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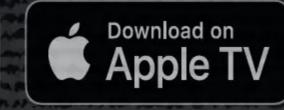


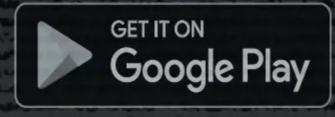
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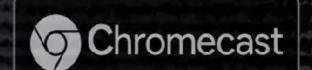












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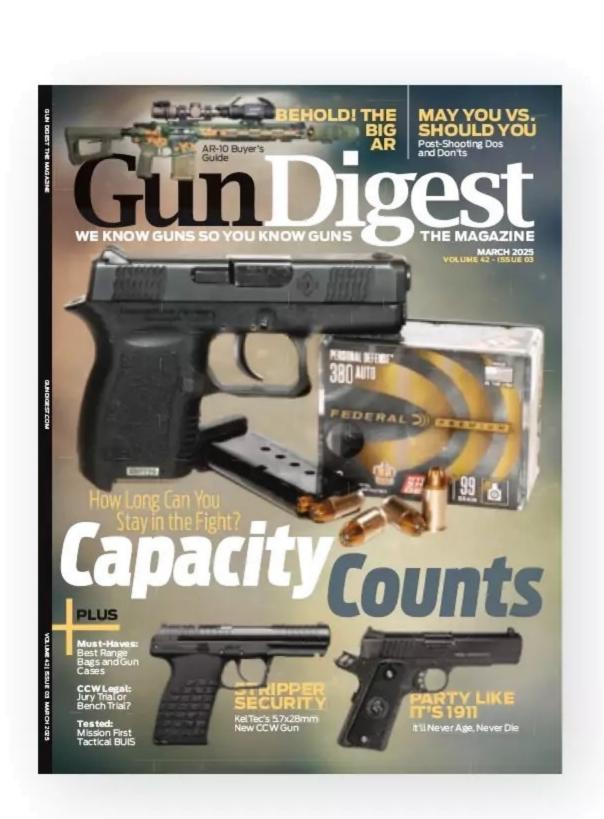
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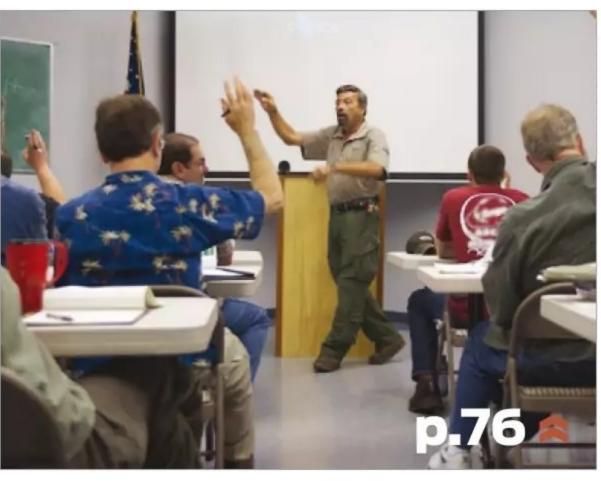




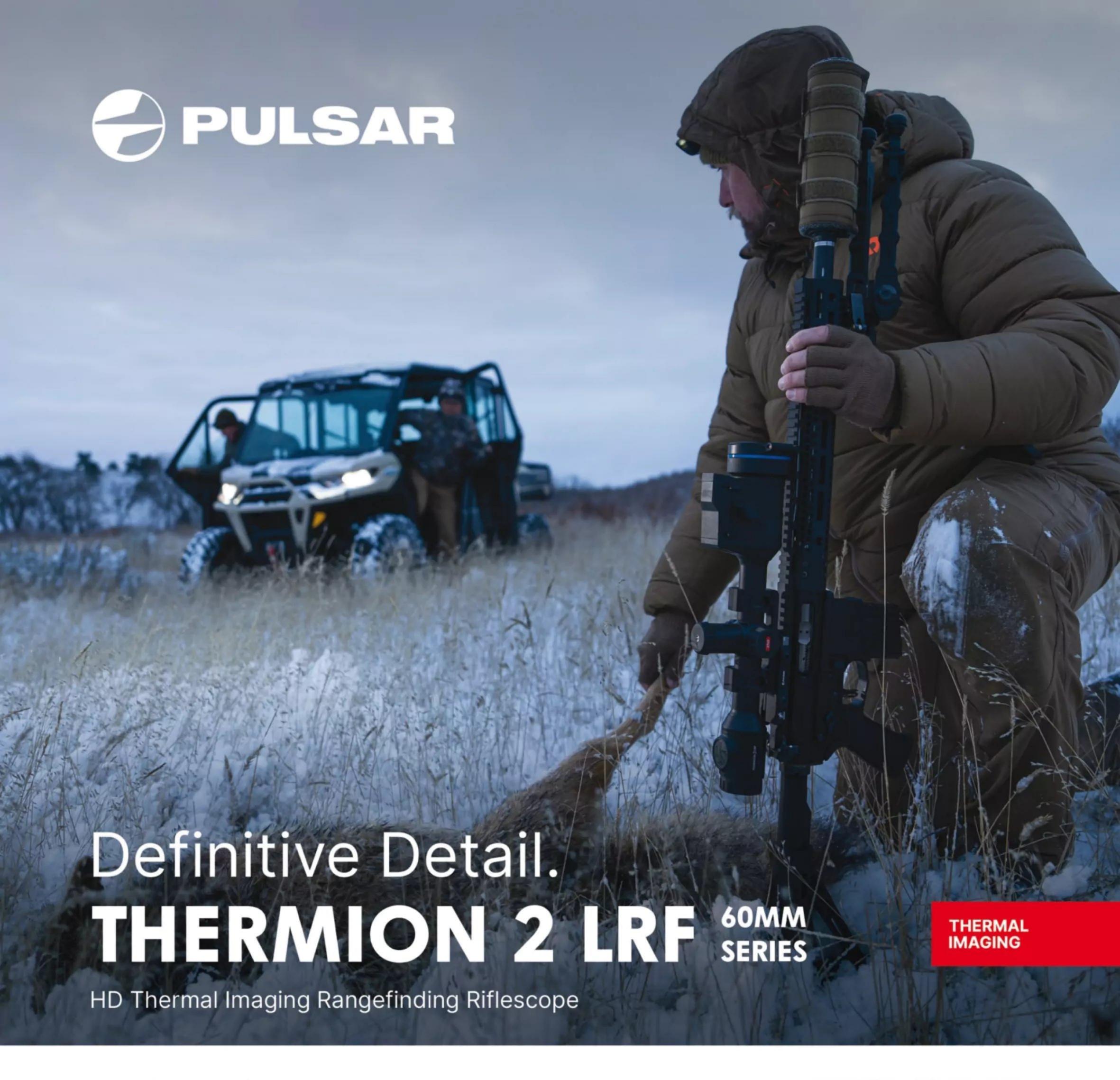








Gun Digest the Magazine (ISSN 1938-5943) is published monthly by Caribou Media dba Gun Digest Media, LLC. Corporate Headquarters is 5583 W. Waterford Ln., Suite D, Appleton, WI 54913. Periodicals postage paid at Appleton, WI 54913 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to PO Box 182, Williamsport, PA 17703. Copyright © 2025 Gun Digest Media. GUN DIGEST THE MAGAZINE and its logo are registered trademarks. Other names and logos referred to or displayed in editorial or advertising content may be trademarked or copyrighted. The publisher and advertisers are not liable for typographical errors that may appear in prices or descriptions in advertisements.



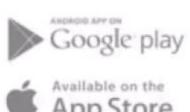
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s I write this, SHOT Show 2025 is less than a week in the rearview. While there are certainly other metrics by which the "state of the union" can be measured—as it pertains to the gun industry, anyway—a lot of information can be gathered throughout the show by keeping one's mouth closed, and eyes and ears open.

I suppose that applies to life in general as well.

Anyway, in addition to working with my sales team on the show floor, I spend a fair amount of time gathering content for upcoming issues of this magazine, and I dedicate a lot of energy filming videos of products that catch my eye (you can catch those videos on our RecoilTV YouTube page).

My videographer for this specific mission goes by the name of Dyson ... yes, like the vacuum brand. Dyson and I have worked together on a few projects now, and we jive quite well together. In the world of firearms, Dyson is not what I consider to be an enthusiast. I'm sure he's shot from time to time, but I don't think he owns a gun. And although we never talk about it, I have my doubts that he and I would agree on many political points.

But here's something about Dyson that resonates with me, and I found myself a bit jealous of the wide-eyed manner with which he experienced his first SHOT Show. In a labyrinth of black guns with black optics and black stocks, I caught Dyson involuntarily taking a moment to admire a rifle wearing a fantastic piece of Turkish walnut. And at the Mossberg booth, I could actually see Dyson visualizing himself traversing the dark hallways of his own home as he held one of the new defensive shotguns.

I doubt he had any idea, but Dyson reminded me of exactly why I do what I do, and for that I am grateful. And for the first time in quite a while, it once again became clear that behind the extravagant booths, the fancy suits and the shiny new products ... is a room full of people who love to shoot so much that they've made careers out of it. And that's something special.

Here's to hoping you experience shooting with fresh eyes each and every time you look down the sights. **GDTM** 

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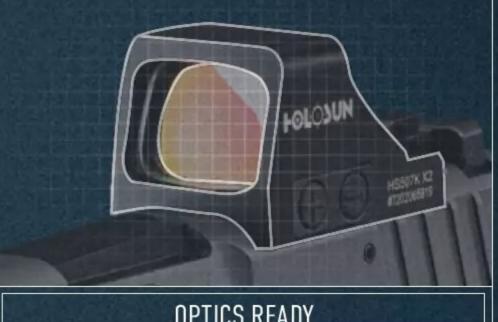
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# TMM WEATHER BY MAGNUN

A victim of the 7mm Remington Magnum.

#### HISTORICAL NOTES

The 7mm Weatherby Magnum was developed in 1944 as one of a series of cartridges based on the necked-down .300 H&H case (it is the .270 WM necked up .007 inch, although it does use a longer overall cartridge length). There are several similar wildcat versions, but Weatherby's design is the most popular, due to the availability of commercial ammunition.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS**

The 7mm (or .284-caliber) has long been popular in the United States in various wildcat cartridges, yet the original 7mm Mauser never generated any great enthusiasm. The 7mm Weatherby Magnum, offered as a maximum-performance cartridge, is probably the best known and most widely used of the current 7mm Magnums, with the single exception of the 7mm Remington Magnum. This is due in part to the availability of factory-loaded ammunition in a good selection of bullet weights.

The 7mm Weatherby has a slight edge over the .270 Weatherby on tough or dangerous game because it can use heavier bullets and churns up greater energy. However, if long-range varmint shooting is on the agenda, the .270 is the better choice. The 7mm Weatherby Magnum is adequate for any North American big

game and all thin-skinned African game. The 7mm Weatherby Magnum has, to a large extent, lost popularity to the 7mm Remington Magnum, because the Remington version is available in a wider variety of rifles that are generally less expensive than the Weatherbys.

Like most high-intensity cartridges, the 7mm WM can be somewhat hard on its barrel, especially with either careless shooting, inadequate barrel cooling between shots, or inadequate barrel cleaning. And, like all similar chamberings, it loses significant velocity with barrels shorter than 24 inches. Ammunition for this cartridge is now available from Federal and Norma, as well as Weatherby. **GDTM** 

AMMUNITION

#### **7MM WEATHERBY MAGNUM LOADING DATA AND FACTORY BALLISTICS**

| BULLET<br>(GRAINS/TYPE)    | POWDER  | GRAINS | VELOCITY | ENERGY | SOURCE                   |
|----------------------------|---------|--------|----------|--------|--------------------------|
| 100 HP                     | IMR4350 | 73.5   | 3,600    | 2,878  | Hornady                  |
| 115 HP                     | IMR4831 | 76     | 3,600    | 3,310  | Speer                    |
| 120 SP                     | IMR4350 | 70     | 3,400    | 3,081  | Sierra, Nosler, Hornady  |
| 130 SP                     | IMR4320 | 63     | 3,300    | 3,144  | Speer                    |
| 139 SP                     | IMR4350 | 68     | 3,200    | 3,161  | Sierra, Nosler, Hornady  |
| 154 SP                     | IMR4350 | 67     | 3,100    | 3,287  | Hornady                  |
| 160 SP                     | IMR4350 | 65     | 3,000    | 3,198  | Sierra, Speer            |
| 175 SP                     | IMR4350 | 65     | 2,800    | 3,047  | Speer, Hornady           |
| 195 SP                     | IMR7828 | 61     | 2,500    | 2,707  | Speer                    |
| 140 Barnes TSX             | FL      |        | 3,250    | 3,284  | Weatherby<br>B7MM140TTSX |
| 160 Speer Trophy<br>Bonded | FL      |        | 3,100    | 3,414  | Federal P7WBTT1          |
| 170 Oryx JSP               | FL      |        | 2,985    | 3,364  | Norma 20171072           |
| 175 JSP                    | FL      |        | 3,070    | 3,662  | Weatherby<br>H7MM175SP   |

# GENERATION

MEETS

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# CAPACITY CONSIDERATIONS

How long do you want to be in the fight?

ack in the day of the gunslinger, fighting handguns held six rounds. Of course, legend has it that they generally only loaded five rounds, at least that's what John Wayne's character J.B. Books told young Gillom in *The Shootist*, "You keep your hammer on an empty chamber for safety ... load six if your insides tell you to."

Regardless, for social survival, five or six rounds seemed like enough, at least up until Dieudonné Saive gave us the HiPower in 1935. With the advent of the high-capacity pistol, lawmen, civilians and even bad guys got to thinking having more than six rounds was a good thing.

If you believe statistics, for a civilian to survive the average self-defense shooting, they'll not need more than five or six rounds. However, as the great Mark Twain said, "Facts are stubborn, but statistics are more pliable." I often take the approach that everything in life is 50-50. The girl will say yes, or she won't, your horse

will come in first or worse, and you'll either need less than six rounds or more. But then, like a more recent philosopher by the name of Paul Harvey once offered, "If there is a 50-50 chance that something can go wrong, then 9 times out of 10 it will."

#### **HOW MUCH DO YOU NEED?**

All this leaves us with the \$10,000 question regarding your self-defense handgun: How much capacity do you need? One way to look at this is to examine how long it takes you to shoot any number of shots, and how accurate those shots might be. Of course, this will vary a great deal with shooter skill, but based on my shooting records I can give you an example.

From the holster, I can generally get two hits on a man-sized silhouette target at 10 yards in about 1.20 seconds.

If I reduce the target size to an 8-inch

circle, my time increases to about 2.5 seconds, which is about twice the amount of time. As for five shots, it usually takes me about 2.0 to 2.2 seconds to get five hits on the silhouette target at 10 yards, depending on whether I'm shooting a 9mm or a .45. Reduce the target size to 8 inches and the time almost doubles.

Why is this important?

It's important because depending on how accurate you want your shots to be, you will empty a six-shot handgun—revolver or semi-auto, it does not matter—in somewhere between 2 and 4 seconds. If you can remain calm enough to take your time and shoot at the right spot, your two to six shots

Are five shots enough? It depends on how long you want to be able to fight will likely stop the threat. (Here we go with statistics again, likely could be anywhere between 51 and 99 percent.) If you rush like statistics suggest you will when you're scared for your life, you might have some misses or lessthan-ideal hits.

The point is that, with a six-shot handgun, you will more than likely be out of ammo in about 4 seconds. If you shoot well, it all might be over. If you don't, or even worse if there's more than one attacker, it still might be over—over for you as opposed to the bad guys.

The point you need to consider is that in a self-defense situation where you must shoot to save your life, with a six-shot gun you best be prepared to reload after about 4 seconds. OK, that's not a problem because you practice speed loads, right? Well, how long does that take?

Just as with the time it takes to shoot, the time it takes to reload will vary too. With the right pistol and an open carried magazine, I can sometimes complete a reload and fire an accurate shot in about a second and a half. When working with a concealed magazine, it can take me from 2 to 4 seconds to reload and fire a single shot with a pistol, depending on where I have the magazine concealed and on the pistol I'm using. That's not too shabby but we already know what can happen in 1.5 to 4.0 seconds. At 10 yards, someone could

How long can you fight with your handgun depends on how much ammo it holds and how fast and accurately you'll shoot.







Skill at reloading fast is a great thing to have, but no matter how fast you can reload it will leave you vulnerable.

You must balance handgun ammo capacity with ease and comfort of carry.

easily shoot you anywhere from between two to five times.

#### IT PROBABLY WILL

When it comes to my life, I kind of like Harvey's logic, which essentially says that if anything can go wrong it probably will. You don't have to be a mathematician to deduce that, if your pistol holds 10 rounds, you can stay in the fight twice as long as you could if it only held five rounds. You also don't have to be a tactical savant to recognize that conducting a reload during a

gunfight could get you killed.

So, we are once again back to the \$10,000 capacity question. The simple answer is the more the better. But this only applies up to the point where the added capacity increases the size of the pistol making it uncomfortable to carry and/or difficult to conceal.

So, what's the complicated answer? Well, I think it's obvious. First, the capacity of your pistol should reflect how long you want to be able to fight. If you're comfortable only fighting for your life for a few seconds, a fiveor six-shot handgun is just fine. If you want to be able to fight for twice that long, you need twice the capacity ... and so on and so on.

Second, you'll have to temper the time you're prepared to fight with the comfort and concealability of your handgun. I don't know about you, but I don't want my gun to run empty before the fight is over ... and I don't want to have to reload my gun until it's really—really—over. Five or six shots might be enough, but if you believe Harvey, it will only be enough 10 percent of the time. **GDTM** 







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# BENCH TRIAL OR JURY TRIAL?

## Weighing the choice in self-defense cases.

hen facing criminal charges related to the use of force in selfdefense, one of the decisions you'll need to make is whether to proceed with a jury trial or waive that right in favor of a bench trial. Each option presents unique advantages and risks, and the decision ultimately hinges on the specific facts of your case, the judge presiding and the composition of the potential jury pool. Here, we'll explore the circumstances that might lead you to choose a bench trial over a jury trial and the rationale behind each preference.

#### THE RIGHT TO A JURY TRIAL

In felony cases, your right to a jury trial is guaranteed and absolute. However, this does not automatically mean you have a right to a bench trial. Waiving a jury trial in favor of a bench trial generally requires the consent of both the prosecutor and the court. Furthermore, in Indiana, as in many states, the law mandates that such a waiver must be fully informed and voluntary. If you are facing misdemeanor

charges, you may also have the right to a jury trial, but only if you request it in a timely manner.

A jury trial consists of a group of citizens who act as the "fact finders" in the case. They evaluate the evidence, consider witness testimony, and determine whether the State has proven guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. In contrast, a bench trial places this responsibility solely in the hands of the presiding judge. This fundamental difference informs the decision-making process.

#### FACTORS FAVORING A BENCH TRIAL

While jury trials are often the default choice, certain circumstances might make a bench trial more appealing. One of the primary considerations is the identity and track record of the judge. If the judge has demonstrated a history of fairness and impartiality in self-defense cases, this could inspire confidence in their ability to fairly adjudicate the matter. Conversely, judges who have shown skepticism toward self-defense claims may discourage opting for a bench trial.

Another critical factor is the nature of the jury pool. Depending on the demographics and potential biases of the jurors, you may perceive the jury as less sympathetic to self-defense arguments. In such cases, a bench trial might be advantageous, as it eliminates the unpredictability of a jury's decision-making process.

Bench trials also avoid voir dire, the process of questioning prospective jurors to identify biases and select a jury. While voir dire can help shape a favorable jury, it also introduces variability—jurors who express hostility toward self-defense claims could end up on the panel. In contrast, a bench trial ensures that only the judge's views come into play, offering a more controlled environment.

