

# THE DETECTIVE GATZETTE

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# Battle of the Snubbies - The Colt Agent Takes on the New Kimber K6xs

By William Bell

It started in 1927 when Colt Patent Firearms introduced their iconic Detective Special. A marvel of marketing, the “Dick Special” was simply a D-Frame Police Positive Special with a standardized 2-inch barrel chambered in .38 Special (and for a time .32 and .38 New Police). It was all steel and in the 2” configuration had an overall length of 6.75” and an empty weight of 21 oz. Of course, it immediately caught on with detectives, investigators, and agents of all stripes, plus “private eyes.” Colt collaborated with Alcoa Aluminum to produce an alloy for a frame that would stand up to the pressures generated by the .38 Special cartridge. In 1950, Colt debuted the Cobra; essentially the Detective Special with an aluminum frame that shaved 6 oz. off the empty weight. Another aluminum-alloy Colt appeared in 1955 and was called the Agent; it had an empty weight of 14 oz. Colt had standardized on the D-Frame grip frame size in the 1960’s so the changes in the height in the various versions was dictated by the length of the wooden stocks. The wood stocks of the Detective Special extended beyond the bottom of the grip frame by 5/8” while the Agents stocks were only ¼” long.

## The Colt Agent Becomes my EDC

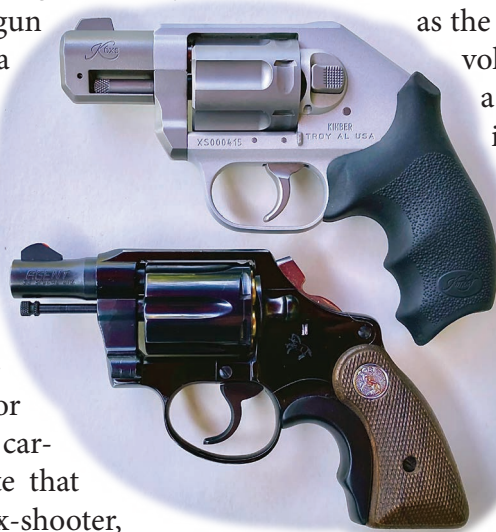
It’s a good thing that I’m in the company of Snub Noir folks, who are people of a like mind. You won’t be surprised that I wanted a small revolver as my EDC instead of a 13-15 shot 9mm pistol. Number one, I cut my teeth on revolvers when I began shooting about 50 years ago and Number Two, I carried revolvers as a law enforcement officer for the first 15 years of my 38-year career so I am very comfortable and competent with them. Number Three, these days given my age and physical condition, I am more apt to carry a gun weighing 18 oz. loaded, rather than a loaded 9mm weighing 28-32 oz. It’s a back/hip thing. I also find the revolvers rounded contours make it more versatile for different carrying modes. While I usually carry my little sixgun in a OWB pancake-style holster, I also use pocket carry and in rare cases, an ankle rig. These carry modes all seem to work better for me with a revolver. We’ll not get into cartridge capacity, but statistics indicate that I’m in pretty good shape carrying a six-shooter,

plus I always pack at least one full Speed Strip.

For a number of years, I was happy with a 5-shot “Airweight” J-Frame. I then tried the new steel-frame Cobra that Colt trotted out in 2017, but a loaded weight of some 27 oz., it put me off a bit. Maybe if they had made a REAL Cobra, my search would’ve been over. Then right before Christmas a few years ago, I went into an LGS and there in a display case was a Colt Agent in like-new condition. I looked it over from stem to stern, examined the bore, chambers, and tried the action, then I fondled it a little more. Merry Christmas to me, I left the shop with the Agent in a small gun rug! When I got it home, I checked the serial number on the Colt Manufacturing website and found that it was made in 1972. So, I had one of the last Agents made before Colt switched over to the heavy full-shrouded barrel with a sloping ramp front sight, and wrap-around wood stocks. All I added at this point was a B.K. Grips T-grip adapter. I didn’t want to carry +P ammunition in this gun, so at first, I loaded it with vintage Federal Nyclad cartridges with 125 gr. HP bullets at standard pressure. Later, I switched to Georgia Arms Ultimate Defense snub loads, with 148 gr. wadcutter bullets. To make my Agent more suitable for pocket-carry, I bought an extra hammer, sent the hammer and revolver to a custom gunsmith friend, had him de-spur and install the hammer on my Agent. I was happy with this wheelgun; it was a six-shooter rather than a 5-shooter, and I felt sufficiently protected; it shot well, pointed naturally, and gave me some nostalgic vibes. It rode in my pocket or on my belt daily until just recently.

## Enter the Kimber K6xs

In 2016, Kimber announced the K6s, it was billed as the world’s lightest 6-shot .357 Magnum revolver at 23 oz. It was stainless steel, had a 2-inch barrel and a concealed hammer inside its oddly-angular frame. Instead of a fixed rear sight cut into the top-strap of the frame, it had a black-colored fixed sight, mounted in a dovetail, with 2 white dots on either side of the square sight notch. The front sight was a black post with a white dot. Interestingly, the cylinder had “flats” instead of flutes for added strength. Over the years Kimber has made several versions; some with 3 and even 4-inch



barrels, plus models with exposed hammers (DASA) and even adjustable rear sights. The one that really piqued my interest was just introduced at the 2023 NRA Annual Meeting; that would be the K6xs.

The K6xs (XS stands for extra-small) is basically the K6s, but with an aluminum alloy frame. Said frame, with some metal removed from the ejector rod shroud and behind the trigger, plus with a cylinder having flutes instead of flats, has reduced the empty weight to 15.9 oz. Finish on the frame is a silver Kim Pro II and like the original K6s, it has an internal hammer. The barrel, cylinder, crane/yoke, trigger, and push-in cylinder latch are bead-blasted stainless-steel. Another big difference between the K6s and the new K6xs is the rear sight. It is now a fixed notch integral with the top-strap, that's raised slightly at the rear. The front sight is not black like the K6s and has an orange dot at the rear instead of a white one. The grips/stocks are slightly different too. They are Hogue, over-molded black rubber, with "cobblestone" texturing and finger grooves. Longer than the Hogue grips on the K6s 2", they have a "pinky rest," and cover the backstrap. The trigger is about 3/8" wide and smooth-faced; the DAO trigger pull weight is listed as 10-12 lbs., non-stacking. When you pull the trigger, there is a slight catch/stop towards the end of the pull that allows you

to finish the pull in a semi-single action mode. The rear of the cylinder is recessed to enclose the cartridge case heads.

### Range Session

I decided to conduct a shoot-out; my old Colt Agent vs. the new Kimber K6xs. I have now used them both as an EDC and they are comparable in weight and dimensions. I've done this before with original and new versions of the Colt Python and S&W Model 19. For ammunition, I chose Black Hills 148 gr. wadcutter and Remington-UMC 158 gr. RNL cartridges; both standard pressure loads. This would be a mini-test at a commercial indoor range, so it would be simple paper-punching, nothing from the holster or "dangerous" stuff like that.

First, I used oval-shaped bullseye targets at 10 yards; both sixguns loaded with 5 rounds of wadcutter ammo. Shooting was from a sandbag rest, I was seated on a stool, and of course, both guns were fired double action. I fired two 5-shot groups with each revolver. My first group with the Agent was a whopping 3-1/8" and I held on the middle of the target, so my hits went high. The next group, I aimed 6 o'clock of the center and got a more centered group that measured 2-5/8". DA pull weight on the Agent was around 15 lbs. and stacked appreciatively just before the sear released the hammer. With the Kimber, I used the 6 o'clock hold and the first group was a bit high and left, measuring 1-1/2". The second group was larger at 2-6/8". Clearly, the Kimber had the better trigger pull and sights.

Next, I sent a reduced-size "bad guy" silhouette target to 10 yards and both guns were loaded with 5 rounds of the Remington-UMC "Police Service" ammu-

**The Shooter's Guide  
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*A user's guide to the classic S&W carry gun*

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**by  
Stephen A. Camp**



niton. In this instance, I stood up and fired DA, using a two-handed isosceles stance, at a more rapid pace. After the 5 rounds, I reloaded and fired 5 more. The 10 shots with my 44-year-old Colt Agent weren't bad with 9/10 inside the center-mass scoring zone; one shot hit the left hip area. I had four strikes in the center. The "group" as it were, measured 4-1/4". With the Kimber K6xs the shots were more centered, but slightly to the left (my fault) and the group was 2-3/4". With the increased velocity, and heavier bullet, the recoil was more pronounced with the Agent and those checkered wood grips are hard on the palm. The Kimber grips soaked up the recoil and rapid-fire control was much better; as was quick realignment of the sights. Both guns ejected brass with no problem and there were no malfunctions.

