

# THE COMPLETE BOOK OF HANDGUNS

2012

by MASSAD AYOUB



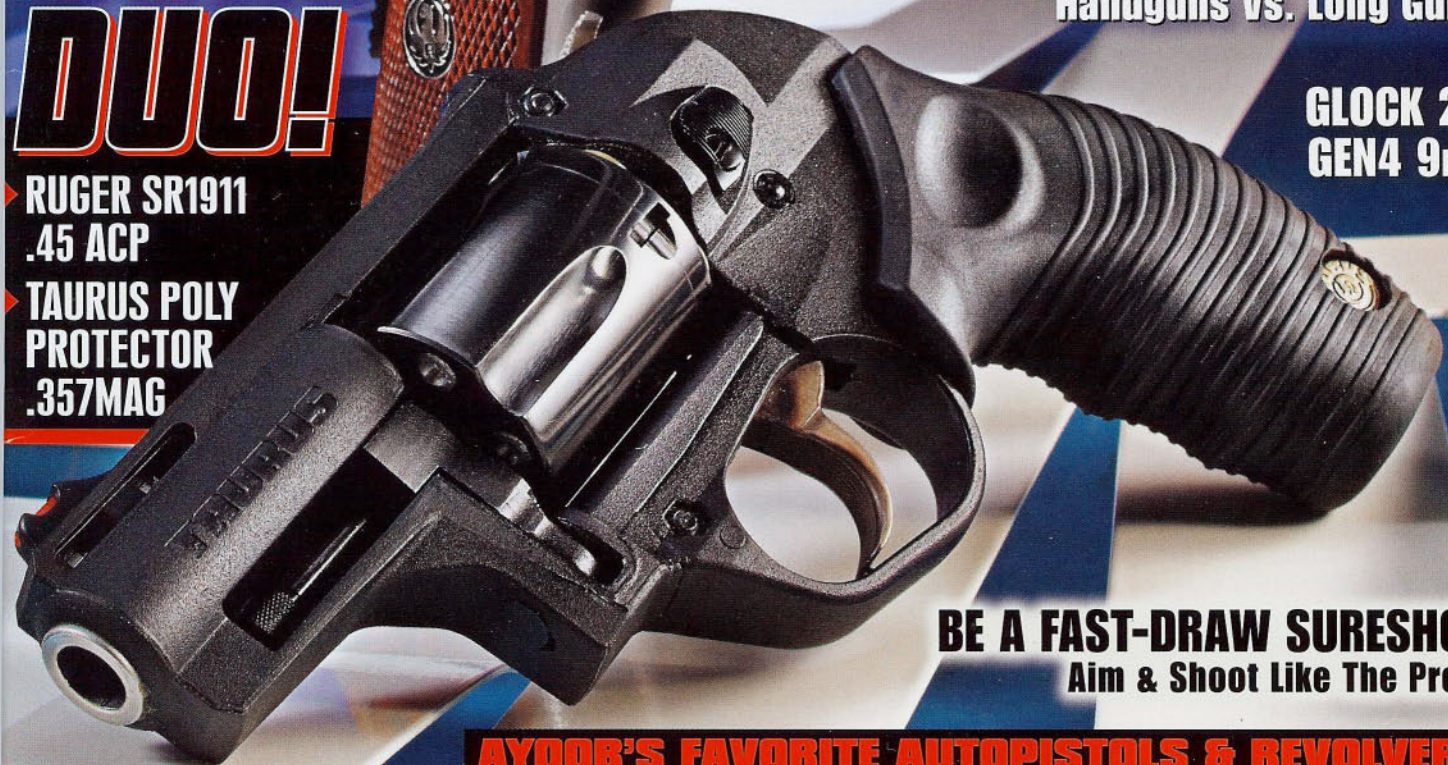
## BIG BORE DUO!

RUGER SR1911  
.45 ACP  
TAURUS POLY PROTECTOR  
.357MAG

**CONCEALED CARRY TACTICS & TECHNIQUES**  
*Loaded • Legal • Lethal*

**HOME DEFENSE FIREPOWER**  
Handguns Vs. Long Guns

**GLOCK 26 GEN4 9MM**



**BE A FAST-DRAW SURESHOT**  
Aim & Shoot Like The Pros!

### AYOUB'S FAVORITE AUTOPISTOLS & REVOLVERS

**BET YOUR LIFE AMMO**  
.357 Mag/9mm/.45 ACP



Sig Sauer P220  
.45ACP



Glock 26  
9mm



Beretta M92  
9mm

## GUN TESTS

Chiappa White Rhino .357 Mag ■ Houzenga MTG2011 9mm ■ Glock 26 Gen4 9mm  
Sig Sauer P220 .45 ACP ■ Beretta Model 92 9mm ■ Springfield EMP 9mm ■ More!



