

Phoning It In

By Reg P. Wydeven
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A few months ago, a bunch of my buddies from work and I went to a shooting range over the lunch hour. We called it our first annual “Lunch ’n’ Load.” A few of my friends brought in their 9 millimeter handguns and we shot at targets.

I had never shot a handgun before. Although we had ear protection, I couldn’t believe how loud it was. Plus, it was much harder than Bruce Willis makes it look in the movies. Thankfully, I received great tutelage from my friends who were seasoned veterans with guns. I did pretty well and in one round, I even had a nice cluster of holes in the bullseye.

We had so much fun, my friend, Keith, even arranged for an instructor to come to our office for a training session so a few of us could get certified for a concealed carry permit.

Many states, including Wisconsin, have passed concealed carry laws, meaning with a permit, citizens are allowed to carry a concealed handgun. Even though the guns are concealed, they are still sometimes visible, however.

For example, Kirk Kjellberg had a concealed gun in a restaurant a few years back. He explained to NBC News that, “A boy spotted me in the restaurant and said loudly, ‘Mommy, Mommy, that guy’s got a gun!’ And then pretty much the whole restaurant stared at me.”

As a result, Kjellberg, a self-proclaimed “serial inventor,” decided to make a gun that wasn’t so conspicuous. He created the Ideal Conceal, which is a handgun that looks almost identical to a smart phone.

Like a Transformer from the 1980s, the ‘smart phone’ unfolds into a .380-caliber, double-barreled, two-shot pistol. The Ideal Conceal is made of plastic with a metal core and is 3 x 5 inches, the size of a Galaxy S7. The gun, which lists for \$395 and goes on sale in October, is touted as being “virtually undetectable because it hides in plain sight.”

Kjellberg’s company, based in Minnesota, received more than 13,000 ‘Likes’ for its Facebook page for Ideal Conceal. According to Kjellberg, over 4,000 people around the world have expressed interest in purchasing one. But the guns has had its fair share of dislikes, too.

U.S. Senator Charles Schumer has asked the federal Department of Justice and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to investigate the Ideal Conceal. Schumer believes the gun “is just a disaster waiting to happen.”

The Senator claims that because the gun resembles an everyday item, it could violate federal law. He also expressed concern for the safety of law enforcement officers, for they have no way of knowing if a suspect was pulling out a phone or a gun.

Because Ideal Conceal is made of plastic, the Department of Homeland Security has asked Kjellberg to provide the agency with x-rays of the gun to see if it can be distinguished from cellphones during airport screenings.

Finally, there is concern that young children will confuse the gun with a phone and accidental shootings will result. Kjellberg counters, saying, “if you have a pistol and you have children anywhere near you, it’s your responsibility to lock that stuff up and keep it away from children.”

Even though I don’t own a gun and don’t plan on getting one, I still want a concealed carry permit. Because my hands are lethal weapons, I’ll finally be able to wear gloves.

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