#### **RISKS OF A BENCH TRIAL**

Despite these potential advantages, bench trials carry significant risks. One notable downside is the lack of jury nullification. Jury nullification allows jurors to acquit a defendant despite the evidence and legal standards if they believe a conviction would violate their conscience.

"For defendants in self-defense cases, the decision often boils down to a preference for the collective judgment of a jury versus the singular judgment of a judge. Each option carries inherent risks and benefits, and the choice must be tailored to the unique circumstances of the case." In felony cases, your right to a jury trial is guaranteed and absolute. However, this does not automatically mean you have a right to a bench trial. Waiving a jury trial in favor of a bench trial generally requires the consent of both the prosecutor and the court."

Jury nullification, while not viewed favorably by many judges and prosecutors, is rooted in the historical practice of allowing juries to act as a safeguard against unjust laws or their harsh application, thereby reflecting community values and morals in legal outcomes. Waiving a jury trial eliminates this possibility, which can be a powerful tool in cases where the strict application of the law may seem unjust.

Moreover, judges, like jurors, are not immune to bias. While judges are expected to filter out external influences such as media coverage, not all are equally adept at doing so. This concern is heightened in high-profile cases where extensive publicity might impact the judge's objectivity.

Physical presentation is another consideration. In bench trials, defendants may not always have the option to appear without physical restraints, such as hand-cuffs or shackles, during the trial. While this may seem like a minor issue, it could subtly influence the judge's perception of the defendant.

#### PROSECUTORIAL DYNAMICS

Another distinction in bench trials is the possibility that the prosecutor may forgo an opening statement. While this could potentially benefit the defense, it might also allow the prosecution to avoid revealing its strategy upfront, making it harder to anticipate and counter their arguments. The absence of a jury changes the dynamic of the trial significantly, as judges are less likely to be swayed by rhetorical appeals or emotional arguments designed to influence a lay audience.

#### KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR SELF-DEFENSE CASES

Self-defense cases hinge on specific factual disputes, such as whether the defendant reasonably perceived an imminent threat and whether the use of force was proportionate. In a jury trial, these determinations are made by individuals who bring diverse life experiences to the deliberation room. While this diversity can be advantageous, it also introduces unpredictability. Jurors may misinterpret legal instructions, allow personal biases to cloud their judgment, or fail to grasp the nuances of self-defense laws.

In contrast, a judge's legal training and experience may offer a more precise application of the law. Judges are also expected to base their decisions on evidence and legal standards rather than personal or emotional considerations. However, this reliance on a single individual's judgment can be a double-edged sword. If the judge harbors biases or misinterprets the evidence, there is no

collective deliberation to counterbalance their views.

#### THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

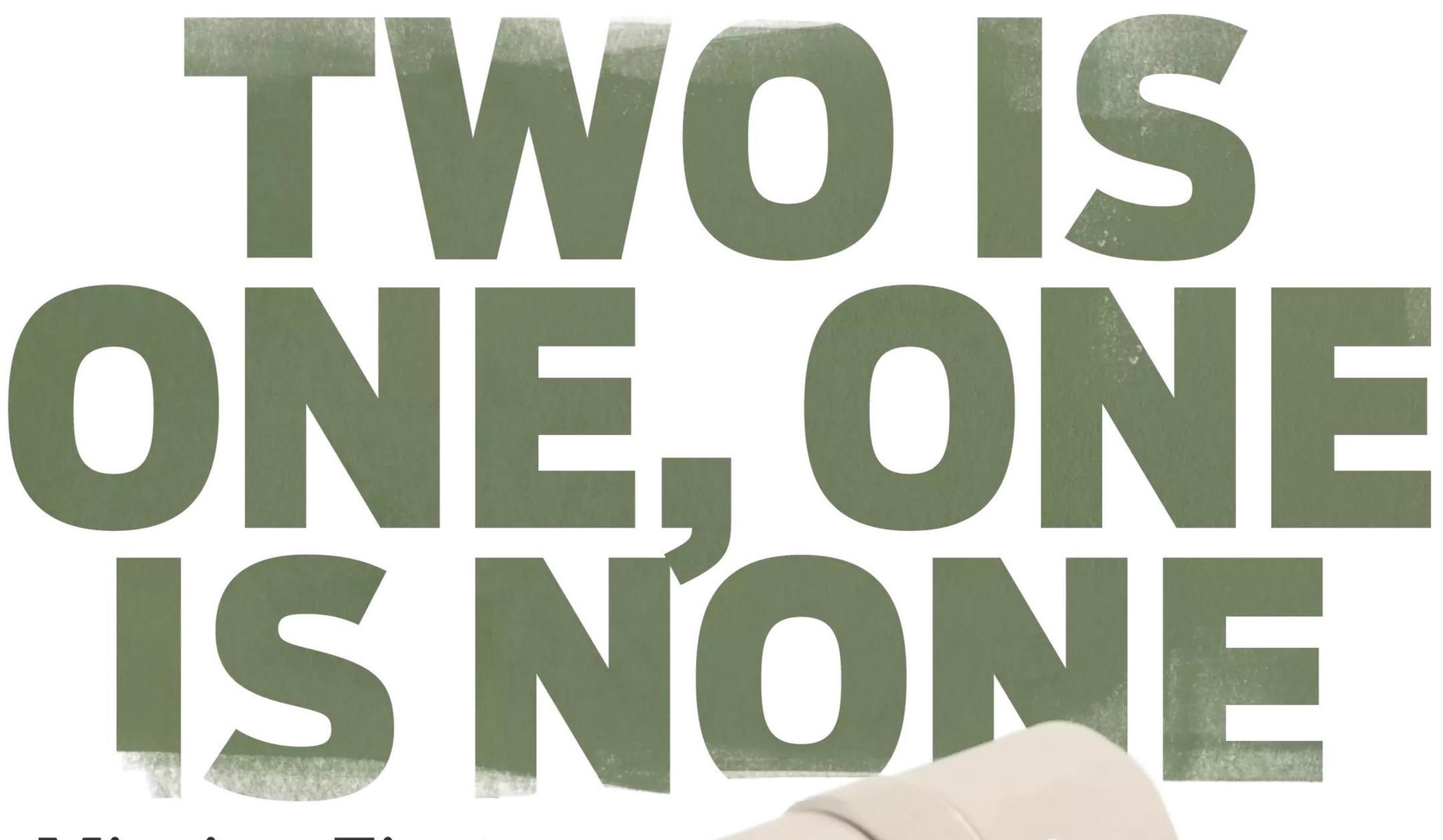
Ultimately, the choice between a jury trial and a bench trial requires careful consideration of multiple factors: the specifics of the case, the characteristics of the potential jury pool and the identity of the presiding judge. Your legal team's input is invaluable in assessing these variables and determining the best course of action.

For defendants in self-defense cases, the decision often boils down to a preference for the collective judgment of a jury versus the singular judgment of a judge. Each option carries inherent risks and benefits, and the choice must be tailored to the unique circumstances of the case.

By weighing these considerations thoughtfully, defendants can make an informed decision that maximizes their chances of achieving a favorable outcome. Whether you entrust your fate to a jury of your peers or place your confidence in a judge's expertise, the goal remains the same: to secure an acquittal based on the just assertion of self-defense. **GDTM** 

# About the Author

Alex Ooley is an affiliate attorney with the Armed Citizen's Legal Defense Network. The views and opinions expressed in this article are his own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Network. This article is for informational purposes only and should not be considered legal advice. For specific legal guidance regarding your situation, please consult with a qualified attorney.



Mission First Tactical BUIS.

The MFT BUIS is compact enough to be out of the way of the other gear you might attach to your rifle.

6 GUN DIGEST THE MAGAZINE MA CH 2025

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ou've heard the phrase, "Two is one, one is none." But, do you really know what it means?

If you have just one tool, and it breaks, you are out of luck. If you have two of them, and one breaks, you can still get the job done. Some tools never break ... and some situations cannot abide the risk of the only one breaking.

That's why it's prudent to have backup sights. Yes, you have a highperformance optic on your rifle, and it does everything but look around corners (give the optical engineers time). But one hard whack or errant bit of flying whatever and your optic is a mess of aluminum and glass.

Enter BUIS (back-up iron sights), and I prefer that my backup be as solid as I can make them. So, despite the popularity of a certain brand of polymer folding sights, I prefer metal. Aluminum will do, but steel is better. (The pre-dawn mechanical engineering materials courses inform that mindset.)

is all-steel and tough enough to take whatever happens. In fact, they can probably withstand more abuse than you, or the rest of your rifle, can.

These are the EXD front and rear and clamp onto the top rail of your rifle. They both fold down flat enough that they will not be in your field of view in your red-dot or magnifying optic.

The front post is threaded so you can zero your irons (always a good idea, because if you're at the point of needing them, you are likely deep in the weeds and need all the help you can get). The rear is windage adjustable, so once you have done your proper range work and zeroing, you won't have to have a taped set of offsets for your Kentucky windage.

They're as lie-flat and slim as they can be, so they will be as much out of the way until you need them as possible. The folding is spring-loaded, so once you get them started up (and it takes a bit of work—they won't be popping up on you when you don't need

them), they are spring-loaded up.

They don't lock in the upright position, which some OCD types insist on. The springs are strong, and the sights don't stop at some middle position.

The two sights are black with a nitride finish. If you want to have the BUIS on your rifle matching your tacticool camo paint job, you'll have to take care of that yourself. That's a small price to pay for durability.

What isn't a small price is the cash cost. I'll admit that durability is good, but be ready for the bill, because the front is listed at \$99.99 and the rear at \$124.99. But, as with so many things, the "pay once, cry once" law of economics applies here as well.

Short of being attacked with a ballpeen hammer, I don't see these sights quitting on you. And they come with a lifetime warranty, so if they do break, MFT will take care of you. **GDTM** 





An interesting 5.7x28mm concealed carry pistol that's loaded via stripper clip.



The stripper clip holds 20 rounds of 5.7x28mm ammo, offering a lot of ammo in a design that's still easy to conceal.

hile some shooters deride KelTec for its often unorthodox designs, others appreciate the company for its interesting, innovative firearms that step outside the mold. KelTec's latest gun, the PR57, is a testament to that and has already sparked some heated debate online.

Even at a glance, it's easy to see why, as this concealed carry pistol is top-loaded with stripper clips.

Designed by the legendary George Kell-gren and chambered for 5.7x28mm, the PR57 is not a typical concealed carry pistol by contemporary standards. In a world of micro 9mms, 5.7 pistols have typically been relegated to the nightstand or open carry given their large size, but KelTec has now managed to build a handgun for the caliber that's small enough to conceal.

The root of this innovation lies in the PR57's rotary barrel, and that's what the "R" stands for in the gun's name. The rotary barrel system is what allows the PR57 to be 40 percent lighter than the next lightest 5.7 pistol currently on the market. Combined with the compact size, it should be very easy to carry concealed.

As for the gun's chambering and the decision to use an internal stripper clipfed magazine, KelTec has clearly laid out its reasoning. Since data shows that most self-defense encounters are quick, at close

range and see only three shots fired, the company felt that a pistol that focused on shootability, reliability and concealability was more valuable on most people's hips than a more powerful gun that can be rapidly reloaded.

With 20 rounds of 5.7 on tap, the idea is that the capacity is sufficient enough to eliminate the need for speed reloads. The caliber also produces very little recoil, making it easy to shoot for new and experienced shooters alike.

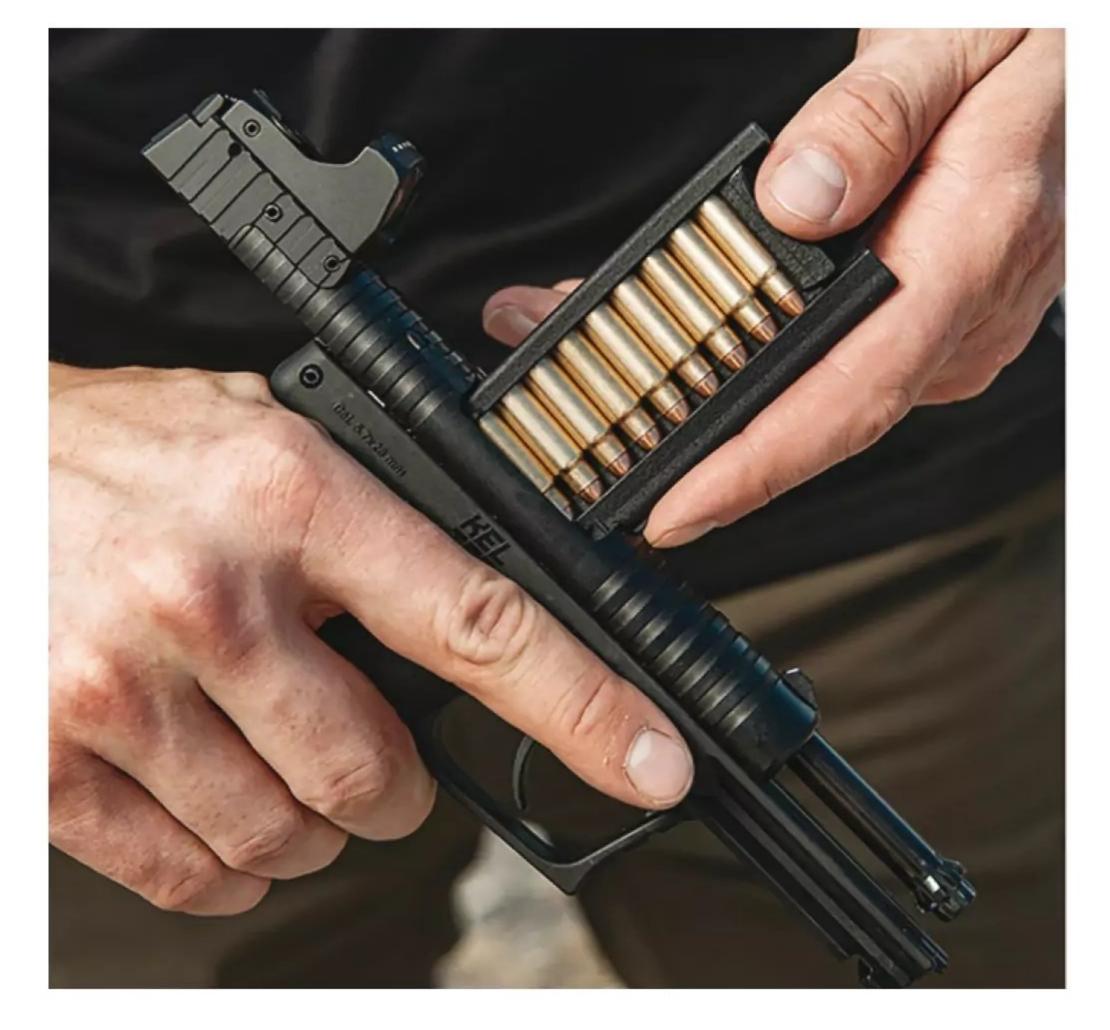
Further, by omitting detachable box magazines, the PR57 can be very slim

The keystone to the functionality of this pistol is the rotary barrel, designated by the "R" in the gun's name.

despite its large capacity and is only 0.937 inch at its widest point. The pistol is loaded with two 10-round stripper clips, two are included with each gun and more can be purchased separately.

The two final notable details of the PR57 are that it's optics-ready and very easy to disassemble. By just pushing the trigger forward, the slide can be pulled right off, and KelTec is calling it "the quickest and easiest fieldstrip on the market."

The KelTec PR57 is expected to begin shipping in Q1 of 2025 with an MSRP of \$399. **GDTM** 



#### 01 Smith & Wesson Model 1854 in .357 Magnum

Smith & Wesson expands its Model 1854 series with the addition of the .357 Magnum caliber, combining classic American lever-action design with modern enhancements. Available in black polymer and stainless steel or walnut with Armornite finish, the rifle features a 19 14-inch threaded barrel, 10+1 capacity, adjustable XS Sights ghost ring rear sight, a Picatinny optics base and a removable magazine tube. Recognized as Ballistics' Best Lever-Action Rifle - 2024, the Model 1854 delivers smooth action, precision and versatility. Now available in .357 Magnum, it offers enthusiasts a blend of tradition and innovation.

#### **02** FN Reflex XL MRD

FN America introduces the FN Reflex XL MRD, a concealed-carry pistol designed for accuracy and comfort. Building on the success of the FN Reflex series, the XL features a 3.8inch cold hammer-forged barrel, extended grip, and compatibility with popular red-dot optics. With a 15-round standard capacity (18-round extended magazine), the XL balances concealability at 1.1 inches wide and 20 ounces, while improving shootability with an ergonomic grip, enhanced trigger guard and smooth 5-pound trigger pull. Available in black and FDE finishes, the FN Reflex XL offers a versatile, reliable option for everyday carry with optics-ready capability and top-tier safety features.

#### **03** Colt Optics-Ready 1911 Competition

Colt's Manufacturing Company has launched the Optics-Ready 1911 Competition Pistols at the 2025 SHOT Show in Las Vegas. Available in 9mm and .45 ACP, these pistols are engineered for precision and performance, featuring Colt's innovative optics plate system for enhanced speed, accuracy and customization. Key features include a stainless-steel Optics Ready Slide with a black nitride cover plate, Series 70 Firing System, ergonomic design for optimal control and G10 checkered grips. These pistols will be available nationwide starting April 2025, offering competitive shooters Colt's legendary performance and cutting-edge innovation.

#### **04 YHM VICTRA-12**

Yankee Hill Machine (YHM) has unveiled the VICTRA-12, a modular sound suppressor for 12-gauge shotguns. Engineered for performance, the VICTRA-12 is lightweight, durable and delivers outstanding noise reduction. Its modular design allows users to adjust lengths to 12, 10, 8 or 6 inches for tailored use. The suppressor's innovative mounting system works with popular shotgun models and includes an interchangeable choke system, shipping with an Improved Cylinder choke and optional Full and Modified chokes. Weighing 25 ounces and full-auto rated, the VICTRA-12 sets a new standard in shotgun suppressors.

MSRP: \$960

MSRP: \$719 MSRP: \$1,399 **01** ¥ **02** 🔰 **03** » **04** »

MSRP: \$1,399

#### 05 Mossberg 590R & 590RM

Mossberg introduces the 590R and 590RM pump-action shotguns, groundbreaking additions to the trusted 590 platform. Designed for duty and home defense, these 12-gauge shotguns feature AR-style ergonomics, ambidextrous rotary safety selectors and user-serviceable components. The 590RM models offer detachable, double-stack magazines with a 10-round standard capacity and optional 5-, 15-, and 20-round magazines. Both models boast an 18.5-inch barrel with integrated heat shield, five-position adjustable stock, Magpul MOE+ pistol grip, and Picatinny rail for optics. Additional highlights include a crisp flat-profile trigger, M-Lok compatibility, and enhanced durability. The innovative 590R and 590RM redefine tactical performance and versatility.

MSRP: 590R \$1,085, 580RM \$1,190

#### **06** Foxtrot Mike Products VFM-9

Foxtrot Mike Products introduces the VFM-9, a new line of 9mm upper receivers designed to deliver exceptional performance and value for budget-conscious consumers. Built with a robust 4140 steel barrel rated for over 10,000 rounds, the VFM-9 offers impressive accuracy and durability. Innovative features include a thermal fit barrel design, streamlined assembly, and compatibility with Foxtrot Mike's industry-leading Last Round Bolt Hold Open (LRBHO) system. Available in two configurations—non-reciprocating forward charging or dual charging handles—the VFM-9 delivers versatility and reliability. Backed by a lifetime warranty, it's the ideal choice for PCC enthusiasts seeking high quality at an accessible price.

