulic press. The Kydex scabbard features ambidextrous carry and is MOLLE/PALS compatible. We also offer D-rings for sling carry. The blade geometry is CNC machined for a perfect angle every time." The Model One can be had in a wide variety of colorations. The basic Model One in Hickory wood or injection molded nylon will run you \$189 plus \$65 for a Black Kydex sheath with locking strap. Injection molded handles come in three colors — Basic Black, OD Green and Coyote Brown with tomahawk heads powder coated to match. Hickory handles can also be coated with matching heads should you choose to forego the

standard wood finish. A Black Kydex sheath with low or high ride MOC straps is also available.

Once the Model One had been firmly embedded in the American Tomahawk Company line Johnson and his team began work on an updated version of the original hawk. "Model Two has been designed and tested," notes Johnson. "We are in the process of forging these and feel the broad edge and hammer poll design will appeal to a broader audience." Indeed, as this is being written I have been told the Model Two is currently undergoing final testing on hunts in Alaska and should be on the market by the time this article is published.

But the fun doesn't end there. "We also make a modern-day version of the

*Continued on page 69*

Hollowpoints, left to right: CCI Suppressor HP, 45-grain; Remington Subsonic HP, 38-grain; Remington Subsonic HP expanded with #0 screwdriver; Winchester Subsonic HP, 42-grain; Eley Subsonic HP, 38-grain; Aguila SuperExtra HP, 38-grain; Aguila SuperExtra HP, #0 screwdriver; and Aguila SuperExtra HP, Li'l Gizzy large HP.



ROGER SMITH

# BEAT THE AMMO SHORTAGE

## HOLLOW-POINT YOUR OWN .22LRS

Roger tested the ACU'RZR with CCI standard velocity rounds. As expected, the NASTI-NOSE HP (center) expanded nicely. The cupped point rod (right) produced a flat-bottomed crater with a thin raised rim around it and expanded just a trifle. The SCORP'N (left) also expanded very little. Inset: The shoulders on the Li'l Gizzy rods prevent them from sliding up in the drill press chuck and provide solid depth stops nose shape precision. The shoulders on the ACU'RZR rods are purely decorative.



CCI Mini-Mag Results, left to right: CCI Mini-Mag 36-grain HP, unmodified; Mini-Mag 40-grain solid, Li'l Gizzy small HP; Mini-Mag 40-grain solid, Li'l Gizzy large HP; Mini-Mag 36-grain HP with #0 Phillips screwdriver indentation; and Mini-Mag factory 36-grain HP with Dewalt #1 screwdriver bit impression.

**C**aught with your pants down around your ankles again? After all, we thought the Obama-generated ammo shortage was finally over. No more anxiety-driven searching for .22 ammo, right? The hoarders were satiated, and the supply chain was overflowing.

Then along comes the Kung Flu and the new wave of panic buying hits well before the elections. And now, with the nationwide violence that has erupted while writing this, all varieties of ammo seem to have evaporated.

I sure hope you bought enough during the lull. The trouble is, .22 hollowpoints have always seemed to be in short supply in my part of the world. Even if we think we finally have enough plain ol' round noses for general banging around through the current shortage, what if we never did find a decent stock of HPs when we had the money? Make 'em yourself, that's what. Yeah, right, you say?

### The Right Stuff

Like most everything else, it's easy if you have the right tools. For

instance, check out the Li'l Gizzy tool set, which Jack Harvey makes in Michigan and sells on eBay for \$75. Li'l Gizzy comes with three rams, or nose punches. One makes a nearly full-diameter flat nose. By shimming the ram with washers, you can even adjust the diameter of the meplat smaller, similar to the often-scarce CCI SGB small game bullet. The other two make your choice of a small or large hollow point in garden variety round nose .22LR bullets. And man, do they work well! An added benefit is the bullets all come out at

a 0.225" diameter after experiencing Li'l Gizzy's loving embrace. Consistency in dimensions makes for more consistency at the target.

Also be sure to check out Arizona-based Paco Kelly's line of .22LR cartridge improvement tools, one of which is his \$75 ACU'RZR. It makes two different blunt nose shapes, plus an HP, as shown in the photo. It's double ended with 0.223" and 0.224" chambers, so you can choose the diameter that works best with your rifles. Check out Paco's other ACU'RZR tools for other diameters and for higher-volume production. Orders are accepted via snail mail only.

## Field "Testing"

This project started simply enough. Shoot a few refilled plastic one-gallon jugs at 10 yards with my Marlin 70HC to compare factory CCI Mini-Mag HPs to the small and large HPs made at home with the Li'l Gizzy, and be done. Uh-huh.

The problem with my plan is I always have to know more. For example, does the old trick of pushing a #0 Phillips screwdriver into a factory HP actually make it expand still more? Will it make a difference when pushed into Li'l Gizzy's HPs compared to doing it to factory HPs? What does Li'l Gizzy do for standard velocity RNs, both with and without that #0? How about subsonics? On and on the quest goes. And to be fair, I just had to give the snazzy ACU'RZR a whirl, too, didn't I?

## Results

My conclusions? Well, I learned the Phillips head screwdriver trick doesn't seem to offer much, if any, improvement for high velocity HPs. They already expand very well as they come from the



The Li'l Gizzy hollow- and flat-pointing tool set comes with the die and rams to make small and large HPs and FPs. Roger used a drill press (not running), but you can also use a soft-faced hammer.



factory. Nor does the trick do much for .22s at velocities below 800 fps. On the other hand, from 835 fps on up into the standard velocity range, it can sometimes make a dramatic improvement with both factory and homemade HPs. I'll refer you back to the photos.

Second, flat-pointed .22s, even at high velocity, don't expand much at all unless they're nearly full diameter wadcutter. Then they become a real bear to extract from the forming tools, and they don't chamber worth beans when feeding from a magazine. Without gelatin block evidence, the increased effectiveness of meplats any smaller than near-full diameter remains anecdotal and speculative. Besides, HPs are what this article is all about.

Third, Li'l Gizzy is so plain Jane, you almost feel sorry for her. But, man, the results! Everything you poke in comes out perfectly dead-nuts consistent, thanks to the depth-limiting shoulders on

the nose punches. Using a turned-off drill press, the hollowpointing job is fast, simple, consistent, reliable and totally satisfying.

On the other hand, the ACU'RZR is pure head-turning eye candy. It's a fine example of gorgeous industrial art work. But to me, it's fancy but fickle. Without depth-controlling shoulders on the rods, consistency with the ACU'RZR can be frustrating and elusive, requiring a lot of effort and much practice driving them with your hammer to achieve. Persist and you'll get results worthy of the effort.

So, pull up your big boy pants, make your choice, and spend what is necessary now to be better prepared and more self-sufficient in the future. You'll be glad you did.



For more info: [jksswage@yahoo.com](mailto:jksswage@yahoo.com), [pacotools.com](http://pacotools.com)



Modified Roundnoses, left to right: CCI Quiet 22 RN, 40-grain, Li'l Gizzy small HP plus #0 screwdriver; CCI Quiet 22 RN, 45-grain, Li'l Gizzy small HP; Quiet 22, 45-grain, Li'l Gizzy small HP plus #0 screwdriver; Quiet 22, 45-grain, Li'l Gizzy large HP; Unmodified CCI Suppressor HP, 45-grain; CCI Std. Vel., Li'l Gizzy small HP; CCI Std. Vel., Li'l Gizzy large HP; and CCI Std. Vel., Li'l Gizzy small HP plus #0 screwdriver.

# CHARTER ARMS

J.B. WOOD



Simple but effective. A fixed ramp front sight and square notch rear provide a durable yet clear sighting system.

The ejector has enough reach to clear the cases. Look closely and you can see the little rim contact part.

## PITBULL

### THE .380 ACP REVOLVER THAT COULD

If you're going to make a revolver chambered for a "rimless" auto pistol cartridge, you need to leave room for a modern version of the old "half-moon" clip. Unless, that is, you're Charter Arms. They have patented some marvelous little rim-contact parts in the center rod of the cylinder to accomplish the same goal. So, there's no need for what we now call a "star" clip.

In the past year, Charter added to their auto-pistol chamberings lineup began back in mid-2019 the .380 Pitbull. Some gun people associate a reasonable price with lesser quality, and that would be a huge mistake here. Over the past 50 years, I've found Charter's excellent. They work. Every time.

The .380 Pitbull uses high-tech alloy for the grip frame, and stainless steel for most of the remaining parts. The front of the rubber grip piece has well-spaced finger recesses, and there's even one for the little finger. The fit and finish of all parts is superb. Let's look next at weight and measurements. Note these are not factory specs, I did my own measurements.

The .380 Pitbull weighs 26 oz. and the overall length is 7.6". The height is 5" and width at the cylinder is 1.03".

Barrel length is 3" and the cylinder holds six rounds. As you can see, it's not pocket-sized or for deep concealment. It's perfect though for home, car or purse.

If anyone is concerned about the effectiveness of the little .380 for personal defense, remember using today's high-performance loads, it gets into the lower edge of full 9mm ballistics. The Super Vel load I used for my range testing is an example. Also, in the Charter barrel, the rifling lands are less prominent, adding a few more feet per second of velocity.

The trigger pull is excellent. Single-action is 3.5 lbs. with a clean break and minimal over-travel. The DA pull is 9.5 lbs., but it's so smooth it feels like less. The sights are just right for practical use — non-adjustable. The front is a simple ramp, and the rear has a wide square notch.

I tried out the .380 Pitbull at seven and 15 yards, standing, with a 2-handed hold. I found the point of impact to be well-centered and I was able to print 3.5" groups free-handed. The felt recoil was minimal, a factor that is important for some users.



J.B. liked the grip and found it had plenty of room for all fingers.

Mechanically, Charter revolvers have all the things you'd expect in a modern gun. The cylinder and crane unit is locked at the front and rear, and the engineers accomplished this without extra parts and springs. The firing system uses a transfer bar so the hammer can't contact the firing pin unless the trigger is fully depressed to the rear.

So, what do we have here? A beautifully made revolver with light felt recoil and a suggested retail price of \$464. It's a solid handgun that will perform when needed.



For more info: [CharterFirearms.com](http://CharterFirearms.com)

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# RELOADING

TOM MCNAUL

If there was ever a time to seize control of your ammo supply destiny, it's now. With the right gear and some know-how, you can laugh your way through the next ammo hoarding crisis. Here are some of our favorites.

## 1 DILLON 550C PROGRESSIVE RELOADING PRESS

Buy once, cry once is as true an apothegm as you'll find, and it applies to the 550C. Built with a "belt-and-suspenders" engineering approach throughout, you'll find the powder dispenses with boring and predictable precision. Everything fits like a bespoke glove. Cases move smoothly through the system without jumps. It's forgiving thanks to manual indexing. Even the weak point of most progressive presses, the primer system, runs like a Swiss watch. The 550C is a true machine.

