

THE 'SINGLE-STACK' ISSUE

CONCEALED CARRY

MAGAZINE

POSSIBLY ARMED AMERICANS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023

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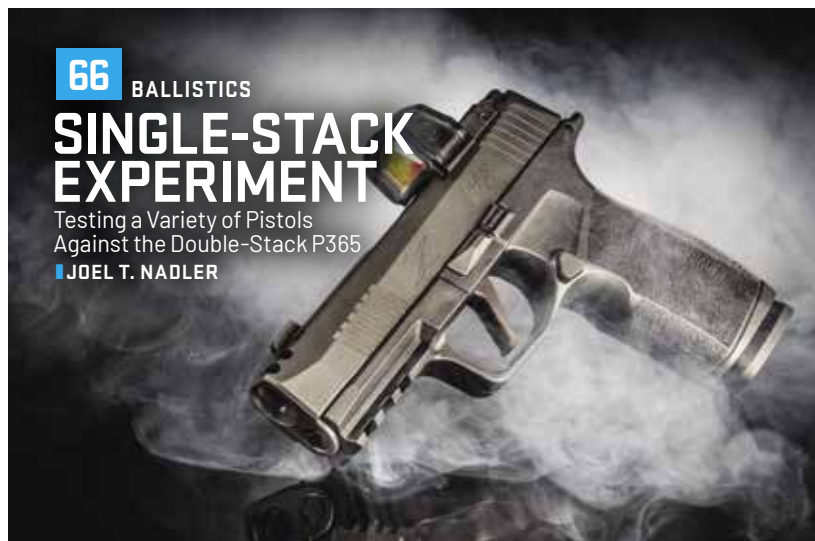
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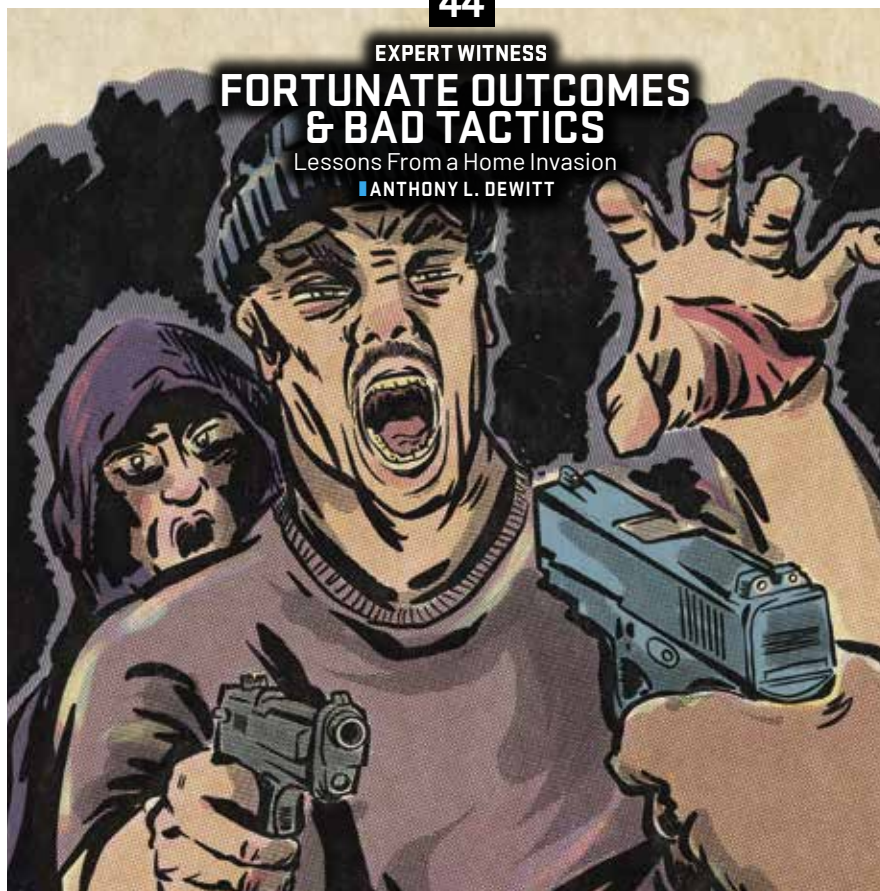
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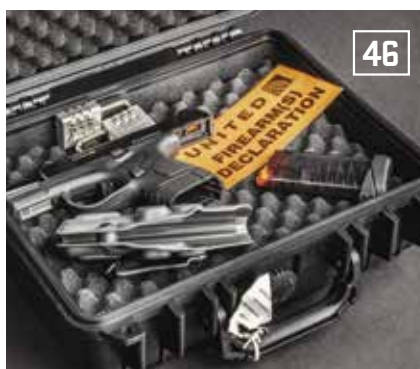
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LOVE & LOGIC