MSRP: Starting at \$269

#### 07 KelTec PR57

The KelTec PR57 redefines concealed carry with its innovative design and lightweight build. Chambered in 5.7x28mm, the PR57 features a rotary barrel system, making it 40 percent lighter than its competitors and just 0.937-inch wide for exceptional concealability. Instead of detachable magazines, it uses an internal stripper clip-fed system, holding 20 rounds across two 10-round clips, prioritizing shootability and reliability for realworld self-defense scenarios. Designed by George Kellgren, the PR57 is opticsready and offers the market's easiest field strip with a simple forward push of the trigger.

MSRP: \$399







# THE 1911 WILL NEVER DIE

## The multi-generational pistol.

o all whom it may concern: Be it known that I, John M. Browning, a citizen of the United States, residing in Ogden, in the county of Weber and State of Utah, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Firearms, of which the following is a specification, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, forming a part hereof." Those are the first words on a patent application submitted on February 17, 1910. Patent #985,519 was subsequently issued on February 14, 1911, for what would become known as the 1911 pistol. That was 114 years ago, and manufacturers are still making, and shooters are still buying, pistols based on that patent.

It might seem irrational that a century-old pistol design remains so popular in this modern world. But there are reasons for this. Mike Barham at Galco Gunleather told me, "Galco sells

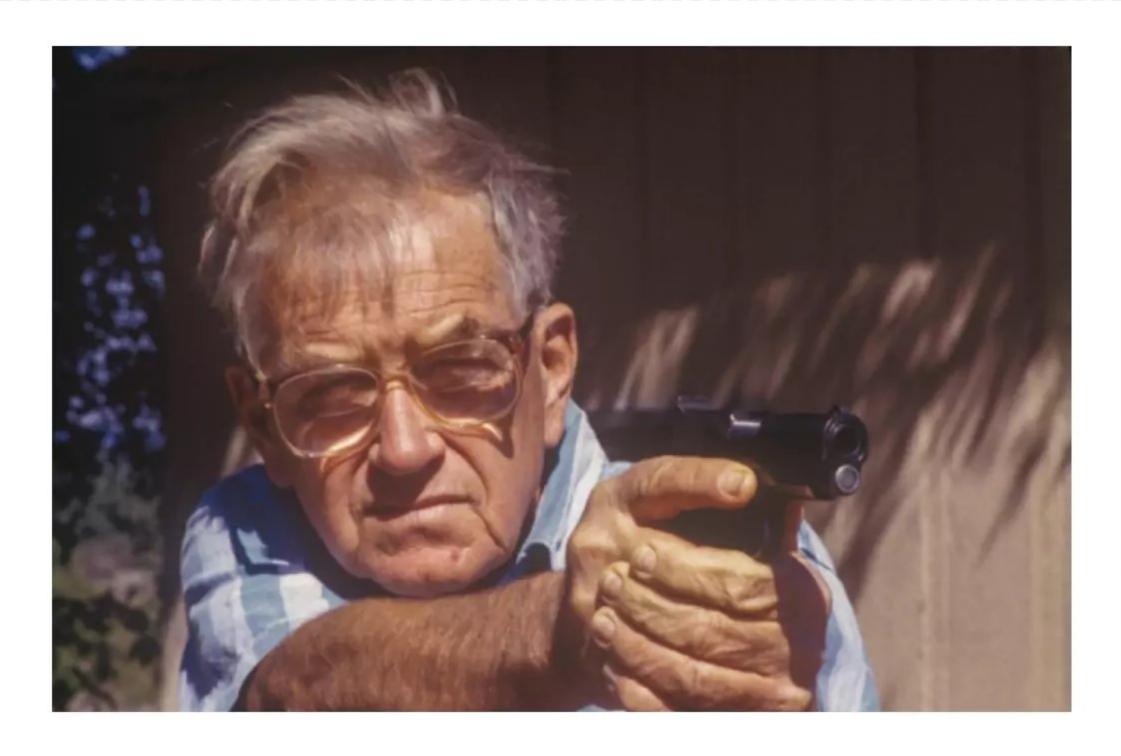
an enormous number of 1911 holsters every year. The 1911 endures as a carry gun because it's slender and flat. This makes it easy to carry ... that svelte 1911 just tucks away in a good, concealed carry holster." But that's not the only reason the 1911 has remained relevant for 114 years. But first, some history.

#### **1911 HISTORY**

Browning designed the 1911 for military consideration, complying with the stipulation that it fire a bullet of not less than 0.45-caliber and that it must utilize the semi-automatic mode of operation. Based partly on a 6,000-round failure free test, in March of 1911 the Army adopted it as the "Model of 1911," and it saw service in World War I. The Army, however, requested some changes they incorporated in 1924. This updated version was known as the 1911A1, and it served the Army throughout World War II and beyond.

The next major change came in 1949 and was known as the Colt Commander. This pistol was identical to the 1911 in operation but had a shorter—4.25-inch opposed to a 5.0-inch—barrel and a shorter slide. The Commander is also noteworthy because it was the first mass-produced American-made pistol with an aluminum alloy frame, and the first American-made pistol chambered for the 9mm Luger/Parabellum cartridge. In 1970, Colt introduced a steel-framed version of the Commander.

Detonics created a 1911 with an even shorter 3.5-inch barrel with a matching slide and a more compact frame in 1976. It was a compact version of their Combat Master 1911. In 1985, Colt introduced their version of this littlest 1911 and called it the Officer's Model. This pistol would morph into another 1911-style pistol known as the CCO or Concealed Carry Officers Model, which had the compact frame of the Officers





Model but the 4.25-inch barrel and slide of the Colt Commander.

Ironically, at about the same time Colt introduced their smallest 1911, a company from Toronto, Canada, known as Para-Ordnance would offer the largest. Para's 1911 pistols were known as "double-stacks" because their wider magazines would hold twice as much ammunition. They were immensely popular for competition.

Additionally, in 1976, Jeff Cooper

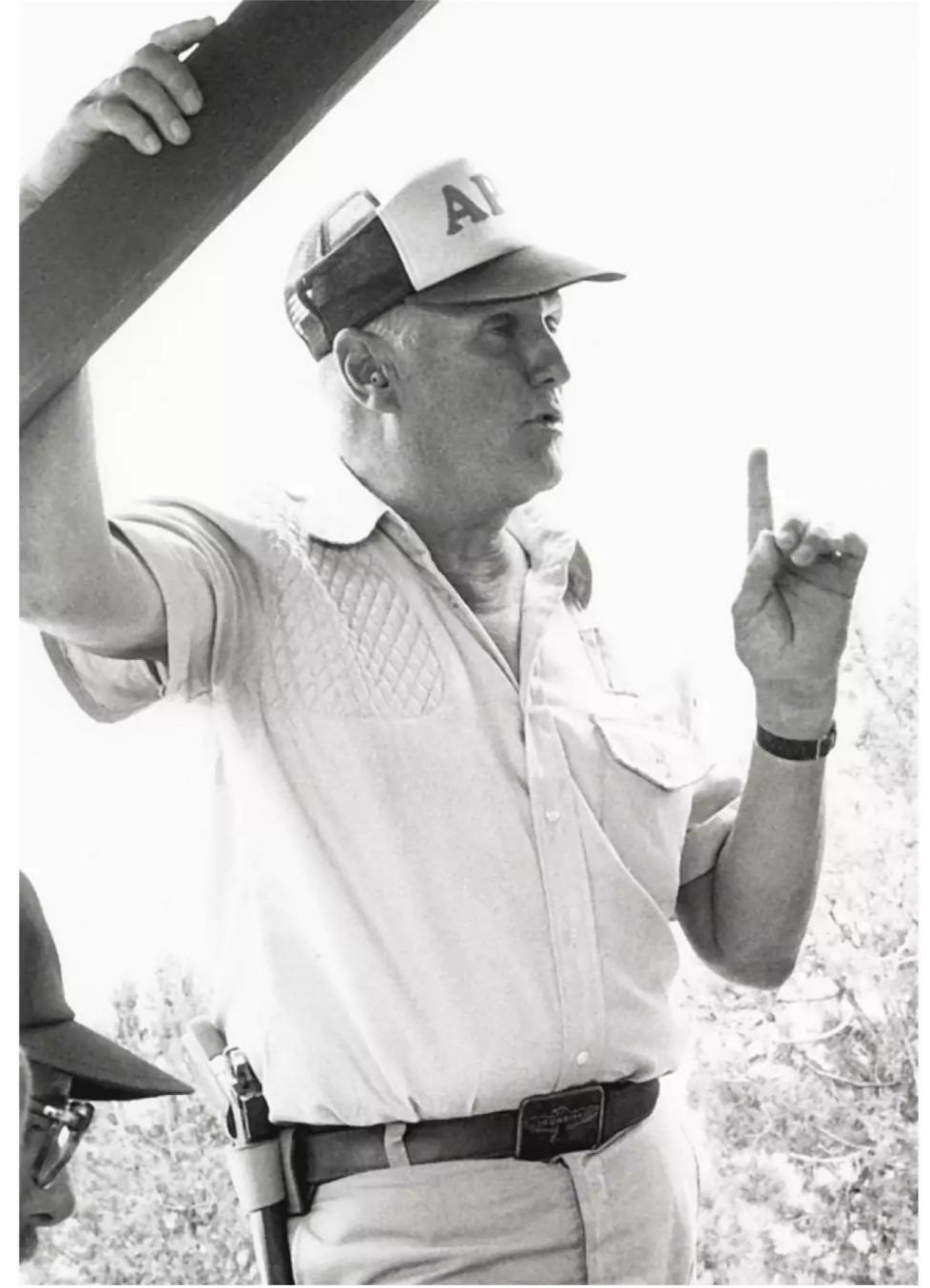
founded the American Pistol Institute, which would become Gunsite Academy. Cooper was a strong proponent of the 1911 and preached its virtues at his school and in the magazines, he wrote for, and a lot of shooters were listening. This is all very important because the wide array of 1911 pistols we have today, manufactured by so many companies, in and outside the United States, can trace their heritage to one or more of these four early versions, and in no

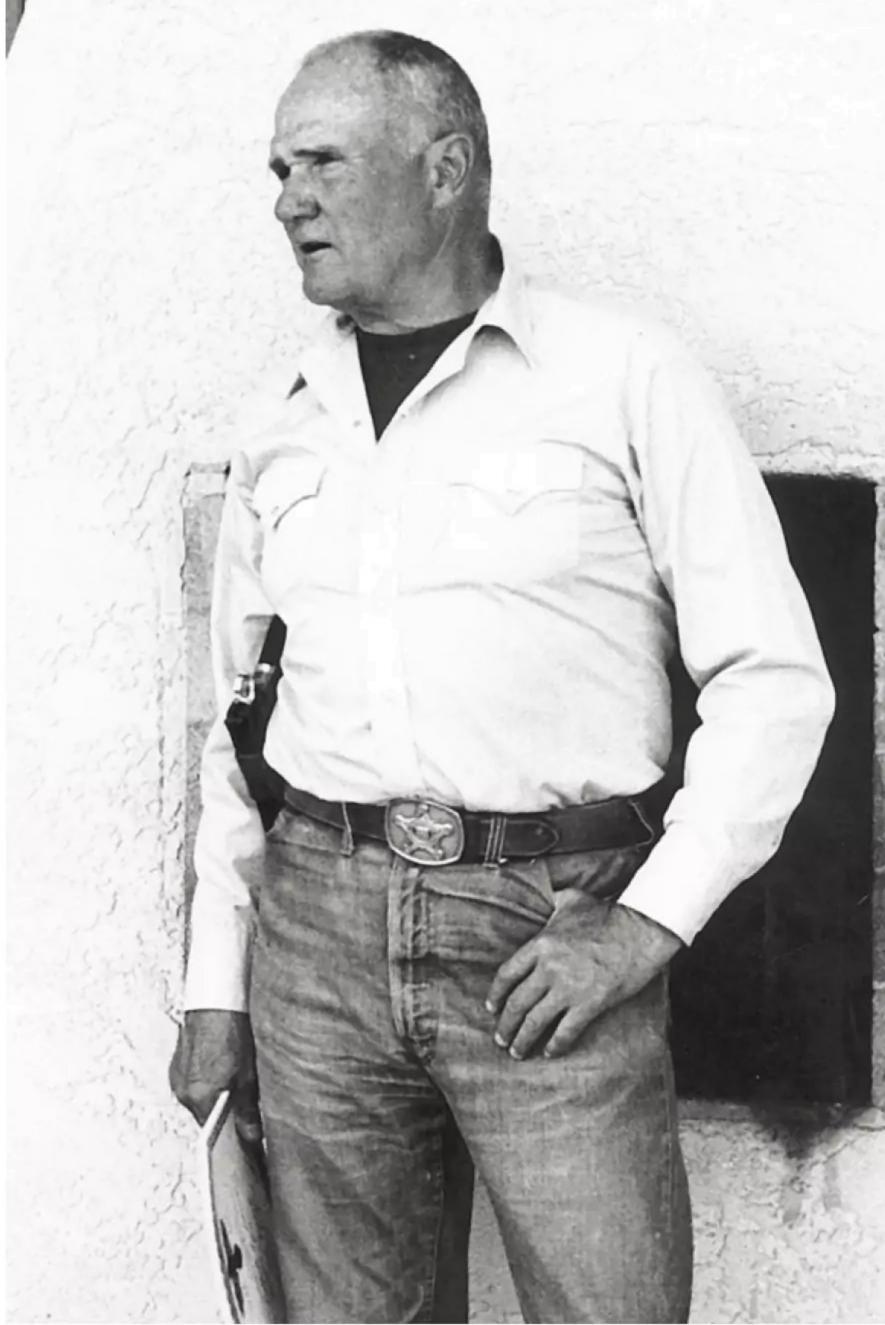
small way to the 1911 legend Cooper helped create.

But we cannot overlook the influence of Cooper. Cooper and his school were significant in the continuing legacy of the 1911 pistol. Ken Campbell, the current CEO of Gunsite Academy told me, "The 1911 is a tried-and-true design ... it makes me smile to see the *youngsters* of today with their 2011-style pistols realizing and recognizing the simplicity and accuracy of shooting a 1911 platform."

(Above) Legendary
African professional
hunter and gunwriter
Finn Aagaard with his
1911. He once wrote,
"I dote on my Colt Officer's Model ACP carry
gun, and delight in its
presence on my hip."

The 1911 has been customized more, and in more ways, than any other pistol.





Former Marine and Gunsite Academy founder Jeff Cooper was a staunch supporter of the 1911 pistol. He was known for calling it the "Yankee Fist."







than a century of tweaking, manufacturers now know how to make 1911s run reliably regardless of the ammunition. Reliability is also a product of magazine quality, and if you use good magazines in a modern 1911, it will sing like a sewing machine. All modern 1911s need to run reliably are good magazines, a little lubrication, and to not be neglected.

Durability: It's unlikely a 1911 will ever wear out. The extensive slide to frame contact, solid lockup and slide geometry all contribute to the pistol's ability to withstand continuous use. A well-made 1911 will last your lifetime and for the lifetime of whomever you bequeath it to. My oldest 1911 is nearly 40 years old. It was my competition

#### 1911 APPEAL

One of the best ways to track the modern history of the modern 1911 is to look at Wilson Combat, the oldest and largest manufacturer of custom 1911 pistols in the world. Founded in 1977 by Bill Wilson, who started customizing 1911s to help him perform better in competition, the company now offers everything from customized classic 1911s to their newest 2024 pistol—the Division 77 P1—which is a 2011-style, high-capacity, aluminum-framed, modified 1911 design with a ported barrel and slide. As an example of the 1911's continued popularity, the same day Wilson Combat announced their new P1, dealers purchased every pistol available.

I asked Bill Wilson his thoughts on the 1911, "The 1911 platform pistol is more popular than ever. I believe this is due to the following factors: Reliability, durability, inherent accuracy potential, excellent trigger pulls and nostalgia. I'm not aware of any pistol design that is as durable as a 1911, I've seen guns with well over 100,000 rounds through them that are still fully serviceable, having only required minor parts replacement through the years." Let's look a bit deeper into these factors to better understand the gun's appeal.

Reliability: Some early 1911 pistols could have issues feeding jacketed hollow-point bullets, but after more



The Wilson Combat EDC X9 is a modified 1911 that does not have a grip safety like the original or most 1911 clones.

The author has been shooting 1911 pistols since he attended basic training in 1984.
Nothing has happened to deteriorate his trust in the platform.





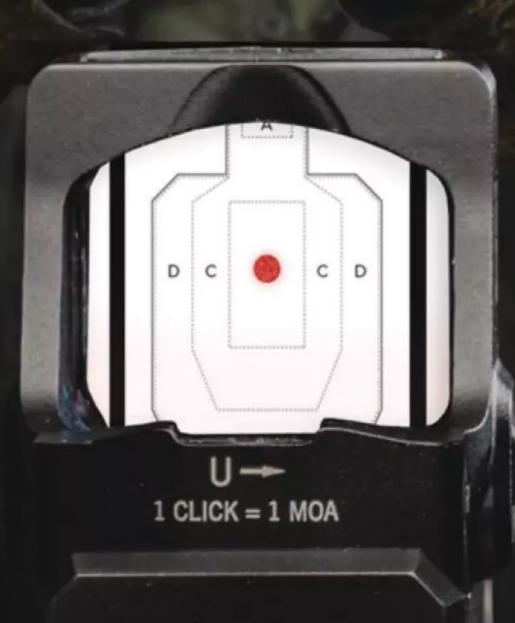
# REAL-WORLD







SCAN TO GET YOURS





MICRO RED DOT

pistol and has thousands of rounds fired through it. It's still reliable, and it still shoots better than I can.

Accuracy: How well can 1911 pistols shoot? Well, that depends on manufacturer skill and the tolerances allowed. When I was working with the West Virginia National Guard pistol team, I evaluated 50 GI-stock 1911A1 pistols. Some shot better than I could and others, not so well. But a modern well-made 1911 can outshoot any user. Wilson Combat routinely guarantees their 1911s will group into less than an inch at 25 yards. It has a lot to do with the barrel and the slide to frame fit, but the excellent trigger is a big part of the equation.

Excellent Trigger: Unlike most every other pistol ever made, the 1911 trigger does not pivot, it moves straight to the rear. This means your trigger finger's interface with the trigger does not change through the very short trigger press. When properly tuned, with a light pull weight, no creep, and minimal overtravel, the 1911's single-action operation and straight in-line trigger movement makes



it the best pistol trigger ever fashioned.

Nostalgia: No other pistol has the legacy of the 1911. It served our military from 1911 until the Beretta M9 replaced it in 1985. After that, the 1911 still remained in the holsters of some elite units. It fought in two World Wars and served in Korea and Vietnam, where countless American GIs learned to trust it to keep them alive. It also dominated early pistol competitions; Ray Chapman won the first 1975 World Shoot with a 1911. Ken Hackathorn is one of the most experienced firearms trainers I know, and he still trusts the 1911. Hackathorn told me, "Certainly, no other USA handgun has had the legacy of the

1911. Even after 114 years, it remains a tool that, in the hands of a competent person, will get the job done. Can't get more American than that."

Customization: There's another aspect to the appeal and nostalgia of the 1911 that rings true with many shooters. An aspect Wilson probably knows better than anyone. The 1911 is a pistol made of metal. In your hand, it feels like a pistol as opposed to a toy. It's one of the most customizable pistols every made. You'll never see a modern poly-framed pistol outfitted with hand-checkered Cocobolo wood grips, and no modern pistol looks as good as an engraved 1911.



Springfield Armory manufactures a wide selection of 1911 pistols. This is one of their fullsize 1911s.

Springfield Armory manufactures a wide selection of 1911 pistols. This is one of their Officer-sized 1911s with a 3-inch barrel.

tion of 1911 pistols.

This is one of their

Commander-sized

1911s with a 4-inch

barrel.



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Wilson Combat's new ported, high capacity, and reflex sight compatible P1 pistol is the ultimate expression of the evolution of the 1911.

