



Department  
of the Treasury

United States  
Customs Service

Special Report

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# Disguised Weapons

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# Introduction

U.S. Customs officers processed more than 273 million persons entering the United States in fiscal year 1978. The vast majority were law-abiding individuals. A very small percentage were known or suspected criminals. Because there is always a chance of danger on the job, it is to the advantage of Customs officers to be able to spot the disguised weapons described in this publication.

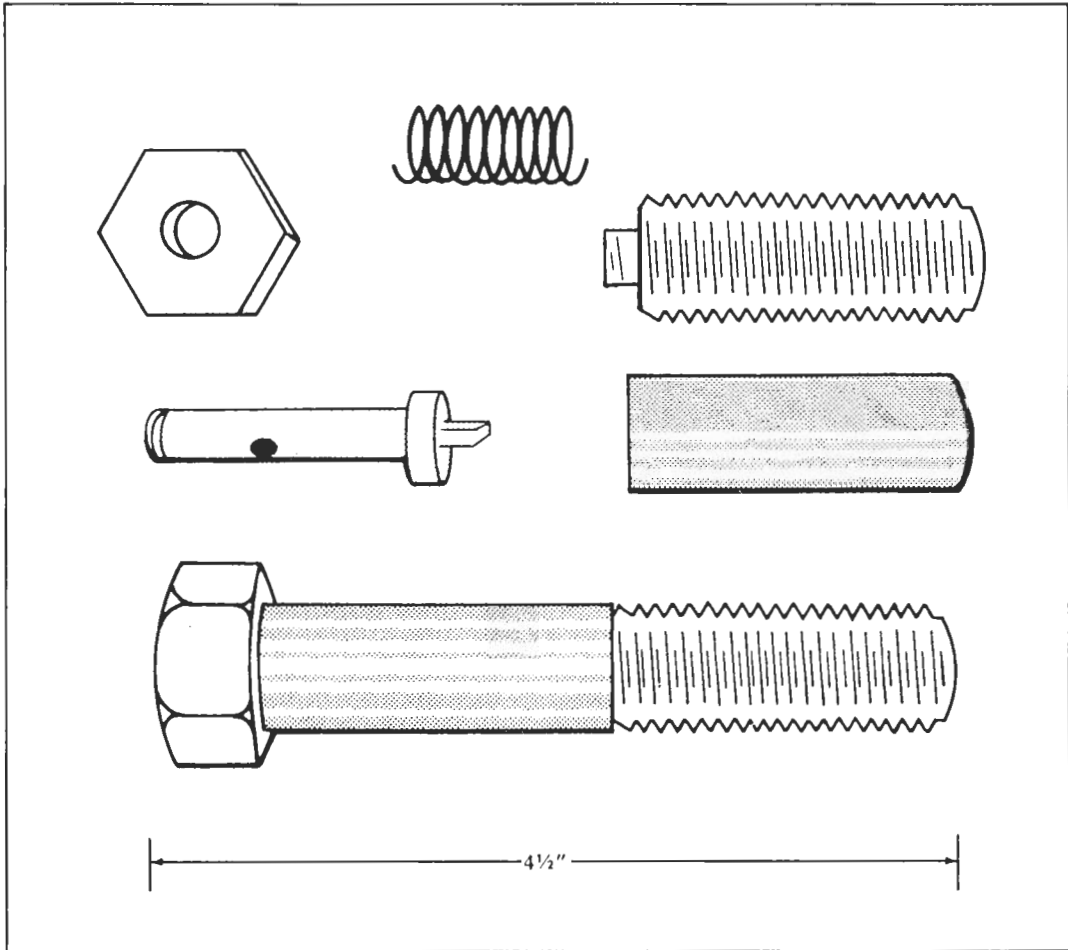
The information in this report was contributed by U.S. Customs field offices; the Planning and Procedures Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms; the Civil Aviation Security Service of the Federal Aviation Administration; and the Organized Crime and Criminal Intelligence Branch, Division of Law Enforcement, California Department of Justice. You can help keep all Customs officers informed by forwarding additional information on disguised weapons, including photographs and drawings, to the Analysis/Programs/Liaison Branch of the Office of Enforcement Support.

Office of Enforcement Support  
Information Management Division  
Analysis/Programs/Liaison Branch  
February 1979

## Bolt Gun

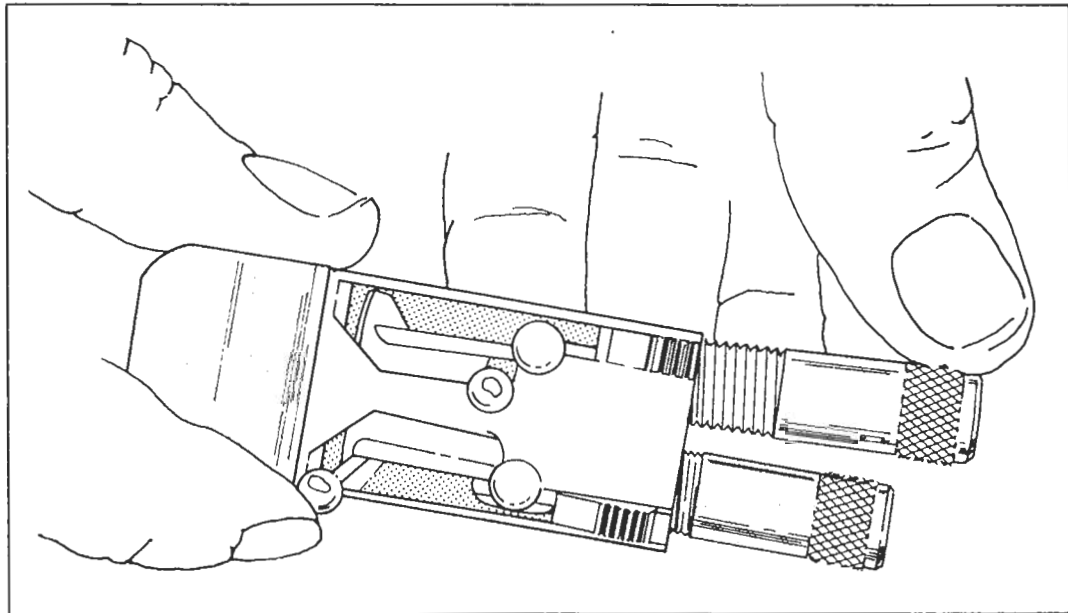
Like an ordinary bolt, the bolt gun can be fitted into a motorcycle, a car, a truck, or a piece of machinery and would completely blend in with the other bolts and equipment. As you can see, the bolt is made from a standard 5/8" diameter machine bolt. It is designed to fire a .22 caliber long rifle or standard cartridge. The weapon can be broken down into five pieces. The total length of the bolt is 4 1/2".

To load the weapon, the threaded portion of the bolt, which acts as the barrel, is unscrewed and a cartridge is placed inside. The bolt is fired by pulling back and releasing the hexagonal bolt head.



## Double Barreled Weapon

This device closely resembles a cigarette lighter and can easily be concealed in hand or pocket. Two .25 caliber cartridges can be fired, either independently or at the same time. The weapon is loaded by unscrewing the two barrels and placing the cartridges into the threaded ends. The barrels are screwed back in and the weapon is fired by pulling back and releasing the two small pins, which can be locked back in a firing position.

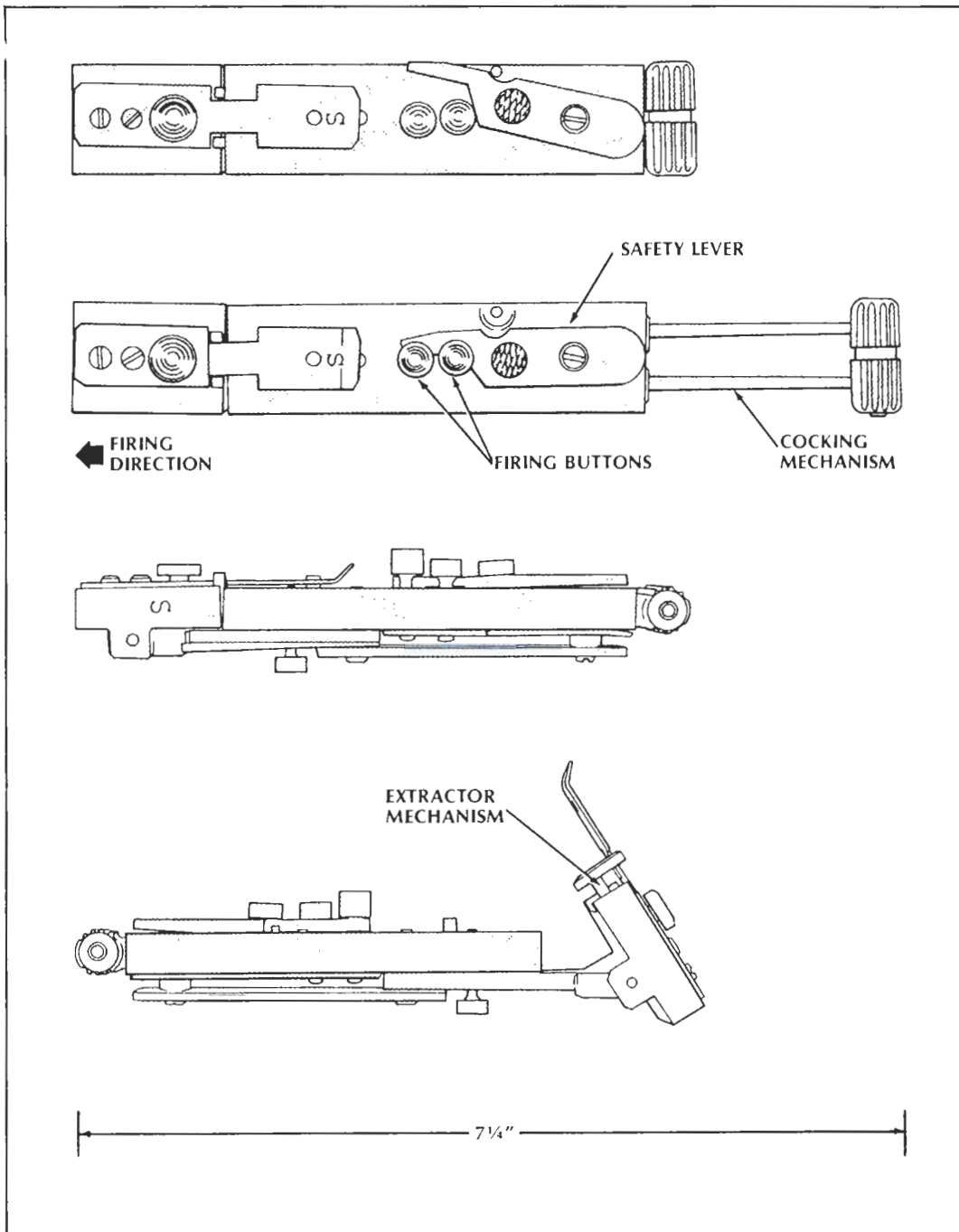


## Double Barreled Handgun

The homemade double barreled handgun is currently available on the Mexican black market for \$25. The device is made of steel and measures 5 1/4" x 1" x 1/2". It weighs nine ounces and fires two .22 caliber short, long, or long rifle cartridges. The loading and unloading of the device is similar to that of a double barreled shotgun, in that the barrels are side by side and the barrel portion of the weapon breaks open for loading and unloading. The device also includes an extractor for easy ejection of the spent cartridge casings.

The weapon is cocked by pulling back the serrated knob located at the rear of the weapon. When the safety lever is moved to the "fire" position, the weapon can be fired by pushing one or both of the buttons located behind the barrels on the top of the weapon.

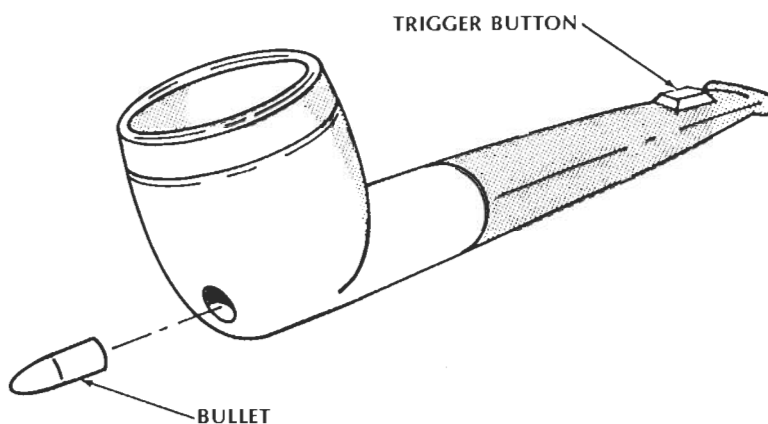
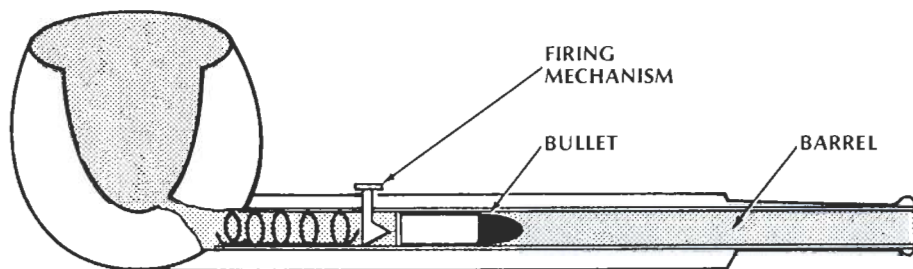
Because of its compact design, the weapon could easily be concealed in a pocket, on a piece of machinery, or in a case, such as a Buck knife style sheath. The weapon is said to be accurate to a range of 15 to 25'.



