

EVERYDAY

# GUN



## TAURUS JUDGE®

A DECADE LATER, THE VERDICT STANDS



# 6

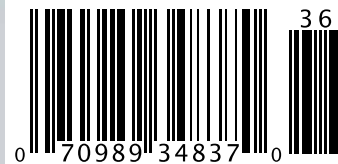
TIPS WITH  
JESSIE DUFF

**EXPLAINING EDC**  
(EVERYDAY CARRY)  
AND OTHER CONCEALED  
ACRONYMS

HUNTING  
GATORS  
WITH THE  
RAGING BULL  
.44 MAG.

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF  
**GUNS&AMMO**

USA/CANADA \$8.99  
DISPLAY UNTIL 3/28/2016



**HOME  
DEFENSE  
HANDGUNS**  
STAY SAFE,  
SPEND LESS

**MAGTECH  
AMMO**  
PROVING  
QUALITY CAN BE  
AFFORDABLE

# 2,056

 ROUNDS AND  
COUNTING

THE 709 SLIM KEEPS ON SHOOTING!

## TOURING AND SHOOTING ACROSS

## UTAH ON MODERN HORSES.

BY MIKE SCHOBY  
PHOTOS BY ALFONSE PALAIMA

**H**ere's the concept," said Mark Sidelinger, long-time buddy and media relations professional. "I want to combine a group of motorcycle junkies with gunwriters for a multiday ride around Utah. We'll ride several hundred miles over challenging terrain and stop at various gun ranges along the way."





“Do the motorcycle guys know much about guns?” I asked. “Not really, and the gunwriters have limited motorcycle experience. I want everyone out of their element part of the time,” he said with a sadistic grin. “Count me in,” I chuckled. The group descended on Salt Lake City in July, old friends from the gun and hunting world: John Snow from Outdoor Life, Eric Poole from Guns & Ammo and me from Petersen’s Hunting. At a motel next to the airport, we met up with the motorcycle contingent: Jeff Herzog of Kawasaki, Kerry O’Day of MG Arms and World Speed Record holder on a KLR650, the aforementioned Mark Sidelinger, and photographer Alfonse Palaima, referred to simply as “Fonzie.” All of them have forgotten more about motorcycles than our gun group will ever know. As the gun guys talked ballistic coefficient, terminal bullet performance and aftermarket triggers, they discussed panniers, roto packs and displacement, two vastly different conversations but somehow strangely familiar.

**THE ROUTE**

As we poured over maps in the hotel parking lot, the route took shape. Start in Salt Lake City; ride over the Wasatch Mountains to Park City. From there, continue on to Heber City and the Big Hollow Gun Range. From there, ride over the foothills of the Uinta Mountains to the town of Duchesne, where we would overnight. From Duchesne, head out through the desert and canyons to view the petroglyphs of Nine Mile Canyon, then follow along a rural dirt

track up to the top to Tavaputs Plateau for the night. The following day, descend down the Tavaputs Plateau through east Carbon, make a stop at North Springs Shooting Facility, then ride on to Marysvale to stay at Hoover Resort in the Wasatch Mountains. The final day, ride from Marysvale over to the town of Beaver.

With the route agreed upon and the maps folded, we took off riding over Guardsman Pass to Park City. It was all pavement but a curvy and breathtakingly gorgeous route to one of my favorite towns in all of Utah. We grabbed a quick bite. While Park City is a cool town, it’s a bit swanky for the likes of a bunch of sweaty gunwriters and motorcycle gear heads, so, donning our Arai helmets, we took off again for something a bit more our style, Heber City and the Big Hollow Gun Range.

Run by volunteers, Big Hollow is open to the public for no charge several days a week. This is a concept more ranges should adopt if they are serious about enticing new shooters to the sport. We unloaded, met up with the support van, set up a variety of targets and grabbed guns. I gravitated to the Taurus 1911, a fine gun with all the niceties you would expect to find on a quality .45 — beaver-tail grip safety, match-grade barrel, adjustable sights — while Poole reached into the chest pocket of his KLIM jacket and pulled out a Taurus 709 Slim.

I must have given him a look, as he said, “I have my Utah concealed carry permit, and I’ve been wanting to test this as a carry gun. It fits so well, I almost forgot it was there.”

Loading mags of Magtech ammo, we took turns with both guns dumping steel plates and bouncing round rubber resealable targets

along the desert floor before saddling back up and heading on to our first layover, Duchesne.