OBJECTIVE DECISIONS TO SUPPORT YOUR PERSONAL MISSION

The first pistol I ever purchased was a single-stack .45 ACP Glock 36 shortly after the birth of my first son. Though that was more than 20 years ago, I can still remember how much time I spent and how much research I did before I landed on that purchase. It felt like a monumental decision (and, in retrospect, I think it's safe to say it really was).

My impetus for even thinking about buying, owning and carrying a gun was love — an overwhelming, all-consuming, “there-is-nothing-I-wouldn’t-do-to-keep-this-new-little-guy-safe” type of love. That was my “why.”

It was the “what” and the “how” that were a lot more difficult to navigate (and, as you surely are aware by now, the factors that drove the birth of the USCCA 20 years ago).

You see, I have what some might call an “engineer’s brain.” I have to gather as much information as possible before I feel comfortable making any sort of decision, especially one that was as important as selecting a gun I would be carrying to help me protect my family. And so, as I’ve already mentioned, I conducted exhaustive research on what would work best for me and then analyzed what I discovered. I was meticulous, weighing the pros and cons of each firearm and also connecting all of the dots on how each would fit into the overall picture of my circumstances: my body type, my lifestyle, my willingness to carry this tool on me every day.

In many ways, that Glock 36 was the only logical choice. It was like I had an innate understanding of the trade-offs too. Everything else seemed not only ill-suited but also almost ridiculous. Why would anyone buy anything but a Glock 36?

But over the years, I’ve learned a lot about self-defense, and I now understand that as a 6-plus-foot-tall man, the Glock 36 is just what worked best for ME. Further, the Glock 36 is just what worked best for ME at the TIME.

I’ve moved on to several different guns over the years, including the Kahr PM9 and the SIG P365. You see, once I discovered that I could get a thinner and lighter gun that held more ammunition without changing the equation of being able to protect myself and my family, my options really opened up for me.

I know a lot of people talk about the benefits of certain cartridges and argue the merits of the single-stack versus the double-stack and even pistol versus revolver, but at the end of the day, the best gun will always be the one you are willing to carry with you and the one you have trained to use effectively. As with all things in self-defense, it’s about balance and compromise.

I have fond memories of that Glock 36. It served me well at the beginning of my concealed carry journey, and six rounds of .45 ACP is no joke. But your circumstances are no doubt different than mine, and my circumstances are not the same as they used to be.

And so I think that approaching “it” — choosing a gun to carry every day — like an engineer might be helpful for you too. It will allow you to think of your EDC as part of a system and analyze whether it will all work together in support of your goal. And though you will no doubt encounter an overwhelming amount of information on that quest, remember what I told you a couple of issues ago: Sometimes it’s best to keep it simple. A gun doesn’t need to have tons of bells and whistles in order for it to work properly when you need it to. Everything else aside, it working properly when you need it to really is the most important factor after you making the decision to carry your gun every day.

Maybe a single-stack is right for you. Maybe it’s not. Or maybe a single-stack used to be right for but your circumstances now warrant a look at something else. That’s OK too.

Remember, nothing is more important than you carrying a gun that works when it’s called upon and that you can use effectively when you need it most. Regardless of what you choose — single-stack or double-stack, pistol or revolver — let logic dictate the “what” and the “how.” And as for the “why,” well, leave that one to your heart.