### Wrap Up

One last item. After doing some reading and research on .38 Special loads for defense, I decided to ditch the load I'd been carrying in the Kimber K6xs and go to the old FBI cartridge. I'm talking about the 158 gr. SWC-HP +P. I had a partial box of gov't issue Federal Hi-Power and one of Samson (IMI) loads with the same bullet, but these are hotter than the Federal cartridges. I sent an FBI-style target down-range 21 feet and shot 5 rounds of each load, holding dead center, and using the same isosceles stance as before. Only two hits were outside the 10-ring and they were both 9's. I could definitely feel the recoil difference between the Federal and Samson ammo! As I fired round 4 of the Samson cartridges, the cylinder on the K6xs locked up. Turns out cartridge number 5 "jumped" out of the case, jutting out of the chamber mouth. I've never had this happen before, but knew it



could happen with light-weight guns like the Kimber. Looks like I'll pack the Federal ammo!

Hands down, the Kimber K6xs will replace my Colt Agent as my EDC. It's the superior revolver all the way around, plus it's not a collector's item like the Agent. My old Colt had no holster wear until I brought it home, but it does now. If I had to shoot a "goblin," then the Colt could end up in an evidence room for an indeterminate period. The Kimber could too, but they are a bit easier to come by than my Agent. For more information on the Kimber K6xs, go to [www.kimberamerica.com](http://www.kimberamerica.com)

## Inside The Suicide Special Revolver



Bruce T. Varner

For the first time in over 60 years a published study of Suicide Specials. Includes information on many who produced these revolvers.

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# Salsa and the Model 49

By “Pepe” Castillo

Early in my Coast Guard career I did an assignment in Coast Guard Intelligence — the precursor to today’s Coast Guard Investigative Service, or CGIS. It was re-named to differentiate between the operational end of intelligence and the support end which has grown enormously in both size and capability in the ensuing four decades.

Unlike almost all the rest of the Coast Guard who used the venerable .45 of the 1911 persuasion, we used .38 caliber revolvers (as did some aviation and police units). Our issue revolver was a S&W Model 56, a K-frame with a 2 inch barrel, adjustable sights, and a square butt with magna stocks. However, with the requisite permission from the boss, we were permitted to carry our own revolvers, if they fired the issue ammunition — the famed Treasury +P+ load. And of course, we had to pass the normal qualification course with them.

I generally carried a Ruger Security Six with a 2 3/4 inch barrel, or a S&W Model 60 with a bobbed hammer. When I was on stakeouts with some other agencies in the Louisiana bayous, I carried both — plus maybe another one or two...the deep bayous were a long way from arriving help.

Since I was a gun guy, I was always looking and trading and buying and selling. One day I came across a S&W Model 49, one of the Bodyguard series — a blued steel, humpbacked model that was both appealing and repelling at the same time. I wasn’t sure why I felt it calling to me and I still don’t. But call it did, and I was very happy taking it home and putting it to work.

One day, I left it in the office when I went to lunch in downtown New Orleans. We went to Jorge’s, a great Tex-Mex joint that was a little shoddy, but made food good enough to pay what must have been high rent on Camp Street, a mere block and a half from the modernistic F. Edward Herbert Federal Building. There were two distinguishing characteristics of Jorge’s. First, as you walked in, most of the waitstaff disappeared if you looked like you were immigration police. Once you sat down at a table to eat, they eased back in. Second, the salsa would singe your eyeballs. And after three bites your eyelashes were gone. Man was it good stuff!

This day’s lunch was like any other, until I successfully sweet-talked one of the waitresses into sending some salsa home with me. It had been probably six months since I had first starting asking. But their policy had been a

firm no. That day she came out of the kitchen with a baby food jar wrapped in tinfoil and dropped it into my lap. I was in heaven — it was like I had finally talked someone into being an informant and they had just brought me the second set of books that proved the company was cheating the tax man.

I went back to my office which was on the third floor, while the rest of the Coast Guard was on nine, ten, and eleven. Eleven was the very top floor, with a great view of the Mississippi River. Among other duties, CGI was the Coast Guard’s internal affairs. The theory was that people wouldn’t know who came to see us since our floor was so separated from the rest of the Coast Guard in the building.

At my desk I dropped the salsa container into my briefcase and went back to work. At the end of the day, I got my Model 49 and added it with some paperwork to the briefcase and drove through the hourlong traffic to my duplex home in Coast Guard housing in New Orleans East.

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That evening I eagerly took out the salsa and showed it to my wife, proudly describing the successful, six-month-long OPERATION SALSA. Grabbing some chips, I dug in and offered her some. Since our tastes differ, and I had warned her about the heat, she took just a little on her chip. I was not altogether disappointed when she pronounced it too hot for human consumption. Oh well, more for me.

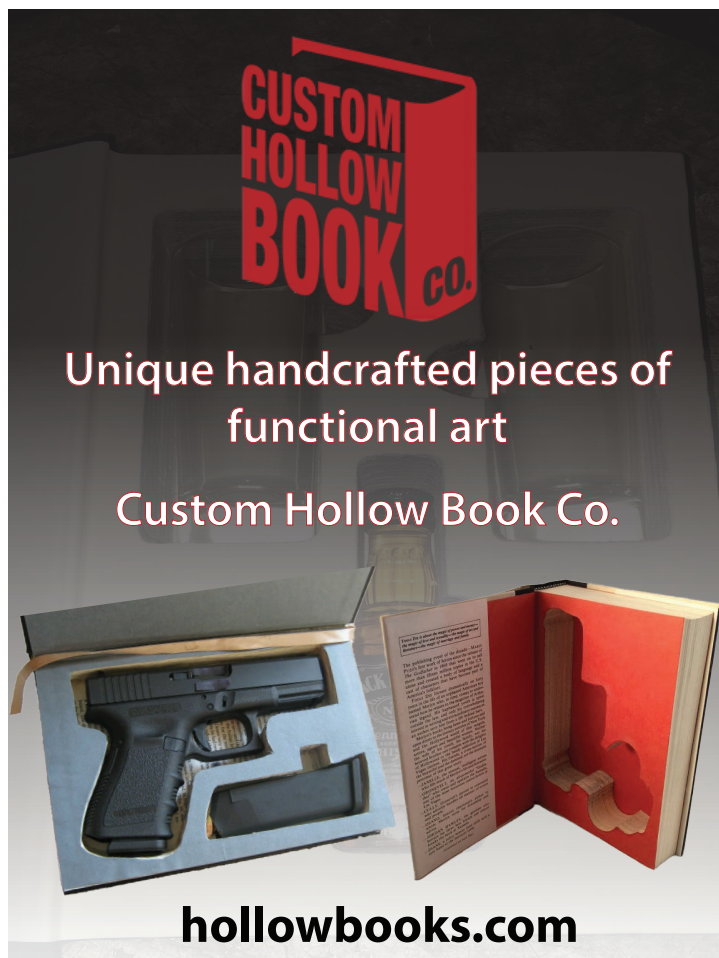
After dinner, I went back to the briefcase to do some paperwork. The humpbacked 49 was still in it. (With no rug-crawling children yet, I did not feel the need for a safe at home.) As I shifted things around, something did not feel right. Salsa had leaked out of the jar and onto the frame of the revolver, just under the cylinder release. It ate right through the bluing and discolored the steel! Worse yet, no type of cold blue or bluing touch-up that I could find would repair the damage!

While I was loudly lamenting the situation, my wife came into the room to find out what was going on. After I finished telling her, she very empathetically (more likely, sarcastically) said, "So you've been putting that stuff into your stomach twice a week? I'll bet that's just great for your insides!" I thought about the wisdom and logic of what she said, and decided she had a point. She often does. I stopped going to Jorge's ... for almost a week.

The Bodyguard recovered from its trauma better than I did. It acted as if nothing was wrong, still shooting where I aimed, but the scar remained. A complete re-blue was out of the question on a lieutenant junior grade's salary with a baby just arrived. And anyway, I had my doubts about just how well a hot bluing bath would work after what I had seen happen to the original, beautiful Smith & Wesson bluing job. I continued to try different kinds of first aid, but nothing helped. Even though I was trying my best, it looked at me accusingly every time I took it out. This time the message it was calling to me was different than when I had first seen it. Now it was saying, "Look what that salsa did to me - think what it's doing inside you!"

That thought preyed on my mind every time I looked at it. I took to carrying my Model 60 with the bobbed hammer but seeing that Stainless Chief's Special made me think of the Bodyguard and why I wasn't carrying it. And soon it became a matter of either the Model 49 or Jorge's remaining in my life. There simply wasn't room for both. I thought again about what my wife had said to me, and what the 49 was reminding me of, and made my decision.

I sure miss that gun... 



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# Knuckle Sandwiches

By Conrad C. Szymczak

## It all Started with Paper

Paper? Rock? Scissors? No, paper rolls. My Uncle Joe was a Cook County Bailiff. He had the Stetson (which I turned into a charm beanie), snub nose .38 & all. I don't know what sort of side hustle he had going on, but it was my job to take 3lb coffee cans full of coins and paper wrap them. A few rolls found their way to my pocket.