## Smoking Pipe Guns

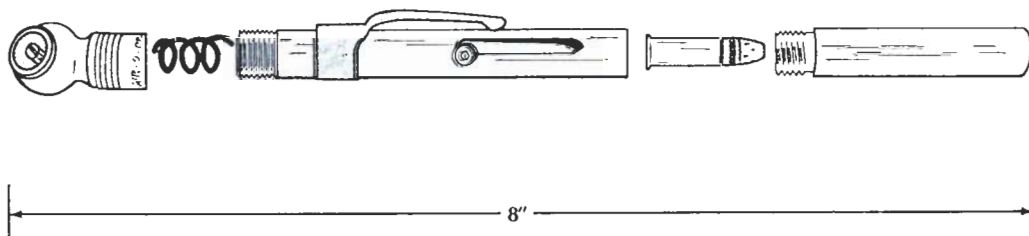
There are two types of smoking pipe guns. The first is an ordinary looking smoking pipe modified to fire a .22 caliber or .32 caliber cartridge. The pipe stem is bored to allow insertion of a piece of metal tubing to form the barrel of the weapon. The pipe is fired by pulling back and releasing a small pin on the top of the tube portion of the pipe.

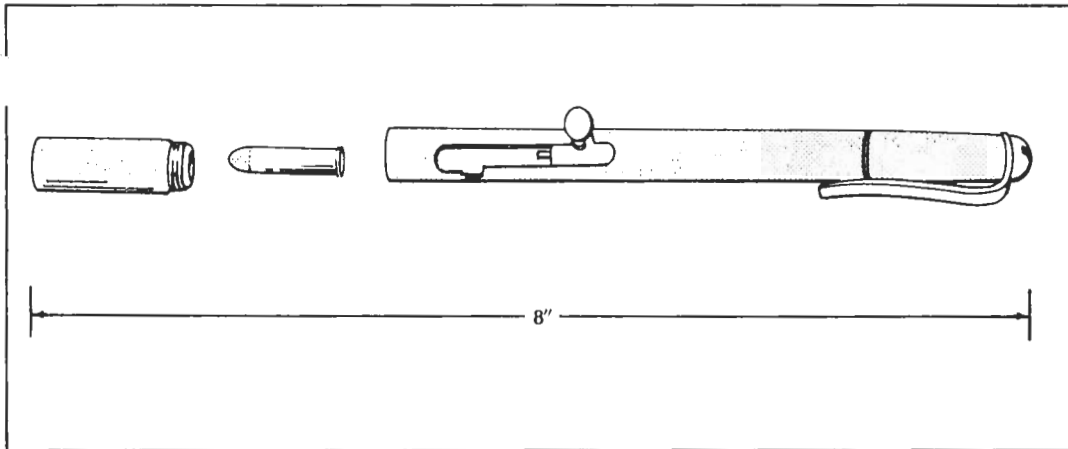
The second type of smoking pipe gun was seized by a U.S. Customs officer. The pipe is constructed so that when the smoker bites down on the trigger button in the stem, the bullet is fired through the front of the bowl portion of the pipe.



## Tire Pressure Gauge Gun

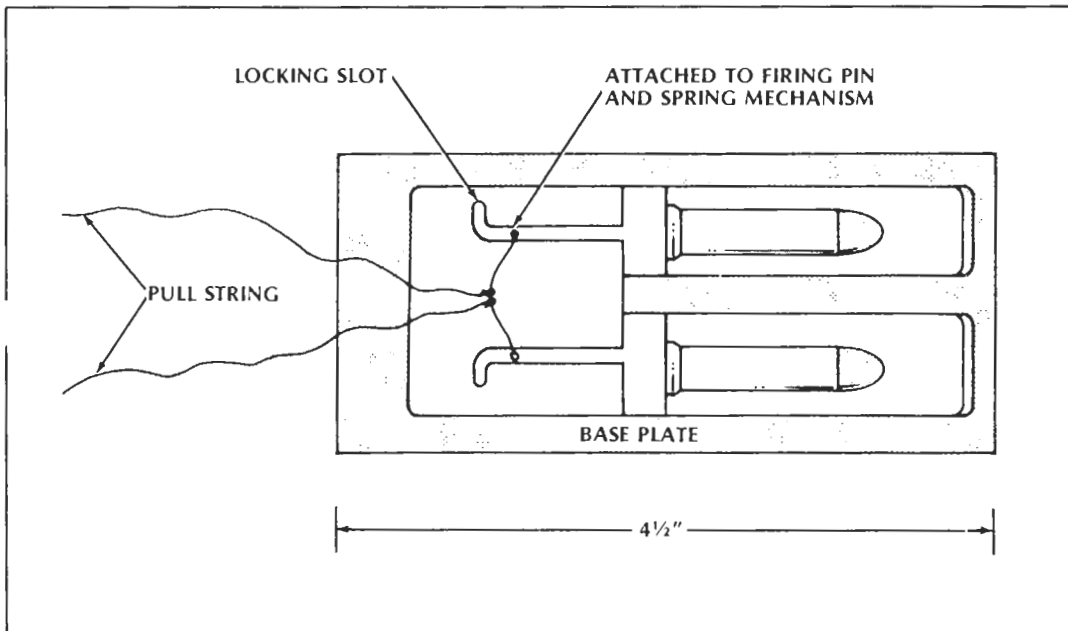
This tire pressure gauge has been modified to fire a .22 caliber long rifle or standard cartridge. The gauge, when placed inside a shirt pocket or in a tool box, would appear to be a normal tire pressure gauge. The weapon is fired by cocking and releasing the pin on the side of the gauge.





## Flare Gun

Similar in design to the tire pressure gauge gun is a flare gun modified to accept a cartridge such as a .22 caliber cartridge or a small shotgun shell. This weapon, which is a legal device used to fire distress signal flares, is approximately 4" long and  $\frac{1}{2}$ " in diameter. Without careful inspection, it would easily pass for a pen or mechanical pencil.

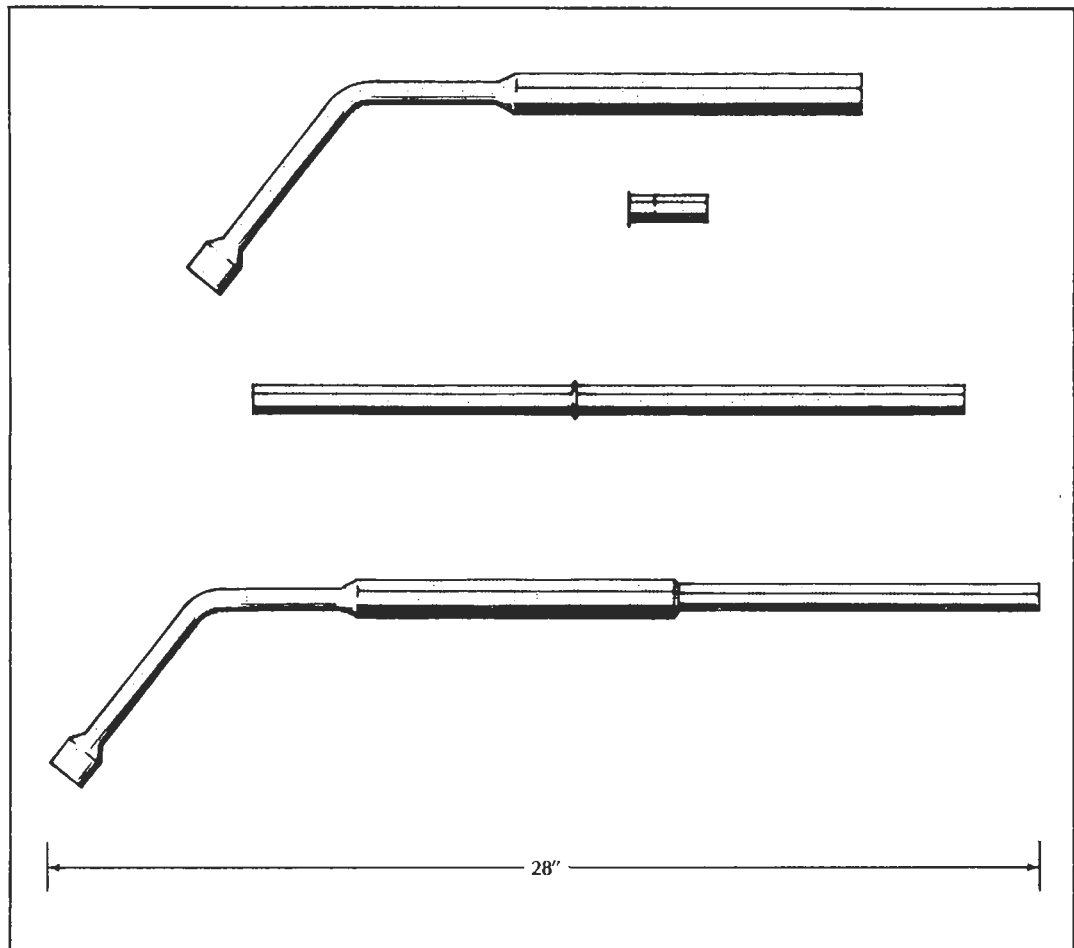


## Belt Mounted Gun

The belt mounted gun has been seized by both state and federal authorities. It is 4 1/2" long and fires two .38 caliber cartridges. This homemade device is usually attached to a belt. One end of a string is connected to the firing pin of the weapon and the other end is threaded through a person's coat sleeve and tied around one finger. When told to put his hands up or against the wall, an individual wearing this weapon can fire the gun.

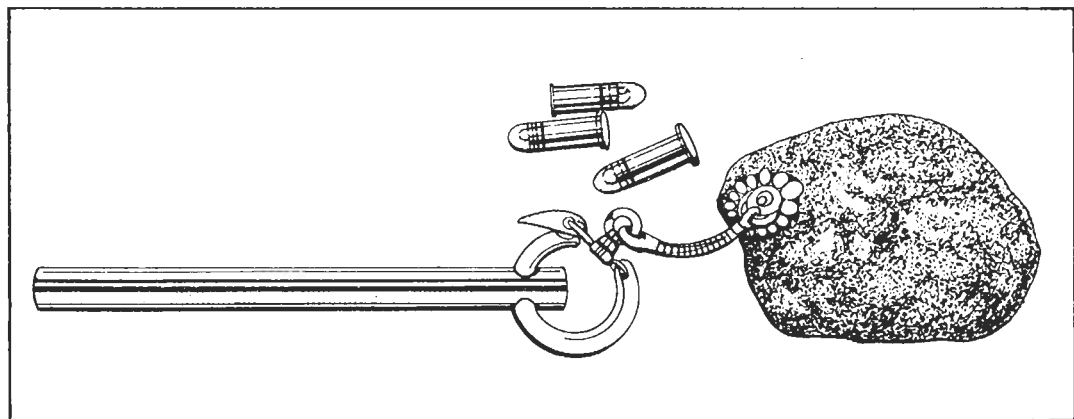
## Tire Iron Shotgun

The tire iron shotgun looks like a normal tire iron and fires a .410 gauge shotgun shell. The shell is inserted into the barrel and the barrel, which has a smaller diameter than the actual tire iron portion of the weapon, is inserted into the tire iron portion. The weapon is fired by forcing the barrel portion back against the rear of the tire iron portion.



