

## 22 *The Concealed Handgun Manual:* How to Choose, Carry, and Shoot a Gun in Self Defense

Reviewed by Lee Arten

It's common for people concerned about self-defense to acquire a library on the subject. Over time, I've collected several volumes on armed self-defense. If I were to try and get by with just one self-defense book, however, Chris Bird's, *The Concealed Handgun Manual*, would be a good choice. The 460-page book is in its fourth printing. It's on the list of reading approved for concealed carry licensees by the Texas Department of Public Safety. People who wrote cover comments include trainers Massad Ayoob and John Farnum.

Bird was born in England, lived in Canada and Australia, and now resides in San Antonio, Texas. The author's bio states that Bird has been a handgun shooter for more than 40 years, and a journalist for 25.

After serving as commissioned officer in the Royal Military Police, he moved to Canada. There, he worked for the *Vancouver Province*, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He then sailed his self-built 27 footer to Australia and then from Australia to the United States.

Bird married a native Texan and worked as a reporter for the San Antonio *Express News*. He claims that in his career as a reporter he reported on, "More shootings and killings than Wild Bill Hickok had gunfights."

Bird is a practical pistol match shooter, a director of the Texas Concealed Handgun Instructor Association, and a member of the Texas State Rifle Association and the NRA. He writes well, and sounds like he'd be a good guy to talk to, or go to the range with.

The experiences listed above helped Bird write the book, but he did not do it without referring to experts in the field. At the front of the book there is a page and a half of acknowledgments. People mentioned include trainers like the late Jeff Cooper, Clint Smith and Manny Kapelsohn, people who survived criminal attacks like Suzanna Gratia Hupp, retired law officers, and others.

*The Concealed Handgun Manual* is a good mix of reports of self-defense incidents, and equipment and training recommendations. The first self-defense incident covered involved John Long, a barber from Shreveport, Louisiana. Long and his father run a barbershop in a tough area of that city. Long was menaced by a man with a

knife one evening after leaving practice with a barbershop quartet. Long had a .38 caliber revolver in an ankle holster that he'd forgotten to remove when he entered the church where the practice was held. He managed to pull it and the attacker left. "In a flash, he was gone," Long said.

After that Long and his father began to carry openly in the barbershop. They believe they have thwarted several robbery attempts, but have never had to fire a shot.

Other people written up in the book were not as lucky. Some were attacked, shot and killed their attackers but were then victimized by the legal system.

Pete Kanakidis was one of these. Three men attacked him in his automotive center. He tried to defuse the situation and called the police. Before the officers arrived he felt forced to shoot. Kanakidis thought one man had tried to run him over, and then appeared to be going for a gun. The shot killed the man.

When the police arrived, Kanakidis was angry at what he thought was a slow response and made a comment to that effect. The responding officer reacted badly and Kanakidis was eventually indicted for murder. A jury found him not guilty, but the process was long and expensive. Bird suggests ways to avoid this outcome in the book. This section may be one of the most important.

Bird also gives information on guns to buy, training to get, avoiding accidents, and good gun handling. He stresses both good and bad points of handguns in general and revolvers and autopistols in particular. He begins by stating, "Like many things in life, a handgun is a compromise. It is the least-effective firearm for self defense."

After gun selection, Bird discusses holsters and accessories, avoiding accidents with handguns, and mindset and tactics. I was familiar with much of the material in *The Concealed Handgun Manual*, but still found some new angles to consider.

*The Concealed Handgun Manual* is published by Privateer Publications in San Antonio, Texas. It can also be ordered on page 32 of *The Blue Press*.

