

NCJRS

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ACQUISITIONS

ROBBERY PREVENTION MANUAL

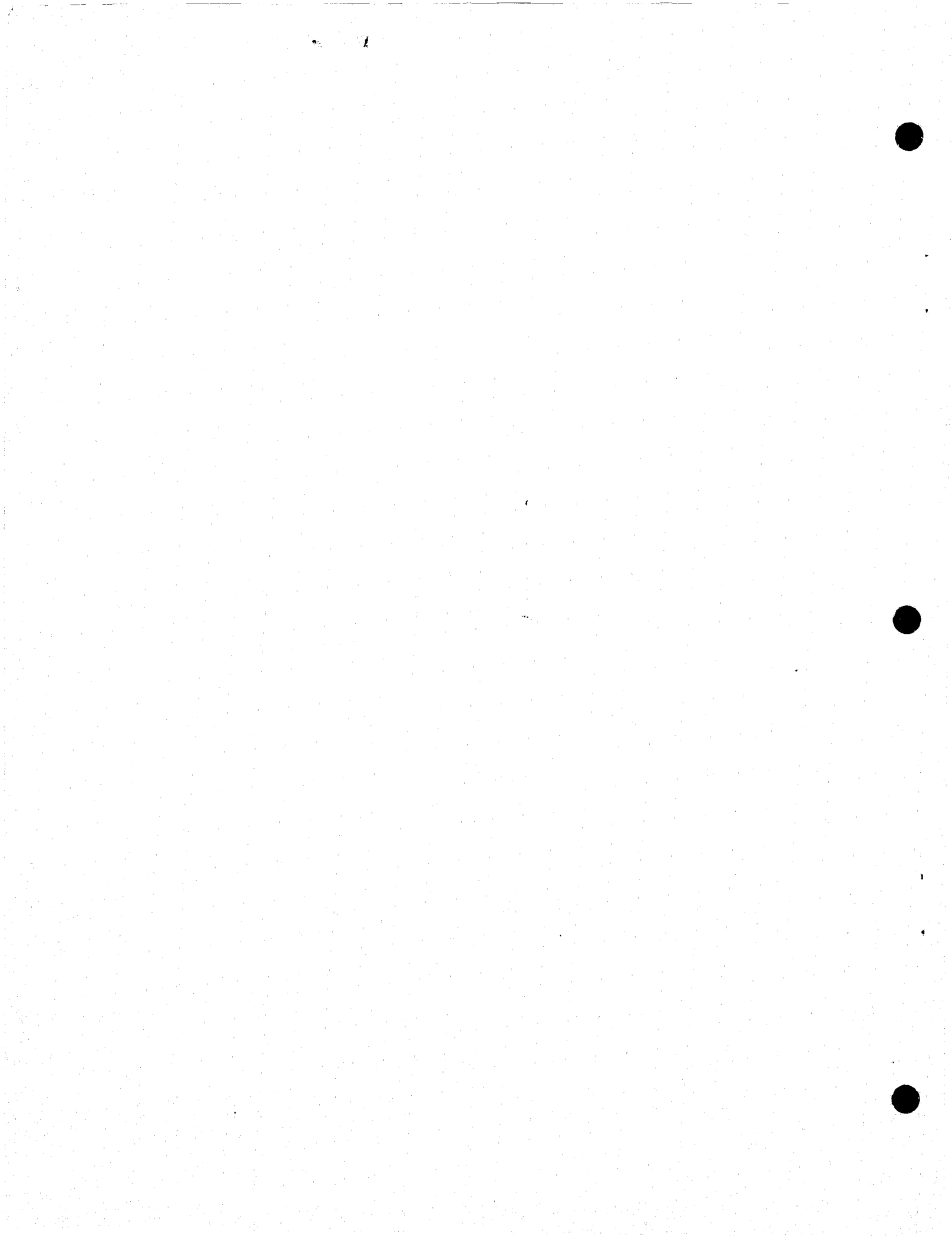


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Compiled by:

**DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE
CRIME PREVENTION CENTER**

Col. George L. Halverson, Director



INTRODUCTION

Many problems face the citizens of Michigan and the country as a whole, but few have generated as much fear and concern as the growing problem of crime. Crime is multi-faceted, but a common denominator found in most crimes is a level of opportunity that allows the perpetrator a definite advantage over the potential victim. Opportunity reduction, therefore, must be a priority of not only law enforcement agencies, but citizens as well. The crime prevention effort embodies the principles of opportunity reduction and seeks to inform citizens of ways in which they can reduce the chances of becoming potential victims.

