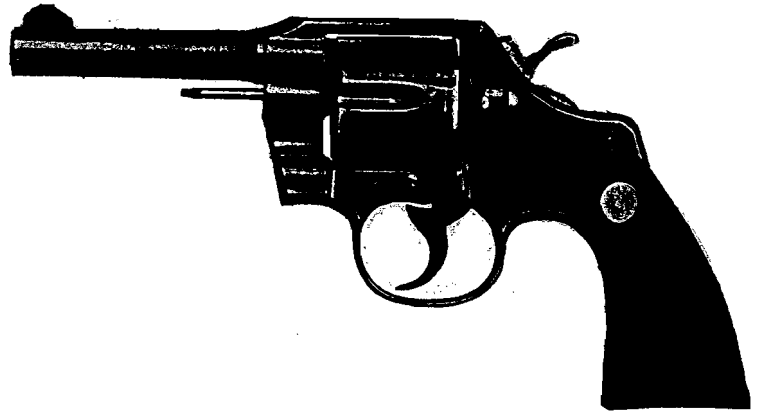


# THE HANDGUN

by  
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I am maligned by the ignorant alone. Of my own nature, I am neither good nor evil, I just am. I come in many sizes, and all are effective in the hands of the competent.

I am misused by the criminal element.

I, not carelessness, ineptitude, or reckless disregard, am blamed for accidents which simple common sense would have prevented.

I cause less than .1 of 1 percent of the deaths in the United States, but I am classed with the greatest disasters in history.

I have saved thousands more lives than I have taken; I have prevented countless more injuries than I have caused; yet the self-serving would destroy me.

*I am the first thing of which people are deprived, when the intention is to deprive them of all else.*

Were it not for me, the small, the weak, and the helpless would be at the mercy of the large, the strong, and the mighty.

I have been with some of the greatest men in history---and some of the worst. When I have been with the best, the man gets the credit; when I have been with the worst, I get the blame.

I have no Independent volition.

I have protected more people than all the policemen in the world, for I am more numerous, and, I protect the policeman.

I safeguard the weak in their homes, the honest in their businesses, and the lawful in their streets.

I question why I am blamed for the existence of crime as I prevent an infinite number more than I assist, when the automobile, which kills thousands and injures millions each year is glamorized.

The politicians who would control both government and the people would subvert me to their use, and otherwise see me destroyed or outlawed.

I am, and have been, the instrument whereby the few have provided law and order to the many.

The naive would believe that my elimination would end crimes that existed before I was a glimmer in the mind of man; Cain did not shoot Abel, nor do I remember Caesar being shot.

The *unlawful* and *unworthy* make an effort to convince the lawful and trusting that I should be eliminated when I am the force that stands between the *former* and the *latter*.

I am as constitutionally protected as freedom of speech, the right to counsel, and freedom of religion.

I am the first thing of which people are deprived, when the intention is to deprive them of all else.

I reach the conclusion that I am the block between the criminal and his victim, the politician and his dictatorship, freedom and invasion, honor and servitude, --- being secure in your beds and the knock in the night.