



## Violence Policy Center

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# “Never Walk Alone”<sup>1</sup>

## How Concealed Carry Laws Boost Gun Industry Sales

In the wake of the tragic shooting death of unarmed 17-year-old Trayvon Martin, much of the public focus has been on Florida’s 2005 “Stand Your Ground” law (opposed then, and exposed today as a “Shoot First, Ask Questions Later” law). Regardless of concealed handgun permit holder George Zimmerman’s invocation of the law, and the effect of the state’s “Shoot First” law on his fate, the stark reality is that it is Florida’s lax concealed weapons law that allowed George Zimmerman to carry a black seven-shot Kel-Tec PF-9 9mm pistol in public and shoot Trayvon Martin.<sup>2</sup> If Florida did not have this dangerous National Rifle Association-promoted law, Trayvon Martin would be alive today.



The ad above for the Kel-Tec PF-9 appeared in the NRA’s January 2012 *America’s 1<sup>st</sup> Freedom* (the organization’s monthly activist magazine) and features an array of the pistols in different finishes. It urges readers to “Pick your favorite color.” Described by

<sup>1</sup> Headline from ad for the Micro Desert Eagle pistol, *Gun World*, March 2009.

<sup>2</sup> “George Zimmerman’s Gun: A Popular Choice for Concealed Carry,” *Time*, March 28, 2012.

its manufacturer as being designed with “maximum concealability in mind,” the PF-9 is “one of the lightest and flattest 9mm ever made.”<sup>3</sup> An ad for a similar Kel-Tec concealed carry pistol, the P-32, in the July 2011 issue of *Guns & Weapons for Law Enforcement* features the handgun lying on a table next to the owner’s car keys and spare change. Characterizing the handgun as “compact protection,” the ad warns, “Don’t leave home without it!” On its website Kel-Tec states that it specializes in “handguns for concealed carry by law enforcement personnel and qualified citizens....” All of the company’s employees are members of the National Rifle Association.<sup>4</sup>

The gun used to kill Trayvon Martin didn’t find its way into George Zimmerman’s hands by happenstance. Like the killing itself, it is the predictable result of an aggressive decades-long campaign by the National Rifle Association to promote concealed carry laws and attendant “Shoot First” laws. The primary and intended beneficiary of these laws has been the firearms industry. Faced with a steady decline in household gun ownership over the past 30 years,<sup>5</sup> such laws have created sales opportunities for a gun industry constantly looking to identify new potential customers or resell old ones. As former NRA chief lobbyist Tanya Metaksa proclaimed to the *Wall Street Journal* in 1996 in discussing the organization’s efforts to pass lax concealed carry laws:

“The gun industry should send me a basket of fruit—our efforts have created a new market.”<sup>6</sup>

Soon after, a headline in the gun industry magazine *Shooting Industry* put the effect of these laws bluntly: “More Gun Permits Equal More Gun Sales.”<sup>7</sup> A later article advised gun dealers, “It’s time to jump in on the defensive handgun market if you haven’t already.”<sup>8</sup>

Pro-gun author and expert Massad Ayoob<sup>9</sup> summed up how this marketing shift in the 1990s changed the American gun market:

“I recently was leafing through an issue of *Shooting Industry* from 1971. Talk about a blast from the past! A quarter century later, things have changed dramatically. In *SI* back then, it appeared that shotguns and .22s were the mainstay of the firearms business. A firearms retailer today knows that...that type of sporting market is stagnant at best. The guns that are selling during this sales trough in the industry are defensive firearms, particularly handguns thanks to reformed ‘shall issue’ concealed carry rules in several states....

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<sup>3</sup> See <http://keltecweapons.com/our-guns/pistols/pf-9/>.

<sup>4</sup> See <http://keltecweapons.com/about/>.

<sup>5</sup> See the April 2011 Violence Policy Center report *A Shrinking Minority: The Continuing Decline of Gun Ownership in America* (<http://www.vpc.org/studies/ownership.pdf>).

<sup>6</sup> “Tinier, Deadlier Pocket Pistols Are in Vogue,” *Wall Street Journal*, September 12, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> “More Gun Permits Equal More Gun Sales,” *Shooting Industry*, February 1997.

