

20 Ahern Under the Gun: :

By Jerry Ahern
Photos by Sharon Ahern

Sharon and I have been gathering a variety of holsters and other gear for a massive concealed carry project with which we are involved. One thing became clear very quickly: There is an extremely limited range of leather concealment gear available for full-sized revolvers. It is fortunate that some quality makers still offer holsters for these guns, because a solid four-inch-barreled revolver is still a formidable weapon, even if it's one of the older .357 Magnums that is only a six-shooter. Lately, I've been examining several examples of Dillon Leather by Mitch Rosen. One of these is the 5JR-DL – catchy name, that – for a Smith & Wesson L-Frame.

I have a Smith & Wesson Model 686, which I acquired right after L-Frames first hit the street quite a number of years ago. Right after its acquisition, I sent the revolver to my old pal Ron Mahovsky at Mahovsky's Metalife. He's a superb revolver smith. He slicked up the action, round-butt the grip frame, slab-sided the four-inch barrel (even putting my name on it) and added a crane lock. Recently, I've augmented this revolver's versatility with Crimson Trace Lasergrrips. Trying this revolver in a Dillon/Rosen holster seemed like the perfect idea.

The holster is black and made to fit one and one-half-inch belts. It is very nicely detail molded from what appears to be a five and one-half- to six-ounce cowhide. Double-row stitching surrounds the gun itself, single-row stitching around the edges of the holster and reinforcing the belt slots, the two pieces of leather which form this flat

silhouette “pancake” style rig are also glue bonded, of course. This holster is built to last.

An FBI cant is important in a strong-side holster such as this, and this cant is executed perfectly so that the imaginary line drawn between the toe of the butt and the furthest extension of the muzzle would be parallel to the body plane. The front of the holster lip is relieved in order to be clear of any adjustable sights and in order to facilitate smoothness of the draw. For safety, the rear of the

holster is built up somewhat in order to cover the trigger guard. This is a fine feature. Yet, this in no way interferes with obtaining a “full combat grip” as the gun is drawn. This holster really works. Molded on both sides, the holster is designed to contour to the body of the wearer while maintaining itself as a rigid platform.

In short, this is a terrific holster for a wheelgun and I'd recommend it. Revolvers give you “six for sure,” as my old friend Ron Mahovsky puts it. Ron is someone we've known for decades rather than years.

In May, we visited the Blade Show in Atlanta and had the chance to get together with some other friends who go back decades with the Ahern Family, among these Pat and Wes Crawford, the father-son knife making duo from West Memphis, Arkansas. Pat and Wes showed Sharon and me some of their newest knives, of course. But, meeting them reminded me of a knife Pat made for me some years ago. I haven't mentioned it in print for maybe as long as 20 years. It is one of those knives I would never sell or trade.

Let me explain. Both Sharon and I are great fans of Alistair MacLean's most well-known World



Ahern's Lasergripped S&W 686 in the Dillon Leather/Mitch Rosen 5JR-DL flat silhouette belt holster, a fine combination.