It is the objective of this manual to center on the problem of business robbery and provide various prevention tips, both procedural and physical, to reduce its further growth. It is important to qualify such a statement by pointing out that robbery is not limited to the business community. The crime of robbery can occur almost anywhere; in a home, vehicle, on the street, etc., and the need for prevention guidelines in these areas is not in any way diminished. However, the prevention tips to be presented in this manual can be applied to some extent to other robbery situations.

When examining the problem of business robbery the phrase "opportunity reduction" becomes synonymous with "target hardening". Every business is a potential target, and what factors characterize it as an easy vs. difficult target are determined by management's approach to security. Every business owner must strive to make his business as difficult a target as possible and the means to achieve this end will be provided throughout the manual. Business robbery will never be eliminated, but the key to stopping its growth is PREVENTION.

The following information will be broken down into three distinct categories; before, during and after a robbery. It is done in this way to facilitate an easy training program for employees. Before reading any further, it is of paramount importance for all business owners to accept the fact that YOUR business IS a potential target. Once potential vulnerability is recognized, prevention becomes a useful management tool.

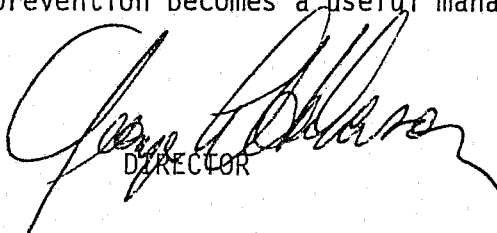

DIRECTOR

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I. BEFORE A ROBBERY

A. Visibility

1. Signs displayed in windows for advertising purposes many times afford the perpetrator excellent cover to commit a crime. It is recommended that signs be placed on windows and doors in such a manner that allows pedestrians, passing motorists, or patrols a clear view of the cash register. Signs can be placed above eye level and still achieve the desired results. Good visibility also allows employees a clear view of a suspect's vehicle, license number and direction of travel, after a robbery has been committed.
2. Since cash is often the target of a robbery, the need for good cash register visibility both from outside and within the business is vitally important. Displays and other retail goods should not be placed near or around the register since it offers concealment for both the weapon and the perpetrator. Placement of the register is important and should be done in such a way to allow the employee(s) a clear view of the store layout. Unnecessary clutter, both inside and outside of the business, can be perceived by the perpetrator as a plus and decrease his/her chances of being interrupted or discovered during the robbery.
3. Store layout is also an important part of maintaining adequate visibility. Counters and shelves should be at a height that allows employees to view customers throughout the business. This practice will also be a definite deterrent to the crime of shoplifting.

B. Lighting

1. Poor illumination of parking areas surrounding a business affords potential robbery suspects cover while observing a store. It will also restrict the ability of the victim to identify a getaway vehicle. Therefore, serious evaluation of lighting throughout the parking area should be a priority when designing or remodeling a business.
2. If spotlights are utilized for security while the business is unoccupied, the beam should be directed towards the business, thus eliminating shadows. Remember, adequate lighting is a cost effective deterrent to crime.

C. Money Handling

1. Having enough cash on hand is a necessity when operating a business, but how the cash is maintained and subsequently deposited determines the amount of risk a businessman takes.
 - a. Keep a minimal amount of cash in the register at all times. Bills of large denominations should be removed periodically from the register and placed in a drop safe that cannot be opened by the employee operating the register. Advertise this fact by use of signs or stickers.
 - b. Do not count cash in the view of customers when clearing a drawer or near closing time. This procedure will often invite a spontaneous robbery.
 - c. If possible, position cash registers so that customers cannot reach over the counter and grab exposed currency.

- d. Consider the use of bait money in all registers. This involves simply recording the series, serial numbers and denominations of certain bills, and in the event of a robbery, give those bills to the robber. Bait money can also be used to initiate an alarm and/or camera once it is removed from the triggering device in the register.
- e. When transporting cash or other currency from the business to a bank or home, do not use premarked money bags. Also, alter the time and route taken when making a deposit. DO NOT in any way draw attention to the fact that you are carrying money.