<sup>8</sup> “Shot Show Indicates Defense Guns on the Roll,” *Shooting Industry*, April 1997.

<sup>9</sup> See [http://massadayoobgroup.com/?page\\_id=165](http://massadayoobgroup.com/?page_id=165) for biography.

“Defensive firearms, sold with knowledgeable advice and the right accessories, offer the best chance of commercial survival for today's retail firearms dealer.”<sup>10</sup>

Years earlier, in an article entitled “‘Trend Crimes’ and the Gun Dealer,” Ayoob had advised using fear to sell more guns on “impulse,” stating:

“Customers come to you every day out of fear. Fear of what they read in the newspaper. Fear of what they watch on the 11 o'clock news. Fear of the terrible acts of violence they see on the street. Your job, in no uncertain terms, is to sell them confidence in the form of steel and lead.”<sup>11</sup>

Little has changed since those days. Fear of “acts of violence they see on the street” has been leavened by the gun lobby and gun industry with fear of terrorist attack, economic collapse, civil unrest, the United Nations, and the presidency of Barack Obama. Today, concealed carry handguns—also frequently referred to as “personal defense” handguns in gun industry publications and the ads of handgun manufacturers—dominate (along with assault rifles) the firearms market in the United States. The following excerpts, taken from the gun industry publication *Shooting Industry*, offer examples as numerous as they are consistent of the important role concealed carry and “personal defense” handguns play in gun sales in the United States.

- “Self-defense buyers—whether they are concealed-carry citizens or family folks concerned about home security—come to your shop bearing long-term sales potential...If you don’t have a display case or counter clearly devoted to self-defense, then flag selected products with bright placards stating ‘Great Choice for Concealed Carry’ or ‘Top Pick for Home Defense.’”<sup>12</sup>
- “[According to Mark Kresser, CEO of handgun manufacturer Taurus International], ‘The buying trends of most people have shifted quite dramatically over the past four or five years. The products that are selling throughout the year have shifted. For instance, the cycles for sales of hunting products have been shortened dramatically, which requires a tremendous amount of planning and research to make sure you hit it right. However, in home security and concealed carry, it’s a year-round business...The economy is certainly something we have been lucky to escape, especially in the areas of home security and concealed carry.’”<sup>13</sup>
- “Scaled-down guns are the hot ticket for 2011, and many of the new guns introduced earlier in the year are beginning to appear on dealers’ shelves. Almost every major manufacturer has a firearm that is reduced in size or designed for

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<sup>10</sup> “The Defensive Market Today,” *Shooting Industry*, February 1997.

<sup>11</sup> “Trend Crimes’ and the Gun Dealer,” *Shooting Industry*, March 1993.

<sup>12</sup> “Self-Defense Sales: It’s All About Attitude, Inventory, And Experience,” *Shooting Industry*, February 2008.

<sup>13</sup> “New Business Year: Meeting The Challenges Of 2012!,” *Shooting Industry*, December 2011.

concealed carry, which is great news for women looking for pocket-sized self-defense guns, and long guns created with small-stature individuals in mind.”<sup>14</sup>

Ads for these guns are ubiquitous in gun fanzines and industry publications (the sample ads cited below, plus additional ads, are included in the Attachment to this report).