Once only considered a custom option for competition, ported 1911s like this EDC X9 2.0 are now becoming more popular for selfdefense.

Whether you're shooting recreationally, in competition, or to save your life, you can find a 1911 that's been purpose built for the job.

#### THE FUTURE

Unless aliens take over control of Earth, or unless the need for citizens to arm themselves for personal protection vanishes, the 1911 will be with us for the foreseeable future. I'm also confident that the pistol will continue to evolve. Wilson Combat has already shown how this can happen with their EDC-style frame that has abandoned

the grip safety, as well as their most recent pistol, the high-capacity and ported P1.

In 1917, Ford introduced the Model TT, which was arguably the first pickup truck. We've all seen how the pickup truck has evolved, just compare a Model TT to a Tesla Cybertruck. More fortunes have been made and lost by building, modifying, and using 1911 pistols than

any other handgun. There's no reason to expect any of that to change, and as long as we have pickup trucks, we'll have 1911s. This all reminds me of the words of singer-songwriter Robert Earl Keen, "The road goes on forever and the party never ends." The 1911 is a multigenerational pistol, and its story is a long way from its end. **GDTM** 







The City of Washington, Arkansas, in partnership with the University of Arkansas Hope-Texarkana Foundation and Historic Washington State Park, will host the 4th Annual James Black's Bowie Heritage Festival on April 25-26, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The festival will celebrate James Black, the bladesmith who forged the first Bowie Knife for Jim Bowie in Washington, Arkansas, and showcase a variety of Arkansas heritage crafts and trades.

#### **Upcoming James Black School of Bladesmithing Classes:**

January 18-19: Forge to Sharp Course

February 3-7: Advanced Transition Damascus Course

March 17-21: Hunting Knife Course

May 5-9: Bowie Knife Course

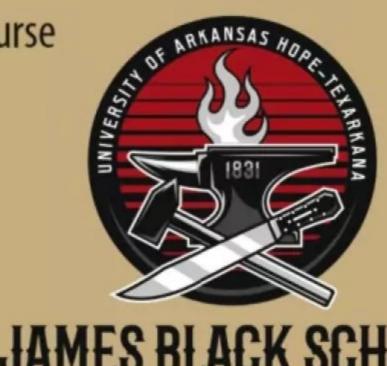
June 21-22: Forge to Sharp Course

July 12-13: Friction Folder Knife Course

September 8-10: X-Rhea Knife Course

October 10-13: Hunting Knife Course

November 3-7: Free Veterans Course



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## FEATURING

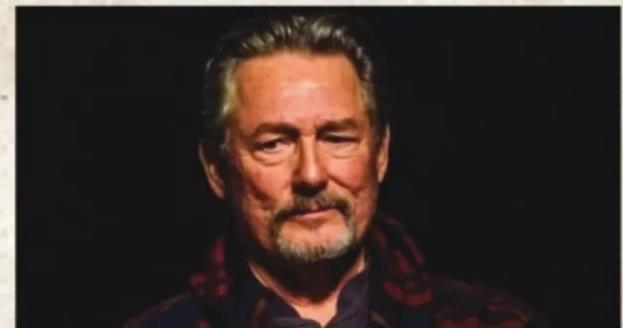
- World Famous Bladesmiths
- Forged in Fire Celebrities
- Bladesmith Cutting Competition
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- Historical Reenactments & Encampments
- Bowmakers & Knapping
- Original James Black Bowie Knife Exhibit & FREE Knife Evaluation by Mark Zalesky
- Welding Competition by Students
- Forging Competition by Bladesmiths & Festival Attendees
- Tours of Historic Buildings
- Surrey Rides
- Arts & Crafts
- Food Trucks & Williams' Tavern
- Many Other Attractions!

Meet Forged in Fire celebrities **DOUG MARCAIDA**, **RICARDO VILAR**, & **J. NIELSON**, and actor, stunt actor, & weapons master known for his work in the movies Indiana Jones & Road House **ANTHONY DE LONGIS**.









For information, call 870-648-5084 or visit bowieknifefest.com.







What is even more surprising is that these features actually deliver on what the company claims. Most gunmakers say their guns have an improved trigger these days, but Walther comes out of the gate swinging in this department. This is *actually* the best trigger I've found on a factory striker-fired pistol. Honestly, it's better than a lot of factory 1911/2011 triggers.

The magwell is wide and useful, the PMM comp actually works, and even the slide serrations are extra deep for maximizing their usefulness. Walther didn't just add "features" to check off boxes on a list, they added features

that matter and do their jobs like they mean it.

And they did it for an MSRP of \$1,000.

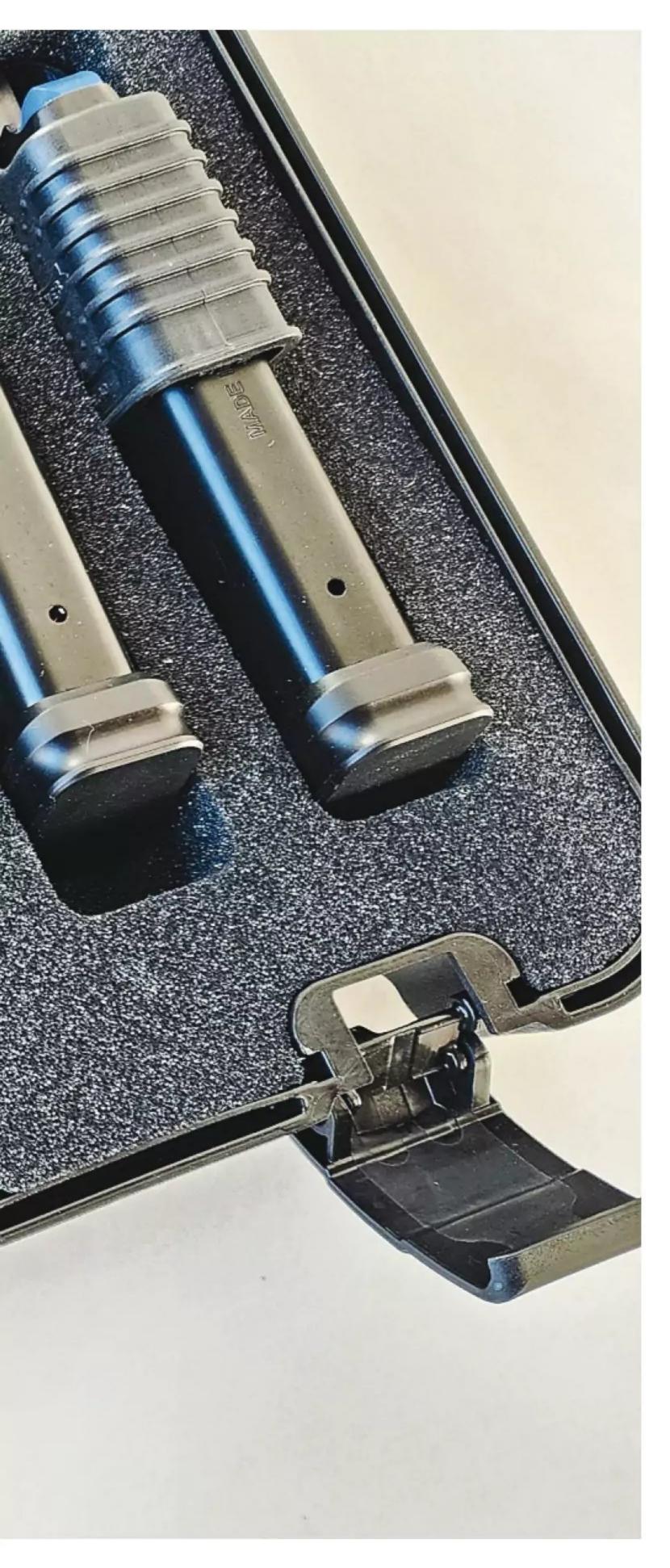
#### **ON THE RANGE**

Getting on the range with the Walther PDP Pro-X immediately feels like nothing else. Everything about this pistol seamlessly integrated into every drill and stage thrown at it. Normally, there is a bit of a familiarization curve with any review. A practice magazine or two or three to shake out just how it feels and performs. That just didn't happen with the PDP Pro-X. From the first

shot, it felt natural and right.

Maybe it's a freak occurrence with my grip and eyes perfectly mating with the ergonomics of the gun, or maybe it's a little German-American magic. Either way, the PDP Pro-X shoots like warm butter.

Playing around with a few types of ammo, it quickly became apparent the PMM did a great job on this comp. Almost every brand and grain of ammo worked well with the gun. Shooting 115-grain, the comp provided a little less compensation than 124-grain, but the fairly anemic load still benefited from the PMM comp.







The meat and potatoes of the shooting were done using Igman 124-grain and S&B 124-grain. Both felt great and shot well with minimal muzzle rise.

If you love great triggers, you're faced with a difficult decision with this pistol. The Walther PDP Pro-X will forever redefine your definition of a good striker-fired trigger. Honestly, it might ruin you for other triggers. Going back to your gunsmith-polished, aftermarket Glock trigger will feel like going back to a bag of rocks.

On the other hand, you'll experience what is genuinely a stunning trigger. And that isn't just for a factory trigger.

It's outstanding for any striker-fired trigger ... ever. If Walther ever brings this technology to other platforms, it'll corner the market on triggers.

The pull measures at 4 pounds but is so crisp, it feels lighter. Movement

from take-up to break is extremely short, just enough you know you put pressure on the trigger before hitting a defined wall for the break. Reset is a few millimeters and feels almost instant.



#### **ALL ROSES?**

Maybe this is just personal preference but there are a few points that would improve the PDP Pro-X in my book. First, a double undercut for the trigger guard. For a pistol that leans very modern in every other respect, it's kind of odd not to see a double undercut.

Second, it needs suppressor-height sights. The irons on the PDP Pro-X are decent, nothing to write home about. Yet, this is a gun built for red dots. Not only because of the optics plate system, but just everything about it exudes the desire for a red dot on top. Why then, are the irons so short?

Sure, different dots work best with slightly different sight heights, but adding a few millimeters to the PDP's factory sights would have solved it for most people shooting most red dots.

These are fairly minor points though. In the grand scheme of everything, the Walther PDP Pro-X punches way above the average.



#### CFS 6-36x50mm F1

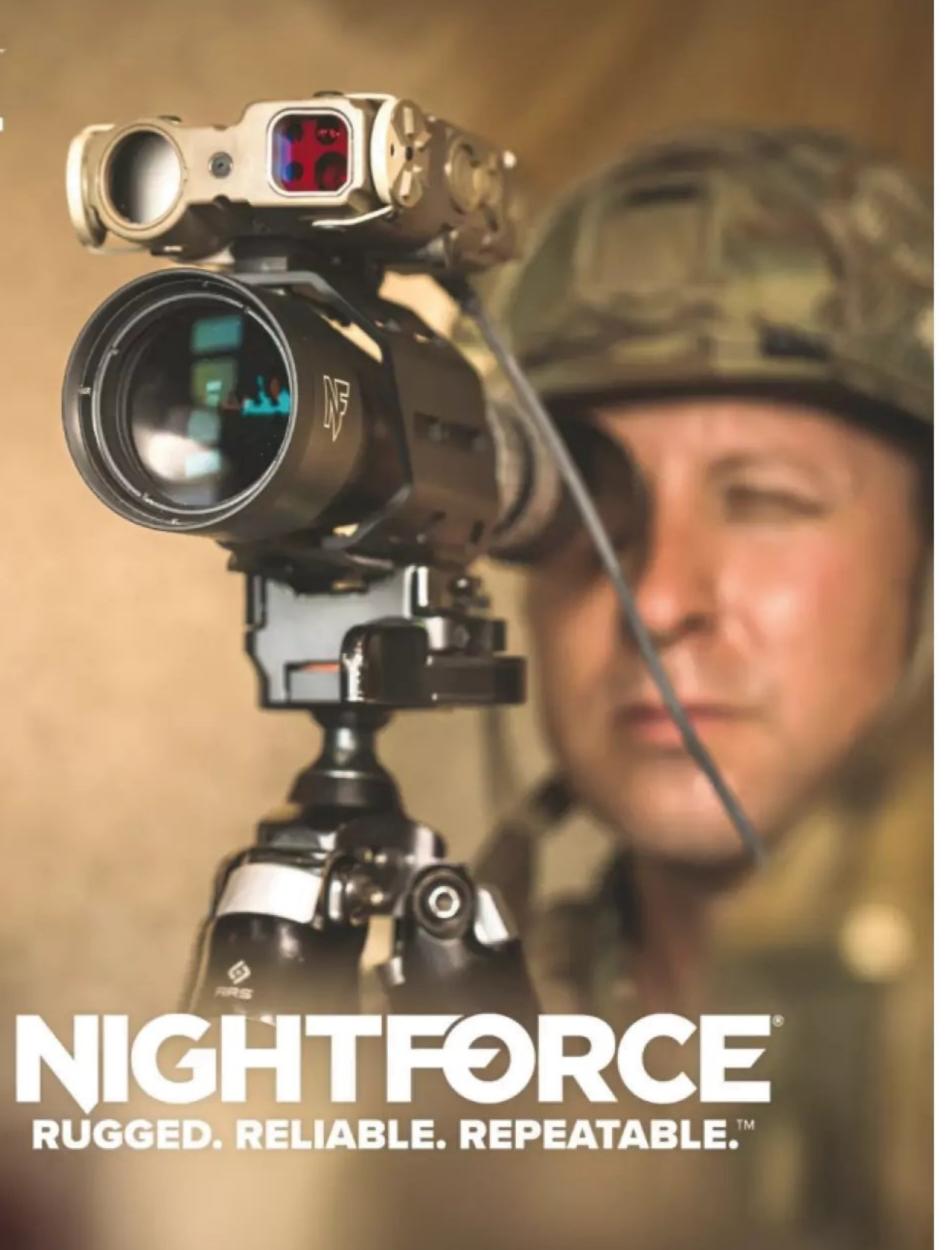
The Configurable Field Spotting Scope (CFS) 6-36x50mm F1 was designed with practical field use in mind. An emphasis on balanced ergonomics, flexible configurations, and refined optical quality, while maintaining the ruggedness Nightforce is known for make the CFS ideal for your next adventure.





0 F

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One point that isn't so minor is magazines. Currently, the PDP Pro-X ships with three 20-round magazines (and that's awesome). But getting *more magazines* is a touch rough. Its 20-round mags aren't currently available from Walther, 18-round mags are as large as they currently go.

The 20-round magazines that ship with the gun are 18-round bodies with a plus-two baseplate. But the baseplates aren't available from Walther either.

The gun's 18-round magazines are easy to find in stock and are very affordable at around \$32 from retailers. You can add your own aftermarket plate and get plus-two or even plus-three from those, but it would be nice to see factory options from Walther soon.

#### **LOOSE ROUNDS**

The Walther PDP Pro-X is an outstanding pistol that you have to shoot to believe. The trigger alone is worth

seeking out a friend or rental range to give it a try. If you're looking for a pistol that can hang with the big dogs for a weekend of competition but also be a gun you can always bet your life on, the Walther PDP Pro-X makes a compelling argument.

In a market awash with pistols that over-promise and under-deliver, it's refreshing to see just how much effort Walther has put into making a gun that shows up. **GDTM** 





#### QUICK SPECS:

Caliber: 9mm

Magazine Capacity: 18 rounds

Barrel Length: 5"

Weight (Empty): 33.8 ounces

#### **New Optic Pin System:**

Easily switch between RMR, RMSC, and DeltaPoint Pro optics.

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# BOS A RES

The AR-10 and others like it.



iving through historical events provides perspective on the past and future, and we are definitely living during interesting times. We're also trending toward interesting new things across the gun industry: new ammunition technology, optics and, of course, firearms.

We're at a very interesting crossroads in our national small arms history as well: Our military has settled on a new, large-frame combat rifle and cartridge, and we're seeing a resurgence in interest in large-frame designs and cartridges. This is about to be the golden era in many ways, and we are certainly about to enter the golden age of the large-frame AR rifle.

#### **BIGGER MIGHT BE BETTER**

The AR-15 may be the most popular type of rifle in the country today, but

it was not the first in the AR family to exist, nor was it the last modern design to emerge from its designers. This is pretty well-known history here, and I don't want to offer a whole lesson on Eugene Stoner and ArmaLite in the mid 20th century ... and the history of the M16 in Vietnam.

The takeaway here is that the designs we are about to discuss are rooted in the original AR-10, and even AR-18 models, developed by Stoner. The world at the time was looking for what amounted to a full-size battle rifle that would ideally be chambered in the then-new 7.62x51 NATO cartridge. Many were adopted, including the famous M14 and FAL rifles.

These full-size rifles were supplemented and eventually superseded by smaller and lighter weapons in 5.56x45 NATO, as military and civilian needs and interest shifted in the latter half of the 20th century until the War on Terror. The 21st century has seen a slow and relatively begrudged slog back to more powerful cartridges in larger and



The author's Aero
Precision M5E1 build as
described in the article



The Lancer mags featured here are very reliable and available in several colors. The Aero lower takes most standard AR-15 small parts, but the takedown pins are specific to large-frame guns. Trigger by Timney.



The M5E1 upper uses a different barrel nut setup than the Faxon upper. Something to be aware of is that certain uppers may require the use of manufacturer-specific handguards.



The 5.56mm mags are notably smaller in size than the 7.62/308 pattern common to the large-frame rifles we are discussing. Ammunition is from Black Hills and Remington.

heavier weapons. The modern American military ended up facing 7.62x54R rifles and machine guns courtesy of Soviet presence in much of Asia for more than 2 decades, as well as in fighting by proxy in Eastern Europe and directly in Africa against Islamist groups.

The effectiveness of these Cold Warera weapons has always been apparent, and for many reasons Western militaries have struggled against them in combat. The Tongo Tongo ambush of 2017, of which there is plenty of video, demonstrates how fearsome the 7.62x54R cartridge is from the point of view of Americans being killed by it. The same goes for the countless hours of combat footage from the Russo-Ukrainian War, where we consistently see the effects of larger rifles and cartridges.

All this to say is that there is significant interest in our modern era concerning larger rifles and more powerful ammunition. The American military has chosen the Sig XM7 as part of its Next Generation Squad Weapon (NGSW) program to, at least on paper, replace the M4 Carbine and M249 LMG. Both the M4 and M249 are chambered in 5.56x45mm, whereas the new weapons will be chambered in 6.8x51mm Fury.

How this will work out long-term is



yet to be seen, but the modern military is placing emphasis on a larger primary weapon and a more powerful cartridge. The XM7 is a large-frame "AR" variant in that it has a similar manual of arms to the AR platform while not being of the same design. This is of critical importance to this discussion, as the large-frame "AR" market consists of a vast number of non-standard, non-compatible designs that share perhaps only a common magazine type.

#### **THE MESS**

We commonly refer to the large-frame, semi-auto rifles we have today as the AR-10. This is the same thing as calling every tissue a Kleenex.

In fact, the AR-10 is a specific design among many, and there are very few true AR-10 designs on the market today ... compared to what we may address as "308 AR" sized guns. There is very little standardization among these designs. In fact, I would go so far as to say that they are all largely incompatible, except that most today use the SR25 magazine, the common .308 mag we all know and love that is available from Magpul, Lancer and more.

There is no common mil-spec set of parameters that dictate the large-frame markets. Each company does things a bit differently and, aside from a few metrics, you might find that parts you like are incompatible from rifle to rifle. You should consider most large-frame designs to be proprietary and unique.

This lack of standardization in firearms parts has resulted in some generally agreed upon standards that are much looser than those for the AR-15. For instance, the two feature rifles in the pho-

tography for this article have a good number of common parts but are not entirely interchangeable.

The Aero M5E1 upper cannot accept the PRI handguard system, but they do share a common bolt and charging handle and barrels. There are several thread-pitch variances between various upper receivers, so the PRI handguard might not even fit upper to upper with a "standard" profile.

