

34 The Summer Gun *Continued from Page 10*

push the slide back the one-fourth inch or so necessary to render the gun incapable of being fired. **If** you are standing on your hind legs, **if** you have been trained in weapon retention skills, and **if** you have the presence of mind to implement these skills while someone is beating, stabbing or shooting you, then this is no problem at all. If on the other hand, you are on the ground, pushed into a corner or with your elbow against a wall or seat back, the fact that your gun full of magic bullets doesn't make the bad guy go away may be disconcerting. So, which shooting schools teach those boring classes on weapon retention that no one signs up for?

Revolvers

In the store, we almost always start at the semi-autos. Usually, after someone has looked at the various sub-compact semiautos, I ask them if I can show them a revolver. In this size class this usually means a .38 Special with either the +P 158-grain lead semi-wadcutter hollow point, or the new Speer 135-grain Gold Dot, also in +P. With their preferred semiauto and a small revolver side by side we begin to consider the pros and cons of the two systems.

The most obvious drawback is that revolvers usually carry fewer rounds than a semiauto. A second is

that, even with speedloaders, revolvers require more manual dexterity to load and unload. The last drawback we usually discuss is the sights.

The revolver has its advantages though. As I already alluded, the firing cycle of the revolver is more difficult to interrupt in the event of a contact distance assault. Muzzle contact with an assailant usually will not prevent a revolver from firing at least one shot. Because these guns are destined for the pocket, the purse, the bellyband or the ankle holster, they will inevitably face lint and sweat. The hammerless or concealed-hammer models are an even better choice for these circumstances. These factors, combined with the availability of Crimson Trace Laser grips for the Ruger SP-101, Smith & Wesson J-Frames, and their Brazilian cousins from Taurus, make the old-fashioned snubby a superior tool for personal defense in the low-light conditions likely for such a confrontation.

Whichever model you choose, Dillon has the holsters, laser grips and accessories to make your choice a useful concealed-carry system.

For new shooters Mike has written a book entitled "First Handgun - Making the Right Choice." Enter "First Handgun + Mike Johnson" at Amazon.com or Lulu.com.

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