At that time in my life, I was being mercilessly tormented by the bullies in my Catholic grade school. Plan A. Say a prayer and hope they left me alone.

Nope, didn't work.

Plan B. I am sure the idea of using these rolled coins as an Instrument of Persuasion came from Uncle Joe who was quite experienced in dealing with court ruffians. Rolled coins add mass and rigidity to protect the bones in your hand and impart a message to ruffians.

My reasoning for carrying that type of Persuader was that Sister Mary Neverlies (name changed to protect the guilty) would understand it was only pocket change I got from my dear Uncle Joe. Not a weapon at all.

As times changed, my oppressors became bigger and stronger as my determination to resist them morphed as well. We will stop here on the weapons I used until my article on Expedient Defensive Weapons comes out in a future edition of the Gatzette.

A step-up weapon from the "something in your hand" is the huge assortment of devices colloquially know as Brass Knuckles. These babies will definitely impart a

message or death knell.

For purposes of this article, I will simply call them "knucks" (not to be confused with my neighbors to the North, "Canuck / Kanuck").

## Design and engineering

Knucks are made of wood, polymer, leather, steel, cast iron, brass, aluminum, or tungsten. They are fabricated by stitching, casting, machining, sawing, and printing. They come in one, two, three, and four finger configurations. The most important factor in useable knucks is fit and finish. They must fit each finger correctly and move smoothly against the skin as there will surely be movement.

## Iteration on a theme

Sap gloves come in various flavors and configurations. You can buy them pre made or find directions on how to make them yourself.

Weighted workout / sparing gloves and 1 to 2 pound hand weights can pack a wallop as expedient knucks.

## History of Knuckles

How far back do Brass Knuckles go back? People might say the turn of the 18th or 19th Century. Ask Robert Escobar and he will place the origin of Fist Enhancers to Greek and Roman gladiators. The Cestus is a glove that was the ancient world's equivalent of brass knuckles. They were made by wrapping leather around lead and adding metal studs to add force to punches.

Bringing us back to the 21st Century melee weapon,



Fist Enhancers: Column 1: Coins & Boxing; 2: Traditional; 3: Elongated; 4: Printed & Tenderizer; 5: Exercise



the knuckle “duster”, why do they call it a “duster”? Traditional designs cause the user to wear the “duster” in a manner which encourages a slightly hooked swing or “dusting” of the target. Trying to wear a knuck on the proximal phalanges for a straight on punch will most likely break some bones on the user’s hand. The safe and effective way to use a knuck is on the middle phalanges. Refer to video “How to wear Brass Knuckles” in the Extras section on the Sunbu Noir website: [snubnoir.com/DG10](http://snubnoir.com/DG10).



Correct grip left, Wrong grip right

### Books

Two excellent books on the subject of knucks are the *History of Knuckle Dusters: The Ultimate Close-Quarters Weapon* by David Grant and *Knuckle Duster: A Guide to Using Brass Knuckles* by Fernan Vargas & James Loriega.

*History of Knuckle Dusters: The Ultimate Close-Quarters Weapon* takes a look at the history and development of knucks in the 20th and 21st Centuries. Grant carefully traces the roots of war in the use of what we think of as Brass Knuckles and their place as an augmentation of fighting knife handles in World War I as a trench warfare melee device and its follow on into WW II.

The more exotic of pistol-knife-knuckle is examined in detail, right down to drawing/patent information. Exotica yes, usability, questionable. My Gramma once said that “anything good for everything ain’t good for nuthin’!” A wise woman she was.

The KO Glove was and still is around but of questionable value in a fisticuffs engagement. It may keep your hand from hurting in a melee, but soften the blow of the user.

I was struck that there were several versions of Survival Tools which enlisted attributes of knucks.

*Knuckle Duster: A Guide to Using Brass Knuckles* is a no nonsense look at the proper utilization of knucks. Fernan & James safety, use of force, reasons to use knucks, some brief history of ancient and current usage, but most saliently the art and techniques of employing knucks in a melee.

As the proverbial ‘cherry on top’ they end with a compendium of knucks in Film and Television.

### Targets

If you want to practice your “Knuck Tai Chi”, a Silhouette Target (USPSA) will do you no good. Knucks, depending upon design, are primarily used for impacting the head.

First thing to check is the fit and finish (F&F) of your knucks. They should not hurt you. Unduly. They should hurt the other guy. You can test it/them (I suggest you use in pairs; I am not referring to ‘pronouns’) on your anvil or vise, but I do not recommend this. They do hurt. A better solution to test F&F is to do some shadow boxing on a tree or wood, such as your workbench (but not the dining room table!).

Once you are satisfied with F&F, I recommend getting a head sized punching bag. Practice weave/bob/footwork. It is all the same as boxing, but deadlier.

If you want more realistic targets, use cantaloupes or small round watermelons. In my opinion the only usefulness of this is to make fruit salad for dinner.

### Reminder

This article is presented for historical and entertainment value. The use of weapons apparently capable of producing bodily harm is regulated by Federal, State, and Local Laws and Regulations. The mere possession of some of these weapons is illegal in certain jurisdictions.

More info at [snubnoir.com/DG10](http://snubnoir.com/DG10) 

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# The Complete Book of Tokarev Pistols Review

By T.C. Fuller

*The Complete Book of Tokarev Pistols* by Cameron S. White is exactly what it holds itself out to be. I would go so far as to suggest that the word “complete” does not do the book justice. It is nothing if not thorough. If you have an interest in these firearms, this book must be given room on your bookshelf.

Beginning in the 1920s, the Tokarev story stretches through to today. The tale is not just lengthy, but really quite fascinating, arching as it does over three quarters of a century and counting. A result of the firearms advancements of the early 20th century, the Tokarev was an early beneficiary of the move by world militaries from revolvers to semi-automatic pistols.

The Tokarev made its way across borders as it followed the expansion of the Soviet Union into eastern Europe and numerous nations across the world. It has been licensed and adopted by many nations, becoming so widespread in its distribution that it is a near universally recognized firearm.

White discusses all this, and more, in his amazingly deep dive into the Tokarev family of pistols. The book is a familiar large format that we often see in books of its ilk, running 8.5”x11”. It contains something north of 1,500 color photographs and illustrations. These pictures cover not only the variety of firearms discussed, but just about every part and ancillary piece you can imagine.

Holsters, magazines, grip panels, seals, disassembly tools, Type 51 versus Type 54 cleaning rods, exploded diagrams of the guns, and photos of the weapons disassembled are to be found here. This book has it all, with detailed explanations and discussions of everything.

For example, there is an entire chapter devoted to a discussion of 7.62x25mm ammunition, complete with pictures of original cartridge boxes, ammunition, and headstamps. Want to be able to tell the difference between Chinese and Polish versions of this ammunition? This is the book for you!

There is in-depth discussion, with photographs of course, of the triggers available on the M57 Commercial Race Gun. Perhaps you want to know about the production figures for the TT33 in 1943? White has that, both planned and actual production numbers. Looking for pictures of holsters produced by Bulgaria for the guns they made under license? That’s here too.

If you are not convinced by the examples noted above that this book is a truly granular discussion of the entire

history of the Tokarev pistols, there is not much more I can do for you. Having done my own fair share of research over the years, I understand just what kind of effort went into making this book and I am impressed. White has really put in the hard yards on this one.

Along the way, he has managed to hang onto a surprising level of readability in his work. If you are not into guns in general, and these in particular, this would be a tough slog of a read. But if you are a gun person, and especially if you are a Tokarev person, reading this book is not just painless, it is fun.

White writes this book for those who really want to know about the Tokarev and in doing so, he hits the ball out of the park. Aficionados, collectors, and regular old gun folks will find this book to be the seminal work on the topic. I doubt anyone will be able to do any better for the next 80 years of Tokarev history. 🤖



# Nagant Shooting Review

By Alban Weber

The Nagant's history is rich and storied. But how does this antiquated vestige of the Russian Empire shoot? The grip is slim and petite yet strangely ergonomic for hands that like caressing a N Frame. The sights are small like most weapons of the era, and the barrel rides high above the shooter's hand. To pull the hammer back to get off a single action shot requires breaking your grip to reach up and pull that heavy hammer back.

There is a reason Stalin's executioner, Vasily Blotkin, used Walthers. Frankly, the Nagant is atrocious to shoot. We can thank the trigger and the gas seal system for this. The only thing heavier than the Cheka's repression is the trigger. Thus, accuracy is terrible. In single action, it feels like pressing your finger against the ruddy bricks of the Kremlin. Like the dreaded knock in the middle of the night on your Moscow door, you have no idea when the hammer is going to fall. Double action is extremely heavy and mushy, and will likely throw your shots, unless your model is well worn in from helping Stalin purge his officer corps.