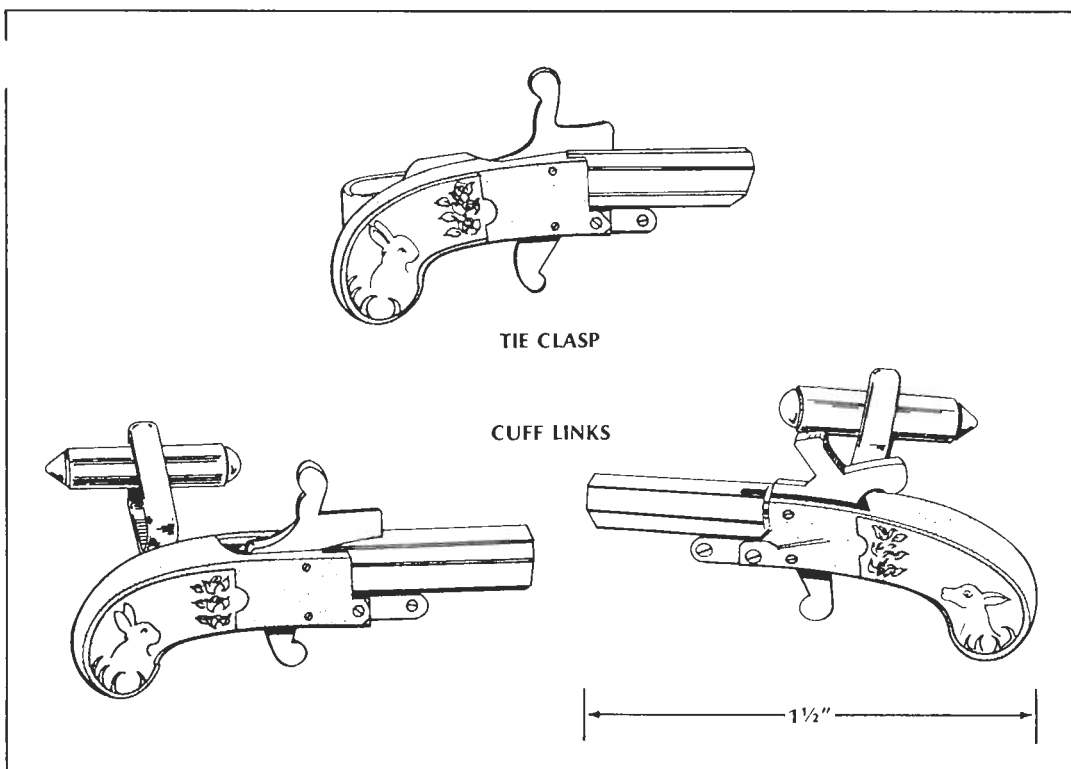
## Key Chain Gun

The key chain gun consists of a metal cylinder and a rock attached to a key ring. It fires a .22 caliber cartridge. The cartridge is placed in the key ring end of the metal barrel or cylinder and the weapon is fired by striking the cartridge head with the rock.



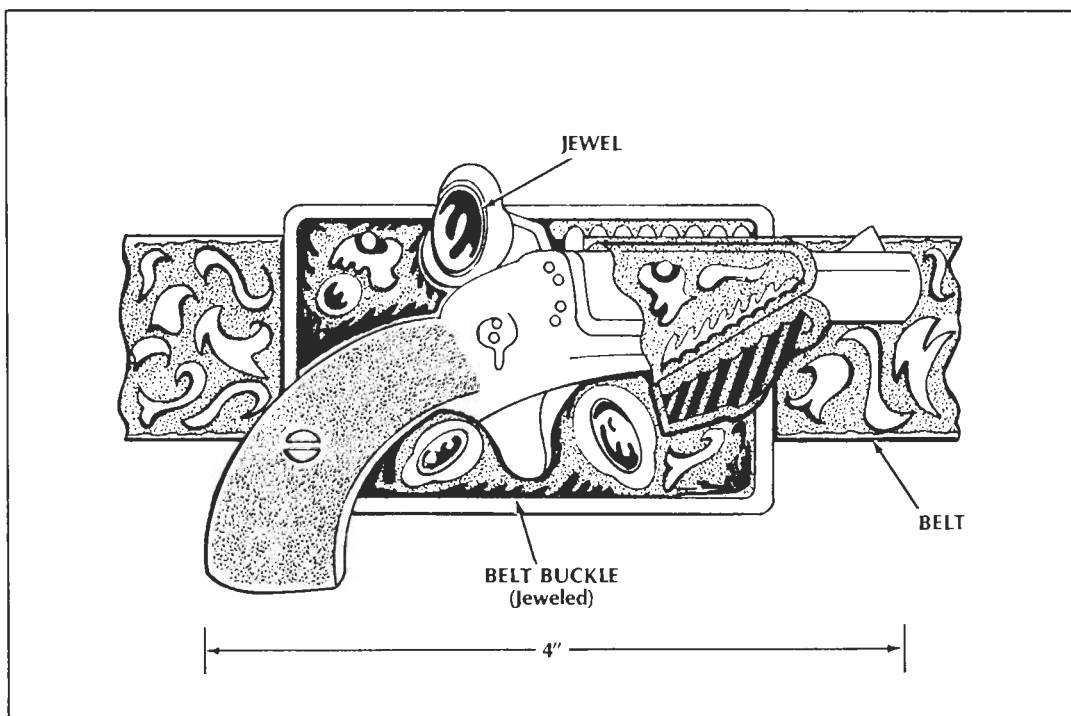
## Firing Cufflinks and Tie Clasps

These small cufflinks and tie clasps purchased in Germany and San Francisco have a charge of birdshot. The weapons are approximately 1 1/2" in length and resemble miniature representations of antique pistols. The pistols, when loaded with number 8 or 9 birdshot, can be lethal at close range.



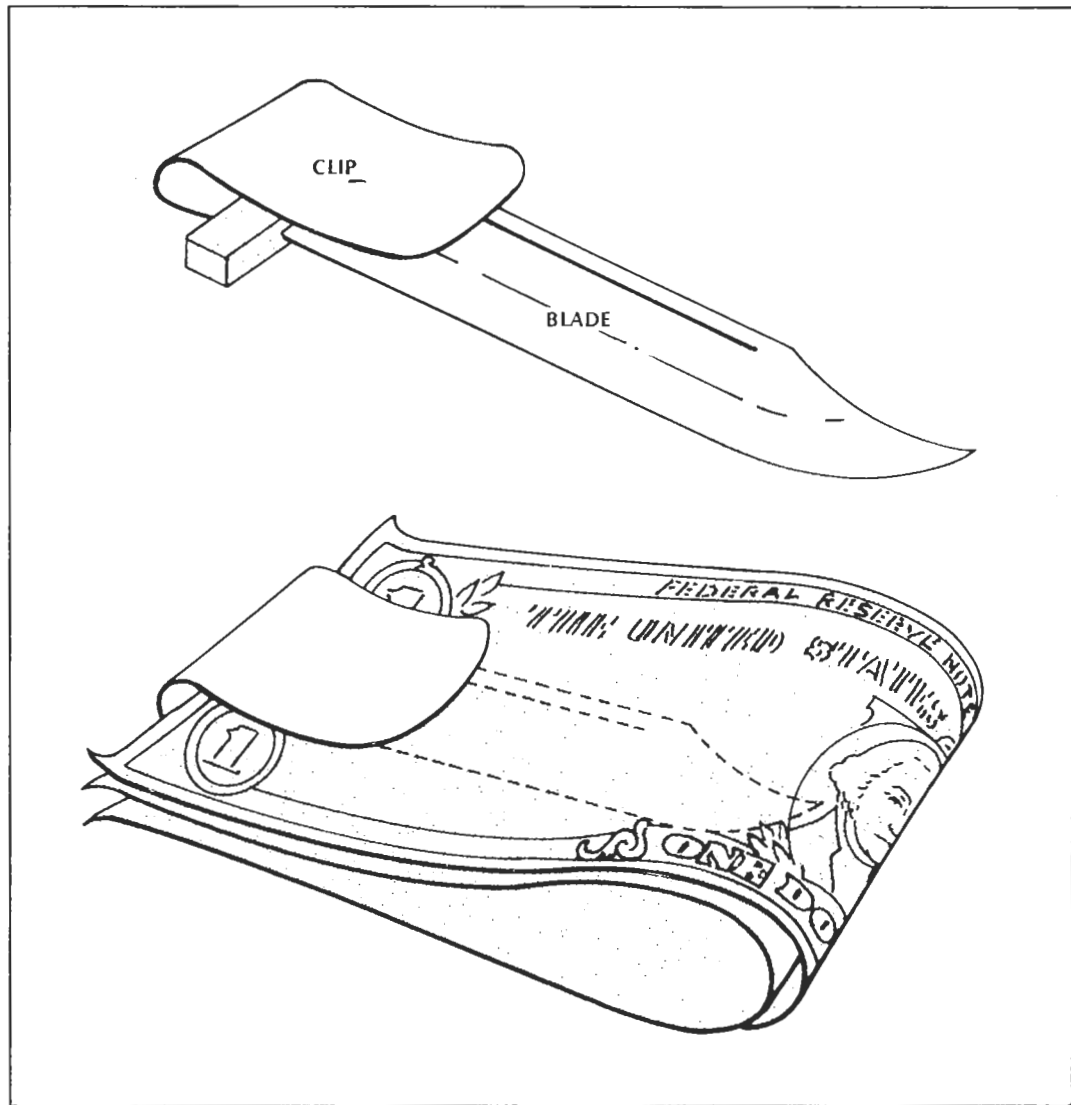
## Belt Buckle Derringer

The weapon initially looks like a piece of jewelry, when in fact it is a fully operational .22 caliber single shot derringer mounted on a belt buckle. When the derringer is in place on the belt buckle, it appears to be a toy or an ornament. The buckle is made of polished metal and the jewels are imitation turquoise. One of the stones, behind the hammer of the derringer, is spring loaded and moves to allow the derringer to be removed from the belt buckle.



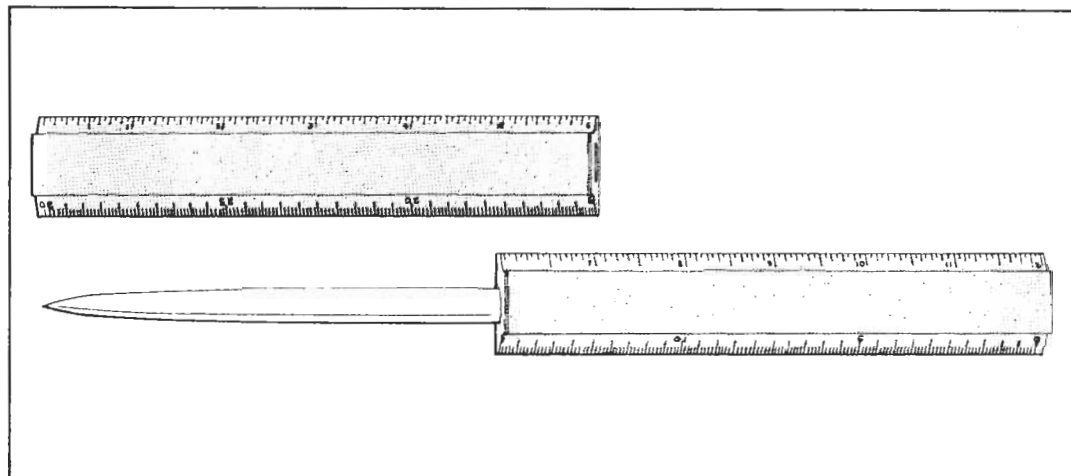
## Money Clip Knife

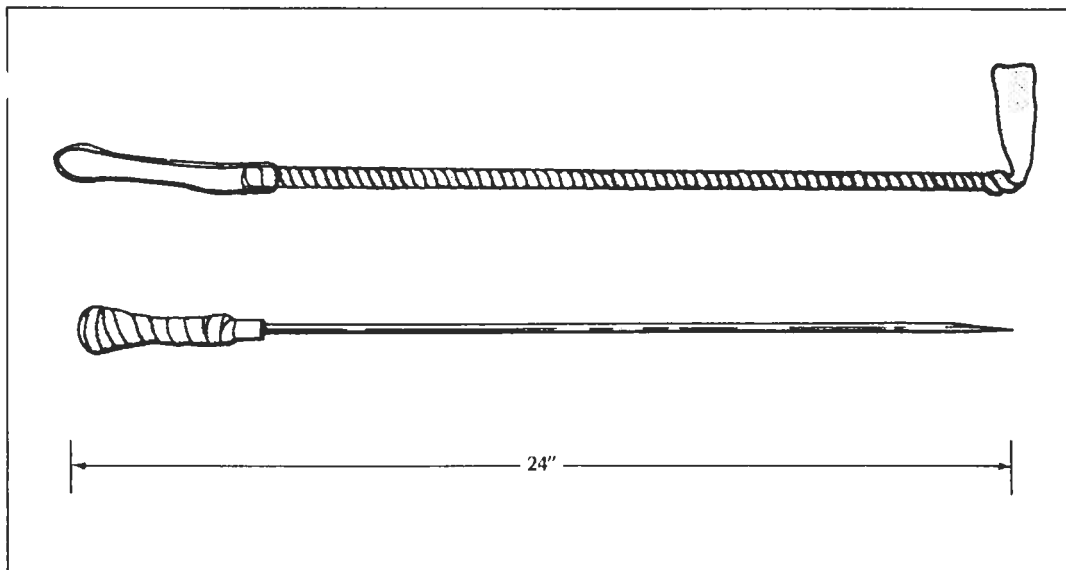
The money clip knife could be overlooked in a hasty personal search.