Printed in USA



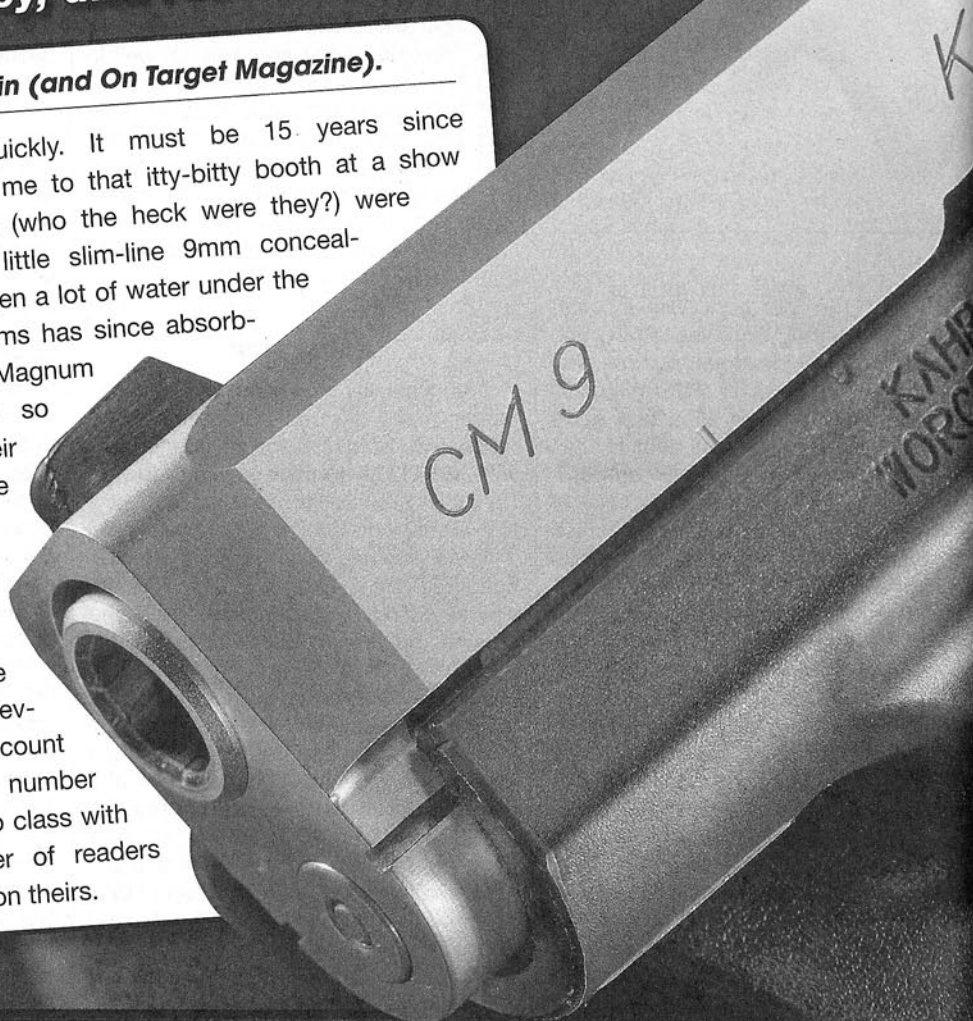
# DRIVING YOUR KAHR

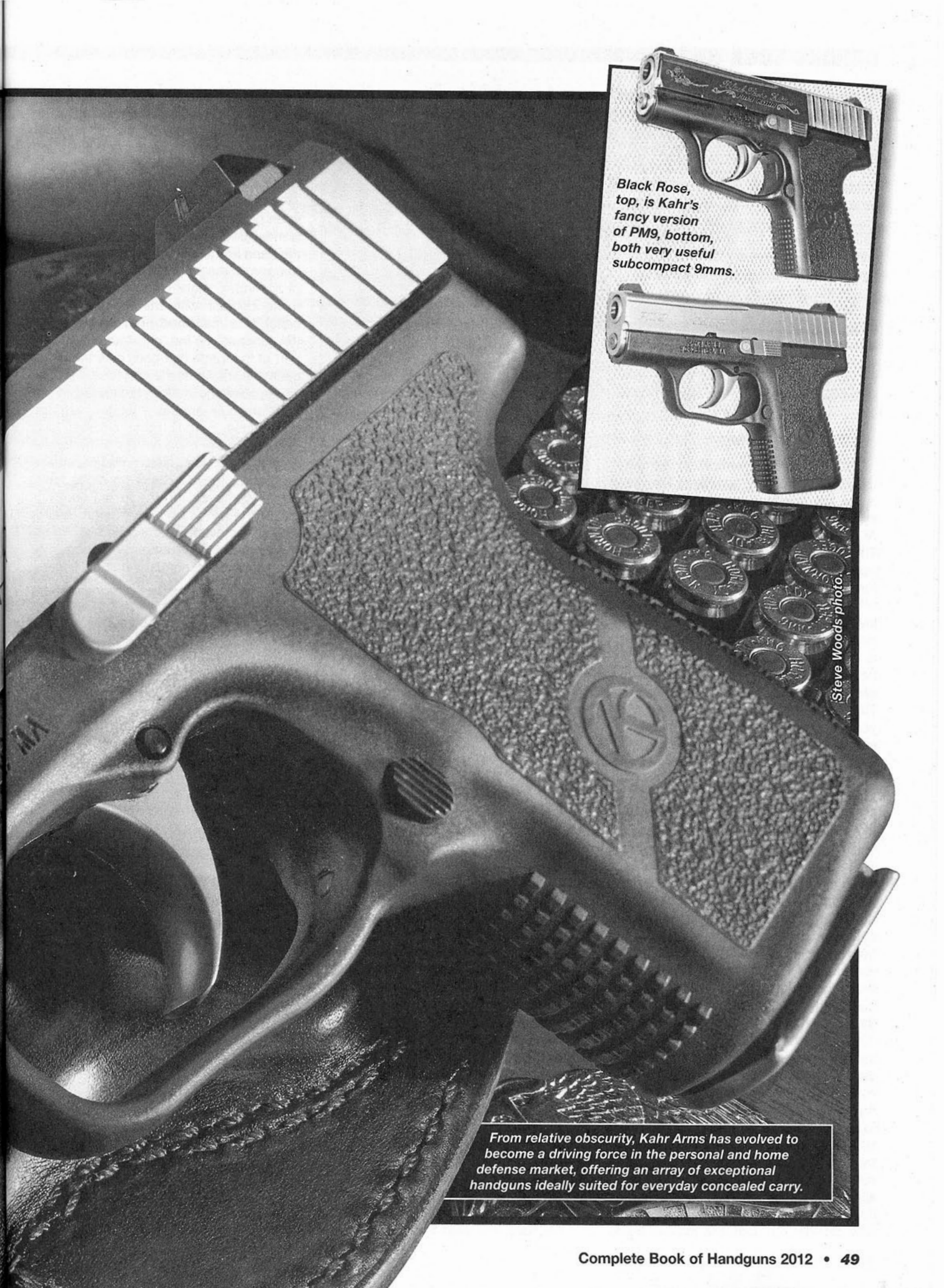
*These tiny pistols continue to rise in popularity—  
here's how to get the best speed,  
accuracy, and reliability out of them!*

*Photos by Gail Pepin (and On Target Magazine).*

**T**ime goes by quickly. It must be 15 years since someone flagged me to that itty-bitty booth at a show where Kahr Arms (who the heck were they?) were showing a nifty little slim-line 9mm concealment pistol. Well, there's been a lot of water under the bridge since then. Kahr Arms has since absorbed Auto Ordnance and Magnum Research, and produces so many pistols under their own Kahr banner that I've frankly lost count.

I remember thinking on that long ago day, "Damn... if that thing works, I'd wanna have one." Well, I now have several. I long since lost count of something else: the number of students who came to class with Kahrs, and the number of readers who gave me feedback on theirs.





*Black Rose, top, is Kahr's fancy version of PM9, bottom, both very useful subcompact 9mms.*

*Steve Woods photo.*

*From relative obscurity, Kahr Arms has evolved to become a driving force in the personal and home defense market, offering an array of exceptional handguns ideally suited for everyday concealed carry.*



Putting it all together, my synopsis is this: the Kahr is a quality pistol, ingeniously designed, remarkably slim and concealable, and surprisingly "shootable" for its size. The only trouble folks have with that is the "shootable" part: they try to take grasps and shooting techniques to which they've become habituated with their big service pistols or target handguns, and apply them to a platform that is much smaller.

Some of what follows here will apply generically to all small semi-automatic pistols. Some of it will even apply to small revolvers. But all of it will apply to the double-action-only (DAO) pistol series produced by Kahr Arms.