To put those analogies in numbers and comparison, the single action pull on a Nagant is around 12 pounds. The double action clocks in at 20 pounds. Better start arm wrestling Siberian bears if you aspire to be the Jerry Miculek of Novosibirsk. We can thank the funky gas seal system for that horrible trigger. Plus, the Nagant was initially adopted as a single action only. The double action was an afterthought. But there is a positive aspect of that trigger- it's simple and rugged. Some partisans recount repairing Nagants with hammers. The Nagant is even mentioned in a Yiddish partisan ballad.

The accuracy of the revolver is greatly diminished by this terrible trigger. Fighting the trigger pulls your shots off the bullseye. But the recoil is minimal. The odd 7.62 Nagant cartridge isn't a barn burner- the original loading shoots a 100 grain slug at 1100 feet per second and the modern commercial loadings are much weaker. You're too busy fighting the trigger to feel that little bean fly down the pipe. I do think a suppressor married to the Nagant's gas seal would induce some giggles.



Photograph by Neal Shera

Loading and unloading the revolver is as long as your sentence for subversive activities in Kolyma. Each case has to be ejected one at a time through a loading gate with a flimsy, non-spring loaded rod while you manually index the cylinder. The surplus copper washed steel case ammo has a penchant for expanding and binding up, usually requiring a swift slap on the ejector rod's tiny head. A Colt Single Action Army is a modern marvel compared to this time consuming process. To further frustrate unloading, the ejector rod must be rotated to a precise location to index with the chambers.

I would not want to run dry when engaging Bolsheviks. Unlike a Colt or Smith and Wesson, the Nagant cylinder spins freely. Russian Roulette's origins predate the Nagant, likely with Lermontov's escapades in Chechnya. But as fate had it, the Russians developed the perfect gat for the deadly game. Would I carry a Nagant 1895? NYET! I'd rather dig into a Ukrainian salt mine for a Smith and Wesson Third Model in .44 Russian. But all things considered, the Nagant served the Tsar's call for a rugged, reliable handgun that far outlived his tenure. 🎩

## Cocktail Corner: The Manhattan

By David T. Zeppieri

Recipe:

-2 oz Rye Whiskey

-1 oz Sweet Vermouth

-2 dashes Angostura bitters

Mix together, strain and serve in a cocktail glass.

Garnish with a cherry.

A truly timeless cocktail, the Manhattan is a perennial standby for when a fellow doesn't know what drink to order. With only three ingredients, it's quite easy to prepare at home as well. But don't be fooled by its simplicity. Much like the Martini, a Manhattan benefits from being simple and straightforward.

The combination of Sweet Vermouth and bitters means you can get away with using slightly lower-quality Rye if you don't have any top-shelf booze available. You can even substitute Bourbon for the Rye, but you shouldn't go wasting Blue Label on a sweet cocktail.

One interesting variation is the Dry Manhattan. The only difference is substituting Dry Vermouth for the Sweet. It makes for a completely different, quite potent end result. The Dry Manhattan is definitely a cocktail for drinkers with a seasoned palate, so don't mix one for your ladyfriend who only orders vodka-cranberries at the bar.

As always, remember that alcohol and firearms don't mix. So leave your assorted lead-slingers in the safe before trying your hand at any mixology endeavors! 🎩

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Michael E. Conti

Reviewed by  
Dr. H. Anthony Semone, PhD  
Forensic and Police Psychologist

Forewords by  
Jim Cirillo, NYPD (Ret.)  
Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, US ARMY (Ret.)

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# Citizens Defense Research Contextual Revolver: Fundamental Revolver Skills

By Pat Tarrant

Citizens Defense Research Contextual Revolver: Fundamental Revolver Skills AAR

Caleb Giddings, Instructor

Class description from <https://citizensdefenseresearch.com>

Fundamental Revolver Skills is a 2-day course designed for shooters new to, or somewhat familiar with the lost art of performance revolver shooting. This course is for anyone looking to carry a revolver as a primary CCW, a backup, or just someone interested in revolvers looking to improve their shooting skills.

## Class prep/gear list

This was my first revolver-specific class, and I decided to bring a range of revolvers and gear in order to test a variety of equipment under various circumstances.

**Guns:** There was a wide range of revolvers brought by students that ranged from snub nose .22LR Smith & Wessons (S&W) to 6" .357 Magnum Ruger GP100s, to eight-shot N-frame S&Ws with red dot optics. I personally brought five guns of different sizes. I primarily shot a 2" barreled S&W K-frame 15-4 in .38 Special and a very small 2" I-Frame Regulation Police in .32 S&W Long during the class.

**Gear:** Students brought a wide variety of support gear. Some ran primarily competition-oriented holsters and reload pouches while others ran from concealed holsters including appendix inside the waistband (AIWB). There were a couple students using pocket holsters, myself included. Just about every type of speedloader was used in the class; moon clips, twist and direct load speedloaders, speed strips, loose ammo pouches, and even some fanny packs.

With very few exceptions, all the guns and gear ran well. The students attending were all experienced shooters with military, law enforcement, and open enrollment training and competition experience.

## Training Day 1 (TD1)

The class gathered at an easel at the start of the class where Caleb shared various notes and illustrated several points. He went over his background as a US Air Force instructor and competition shooter, and his journey to his specialization in revolvers. He was also very up front about his position as a marketing executive with Taurus USA. The students introduced themselves and Caleb noted what everyone was planning to shoot during the class. The most common guns were S&Ws in 38 Special.

Caleb then reviewed with the class the Revolver Utility Curve. You can watch his video on Youtube (@Mr-Revolver) for all the details. The gist is that there is a U-curve of revolver utility, or perceived utility, compared to the experience level of a shooter. For new and inexperienced shooters, a revolver is very advantageous for several reasons. Primarily, they are far simpler to verify whether or not they are loaded, very simple to operate, and more difficult to negligently fire than semiautomatic handguns. As a shooter gains experience and ability, the easier to shoot semiauto with higher capacity begins to show real advantages in speed, accuracy, and practicality. Thus, the utility of a revolver appears to dip at the bottom of the U. However, as one gains even more experience or starts to tailor their gun selection to special needs, he or she may see an increase in their utility. Personally, I have found that after years of carrying various sizes of semiauto pistols, I began to find myself leaving my gun at home more and more often. The realities of getting older, having kids, and living in a relatively low-crime area made carrying a semiauto more of a burden that I often just did without. However, after opening my mind to some very experienced people like Darryl Bolke, Chuck Haggard, Caleb, and others, I decided to purchase an Airweight J-Frame S&W and found that with a good pocket holster (or selection of pocket holster, to be honest) I could very easily and comfortably put a gun in my pocket in the morning and carry it all day long with no real interference like I'd have from a couple pounds of polymer and steel behind my belt buckle.



Instructor reviewing the (Perceived) Revolver Curve with students.  
Photo by Melody Lauer, Citizens Defense Research

Caleb continued the lecture portion with a discussion of various sizes and calibers of revolvers along with

what niches they support. We also discussed the myriad of support gear for revolvers to include holster selections, the types and advantages of different speedloaders, ammunition selection, a couple different brands of gear makers, and choices of how to wear support gear.

Next, he discussed various administrative topics. We reviewed the nomenclature of revolver parts and their differences between various brands. Caleb discussed and demonstrated various loading techniques, grip techniques, and different methods of trigger manipulation. He stressed the advantage of a rolling trigger break, smooth and steady pressure throughout the trigger press, versus either a staging trigger press or single action trigger press.

The lecture portion took up the morning portion of the class, which may seem long compared to other classes. However, the realities of revolver shooting and manipulation required a lot of up-front discussion. We came back after a quick lunch, conducted a range safety and medical brief, and set up at the firing line in two relays. We began by dry firing, then a single live round with five dry fire manipulations, and worked our way up to a full cylinder, all the time working on a smooth rolling trigger press. We quickly progressed through a couple different

drills. Caleb had us shoot a lot of Mozambique (or Failure) Drills, firing two to the center mass of the target with a quick follow up shot to the head box.

We then shot a modified version of the Hardwired Tactical Shooting (HiTS) Revolver Super Test on an IDPA target (the normal Super Test is shot on a B8 target). This drill has three stages; six rounds in 12 seconds from 15 yards, six rounds in eight seconds from ten yards, and finally six rounds in four seconds from five yards. This drill was a great chance to work the balance of a smooth and more precise trigger press at longer distance with a faster, but still smooth, press with a firm grip at close range with fast follow up shots.

Towards the end of the day, we worked on various transitions, both vertical transitions (body to head, head to body) and lateral (target to target). We ended the day with a modified Air Force qualification, a 45-round course of fire from the 7-, 15-, and 25-yard lines. Our particular class further modified this qualification course by unintentionally moving the 25-yard line back to about 33 yards. We must have just been that good! Concluding the day, we briefly reviewed what we learned, went over what to expect the next day, and joined up at a local restaurant for a class dinner.