## Ruler/Letter Opener

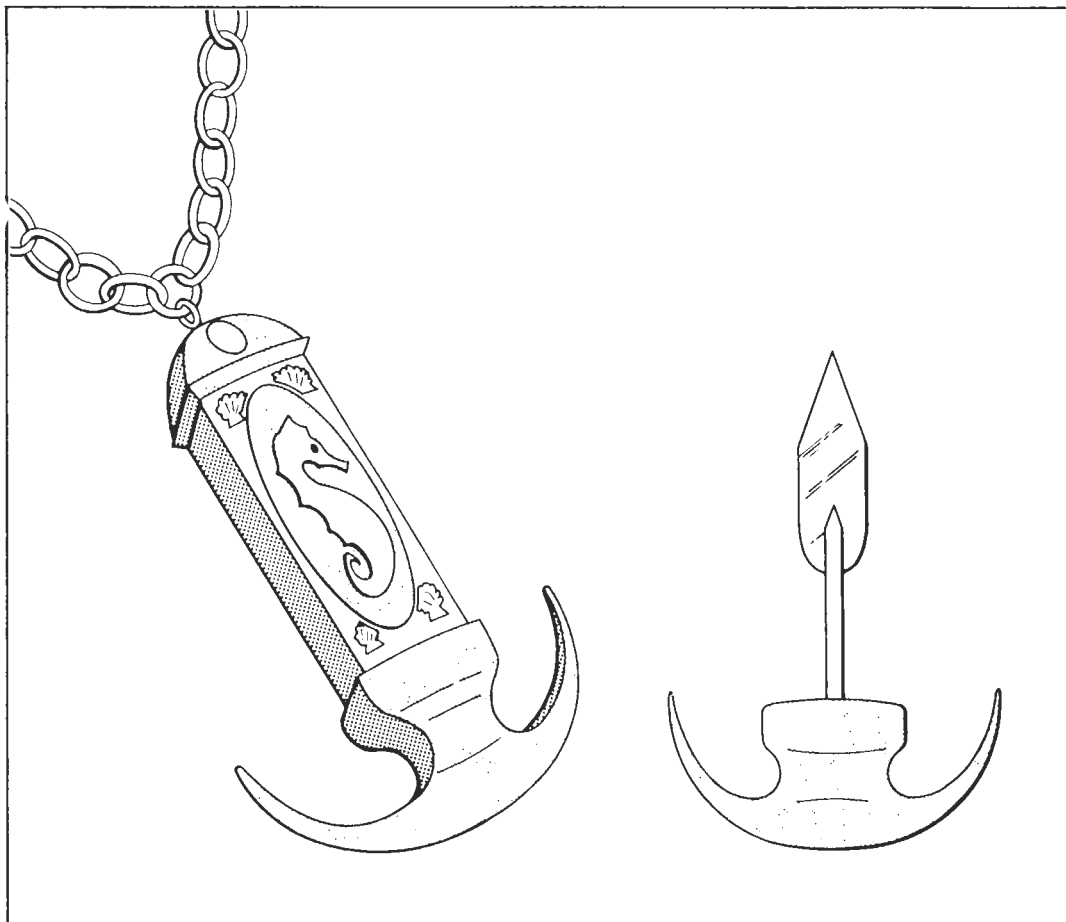
Actually a ruler with a letter opener inside, the weapon could be overlooked in search of a briefcase or an attache case. Compared to a standard ruler, the only noticeable difference is the separation in the center of the ruler. Although this device was not designed to be a weapon, it could easily be used as such.





## Riding Crop Sword

Similar to sword canes, the riding crop contains a steel shaft with a sharp pointed end. Mixed in with other riding equipment, this weapon could easily go unnoticed.

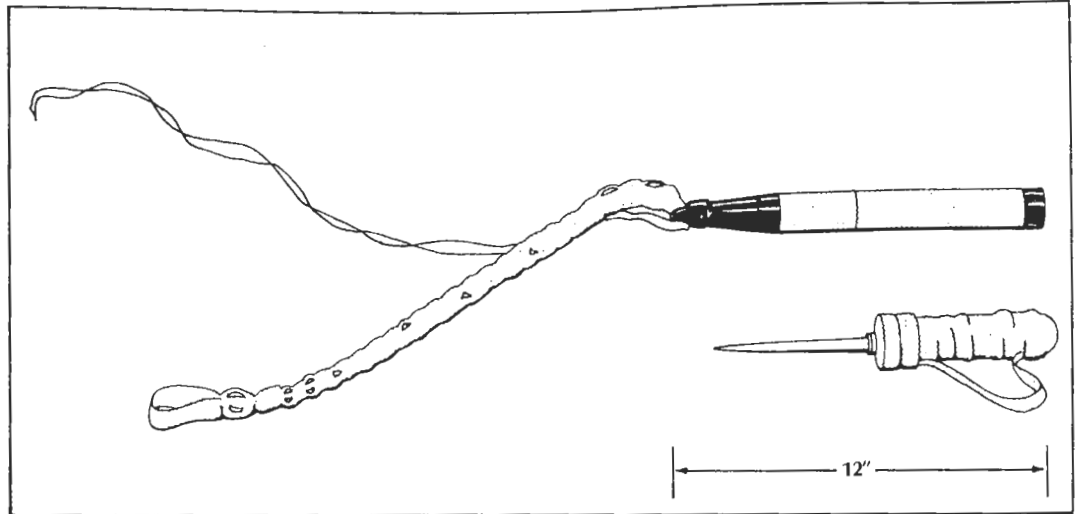


## Cat Claw Dagger

The weapon is called a Cat Claw in an advertisement in Shotgun News. It is designed to be worn as a pendant and chain. Concealed inside the pendant is a multi-edged stainless steel knife blade. The overall length of the blade, shank, and handle is approximately 3 1/2". The blade can quickly be removed from the sheath by grasping the handle portion of the pendant and pulling down.

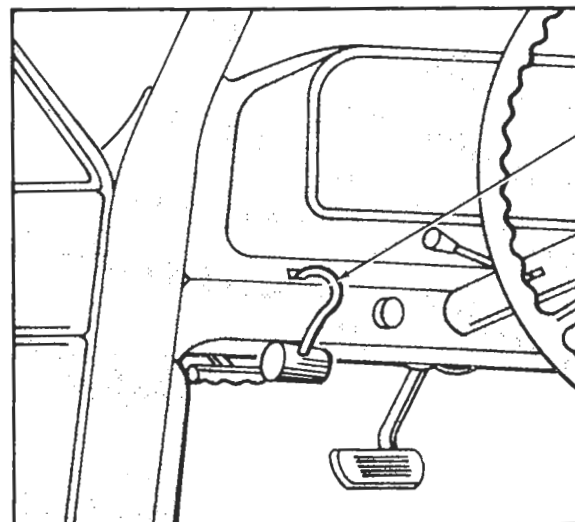
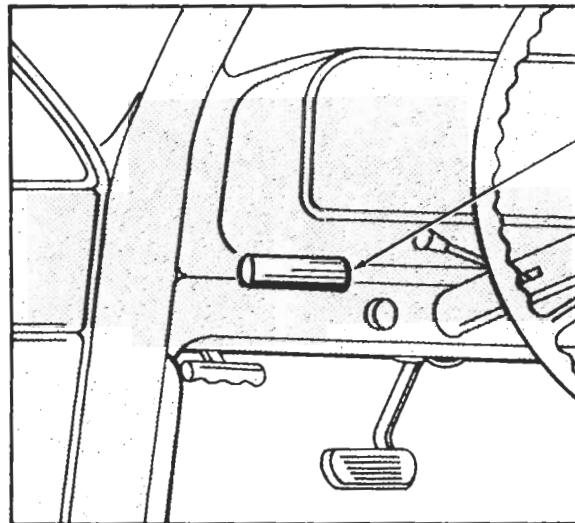
## Whip Stabbing Device

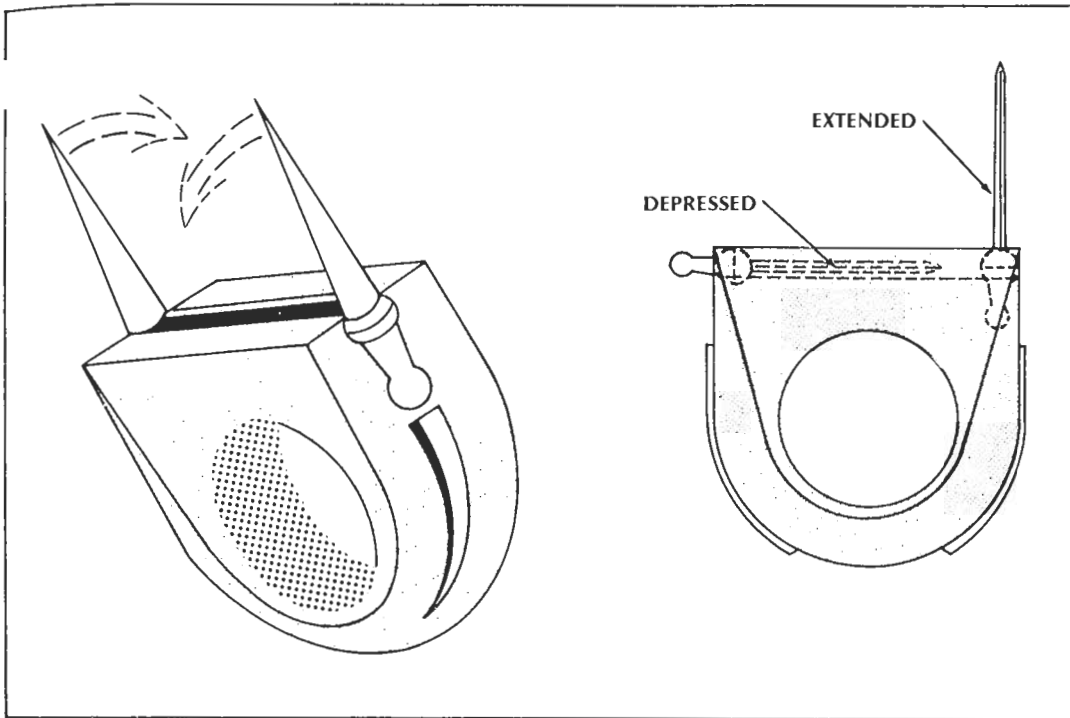
Shown is an ornamental whip, the type of item a tourist might bring back from a foreign country. The handle portion of the whip conceals an ice pick shaft.



## Hay Hook

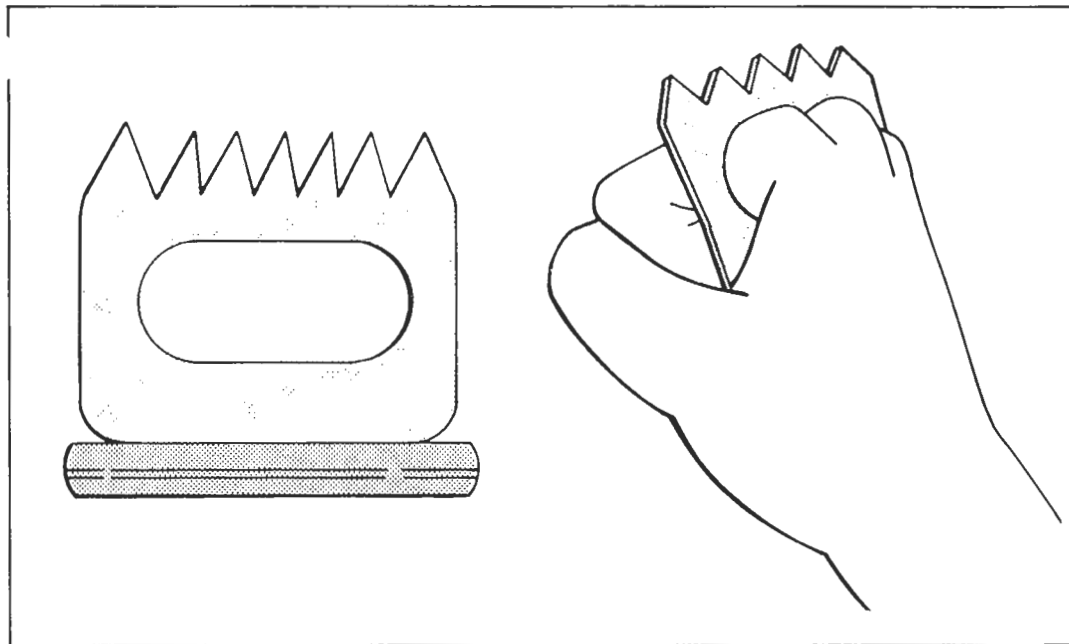
A Wisconsin state trooper discovered this device in a vehicle which he had stopped for a traffic violation. Commonly known as a hay hook or bailing hook, it is normally used on farms for moving bales of hay or on the waterfront for moving cargo. In this particular case, the hook had been concealed on the vehicle dashboard by placing the metal hook portion through a hole in the dash. This left only the wooden handle portion exposed. This weapon is reportedly common in the Chicago area.