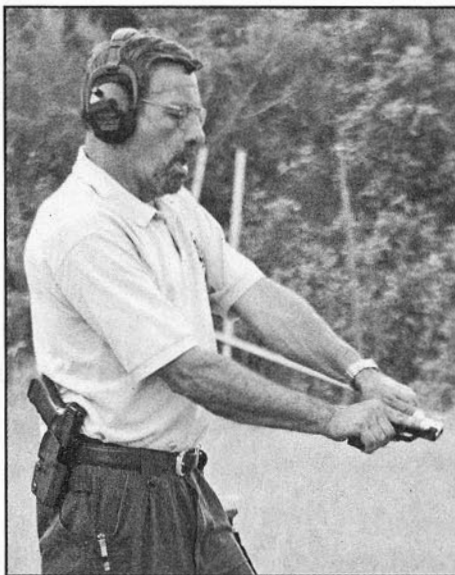
## Seating

Proper grasp is critical in getting the most out of any handgun. The grasp is the key interface of man and machine in pistol shooting. Be certain that the web of your hand is high up into the grip tang. This takes advantage of the Kahr's low bore axis *vis-à-vis* the long bones of the forearm, and gets it as low as it can get.

The lower the bore axis, the less leverage a small, light pistol has to snap its muzzle upward when a powerful cartridge is fired and sends its recoil impulse backward. When the firing hand is too low on the gun, the muzzle torques upward. That increases the interval between when you fired the last shot, and when the gun comes returns to target for the next.

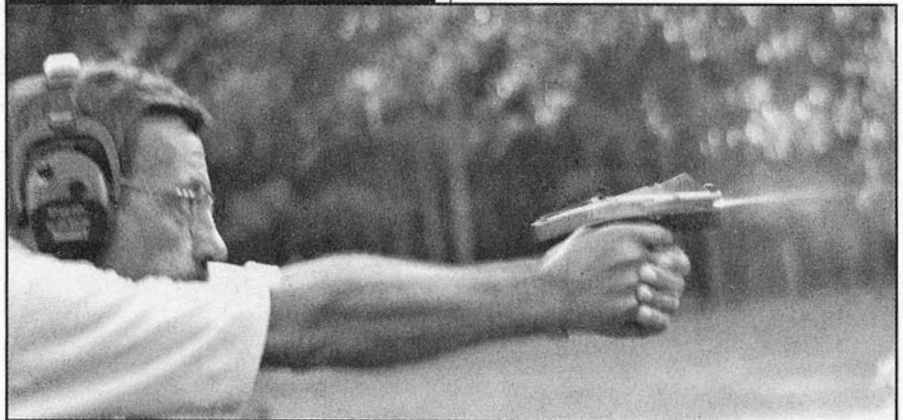
Worse things than that happen with the low grasp. Kahr designer Justin Moon — like Gaston Glock and John Moses Browning and others before him — assumed the shooter would be smart enough to hold the gun properly. Therefore, all these brilliant firearms designers put the trigger where, with a proper hold, a natural rearward movement of the index finger would bring the trigger straight back, and not deviate the gun from its point of aim on the target. If the hand is too low, a straight-back pull of the trigger jerks the muzzle down, and the bullet strikes at a point far below where the shooter intended it to go.

The too low seating of the hand on the gun gets worse still. Virtually all semi-automatics are designed on the assumption that the slide will have the rigidly held abutment of a solid hand- hold to work against as the slide rockets back and forth to eject the spent casing from the last shot, and then chamber a live cartridge for the next. The too-low hold allows the hand to recoil with the gun. Forces that should be operating the slide, now dissipate through the moving frame



*Mas demonstrates Israeli method for racking slide on Kahr .45. Whole left hand firmly holds slide, whole body drives right hand simultaneously forward.*

*Hard hold limits muzzle rise, caught in shadow image at instant of Kahr .45's discharge.*



in the moving hand, and the slide runs out of momentum.

The result is a stoppage. Perhaps a "stovepipe," with the spent casing caught upright in the ejection port. Perhaps another type of ejection failure, in which the spent casing wasn't driven hard enough against the ejector to be thrown from the gun, and is caught in the ejection port as the slide closes. Perhaps the slide just doesn't have enough "oomph" to full chamber the next live round, resulting in a failure of the pistol to go into battery. When any of these things happen, the gun stops running. As the great handgun instructor Ken Hackathorn was known to say, that's "bad juju."