These rifles are loosely the same pattern externally, both being DPMS style, not AR-10. You can tell the difference because a true AR-10 variant will have a sharp angle at the rear of the receiver by the takedown pin, whereas the DMPS pattern receivers—not true AR-10 in design—will have a rounded junction between the upper and lower.

The DPMS-style receiver design has become something of a default standard for the large-frame AR, at least to consumers interested in building their own guns. You can use standard AR-15 lower parts on most of the build, but you do need different takedown pins, buffer and occasionally proprietary magazine release and bolt stop parts.

More maddening to the large-frame market is the large/small factory guns that occupy a bit of middle ground between AR-15 and DPMS AR .308 sizes. These should be considered entirely separate from builders' discussions. The current generation of folding stock, self-contained upper rifles, such as those from Sig, are based on entirely different operating systems ... as opposed to the direct-gas AR types.

While these uppers might fit on various lowers out there, there's no guarantee

of function across the board. You'll notice that self-contained uppers designed for the AR-15 footprint are usually compatible with standard lowers, such as the BRN-180 family. You can use these on a lower with no buffer tube if you choose or simply swap them on to any mil-spec lower. This compatibility is not guaranteed to exist with the large-frame guns.

With an eye to the future, I know that we probably won't be seeing anything resembling a completely standard footprint for the large-frame rifles. We seem to be looking at a permanently mixed market with perhaps a center that has conforming parts, but until we as a consumer base and industry at large can agree on what those truly standard specs may be, we will continue to have an ever-growing variety in terms of what constitutes these large-frame rifles.

At the very least, we are essentially at a point of general standardization for magazines, which is a step in the right direction.

#### THE AUTHOR'S BUILDS

Some shooters have this idea of the AR-10 size rifles as something of a "battle rifle," a full-horse cartridge out of a full-size gun, lower capacity and heavy—but advantageous—at medium to long range. The issue we run into is that this is a somewhat narrow point of new, and it really doesn't give the large-frame rifle a good chance to show its versatility. These guns, even for the home builder, can be lightweight and offer a wide variety of possible build options.

I took it upon myself to construct a couple of very different large-frame rifles that were designed for different purposes, but also sharing the best aspects of each other and modern technology concerning optics and suppressors. Both of these rifles are of DPMS pattern and chambered for .308 Winchester.

I wanted to demonstrate that the large-frame rifle, while being bulkier than a standard AR-15, is still capable of being deployed as a compact, handy carbine ... and as what people think of as a better role for a bigger gun, that of a long-range marksman's rifle. You can, in fact, do it all

with this frame size, from a 16-inch fast-handling carbine to a 20-inch precision rifle. However, the end use is subjective; both of these finished guns occupy much of the same effective range.

The cosmetics and ergonomics don't influence the effectiveness of the .308 cartridge. A 16-inch barrel and a 20-inch barrel are functionally identical with most modern ammunition in terms of velocity and accuracy. At the general effective range of most semi-auto .308 rifles, this isn't much, typically around 75 to 100 fps at the muzzle, and about 2,500 to 2,800 fps. In all my years of ballistic testing and working as a gun writer, I have never seen a need to go over 20 inches on a .308 Win.; 14 to 18 inches is, in fact, ideal for 99 percent of uses.

These rifles were completed to give you an idea of what you can do creatively, both with manufacturer-exclusive and "standard" parts for the large-frame, .308 AR-sized guns. Both guns are based on the DPMS pattern receivers but are not entirely interchangeable. Of note is the incredible One Hundred Concepts scope caps with glint-blocking front caps, easily one of the best small features on both builds.

#### **SAME BUT DIFFERENT**

The first is what I'd call a traditional-style, modern-twist SPR build using a PRI handguard for that mid-2000s War on Terror vibe. The receiver set and bolt car-

rier group are from Faxon Firearms and have a threaded barrel nut setup similar to common AR types. Assembly of this rifle was a little complicated with getting all the rail system and barrel nut situations in place, but it all went together nicely.

I opted for a 20-inch, fluted Faxon .308 Win. barrel and installed a Superlative Arms adjustable gas block to use with the JK Armament 155 suppressor on a Rearden mount. I also used a PRI charging handle. The lower is outfitted with Geissele parts and has a Magpul PRS Light stock and B5 grip. For optics, I wanted something in the medium-range class, so a Leupold MK5 HD 2-10x and brand-new Armasight clip-on thermal were used. These both feature AMD QD mounts.

What we have here is something a bit retro and a bit modern, but making the best of both worlds to fit that full-size, stereotypical semi-auto .308 flavor we expect for this class of rifle.

The second build I went with my knowledge and experience in building a lighter and more linear .308, so I selected the Aero M5E1 receiver set in Partisan camo. The trigger and lower parts of this gun are respectively Timney and Aero, all great stuff. The bolt carrier group is also from Aero. I went with OD green Magpul furniture that fits my hands and shoulder really well while being low profile. The upper contains a Geissele charg-

ing handle and Criterion chrome-lined 16-inch barrel, choices I made for their ease of operation and ruggedness. I used a Q Cherry Bomb brake to mount the SilencerCo Omega 36M with Rearden adapter.

The optical package is geared for medium range nighttime hunting and daytime speed: a Vortex Razor 1-6x in ADM mount combined with a AGM Rattler clip-on thermal. Note how far forward you can mount the optics on this rifle, making it fast-handling but also compact with the advantage of being able to use the gun with the stock collapsed completely. Angled Magpul sights are also in play for close-up hog hunting. The underside of the handguard has a Magpul ARCA rail to allow tripod use in the field.

This is a great example of an intentionally built field rifle that takes advantage of many of the best components for hard use ... but not overbuilt into a boat anchor.

Building these rifles was a bit of a trip. There were enough non-standard parts I had to make triple sure I was getting the right stuff in. Compared to building a regular AR-15, these took a little guessing to get right, but I did achieve what I set out to do without a lot of extra effort.

Be careful when ordering large-frame parts, because there are differences. If you want to play it safe, order from one place or contact a retailer like Brownells (the source of many of these parts) to talk with an expert before doing a build with parts from multiple makers. **GDTM** 



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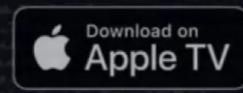


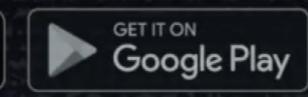
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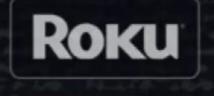
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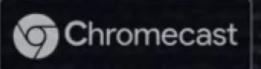






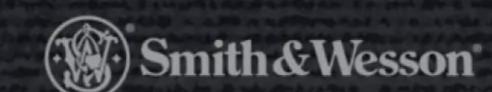




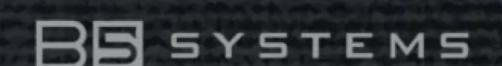


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#### Large Frame Consumer Guide

#### Sig Sauer

As of this point, you'll find a number of large-frame rifle options from Sig. The company lists their MCX designs in a variety of options to include the military 6.8x51mm chambering, arguably as close as you can get to the military's new weapon. In addition, the SIG 716 is still available as a more traditional AR variant if the proprietary MCX lineup isn't in your budget. While the 716 is affordable, the MCX variants run up the price tag notably.

#### Ruger

The Ruger SFAR is a middling class rifle that occupies that territory between larger AR-10 type guns and the smaller AR-15. It is, in fact, much closer in size to the latter than the former and feels quite small in the hand. I was very impressed when I first got a chance to look at these rifles, and it could well be one of the premier platforms for the light-recoiling 6.5 Creedmoor. I do not have much time on these rifles but that will hopefully change in the future, because the weight savings for a hunter like me is very interesting.

#### **POFUSA**

Patriot Ordnance Factory has been making some very interesting designs for some time. Their Revolution models are of particular interest though, while a proprietary design significantly reduces the size of the rifle over a common AR-10 or .308 AR. The company's website is extremely helpful in showing the real-world size differences you can expect to see with these models over both the original AR-10 and the DPMS-style variants. This is an example of a true reinvention, not just a cosmetic change.

#### **Aero Precision**

Aero Precision is one company dominating the builder's market for the large-frame guns. They use DPMS pattern receivers for the M5 series and these are very straightforward to work with and are doing a very good job at forcing an industry standard by sheer numbers alone. If you're planning to build instead of buy, Aero is an extremely strong brand for maximizing your options to get exactly what you want. I use this company often for my builds and they have yet to fail me even when there is so much variation in the large-frame market.

#### **Faxon Firearms**

Faxon Firearms is a company best known for their barrels. I have worked with them for over a decade and have a great many of their barrels in my rotation. All of them shoot lights out. The company produces barrels for your large-frame builds (one is in this article) but also complete rifles if you want to skip the build and get to business. They're on the forefront of many new calibers, such as the 8.6 Blackout, and have a range of factory options you can choose from if the common chamberings aren't exciting enough.

#### Springfield Armory

Springfield Armory lists several models chambered for .308 in their Victor lineup. These are affordable rifles and are feature rich right out of the box. While not exactly entry level, these guns are pretty much ready to go and are a great value for people looking for a no-frills pig or deer rifle that isn't going to break the bank while still offering incredible accuracy and reliability. I can heartily recommend the Victor if you want to get straight to the field.

#### Palmetto State Armory

PSA is out there cranking out all the guns you didn't know you needed. The company is making a great splash in the AK and historical markets without a doubt, but they're also putting out some stunning large-frame AR rifles at a very good price. I had the opportunity to fire several over the last fall and winter, and I was shocked to learn that their price tags were very reasonable for the kind of accuracy and shooting I was getting. Their Sabre-10 rifles are visually pleasing and come in a number of color options, from black to pseudo-military. I've fired their M110 "clone" that retails at around \$1,500 and was legitimately impressed past 800 yards.

#### **Daniel Defense**

At the time of writing, Daniel Defense has a few large-frame guns listed on their website, including the somewhat obscure .260 Rem chambering, a round that runs great in the AR but is commercially inferior to the 6.5 Creedmoor. I'm not one to ask questions in this aspect, but it is curious. The DD5 rifles are well known for reliability and accuracy, I've shot them plenty over the years and have always been impressed with what they can do.

#### Other Companies

These are just a few of the highlights for the large-frame rifles available today. Plenty more companies make this class of rifle including, but not limited to: CMMG, H&K, Franklin Armory, Rise Armament, Smith & Wesson, Rock River Arms, Radical Firearms, LWRC, PWS and so many more. The list will continue to grow as time goes on. That much is certain.





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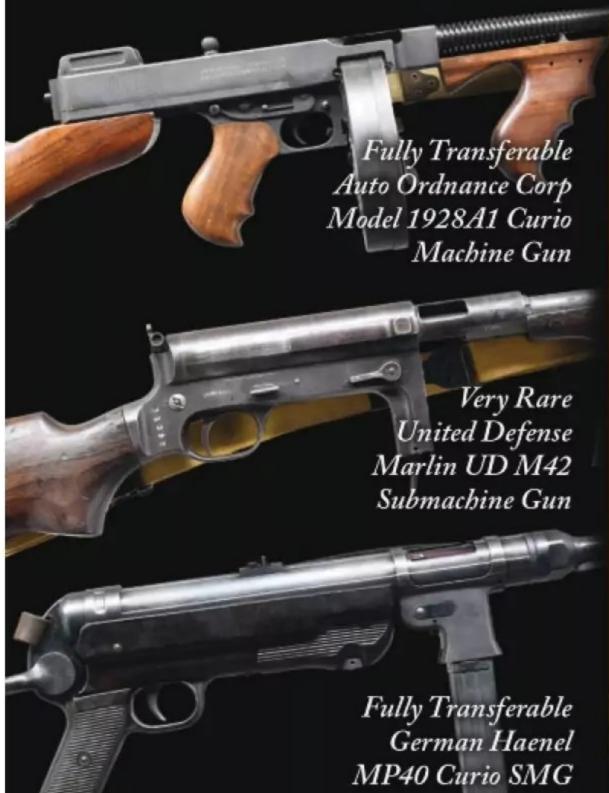


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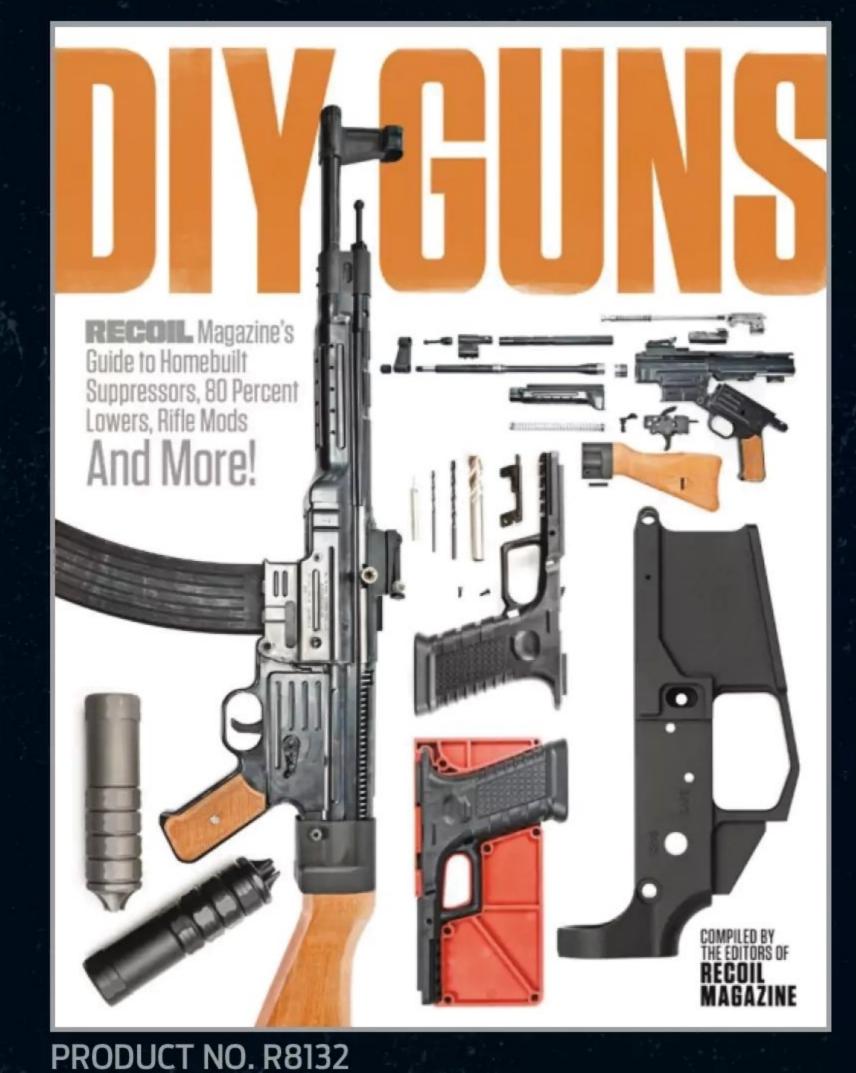






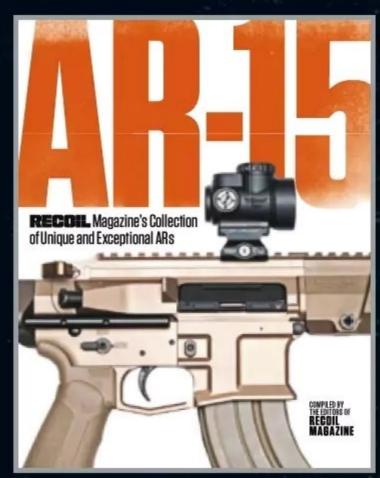
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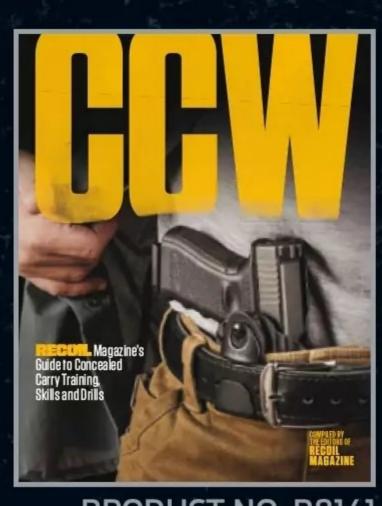