You'll pay more up front for the Dillon, but it's worth every penny. [DillonPrecision.com](http://DillonPrecision.com), \$529.99

## 2 LYMAN CYCLONE ROTARY TUMBLER

Once you tumble wet, you never go back. As a decades-long dry tumbling kind of guy, I saw no need to try the wet method — until I did.

Not only does cleaning cases with water, detergent and steel pins get your brass shiny, it also (literally) washes away all the nasty range filth. With dry tumbling, all the dirt has nowhere to go. It's like mopping with dirty water.

The Cyclone Rotary Tumbler holds about 1,000 pistol or smaller rifle cases inside its rubber-lined (that means quiet) drum and runs with a simple dial timer for up to three hours per cycle. When finished, pour cases, water and included stainless pins into the included dual sifting trays to rinse. Your sparkly brass will be the envy of your range. [LymanProducts.com](http://LymanProducts.com), \$259.95

## 3 DILLON CM-500 CASE/MEDIA SEPARATOR

Whether you clean brass using the "dry" method with a vibratory tumbler or "wet" with water, soap and steel pins, you'll need a way to get all the cleaning media out of the cases. Sure, you can turn each upside down and shake, or you can do it the easy way.

The CM-500 is much bigger than it looks in pictures (13.5" x 19.5"), holding about 500 pistol cases or 200+ large rifle cases. The tub does a fine job of catching and containing media, water and pins depending on your cleaning method. I use one to retrieve steel cleaning pins and excess water from cases before they go in the drying machine. Like other Dillon gear, it's built to last. [DillonPrecision.com](http://DillonPrecision.com), \$52.99

## 4 SINCLAIR INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL CALIPERS

The most frequently used tool on the bench is a good set of digital calipers. A "must-have" for any reloader, the Sinclair International

Digital calipers let you measure ... most anything. The outer and inner jaws make it a snap to measure exterior and interior dimensions while the protruding rod lets you measure depth. A one-button zero ensures you're calibrated properly before each session.

You'll use this to verify overall case length, crimp diameter, verify bullet diameter, measure empty case length and lots more. Heck, I even use mine to measure group diameter on targets. [SinclairIntl.com](http://SinclairIntl.com), \$39.99

## 5 RCBS CHARGEMASTER COMBO POWDER DISPENSER

I confess I did a "go big or go home" approach when investing in a scale. After using a battery-powered model and suffering "low-battery wonkiness" I decided to get a proper AC-powered bench scale. Feeling extravagant, I got one with an automated powder dispenser attached.

The Chargemaster is a two-part affair: a digital scale, and an attached powder dispenser. Enter the charge you want and it automatically dispenses the exact charge by weight, not a volume-based estimate. It's fascinating to watch and dead-on precise. I use the full dispensing function for rifle loads and precision handgun ammo. Of course, the scale is plenty handy on its own for quick spot checking of charges thrown by your reloading press. [RCBS.com](http://RCBS.com), \$469.99





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## HANDGUN OF THE MONTH



# TURNBULL RUGER

**A**merican Handgunner proudly presents its Handgun of the Month for the May-June 2021 issue — the *Turnbull Ruger Mark IV Target 10*™.

Turnbull Restoration Co. has added the Ruger Mark IV Target with 10" cold hammer-forged bull barrel to its family of Turnbull Finished Favorites. World famous for its mastery of classic-era restoration techniques and finishes, the company transforms select, factory-new firearms as well. With the Mark IV line, Turnbull polishes the tube and barrel and then color case hardens it using their traditional bone charcoal method, which has been Turnbull's signature for decades.

The Mark IV's simple, one-button takedown makes field-stripping and proper cleaning a breeze. The longer barrel generates higher muzzle velocities and provides increased stability and a longer sight radius. A hard case and two 10-round magazines come with the pistol. Turn to p. 34 of this magazine to read Massad Ayoob's "Playing the Long Game" about the Mark IV Target 10" in its original form.

Win the Ruger Mark IV Target pistol masterfully transformed by Turnbull Restoration Co. Click on [AmericanHandgunner.com/giveaways](http://AmericanHandgunner.com/giveaways). You can send a post card too! —Jazz Jimenez

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**ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY MAY 31, 2021** WINNERS CHOSEN BY RANDOM DRAWING. Limit one entry per household. To protect the privacy and security of winners, their names will NOT be made public. Contest void where prohibited by law. Winners must undergo a background check and comply with all other federal, state and local laws. Taxes and fees will be the responsibility of the winner. Contest open to U.S. residents only. Employees and agents of Publishers' Development Corp. are not eligible. No purchase necessary. Winners will be notified by certified mail on official letterhead. Winners must respond within 30 days of receiving notification or an alternate winner will be selected. Attention deployed military: use stateside address! Giveaway guns and accessories may have evidence of being test fired or exhibit minor handling marks. Factory warranties may apply in some cases. The *Handgun of the Month* package is awarded only to the entrant drawn and will not be awarded if the firearm presented is illegal in the jurisdiction of the winner. An alternate, authorized winner will be selected. No substitutions or transfers to a third party are allowed.

**UNABLE TO ENTER ONLINE?** Mail a postcard with your name and address (no envelopes please) to *American Handgunner Magazine*, GOM May/June 2021, P.O. Box 501377, San Diego, CA, 92150-1377.



**SCAN TO ENTER**



# MARK IV TARGET **10"**

## **TURNBULL RUGER MARK IV TARGET 10"**

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MANUFACTURER: RUGER  
(336) 949-5200, [RUGER.COM](http://RUGER.COM)

CALIBER: .22LR  
CAPACITY: 10+1  
OAL: 14"  
BARREL LENGTH: 10"  
WEIGHT: 46.3 OZ.

**TOTAL  
VALUE:  
\$825**

# GUN RIGHTS

Alan Korwin



## THE \$5 TRILLION GUN-RIGHTS ASSAULT

**T**wo years ago, a third power bloc introduced five principles for what they called “a responsible firearms industry.” This bloc represents \$5 trillion in assets and the influence that implies.

According to the California State Teachers’ Retirement System, signatories to this include Connecticut Retirement Plans and Trust Funds; Florida State Board of Administration; Maine Public Employees Retirement System; Maryland State Retirement and Pension System; Oregon Public Employees Retirement Fund; Rockefeller Asset Management; San Francisco Employees’ Retirement System; State Street Global Advisors and more.

These groups are not friends of the Constitution. According to CalSTRS Chief Investment Officer Christopher J. Ailman, “This is not a political statement about constitutional rights; it is a joint assertion by all the involved signatories that investors have a stake in advancing public safety.” This is total propaganda hogwash. *It is 100% about your individual rights — squashing them.*

The five stated principles of this power mob have zero to do with reducing criminal activity. The entire plan is aimed at you, your guns and your law-abiding neighbors. Consider the principles, and with them, alternate plans that would actually address real crime in America, entirely missing from this Harvard-assisted plan. Solutions having a chance of working will be avoided and evaded by these folks.

Any semblance of real answers to mob violence, street crime, arson, cold-blooded murder, destruction of the symbols and statues of our free society, will be dismissed while patting themselves on the back and running publicity campaigns to convince useful idiots their plan is good. Useful idiots include tens of millions of your fellow Americans who voted to install communists and ANTIFA anarchists into power

in the recent elections. Here’s their plan, and some illumination.

### **The Gun Control Plan**

First: “Manufacturers should support, advance and integrate the development of technology designed to make civilian firearms safer, more secure, and easier to trace.”

Any requirement that makes it harder for citizens to immediately bring guns to bear in emergencies is wrong headed. Police will and should object, as should the public. Giving authorities increased ability to track you or your guns is a terrible idea. Increasing *crime-control efforts* to identify and apprehend 7,000 perpetrators who murder 7,000 black victims every year is desperately needed, ignored here and unaffected by this misdirection of resources.

Second: “Manufacturers should adopt and follow responsible business practices that establish and enforce responsible dealer standards and promote training and education programs for owners designed around firearms safety.”

This is not the job of manufacturers. The school system must stop vilifying guns, leaving students in abject firearms ignorance, their history, their role in preserving peace and freedom, and how to safely handle and discharge firearms for sport and protection.

Third: “Civilian firearms distributors, dealers and retailers should establish, promote, and follow best practices to ensure no firearm is sold without a completed background check in order to prevent sales to persons prohibited from buying firearms or those too dangerous to possess firearms.”

Law enforcement is a government duty, not a civilian one. Repeated studies show almost all retail-sales denials are false positives, and the few criminals foolish or brash enough to attempt retail purchases face virtually no meaningful police response. This is where attention is needed, not castigating or even focusing on innocent businesspeople.

Fourth: “Civilian firearms distributors, dealers, and retailers should educate and train their employees to better recognize and effectively monitor irregularities at

the point of sale, to record all firearm sales, to audit firearms inventory on a regular basis, and to proactively assist law enforcement.”

Again, the misguided rich elites focus on the innocents and retail. To reduce crime, focus on criminals: Keep repeat offenders behind bars, using firearms in crime must receive real punishment. Judges who allow such criminals to skate should be publicly identified, censured, and removed from the bench. The countless criminals already armed need to be identified and dealt with under existing law. Focusing on gunless bad guys buying their first gun at retail is an idiot’s plan for crime control.

Fifth: “Participants in the civilian firearms industry should work collaboratively, communicate, and engage with the signatories of these Principles to design, adopt, and disclose measures and metrics demonstrating both best practices and their commitment to promoting these Principles.”

Officials, not civilians, should routinely post their progress in identifying armed felons, inner-city murderers, catching them and bringing them to justice. Everyone must expose elitist anti-rights bigots posing as experts and proposing attacks on civilians as an obstacle to reducing crime. It misdirects attention, wastes resources and denigrates fundamental human rights, by people pretending to be authorities, which they are decidedly not.

You should question their sources of wealth, and whether it should be redistributed, considering their obvious misuse of the astounding funds and influence they have  controversially amassed.

*Alan Korwin’s website features plain-English books on state and federal gun laws for the public, and more common sense like you just read. He invites you to write to him or see his work at [GunLaws.com](http://GunLaws.com), where you can get books and DVDs that help keep you safe.*

# DIY FREEDOM

Continued from page 39

a Dremel tool. The second I finished out without using electricity. This meant a hacksaw blade, a pair of wire cutters, a small round rasp, a coarse file, a spot of sandpaper and a most remarkable hand drill.

I once used this very tool to bore a hole through a man's skull. He had recently suffered a fairly impressive motor vehicle crash and was in no shape to complain. The hole in his skull emergently relieved the pressure on his brain and saved his life.

This disposable burr hole craniotomy set included the niftiest little hand drill. I couldn't bring myself to discard such an awesome tool, so I scrubbed it down, ran it through the autoclave, and have used it for more than 20 years for minor chores. With nothing more than that simple drill and a few hand tools, you can craft what is arguably the world's coolest polymer-framed handgun.

## Mechanical Details

The build fractionates down into two phases. Bolt the jig in place around the frame and then use your drill to bore the three pin holes. Each hole must be drilled separately from

each side, so that's six different operations. It takes less time to do than to describe. A drill press helps keep things square and precise, but the manual drill and a steady hand produced a comparable end result.