### Training Day 2 (TD2):



*Relay 2 showcasing some of the varied guns and equipment used by students. Photo by Melody Lauer, Citizens Defense Research*

TD2 started out cool and wet. Luckily, several students brought out canopies and most brought rain gear. Caleb brought us to the seven-yard line for warmup drills. After a few drills, we moved to a practice modified Air Force Qualification course. I decided to switch from my Model 15-4 to my 586 L-Comp, thinking of the advantages it had with a fiber optic front sight and fast-reloading moon clips. However, I found that while it had some advantages, my ammunition did not shoot to the point of aim, especially back at the 33-yard line. After a

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very unsatisfying tally of my score, I made the decision to switch up again, but this time to my venerable 1949 vintage I-frame 32 revolver that I'd shoot out of a Mika pocket holster.

This class being "Contextual Revolver," a bit of context was highlighted by Caleb as we lined up to shoot. He said that while people carrying in belt holsters can't walk around all day with their hand on their gun in polite society, someone carrying a pocket revolver can in fact walk around all day with their hand on their gun in polite society, and no one would ever know. Thus, students carrying in their pocket were allowed to start each string with their hand on the gun inside their pocket. In addition to a faster draw, the little 32 was very soft shooting and shot much closer to the point of aim compared to the big 586. On the real qualification shoot, I was able to achieve a passing score with 43 out of 45. The top qual score went to another very experienced shooter using a big N-frame, eight-shot S&W TRR8 with an Aimpoint ACRO red dot sight in a mount custom made for him by Chambers Customs. In addition to bragging rights, the student also was awarded with a very cool prize from Taurus.

After shooting the qualification course we broke for a working lunch and discussed why Caleb chose a modified Air Force Qual. We also got ready to go over intermediate range shooting at 25 yards and the advantages and disadvantages of large versus small revolvers.

As the sky cleared up in the early afternoon, we got to the really fun part of the class, head-to-head competitions. Using C-zone steel targets set up at 50 and 100 ft firing lines, students were split into two lines. As each pair of students came up to the line to shoot head-to-head on steel, Caleb threw in the contextual twist again: based on the type of gun the student had and how it was being carried, the student started with their hands in different positions. Students with large competition suitable guns with red dots might have had to start with their hands above their heads. Conversely, someone carrying AIWB may have started with their hands at their midsection. Once again though, pocket carriers got their unfair advantage (greatly offset by their tiny sights and nonexistent sight radius) of starting with their hand on the gun in their pocket. Several runs were made by each student and pairings were switched up in order to demonstrate how various guns and carry methods compared head-to-head at various distances.

The last shooting section of the class was a head-to-head elimination competition from the 50ft line on steel. Caleb again chose the starting positions of hands based

on gun and carry method, but for the most part hands were much closer to guns than in the previous runs. Like the qualification shoot, the winner of the elimination match walked away with another very cool prize from Taurus. However, unlike the qualification shoot, a pocket snub shooter won the elimination.

We concluded the day by reviewing all that we had learned over the weekend. Each student had the opportunity to highlight things they thought were good or not so good, and were able to offer up their thoughts on making the class better. Caleb was very open to these ideas, and planned to evolve his revolver class (this was only his second Contextual Revolver class). Overall, I found the class to be exactly what I wanted and needed. I have been pocket carrying a snub nose revolver as my primary method of carry for at least a year, but had never taken any formal revolver training. For my needs, small revolvers work really well, and I always have the option to "gun up" to a semiauto if I feel the need. I also benefited greatly from moving away from shooting my midsize guns and concentrating on the snubs on TD2.

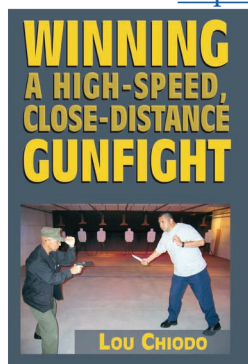
For anyone considering carrying a revolver of any kind, I highly recommend Caleb's class. For a taste of what you can expect, he recently released a video with Panteao Productions available at MakeReadyTv.tv. Shooters on the more experienced side of the utility curve would probably benefit the most from this class. However, even new shooters would find a lot to learn, and Caleb's personality and teaching style is very welcoming to people of all background and skill levels. Special thanks to Caleb for taking the time away from his jobs with Taurus USA and the US Air Force, as well as his family, to come teach us. Special thanks also to Citizens Defense Research and to Green Ops for hosting the class. 🧢

### Contact Info

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Taurus USA: <https://www.taurususa.com/>



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# The Smoke Filled Room

By Doc Hannah

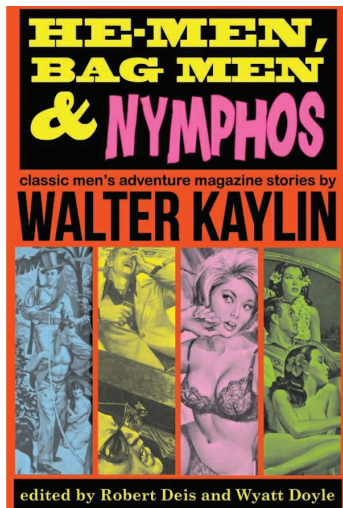
BOOK REVIEW- He-Men, Bag Men, & Nymphos: Classic Men's Adventure Magazine Stories by Walter Kaylin, Edited by Robert Deis and Wyatt Doyle (2013, New Texture Publishing)

I'm always on the lookout for a good book to read on a rainy night, with a good cigar, two fingers of bourbon, and my trusty snub for company. I'm also always on the scout for a good subject to write about in this column. When Michael de Bethencourt asked me to read and review He-Men, Bag Men, & Nymphos: Classic Men's Adventure Magazine Stories by Walter Kaylin, it was like drawing to an inside straight. But would it be a winning hand, or would I fold?

Stick around, and find out.

If you're of "a certain age", you may recall magazines which catered to men's sense of adventure. Rough men and eye-catching women in various states of undress on the covers of Men's Adventure Magazines such as Men, Male, True Action, and the oh-so-provocative Stag, offered tales of derring-do in exotic locales, or gritty stories from America's mean streets, salted with implied (or sometimes semi-explicit) sex. Starting with war, noir, and animal adventure stories in the 1940s, the "Sweats" or "Slicks" genre added soft-core erotica in the 1970s, as its segment of the publishing industry sought to compete with popular adult magazines, while continuing to offer two-fisted action to a dwindling customer base. By 1980, Slicks were on their last gasp, and by 1985 the only remnants of the industry were a few cheap porn rags and Soldier of Fortune magazine.

Robert Deis is the curator of, perhaps, the world's largest collection of classic Men's Adventure Magazines.



He is also the owner of menspulpmags.com, which is dedicated to this dusty corner of the publishing world. With co-editor Wyatt Doyle, he has published several volumes dedicated to the genre, its writers, artists, and themes. I had previously read their first collaboration, *Weasels Ripped My Flesh!* (2013), and was excited to rip like a weasel into its successor, *He-Men, Bag Men, &*

*Nymphos: Classic Men's Adventure Magazine Stories* by Walter Kaylin.

The subject of this book, Walter Kaylin, wrote dozens of stories for Slicks under his own name, and the noms de plume Roland Empey and David Mars. This collection of fifteen stories spans the period of 1956 through 1975. Kaylin's evolution as a writer, and the evolution of Slicks in general, is evident in the progression of stories.

The first, "Snow Job From a Redhead" (1956), is a straightforward noir tale, which hits all the beats: a thug protagonist; a busty redheaded femme fatale; plenty of violence; and an unsurprising, yet satisfying double-cross which sets up the perfect ending for our narrator. Kaylin's 1959 offering, "The Terrible Reward of 'Far East' Harry Wax", takes us to Mongolia in 1923, where the titular Mr. Wax leads a peasant revolt in a country caught between the Chinese, White Russians, and Soviets. In the final chapter, "They Call Him Father Italy" (1975), the title shares space on the cover of *For Men Only* magazine with a nude woman named Sue Anne, "Memoirs of a Super Bowl Hooker", "I Drive A Mobile Massage Parlor", and a tease for the results of the magazine's "Sex Survey". "Father Italy" is a salacious tale of an American GI who services the women of an Italian village with far more gusto than he ever served the US Army.

Kaylin's stories are uniformly gripping, and contain an incredible amount of detail which speak to either scholar-level research, incredibly imaginative world-creating, or both. Deis and Doyle's selection of stories, and their introductions to the volume, make the collection even more enjoyable.

If you enjoy two-fisted fiction, and who among us here doesn't?, *He-Men, Bag Men, & Nymphos: Classic Men's Adventure Magazine Stories* by Walter Kaylin is a must-read. It is available on Deis' website, menspulpmags.com, and on Kindle at amazon.com. You may soon find yourself down a rabbit hole of literature, and loving every minute of it. 🐇

*Doc Hannah earned his name the old-fashioned way as an Army flight medic and medical NCO. Following his military service, Doc had a career as a law enforcement officer and paramedic in the wide open spaces of Nebraska and Missouri. Now semi-retired, he smokes cigars professionally, and writes for fun. His podcast, "I Smoke Cigars and I Know Things", is available on YouTube, Facebook, Stitcher, and Amazon.*

# Hands-On with the Taurus 856

By Erik Nelson

We recently had an opportunity to tear down a Taurus 856 and really get into the guts of the gun to understand how it works mechanically. What we found was a higher-than-expected quality of production and a no-frills, economic design.