- A full-page ad in the March 2009 issue of *Gun World* for the “6-shot, .380 auto Micro Desert Eagle” from Magnum Research, Inc. warns “Never Walk Alone.” The gun is “...the ultimate in compact personal protection. Small enough to nest comfortably at home, in a pocket or in a purse, the double action only Micro Eagle is proudly made in the U.S. and weighs less than 14 oz....Which only goes to prove that good things do indeed come in small packages.”
- The back cover of the same issue contains an ad for the Taurus Model 856 small-frame revolver with the headline: “6 Shot Capacity. Delivers 20% More Firepower.” A free one-year membership to the NRA comes with the purchase of the gun.
- A full-page ad from Heizer Defense for “The world’s smallest & lightest .45 ACP concealed carry pistol on the market today” in the January 2012 issue of *Gun World* touts the DoubleTap, “the Titanium Tactical Pocket Pistol.” The ad promises that the “future of concealed carry firepower is now in your hands!”
- A full-page ad in the September 2011 issue of *Guns & Weapons for Law Enforcement* for the Sig Sauer 9mm P290 Subcompact states, “Get 9mm firepower in a palm-sized, easy-to-carry polymer package.”
- A full-page ad in the April 2006 issue of *Guns & Weapons for Law Enforcement* for the Heckler & Koch P2000 SK pistol states “Conceal: Accuracy, Reliability, Firepower, Performance, Handling, Ruggedness” and promises “Everything you expect from Heckler & Koch in a lightweight carry gun...The P2000 SK is the ultimate concealed carry pistol.”
- A full-page ad in the August 2011 issue of *Guns & Ammo* for the Ruger LCR (Lightweight Compact Revolver) features a woman alone at night, looking behind her, the revolver drawn and ready to be fired.
- A full-page ad in the February 2012 issue of *Gun World* features two Ruger pistols that are “both perfect for personal protection.” The Ruger LCP “is a compact .380 Auto pistol that weighs just 9.40 ounces (with an empty magazine). It is lightweight and ideal for all-day carry—ensuring you have it when and where you need it.” The larger Ruger 9mm LC9 “features smooth ‘melted’ edges for ease of holstering, carrying and drawing.” The ad urges the reader to “check out the Ruger LCP and LC9 with Lasermax Centerfire Lasers!”

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<sup>14</sup> “Mighty Minis Drive The Women’s Market,” *Arms and the woman, Shooting Industry*, June 2011.

- An ad in the December 2011 issue of *Gun World* for North American Arms' mini-revolver promises, "Regardless of your location, your dress or the season, NO gun is easier to carry or conceal than a North American Arms mini-revolver. Is it an effective deterrent? Would you want to be shot with one?" The ad warns the reader "don't leave home without one" and adds, "Remember Rule #1: Have a gun!"

Ironically, while concealed carry organizations and advocates often display hostility toward law enforcement both in word<sup>15</sup> and deed,<sup>16</sup> gun manufacturers and dealers promote the use of specific models and manufacturers utilized by police in their marketing efforts to private citizens.

- "The law enforcement connection is important, as is the military connection,' [Colorado gun dealer Ray] Sanchez explained. 'People want to carry and use handguns designed for the extreme conditions of police or military use. So we carry what our local officers want, but they are vastly outnumbered by civilian buyers—defensive shooters, concealed-carry handgunners, competitive shooters.' Sanchez says the consistency and sheer enthusiasm generated by civilian tactical shooters keeps 'our sales numbers growing out of sight... There's no secret to our success. We sell *fighting* handguns, long guns, accessories and ammunition. Sporting arms are few and usually multi-use.'"<sup>17</sup>
- "When it comes to self-defense and home protection, citizens want to rely on the gear cops rely on. Aside from the obvious sales-promoting points—like reference to the safety, handling and function testing carried out by L.E. [law enforcement] agencies selecting firearms—many savvy civilians believe that using the same guns and ammunition used by police officers provides them a degree of protection from liability lawsuits if they ever wind up using those firearms and ammo in lethal-threat situations. Too, the 'law-enforcement connection' allows dealers to, in effect, let public agencies do their product promotions for them. Every L.E. agency press release announcing the adoption of a weapon, accessory or ammunition should be seen as an advertisement you don't have to write yourself, and a 'field evaluation' you can quote from an objective professional source."<sup>18</sup>
- A full-page ad for the Sig Sauer Tactical P229 pistol in the May 2011 issue of *Guns & Weapons for Law Enforcement* features the handgun under the headline "Standard Issue" and promises that it is "Dedicated to protect and serve. Just like the officers who carry it." On the opposite page is an ad for Kahr Arms' PM9 pistol, which features a woman holding the handgun under the headline "Thin is Sexy." The ad promises, "Nothing fits better undercover."