PRO

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EMPOWERING YOUR DECISION

DETERMINING IF A SINGLE-STACK IS RIGHT FOR YOU

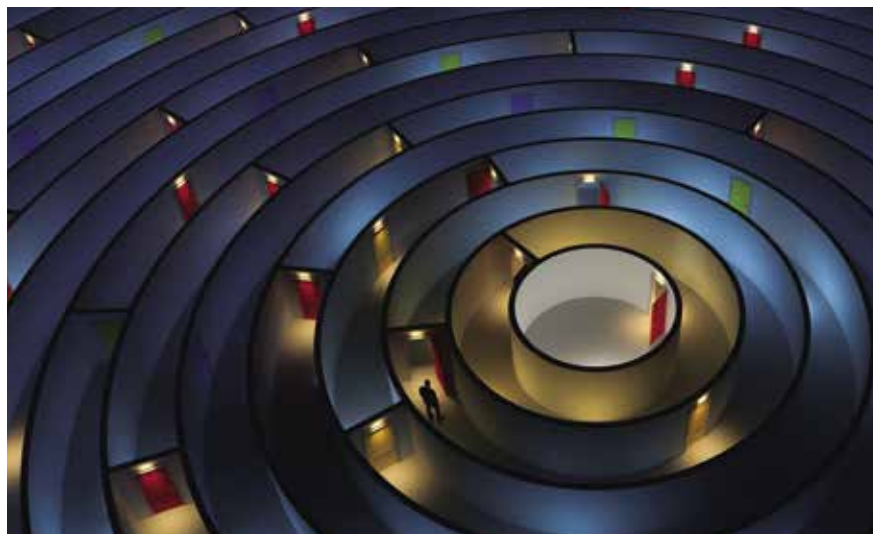
Debating pistol designs is like walking into a maze. There is something different at every turn. There are nearly as many ideas as there are pistol shooters. It seems people will argue about anything — from caliber to the efficacy and benefits of passive or active safeties. Individuals on each side of every topic can present valid reasons for the positions they support. In short, everyone seems to have a dog in the fight.

It is under this umbrella that we here at *Concealed Carry Magazine* return once again to look closely at the single-stack auto-loading pistol. We have approached this theme before, several years ago. As always, the marketplace continues to change. Training protocols are refined, and we all learn more about everything from terminal ballistics to recoil control. The dynamic nature of this industry is one of the major factors that keeps me so thoroughly engaged.

Here we are once again talking about the single-stack. It is a style of pistol some people love and others call obsolete. It doesn't carry enough ammo. It fills the hand just perfectly. It can be difficult to reload under stress. It all but disappears under a cover garment.

Like anything else in the world of defensive firearms, the single-stack pistol has its detractors and its advocates. In many cases, these people are learned, experienced and well-respected even though they fall on different sides of the debate.

And regardless of that debate, single-stack pistols still have ardent followers. Consider this: Lt. Col. Jeff Cooper, father of the Modern Technique of defensive pistol shooting and founder of the world-renowned Gunsite Academy, lived and died with the belief that the 1911 pistol, chambered in .45 ACP,



was the pinnacle of the modern fighting handgun. He is also quoted as saying of the Browning Hi Power, "It is a fine handgun. It is a shame it is not made in a caliber of consequence."

Notice that Cooper didn't say anything about the Hi Power's double-stack magazine. He just wanted that gun to be chambered in .45 ACP. And I would say this perfectly defines the dynamic nature of the debate surrounding modern defensive pistols: Shooters don't really look at guns holistically. They debate components and attributes. I think this is because there will never be one gun to satisfy every shooter.

Some people will demand the large, heavy projectile of the .45 ACP. Someone else will demand the greatest number of rounds that can be stuffed into a magazine and grip frame. But that means the fully loaded pistol will be quite heavy. To reduce the weight, you can choose a different caliber or reduce the round count. If a double-stack magazine

A VERY PERSONAL PATH

There is no single "best" firearm that will work for every person. Your unique circumstances will dictate your choices more than almost anything else.

makes a gun too thick and a single-stack leaves the shooter with too few rounds, where is the happy medium?

There is no universal truth, except this one:

The gun for you is the gun that you are able to shoot proficiently and that you are willing to carry every day.

Period.

Is that pistol a single-stack? You won't know until you have done some research and asked some questions. You might not know until you have carried a single-stack for a couple of months to learn what you like and don't like about the gun.

It is our job at CCM to give you the best possible information from the widest array of experts so that you can make an educated choice. After all, it is your life that is on the line. The tools that you use to protect yourself must fit your needs and yours alone.