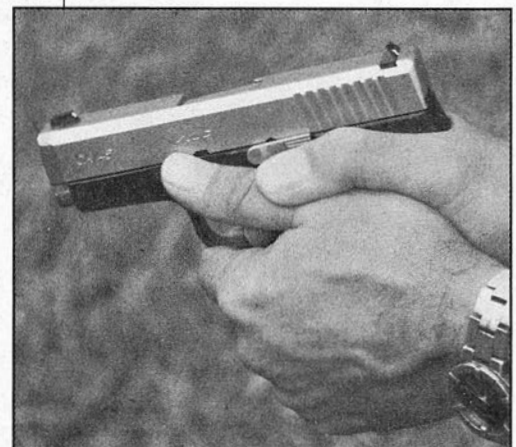
Once we have the high hand grasp on the Kahr, the next thing we need to

do is make sure the thumb isn't going to get in the way of the trigger finger. The reason is, the dimension of "trigger reach" on the Kahr pistols is short, and very short on three of the four calibers in which it is offered.

Trigger reach is the key element of hand fit on pistols (or revolvers). On the hand, it is measured from the center of the web of the hand in line with the long bones of the forearm, to the point on the palmar surface of the index finger where that finger will make contact with the trigger. On the pistol, it is measured from the center of the juncture of the grip-frame with the part of the frame that goes over the hand, generally known as the grip tang.

Because the Kahrs chambered in .45 ACP are built around a longer cartridge than those in their other calibers, and because the grip-frame has to be longer front-to-back to accommodate these cartridges, the .45 Kahrs have the longest trigger reach of any in the line. For pure fit in terms of trigger finger reach, they're my favorite of the breed.

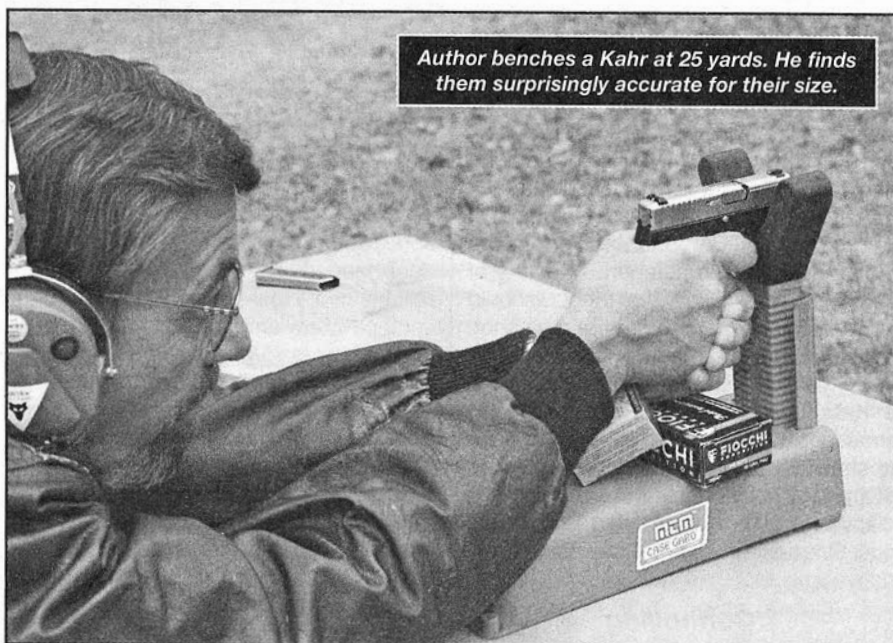
The others are extremely short. For those with small hands and short fingers,



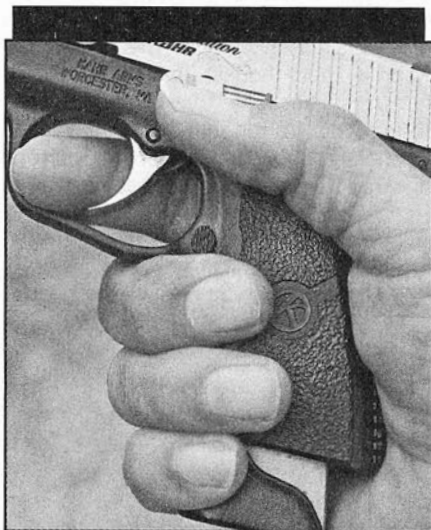
*Analyze the author's preferred grasp of Kahr pistol. Thumbs are straight so as not to block the trigger finger's stroke, and the right thumb is over the left thumb, away from the sharp-edged slide stop lever.*

this is a good thing. Compensating for a pistol whose trigger reach is too short, is relatively easy. Compensating for a pistol whose trigger reach is too long is not so impossible as some say, but it's pretty damn difficult. The whole raison d'être of the Kahr concept was to make it a small pistol, and it should not surprise anyone that a short trigger reach is part of the package when you buy a small gun. Men with average or larger than average size hands have been dealing with that for more than 60 years with J-frame Smith & Wesson revolvers, and for half a century or more before that with the smaller S&W's that preceded the J-frame.

