Holsterless carry is a subject little discussed. There is a veritable litany of dos and don’ts that must be well understood if one contemplates such a carry. A very basic one is, “Does holsterless carry violate the provisions of my concealed carry permit?” Many concealed weapons permits will spell out certain restrictions for carry. You may find out that carry with a holster is mandated. If holsterless carry is legal, it should be understood that, for most applications, it will be an occasional carry method, if used at all. For example, I carry holsterless when I take a handgun from the glove compartment to the house. I’m on private property, so legality is not an issue. Sometimes, I’ll drop a gun the size of a Detonics CombatMaster in my hip pocket; but sometimes, I’ll stick that pistol inside the waistband of my trousers.

Carrying a 1911-style pistol – the CombatMaster is a much downsized 1911, of course – holsterless on body absolutely demands, as far as I’m concerned, that you carry the weapon in other than Condition One,cocked and locked. Many of us will recall from some years back the entertaining action flick entitled “Cobra,” starring Sylvester Stallone. In it, he carries a 1911-style pistol cocked and locked inside the waistband of his trousers. After a really well-choreographed gunfight, he twirls the pistol on his trigger finger and thrusts thecocked and locked pistol rapidly into his pants. You can’t be a gun person or a male – Editor and watch that scene without cringing. I’m not getting into a debate about carrying cocked and locked. I am making, instead, a point that carrying cocked and locked without a holster is asking for it. When I carry a 1911-style pistol in my waistband without a holster, I carry hammer down over a live round. I would not do that with any 1911-style pistol except a factory perfect Detonics, small or full-size, because the springs used were specially selected for a variety of considerations, strength among them. With any other 1911-ish pistol carried holsterless in the waistband, I’d go to hammer down over an empty chamber. I recently read a criticism of this carry – hammer down over empty chamber – which may or may not be valid, but ignored the fact that purportedly a great many armed Israelis carry chamber empty, learning to draw, rack and shoot quite quickly and reliably. The argument can be made, certainly, that someone who might be injured at the beginning of an attack might well be unable to use two hands to get the gun into the fight. The odds of that occurring in a concealed-carry situation on the street are rather remote. If that is a genuine concern for you, carry a small double-action revolver holsterless on a Barami Hip-Grip as a backup, or at least one small backup pistol in a front pocket. Plus, a well-trained pistolsector who practices the technique can “sight snub,” as it is called, catching the front sight of the pistol against something – a doorjamb, etc. – cycling the slide that way. Practicing this technique must be done without live ammunition and I wouldn’t recommend staking one’s continued breathing on the method working smoothly!

Am I advocating carrying a semi-auto chamber empty? Of course not, unless one is carrying holsterless with a pistol that logic and reason indicate should not be carried holsterless with a round in the chamber.

Back in the late 19th and early 20th Century, men like Wyatt and Doc might well have used what was called a “town carry,” the Single Action thrust holsterless into the trouser waistband, the loading gate left open to act like a hook and prevent the weapon from falling through. In more recent revolver days, some people would carry their primary ordnance double action rebounding hammer sixgun with only five rounds in the cylinder. But, the empty charging hole was the first one up and not under the hammer. So, if a bad guy grabbed the gun, the first time he pulled the trigger, the gun wouldn’t go boom. That failure to fire theoretically enabled the good guy to draw and fire his backup gun or employ some other life-saving technique. Like sight stubbing, I wouldn’t have wanted to bet on that method, either.

Revolvers generally (unless you do use a Hip-Grip or something similar) do not lend themselves well at all to holsterless inside waistband carry. The chubby cylinder slips ever downward and, once it’s past the belt line, the revolver can slide down through your pants leg. Or, the cylinder works its way upward as you move about or squirm in your seat and, when you stand up or