<sup>15</sup> See for example: "The Authorities" section on the website *KeepandBearArms.com*, <http://www.keepandbeararms.com/>;

<sup>16</sup> See for example, Violence Policy Center *Concealed Carry Killers*, Law Enforcement Officers Killed by Concealed Carry Killers, [http://www.vpc.org/fact\\_sht/ccwlawenforcement.pdf](http://www.vpc.org/fact_sht/ccwlawenforcement.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> "Tactical is Practical, LE Connection Rules," *Shooting Industry*, October 2008.

<sup>18</sup> "Self-Defense Sales: It's All About Attitude, Inventory, And Experience," *Shooting Industry*, February 2008.

With concealed carry laws in place in 49 of the 50 states (only Illinois and the District of Columbia prohibit concealed carry) the gun lobby and firearm manufacturers have turned their attention from individual state houses to the U.S. Capitol. The U.S. Senate may soon take up legislation that would expand the rights of concealed carry vigilantes like George Zimmerman to carry their guns outside their home states and across the nation. Two bills (S. 2188 and S. 2213) have recently been introduced that would significantly expand the ability of concealed carry permit holders to carry their loaded guns nationwide. The result would be that states such as New York and California that tightly regulate who can carry a gun would be forced to allow people with concealed carry permits issued by Florida and other states with lax laws to carry their guns into their states—holding the residents of these states hostage to the George Zimmermans of the world. And while pro-gun advocates will inevitably voice their support of these bills in terms of self-defense and individual rights, truly the greatest beneficiary of national concealed carry stands to be the gun industry.

The deadly shooting of Trayvon Martin is, unfortunately, only one example of at least 402 victims killed in non-self defense incidents in 32 states since May 2007 involving private citizens legally allowed to carry concealed handguns.<sup>19</sup> Across America, hundreds of innocent citizens and families have been decimated, their communities shaken, by concealed carry killers who acted as judge, jury, and executioner—all in the name of the gun industry's bottom line.

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<sup>19</sup> Figures cited are current as of March 2011 and are updated monthly. For an ongoing tally of killings not ruled self-defense since May 2007 by private citizens legally allowed to carry concealed handguns, see the Violence Policy Center's ongoing *Concealed Carry Killers* project (<http://www.vpc.org/cckillers.htm>).

Pick your favorite color.



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WEIGHT.....6.6 OZ.  
CAPACITY.....7 + 1  
LENGTH.....5.1"  
HEIGHT.....3.5"  
WIDTH.....0.75"