To finish out the frame, you also need to remove four plastic tabs from the sides along with a bit of leftover material inside the front of the dust cover. A sanding wheel, some wire cutters, or a good sharp knife and a little patience will do the tabs. Snip them back carefully with wire cutters then polish what's left down flat. Remember it is way easier to take stuff off than to put stuff back on. Shooting the gun some smooths everything out nicely.

Get the big chunks of the semicircular bit up front clear with a hacksaw blade or a cutoff wheel on a Dremel tool. Then dress the area with a round rasp or the Dremel grinder. The build kit from 80% Arms includes both the requisite drill bits, and the proper grinder attachment you need for your Dremel tool.

The instructions are beautifully executed and simple to follow. They claim you can finish the frame in 15 minutes. Move with a purpose using power tools and you'll be done in less than that.

Once you've completed the frame, it's time to put everything together. There are indeed some tricky bits,

but YouTube is awash in instructional videos. If you're too dim to pull this off, I sure wouldn't admit that to anybody. It really is a delightfully enjoyable process.

## Trigger Time

The GST-9 is everything the GLOCK 19 might be, but better. It carries just as beautifully, while the optimized particulars make it a superb combat tool. Magazines leap clear like a six-year-old peeing on an electric fence.

Reliability once everything is broken in is on par with the GLOCK, and follow-up shots are both fast and smooth. I mounted one gun with a Trijicon RMR micro red dot and Streamlight TLR8G illuminator/laser sight and felt ready for just about anything. The GST-9 will reliably take care of business.

This pistol fits my hand like it was born there and is sufficiently reliable to guard my family when out where the Wild Things Roam. It runs just as fast and just as well as a factory pistol while honestly looking even cooler. The fact I made it myself means I know every pin and spring intimately. The kit even delivers straight to your door without pestering an FFL. The GST-9 is a pocketful of DIY freedom.



For more info: [80PercentArms.com](http://80PercentArms.com), [Trijicon.com](http://Trijicon.com), [Streamlight.com](http://Streamlight.com)

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EDITOR  
PICKS

# GUNNYSACK

TOM McHALE

## DILLON SUPER SWAGE 600

**W**e're in the midst of yet another ammo crisis, meaning you can't find any. The time is now to begin planning on controlling your ammo supply destiny by taking up reloading. If you shoot an AR pistol or even .40 or .45 handgun and run into spent brass with crimped primer pockets, this Dillon tool is a lifesaver. Just mount the Super Swage 600 to a bench and you can press the primer pocket crimps right out. New primers will ease into place effortlessly, and the swaging solution is a lot easier than cutting approaches. A spindle supports the case from the inside, so you won't crush anything, and the large operating handle provides plenty of leverage. The unit comes with .223 and .308 swaging rods, but you can order .40 and .45 as well. [DillonPrecision.com](http://DillonPrecision.com)



SERENA JUCHNOWSKI

## S.O.L. FIRE LITE FUEL-FREE LIGHTER

**N**o more worrying about being down to your last match — the Fire Lite Fuel-Free Lighter from Survive Outdoors Longer combines technology with necessity. This lighter is USB rechargeable and a single charge powers approximately 45 lighter uses or three hours of low light for the 100-lumen built-in flashlight. Pair it with a solar-charging battery pack and you have a reliable way to start a fire regardless of wind, rain, temperature or altitude. Encased in a bright orange, waterproof case and weighing less than 2 oz., it's intuitive to use and not a burden to carry. Pressing a button turns on dual plasma arcs that ignite anything flammable on contact while allowing you utmost control, unlike a match flame with a mind of its own. A tinder paracord lanyard serves as a convenient fuel source. [SurviveOutdoorsLonger.com](http://SurviveOutdoorsLonger.com)



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TOM McHALE

## RCBS UNIVERSAL HAND PRIMING TOOL

**S**ince we're talking about reloading in this issue, it would be a *faux pas* of epic proportions to not mention the tool I use more than any other — the RCBS Universal Hand Priming Tool. If you use a single-stage reloading press, handling the priming operation separately can save lots of time and aggravation. Even if you use a progressive, offloading primer seating can often make sense, especially with finicky presses or calibers.

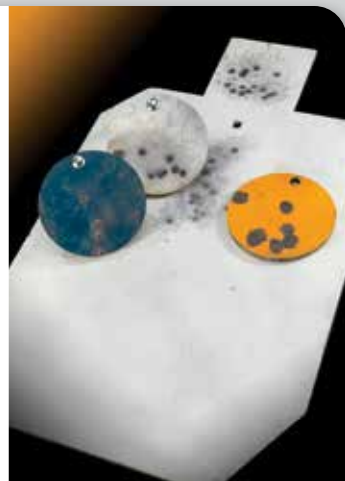
With this tool, say goodbye to caliber-specific adapters forever. Insert a cartridge case between the spring-loaded clamps and it's automatically centered and ready to go. The heavy-duty grips won't give you blisters after a few hundred cases and will last a lifetime. The primer reservoir doubles as a "flip tray" to orient a box of primers properly in seconds. And the tray is segregated from the primer insertion punch to protect against mass detonation. A brilliant and "must have" tool! [RCBS.com](http://RCBS.com)

TOM McHALE

## BLUEGRASS TARGETS

**T**he Imagesmith Rob Jones, who takes all those snazzy photos for our cover features, turned me on to a new company, at least to me — Bluegrass Targets. These folks manufacture a wide range of AR500 steel targets and complete systems so you can assemble the shooting range of your choice. Like big guns? Be sure to check out the 1/2" thick AR500 models for magnum use. Rimfire fanatic? You might like the 1/4" models as they're a bit lighter for easy transport. They're fine for "normal" pistol calibers too. Check out the company's iconic Yeti target in this line for a little extra range fun. I particularly like the options for easy-to-assemble plate rack and swinging target systems. Using clever adapters, you can assemble your own shooting gallery using sections of standard pipe. If you want to hone your trick shot skills, do check out the "Know Your Limits" setup offering a range of swinging targets ranging from 2" to just 1/4" in diameter. Can you say "frustration"?

As for Rob, he favors the nicely radiused edges and that satisfying ring when shot. [BluegrassTargetsKY.com](http://BluegrassTargetsKY.com)



## KEEP IT SHORT AND SWEET



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## AYOOB FILES

*Continued from page 78*

his revolver, shotgun and ammunition. About 400 rounds sounded right to him. He wouldn't attack first, but he would not hesitate after the first person attacked him.

### How large was the crowd harassing the Sweet home? Prosecution witnesses claimed as little as ordinary neighborhood foot traffic, while defense witnesses described as many as 300 to 15-hundred hostile people.

"After speaking with Osby, Ossian Sweet purchased guns and ammunition to protect himself and his family in the event of trouble." (1)

#### Shots Fired

Ossian Sweet called on friends and relatives to assist in the move. Dr. Sweet had picked the Labor Day time period on the theory neighbors would have better things to do than harass black folks then, but that turned out not to be the case. As the Sweet allies arrived, they found a crowd of angry white people gathered at the scene, shouting racial slurs. Inside the home, doors were locked, curtains were drawn, and guns and ammo were distributed. Boxes of ammo were placed on windowsills. *All save Mrs. Sweet appear to have been armed.*

After a sleepless night, the harassment continued. Sweet had requested police protection beforehand, and by evening of the second day, September 9, an estimated eight to 10 Detroit police officers had been assigned to control the scene but appear to have done little if anything to disperse the crowd. Things escalated. A barrage of rocks was thrown at the Sweet house and through the windows. Dr. Sweet himself was showered with broken glass when a rock crashed through his bedroom window.

Suddenly, shots were fired. Across the street, one man staggered, and another collapsed. Twenty-five-year-old Eric Hogsburg (spelled Houghsberg in some accounts) had been shot in the leg. Leon Breiner, 33, had been hit in the back. His last words before he died were "Boys, they've shot me."

All 11 people in the Sweet household were arrested. After hours of interrogation without counsel present, *all were charged with murder.*

#### Missing Details

Accounts of the specific "shots fired" details are scarce and vary wildly.

Accounts range from two shots fired (an unlikely minimum) to more than one "barrage" or "volley" of gunfire. I've been unable to find any inventory of spent cartridge casings or any documentation of trajectory analysis. Neither of the projectiles that took flesh appear to have been recovered.

There is a paucity of even descriptions of the firearms recovered from

the shooting scene. Phyllis Vines writes, "... police searched the house and confiscated guns, automatic pistols, rifles, the diamond-studded blue-steel revolver belonging to (Dr. Sweet's brother) Otis' roommate, the narcotics agent William Davis." Later Vines adds, "The testimony most damaging to the Sweets came from Detective George Fairbairn, the arresting officer who identified the weapons. They found two .38 Colt revolvers hidden in a mattress in an upstairs bedroom, along with a black automatic Remington shotgun covered by a pillowcase. All were fully loaded. In an upstairs dresser were a German automatic revolver (sic), two shotguns, and a bag of ammunition." A double-barrel shotgun was also seized as evidence. Evidence tracking seems to have been sloppy. Vines: "Inspector (Norton) Schuknecht had testified there was no inventory of all the exhibits, including boxes of bullets that Lieutenant William Johnson maintained for safekeeping."

#### First Trial

All 11 defendants were tried together. Testimony varied wildly, often contradictory and with some witnesses even self-contradictory. How large was the crowd harassing the Sweet home? Prosecution witnesses claimed as little as ordinary neighborhood foot traffic, while defense witnesses described as many as 300 to 15-hundred hostile people. *Detroit News* reporter Philip Adler, who had happened onto the scene, triggered an objection from the prosecutor when he described the group as "a mob" while testifying as an eyewitness.

Dr. Sweet's younger brother Henry was the only defendant who admitted firing a gun, described as a ".38 caliber Winchester" rifle. He said, "I looked out and saw the crowd across the street throwing stones. I tried to protect myself. I fired the rifle in the air the first time. The second time I fired at the

crowd standing between the store and the first house.”

The NAACP funded trial expenses, hiring the legendary Clarence Darrow to lead the defense, supplementing local counsel Charles Mahoney. Darrow, in his waning years at age 68, was the most famous lawyer in the country at the time, having recently finished the legendary “Scopes Monkey Trial” in Tennessee.

In the course of trial Darrow argued since the State could not prove which of the 11 defendants had fired the fatal shot, none should be found guilty of the killing. In the end, this argument proved insurmountable. The all-white-male jury deadlocked, resulting in a mistrial. It soon came out some two-thirds of the jury had voted to acquit all defendants of all charges. (2)

A new trial was scheduled. To avoid the same mistake, the prosecution decided to try each defendant separately, beginning with Henry Sweet, the only one who admitted he fired at all.