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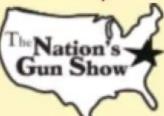
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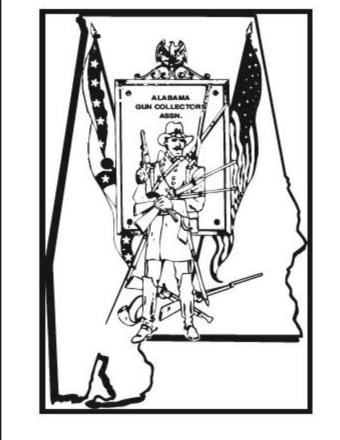
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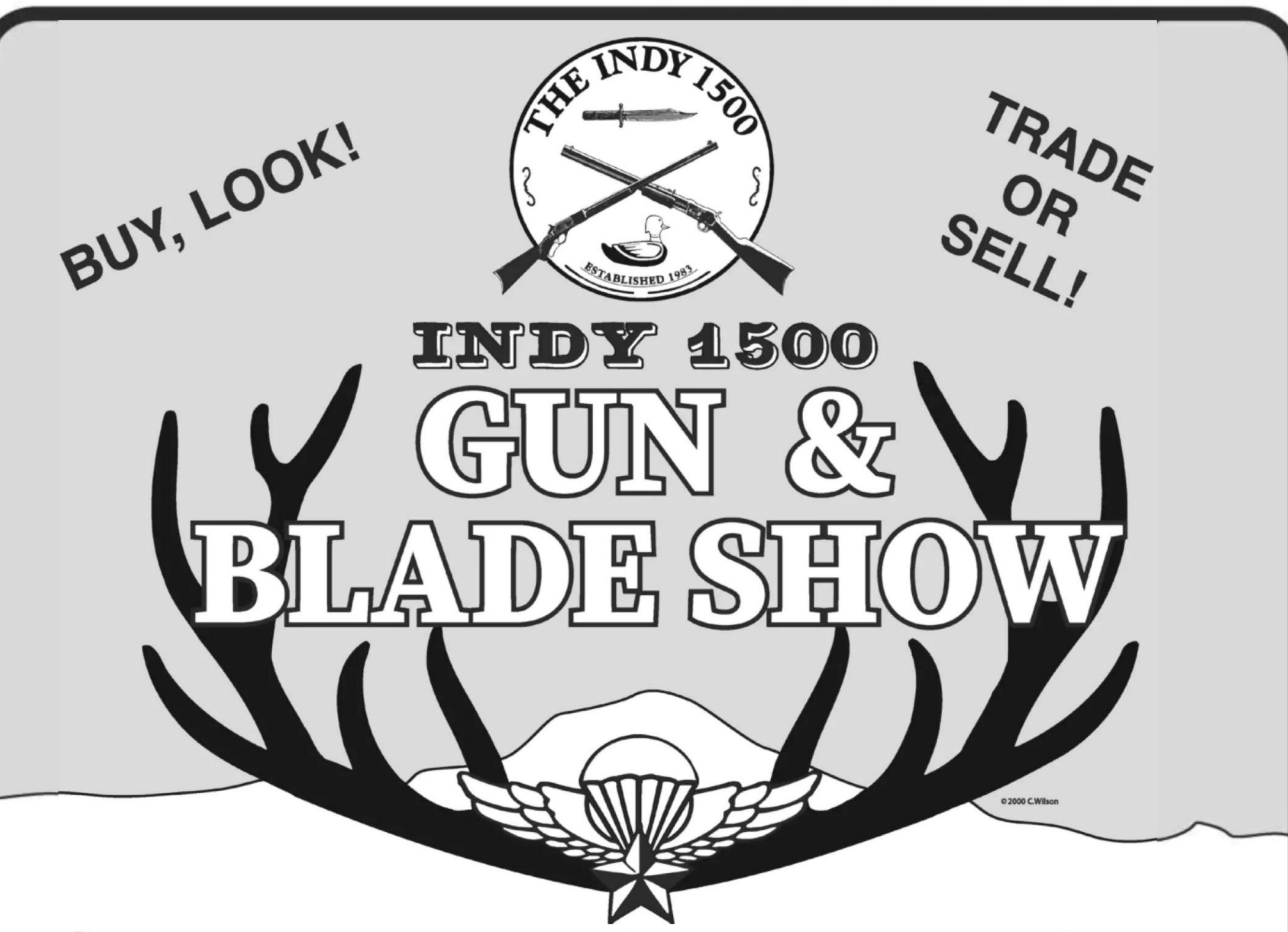
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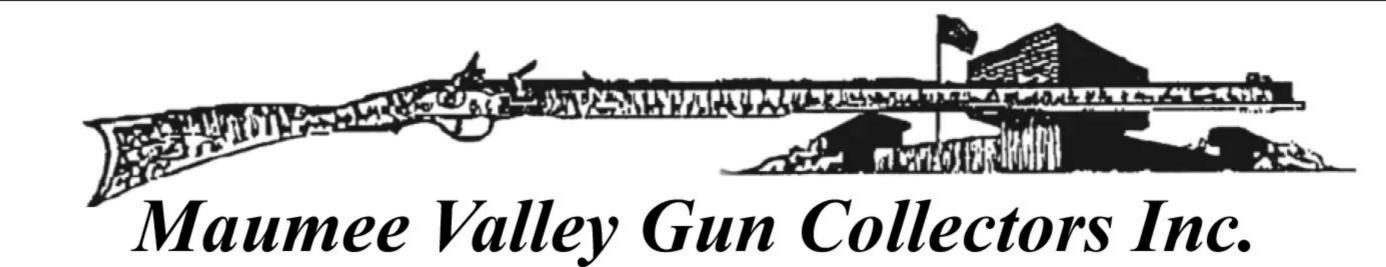
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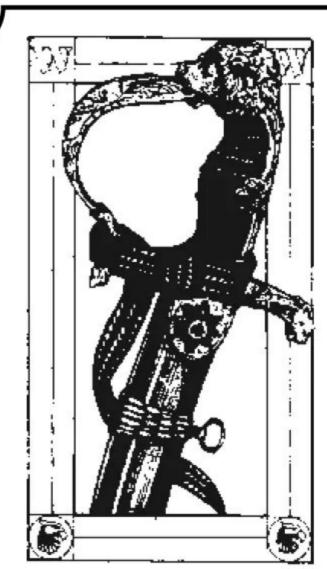
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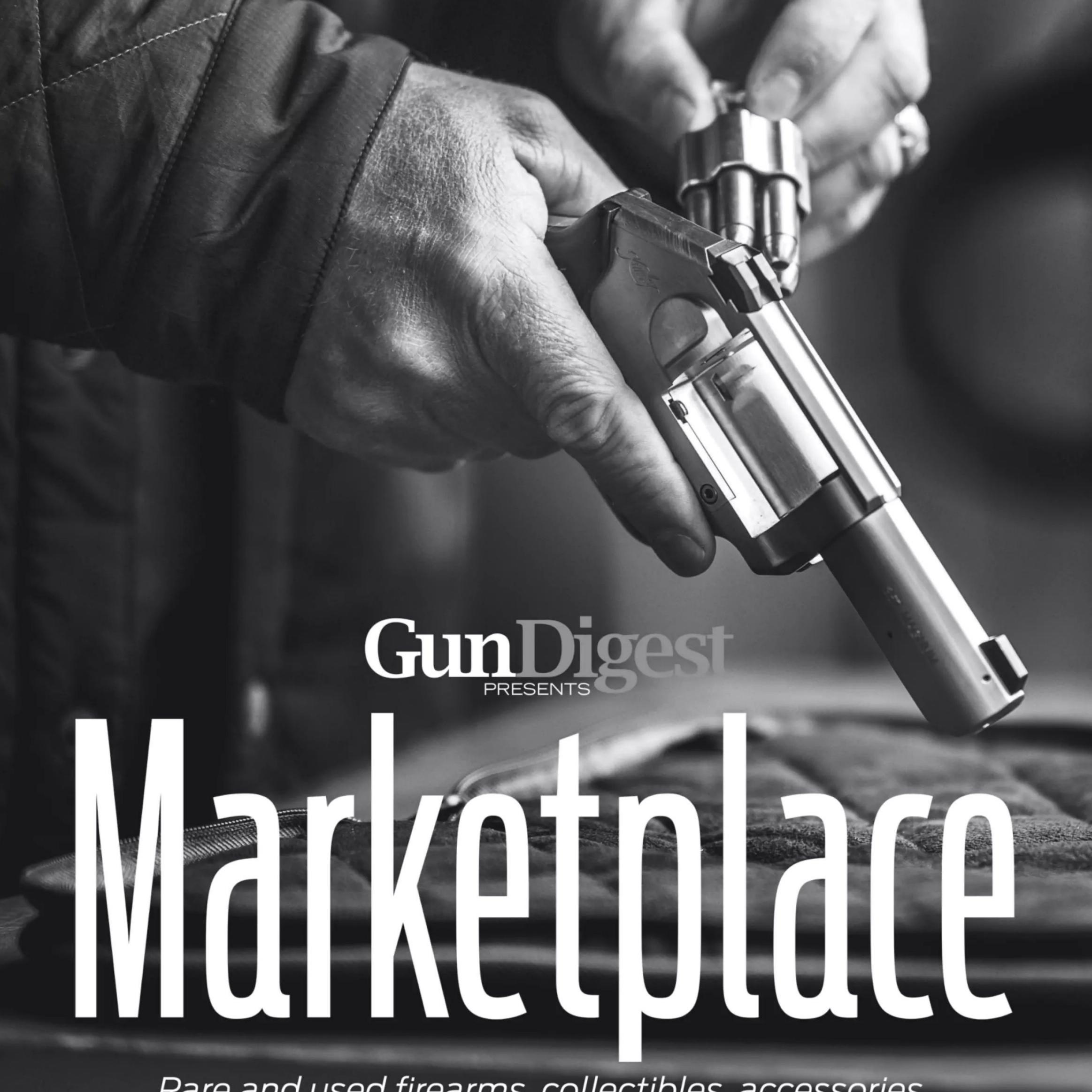
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- 6-T Charter Arms .45 ACP "Pit Bull Model" Double Action Stainless Revolver 2 ½" ribbed barrel with mint bore, 99 ½% original stainless and stainless looking alloy parts, simple top strap groove rear and ramp style front sights, 5 shot special cylinder that uses rimless ammunition without a "moon" clip, mint checkered black rubber wrap around finger groove grips with Charter Arms logos, excellent function, as new in case with paper and lock.... \$395

- 15-T Harrington & Richardson .22 LR Model 199 "Sportsman" Single Action Target 5<sup>th</sup> Variation Post War Top Break Revolver 6" oval barrel with mint bore, flat top front and rear adjustable sights, 97%+ original blue with light muzzle wear, light pin prick pitting on finger rest triggerguard and light staining on trigger and hammer, original large target checkered Walnut one piece grips, excellent function, manufactured 1949 (C&R) ........................\$695

- 16-T Harrington & Richardson .22 LR "Model 199" 2nd Variation Target Top Break Single Action Revolver 6" ovoid barrel with bright excellent bore, adjustable sighs, 98% original blue, light pin prick pitting on hammer and trigger, one piece oversized checkered Walnut grips, front strap shows blue to gray, excellent function, manufactured 1956 (C&R) .... \$625

- 22-T High Standard .22 LR 107 Series "The Victor" Target Auto Pistol 5 ½" slab side barrel with mint bore, adjustable sights integrated into the ventilated, grooved aluminum top rib, 97%+ original blue on barrel and slide, matte finish on frame with stippled front and back strap, checkered grips with left side thumbrest, gold plated adjustable trigger, safety, slide release, magazine release, comes with one 10 round magazine with green polymer follower and red polymer base, push button barrel release, barrel factory drilled and tapped to accept barrel weights, (no weights present), nice super looking and functioning "Victor" ....... \$675
- 23-T High Standard .22 LR "USA Model H-D" <u>U.S. Property Marked WW-II Training</u> Auto Pistol 4 ½" heavy barrel with mint bore and lightly marked "property of U.S.A." on top, fixed sights, early style blue finish has been re-blued with a slight loss of sharpness on frame legend, still nicely marked "Property of / U.S." on frame, excellent function, excellent hard rubber grips, original 2 tone magazine shows same refinish blue as gun, made in 1942 (C&R) ..........................\$695

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- 34-T Smith & Wesson .38 S&W "38 Safety Hammerless 4th Model" Top Break Revolver 4" ribbed barrel with poor pitted bore, fixed sights, little or no original finish just smooth unpitted gray metal, excellent S&W logo checkered black hard rubber grips on round butt frame, grip safety auto ejection and double action all work fine, made around 1905 (C&R) ..... \$165

#### **CENTERFIRE RIFLES**

- 43-T Chilean 7.62 NATO "Model 1912-1961 NATO" Bolt Rifle 23 ½" barrel with good strong bore, 50% thinning blue on most smaller parts with gray receiver and bolt, matching numbers on most parts (bolt, stock, etc.) nice Chilean crest on receiver along with "1912-61/NATO", good solid but well dented matching stock with sling swivels, old leather sling, and smooth steel buttplate, works fine, cartouche on stock "1918" but difficult to make out (C&R) . \$595

- **46-T French 8mm Lebel "Model 1892/16" Berthier by Chatellerault Bolt Carbine** 17 3/4" barrel with fair pitted bore, 60% original blue going gray, factory carbine ladder sight graduated to 2000 meters, mismatched on bolt, (5) shot conversion on action, good original buttstock with matching number and original leather sling in side mount swivels, upper wood is poor with multiple cracks and small chips missing, import marked on barrel, a decent looking carbine that looks like it has seen a war or two (C&R) ................................\$395

- 57-T Russian / Tula Arsenal 7.62x54R "Model 91/30" Mosin Nagant Bolt Rifle 30" barrel with good pitted bore, 97%+ arsenal finish, protected front post sight, adjustable rear sight graduated to 2000 meters, barrel marked with Tula arsenal mark, date "1925", receiver marked with importer mark and serial number, straight grip hardwood stock and handguard, handguard shows finish wear, all matching numbers, manufactured 1925 (C&R) ...............\$765
- **59-T Spanish Mauser 7mm "Model 1916" Bolt Rifle** 22 ½" barrel with good, lightly pitted bore, 90% arsenal blue showing brown patina on barrel, bayonet band, barrel band/sling swivel, factory sights, receiver shows two "XX" marks, Walnut straight grip stock with a crack along the top of wrist, steel buttplate, excellent function, manufactured 1930 (C&R) .... \$325
- 60-T Springfield 30/06 "Model 1903" Pre WW-I Bolt Rifle 24" barrel with poor dark, pitted bore showing no rifling, low (4) digit serial number on receiver, 30% original blue, rough deep pitting near muzzle with "SA" over "ordnance bomb" over "1905" date just visible, stock has been cut to a sporter configuration and still has original smooth "trap" style steel buttplate, all milled parts on what is left, parts or display for very low serial number (C&R) ........ \$595

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#### **RIMFIRE RIFLES**

- 76-T Mossberg .22 LR "Model 380" Butt Tube Feed Auto Rifle 20" barrel with excellent bore, 98% original blue, factory open sights and grooved receiver, excellent Walnut pistol grip stock with black plastic triggerguard showing a break at rear screw, excellent function . \$195

- 85-T Remington .22 S, L, & LR "Model 572 / Fieldmaster" Pump Rifle 21" barrel with mint bore, 98%+ original blue, factory open sights plus grooved receiver, excellent figured dark Walnut pistol grip stock with a few minor dents and a checkered logo plastic buttplate, matching serrated pump handle, made in 1969, excellent function (C&R) .........................\$485

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- \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* 93-T Savage .22 S, L, & LR "Model 29B" Pump Rifle 24" barrel with excellent bright bore, 95%+ original blue with a small spot of pitting on barrel and a pencil line scrape on left side of takedown receiver, very nice lightly figured dark Walnut pistol grip stock, serrated pump handle and serrated black hard rubber buttplate, factory open sights added white line spacer at butt, excellent function (C&R) ......\$485 94-T Sears, Roebuck & Ted Williams / Sears / Ithaca .22 LR "Model 340.530430 / Single
- Shot Lever Carbine 18" barrel with bright excellent bore, 90% original blue with scattered pin prick pitting, 97% enamel finish on action, lever and barrel band, blonde colored checkered Elmwood straight grip stock and forend wood, manufactured 1969-1976...... \$265
- 95-T Weatherby .22 LR "Model XXII" Clip Feed Auto Rifle 24" barrel with mint bore, 97% original blue, front sight has a raised post with brass bead, open dovetail rear sight slot, mounted on factory grooved receiver is a high quality "Nichols" 4x32mm scope with "wide view" optics and duplex reticule with crisp clear glass, Walnut pistol grip stock with cut checkering, Monte Carlo, cheekpiece, sling swivels and factory logo rubber buttpad, stock has white line spacers on Rosewood forend tip and "white diamond" insert pistol grip cap, stock shows dings and dents from field use, one factory magazine, excellent function ............ \$725
- 96-T Weatherby .22 LR Model MK XXII Clip Feed Auto Rifle 24" barrel with mint bore, 98%+ original blue, front raised ramp (no hood), rear open folding leaf sight, grooved receiver, skip-line checkered Walnut pistol grip Monte Carlo stock with cheekpiece, and Rosewood forend tip, pistol grip cap and factory logo rubber buttpad, factory sling swivels, comes with one original magazine, Italian manufactured 1964-1971 (C&R) .......\$700
- 97-T Winchester .22 LR "Model 63" Grooved Receiver Butt Tube Feed Auto Rifle 23" barrel with mint bore, 98%+ original bright blue, factory open sights plus grooved receiver, figured Walnut pistol grip stock with a small chipout at toe, made in 1958 (last year of production), looks and functions as new, collector quality (C&R) ......\$1275
- 98-T Winchester .22 LR "Model 63" Butt Tube Feed Auto Rifle 23" barrel with mint bore, 98% original blue, factory open sights, very good+ dark Walnut pistol grip stock with some field use nicks, dings, and scrapes (nothing serious), excellent function, made in 1956 (C&R) .... \$985
- 99-T Winchester .22 LR "Model 63" Butt Tube Feed Auto Rifle 23" barrel with mint bore, 99% original bright blue, factory open sights, mint figured dark Walnut pistol grip stock, looks and functions as new, made in 1951, collector quality (C&R) .......\$1195
- 100-T Winchester .22 LR "Model 74" Butt Tube Feed Auto Rifle 24" barrel with mint bore, 95%+ original blue, factory open sights, excellent dark Walnut pre-war style pistol grip stock with just a few field use dings, made in 1941, excellent function and good looker (C&R) .......\$285
- 101-T Winchester .22 LR "Model 74" Butt Tube Feed Auto Rifle 24" barrel with mint bore, 98%+ original blue, factory open sights, excellent dark Walnut pre-war style pistol grip stock with just a few field use dings, added sling swivels, made in 1942, excellent function and good looker (C&R) .......\$355
- 102-T Winchester .22 LR "Model 77" Clip Tube Feed Auto Rifle 22" barrel with mint bore, 99% original bright blue, factory open sights, grooved receiver, early style action with bolt hold open button, minty dark Walnut pistol grip, lightly figured stock with logo plastic buttplate, looks and functions as new, collector quality (C&R) ......\$395
- 103-T Winchester .22 S, L, & LR "Model 69A" Clip Feed Bolt Rifle 25" barrel with excellent bright bore, 96% original slightly faded blue, factory open sights, dark figured Walnut pistol grip stock with minor field abrasions, (5) round clip is a high quality reproduction, works well but stock buttplate is missing (C&R) ......\$195
- 104-T Winchester .22 S, L, & Extra Long "Model 04" Single Shot Bolt Rifle 21" barrel with good strong but pitted bore, factory open sights, traces of original blue on otherwise smooth gray metal with little or no pitting, very good dark Walnut straight grip stock with field use dents and scrapes and well worn but original logo hard rubber buttplate, excellent function and nice representative sample (C&R) ......\$225
- 105-T Winchester .22 S, L, & Extra Long "Model 1904" Single Shot Bolt Rifle 21" barrel with very good strong bore, little or no original blue with most metal having a smooth gray with brown spotting, original open rear sight and replacement bead front sight, very good original straight grip Walnut "Perch belly" stock with a rusty and pitted crescent steel

#### **SHOTGUNS**

- 106-T Coast to Coast Stores (Mossberg) 12 Gauge "Model CC660 "Master Mag" Pump Shotgun 22" smooth bore barrel with 3" chamber and fixed cylinder choke, 95% original blue with anodized receiver showing some scrapes, "Mossberg" marked barrel, very good Walnut pistol grip stock with impress checkering and serrated plastic buttplate, excellent function and a nice riot or slug configuration ......\$215
- 107-T Fox by Savage 12 Gauge "Model B" Side by Side Shotgun 28" raised rib, (2) bead barrels with 2 3/4' chambers, improved cylinder and modified fixed chokes, and excellent bores, 98%+ original blue, single trigger, ejectors, excellent pistol grip stock with impress checkering, full beavertail forend and serrated plastic buttplate, looks and functions as new (C&R) .... \$565
- 108-T Harrington & Richardson .410 Gauge / 12mm Single Shot Top Lever Shotgun 26" plain barrel with mint bore, 97% original slightly faded blue, 97% original case color with a fine peppering of finish, excellent Walnut pistol grip stock with smooth steel buttplate have
- 109-T Iver Johnson .410 Gauge "Champion Model" Single Shot Shotgun 26" plain barrel with excellent bright bore, 90%+ original faded blue, very light strike of manufacturer's information, top of barrel is labeled "410 bore-barrel and lug forged in one" very good+ Walnut pistol grip stock with "owl head" Iver Johnson logo hard rubber buttplate, excellent function (C&R) .......\$310
- 110-T Mossberg 20 Gauge "Model 500C" Pump Shotgun 22" vent rib (2) bead barrel with 3" chamber mint bore and "Accu choke" screw in modified choke, 99% original blue/black finish, top of receiver drilled tapped and plugged for scope rail, synthetic checkered black