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STANDING TALL

■ It can at least seem like there's nothing handgun enthusiasts won't argue about. Whether it's the "great caliber debate" or how many rounds a self-defense sidearm should hold, you'll rarely find yourself short on fellow aficionados with whom to hotly converse on any number of topics. One fact isn't up for debate though: When you need a firearm for self-defense, whether you have a firearm will be a lot more important than whether that firearm is fed by a single- or double-stack magazine. To many concealed carriers, a single-stack design is just plain easier to carry every day. And as far as emergency lifesaving goes, that's far more important than anything else.



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PIERCING INQUIRY

QUESTION:

I need to get relevant information to my students: If you are proficient with your firearm, just how much risk is there in overpenetration with ball ammo if that is what you have at the time of your bad day?

Tedd, via email

ANSWER:

First, let's be clear that the terminal ballistics of pistol ammo and rifle ammo are vastly different, not only because of the design of the bullets but also because of the physics and physical differences between the two projectiles.

A 5.56 FMJ round reacts differently inside a human body than does a 9mm like the one pictured here because of the weight, speed and shape of the projectiles. So, let's narrow this down to discuss only pistols and their projectiles, as that is what most concealed carriers are concerned about on a daily basis.

The truth is that there are so many variables in real-life shootings that it becomes difficult to mimic those in a testing environment. So, let's agree that ballistic gel is designed to mimic human tissue (not bone, just muscle and fat). If we talk about only the design of the pistol projectile and not the weight, we see that an FMJ pistol bullet will pass through plain ballistic gel or its polymer substitute with enough speed to penetrate a human body after exiting the first 12 inches of gel. I have seen some go through 24 inches of gel with enough speed to make me not want to be standing behind that gel.

So, the short answer is, "Yes. There is increased danger of overpenetration causing unintended injury when you're firing

FMJ ammo out of your defensive pistol."

Now, we must add that there are all sorts of variables that can cause a JHP projectile to fail to open up and thus act "just like" FMJ ammo. This can be anything from bullet speed to having the JHP cavity clogged with clothing or Sheetrock or some other material.

To provide relevant information to your students, I would suggest this: First and foremost, become proficient with your firearm. Be able to consistently hit that at which you are shooting. Then understand that FMJ does produce some increased risk of overpenetration, which could lead to unintended injury. We cannot give a number, ratio or percent as to the amount of increase, but yes, FMJ increases that danger. Therefore, the best option is to use quality JHP ammo from a reputable source and hit your target with that ammo.

That is the best answer we can give at this time.

Stay safe,

Kevin Michalowski
Executive Editor

I support everything that our executive editor said above, but I'll need to add one more element. As I mention in my Legally Armed Citizen column on Page 34, I will always advise that defenders load their 9mm pistols with quality jacketed hollow-points. It's what



TO SUBMIT A QUESTION TO "ASK THE USCCA,"
EMAIL US AT EDITOR@USCONCEALED.CARRY.COM.



countless law enforcement officers carry, and quality jacketed hollow-points have proven, time and again, to be the ideal tool for stopping imminent, unavoidable threats of death or great bodily harm. As Kevin mentioned, it is slightly more possible that a round of ball 9 would exit an attacker than a round of JHP would exit that attacker.

And to be brutally honest, 9mm is — by the numbers — most of what we're talking about here. It's far and away the most common defensive handgun cartridge in the country. As for the lower-velocity stuff, like .380 ACP, .38 Special and .45 ACP, real-world results can be mixed. As I also mention in that column, John Browning designed the .45 ACP cartridge as a fighting round, and as with every other load, more innocent persons have been harmed by rounds that missed their intended targets than by rounds of 230-grain ball that passed through an intended target and then found an unintended target.

Which brings us to what in my experience is the most oft-neglected aspect of an everyday carry loadout: pairing ammunition to the pistol in question.

Not all 9mm JHPs will function identically out of one specific pistol. Some will print far tighter and more consistently than others. This is because different loads are optimized for different platforms, specifically when it comes to 4- and 5-inch duty guns and shorter subcompacts. In order to ensure a student's best chances of successfully stopping an imminent, unavoidable threat of death or great bodily harm, it is essential that he or she get out to the range with a few boxes of JHPs and see what — specifically — works best in his or her pistol. The rounds have to be reliable, and they have to go where they're intended. Until that requirement is met — and proven to be met — everything else is a lesser worry.

