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(Note: AIWB = Appendix Inside the Waist Band)

The Case For Two Guns



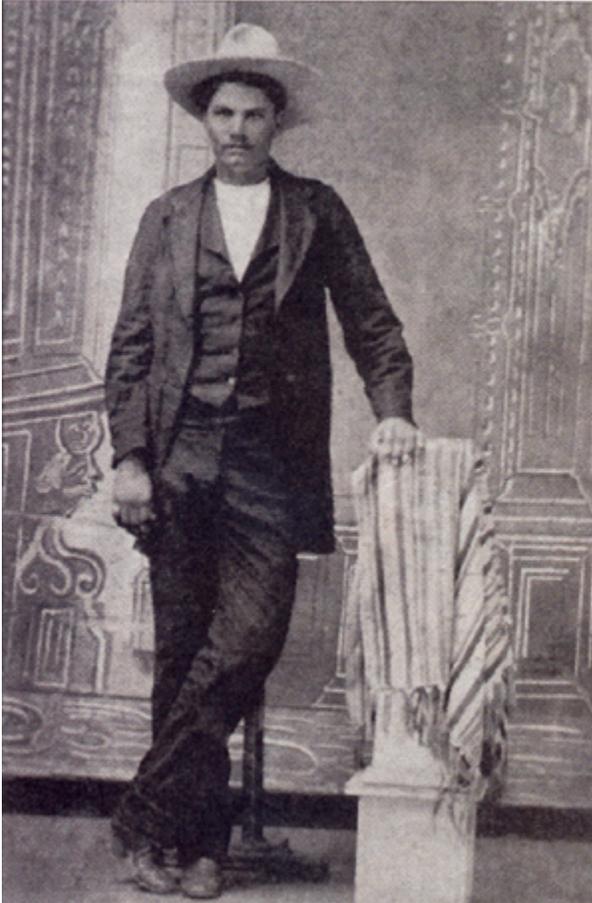
One thing that I have always tried to do is keep an open mind to new ideas that cross my desk. Rather than dismiss things with a dictatorial wave of the hand, I have taken a “let’s test it and see” approach. One of the recent things, as one example, has been the addition of the Trijicon RMR Red Dot sight onto a pistol. Another has been our focus on the Kalashnikov Rifle and its subsequent acceptance on the US Market. And yet another has been the ambidextrous deployment of rifles or pistols in our classes.

It was with that attitude that I considered the issue of carrying two pistols. The idea is not new by any stretch, but it came up recently during a discussion with SI Staffer Roger Phillips on the ambidextrous pistol training we were working on. Earlier, I had seen the concept at a Zero To Five Feet class. A student, “Frankdude72”, wore two AIWB Glocks during the force on force work and did quite well.

Truly, to develop ambidextrous capability with a handgun involves the draw as well as all the manipulations normally trained in class. And to do that of course, requires a second holster.

I walked downstairs to the warehouse and grabbed up one of our Archangel holsters for a Glock 17, but in left hand configuration. I have been carrying two Glocks this way for a couple of weeks, but before I tell you what I think, I want to put out some perspective on the matter...historical perspective.

Any look at our history of the Old West will quickly reveal the two gun concept was alive and well. Men like Hardin, Hickok, and others made it a habit of carrying two guns on a daily basis. This was not so much for using them simultaneously, but rather subsequent to one another.



Massad Ayoob wrote on this back in 2002 for Guns Magazine. He quoted John Wesley Hardin's biographer Nordyke several time relating how Hardin made it a habit to carry two revolvers with him and that he always regretted it when he did not.

He outlined some very reasonable reasons for doing so, specifically; **When the First Gun Fails, When You Must Arm a Companion, When A Second Gun is More Accessible, When Your Primary Gun is Empty.** While I may not agree with Mas on many things, it is hard to disagree with this.

Let's examine the concept from a modern perspective -

As A Back Up Gun – It is very common to carry two pistols in the law enforcement world. The difference is primarily one of presumed mission. While we are looking at this as two primaries, the backup gun concept is of an additional weapon carried as a back up in the event the primary is lost, or inoperable. The interesting thing is that the proposed mission does not change the use as a backup weapon, but it still allows for as quick an access as the primary weapon.

When Your Companion is Unarmed – I recall one evening when a number of us ran out of the station to apprehend a drive by shooting suspect. The officer that got in the car with me forgot his pistol in the jail lockbox. While all I could offer him was a J-Frame revolver, he was now an additional shooter rather than just a witness.

When The Other Gun is More Accessible – This is an area where many guys shrug and wonder what we are talking about. Yet the first time they do one of our classes, where we will not be standing in perfect weavers or isosceles shooting at a piece of paper, but rather doing some very dynamic shooting on the move from zero to ten feet, often while involved in a hand to hand situation, the notion of not having access to the primary becomes quite clear.

When Your Primary Gun is Inoperative – Anything man-made can fail, and if not, it will invariably run out of ammo. We have proven that an immediate action unrelated to any weapon diagnosis is faster than any weapon manipulation. The concept is widely accepted in rifle schools, where an operator will transition to the pistol if the rifle fails and the threat is inside pistol ranges. No difference here really. If the primary pistol fails, go to the second pistol immediately. Much faster than any reload or any malfunction fix.

Some counters to the idea of carrying two pistols might be the weight. I weighed the “two spare magazines” that most guys carry on their support side. In my case it was two Glock 17 magazines fully loaded. Together they weigh 1 pound 4 ounces. The fully loaded Glock 17 weighed in at 2 pounds exactly. So you are adding 12 ounces. Is that a big deal? It wasn't to me.

Another issue might be problems with concealment. I think that if your daily attire will keep one handgun hidden, it will provide you enough room to conceal a second one as well. This will be an individual matter.

My findings after working this way for a time –

I carried a second Glock 17, in the Appendix IWB position, to the left of the belt buckle, for left handed use. The slightly oversized shirts I wear offered ample concealment and I had no issues with keeping the guns hidden. I am what I

consider physically fit so there is plenty of room in the mid section to emplace the pistol IWB, but for those that are still working on the six-pack, the same can be done OWB (outside the waistband).



It took a few days for the left side of the body to mirror the skills on the right side but it was not much of a problem verifying that the one side will teach the other. I carried empty chamber for the first few days until the left hand got accustomed to doing things right. Now it is not much of an issue...right hand or left hand.

Setting up truly ambidextrous deployment opens up all manner of shooting, moving and combative possibilities for the operator.

This may not be for everyone, but like appendix carry, red dot sights, and point shooting, those with an open mind should give it consideration.