- 111-T Remington 12 Gauge "The Sportsman / U.S. Property Marked" Auto Shotgun 20" riot barrel with excellent bright bore, 2 3/4" chamber and marked "Cyl" choke, 95% original fading blue, receiver is marked "U.S./ordnance bomb/military finish", barrel is marked "U.S./ordnance bomb" lower tang of triggerguard is marked "AHP", very good Walnut pistol grip stock marked "FJA" and "crossed cannons ordnance wheel", serrated Remington logo buttplate, matching forend has a few short cracks at receiver, very nice looker and all correct (C&R) ........... \$1225
- 112-T Remington 12 Gauge "Model 870 Magnum" Pump Shotgun 30" plain barrel with mint bore, 3" chamber and fixed full choke, 95% original blue spoiled by spotty pitting especially on left side of receiver, excellent Walnut pistol grip stock with impress checkering, grip cap, logo vent rubber pad, and matching pump handle, excellent function, made in 1973 (C&R) ... \$385
- 113-T Remington 20 Gauge "Model 870" Pump Shotgun 21" vent rib barrel with mint bore, 3" chamber and improved modified screw in "Rem choke", 98%+ matte blue original finish, minty laminate wood pistol grip stock with Remington logo solid rubber buttpad, looks and functions as new .......\$595
- 114-T Remington / Baikal 12 Gauge "Model SPR310 Spartan Sharpes" Over/Under Shotgun 28 ½" vent rib barrels, 3" chambered with full and improved cylinder screw in choke tubes, 98% original blue, engraved silver receiver, single trigger, auto ejectors, minty checkered Walnut pistol grip stock with logo vent rubber buttpad, nice quality looks and functions as new .......\$445
- 115-T Savage / Fox 20 Gauge "Model BSE-C" Side by Side Shotgun 28" vent rib barrels with excellent bright bores, 3" chambers and fixed full and modified chokes, 98% original blue, (2) bead vent rib, single trigger, auto ejectors and all excellent functioning, very good Walnut pistol grip stock with impress checkering, grip cap, checkered black plastic buttplate, and full beavertail matching forend, wood shows an old repaired broken out piece behind boxlock receiver (broken out piece is fairly good size and shows an old poor re-glue), nice looking and pre-1968 made (C&R) .......\$695
- 116-T Savage / Sun City Machinery 12 Gauge "Model 320 Stevens" Pump "Security" Shotgun 19" barrel with mint bore, 3" chamber and fixed cylinder choke, 99%+ original matte blue, brass bead front sight plus factory drilled tapped and plugged receiver for optics mounting, mint black synthetic prominent pistol grip stock with swivel "eyes" and black solid rubber buttpad, as new in box ......\$220
- 117-T Savage / Sun City Machinery 12 Gauge "Model 320 Stevens" Pump "Security" Shotgun 19" barrel with mint bore, 3" chamber and fixed cylinder choke, 99%+ original matte blue, brass bead front sight plus factory drilled tapped and plugged receiver for optics mounting, mint black synthetic prominent pistol grip stock with swivel "eyes" and black solid rubber buttpad, as new in box ......\$220
- 118-T Stevens 12 Gauge "Model 235 External Hammer" Side by Side Shotgun 30" raised rib barrels with very good but pitted bores, 2 3/4' chambers and fixed modified and full chokes, 70% faded graying and browning original blue, just traces of case color, double triggers, extractors, very good Walnut pistol grip buttstock with flat cut checkering and nice large "S" Stevens logo hard rubber buttplate, excellent function, shows field use and a crack down middle of the splinter forend (C&R) ......\$315
- 119-T Stevens 16 Gauge "Model 5100" Side by Side Shotgun 28" raised rib (2) bead barrels with excellent bright bores, 2 3/4" chambers and fixed cylinder and improved cylinder chokes, 98%+ original bright blue and case color, (2) trigger, extractors, minty Walnut pistol grip stock with dark color, cut checkering, semi-beavertail forend and serrated hard rubber buttplate, excellent function, made around 1936 and looks near new overall (C&R) ...... \$435
- 120-T Winchester 20 Gauge "Model 50" Auto Shotgun 28" barrel with bright excellent bore, 2 3/4" chamber, fixed modified choke, single silver bead front sight, 85% original blue thinning to brown and gray with high edge wear along receiver, checkered Walnut pistol grip stock and forend wood shows wear, original Winchester buttplate, excellent function, manufactured 1956 (C&R) ......\$495
- 121-T Winchester 12 Gauge "Model 12 Trap" Pump Shotgun 30" ventilated rib barrel with mint bore, 2 3/4" chamber, fixed full choke, twin silver bead sights, 98% original blue showing light scratches, custom shop Myrtle checkered stock and extended forend, stock sports an oversized pistol grip and semi rollover cheekpiece, forend shows a small 2" section of lighter color, black rubber recoil pad, 14 3/4" L.O.P., offset Winchester proof mark on barrel and receiver, serial number range falls in the 1964 clean up range and probably a "Custom Shop" special order, excellent function and super looking, manufactured 1964 (C&R) ............ \$925
- 122-T Winchester 12 Gauge "Model 12" Trap Deluxe (Pre 64) Pump Shotgun 30" vent (Simmons) rib barrel, 2 3/4" chamber, fixed full choke with excellent bore, rib is bent slightly just being mid bead sight, white bead front sight, silver mid bead, 98% on both Simmons blue barrel and original Winchester blue receiver, deluxe checkered Walnut pistol grip stock and forend white line spacer on pistol grip cap and brown rubber Pachmayr recoil pad, 14 1/2" L.O.P., manufactured 1951 (C&R) .......\$925
- 123-T Winchester .410 Gauge "Model 41" Single Shot Bolt Action Shotgun 24" barrel with good lightly pitted bore, metal is mostly un-pitted gray/blue/brown, factory rear open sight and bead front sight, good dark Walnut one piece pistol grip stock with serrated black plastic replacement buttplate, 2 ½" chamber with full choke, works fine (C&R) .......\$285
- 124-T Winchester .410 Gauge "Model 41" Single Shot Bolt Action Shotgun 24" barrel with a fair pitted bore, fixed full choke, 2 2/1' chamber, fixed sights, 90% original blue with areas of blue to brown at contact points, smooth Walnut pistol grip stock with dings and dents showing throughout, one 2" crack just below handle, Winchester hard rubber buttpad, manufactured 1920-1932 (C&R) .......\$395
- 125-T Winchester .410 Gauge "Model 42" Pump Shotgun Factory New Stripped Receivers no barrel, no wood, no internal parts, just an as new blued receiver with slot extension for a vent rib on top and the fastening threaded "tail" for stock installation, all machine operating completed on this 1958 made receiver (1958-1962) production, have 2 (C&R) (7357) ......\$395 each

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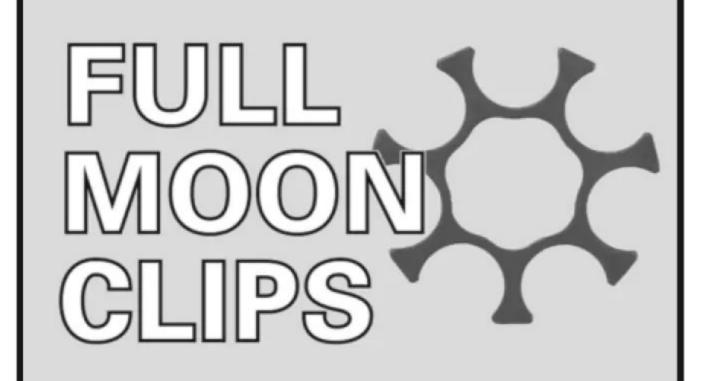
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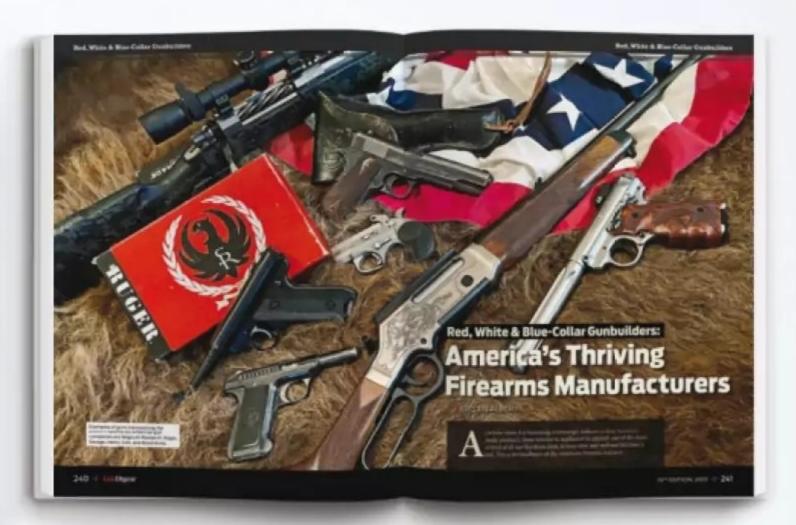


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#### **RANGE BAGS**

When it comes to range bags, I think there are two types. The first is what I call an "everyday" range bag, and it contains the shooting accessories that are necessary to make my range session successful. My everyday range bag contains a notebook, pens and markers. It's also where I keep my ear and eye protection, target posters and small stick-on targets.

Inside, you'll also find some general first aid items such as Band-Aids, bee sting neutralizer, ibuprofen and a tourniquet. And, very importantly, it also contains gun care and cleaning products like Rem Oil and a collection of common tools I need to conduct field maintenance on firearms. You could just call it my shooting toolbox.

I recently visited Federal for the launch of their new 7mm Backcountry cartridge and learned they have a cou-

ple new range bags that'll work splendidly as a range toolbox. Their Top Gun Range Bag retails for \$54.99 and is 16 by 9 by 9.5 inches in size. This padded, rugged fabric bag has a zippered external pocket and two mesh pockets to shove gear in, and it also has a padded shoulder strap and a removable internal divider. It's capable of holding all the range *tools* I need.

Similar in design, and for those who like things a bit fancier, Federal's Premium Range Bag is a bit larger and is made of 18-ounce waxed canvas. It retails for \$159. If you drive a Mercedes-Benz or a Land Rover, Federal also makes a range bag to fit your lifestyle. It's made of American bison leather and will be right at home with your Purdey shotgun or Westley Richards safari rifle. It sells for—are you sitting down?—\$430.

The other type of range bag is what I call the gun and ammo bag. The only

purpose it has in life is to safely transport handguns and/or ammunition to the range. It can be exactly like your everyday range bag but could also be different, so you don't get them confused. The guns and ammo range bag I use is from 5.11, and it's their 50-liter Range Ready Trainer Bag. This is a bag made of 600D polyester that has lockable zippers, a carry handle, a removable shoulder strap, and it's fully padded. It'll tote more handguns and ammo than you can probably carry.

#### **GUN CASES**

It's easy to transport handguns in a range bag, but not so much with rifles, shotguns and carbines. For those firearms, you'll need a dedicated case. Hard cases are cool but unwieldy and heavy; I like soft cases for trips to the range. Federal offers long-gun cases that sort of match the price point and style of their range



bags. Their affordable Top Gun series of long-gun cases retail for only \$29.99, and their Premium Scoped Rifle and shotgun cases retail for just a shade under a hundred bucks. If you can afford the Bison leather range bag and want a long-gun case to match, Federal's bison leather scoped rifle and shotgun cases retails for—are you still sitting?—\$450. You'd look super cool pulling that gun case out of your Bently Roadster.

I own and use one of the Federal Premium Scoped Rifle cases and like it. But I also own several of Galco's Field Grade Zippered long-gun cases. Galco constructs these cases out of khaki cotton duck, lines them with acrylic fleece, and they have a generous outside Velcro pocket. They also look sharp because they have a rich dark Havana leather trim. They come in three lengths, and I've taken them to Africa on multiple safaris. At \$237, they're a bit pricey but do a great job of protecting your rifle.

Hard cases are great for airline or extended travel, but for short trips to the range softs cases are much more manageable and convenient. They are also a great way to protect a rifle inside a hard case when traveling by air or car.







Federal's Top Gun Range Bag and Top Gun Scoped Rifle Case.

You need a range bag for your guns and ammo, but you also need a range tool bag for all the other gear and gun care items you need at the range.

FEDERAL DIL

The ideal case for a traditional scoped rifle is not necessarily perfect for a carbine for which you likely have a collection of magazines and other accessories you want to keep with it. I've found that 5.11 offers a wide variety of cases, and their LVC Rifle Bags come with shoulder straps, a large accessory pocket, and in a variety of lengths. They retail for around \$130. It's worth noting that 5.11 also offers more conventional single and double rifle cases equipped





If you must transport paper targets to and from the range, the Thompson Target, Target Taxi is ideal. with internal and external MOLLE panels so you can attach other 5.11 pouches for magazines or gear. These cases are well padded and constructed of 600D polyester.

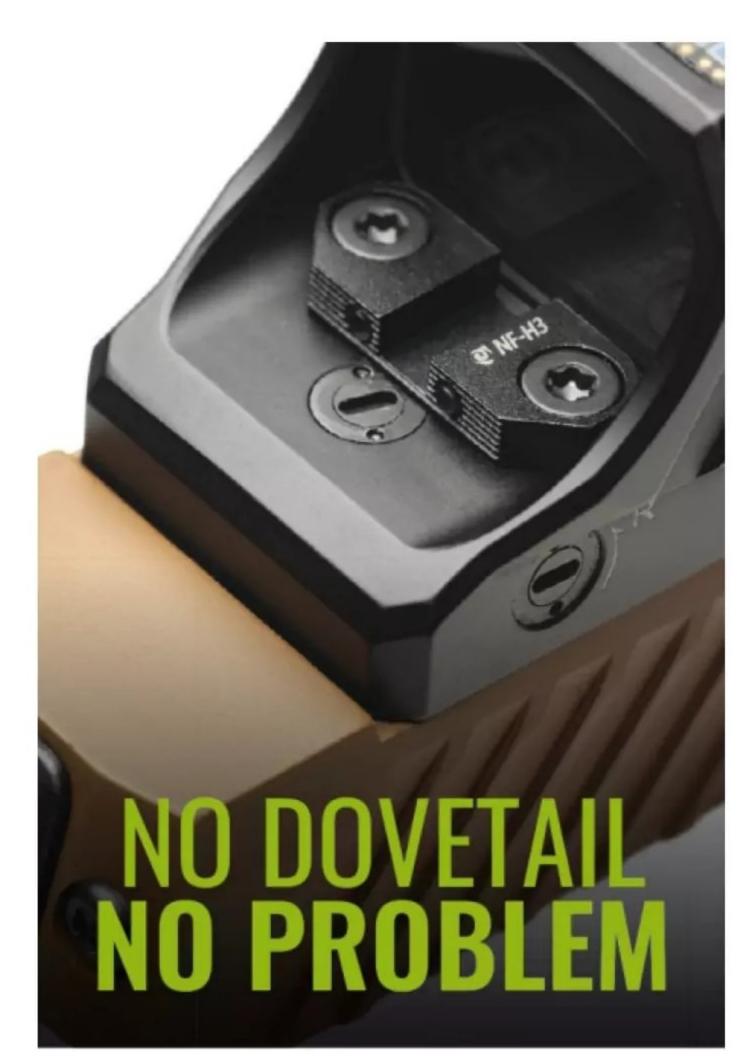
### **THE TARGET BAG**

You've probably never heard of a target bag, and I'll admit that until last year I hadn't either. Most of the paper targets I use are from Thompson Targets, and, last year, Jessie Thompson sent me a pack of one of my favorite targets they

Thompson Target, Target Taxi.









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make, but in the box with the targets was a large but flat zippered bag called the Target Taxi. This waterproof bag will hold a bunch of 19x25-inch targets and has two internal dividers to keep targets organized. At first, I thought it a bit foolish, but I eventually realized that not everyone has a range out their back door like I do, and they must drive to and from a range. If you're a serious rifle shooter you probably like to bring your targets home for further analysis ... or to facilitate comprehensive record keeping. The Target Taxi retails for \$34.99 and is a great range accessory.

Shooters spend a lot of money on guns, and a lot of time and money on trips to the range. To get the most enjoyment out of those trips, you need to make sure you have the gear and tools you need, and that you can get your guns there and back without damage. It might be painful to purchase range bags, cases and cans of Rem Oil, but it's all part of being a gun owner.

Don't be that guy at the range with all his stuff crammed in a cardboard box and grocery bags. You might think that's how us hillbillies do it, but we're a bit more refined than that. **GDTM** 

### ANOTHER KIND OF BAG

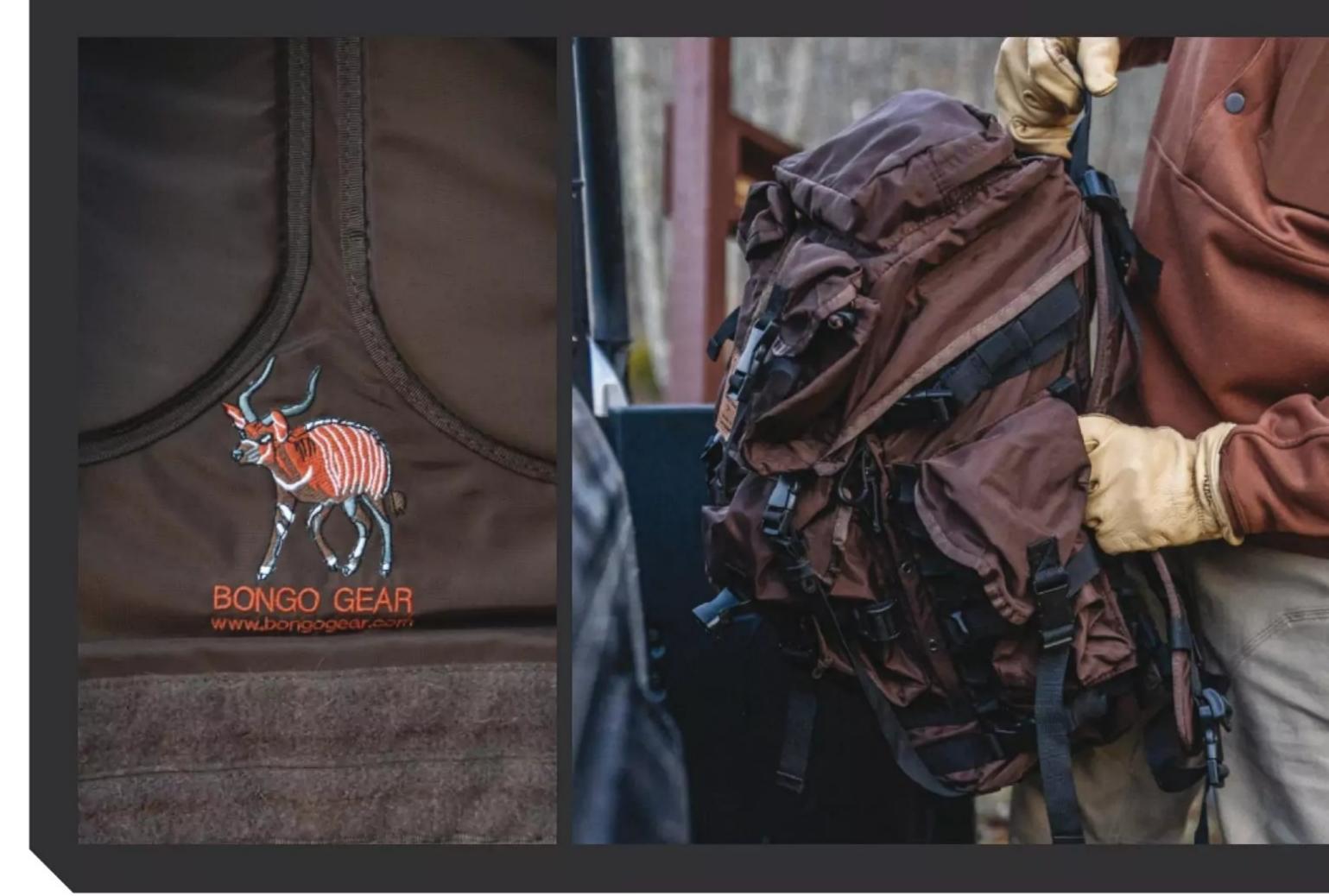
Gun guys use range bags, but serious gun guys have another kind of bag, some call it their "go-bag" and others will call it a "SHTF bag." Regardless, it's a bag that contains the stuff you want with you when all hell breaks loose. Some will keep it in the closet, others will keep it in their trunk or behind their truck seat. I might have found the best go-bag that's currently available, and it's called the Becker Patrol Pack.