The 6-shot, .38-caliber 856 was designed with input from seasoned revolver shooters. The 3" heavy barrel is a great compromise between concealment and power. The front sight is oversized and easy to pick up in shooting. It is also easy to replace with a variety of high-visibility brands like XS-Sights and Ameriglo. If you are transitioning to red dots, the 856 frame comes with factory threads for mounting a small optic. We used the Holosun 507k. The feedback we got from shooting with a red dot was a very useful (if sometimes humbling) training aid.

Right out of the box, the 856 has an excellent factory trigger and action. The mechanism most closely resembles a Smith & Wesson. It ditches the internal mainspring housing for a floating coil spring on the trigger return. It is primarily made with MIM parts, save for the bolt catch and hammer safety. The MIM parts were tougher than we expected while we were cutting and stoning them smooth during our gunsmithing work. This speaks to the evolution of the MIM process in manufacturing (though I maintain it is a ways off from being as good as billet). With an hour or two of work we were able to turn the 856 into a shooter with a reliable, silky-smooth trigger pull that would be suitable for both EDC or IPSC/ICORE competition shooting.

The mechanical accuracy of the 856 is surprisingly good. We were able to comfortably make off-hand hits at a steel IPSC target at 50 yards and it will center punch a B8 target all day at 10 yards with no fuss. The factory DA pull is around 10-12 pounds and the SA breaks at closer to 6lbs. We did not have any trouble with reliability while we worked on the trigger, both in DA and SA modes. The heavy barrel profile kept the muzzle flat and helped tame the recoil. We tried several brands of factory ammunition including Blazer, MagTech, Winchester and some sketchy handloads we found in a forgotten ammo tin. The Taurus ran like a clock with no issues.

There are plenty of aftermarket accessories for the 856. The pinned front sight can be swapped out in a minute with a basic hammer and punch. The grips are compatible with the Model 85 steel frame and the Taurus 605. We tried it with the included rubber grips as well as a

set of G10 grips from VZ grips. For shooters with meatier paws, the VZ grip offers more surface area and better traction. Someone who shoots and trains frequently (1-2 hours a week) will prefer the rubber grips for comfort.

Holsters are a little harder to come by, especially with a red dot configuration. We were able to have ours made locally by HofTac Holsters, based out of Meridian Idaho. The 856 has enough unique design elements that few manufacturers have molds ready to go for the gun yet.

The 856 is meant to be a no-frills, economic option for people who prefer to shoot and train with revolvers. It strikes all the right balances between cost, performance and ergonomics. The red dot mount offers a new way to run and shoot revolvers with accuracy at all distances. The CEO of Taurus, Bret Vorhees, has made it his mission to revive Taurus' brand name. The 856 is proof positive that Taurus' design teams are listening to their customers and producing cost-effective, and functional, firearms well within reach for the average consumer. 🤖



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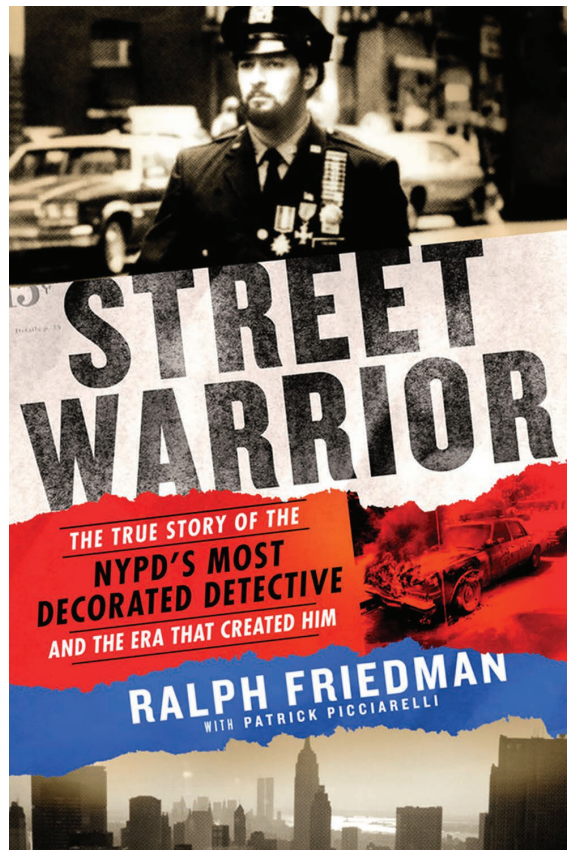


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# Ed Lovette - The Snubby's Greatest Advocate

By McKim Symington

I learned everything I know about DA/SA revolvers from my pal and Snub Noir's staffer, Eddie Lovette. I had worked at Colt's for two years back in the day, but my focus was M16s, not handguns.

Eddie taught a course I took many years ago on guns. He was the main revolver guy along with a big guy named Ron who described the DA trigger technique almost like sexual foreplay. Just coaxin' that cylinder to roll, roll, roll, then bam! Unforgettable.

At the time we were both civil servants working for an Outfit in which most people did not carry regularly, but the Organization's praiseworthy judgment was that we at least needed to know HOW to do it. After 9/11 the approach would become more urgent.

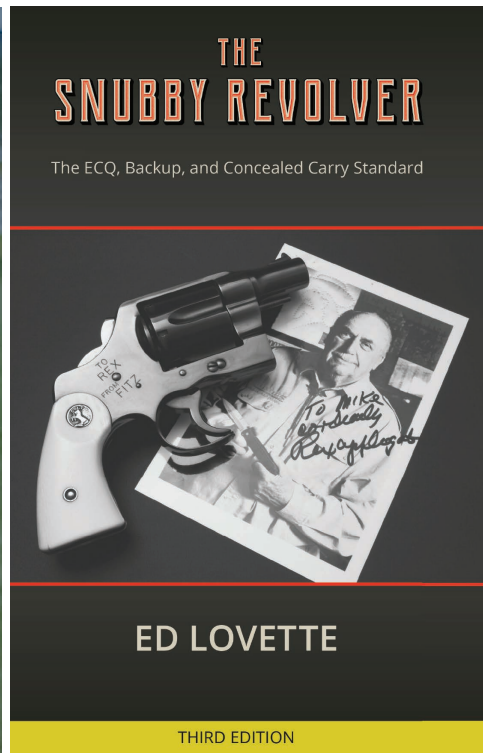
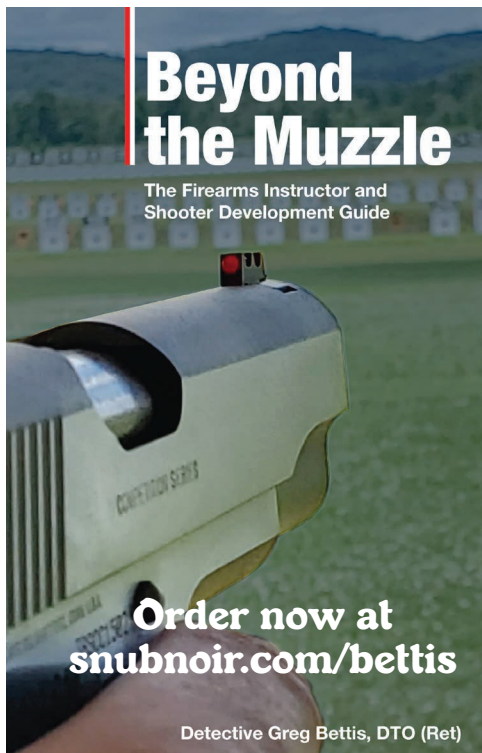
Anyway, we were taught the snubby, fam-fired the pump shotgun, and qualified on a full-sized, classic SA 9x19 pistol. The 9mm was a dream to shoot and its capacity was 14 with one up the spout and 13 in the magazine. Cocked and locked you could chuck it into a briefcase and go about your business. Now that might sound a little dangerous, but that thumb safety wouldn't budge unless you meant it to. We loved that pistol.

Well, Eddie challenged all that. Not just for me but for the whole Organization. What's the best gun?? The one you have with you! Which are you more likely to have, Mr. on-and-off gun carrier---the full-sized 9mm

autoloader or a small snubby, better still a snubby with an alloy frame?! Five instinctive shots versus 14?! Hell, no! But wait a minute. What are you carrying the darned thing for anyway? Dukin' it out and dominating? Hell, no. You are carrying that gun to break contact if things go south in a hurry. No more no less. And you can, like as not, do that with five or six shots. It ain't High Noon--you are getting the hell out of Dodge.