**BLOW OUT**

Somewhere in the dusty desert outside of Duchesne early the following morning, John Snow was in front of me when I saw his back tire shudder and his bike immediately slow down and stop. As I pulled in behind him, the problem was readily apparent, a 3-inch steel spike protruding from the tread as the last of the air hissed out.

We piled up rocks, building a field-expedient workbench, and laid the bike gently over on top of them. Using wrenches from Jeff’s tool kit and a Real Avid multitool, Jeff quickly removed the cotter pin and broke the rear nut loose. The tire bars made quick work of removing the tire, and since we had a few spare tubes, patching was not necessary. With the tire reassembled, Jeff pulled a small electric pump from his pannier and inflated the tire. In about 20 minutes, we went from broken down to on the road again.

**EARLY TROPHY ROOM**

We continued on through the desert to Nine Mile Canyon east of Price. If you haven’t seen this amazing display of rock art, it is well worth the trip. It showcases the petroglyphs of the early Fremont Indians who inhabited the region some 1,000 years ago. Often called the world’s longest art gallery, it stretches over 40 miles (the name Nine Mile Canyon is purely a misnomer), is accessible by gravel road and features numerous rock carvings including the famous Hunter Panel, an entire wall filled with sheep and hunters. (Apparently, desert sheep were a lot more common 1,000 years ago and didn’t require a draw.)

**HILL CLIMB TO TAVAPUTS**

After eating a late-afternoon lunch in the shade of the petroglyph cliffs, our discussion turned to where we would spend the night. Casey Hopes, Carbon County commissioner and our contact for this leg of the trip, had arranged for us to spend the night on top of the plateau at the Tavaputs Ranch. Already beat tired from the day’s ride and looking forward to a shower and a bed, I asked Casey how long of a ride it was to the ranch.

“It’s about three more hours of riding. It’s really not that many miles; it’s just slow and pretty rough. The guys with trucks and Jeeps have to put it in four low to crawl up it. It’s steep, with big, loose boulders and some slick rock . . . Essentially, it’s a dozer track carved out of the side of a cliff.”

I almost choked on the sandwich I was chewing on. Three more hours? Big boulders? Dozer track? What had I gotten myself into? With sun rimming the crest of the canyon, we suited up and rode. As we crested the first of many hills rising out of the cottonwood-lined valley, the Tavaputs Plateau loomed, formidable in the distance.

We hit the base of the cliff just as night fell, which in retrospect was probably good, as looking it over in the daylight, we wouldn’t have attempted it. Giving adequate space to each other, one by one we disappeared into the gravel and rock darkness of the dozer road.



**“AS THE GUN GUYS TALKED BALLISTIC COEFFICIENT, TERMINAL BULLET PERFORMANCE AND AFTERMARKET TRIGGERS, THEY DISCUSSED PANNIERS, ROTO PACKS AND DISPLACEMENT, TWO VASTLY DIFFERENT CONVERSATIONS BUT SOMEHOW STRANGELY FAMILIAR.”**



## GEAR LIST

### BIKE

2015 Kawasaki KLR 650  
kawasaki.com

### GUNS

Heritage™ .22LR SAA  
heritage.com

Rossi® R92  
rossi.com

Taurus® 1911,  
Taurus 709 Slim  
taurususa.com

### JACKET AND PANTS

KLIM  
klim.com

### MOTORCYCLE HELMET

Arai  
araiamericas.com

### TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION

Sena  
sena.com

Left: The author unleashes Taurus' 1911 on steel targets at the Big Hollow gun range in Heber City, Utah.

Bottom left: A modern holster for a modern pistol. Eric Poole utilizes the KLIM jacket to carry his Taurus 709 Slim.



As I rounded the first bend, my KC lights illumined a bad scene. Big, loose boulders were everywhere; Poole was walking down the hill, his bike left somewhere up in the darkness; and Snow's bike had just gone down in front of me, lying on its side, lights shooting out over a drop-off. After checking that everyone was OK and helping to stand up bikes, I kept going, determined to go until I put the bike down, which in this terrain seemed inevitable.

There is something surreal about technical riding on a steep hill at night with cliffs on either side. As any rider knows, a certain amount of speed is required for stability and ability to clear objects, but with too much one hard bounce throws you out of control. It requires standing on the pegs, steering by weight distribution. My arms were screaming from straining against the handlebars, but before I knew it I was on top of the hill. I was elated. I made it,

and it wasn't that tough after all. Then Mark pulled up behind me ...