Ed Combs
Senior Editor



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A DOCTOR'S TAKE

I was very pleased to see the focus on mental health in the January 2023 issue. I have always been a gun enthusiast during my professional career in psychiatric nursing. There were always raised eyebrows when the subject would come up with some of my colleagues as well as some beliefs that I never thought an educated person would assume. The lack of understanding about "gun violence" is truly unbelievable.

That being said, I would like to add to some of the ideas put forth in the January [issue]. When I first started in psychiatry in the late 1970s, the length of stay for children in the hospital was about 30 days. During this time, a treatment plan was generated based on extensive evaluation, individual therapy and family involvement. When the evaluation was complete, a recommendation was made for the patient to return home with outpatient treatment, be enrolled in an extensive outpatient after-school program or be referred to a residential treatment facility. The success rate was very high, and it was a rarity to see these children readmitted to the hospital.

Fast forward to 2010. Just prior to my retirement, the length of stay was about four days, with return visits to the emergency room, frequent readmissions for another few days, no real residential treatment facilities available and children who rarely kept outpatient appointments. Insurance companies dictated treatment rather than clinicians.

Perhaps we should be looking at fixing a failing system instead of targeting law-abiding citizens with laws that do not work.

Joe, Maryland

NICE AND SIMPLE

I was nodding my head vigorously while reading the "Excess Capacity" article in the February/March 2023 issue

of *Concealed Carry Magazine* (Ask the USCCA, Page 12). It particularly resonated with me since I just returned a couple of 12-round mags I purchased for my SIG P365. These mags required a tremendous amount of effort to load using an UpLULA loader. Beyond that, it was impossible to rack the slide once a mag was inserted.

SIG acknowledges the 12-round mags have extraordinarily stiff springs, but that all should have been well if I had simply locked the slide and jammed the first round into battery. They also suggested that I load the mags and let them sit around a while until they were "broken in."

I've never had to "break in" a mag for it to work in any other pistol I've owned. I'm certainly not going to do that for my carry weapon. The 10-round mags I use have worked from round one without any "break in." They have performed flawlessly for over 400 rounds during two different defensive pistol training classes. In any event, I very much appreciated the "Excess Capacity" reply. It applies to both the original manufacturer as well as the aftermarket mags.

I also found the President's Message "Overloaded" to be equally wise (Page 6). Simple is best. More rounds won't matter if the first one doesn't go "bang" when it's needed. A pretty dot doesn't help at the most common ranges for self-defense. Better to spend the money on training.

Best regards,

Jeffrey, via email

COUNTEROFFENSIVE HANDGUNNING?

Mr. Combs,

In the May/June 2023 issue of *Concealed Carry Magazine*, you used the expression "defensive and counteroffensive handgunning" (Legally Armed Citizen, Page 38), but the context of the article did not explain "counteroffensive."

Could you please define what is meant by "counteroffensive handgunning?" I understand a "counteroffensive" in a military context, but how does it apply to the use of firearms in civilian life? Moreover, if a USCCA Member faced legal problems after engaging in "counteroffensive handgunning," would the organization provide coverage to defend the member in court?

Steve, via email

Excellent question, sir.

Like a lot of terminology in the self-defense world, there's quite a bit of overlap and redundancy and people who plain old want to make up their own terms that other people will (hopefully) start using. I picked up "counteroffensive handgunning" from a past CCM contributor named C.R. Williams.

Generally, defensive handgunning is shooting an individual who is specifically attacking you. Counteroffensive handgunning, however, is stopping a general attack, such as what 22-year-old Elisjsa Dicken was able to do in that mall food court in Indiana last year. He stopped an attacker who was bent on generally attacking everyone in that area with the rifle he was carrying, and Dicken engaged and stopped him with accurate pistol fire. A quick online search of Dicken's name will give you more details.

As for your coverage as a USCCA Member, I'm afraid I cannot directly answer such a question because I am not a licensed insurance broker. But many of the employees in our call center are, and they should be able to get you an answer. That number's 1-800-674-9779.