## Guardian Ring

The guardian ring consists of a ring in which two blades are concealed. When the two pins which protrude from two sides of the ring are pushed, the two blades flip into position. Although each blade is only approximately 3/8" long, a bad wound could be inflicted with this weapon.

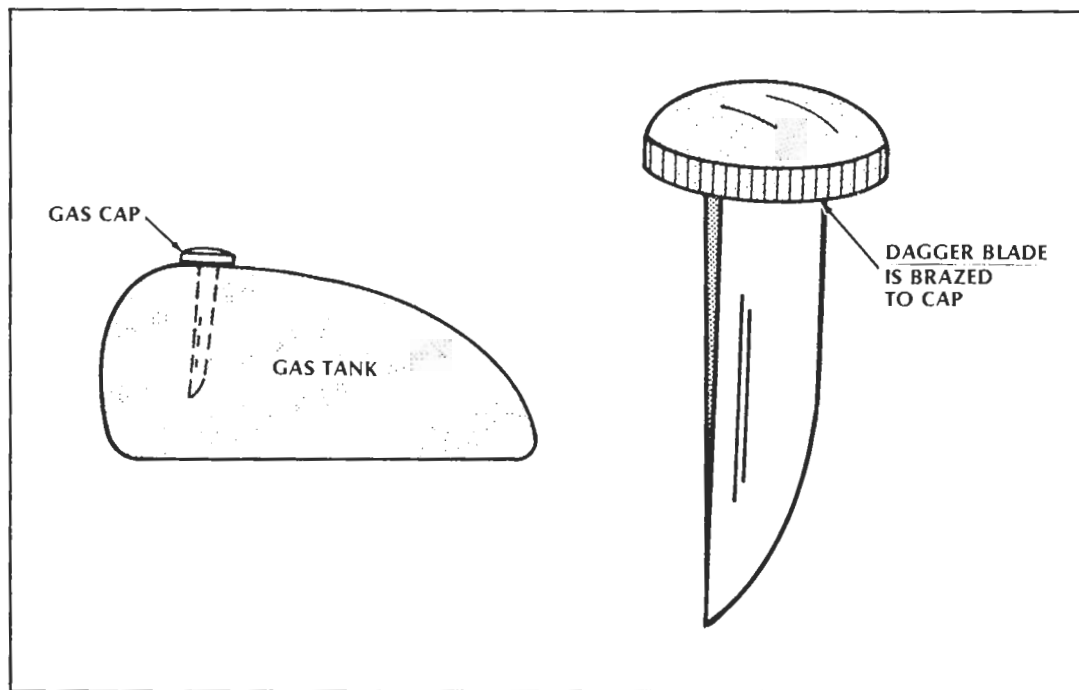


## Hair Pick Weapon

A hair pick is normally used to comb Afro style haircuts. The hair pick weapon is made of sheet metal with razor sharp points. This weapon can reportedly be purchased for \$25. It would also be easy to make.

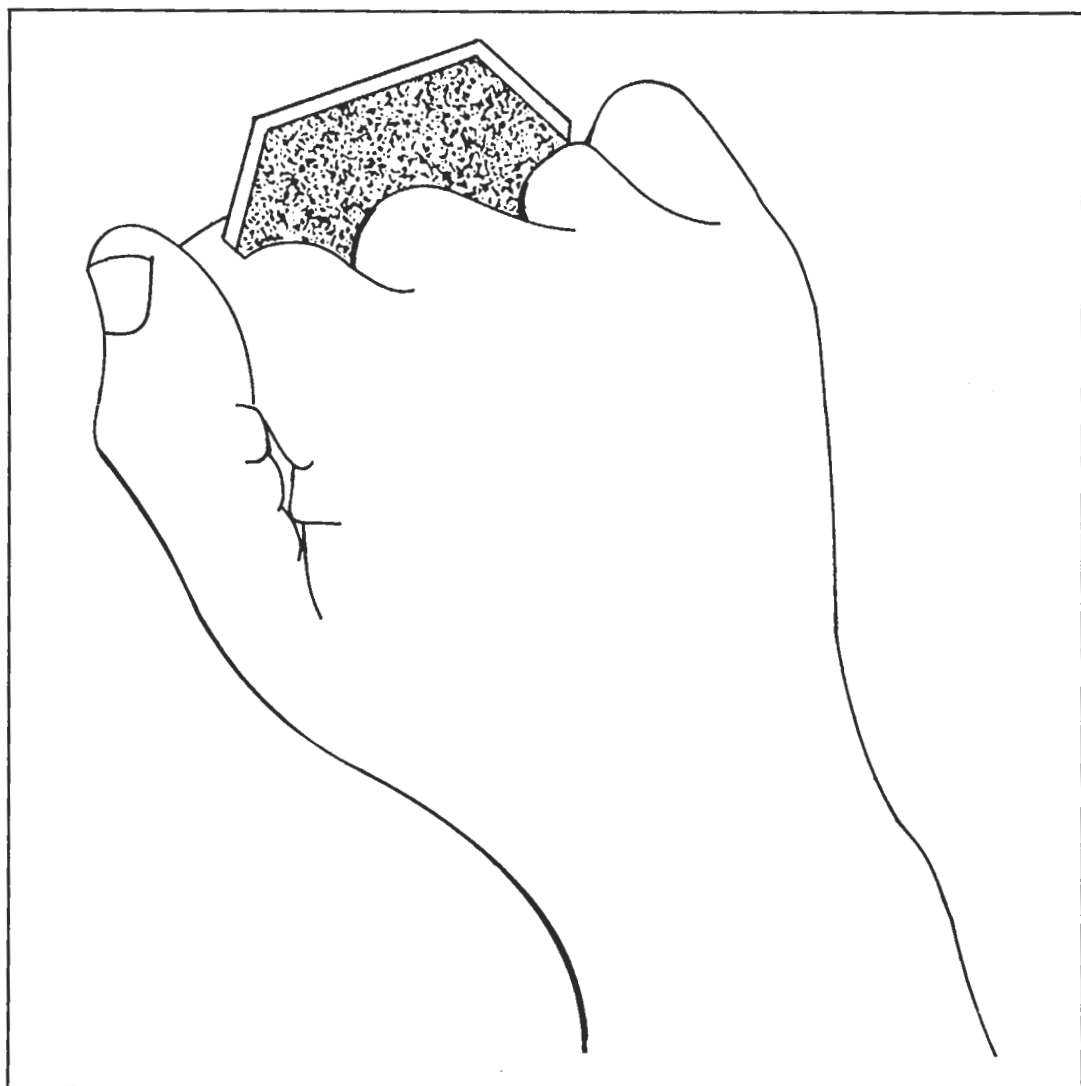
## Gas Cap Knife

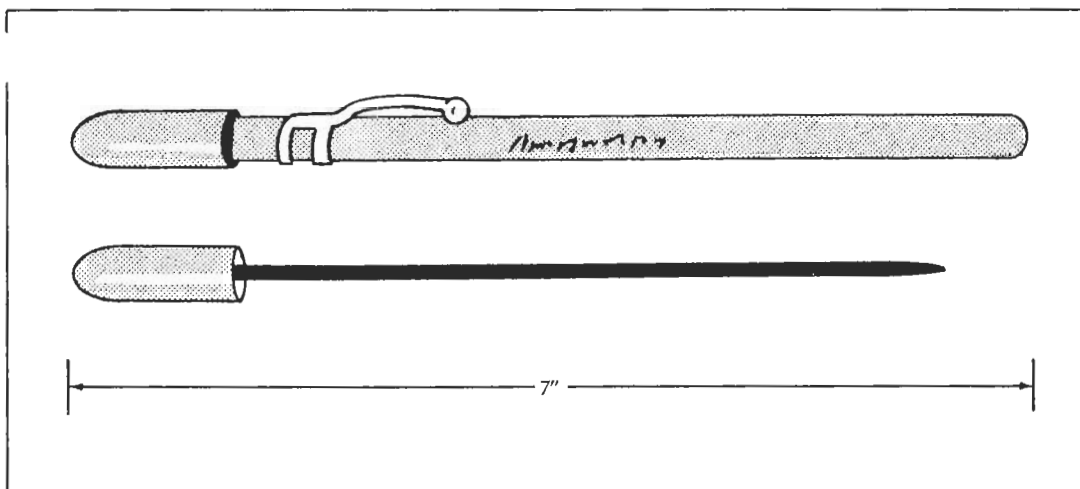
The gas cap knife consists of a knife blade which has been welded to the inside of the gas tank cap. Frequently concealed in a motorcycle gas tank, the knife blade can be as long as the gas tank is deep.



## Knuckle Knife

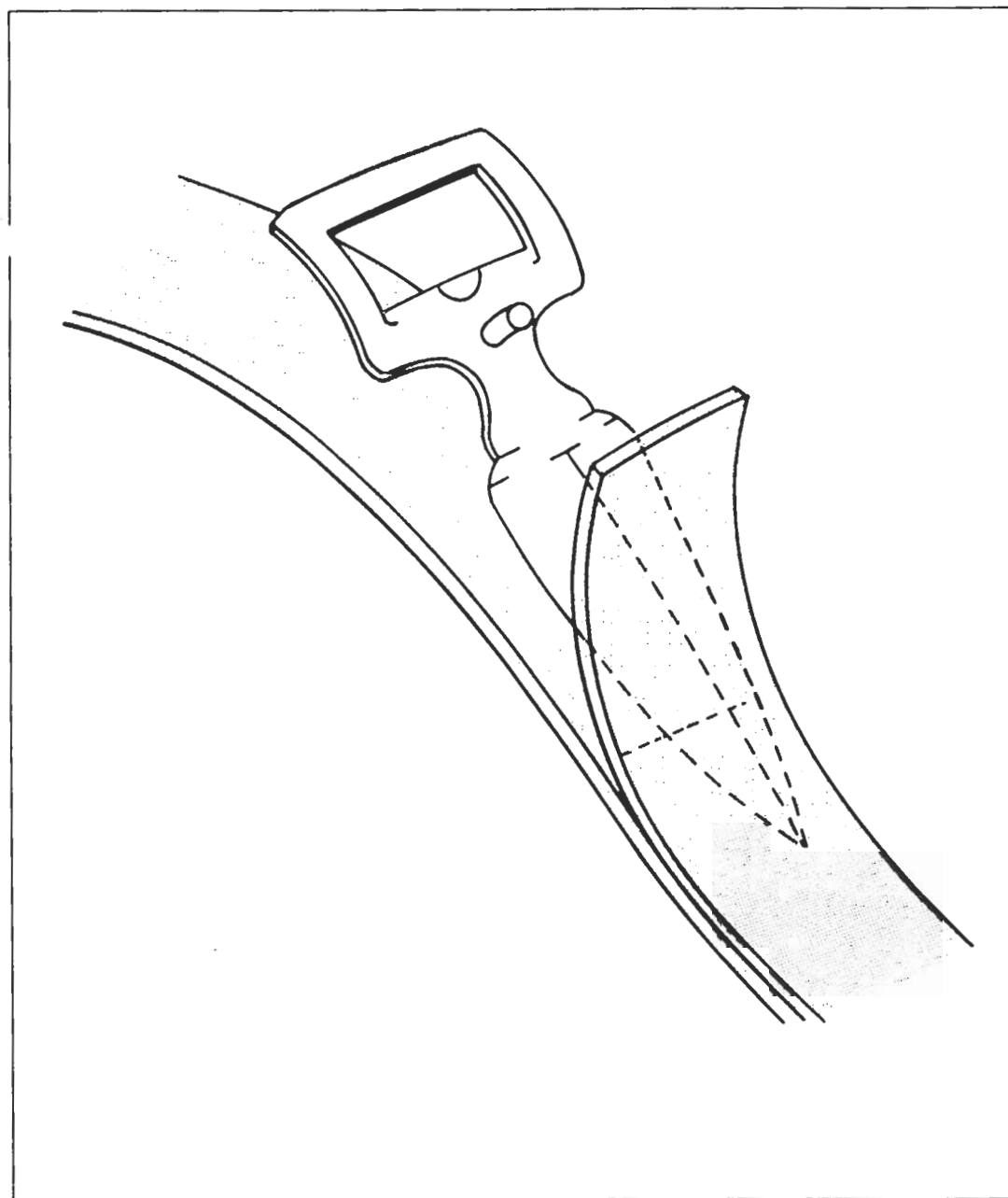
The knuckle knife appeared in an advertisement in Soldier of Fortune magazine. The knife is made of stainless steel and is approximately 1/8" thick. The blade portion is connected to a ring which slips over the middle finger, with the blade protruding out from the knuckles in much the same manner as brass knuckles. Small enough to slip into a pocket, the knife sells for \$50.





## Ball Point Pen Weapon

The ball point pen weapon could easily be overlooked in a personal search. The weapon consists of an ordinary ball point pen with a long thick needle glued into the cap. The needle replaces the ink cartridge of the pen.