### **The Reasonable Man**

In the second trial, *People v. Henry Sweet*, Darrow eloquently explained to the jury a cornerstone of any self-defense plea, what is generically known as the reasonable person doctrine: “What would a reasonable and prudent person have done, in the exact same situation, knowing what the defendant knew?”

Here is how Darrow put it to the jury:

“Men are out in a boat, in an angry sea, with little food, and less water. No hope in sight. What will they do? They throw a companion overboard to save themselves, or they kill somebody to save themselves. Juries have come into court and passed on the question of whether they should have waited longer, or not. Later, the survivors were picked up by a ship and perhaps, if they had waited longer, all would have been saved; yet a jury, months after it was over, sitting safely in their jury-box, pass upon the question of whether they acted too quickly or not. Can they tell? No.

“To decide that case, you must be in a small boat, with little food and water; in a wild sea, with no sail in sight, and drifting around for hours or days in the face of the deep, beset by hunger and darkness and fear and hope. Then you can tell; but no man can tell without it. It can’t be done, gentlemen, and the law says so, and this Court will tell you so.

“Let me tell you what you must do, gentlemen. It is fine for lawyers to say, naively, that nothing happened. No foot was set upon that ground; as if you had to put your foot on the premises. You might put your hand on. The foot isn’t sacred. No foot was set upon their home. No shot was fired, nothing except

that the house was stoned and windows broken; and an angry crowd was outside seeking their destruction. That is all. That is all, gentlemen.

“I say that no American citizen, unless he is black, need wait until an angry mob sets foot upon his premises before he kills. I say that no free man need wait to see just how far an aggressor will go before he takes life. The first instinct a man has is to save his life. He doesn’t need to experiment. He hasn’t time to experiment. When he thinks it is time to save his life, he has the right to act. There isn’t any question about it. It has been the law of every English-speaking country, so long as we have had law. Every man’s home is his castle, which even the King may not enter. Every man has a right to kill to defend himself or his family, or others, either in the defense of the home or in the defense of themselves.” (3)

Darrow’s argument worked. This second jury, again made up of all white males, found Henry Sweet not guilty on all charges. Despairing of any convictions, the prosecution dropped all remaining charges. The Sweet trials were over.

But the Sweets’ travails were not.

### **Aftermath**

Months after the trial, the Sweets’ baby daughter died of tuberculosis. Her

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young mother died of the same disease in 1928. During the funeral, Dr. Sweet was stopped at the cemetery's main gate and told he had to use another point of entry, because this one was for white people only. Dr. Sweet drew a revolver, and the guards rapidly changed their minds and allowed him to lead his dead wife's funeral cortege through the main gate after all.

There were failed marriages. When he drove to see family in the still-segregated South, Ossian Sweet wore a chauffeur's cap to avoid being stopped by police as a black man driving a fancy car. Arthritis plagued him severely. In 1960, at age 65, Dr. Ossian Sweet picked up a gun for the last time. He used it to commit suicide.

## Lessons

It is good to have trial support. The NAACP paid for the Sweets' legal representation. Lawyers of Darrow's caliber today charge \$1,000 an hour, and most people don't realize the long, arduous trial preparation can run into a four-figure count of those hours. Their case had become a *cause célèbre* among a significant, sympathetic segment of society and thus drew substantial contributions to pay for the defense. *The cost of a defense such as the Sweets' would easily go seven*

*figures today.*

Do not tarnish your own defense. Testifying in the first trial, Dr. Sweet had to admit he had ditched evidence — a pocketful of live cartridges — in a cuspidor near a chair he'd sat in at the police station during his interrogation. *Hiding or altering evidence is seen as an "indicia of guilt."* Dr. Sweet's excuse, which apparently resonated with at least some jurors, was that he feared being framed by the police. Still, this action apparently compromised his credibility with at least some other jurors.

Be certain you can justify your actions before you press the trigger. People throwing rocks at a structure from the outside does not generally warrant a lethal force response in and of itself. The prosecution had a solid argument that Leon Breiner was on his own porch chatting with friends and family and smoking a pipe, with his back to the Sweet home, when he was fatally shot. The wound track — entry in lower back, exit near the navel — was straight horizontal. This, Darrow argued, was inconsistent with a shot fired downward from Henry Sweet's position on the second floor of 2905 Garland. The prosecution explained that it could be accounted for if Breiner had been leaning slightly

forward when shot, but the jury clearly had doubts. It appears Breiner was the classic innocent bystander. Henry Sweet firing intentionally "at the crowd" and striking an uninvolved neighbor would be construable as reckless, wanton behavior and certainly enough to sustain a manslaughter conviction.

Understand that bringing friends into such a conflict can jeopardize them. Only Mrs. Gladys Sweet was allowed bail; the rest of friends and family remained in jail until the last trial was done and the last charges were dropped. They had answered Dr. Sweet's call for assistance in what they could reasonably see as righteous cause, but all paid a price whether they pulled a trigger or not.

Attorneys can establish multiple branches of reasonable doubt. Detroit Police Officer Frank Gill claimed to see two of the Sweet party open fire from the upper back porch of the home, and said he returned one shot at them himself with his .38 service revolver, from ground level. The defense tried to indicate the cop's bullet could have traveled parallel across the street, consistent with the trajectory of the fatal wound. If you fire a shot, you should be certain where the bullet is going to end up.

It is critical to understand who is and isn't part of the mob. At the time of the Sweet incident, historian Vines notes, "Michigan law was clear about what constituted a mob. 'Ordinance 15001 of *Offenses Against the Public Peace* defined a mob as '12 or more people armed with clubs or other dangerous weapons ... or 30 or more, whether armed or not.'" (4) A "mob" is generally seen at law as a group with shared criminal intentions. The legal principle is when such a mob attacks you, each member of the mob — a lynch mob, for example — shares culpability and therefore shares vulnerability to lawful defense of self or others. This is not true of a bystander neighbor on his own porch, and in today's pattern of urban violence that begins as a peaceful demonstration, does not extend to protesters as opposed to rioters, looters, and those committing arson of occupied dwellings. This helps to explain some of today's confusion between "protesters" and "rioters and arsonists." Their identity as one or the other must be determined by their observed actions, not assumption based on their mere presence.



*Footnotes: (1): Vine, Phyllis, One Man's Castle: Clarence Darrow in Defense of the American Dream, Harper-Collins, NY, 2004, P. 113. (2): The [Baltimore] Afro-American, 28 Nov. 1925, P. 1. (3): People v. Henry Sweet, trial transcript published by NAACP, 1927 (4): Vines, op. cit., P. 167.*

# TRICK SHOTS

Continued from page 49

accident: My indoor range sold tennis balls connected by a 9" string so we could attach them to the target stands. Hits came in one of two varieties. If you wanted "easy mode," you could wait until the ball crossed your line of sight while it was swaying front-to-back. "Hard mode," of course, was nailing it in the middle of a side-to-side swing.

Killing several dozen tennis balls taught me to pivot my body like a turret. That is, to swivel at the hips so the shoulders, arms, head and wrists all move as a unit and allow the sights to stay in alignment as they simultaneously move with the target. This practice made sweeping the dreaded "Texas Star" a snap when I finally dipped a toe into the waters of competition!

## Behind Your Back!

The classic dare, no? Shooting strong hand or weak hand only is more difficult, but you'd be surprised how achievable it is if you slow down. Be prepared for wobble on account of losing your stabilizing hand but resist the urge to "snatch the 10-ring"

by yanking the trigger when everything seems perfect. Contrary to what it seems, a slow and deliberate press when your sights look just okay will yield better hits than a sloppy pull when the sights seem perfect.

With your weak hand, it's important to think more critically and deliberately about fundamentals, since everything is going to feel more alien. Nothing comes automatically here — probably why so few shooters practice this — but it's a good test of whether you can apply what you know you should be doing. Accept even more wobble than you'd care to abide and slowly increase pressure with what feels like a stupid and useless index finger until your shot breaks.

Note that of all the "trick shots," one-handed stuff is by far the most practical. If you ever need to fight for your life with a handgun, one of your two hands might be holding a flashlight or a cell phone. A hand might be placed protectively in front of a loved one or pushing against an attacker. In the worst of cases, one hand might simply not work at all if previously stabbed or shot. Knowing you'll still be able to shoot in such conditions is very comforting!

## Other Higher Purposes

I genuinely believe we're inclined to practice something when we find

it pleasurable and when we feel like we're moving from a place of "good" to "better" (as opposed to moving from "terrible" to "barely adequate"). Nothing makes you feel like a rock star at the local range than by performing a feat of accuracy you know is cool — even better if there's a witness to gush over the cool thing you just did. Making this week's trip a fun outing is a great incentive to look forward to next week's excursion.

For those of you who are on the cusp, try some of the above and see if you don't surprise yourself. The "trick" of most trick shots is actually quite boring: Again, it's just flawless application of the fundamentals. But even in the attempt of a trick shot, you're forcing yourself to be wholly conscious of good habits and best practice, making these skills second nature if you need to call on them to dispatch something graver than a matchstick or playing card.

And for those of you who aren't quite at this level, keep at it! The vast majority of the deadeyes you see at ranges and local matches reached their level of ability only through years of practice and self-analysis. It's not that you can't do any of the above, it's only that you can't do it yet!



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## LONG GAME

Continued from page 35

with no real accuracy advantage from a practical standpoint.

### Flashback

This gun brought me back. My first "very own" handgun was an early Standard Model with red-medallioned stocks my dad bought for me used for \$20 in 1959. You shot one-handed back then, of course, and it was just too heavy for an 11-year-old kid to hold steadily. I traded it toward a new High Standard Sentinel revolver with a light aluminum frame, which I shot better. I'd have grown into the Ruger if I'd kept with it. At 12, thanks to a growth spurt, I was comfortably shooting a GI .45 — but I always had a tender spot thereafter for the Ruger .22.

With its extremely muzzle-heavy balance, the Mark IV 10" brought me back to the memory of a too-heavy gun that was wobbly. I found off-hand at 50 yards, I grouped tighter with my old Mark I with a 5" heavy barrel. I had spanned the decades from a Ruger .22 too heavy for offhand for a pre-pubescent kid, to one too heavy for a feeble arthritic geezer. For me, the long Mark IV came with a free trip on the time machine.

### Fun Factor

It had been a long time since I'd shot "tin cans," but the Ruger called them out of the recycling bin. Plinking is a red-headed stepchild in the training world, but for many of us it was the first stepping-stone to shooting. It's fun to watch your targets dance when they're hit, and reaction targets make you focus on your front sight. Ruger lists this gun as a target pistol, but I spent more time on soda cans and steel than I did on paper.

The long barrel makes it something of a conversation piece. More than once I heard "Hey, Mas, your integral silencer isn't working worth crap." I replied, "That's okay, I just got it to take to the National Pistol-Whipping Championships."

Fact: This humongous .22 made me dig out a pistol I hadn't shot in years, my Mark III 22/45 — 29.5 oz. on my scale. Ruger makes a 22/45 Lite that goes only 25 oz. Where the heck was that when I was 11 years old and needed it?