And Eddie's position wasn't just one man's opinion. He researched the issue of practicality, querying people who had operational experience, who could make empirical, informed arguments for and against the snubby. Eddie found he was not alone.

I have to admit, Eddie was right. But I got to witness the hornet's nest that Eddie stirred up. And I have to laugh---it was much more emotional than practical. Not that emotion doesn't count for a lot. We had been issued the 9mm as needed since General Motors was a PFC. It was an old friend. Blued steel and walnut count for a lot and you deny that at your peril. So, organizationally, the primacy of the full-sized, all-steel 9mm autoloader was re-established, confirmed, signed and sealed. We would hang onto that fine 9mm at least for a while. And, as before, snubbies were available. But whatever you say, the snub-nosed revolver's greatest friend and advocate was and is, Eddie Lovette. 🧢



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Lou Chiodo

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-Ed Lovette Author of *The Snubby Revolver*

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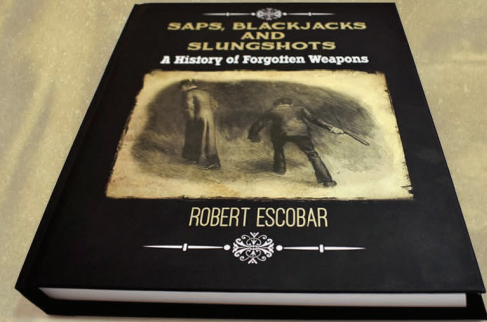


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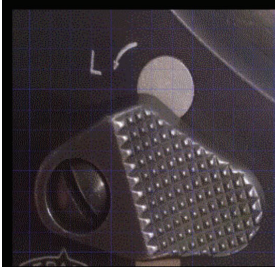
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# Revolver Resurgence

By Jeff Lehman

June 2020 marked the beginning of a second career for Sheriff Tom Kochert of Williams County Ohio. Being that Sheriff Kochert is a retired Game Protector, serving the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for over 26 years and he served his entire career in Williams County, and the fact that I too served nearly 27 years with the Village of Montpelier police department, also located in Williams County, Sheriff Kochert and I were quite familiar with one another. I was the baggage that he brought along with him to the Sheriff's Office where I serve as his Chief Deputy. Being likeminded, and very dedicated to providing the best equipment and training, Sheriff Kochert is insistent in our firearms proficiency and marksmanship.

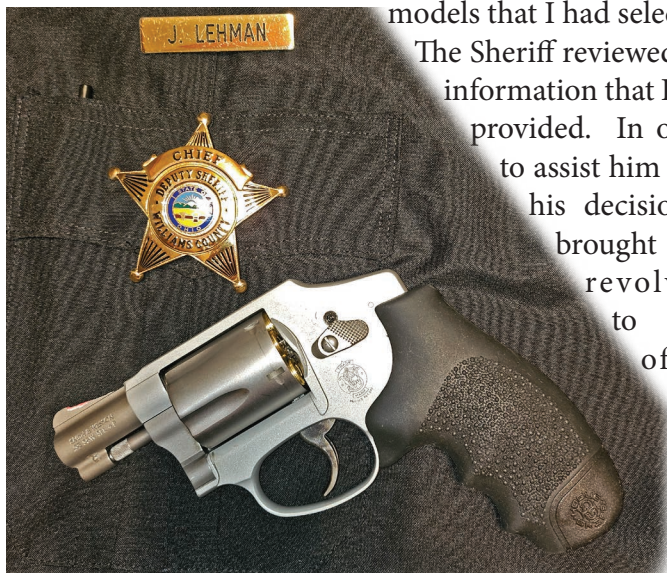
On day I approached Sheriff Kochert with the idea of providing secondary/back-up handguns to the deputies. I started my career in the mid-1980's, when revolvers were the most often carried handgun by law enforcement. The Sheriff was still in the academy when the State of Ohio switched from revolvers to semiauto-pistols. With my knowledge of and experience with revolvers, The Sheriff asked that I select a few models of which he could review and make his selection. Like a kid headed to the candy store, I headed off to my office to conduct some research. I had a few preconceived ideas on what I would suggest. Upon checking price and availability, I selected the Ruger LCR and Smith and Wesson 642 and 638, all chambered for .38 Special +P. Once I had my selection of revolvers for the Sheriff's review and consideration, I was headed back to his office with printed copies of my selections in hand. Ironically, I just happen to own one of each of the models that I had selected.

The Sheriff reviewed the information that I had provided. In order to assist him with his decision, I brought my revolvers to the office and had him

handle them. The Sherriff selected the Smith and Wesson 642. Sometimes good things take time. Dealing with the infamous "supply chain issues" coupled with the fact that other more pressing issues had arisen, and the fact that new primary handguns (Smith & Wesson M&P 9) were purchased and issued for duty pistols, we were finally able to order the revolvers.

In November 2021 we hit the range to conduct training and qualifications with the 642s. Through previous conversations, it was decided that the office would purchase and provide each deputy with a pair of speed strips and an ankle holster. Being that very few of the deputies had fired a revolver, let alone a double-action only, small framed "snubby" this was new, untrod territory for them. Like most everyone who has ever worn an ankle holster, the comments were plentiful. I assured them that they would get used to the feeling. I demonstrated the operation, malfunction drill(s), sighting, and reloading. I stressed the proper technique for the use of the speed strips. By the end of the training the comments about the ankle carry had changed. The deputies had commented that they could barely tell that they were wearing the holster, or carrying the revolver. We have since purchased and issued a nylon, ambidextrous, inside the waistband holster that may double as a pocket, or however else the deputies modify it to work for their needs. The deputies were also provided the option of Hogue grips to replace the stock grips and the option of six different colors of paint to enhance the front sight's visibility.

We have arrived at a year and a half since the 642s were first issued and the initial training took place. Some of the deputies have read "The Snubby Revolver" by Ed Lovette while a few have even volunteered to come to the range during one of my training days. I have been able to work with them on their marksmanship, proficiency, reloading and revolver handling skills. Each session ends with a true marksmanship test. They deputies receive a huge surge of pride and confidence when they ring the steel tombstone target from 50 yards! I tell them that when people comment about a small frame, short barreled revolver only being good for the width of a car or table, and that it is no good for distance shots, their reply should be - "You're absolutely right, you can't, if you don't practice for distance!" The revolver is making a resurgence in law enforcement and our office is just one of the agencies in our area. 🤠



# When Life Gives You Lemons...

By Michael Brady

I went under the knife this summer for significant repairs to my right shoulder. My surgeon said I'd be in a shoulder immobilizer for six weeks and then there'd be eight weeks of physical therapy to restore function. This seemed a fine time to work on my weak-hand skillset. I went looking for a method to recharge my pocket revolvers one-handed, left-handed. The Revolverguy website gave me a starting point with a detailed description of loading a revolver with only the left hand.

First, I worked on my weak hand only marksmanship at three, five, & seven yards. Being strongly right eye dominant I had to stand square to the target and turn my head to the left to align the sights with the right eye. It took several sessions and much dry firing to deliver reliable four-inch groups at close range. I wasn't as fast or as accurate as with my right hand, let alone with two, but I pressed on.

As my left arm would be stronger than my right until I completed PT, I decided I needed a left-handed belt holster. Figured that working with a steel gun fitted with hand-filling stocks and sporting serious sights would make my task easier so I choose to work with my S&W 640-1 Pro Series. The search for leather led me to Don Hume Leathergoods. Their JIT Slide #3 fits J-frames and costs only \$35. The design is simple, clever, and well-crafted plus, being open bottomed, any of my J-frames will fit. It carried tight to the body and was quite comfortable on a Simply Rugged "Real Man's Gun Belt." Until I had both arms to run my reloading bench, I relied on store-bought ammunition for practice. All my J-frames like PMC 38 Special 132 grain ball (38G), which shoots to the sights, kicks about as much as my EDC loads, and Ammoseek helped me find some good prices.



It took plenty of trial and error to adapt to shooting and recharging my small revolvers with only my left hand. After my first five rounds were spent, I stabilized the Hogue hardwood grip against my abdomen and brought my thumb around to press the cylinder latch forward as my middle fingers pressed open the cylinder.



My thumb worked the ejector rod, expelling the five empties as a unit held in an Original Precision moon clip. I stuffed the open, empty J-frame into my front left trouser pocket and reached for the Jetloader tucked next to my wallet in my left rear pocket.





I agree with those who say a 3 or 4-inch barrel would make this practice more stable, but I worked with what I carry.



As the empty loader dropped away, I recovered the gun, pressed the cylinder closed with my left index finger, took a solid grip, and proceeded as appropriate.



It wasn't fast, but eventually it took less time to do it than it's taken you to read about it.