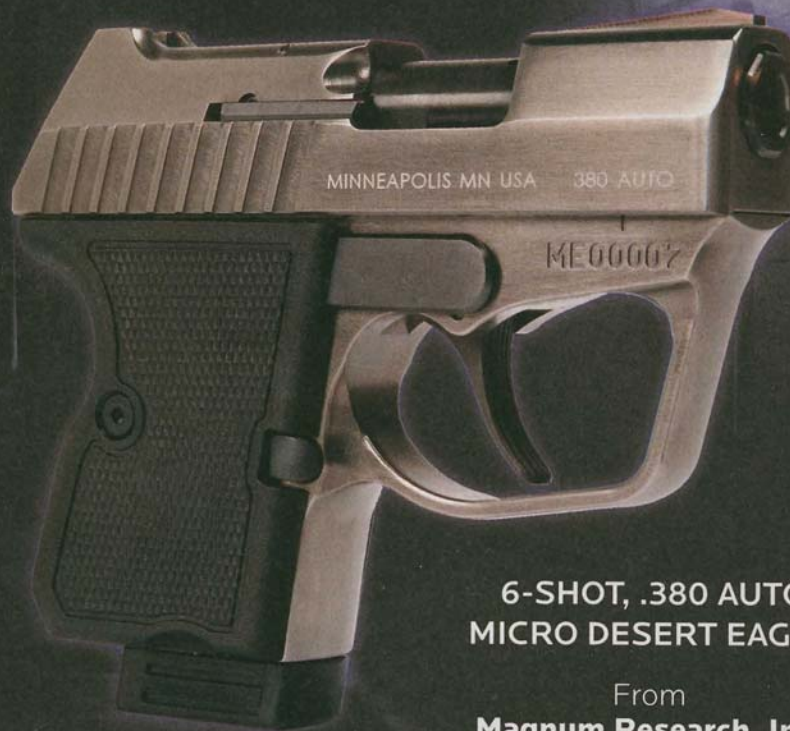
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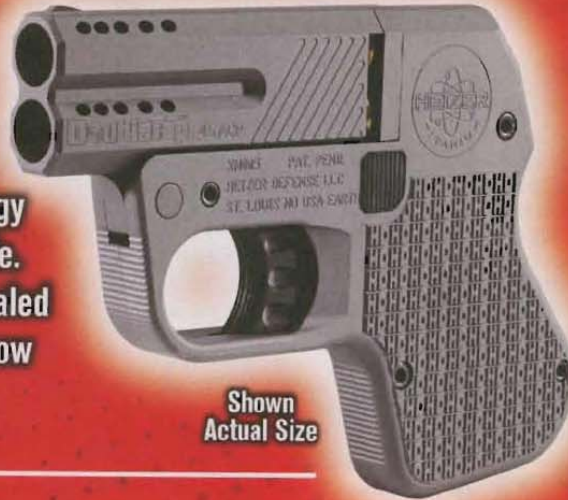
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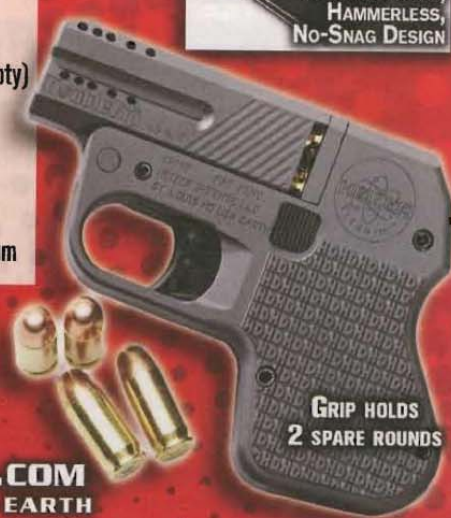


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Barrel: 3.0 inches  
Frame: Titanium or Aluminum



GRIP HOLDS  
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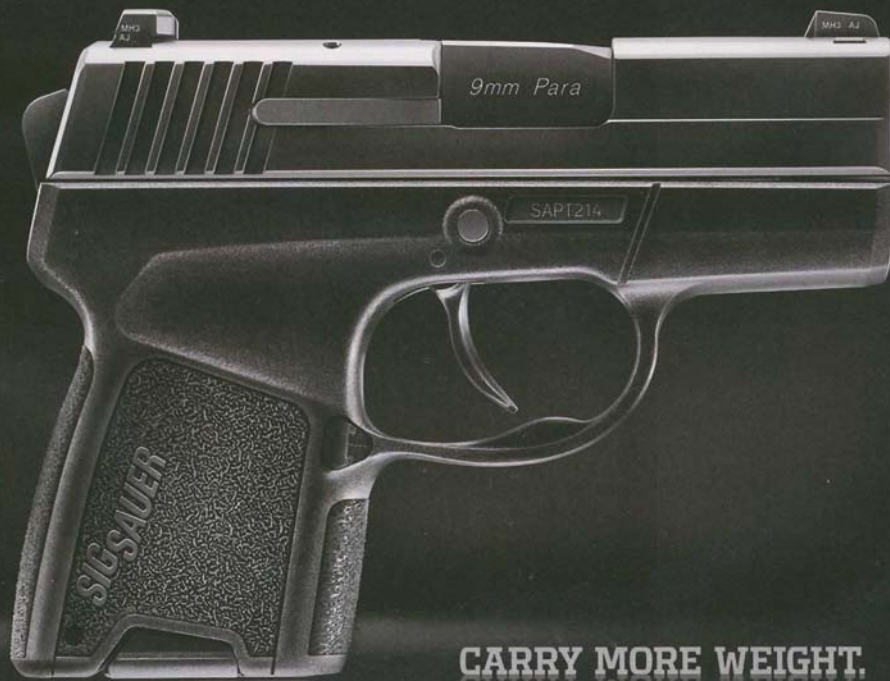