Bottom line? This elongated Ruger is fun! MSRP is \$645 in blue steel and aluminum, \$719 in all stainless steel, and probably less with careful shopping. And if someone ever does host a national pistol-whipping championship, well, you'll know what gun to bring.



For more info: [ClarkCustomGuns.com](http://ClarkCustomGuns.com), [Volquartsen.com](http://Volquartsen.com), [TandemKross.com](http://TandemKross.com), [Ruger.com](http://Ruger.com)

## SOARING HAWKS

*Continued from page 51*

famous trench maces of WWI fame as well as a faithful copy of the WWII-Vietnam-era MP Baton,” Ryan lends. Dubbed the Trench, this is a full-tilt, space-age mace on steroids that would come in handy should anarchists come to call.

Who buys tomahawks? We posed the question to Johnson. “Our customer is typically the guy who is putting together a Go Bag and realizes he needs a reliable tomahawk for breaching and heavy cutting. Our tomahawks are perfect for Go Bags, Active Shooter bags, and truck use as it’s a tool that can get you on target or out of harm’s way by cutting doors, breaking locks and chain, and general light breaching.”

### In Good Hands

The American Tomahawk Company is part of a network of individual companies Ryan has interconnected under the RMJ USA umbrella, all located at the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains. RMJ Tactical was the forerunner, focusing on Johnson’s tactical and wilderness tomahawks initially and expanding into fixed-blade combat, everyday carry, and field

knives. Chattanooga Leatherworks focuses on leather sheaths and accessories. Savage Gentlemen is an offshoot with focus on a wide range of accessories including leather wallets, razors, apparel and drinkware. Readyman places emphasis on survival/EDC tools, first aid and a wide range of camping gear. Other divisions include RATS Medical specializing in tourniquets and Cameron Advanced Mobility featuring training in a wide range of environments worldwide.

As you can see, American Tomahawk Company is surrounded by a diverse group of companies that can support to customers’ any desire — from serious hard-use knives, axes and tools to an eye-tempting range of accessories. We asked Ryan about future plans for American Tomahawk Company. “We plan to draw on two sources for inspiration for new models — U.S. military history and the history of the frontier. These sources give us plenty to work with. Expect several tomahawks, batons and possibly a companion knife in the future.”

To see a video of an American Tomahawk Company hawk in action, check out a video on [AmericanHandgunner.com](http://AmericanHandgunner.com) of our own Editor Tom McHale giving one a whirl.



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## SIXGUNNER

Continued from page 33

Trigger Gauge. The DA pull for each measured 12.5 lbs.

Since these revolvers are K-Frame size, I went into my accumulation of leather coming up with a home crafted thumb break design I made years ago for my Combat Magnum and a Safari-land basket weave finished holster with a traditional safety strap. Both provide comfortable carry and security.

While one might consider these sixguns quite heavy, even with self-defense .22 Magnum ammunition, they are easy-to-use revolvers with virtually no recoil. Hollowpoint .22 Long Rifle ammunition should not be overlooked, especially for those who are recoil sensitive. When the .22 Long Rifle version is loaded with such cartridges as the CCI Mini-Mag +V hollow points it's also a possibility for defensive use with no concern for recoil.

### Range Performance

I always like to have at least a dozen different .22 LR ammunition choices when testing any .22 as they can be extremely picky. The test targets that came with each of these .22 revolvers showed 1.5" groups at 15 meters, so I used the same distance to find ammunition that shot as well or better than exhibited by the test groups. I put 18 different factory rounds to the test and the following, with their muzzle velocities, all grouped just right over 1" at 15 meters. CCI Mini-Mag HP, 1,157 fps; CCI Standard Velocity, 904 fps; American Eagle HP, 1,082 fps; Remington Thunderbolt, 1,022 fps; Remington Sub-Sonic, 856 fps; and the two most accurate loads (both shooting under 1"), the CCI Green Tag at 943 fps and Winchester's 525-round bulk pack HP at 1,083 fps.

Switching to the .22 WMR sixgun, I fired eight factory loads. The first results were very disappointing, however the more I shot the tighter the groups became. I was never able to get good results with Remington 33 AccuTips or CCI Maxi-Mag standard or hollowpoint versions. However, the CCI Speer GDHP self-defense ammunition grouped into just over 1" with a muzzle velocity of 1,270 fps. Armscor 40-grain JHP clocks out just under 1,300 fps with a group of 1½" for seven shots.

With their sturdy construction there does not seem to be anything about these revolvers that would prevent them from being able to provide long-lasting service for several family generations of shooters. I doubt very much they could ever actually be worn out.



# CUSTOM GSX100

Continued from page 45

weight and sensation, just experiment with the company's 2-, 3-, 4-, 4.5- and 6-lb. striker springs.

The trigger moves almost exactly 1/4", grit free, until it hits a smooth pressure wall. With no pressure variance, you'll experience an actual crisp, but surprise break. It's fantastic. What really got my attention was the reset. After just 1/8" forward travel, you'll hear and feel a you-can't-miss-it-unless-you're-unconscious reset, at which point you're ready to fire again. The *raison d'être* of this system is speed.

**Yes, it always pains me to "throw away" perfectly serviceable components when I upgrade something or another. Fortunately, there's a better way.**

Speaking of speed, this GSX100 features a skeletonized striker. Made from steel, this Titanium Nitride treated part also wears a nifty gold finish. It features a slightly extended tip for more reliable ignition and the skeletonized design lightens it up, making things move just a hair faster.

## Other Gizmos

Following the "go big or go home" rule of life, we opted to go with custom performance parts for all the other interior and exterior gizmos.

The captive recoil spring assembly is filled with a Tungsten rod. The assembly is five times heavier than the standard plastic stuff in a factory GLOCK. This gives you more weight up front for improved recoil management and muzzle-flip reduction. Again, every little detail is about speed, not only for lock time, but getting back on target. If you want to customize your recoil spring performance, you can choose from 11-, 13-, 15-, 17-, 20- and 22-lb. Tungsten guide rod kits.

Inside, you'll find an upgraded safety plunger too. Also treated with Titanium Nitride, this gold plug tucked up under the slide reciprocates with every trigger press. A plunger upgrade makes a surprising difference, smoothing out a trigger as the trigger bar drags under it each and every time you press the trigger.

Rounding out the package are upgraded, extended, and cosmetically enhanced controls. The extended slide lock lever is just big enough to allow positive operation (again, it's all about speed) but unobtrusive so it won't get in the way of holstering. We chose red to add a little pop to the rest of the design.

Since we were on a "red" theme, we added a matching takedown lever replacement too.

Paying homage to the "need for speed" theme, we elected to add an extended rectangular magazine release. You guessed it — red! This part is not only enlarged but extends farther from the frame. You'll have no trouble activating it without changing your firing grip. If you plan to build a carry gun, do note some holsters aren't entirely friendly with extended magazine releases in general, so be sure to check your particular holster doesn't apply pressure to that button.

Last, but not least, we elected to top this pistol with TRUGLO fiber optic sights given its range and competi-

tion future. A red tube up front collects plenty of light through its 1/2" opening so it leaps into view. In the back, green fiber pipes flank a square notch.

## Need For Speed

When the range called, the name of the game was steel. Who wants to stand around punching holes in paper when there's a steel silhouette, plate rack and dueling tree begging for a thrashing?

Using a mix of Black Hills 115-grain FMJ, 115-grain JHP and HoneyBadger ammo, I went to town from 15- to 25-yard distances. Rounding out the ammo testing, I checked out some new match ammo from Norma, the Hexagon and their most interesting MHP defensive ammo.

Everything in the mix was soft shooting, especially the light for caliber Black Hills HoneyBadger (100-grain) and Norma MHP (108-grain) loads. As for handling? Sweet. I absolutely loved the trigger and reset on this pistol. Nailing steel at high speed was a breeze. I took my initial shots with this pistol from 25 yards at a steel silhouette target and it felt like cheating, regardless of how fast I launched double and triple taps.

Tearing myself away from the fun task at hand of tormenting steel, I set up some paper targets at 25 yards and did some quick and dirty five-shot group testing using a basic pistol rest. Most of my test loads were consistent with each other as follows: Black Hills JHP, 2.7", Black Hills FMJ, 2.8", Black Hills HoneyBadger 3.4", Norma Hexagon, 3.0" and Norma MHP, 2.0". The GSX100 seemed to like that Norma MHP best, with four of five shots going into a 1.0" group. I repeated groups with that one to



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be sure the flyer wasn't induced by me and I did get consistent 2" groups.

## Closing Arguments

As I write this, I fear we're in for a tough couple of years for handgun and ammo availability. Politics, pandemics and violence in the streets have caused millions of Americans to wake up and head to their nearest gun store to commence loading the shopping carts to the gills. The result is a shortage of most everything.

Maybe it's a good time to think about building your own custom pistol just the way you want it. Not only can you choose your specifications and performance attributes with judicious part selection, you can create your own cosmetic design too. With this GSX100, we kicked the tires of GlockStore's custom laser engraving services and added an engraved and color-filled *American Handgunner* logo on the left along with a GlockStore logo on the right. Because ... why not? The sky's the limit if you want to create an heirloom gift or something special for yourself. Just send in your own artwork or give the tactical artists a call to discuss ideas and you're off and running.



For more info: [GlockStore.com](http://GlockStore.com)

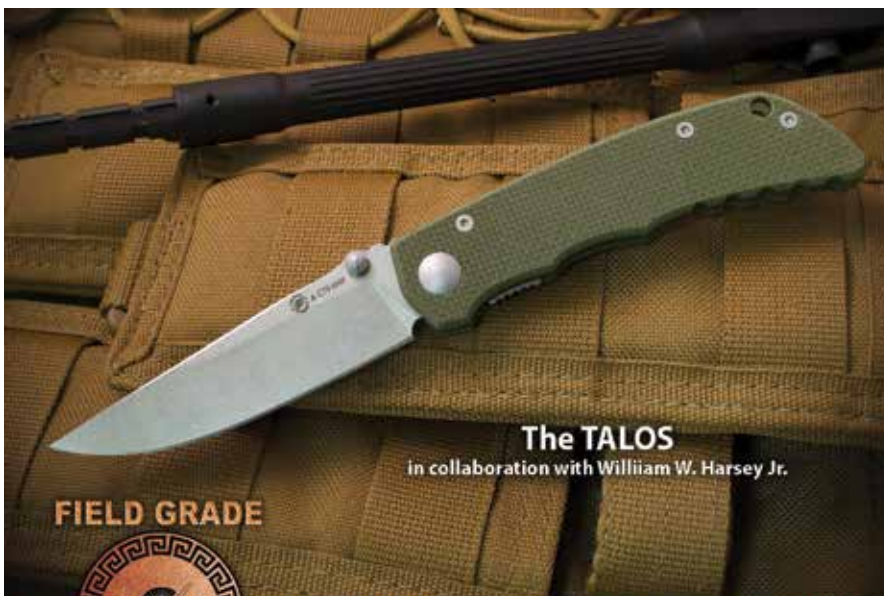
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## SPEAK OUT

Continued from page 9

Connor was my favorite until Will Dabbs. I don't think Connor will mind because Will is an outstanding writer; he is as informative as he is entertaining and thought provoking. Thank you for a great magazine and a fabulous group of contributors.