Improvise, adapt, and overcome...and enjoy the lemonade. 🍹

#### Resources

Revolverguy: <https://revolverguy.com/the-one-handed-revolver-reload/>

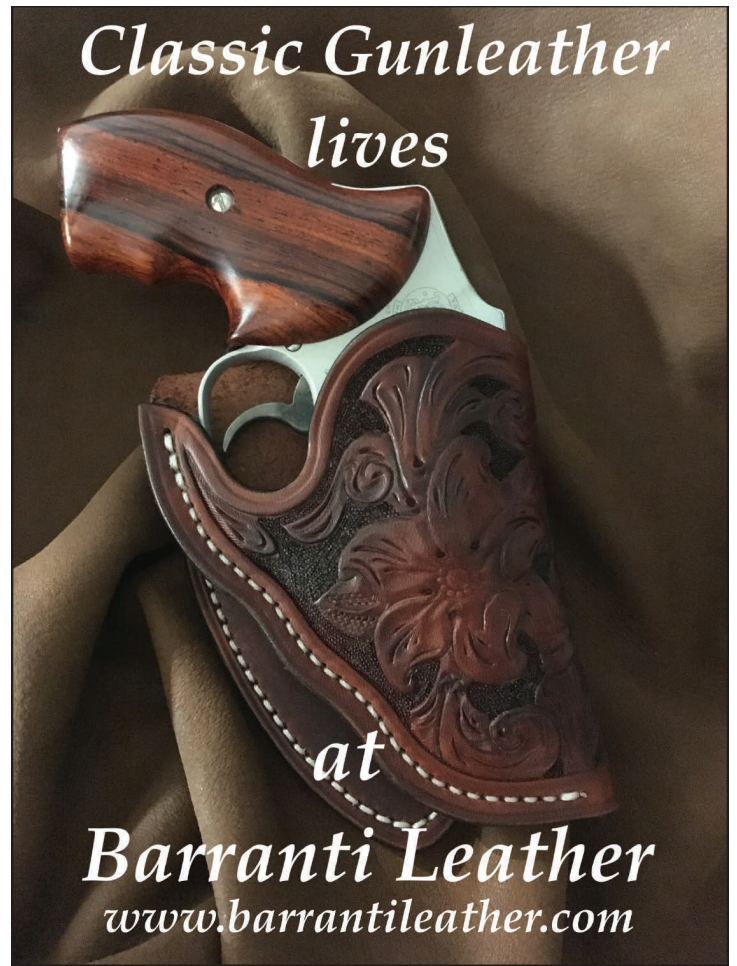
The Don Hume Leathergoods: <https://www.donhume.com>

Simply Rugged Holsters: <https://www.simplyrugged.com>

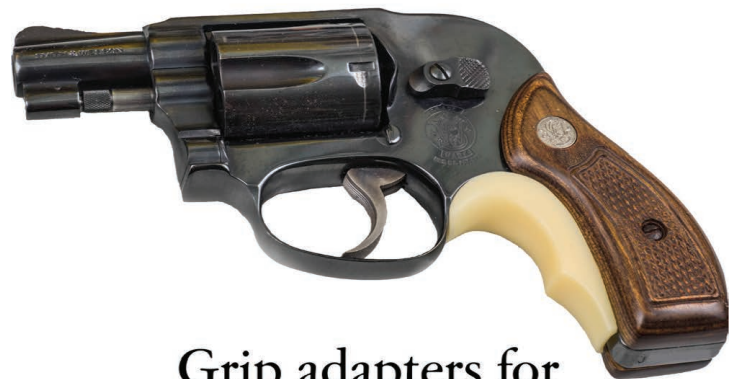
Original Precision: <https://www.originalprecision.com/moon-clips.html>

Jetloader: <https://www.pistoleer.com/jetloader/#TOP>

Ammoseek: <https://ammoseek.com>



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# Vintage Gun Leather: In Praise of the Spring Holster

By R. L. Martin

Sergeant Joe Friday wore one in the 1950s as did many of the officers when I became a policeman, over four decades ago. So-called “cross-draw” holsters were widely used by both uniformed and plainclothes officers. As duty holsters, they were versatile and served a valid purpose. The holsters to which I refer are correctly called “spring-holsters” as they are not exclusively a cross-draw.

While spring-holsters were a staple of uniformed officers at one time, my focus here is on plainclothes work in the olden days, and for concealed carry/personal protection today. In my youth, I did not appreciate the versatility of spring-holsters, nor did I use one as a detective. But growing older and (hopefully) wiser, I now love their “practical simplicity,” which is perhaps the best description of this holster.

My research suggests that the spring-holster came about in the 1930s. Often mistakenly called a “clamshell” holster (as it covers most of the gun), a spring-holster has an open-top, with a steel spring providing tension on both sides of the opening, which runs top-to-bottom. The holster tension is adjustable with a screw. These rigs were crafted by numerous makers like Safety Speed, Clark, Bucheimer, Brauer Bros., and Jay-Pee. They were also sold under the names of police supply houses like George F. Cake and F.M. Pitt. While sometimes thought of as just a cross-draw, the spring-holster is easily used strong-side and conceals well.



*S&W N Frame Revolvers: (L-R) Pre-27 3.5" in a Bucheimer "Combat" holster with belt clip; S&W Mod. 28 4" in a Safety Speed holster; S&W 5" .357 in a Safety Speed holster; S&W 5" .44 in a Brauer Bros. holster.*

Spring-holsters were made in numerous configurations, with the most common being a belt slot. An all-leather holster, they were available in brown, tan, and most commonly, black. Most seem to have been plain leather, but basket-stamped is often encountered. I have seen a few that were floral carved (but have yet to acquire

such a unicorn). Another rare configuration was a snap on leather hood that turned them into a flap-holster!

Primarily a revolver holster, they were made for small, medium, and large frame guns with barrel lengths of 2 through 6 inches (and possibly longer). But here is where their versatility is usually found. While makers offered spring-holsters for specific barrel lengths and frame sizes, many can accommodate more than one frame, brand of gun, barrel length, or even type of gun.

For example, I own two spring-holsters made for three-inch revolvers that will accommodate an S&W J-frame, Colt D-frame, and Charter Arms Bulldog. These holsters are from Safety Speed whose spring-holsters tend to be barrel length/frame specific. But my holsters made by Brauer Bros. usually accommodate more than one particular gun. Some small Brauer Bros. models will work for 2, 2.5, and 3 inch barrels – and slightly larger Brauer's can often be used with 3, 3.5, and 4 inch barrel guns.



*Small-Frame Revolvers: (L-R) Charter Arms Undercover in a Jay-Pee holster; Colt Agent in Brauer Bros. paddle holster; S&W Mod. 60 in a Safety Speed holster; and a Colt Cobra in Brauer Bros. BW paddle.*

Barrel lengths are not their only flexible aspect and makers sought a broader market with fewer holsters. Models from Brauer Bros., Clark, and Bucheimer will often accommodate more than one frame size. Smaller models easily take both a Colt Detective or S&W Chief, but may also work with S&W K-frames. The tension screw often makes the difference. This holds true for larger holsters working for both medium and big frame revolvers. But why stop with wheel-guns? Some of these same holsters will also work with auto-pistols. However, while that is possible, also know that spring-holsters were made to specifically fit medium and large frame autos such as the Colt 1903/1908, 1911s, and the Hi-Power.

As noted earlier, many spring-holsters use a belt slot.

But another popular configuration is a paddle holster. These were especially popular with detectives back in the day because they could be easily shifted from strong-side to cross-draw when seated at a desk, or in a car, especially if transporting a suspect without a cage. The spring-holster was also configured into a shoulder rig by several makers, including Safety Speed. Bucheimer offered an unusual model called the “semi-shoulder” holster. The semi-shoulder model uses a paddle that attaches near the middle of the holster so that your gun rides almost as high as a shoulder holster.



Left: S&W Mod. 36 3" in Brauer Bros. BW extended paddle holster. This holster will accept Colt, S&W, and Charter Arms 3" revolvers.  
Right: Same holster with an S&W Mod. 60 2" revolver.

If you like period-correct leather for your vintage revolvers, start searching online, at gun shows, or in that old cardboard box on the floor of the gun store for your own spring holster. Many can be had very economically. Or if you prefer a new one, Snub Noir's own Christopher Enlow will custom-make you one, and they are still available from Boston Leather as well. But whatever you buy, you will definitely get your money's worth out of the venerable spring-holster. 🍷



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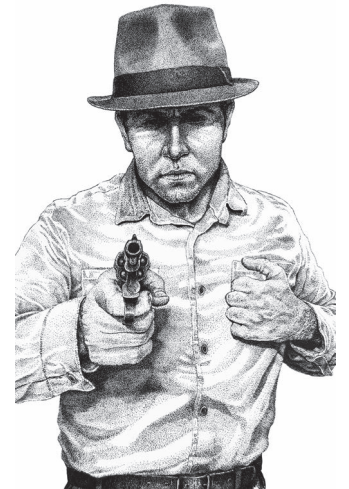
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