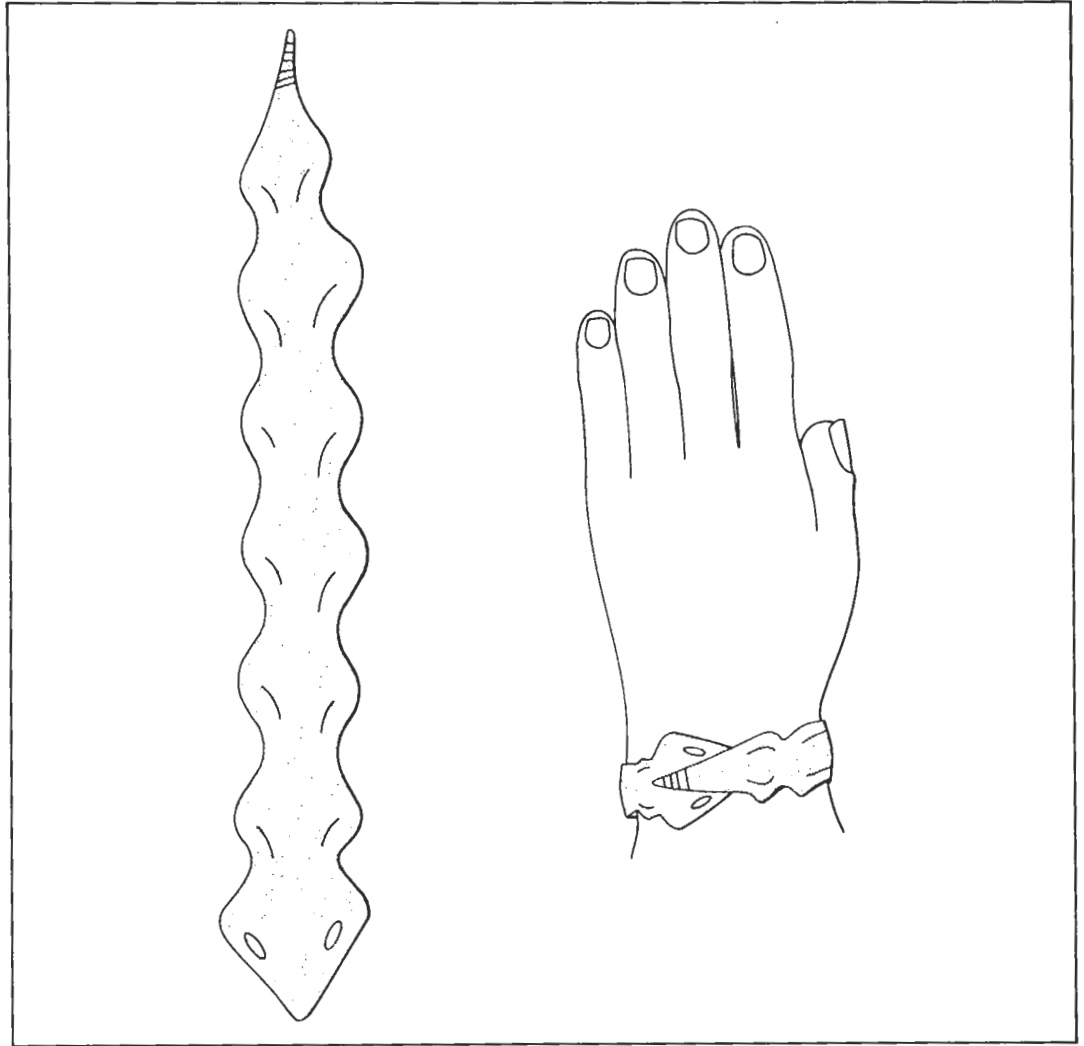


## Belt Buckle Knife

Also known as the Constant Companion, the belt buckle knife is allegedly manufactured by a company in Arcadia, California. The weapon costs from \$25 to \$150, and is made in a variety of sizes, colors, and shapes. The stainless steel weapon is curved to fit the waist and slips easily out of the belt for immediate use.

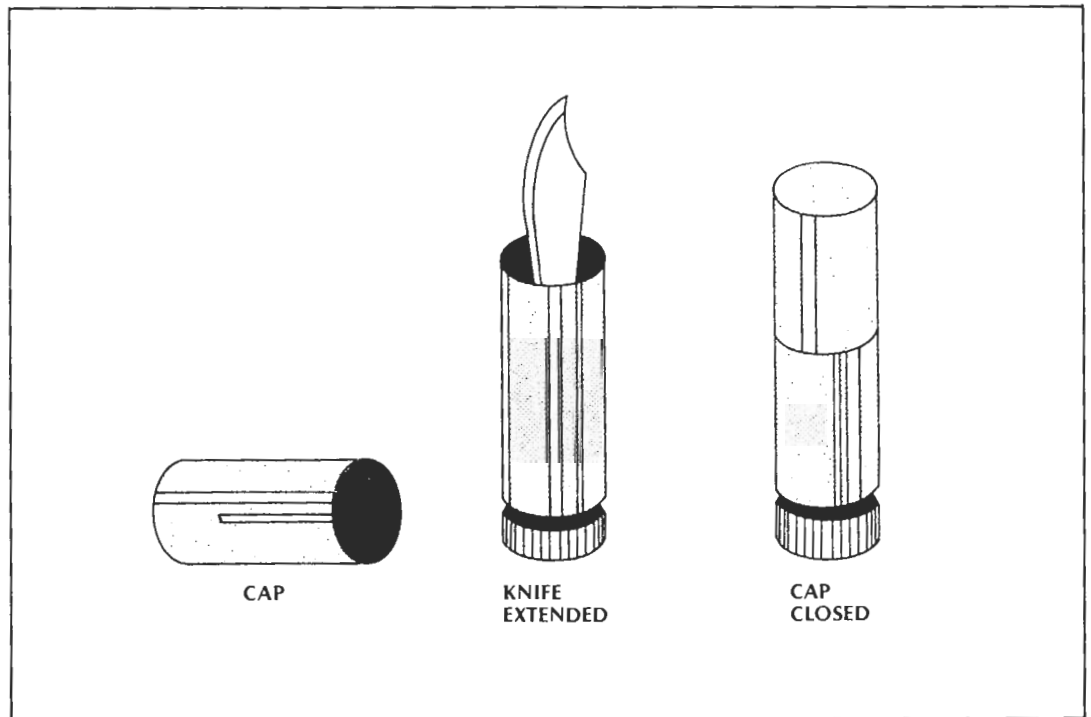
## Rattlesnake Bracelet Knife

A Border Patrol officer transporting an illegal alien across the border discovered the rattlesnake bracelet knife. When removed from the wrist, the bracelet can be straightened into a knife. This weapon is a product of Mexico.



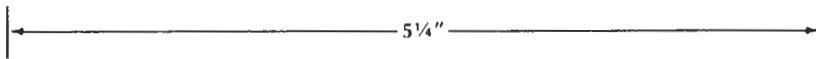
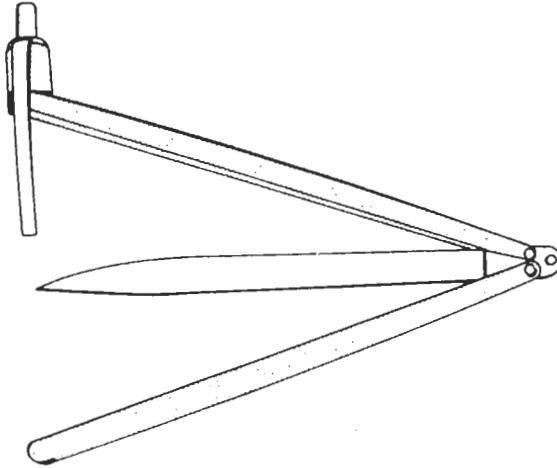
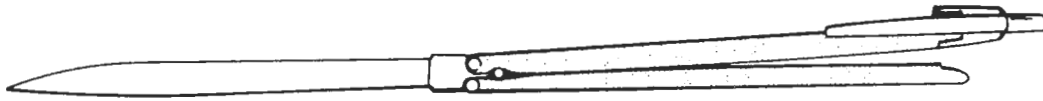
## Lipstick Knife

The lipstick knife contains a knife blade which extends to 1 1/2". The knife can be moved in or out of the tube. Imbedded in a tube of lipstick, the blade would be very difficult to detect.



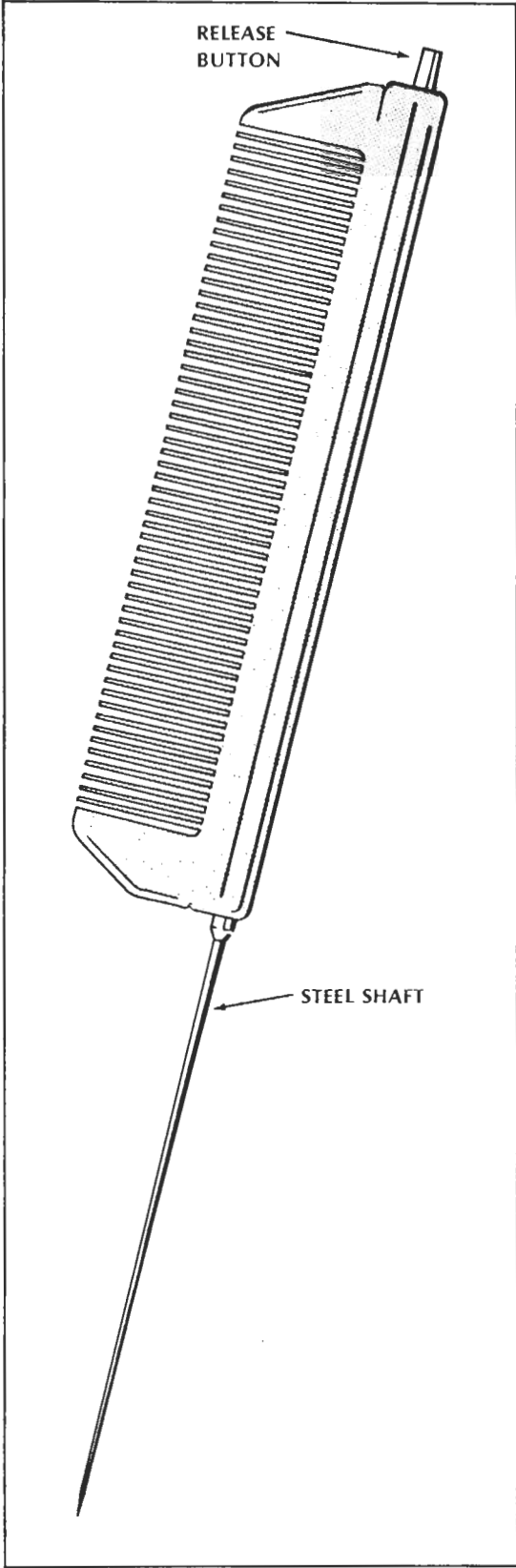
## Butterfly Knife

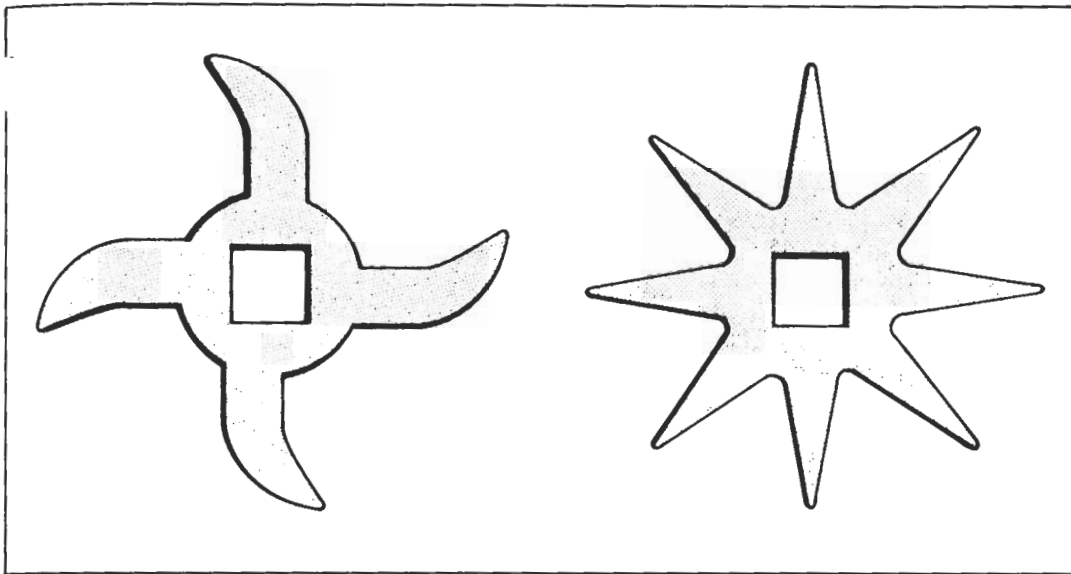
Commonly referred to as a Philippine butterfly knife, this weapon closely resembles a ball point pen. The butterfly knife is hinged at the bottom and when the two sides are folded back, a steel blade is exposed.