David V. Sorrick

Clearly God has given Will Dabbs the gift of communication. His "Child Soldiers: Tale of Two Roys" (Jan/Feb 2021) is one of this best and shows he should be considered as one of the main voices representing gun owners. He should address Congress regarding this piece and start to shut down gun adversaries.

Ken Donaldson

### Tommy Gun Spotting

I really enjoy the magazine and wish it were monthly! Reading *Ayoob Files* (Jan/Feb 2021) got me thinking. I have that picture with Winston Churchill holding the Tommy gun. It's in Chris Kyle's book *American Gun, a History of the U.S. in Ten Firearms*.

Lenny Garofalo

### Red Dot Revolution

Mas Ayoob's informative piece on red dot sights whetted my appetite for more on the topic. In light of the increasing popularity of red dots on handguns and the myriad of choices, perhaps *AH* could publish an in-depth look at offerings including features such as mounting options, reliability, cost, etc. Those of us who can't afford the high-end optics would appreciate it if you could include reviewed budget-priced products.

Joe Costanza

*I guess it's the year of the handgun red dot sight, isn't it? Your timing is excellent, as we have lots more coming in the next couple of issues. I suspect the 2021 DIY Gunsmithing Special Edition will be chock-full of optics content too. —Tom*

### A Very Tank Christmas

Please express my thanks to Tank Hoover for his recent article "A Deer Stand Christmas Carol" (*American-Handgunner.com*). Brings back similar fond memories of my family deer hunts in Pennsylvania. As Mr. Hoover wrote, not as many in attendance and I as well am one of the oldest at the pre-opening day festivities. However, I still wear my Woolrich, but carry

the “more modern” Winchester 88. Always enjoy Tank’s writings. Happy New Year!

Paul Whipple

## New Social Media

Please tell the kids (Tom, Brent, and Roy) this 78-year-old is forever in their debt for finally interesting me in Social Media. I was not a LEO, I was medically exempted from military service, but I do consider myself a Patriot, knowledgeable of American history and the Constitution. I refuse to participate with Facebook and Twitter because I believe them to have an anti-American and 1st Amendment bias, which I deplore. I will attempt to enter the social media world if I can figure out how to use Parler, MeWe and Rumble. Remember, my age group graduated college prior to the availability of handheld calculators and we actually used slide rules. Thanks again young fellas — hope to catch up with you on free speech social media.

Mike Quill  
Wilmington, NC

I was watching your *Guncranks* video and got so worked up about these different social media platforms I had to

pause to send you this message.

I had never heard of Parler, Rumble, or DuckDuckGo and a lot of these other new platforms you mentioned. They were all news to me.

I’ll Google them, but I just wanted to speak up and say I, for one, had never heard of any of these until today!

Don

## Gouging?

Just a quick comment on the state of the firearms industry and the price of ammo in particular. It seems those in the industry take every opportunity to gouge the customer. I’m particularly addressing the outrageous prices that are being asked for almost all ammo. Come on. Twenty rounds of Winchester .223 for \$31, 50 rounds of Armscor 9mm +P for \$70, 100 rounds of Winchester 9mm ball for \$120? This type of thing annoys us old timers and does not show well for the newcomers to the firearms family.

Of course, it doesn’t affect me because I make a habit of keeping a goodly quantity of ammo in my safe. But I have introduced a couple of folks to the world of firearms and have received questions like “is the ammunition always this expensive?” I have to tell them there seems to be a bit of price

gouging going on right now.

Ronald Sallow

## Confiscation? Nah

Confiscation is an alarmist topic that might be good for raising funds and selling media, but a legislative body would need to ignore the Second Amendment and legal decisions such as the Supreme Court’s *Heller* and *McDonald* decisions. I have written a law review article in support of AR-type rifles, teach a law school level 2A course, and have participated in trial and appellate level challenges of restrictive gun laws. Sure, the battle exists over what guns are protected under the 2A, and what restrictions on ownership and carry may be reasonably imposed. But hey, the so-called wild west imposed strict carry bans in almost every town. The only way confiscation will occur is if the 2A is amended or eliminated, and the process was not intended to be simple. Since 1788, it has happened only 27 times.

James B. Astrachan

## Reader Recommendations

Just read your snippet about the Beretta Vic FieldTac shirt. FYI, in case you haven’t seen it, Proper makes a



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similar shirt, but with snaps instead of Velcro, which I think might hold up better when laundered. On the outside, real buttons disguise the snaps. The Proper uses a material that has an interesting texture that prevents printing. It's my favorite, although I haven't tried the Beretta.

Mark Abbott

## Gun People Are The Best

I got a little North American Arms revolver around 1980. After about a quarter Century of pocket lint, construction dust, swamps, deserts and several dunkings in fresh and salt water, the timing got off. I sent it in and offered to pay. NAA replaced all the internal parts and installed their new improved cylinder, and since I had removed my homemade stag grips, they put on new grips as well. And they refinished it like new. No charge!

Imagine if you could take your Ford in after 20+ years and get a new engine and paint job at no charge! Gun people are the best.

David Smith

## Industry Accolades

Many moons ago (years) I purchased the XS Sights "Big Dot" sight and had my Beretta slide cut for mounting.

The Beretta had only been holstered and fired at my local gun club where recently, when I raised it, there was no front "Big Dot."

In communications with XS, they indicated that my Gen 1 sight had been replaced with a Gen 2 and they could not replace the Gen 1 front sight. When all was said and done, they graciously replaced my Gen 1 sights with Gen 2 at no charge (including installation), even though after so many years there was no way I could produce a receipt.

Bottom line: It is consoling to know that there are still companies out there that understand the meaning of the word service, and I cannot say enough for XS Sights.

B. Stewart

## Ayoob Files

I read *The Ayoob Files* (March/April 21) and it is another truly great article. Mas always dissects any incident he covers so that we all can take away knowledge from it. I'm sure many people think that if they are involved in an incident like the one described, we could just go on with our lives without a care. Mas shows this is not the case and that memories and feelings can affect you for months and years afterward. Thanks to Mas there will be a lot of people thinking of, and praying

for, Adan Nesvick and his wife. Adam did the right thing for the right reasons without thinking twice or thinking of what was to follow once he became involved. He is a hero!

Mas, keep doing what you're doing — you're the best at it.

Mr. Lynn Alexander

## Colt-Ruger

I read John Taffin's article, *The Six-guns of Milt Morrison* (July/August 20) regarding attaching a Python barrel to a Ruger Security-Six frame. I liked the article so much I contacted Milt as I had a 4" barrel and a Ruger S/S. Beautiful workmanship and the trigger is as smooth as glass.

Joe Fiandaca

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# XD-S MOD.2 OSP

Continued from page 37

Or do I want more confidence in my shooting if and when the time comes? How do those factors rank against a four-round difference in capacity? That's up to you. I love the Hellcat too, but there's a reason an XD-S has been in my regular carry rotation for nearly seven years.

## Slim Applications

The 0.1" difference in width between the XD-S and Hellcat doesn't sound like much, but it's noticeable for certain applications. For IWB carry, the slimmer profile doesn't yield a material benefit. Where the single-stack approach shines is under the light of different carry methods.

Since day one, I've often used an ankle holster for my original XD-S for either backup or situations where discretion is ... appreciated. It fits into exactly the same size cigar box as a snubie but is a heck of a lot slimmer and packs three more rounds than the classic .38.

For the same reasons, the XD-S makes a great pocket gun. The rules of spatial geometry always apply, so if you're carrying a gun in a front pocket, a tenth of an inch matters. Not only for printing and concealment, but for the draw. A handgun that's slightly too big for a pocket opening acts like a Monkey Trap. When you assume a firing grip in the pocket, you may experience troubles getting your gun-filled hand out cleanly.

## Pleasant Surprise

As the XD-S OSP is a pocket gun of sorts, I felt it appropriate to do some quick accuracy evaluation at 15 yards. Using an impromptu wobbly table (a pistol rest weighed down by a bag of lead shot on a plastic range barrel) I fired five-shot groups with three types of ammo.

I chose two from Black Hills, the most finicky ammo makers on the planet — that means consistency. The 115-grain JHP EXP load grouped into 1.01" while the Black Hills 110-grain HoneyBadger turned in an impressive .71 group. Pleased with those results, I next tried the Norma Hexagon 124-grain match load. That also showed off with a 1.17" group. More accurate than I am? Check.

To get a feel for how this pocket pistol handles, I unleashed torment on a Throom Targets plate rack and dueling tree. I won the duel with myself in case you're wondering. Made from Shoot-Throo self-healing polymer, you can shoot these "plates" from contact distance if you like, as bullets pass right through the targets, mounts and even the "bolts" used for plate angle adjustment. This makes it great for up close and personal practice

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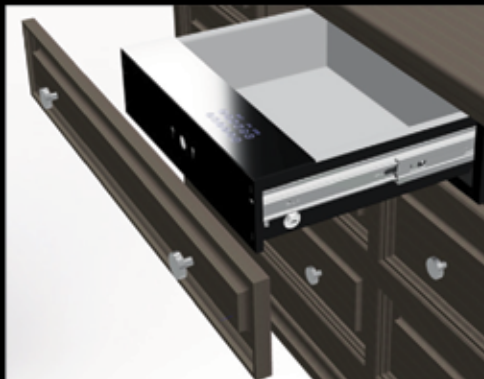


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with a carry gun like the XD-S OSP.

The XD-S is easily controllable, even with stoked-up self-defense ammo. The grip texture prevented rapid fire movement in the hand but wasn't overly abrasive. Recoil was perfectly manageable, bordering on tame. The grip safety resides only in the subconscious. I never had to think about it or acknowledge its presence. It just quietly did its job and

standard white dot front and "U-notch" rear sight through the bottom of the optic. The red dot sight itself did its job, with one glaring exception. I stumbled upon an issue warranting additional investigation when shooting late one afternoon. The sun was high behind my target area, and I found the glare on the lens showed me a strange effect. Rather than seeing my target, I had a nice view

**Do I want something slightly smaller and arguably  
slightly easier to carry? Or do I want more confidence  
in my shooting if and when the time comes?**

let me engage in wanton plate perforation. Bottom line: This pistol is pleasurable and fun to shoot. It's one you'll want to take to the range, not one of those pain-inducing micro pistols that discourages regular practice.

## Optics Considerations

You can order the XD-S OSP in two configurations: with Crimson Trace CTS-1500 red dot pre-installed or without. The basic version comes with a slide cut and cover plate, so it's ready to go with the optic of your choice. The Shield Sights RMSc fits right on sans adapter plate as the XD-S optics footprint is Hellcat-compatible. With the Shield, there's also a rear sight channel so the standard irons co-witness through the glass.

