

THE ULTIMATE SKILL

BY JIM WAGNER

These days, most career criminals are packing, and their second-most common weapon after the knife is the handgun. Consequently, more and more martial artists are studying reality-based combat systems that specifically teach ways to disarm a gunman. Such training normally includes techniques and tactics that can be employed in close-quar-

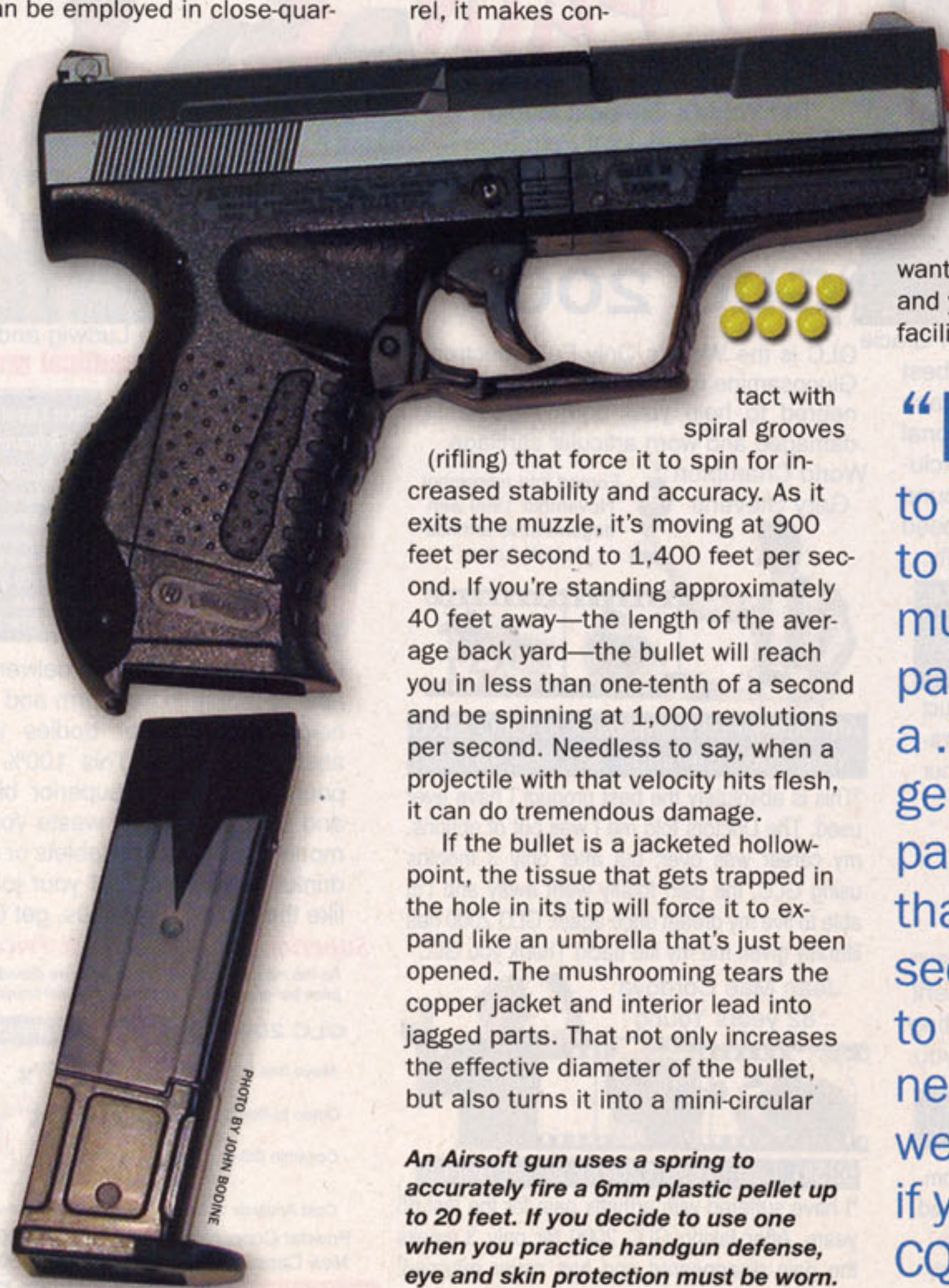
ters-battle range (within 21 feet) and sometimes beyond. Before I delve into methods you can use to advance your gun-defense skills, I'll briefly explain the kind of damage a bullet can do when it strikes a body.

Let's say a gangbanger points a handgun at you and pulls the trigger. As the bullet travels down the barrel, it makes con-

saw as the edges slice through muscle.

When the bullet enters the body, it creates a temporary vacuum behind it. The shock wave forms a rapidly expanding cavity that compresses nearby muscle tissue and organs while shattering any bones that get in the way. Because the spinning of the bullet is so violent, it may hit a bone and careen off in a different direction. It's not uncommon for a person to be shot in the chest and have the bullet leave his body at the neck or hip.

The bottom line is, you never want to be shot. However, if you are and you're relatively close to a medical facility, statistically you have a 90-per-



tact with spiral grooves

(rifling) that force it to spin for increased stability and accuracy. As it exits the muzzle, it's moving at 900 feet per second to 1,400 feet per second. If you're standing approximately 40 feet away—the length of the average back yard—the bullet will reach you in less than one-tenth of a second and be spinning at 1,000 revolutions per second. Needless to say, when a projectile with that velocity hits flesh, it can do tremendous damage.

If the bullet is a jacketed hollow-point, the tissue that gets trapped in the hole in its tip will force it to expand like an umbrella that's just been opened. The mushrooming tears the copper jacket and interior lead into jagged parts. That not only increases the effective diameter of the bullet, but also turns it into a mini-circular

An Airsoft gun uses a spring to accurately fire a 6mm plastic pellet up to 20 feet. If you decide to use one when you practice handgun defense, eye and skin protection must be worn.

“If you really want to know how it feels to get shot, you must train with paint guns. They fire a .64-caliber gelatin-encased paintball at less than 300 feet per second. You'll need to don full head and neck protection and wear thick clothing if you plan to be in CQB range.”