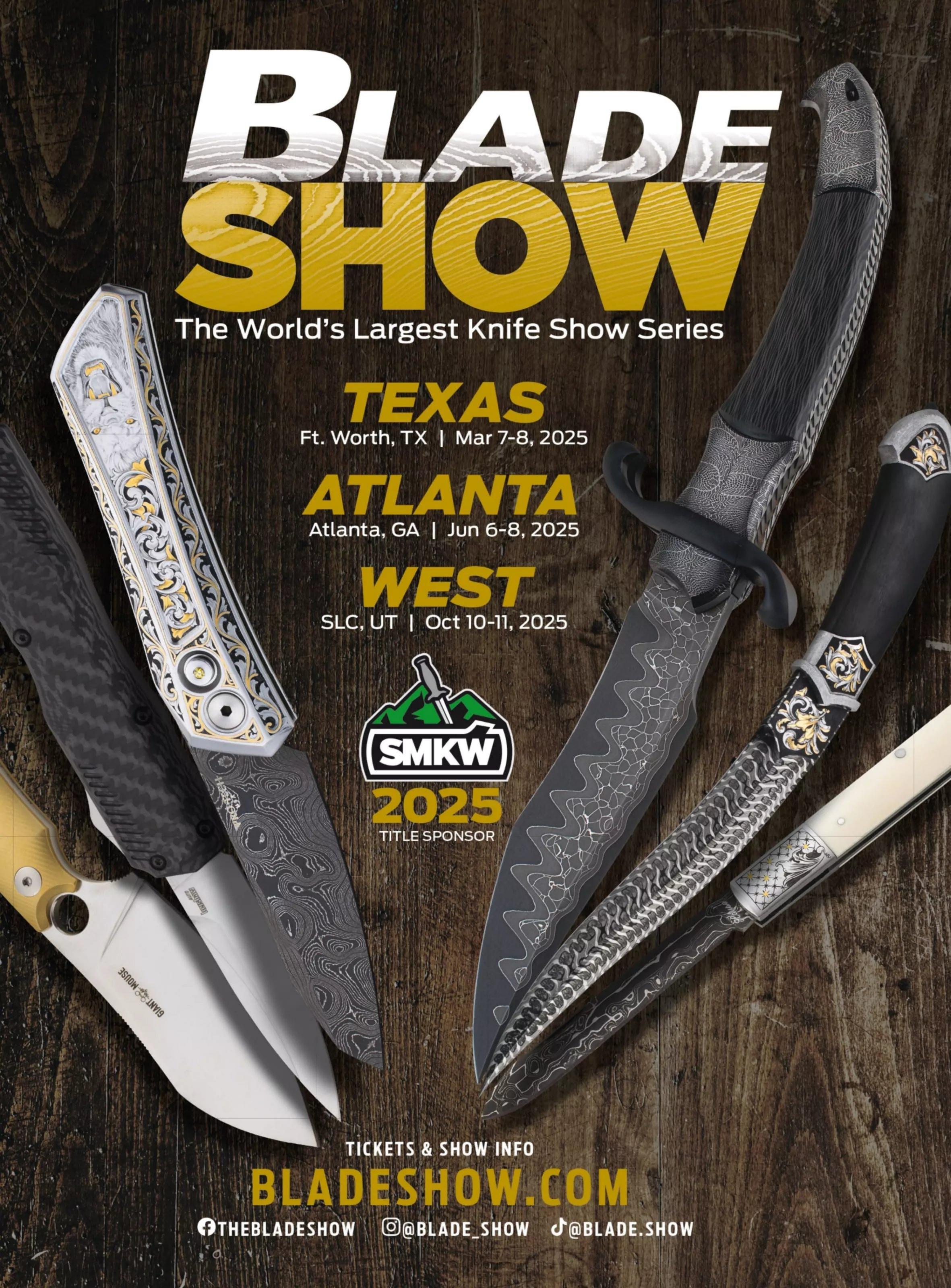
The Becker Patrol Pack is legendary. Ethan Becker developed it in the 1980s for some of his friends who were Vietnam combat veterans. Over the years, it's been manufactured by several sources, and currently it's available for \$285 from Bongo Gear.

This pack is made for rugged use with plenty of pockets inside and out to carry a 50-pound load. Every feature is crafted with carry comfort, convenience and quick access in mind. It has a map pocket in the inside flap and pass-through tunnels on outside pockets. Bongo Gear has updated the original design to include enlarging some of the compartments, replacing the LCE webbing with PALS webbing, added cinch straps, a storm collar on the main compartment, and an



integral padded back panels. The features are truly too numerous to cover in anything other than a short novel. If you can't get what you need in this pack, you probably don't need it.

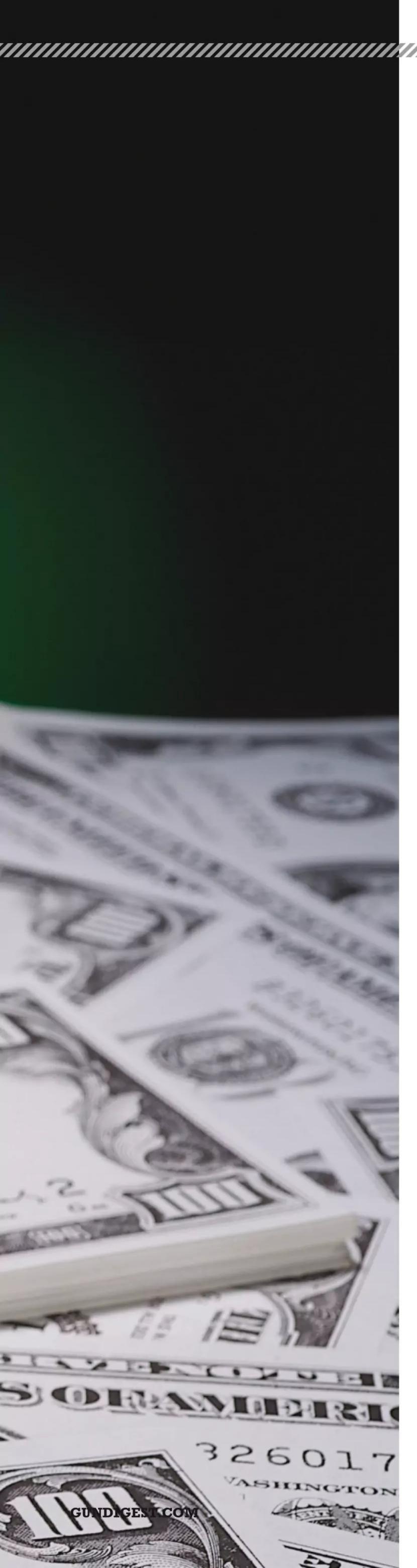




# MAYYOU VS. SHOULD YOU?

The decisions you make in the moments following a self-defense shooting will define the rest of your life.





AUTHOR'S NOTE: I am not a lawyer, and the following should not be considered legal advice. You should always seek the guidance of an attorney in your area, one who is conversant with the selfdefense laws and the legal ramifications of the affirmative defense in court, before you make any legal decisions. There are criteria by which you might be judged in your actions, and I highly recommend that you take advantage of any courses that deal with the legalities of self-defense in your jurisdiction.

n the world of defensive shooting instruction, there is always the "what if" discussion: "What if this happens? Is it legal to shoot someone?" These kinds of hypothetical questions are a traditional part of internet gun forums, to the extent that many of them have sub-forums just for such discussions.

Even in courses devoted to selfdefense law, much time is spent examining whether you may or may not legally shoot someone. How close does someone need to get before shooting is allowed? What kinds of weapons constitute a threat that would excuse shooting? Big attacker versus small one? Multiple attackers versus one? Young versus old?

Don't get me wrong; all these questions are valid, and the answers are essential to understanding the application of law in self-defense cases. Knowing legal concepts such as the affirmative defense and its burdens on you as a defendant in court is a vital part of your defensive training.

It's also critical you understand that shooting an attacker may very well lead to their death. While you never, ever shoot with the intent to kill, you do shoot to stop someone from killing you. Very often, the result of that fight-ending action is the attacker's death. This reality makes the decision to use your gun a

very (pardon the pun) grave one: You may end up justifiably taking the life of another human being.

### **JUST BECAUSE YOU MAY ...**

From a philosophical standpoint, our laws recognize the reality that sometimes it's necessary to shoot and possibly kill someone to save your life or the life of another innocent person. That's the basis of the affirmative defense, which itself is the foundation for any claim of legitimate self-defense: Yes, you shot them, but you had an excusable reason for doing so.

In other words, there are situations under the law where you may shoot someone.

That doesn't mean you always should, however. Regardless of any local requirements for you to retreat unless otherwise unable, shooting someone should be reserved for those situations where you really need to: when there is no other recourse.

That isn't a defeatist attitude, nor am I saying that you must cower in fear. It's an acknowledgment that shooting another human being—even a lifetime criminal who has done no good in society—will change your life. It will cost you money, time, reputation and friendships. A criminal defense might cost you hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Even if you're cleared of criminal

"Shooting another human being—even a lifetime criminal who has done no good in society—will change your life. It will cost you money, time, reputation and friendships. A criminal defense might cost you hundreds of thousands of dollars."

Make sure you're the first to call 9-1-1, whether you shot or not.





If you're the defendant, this is probably how it seems your testimony is being evaluated.

charges, the attacker's family might decide to press a civil suit against you, which is a common happening in to-day's world. Again, think tens of thousands of dollars at a minimum for your legal defense fees.

Shooting someone, therefore, should always be reserved for those situations where it's necessary. How do you know it's necessary?

In the legal portions of many self-defense classes are taught such concepts as ability, opportunity, jeopardy and preclusion—the criteria by which the use of lethal force is justified. You need to know those things ahead of time to fully understand where you're allowed to use lethal force and where you aren't.

That kind of legal analysis is not something you're likely going to have time to do during an attack, however. Instead of focusing on whether you may use lethal force in the heat of action, I believe it's better to focus on whether you need to.

It's possible, perhaps even likely, that when you really need to shoot, there won't be enough time to run through

the legal analysis that answers the question, "May I?" Your attacker appears suddenly, you see a known and articulable threat to your life, and respond appropriately. That's the very situation for which our laws are made: when your life is in immediate and otherwise unavoidable danger, and you must make a decision now.

Knowing ahead of time the kinds of attacks for which lethal force is appropriate, and deciding under what circumstances you would and would not shoot, will lay the groundwork for responding efficiently and appropriately.

Don't misunderstand. You may be legally allowed to do so at that point. The totality of the circumstances may be such that, as the old saying goes, there isn't a jury in the world that would convict you. You may have met all the legal criteria. None of that means you should exercise your trigger finger unless you need to. The question you should be asking yourself when reaching for your revolver isn't "may I shoot this guy?" but rather "do I need to shoot this guy?" If you have time and the presence of mind

to consider that question, the answer is "probably not."

It illustrates why a class in the legalities of lethal force is so essential.

### THE COURTROOM DOWNSIDE TO "MAY 1?"

One of the problems with focusing on the "May I" rather than "Do I need to" question comes when that jury starts looking at your case. There have been court cases where someone was legally allowed to shoot their attacker (or at least believed they were legally justified), but the jury looked askance at their decision.

Focusing on the "May I?" question tends to look very much like searching for loopholes or legal technicalities to get a guilty person off. Whether that's right or valid is a discussion for another book, but in those cases where the shoot decisions weren't clear-cut, the defendants had a much harder time (sometimes requiring more than one trial).

As I see it, it's a lot easier to defend the claim that "I needed to, and here's why" than it is to defend "the law says I could, so I did." That's why I focus on "should" rather than "may."

### **COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS**

One comment I frequently hear when talking about the legal aspects of selfdefense is the idea that someone who has been involved in a "clean" or "good" shoot doesn't have to worry because their innocence will shine through to protect them.

I have a bridge I'd like to sell you if you believe that.

The trouble is that neither you nor I, nor the investigating officers, get to decide what's "clean" and what's not. That's not to say that the police can't choose to drop an investigation due to overwhelming evidence or lack thereof—they certainly can—but not every self-defense case is absolutely clear-cut. There are many instances of legitimate defensive shootings where the evidence wasn't unequivocal (those situations are occasionally exploited by politically motivated

prosecutors).

Ultimately, it's only the trier(s) of the facts—the jury or the judge in a bench trial—who can definitively declare your case to be clean or not. In my state, a Grand Jury makes the first decision, and if they say it isn't "clean," it then goes to trial, where you have the opportunity for a jury of your peers to make the final decision. At trial, someone else will be scrutinizing your acts, and you'll be paying a lawyer a vast sum of money to present your case in a favorable light.

If you remember nothing else, remember this: what looks clean to you or me may not look that way to a person who doesn't understand self-defense. Even if you explain it in detail, they may still not understand, especially if they're weighing your explanation against someone else trying to convince them of the opposite.

Noted defense attorney Jim Fleming was fond of saying that self-defense is determined by inches and seconds. What seems perfectly fine to you may

be interpreted entirely differently by people looking at those inches and seconds in detail and with the dual luxuries of time and undivided attention.

### **AFTER YOUR EARS STOP RINGING**

After the incident, you need to articulate why you did what you did. This point is where your education in selfdefense legalities becomes crucial, so you understand why the law allowed you to respond with lethal force.

Whether you shoot or not, you must make your own call into the 9-1-1 center as soon as you can. Though it's not legal proof of innocence, investigators often take the stance that the first person to call in is the victim. This status tends to influence opinions throughout the justice system.

This maxim is particularly true in those cases where a gun was drawn and, for whatever reasons, was not fired. The bad guy gets to a phone first and says you assaulted them with a gun; minutes



"How you interact with the police after you've been involved in a shooting, how you articulate why you did what you did, and how well the forensic evidence is preserved will all inform the jury about whether you were justified or not. It's in your best interest to not screw any of that up."

later, your call comes in, and you say they attacked you with a rock. Which of you is more believable at that moment?

Call 9-1-1 and describe your address and important landmarks. Then say that you need the police, that you were forced to shoot someone in self-defense, and that the attacker is down and needs medical attention. Then, describe yourself: height, weight, clothes and distinguishing features. That's so that officers will be able to instantly identify you, the victim when they get on the scene.

When the police arrive, make sure that you're not holding your revolver in your hand! Either holster it before they see you or put it down—cylinder open—and step away. The last thing you want is an officer to get out of their car at a shooting scene and see you holding a gun. They don't see the halo we all believe we wear; they see a person with a gun and a body on the ground leaking bodily fluids. It's not a situation where you want to be mistaken for the attacker.

Tell the officers that you were attacked, that you were forced to shoot in self-defense, and that you will "sign the complaint" (the legal version of "I'll press charges"). Be sure to point out any evidence (attacker's weapon, signs of a scuffle, indications on your person that you were assaulted, etc.) so that it isn't missed in the investigation. (Or so that it doesn't magically stick to an accomplice's fingers and be taken from the scene. It happens.)

Make sure the officers know who can corroborate your story. Point out any witnesses. People tend to wander off, particularly if they're of the "I don't want to get involved" mentality.

Once that's done, it's time to exercise your right to remain silent. In other words, stop talking. Don't give any more detail about how the incident happened or why you did what you did. Human memory is fragile, especially amid a traumatic incident, and you want to avoid saying anything that might be used against you later. You might think you've made an innocuous comment, which later proves to be a significant point of contention when it doesn't precisely match the objective evidence or eyewitness testimony.

A good course of action is to say something like, "I know this is a serious situation, and you'll have my full cooperation as soon as I've had a chance to speak with counsel. I'm sure you can appreciate the gravity of my position." This is likely to be pretty close to what those same officers have been taught for those instances when they are involved in an on-duty shooting and serves as one more indication to them that you are, in fact, the innocent party.

This procedure ensures that you've given them the vital information they need to start their investigation while at the same time you've exercised (and protected) your rights against self-incrimination.

How you interact with the police after you've been involved in a shooting, how you articulate why you did what you did, and how well the forensic evidence is preserved will all inform the jury about whether you were justified or not. It's in your best interest to not screw any of that up.

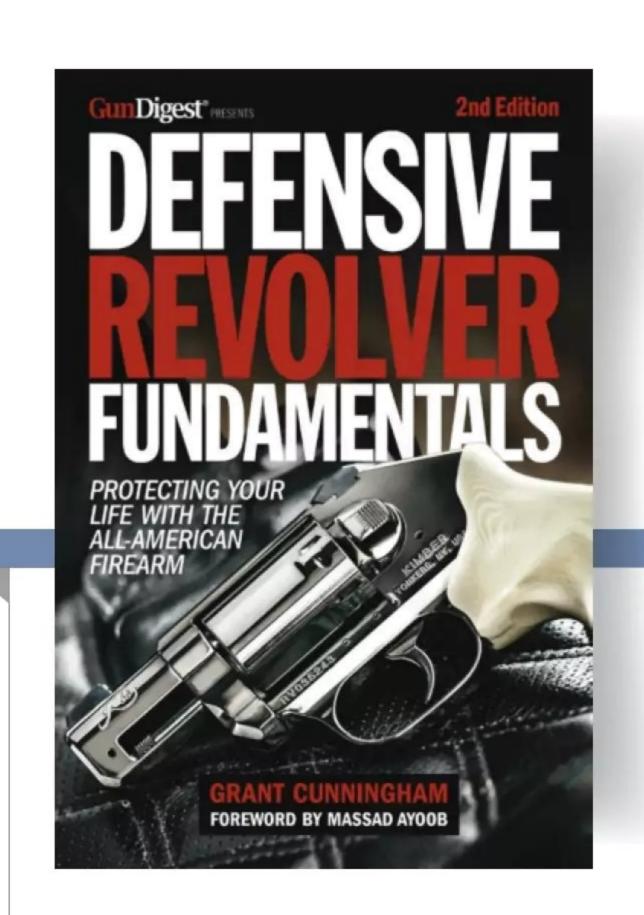
### **USE EXPERT RESOURCES**

I'll repeat what I said at the top: I

strongly recommend that you get appropriate instruction in the legal aftermath of defensive shootings. The premier source for training in the judicious use of lethal force is the Massad Ayoob Group, which sponsors classes all over the United States.

Famed instructor Massad Ayoob travels the country teaching what is probably the best course available on the legal issues of self-defense. Called MAG-20, you can find the schedule at massadayoobgroup.com

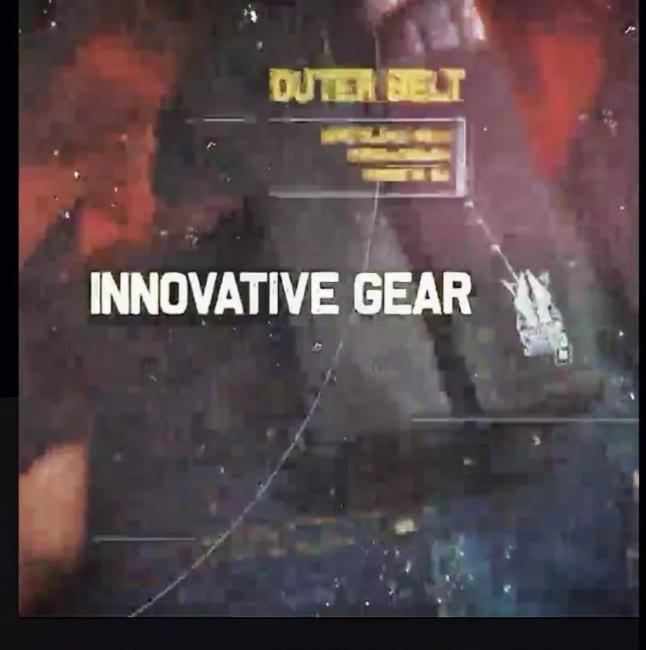
(On a personal note, I consider MAG-20 to be so important that I suggest everyone who even contemplates using a gun for self-defense take the course, even before they take a "shooting course.") **GDTM** 



This article is but a single chapter from "Defensive Revolver Fundamentals: Protecting your life with the all-American firearm." If you own a revolver, you need a copy of this book. Visit GunDigestStore. com and search "Defensive Revolver."













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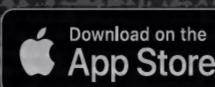


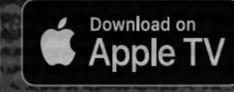


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