The model I've been testing features the Crimson Trace CTS-1500 red dot factory installed. Like the Shield RMSc, it features a groove so you can use the

of the internal projection system. I had a couple of other pistols handy with different optics and I had no similar troubles, so I can only guess it was caused by either a lack of lens coatings or a coating treatment that didn't adequately reflect glare.

Until I learn more, I might consider the CTS-1500 configuration for range use but choose the optics-ready model with my choice of red dot for carry. Chalk this up to one of those differences between less and more expensive optics.

## Closing Arguments

I love this little pistol. Yes, I can get more capacity with a Hellcat (also a favorite in my book) but for aforementioned reasons, I do embrace the single stack tradeoffs and size differences. I've already notified Springfield Armory that I'd like to buy this one — it's an investment well worth the money.

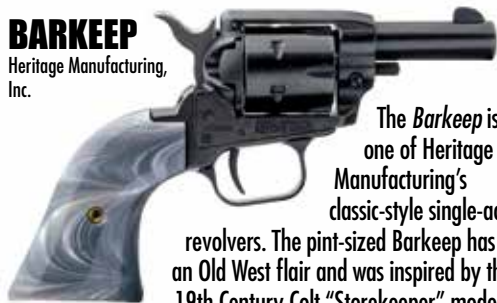




# NEWPRODUCTS

## BARKEEP

Heritage Manufacturing, Inc.



The *Barkeep* is one of Heritage Manufacturing's classic-style single-action revolvers. The pint-sized *Barkeep* has an Old West flair and was inspired by the 19th Century Colt "Storekeeper" model.

Chambered in .22LR, it ships with a 6-shot rimfire cylinder but also works with an interchangeable .22 WMR 6-shot cylinder. With an OAL of 7.95", the *Barkeep* has a 2" barrel, fixed open sights and standard black oxide or case hardened frame finish. It comes in two models: Gray Pearl (in picture) and Custom Scroll Wood. MSRP: \$189.13 and \$180.30 respectively. For more info: (229) 515-8099, [HeritageMfg.com](http://HeritageMfg.com)

## GUN-MAX GUN OIL

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Real Avid presents Gun-Max Gun Oil — a firearms lubricant to enhance corrosion resistance and provide lasting lubrication under friction and low-temperature viscosity. It's available in 120-oz. aerosol and 4-oz. bottles. The aerosol cans are equipped with a flip-up two-position spray nozzle that folds down and stores with the can — allowing for a broad spray application in the down position or a precise stream when using the straw. Gun-Max is chemically formulated to remain fluid at -20° F and won't become sludge when the weather turns arctic.

MSRP: \$12.99 for 12-oz. aerosol can; \$8.99 for 4-oz. liquid bottle. For more info: (800) 286-0567, [ReadAvid.com](http://ReadAvid.com)



## AC-800-CF-S

Bear Ops



The *AC-800-CF-S* pocketknife from Bear OPS boasts a sleek, lightweight design with minimal imprinting. The knife features a 2.5" smooth, fast-action Sandvik blade. The handle is made of stainless steel with carbon fiber. With a push of the recessed button, the blade deploys on demand, firmly locking back to withstand heavy loads. A pen-type clip allows for deep carry. The pocketknife measures 4" closed and weighs 2.7 oz. MSRP: \$274.99. For more info: (265) 435-2227, [BearAndSonCutlery.com](http://BearAndSonCutlery.com)

## OT2 COMBAT CUT HOLSTER

N8 Tactical

N8 Tactical introduces the *OT2 Combat Cut Holster* for mid- to full-size pistols. It is a comfortable IWB holster merging N8 Tactical's Original and Tuckable Holster designs into a new platform that's ergonomic and compatible to all-day wear. The *Combat Cut* design allows for a full grasp on the pistol's grip while drawing. Built on a durable leather form, the *OT2 Combat Cut Holster* comes with a soft, suede backing and a moisture-proof neoprene core. The updated clip design and location allows shirts to be tucked in for a more formal appearance. MSRP: \$39.95. For more info: (888) 732-5011, [N8Tactical.com](http://N8Tactical.com)



## DPX HIT DAGGER TI

DPX Gear



The *DPx HIT Dagger Ti* — aka the "Necker" — is light and versatile. It's a tool you don't even notice until you need it. The compact, lightweight push dagger/neck knife is made in Italy by LionSTEEL and comes with a black leather sheath and adjustable lanyard. There are two versions of the *DPx HIT Dagger Ti*: the Assault Stonewashed and the Sandblasted. MSRP: \$140 and \$130 respectively. For more info: [DPXGear.com](http://DPXGear.com)

## CONCEALED CARRY PURSE LINE

Versacarry



Versacarry offers a *Concealed Carry Purse Line* providing easy access to a firearm. It is available in camo, olive and black canvas, plus one brown leather option (in picture). The line features a velcro-lined center section where the provided holster wrapped in velcro will keep the gun secure. The pistol can easily be accessed from the left, right and top of the purse. Versacarry concealed carry purses are attractive and stylish with functional pockets for other storage needs. MSRP: From \$149.99. For more info: (979) 778-2000, [Versacarry.com](http://Versacarry.com)

## THREADED 9MM BARREL

ALTOR Corp.



ALTOR has introduced a *Threaded 9mm*

*Barrel* for the Single-Shot Self-Defense Pistol. The new accessory could make the pistol the quietest ever with a suppressor since it doesn't have any moving parts except the trigger. ALTOR's Single-Shot Self-Defense Pistol is lightweight and fully ambidextrous. It's easy to hold and carry because of the ergonomic design. MSRP: \$99. For more info: (602) 441-4077, [ALTORCorp.com](http://ALTORCorp.com)



## LAUNCH 13 Kershaw Knives

Kershaw Knives' *Launch 13* combines slimness and full-sized cutting ability. Its 3.5" Wharnccliffe blade is made of CPM 154 black DLC coating with satin grinds. The handle is 6061-T6 black anodized aluminum. Design details include a narrow profile, deep-carry pocket clip, lanyard hole and custom triangular pivot. Weighing 2.4 oz. with an OAL of 8", the *Launch 13* is ideal for fine work, yet slightly angled for more versatile cutting. MSRP: \$189.99. For more info: (800) 325-2891, [Kershaw.KaiUSA.com](http://Kershaw.KaiUSA.com)

## EXOTIC GRIPS FOR RUGER WRANGLER .22 N.C. Ordnance Grips

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## X-TRA CONCENTRATED MASKING SCENTS Wildlife Research Center

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## RIV GiantMouse Knives



Good things come in small packages. That's true for GiantMouse Knives' *Riv*, a compact folder in the company's ACE line of folding knives. The *Riv* has a green canvas Micarta version (sold through dealers) and brass and titanium versions (only available on the GiantMouse website). The knives have an OAL of 5.75" and feature a 2.44"-long Elmax blade steel, a ball bearing pivot and a titanium frame lock. MSRP: From \$195. For more info: [GiantMouse.com](http://GiantMouse.com)

## SLX MD-20 MICRODOT Primary Arms Optics



Primary Arms Optics has just released the budget-friendly *SLx MD-20 (MPN: 810023)*. It improves on previous micro dots with an enhanced emitter providing an ultra-bright reticle with a 50,000-hour runtime on medium settings. Part of the *SLx* product line, the *MD-20* integrates new technologies like *AutoLive*, Primary Arms' motion-controlled illumination system. The micro dot is housed in a durable aluminum body and features a zero-parallax lens. MSRP: \$149.99. For more info: (713) 344-9600, [PrimaryArms.com](http://PrimaryArms.com)



## RAZORWORK Outdoor Edge

The *RazorWork* from Outdoor Edge features a replaceable scalpel-sharp 3" utility blade made from Japanese 420J2 stainless steel heat-treated and hand-finished to get a razor-sharp edge. The EDC Knife has a patented system allowing the user to change blades quickly, easily and safely. The blade is seated in a black oxide-coated steel blade holder; the handle is made of a lightweight, one-piece, non-slip Grivory polymer. Weighing 1.9 oz. and with an OAL of 6.8", the *RazorWork* knife comes with two utility blades and one 3" drop-point blade. MSRP: \$30.95. For more info: (800) 477-3343, [OutdoorEdge.com](http://OutdoorEdge.com)

## HOME DEFENSE AGAINST A MOB

**SITUATION:** A mob motivated by racial hatred is surrounding and attacking your home. Do you open fire?

**LESSON:** It's not "a good shoot" until the triers of the facts say it is, and the aftermath can still be brutal.

---

2905 Garland Avenue is a handsome brick and clapboard single-family house, which sits at the corner of Garland and Charlevoix in Detroit, Michigan. It's also the only house I can think of offhand that is now in the National Register of Historical Sites because of a controversial shooting that took place there.

Before the 1967 Detroit race riot that left 43 dead and hundreds injured ... before the 1943 Detroit race riot that killed 34 people and injured 433 ... there was the Ossian Sweet case.

### Prelude

Ossian Sweet was an African-American born in the deep South in 1895. Growing up in a rural small-town setting in Polk County, Florida, he was five years old when he witnessed the lynching of a black man. He watched in horror as a white mob soaked the victim with gasoline and burned him alive and would vividly remember for as long as he lived some ghoulish observers taking chunks of charred flesh from the corpse for souvenirs.

Sweet took menial jobs to work his way through school, ultimately earning his MD degree, and moved to Detroit where he began his practice. In 1922 he married his wife Gladys. The couple exemplified what some sociologists called "the black bourgeoisie," African-Americans who had diligently achieved upward mobility. Living in the heart of the Jim Crow era, he had hoped to find equality in the North, *only to discover that Detroit was very much segregated*. In 1924, a candidate supported by the then-resurgent Ku Klux Klan had missed being elected mayor of the city by only a small margin of votes.

After taking advanced medical study in Vienna and Paris in 1923 and '24, Sweet returned with his wife to Detroit, hoping to raise a family. Unable to find a suitable home in the black neighborhoods, they purchased the Garland Street house in an all-white part of the city in June 1925. They had struggled to find realtors who would work with them and homeowners who would sell to them, *finally sealing the deal with a purchase price of half again its then-current value*. Hostility from their new white neighbors became immediately evident.

The Sweets scheduled their move for the day following Labor Day. The stage was set.

### The Decision to Arm

Ossian Sweet was not a "gun guy." Historian Phyllis Vine has written what I consider the best book on the Sweet case, *One Man's Castle*. Therein, she explains the Sweets' decision to be armed as follows:

"One summer day (between the purchase and moving in), a group of doctors found themselves talking in an office at the Dunbar Memorial Hospital. Drs. Sweet, Edward Carter and Herbert Simms, along with William Osby, the general manager, were listening to Dr. Turner describe his ordeal." Alexander Turner, considered the most prominent black physician in the city, had recently been forced at gunpoint by white men to sign his Detroit home over to them. Vine continues, "A telephone call from Mrs. Marie Smith pulled Sweet away. She had just been threatened, she said, because she was selling her house to him. The aggressors told her they would get Sweet too. After hanging up the phone, Sweet returned to the conversation about the Turner incident and raised his own concerns. He told his colleagues he wasn't going to run away.