Stay safe,

Ed Combs

Senior Editor



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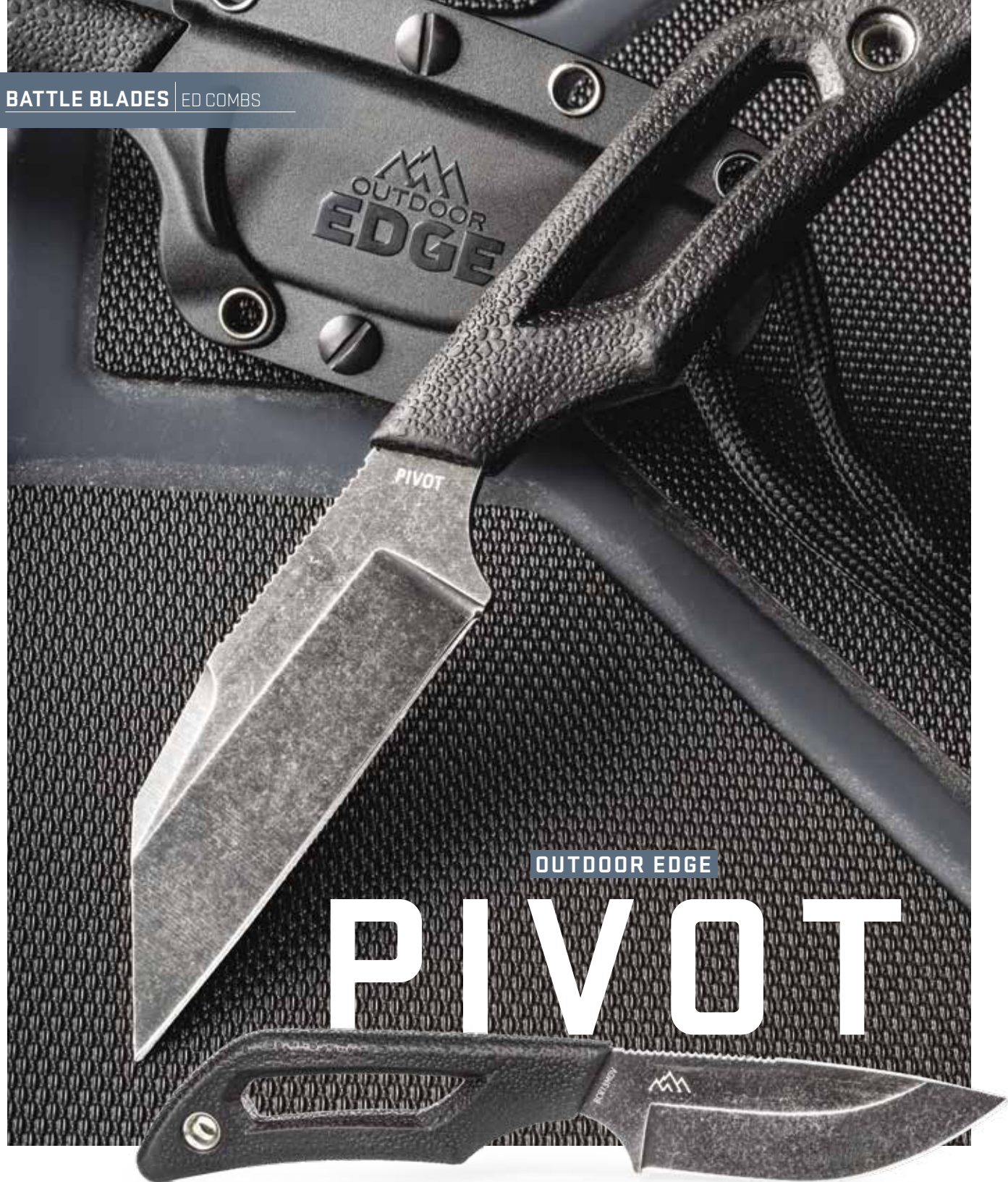