# Pocket Comb Weapon

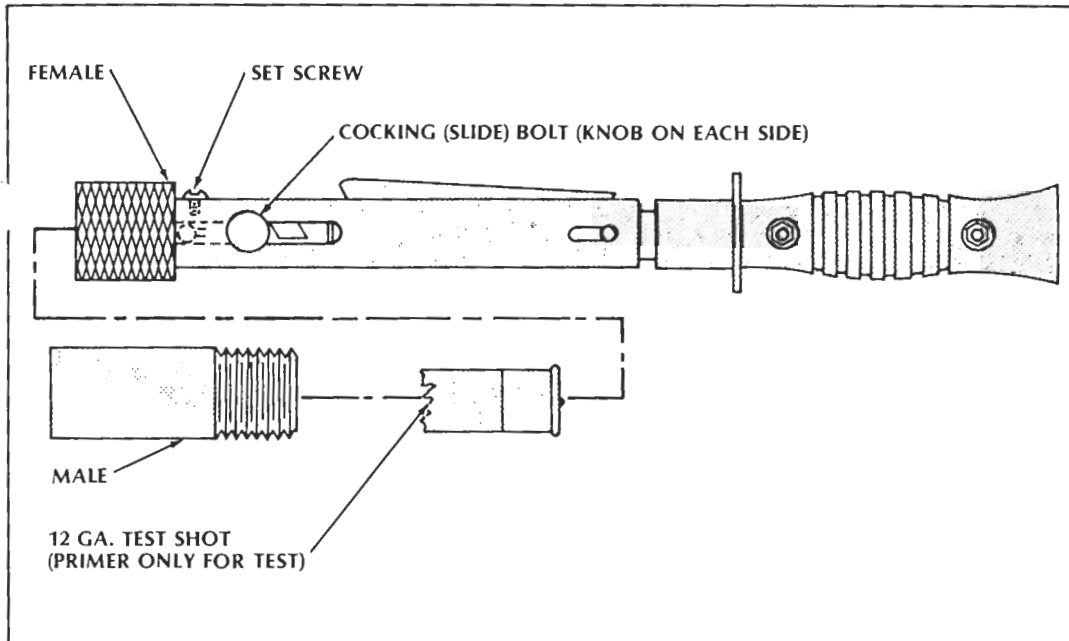
The pocket comb weapon resembles an ice pick. The needle portion of the weapon, which measures 4", is released by pushing a button which protrudes from the opposite end of the comb. When the button is pushed, the needle is released through the force of gravity. Marketed commercially as "The Defender," this weapon comes in a red or black case.





## Shuriken (Japanese Throwing Knife)

The shuriken could pass for ornaments or pieces of jewelry. One could be worn as a belt buckle or a medallion. Thrown like a frisbee, the shuriken moves through the air with a saw blade type action. When thrown accurately and with significant force, the weapon can inflict a serious wound.

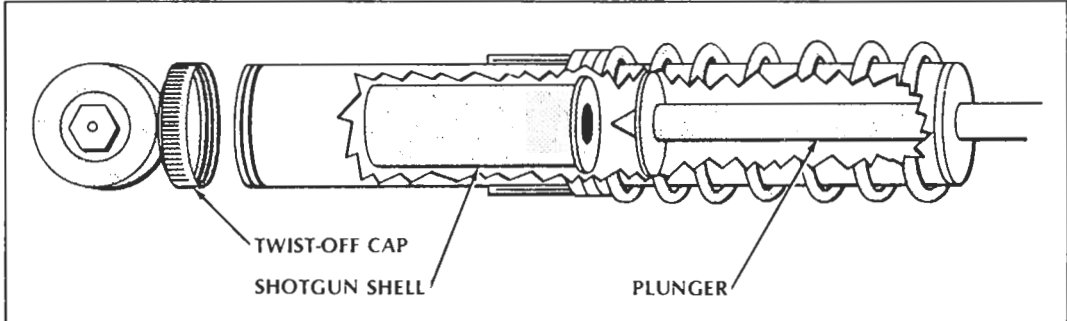


## Shark Killer

It would be fairly easy to conceal the shark killer, which is capable of inflicting a devastating wound. Intended as a weapon for killing sharks, this device fires a .12 gauge shotgun shell when the end of the weapon is pushed against the intended victim. Apparently homemade, this particular weapon was found in the residence of a suspected criminal in California.

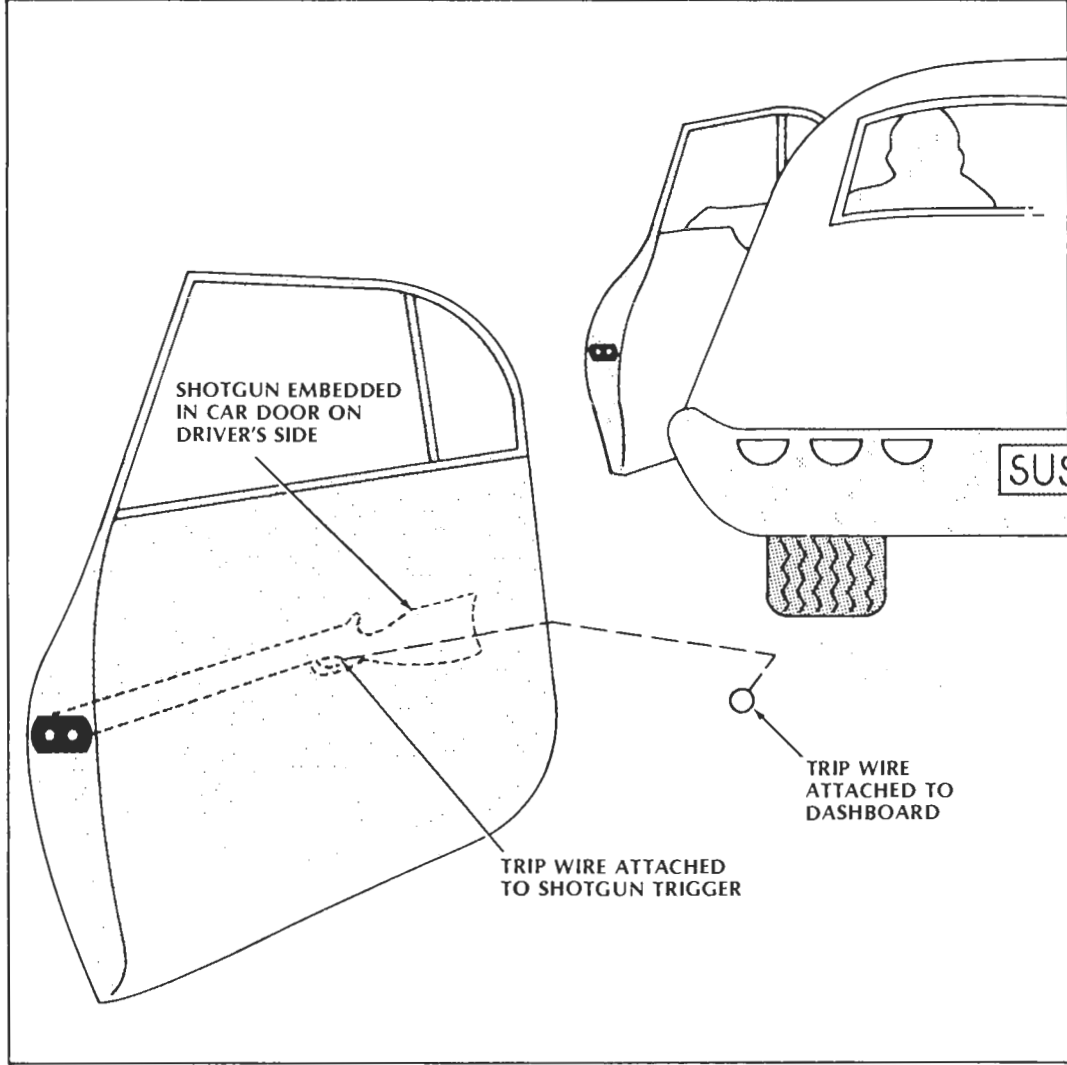
# Shock Absorber Shotgun

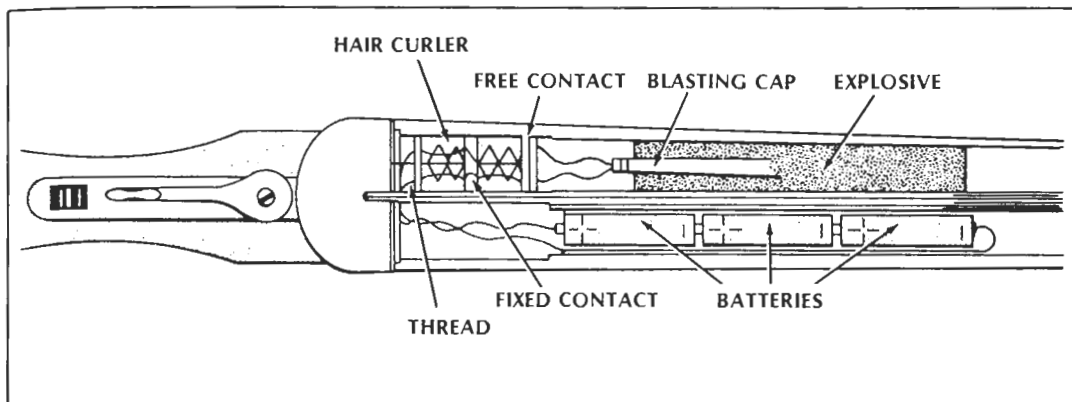
The shock absorber shotgun could easily be removed from a motorcycle and fired. Forcing the two halves of the shock absorber together fires a shotgun shell.



# Car Door Shotgun

Reportedly designed to kill law enforcement officers, the car door shotgun has been found in vehicles in the New York area. As illustrated, a modified shotgun is shortened and placed inside the door of the vehicle. One end of a wire is attached to the trigger of the weapon and the other end is attached to the dashboard of the vehicle. This enables the driver of the vehicle to open the door and fire the weapon without moving from the vehicle or turning around. On vehicles equipped with side mirrors, the side mirrors could be used to aim the weapon.

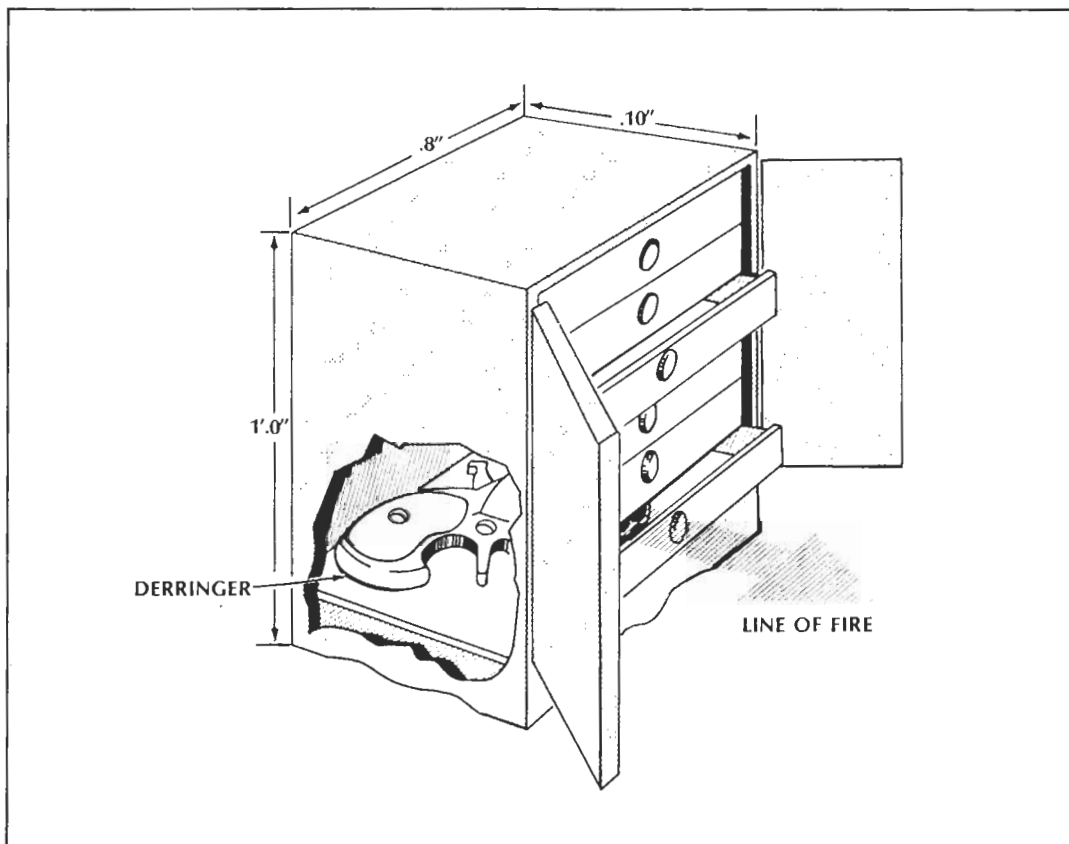




## Booby Trapped Shotgun

The booby trapped shotgun is a lethal weapon. Responding to an anonymous phone call, police officers found a double barreled shotgun wrapped in a blanket in an outside toilet. The gun was taken to the police station and while it was being examined, it exploded, killing two policemen and injuring two others.