"We're not going to look for any trouble," he said, "but we're going to protect ourselves if trouble arises."

"Years later, Osby described the advice he gave to Sweet two days before the move. If he were in Sweet's situation, Osby said, he would send his wife and son out of town. But he would also get

*Continued on page 64*

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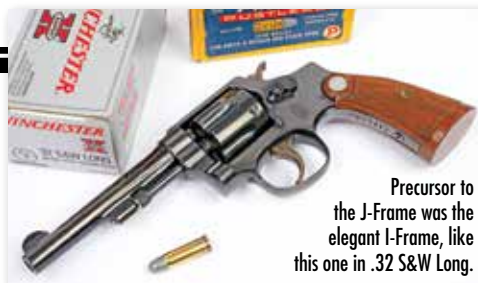
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| DeSantis Gunhide             | 55 | SCCY Industries LLC            | 3  | VZ Grips                      | 9      |
| Diamond D Custom Leather     | 67 | Simply Rugged Holsters         | 9  | W.C. Wolff Company            | 66     |
| Dillon Precision Products    | 11 | Spartan Blades USA             | 72 | Wilson Combat                 | 69     |
| GlockStore                   | 17 | Springfield Armory             | 84 | Wyoming Sight Drifter LLC     | 68     |
| IronMind Enterprises Inc.    | 71 | Standard Manufacturing Co. LLC | 72 | XS Sights                     | 70     |

The first models were highly polished, looking more like nickel, but when cops started to complain about how flashy (literally) they were, S&W changed to a more subdued polish, remaining today.

The general design and feature-set of that original J-Frame continues, and S&W has introduced a long line of models based on the design. Highlights include the various .357 Magnum Scandium lightweight guns, a 5" barrel with adjustable sights — which was a very cool gun and supremely accurate — and even an all-aluminum .22 weighing just 10 oz. We've also been blessed with various models in .22 LR and even .22 Magnum, in both aluminum and steel versions.

About 15 years ago, I attended an S&W event at Gunsite and begged them to bring "A bunch of J-Frames for us to play with please!" They did, and as I recall we had something like 36 different models to shoot, and that wasn't even close to the total number of different SKUs they made at the time. By combining different finishes, sights, grips, alloys, barrel lengths and contours, build designs, limited runs, special editions, etc. there must be thousands of different combinations possible.

Sometimes, though, names get confusing. A modern rendition of the "Bodyguard" has a unique sort of "top" cylinder release along with a laser. The design isn't the same as the more classic version



Precursor to the J-Frame was the elegant I-Frame, like this one in .32 S&W Long.

of the Bodyguard and I'm not sure why S&W didn't just come up with a new name. Bring it up among J-Frame aficionados and be prepared for a loud "discussion" concerning the pros and cons.

## Considerations

S&W has made so many models you can usually find a J-Frame of one sort or another pretty affordable. They're not only practical for defensive use, but unlike what many think are exceptionally accurate. It's possible to ding a 200-yard steel silhouette with one once you get the range, and I've consistently kept groups on an 8" paper plate at 100 yards. Taking your time from a rest, it's possible to manage 1.5" groups at 20 yards once you get yourself settled and pay very close attention to trigger press. Most who think the guns are inaccurate simply don't know how to shoot them properly.

Round butt or square butt? For shootability, the square butt wins, but for pocket carry especially, the square butt does tend to poke out. Airweight or steel frames? I'll be the first to admit the airweight guns are pretty snappy when it comes to recoil but are a delight to carry. I vote for both. Shoot the heck out of steel ones and carry the lighter ones. The aluminum ones are more sensitive to being worn out with a steady diet of duty loads, so go easy on them. The Scandium-based ones seem to be able to outlive their owners though.

The traditional latch on the

Carry method versatility is another plus of the J-Frame. The ankle rig shown is the Renegade from The Wilderness Tactical, Roy's favorite ankle set-up.



Leather pocket rig is from Thad Rybka and the carved hip rig is from Purdy Gear.

side seems to fall under my hands more easily than the odd location on the top/rear (behind the sight) of the newer "Bodyguard." But your results may vary. For ammo, I tend to favor a lighter bullet like the Black Hills HoneyBadger over something heavier due to recoil.

Should you buy a J-Frame or a 9mm sub-compact? That's a toughie. I've never felt unarmed with a J-Frame in a pocket and you won't either. I think if you're experienced and practice, you'd be fine with the auto. If you're not going to practice and will tend to "load it and forget it" get the revolver as it's simpler and has a less complicated manual of arms to operate it. But it's difficult to shoot well, so keep that in mind too.

And, as odd as it may sound, keep in mind a Centennial or Bodyguard (with protected hammers) can be fired from within a coat pocket in a pinch. We did some testing and indeed, sometimes an auto would jam-up. If you insist on trying it yourself just keep your head screwed on straight and be safe.

If you already have one of these nifty little revolvers, dust it off and go shoot it. Don't let it slowly rust away in a drawer or become yet another safe queen! They deserve to be enjoyed.

For more info: [Smith-Wesson.com](http://Smith-Wesson.com); [Hyskore.com](http://Hyskore.com); [TheWilderness.com](http://TheWilderness.com)



The Model 340 PD in Scandium means lightweight carry comfort in .357 Magnum.

Lighter weight bullets shift forward in their cases under recoil.

## MINI-MODEL 92

Hampton Weaver has done it again with another spectacular miniature in their line-up. This one has great detail, like the others, and is made of hefty hard zinc then silver plated and oxidized to make the details pop. At about 2 1/8" it's big enough for you to enjoy those details too. It comes in this tidy high quality box, and at only \$21.95 I think these are screaming deals. They have an entire series and it's indeed fun to "collect the whole set!" as they used to say. [FirearmsAssureFreedom.com](http://FirearmsAssureFreedom.com)



## YOUNG HUNTER SUCCESS!

I always enjoy showcasing young hunters and the families who encourage and mentor them. Here we have Jeremy Johnson, age 11, with his very nice Missouri 8-point Whitetail. He took it with his Remington 700 in .243 (under the close supervision of his dad), and always digs right in, helping to clean and take care of the meat afterward. He's a "seasoned" hunter and has been deer hunting since age seven (using a crossbow!). His tally is now seven deer and turkey combined and his interest isn't waning. His dad said even before hunting, Jeremy used to watch the *Outdoor Channel* rather than cartoons. Well done, Jeremy!





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# J-FRAME GEMS



Another 640 at top (equipped with the Hyskore Grip Light) and a nicely engraved 3" Model 60 below. Note the adjustable sights on the Model 60. Roy has fired it at 100 yards, keeping groups on an 8" paper plate!



This is a 640 from Gemini Customs with a custom profiled barrel, ports, custom grips and has been set-up to use full moon clips.



One of the reasons the J-Frame is so well-loved by shooters is the fact you can pretty much have one in any shape or form you like!

The line offers options galore, from .22s to fire-breathing .357 Magnum models.

## S&W NAILS IT — CIRCA 1950



The one starting the whole show, this original Model 36 is from 1953 just a couple of years after the model was introduced in 1950. Note the flat cylinder release latch and period 158-grain RNL ammo. Some shooters complained about recoil so S&W introduced a square butt model.

In 1894 S&W craftsmen-artists introduced the “Hand-Ejector” series of revolvers, assuring their places in wheelgun history. The first gun evolved into the “K-Frame” but of course the M-Frame, I-Frame, the famous N-Frame and L-Frame also owe their appearances to the same original design.

But the “hidden in plain sight” jewel of the mix is the enduring J-Frame. If we mention it in our pages, reader mail always lights right up full of stories of their own J-Frames. Seems when S&W imagined the J-Frame they scored big — especially because it was pretty much spot-on right out of the gate. But how’d they get from the original 19th Century odd Hand-Ejector design to the nearly “perfect” J-Frame?

In 1949, S&W president Karl Hellstrom — the first non-family member to be president — put out the word to the gang there to update the I-Frame from the creaky turn-of-the-century design it was, to something more modern. Designers went to work and sometime late in 1950,

the “new” J-Frame was born.

The International Association of Chiefs of Police convention was held and S&W introduced the new little gun there. They held a “name this gun” competition and “.38 Chief’s Special” was selected as the grand prize winner. But being how things usually go, the .38 Special part was soon dropped and the classic “Chief’s Special” name was born.

### That First Design

The original was a blue steel, round butt, 5-shot, fixed sight revolver with a 2" barrel. I’m blessed to have a minty sample made late in 1953, just a couple of years after it was introduced. The distinctive flat cylinder release and “5-screw” build (four side-plate screws and the cylinder bolt plunger screw on the front of the trigger guard) shows it’s an older gun. There’s also a distinctive sort of slightly frosty bluing rather than the more “black” of modern guns. It’s simply beautiful in the right light.

That first model was followed with a 3" version and a square butt since some complained about recoil from the 158-grain RNL ammo of the time. Adjustable sights enhanced things around ’55 and in ’57 an aluminum-framed (Airweight, or Model 37) version was introduced. Around the same time the “Model 36” moniker was stuck to the steel version

since S&W was beginning to assign model numbers to some guns. The 1950s were busy for the model, as the Bodyguard with the hammer shroud was also introduced as an airweight.

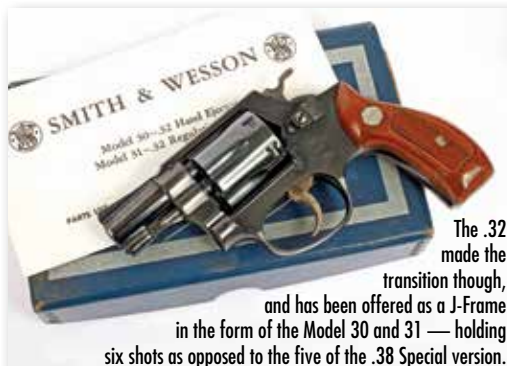
In 1952, S&W celebrated their centennial and lo and behold, a version of the J-Frame was made to commemorate the event. The “Centennial” had a genuinely concealed hammer and unique grip safety to boot.

### More Changes

Around 1961 S&W dropped the ancient I-Frame and from then on, that .32 S&W Long version was made as a J-Frame. The .32s are all 6-shot guns and if you find one, loaded with a modern .32 load from the likes of Buffalo Bore turns it into a dandy personal gun. I had one and it was comforting to have six rather than five shots in the tiny package.

The gun industry was taking a hard look at stainless steel in the 1960s and in ’65, S&W really got everyone’s attention by introducing the J-Frame in .38 Special as an all-stainless steel revolver. Called the Model 60, it rocked the industry and was pretty much sold out constantly.

Continued on page 80



The .32 made the transition though, and has been offered as a J-Frame in the form of the Model 30 and 31 — holding six shots as opposed to the five of the .38 Special version.



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