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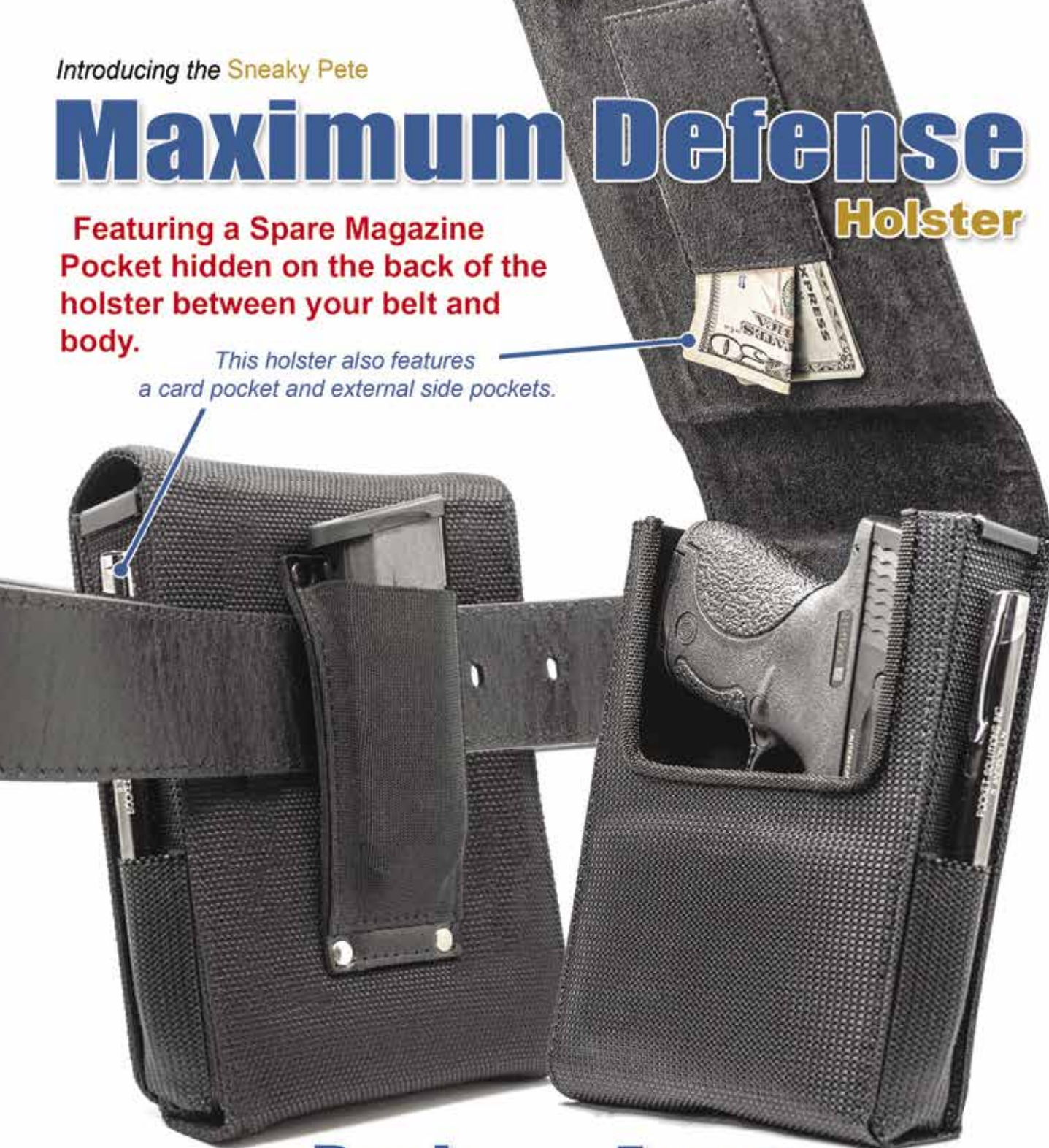


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NIGHTTIME PROWLER

MISSOURI MAN NABS CAR THIEF IN HIS GARAGE

■ A Columbia man heard the sound of his car starting in his garage at around 2 a.m. Taking a handgun with him when he investigated, he discovered a stranger attempting to open his garage door from the inside. The homeowner held the intruder at gunpoint on the floor of the garage. The invader was dressed entirely in black, with black gloves and a black mask, and police found a wallet and car keys from several neighboring houses on him. He was also in possession of a handgun, screwdriver and flashlight. The intruder was charged with first-degree burglary, stealing a motor vehicle, armed criminal action and possession of burglary tools.