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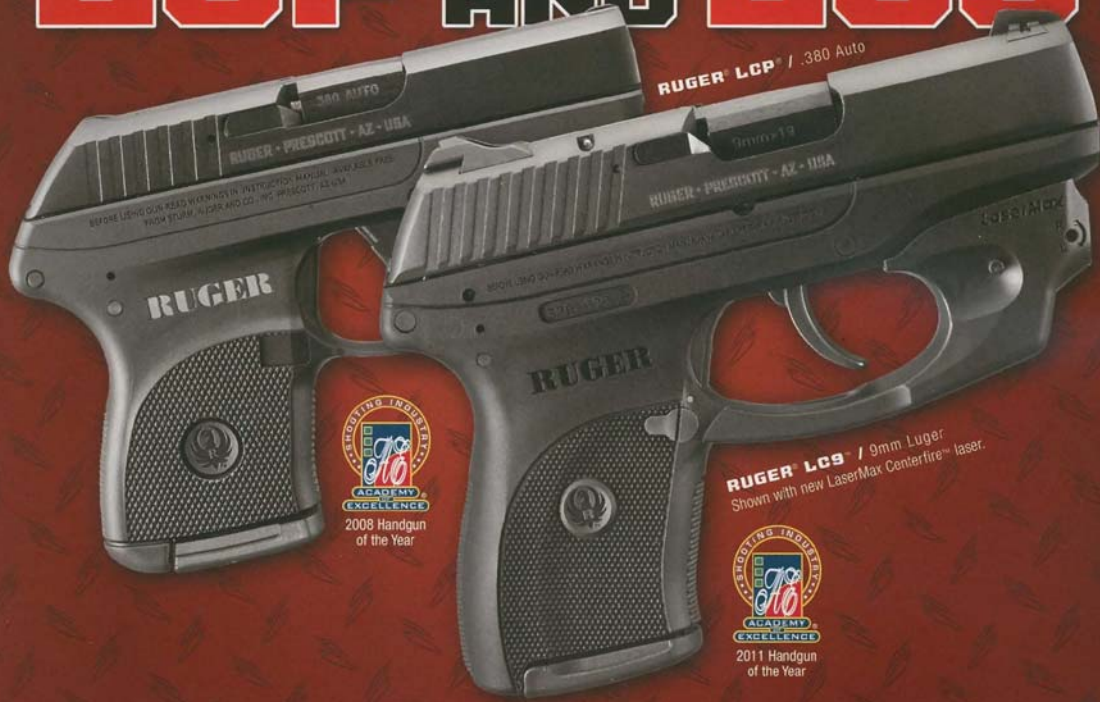
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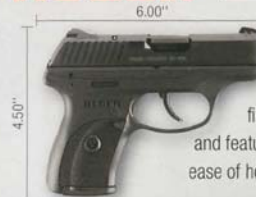
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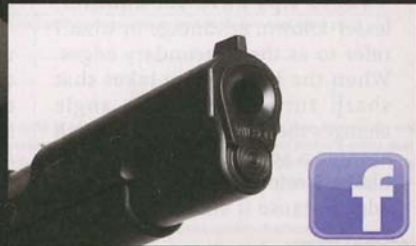
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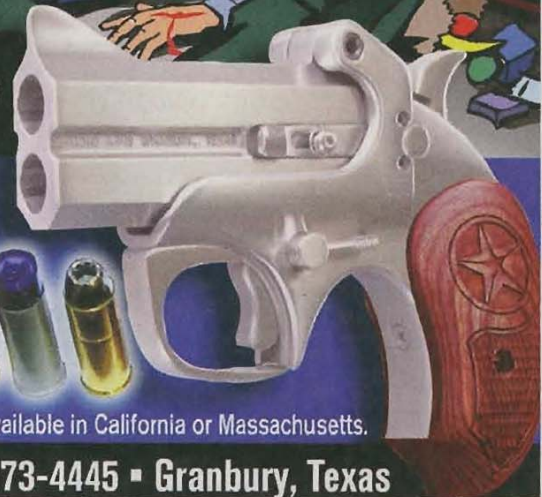
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