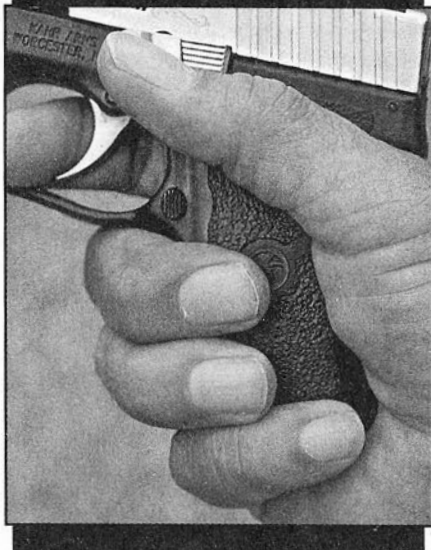
We'll get to trigger management momentarily, but basically, the sweet spot is to have the distal joint of the index finger centered on the trigger. For



Author benches a Kahr at 25 yards. He finds them surprisingly accurate for their size.



Two approaches to pinky finger placement. Here, it is comfortably seated on extension of long mag (above) or tucked tightly under the Kahr's butt when the short concealment mag (below) is in place.



a petite female with proportional size hands, she's there with most Kahr models the moment the gun sits in her hand. For someone with long fingers, the median joint of the index finger has to be cocked out toward the gun hand side a little bit. Honestly, it's no big deal.

What can be a deal-breaker is if the trigger finger is blocked by the thumb. Generations of revolver shooters learned that they had better double-action trigger control with their thumb curled down. That frankly works very well on autos with long double-action pulls like the Kahr, too. However, when you combine curled down thumb with long finger on trigger, you can get the thumb blocking the trigger finger, to the point where the index finger stops its rearward movement before the shot can be fired. And that, friends, is definitely "bad juju!"

The solution is simple: if that's a problem with your hand on your Kahr, get your thumb up out of the way! Point the thumb straight toward the target. The pathway for the trigger finger will now be totally clear.

Another matter of grasp comes not from the topmost finger, but the lowest. Kahr's subcompact models are so short that there simply is no room for the pinky finger. This doesn't mean you extend that little finger as if you were hoisting a fine china cup while having tea with the Queen. It means that you simply tuck the pinky finger down under the butt, curled in tightly. The tight curl will sympathetically tighten the other fingers of the hand, and reinforce a strong grasp. For home defense, or if concealment needs are fungible, you can simply go with an extended Kahr mag available on

most models. It not only gives you one more cartridge to fight for your life with, it gives you a place to solidly lodge that pinky finger in a hold more comfortably reminiscent of the big target pistols that many find more comfortable to shoot, but much harder to carry concealed.

### Driving

To professional shooters, "driving the gun," means operating it at speed, swiftly and surely. In the latter phrase, "surely" is the operative term. Anyone can pull a trigger fast. Pulling it fast and hitting, on the other hand, is a whole different criterion.

If you own a conventional Kahr auto-loader, you are blessed with one of the finest double-action-only trigger pulls ever put into a handgun of any kind. If you think double-action-only (DAO) pulls on autopistols are horrible and nowhere near as good as those on service revolvers, well...you've obviously never pulled the trigger of a Kahr.

Justin Moon's design work on slimming down the gun and making it function was absolutely brilliant...but I personally think the peak of his design genius on this project was the amazingly smooth, light trigger pull. Take apart a Smith & Wesson revolver, remove the mainspring, and pull the trigger. That's kinda what a Kahr trigger pull feels like.

Anyone who knows how to run a double-action revolver already knows how to drive a Kahr. Apply pressure straight back, ideally with the distal joint of the index finger centered on the trigger. Allow the shot to break by surprise. Let the trigger return forward until it stops



moving, without taking the finger off the trigger. Repeat. Yes, it is that simple.

It's a revolver-like trigger stroke, so learn from today's acknowledged top master of the double-action revolver pull, Jerry Miculek. When I realized I couldn't beat him so I might as well join him, I took his class at Smith & Wesson Academy. Jerry taught the importance of "keeping the trigger alive." That is, once a string of shots is undertaken, the trigger should either be going back to fire the next shot, or coming forward from the last one.