KRCG 13, New Bloomfield, Missouri

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■ **TEXAS MAN DEFENDS AGAINST DAYTIME ATM ROBBERY**

A man went to an ATM in downtown Austin at around 1 p.m. to withdraw money when two men tried to rob him. The potential victim used his legally carried gun to defend himself, firing on the robbers and killing both. Investigating police say the robbery victim was defending himself.

FoxNews.com

■ **COLORADO HOMEOWNER THWARTS INTRUDER**

A Colorado Springs homeowner shot a man who broke into his home. The wounded burglar fled the scene and was found near the home by responding police. He was treated at a nearby hospital but did not survive his gunshot wound.

**KRDO News Channel 13,
Colorado Springs, Colorado**

■ **CALIFORNIA MAN KILLS FRIEND IN SELF-DEFENSE**

A Swains Flat man went to check on a friend who had been acting strangely. On the man's arrival, the friend pointed a gun at him and threatened to shoot him. Fearing for his life, the man drew his own gun and fired on his friend, killing him. Police declined to make an arrest but did refer the case to the district attorney.

**North Coast Journal,
Humboldt County, California**

■ **NEVADA MAN SHOOTS STRANGER IN HIS HOME**

A North Las Vegas man found an unknown man in his house at 1 p.m. Since the homeowner didn't know the invader, he took up a gun and shot the intruder, killing him. No charges were filed against the homeowner.

**KLAS 8 News Now,
Las Vegas, Nevada**

■ **ARIZONA MAN FIRES ON BROTHER WHILE DEFENDING HIMSELF**

A Littlefield man got into an argument with his brother. When the exchange

became heated, the brother took up a gun and fired on the man, wounding him. The man returned fire, killing his brother. No charges had been filed as of press time.

St. George News, Utah

■ **NEW MEXICO MAN STOPS BURGLAR AND HOLDS HIM FOR POLICE**

An Espanola man was concerned when he heard a commotion outside his home. Taking up a pistol when he went to investigate, he found a strange man in his garage holding his toolbox and drill. After dropping the items, the intruder offered to leave and then fled on foot. The homeowner pursued the suspect and held him for responding police.

**The Santa Fe New Mexican,
New Mexico**

■ **PENNSYLVANIA WOMAN DRIVES OFF FOUR BURGLARS**

A Philadelphia woman woke late one night to find four strangers had broken into her home. Taking up a gun, she confronted the men. When that escalated, she fired on the quartet, shooting two and putting the others to flight. One of the wounded intruders was still on the scene when law enforcement officers arrived. A second wounded intruder, who had fled the scene, was found nearby and arrested. The other two suspects were also arrested later. Police noted that the woman was defending herself against a burglary and criminal trespass.

FoxNews.com

■ **CONNECTICUT STORE EMPLOYEE FIGHTS OFF TWO ROBBERS**

A Hartford store was the scene of an armed robbery attempt as soon as the store opened. Two armed men rushed into the store and pistol-whipped an employee. The employee responded by firing on the robbers, seriously wounding one and putting the other to flight.

**Channel 3 Eyewitness News,
Rocky Hill, Connecticut**

■ **ALABAMA MAN FOILS INTRUDER**

A Pinson man shot an intruder trying to break into his home one afternoon, wounding the man and putting him to flight. Law enforcement officers were able to capture the suspect a short time later and transported him to a local hospital for treatment of non-life-threatening injuries.

**WIAT CBS 42,
Birmingham, Alabama**

■ **FLORIDA TENANT SHOOTS HOME INVADER**

A Sarasota man heard noises in his rental home at around 2 a.m. On finding an intruder in the home, the tenant opened fire, seriously wounding the invader and ending the incident.

**WFLA News Channel 8,
Tampa Bay, Florida**

■ **WASHINGTON STORE CLERK STOPS ROBBER ARMED WITH HATCHET**

At around 10:45 on a Friday night, a convenience store clerk in Everett called 911 to report an attempted robbery. The clerk said an individual entered the store wielding what appeared to be a hatchet in an apparent robbery attempt. The store clerk shot the would-be robber, and the person fled the scene in a dark-colored car.

Approximately 15 minutes later, Everett Police received a report from a nearby address that a woman was asking for assistance with a person who had been shot. When officers and medics arrived on the scene, they found a person suffering from an apparent gunshot wound in a dark-colored car. The person was transported to a hospital. No further information on the person's injuries or status was provided in the report, and the incident is still under investigation.

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