"You going to keep going, or are you throwing in the towel and jumping in the truck with the others?" Looking at him with slight puzzlement, I realized the steep, difficult run I made was not the entire hill but just one of the many switchbacks. Looking up, I could see at least six more of equal if not bigger size stretching into the night sky.

Exhausted, I lowered my visor and took off. At every switchback corner, I mentally celebrated a small victory. Finally, I broke out of the dozer-carved chute onto a pine-covered plateau. The stars seemed close enough to touch, and it was refreshingly cool. I shut down the bike and enjoyed the moment. It was a magical spot.

After a couple-mile ride across the tabletop-flat plateau, an old

**Old West meets the modern horse. Unlike the hoofed variety, this Kawasaki only requires gasoline to gallop from range to range.**

natural-rock house emerged from the darkness, the Tavaputs Ranch founded in 1887. Shutting off my bike, I sat astride it, slowly removing my helmet and gloves, thinking about the ride, when a young country kid walked up to me from the house and looked curiously at the big KLR.

"You made it up here on that? I bet that was tough," he said. "Yes, yes it was," I slowly replied, undecided if the kid was too young to understand the meaning of the word "understatement."

## OLD WEST REVISITED

The following morning, we got up with the sun, soaked in the scenery and enjoyed a huge ranch breakfast cooked by the sixth-generation ranch owner, Jeanie Jensen. While some in the group were



## Jessie's Tech Tip

### GRIP

**A**chieving a proper grip is critical when shooting. Use a high grip with your dominant hand to help control recoil. Wrap your other hand from the opposite side, and apply the majority of the grip pressure with this hand. Some recommend a 70/30 ratio, with 70 percent coming from the support hand, which allows your shooting hand to focus on what really matters: trigger control. You'll find out that this is a rock solid way of connecting with your pistol, and as you practice, adjust your grip-pressure ratio to find what works best for you.



The Wild West is long gone. Cowboy Action, however, conducted with classic firearms such as the Rossi® R92 and Heritage™ SAA, is still popular throughout much of the country.

repacking their gear for the day, I stole off with a couple of the younger kids from the ranch, showing them what a .17 HMR can do on ground squirrels.

After some squirrel action, we returned to the ranch, donned our gear and prepared to head out. The trip down the mountain may have been worse than going up the night before. Seeing what was ahead as well as peering over the sheer drop-offs made it worse. In the end, it was so steep we shut off the bikes, leaving them in gear and disengaging the clutch to get them to slowly roll down the plateau. It took a couple of hours to get back to level ground. Once there, we hit the road for more shooting.

I've seen quite a few gun ranges, but North Springs Shooting Facility simply blew me away. Up top, it's like any other really high-end shooting facility, with concrete benches, berms and steel out to what looked like 1,000 yards plus pistol bays and archery, but as we drove down into the canyon a different world emerged. Its cowboy town could have been used as a movie set. This was not your typical Cowboy Action set with a couple of plywood outhouses and a fake boardwalk; this was Hollywood-stage set

quality with 15 buildings, nine shooting bays and lots of steel. As a bonus, the rangemasters knew we were coming, and as a gesture of hospitality, they'd reserved it exclusively for our group.

Not needing to be asked twice, we unlimbered Rossi® R92s and a brace of Heritage™ .22 SAAs, then set to work clanging steel. Making an impromptu Cowboy Action set, everyone got engaged in the friendly competition, from motorcycle guys to gun geeks, and due to the low recoil of the .38s and .22s, everyone shot well. It was a testament to both Rossi® and Heritage™.

While this range is unique due to its quality and attention to detail, what I also found noteworthy was that it's owned by Carbon County and open to the public. Now, that's a good use of public tax dollars.

Sweaty, dirty and covered in gunpowder, we repacked the bikes and hit the road for the final time to the Hoover Lodge at Marysville and on to Beaver. A huge dinner and lots of storytelling followed that night, and we all retired early. We were road weary after 600 miles of riding the past couple of days, but we were all deeply satisfied. Utah provided the incredible scenery, Kawasaki provided the iron horses, and Taurus provided the fun. 🍷

### IF YOU GO

**Heber Gun Range**  
[bighollowgunrange.com](http://bighollowgunrange.com)

**North Springs Shooting Facility**  
[castlecountry.com/shooting-range.com](http://castlecountry.com/shooting-range.com)

**Tavaputs Ranch**  
[tavaputsranch.com](http://tavaputsranch.com)