In the past, I've taught classes with a Kahr pistol as my teaching gun. In shooting the "pace-setter" qualification to show the students what was expected of them, I don't remember dropping too many points. The Kahr is a very "shootable" gun. One just has to know how to shoot it.

## Controlling

The doctrine of "grasp the pistol lightly, and just let it recoil" was born in a world of heavy, recoil-absorbing pistols with short, easy trigger pulls. The Kahrs most people buy are light, as much as six times lighter than their trigger pull weights. If you don't take a firm hold, your trigger finger will overpower the

rest of your grasp and move the gun off target. Moreover, remember that fingers are reciprocal: when your index finger moves rapidly, your other fingers want to tighten with it. This induces "milking," in which the other fingers sympathetically contract like the dairymaid milking the cow's udder. It pulls the whole gun down and toward the weak-hand side. The right-handed shooter who "milks" will pull his shots low and to the left, and the southpaw, low and to the right.

The cure is stunningly simple: Hold the gun tight and hard! Yes, a crush grip may induce tremor. The Kahr is a defensive pistol, and if used for its intended purpose, will probably be in a hand that is trembling from adrenaline dump anyway. Now is the time to get used to it. Guess what? If you are holding the trembling sights in the center of the target, the shot will still hit in the center of the target, and the target will neither know nor care whether the launcher was trembling before the projectile took flight.

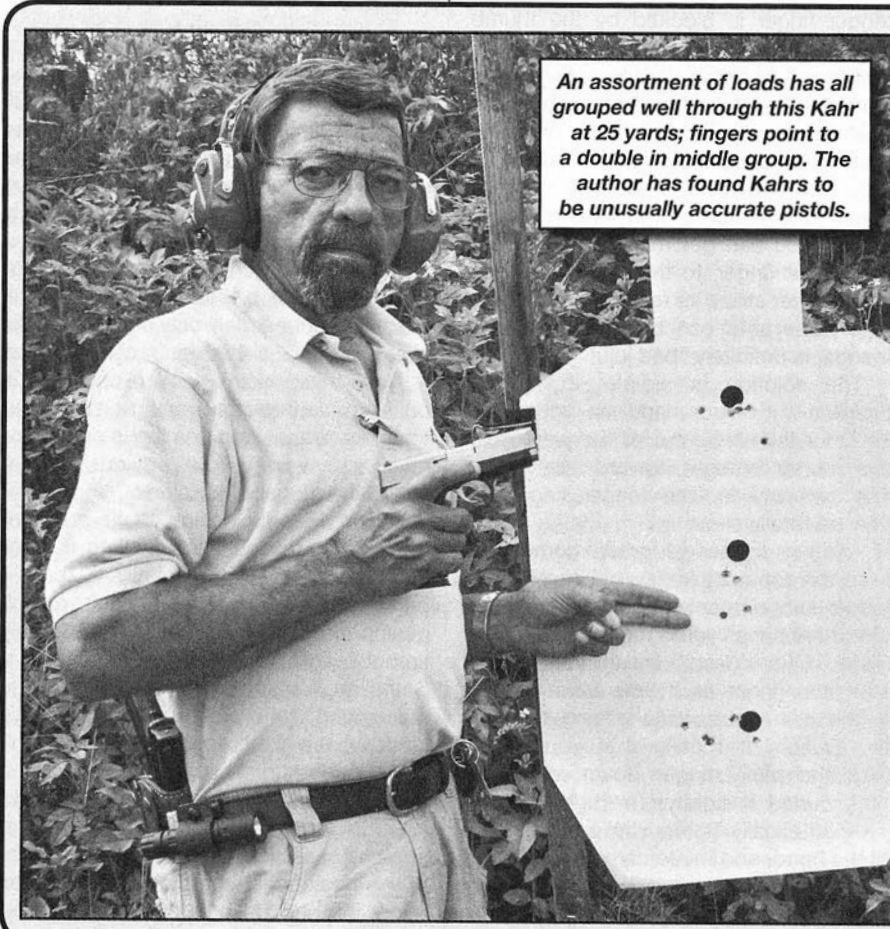
The hard grip will help you sympathetically lock your wrist. With any autopistol, a limp wrist creates whipsaw recoil which, as discussed earlier, dissipates recoil force into the hand when it should be running the gun, and leads

to malfunctions. A hard hold will also reduce felt recoil and get you back on target faster. The crush grip with this gun fits a current catch phrase in popular culture: "It's all good!"