The device consisted of six ounces of commercial explosive, an electric blasting cap, three 1.5 volt batteries, one plastic hair curler, two foil contacts, and connecting wires, all contained in the two barrels of the shotgun. When the gun was broken open, the thread pulled the free contact into the fixed contact completing the circuit and causing the device to explode.

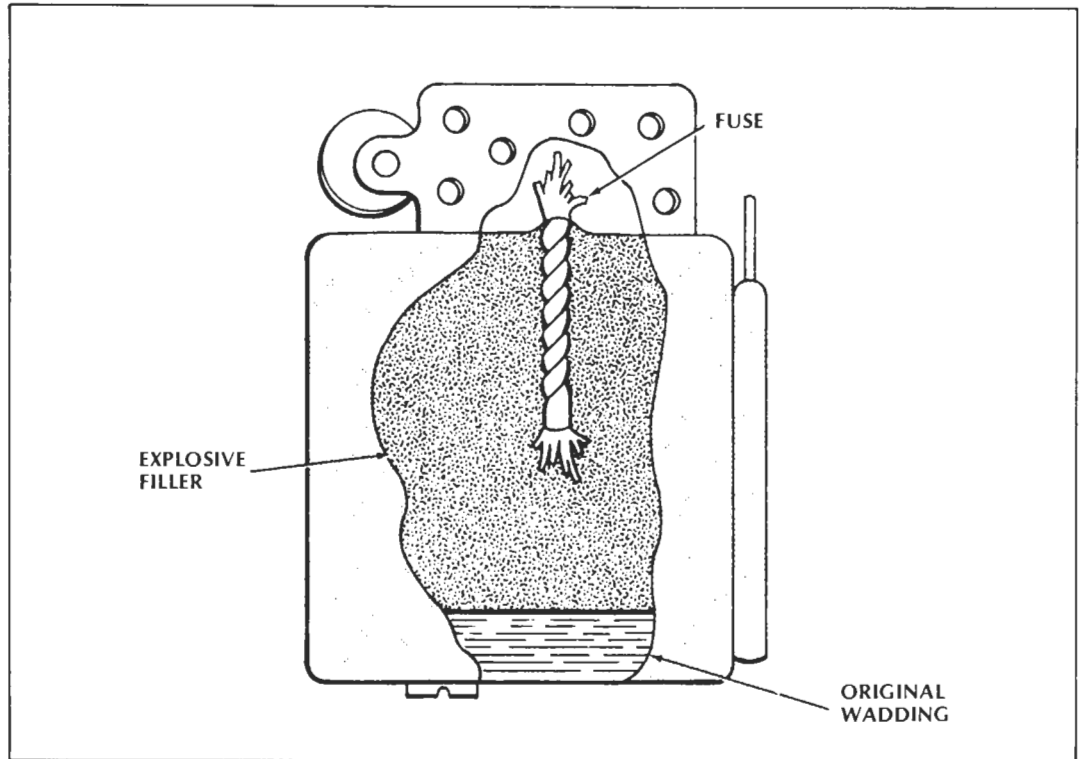


## Booby Trapped Jewelry Box

This device depicts a booby trapped jewelry box, which might be found in an individual's personal effects or inside a camper entering the United States. The jewelry box is rigged to fire a small derringer when the bottom drawer is opened.

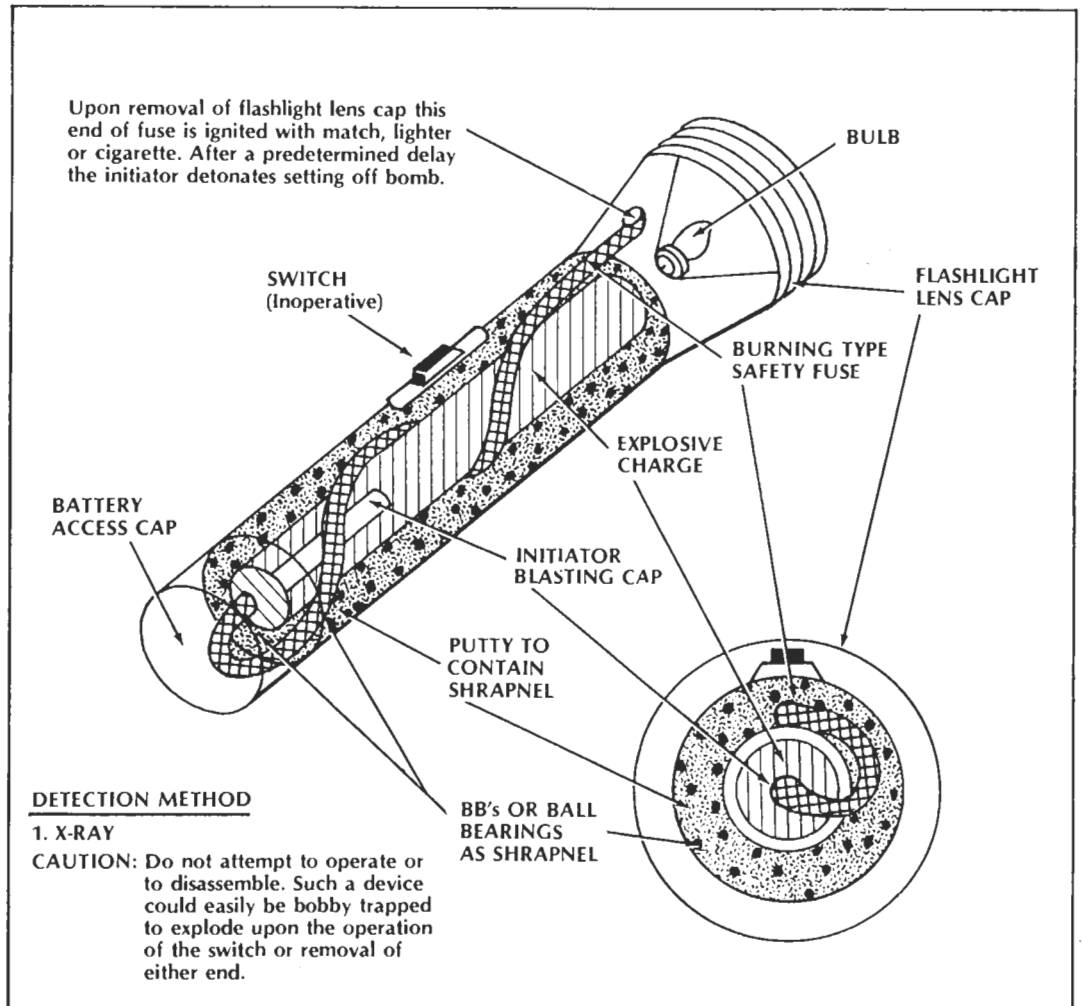
# Explosive Cigarette Lighter

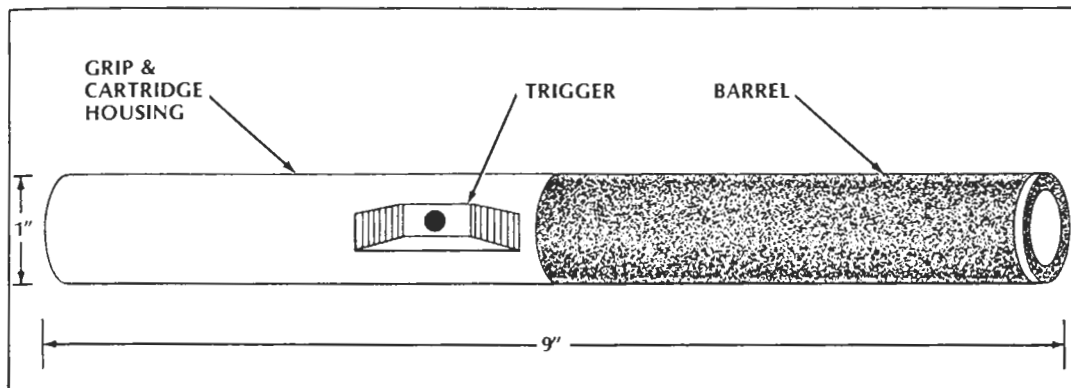
This cigarette lighter is another booby trapped explosive. The device consists of a lighter from which most of the wadding has been removed; an explosive filler has been put in its place. Part of the original wadding has been inserted at the bottom so the lighter will have a normal appearance. The wick has been removed and replaced with a fuse. When the flint striker is operated, the fuse is ignited and the explosive is detonated. The only noticeable difference between this lighter and an authentic cigarette lighter is the fuse in place of the wick.



# Flashlight Bomb

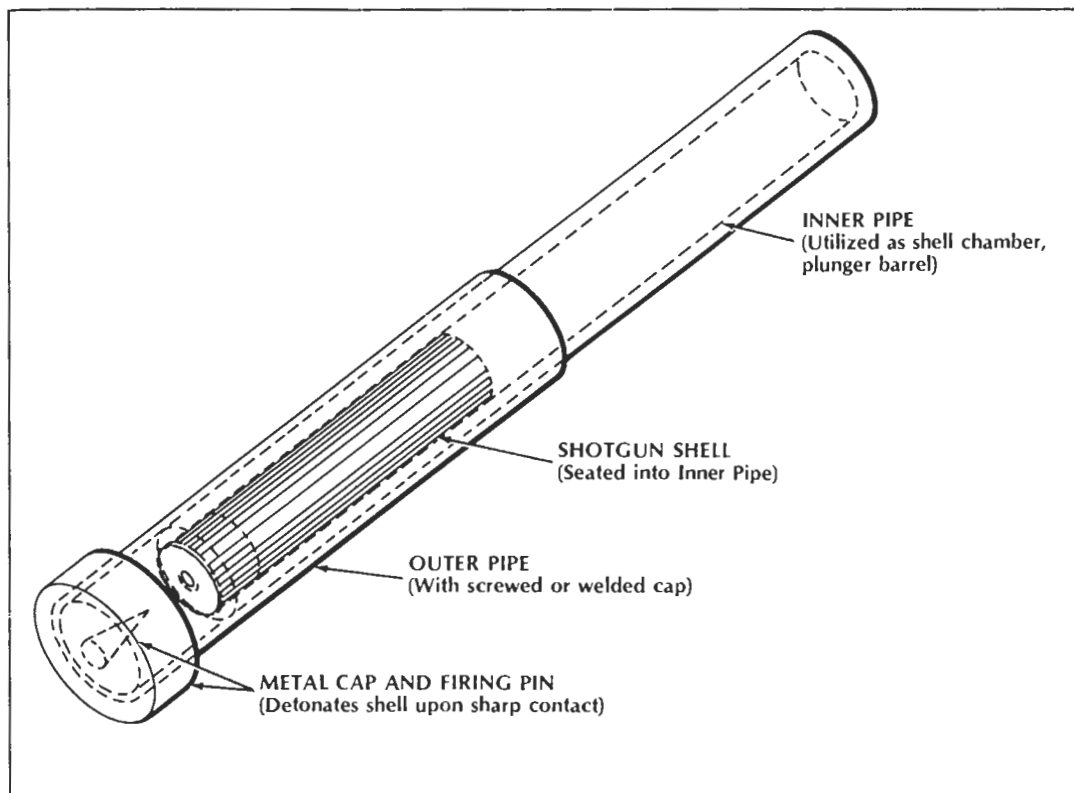
The flashlight bomb is reportedly fairly common in foreign countries. It consists of a flashlight minus the batteries, a fuse, detonator cap, explosive charge and putty in which BB's or ball bearings have been imbedded. The explosive is detonated by unscrewing the lens cap and lighting the fuse. Although in this case the switch on the flashlight is not operational, it could be used to booby trap the flashlight should someone try to operate it.





## Billy Club Shotgun

This device is a billy club shotgun made of metal approximately 1" in diameter by 9" long. The barrel end is covered with hard black rubber. The grip end is unscrewed to load a single 16 gauge shotgun cartridge.



## Highway Flare Shotgun

The highway flare shotgun could easily be mistaken for the normal highway flare that many people carry in the trunks of their vehicles. Although the device is wrapped in red paper, like an authentic highway flare, the paper in this device is of a slightly different texture. The size is also somewhat larger than an authentic highway flare. The weapon is fired by placing the outer section of the pipe against an object, such as a leg or the side of a vehicle, while the inner pipe is held and plunger back against the nail or pin, which strikes the primer of the shotgun shell.