## Break-In

Since before I was born, people who bought new cars were told before they drove them out of the lot, "Put 500 easy miles on your new car to break it in." For many years now, Kahr Arms has said in essence, "Put 200 rounds through your new Kahr to break it in." Same, same. Those easy miles with your automobile, those break-in rounds with your autopistol, "seat the parts" and get everything working in harmony.

I've heard some folks say, "It must be a piece of crap if it needs a couple hundred rounds to break it in." That's amateurs talkin'. All it means is that Kahr is more honest than most manufacturers, because they should all be telling you to run hundreds of rounds through it before you trust it. I for one applaud Kahr for giving that advice.



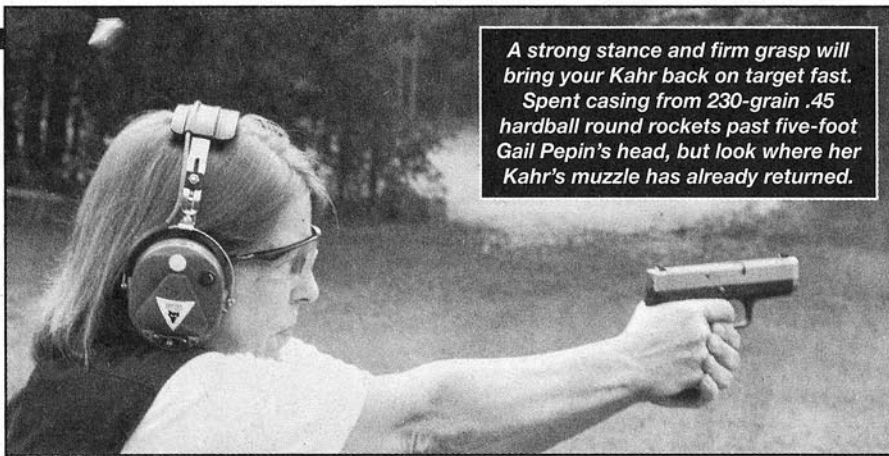
*An assortment of loads has all grouped well through this Kahr at 25 yards; fingers point to a double in middle group. The author has found Kahrs to be unusually accurate pistols.*



*The author finds Kahrs subject to "4+1 syndrome," where the first shot strikes a bit away from follow-ups. Still, with this Kahr .45, note the cluster of best 4 and particularly best 3 at 25 yards.*

*Five-shot group at 25 yards, centered on aiming dot, with inexpensive MagTech 9mm ball from economy CM9 Kahr pistol. Note the "best 3" group!*





*A strong stance and firm grasp will bring your Kahr back on target fast. Spent casing from 230-grain .45 hardball round rockets past five-foot Gail Pepin's head, but look where her Kahr's muzzle has already returned.*

I'd recommend those first couple hundred rounds be inexpensive ball ammunition. Then, once you're ready to rock, clean and lube the gun and then run a couple hundred of your carry hollow points through it. The first break-in was to "seat those parts;" the second is to make sure that the gun will function with what you'll load in it for serious business.

### **Maintenance & Mods**

All autopistols need to be kept clean and lubricated. The Kahr is no different. When you break it down, follow the owner's manual. Have a rubber mallet

handy just in case. It gets easier after you've taken them down and reassembled them a few times. If you want to retrofit night sights, do yourself a favor and send it back to the factory instead of trying to do that. How do I know this, you ask? Well...trust me...I know this.

Kahr pistols, particularly the smaller ones, have lighter magazine release springs than I care for. Light enough that when carried in a left side pocket, if you bump into a doorframe or something the magazine will often release. Doesn't seem to happen in

right-handed carry — score one for those who carry on the right-hand side.

But, a point for the lefties — on most iterations of the Kahr, the slide lock lever has nasty little sharp edges at the bottom rear and top rear. I've seen them draw blood. These need to be rounded more than they are. Interestingly, it doesn't bother anyone in southpaw shooting, because the thumbs are on the opposite side away from the sharp edges.

If you like the Kahr but the trigger is just too short for you, contact Al Greco at Al's Custom. He welded up the trigger face on my favorite K9 Kahr and extended it forward enough to make a huge difference in the feel of the trigger reach. It may not be coincidental that this was particular Kahr is the one I've shot best with. It gave once me a

1.38-inch five-shot group from 25 yards (with Federal 9BP 115-grain 9mm hollowpoint, in Pittsburgh back in the Nineties).

Bottom line? The Kahr is an outstanding pistol that has well earned its popularity in the concealed carry community. Drive it correctly, and it will get you home safe.

#### **For More Information:**

**Kahr Arms**  
508-795-3919  
kahr.com

**Al's Custom**  
724-869-0943  
alscustom.com