D. Surveillance Cameras

1. The surveillance camera is another effective deterrent against robbery. Photographs taken by automatic cameras during the course of a robbery have provided the necessary identification to arrest and prosecute a suspect. Therefore, the camera is recognized by the criminal element as a device to be avoided.
2. If a camera is purchased, the film should be periodically checked, as well as the camera alignment.
3. Dummy cameras can be an effective deterrent if they are installed to appear real. They should not be left to gather dust or covered up by advertising or other sale items.
4. Cameras should be positioned so that they are out of reach of a potential robber.

5. When considering surveillance equipment, several reliable companies should be contacted prior to purchase.

E. Alarms

1. Although alarms are generally considered as a deterrent to the crime of breaking and entering, they can and do have an effective robbery application. Many different alarms are on the market and will vary in price and sophistication. It is important to realize that an alarm system is only one prevention technique in any target hardening security program. It should be used in conjunction with the other prevention techniques discussed in this manual.
2. Most robbery alarm systems are designed to notify police departments of a robbery in progress and can be activated by means of a button, switch, bar, or bill trap in the cash drawers. Several factors should be considered before purchasing such a system.
 - a. Police response time.
 - b. The safety of employees. In other words, the activation of the system should not place the employee in any type of danger. If the system requires an overt movement on the part of the employee, it may cause the robber to become nervous, thus placing the employee in jeopardy.
 - c. Once a system is installed, all employees should be thoroughly trained in its use and limitations.

3. Many photo surveillance cameras and robbery alarms function simultaneously, but can be individually activated. This type of system allows employees to activate the camera to record "suspicious activity" without setting off a silent alarm.
4. If an alarm system is cost prohibitive, business owners could implement a type of buddy system protection. This system works exceptionally well if the buildings are adjacent. A switch located in store A, when activated, would activate a light or bell in store B, thus indicating a robbery is in progress. Store B would then be responsible for contacting the police. This system requires cooperation and training on the part of both stores and their employees.

F. Procedural Considerations

1. Opening and closing times are peak periods for robberies. Because of this situation, some simple precautions should be taken.
 - a. Keep entrances to the store, other than customers' entrances, locked at all times. Before admitting delivery or other people through back door(s), make sure they identify themselves. This can be easily accomplished by installing a bell and a wide angle viewer.
 - b. Search inside the store thoroughly, especially restrooms and stockrooms before locking doors. You could be locking yourself in with a robber if you don't.

- c. Do not admit customers after store is closed unless identified. Enforce closing time.
- d. If opening or closing the business alone, make a cursory inspection of the building exterior and surrounding area. Be observant for suspicious persons or vehicles.

G. Employee Training

1. The importance of employee training when dealing with the crime of robbery cannot be overemphasized. Since robbery is an emotional crime and employees cannot be sure of how they will act under duress, the employer should do all that is possible to prepare for such an incident. Employee safety is the first priority followed by obtaining all necessary information needed by law enforcement. The following tips must be part of the training process.
 - a. Place measuring tape or similar item on the frame of the main entrance door to designate various height levels. The markings should be large enough to be seen from a distance. This allows employees to determine approximate height of the perpetrator as he/she enters or exits the premises.
 - b. Provide suspect description forms or pads at all employee stations (see appendix A). All employees should be familiar with these forms.

c. Certain tasks must be performed by employee(s) during and after a robbery takes place. These specifics will be covered in the following sections of the manual, but it is necessary for employees to be aware and trained in the procedure.

II. DURING A ROBBERY

A. Do not in any way resist.

1. Obey instructions.
2. Do not plead or in any way antagonize the perpetrator.
3. Give the robber what he/she asks for - no more.

B. Activate the alarm only if it is safe to do so.

1. Quick, unnatural movements may upset the robber.

C. Observe.

1. Physical description and characteristics, e.g., walk, right handed vs. left handed, etc.
2. Type of weapon used, (a handgun classification guide is provided in appendix B).
3. Make model and color of getaway vehicle. Any damage or unusual features.
4. Direction and time of escape.

NOTE: The above information must be incorporated into a training program and given to employees immediately after being hired. This type of prevention may save a life and provide police with the necessary information to pursue a successful apprehension and prosecution.

III. AFTER A ROBBERY

A. Implement the preplanned employee assignments.

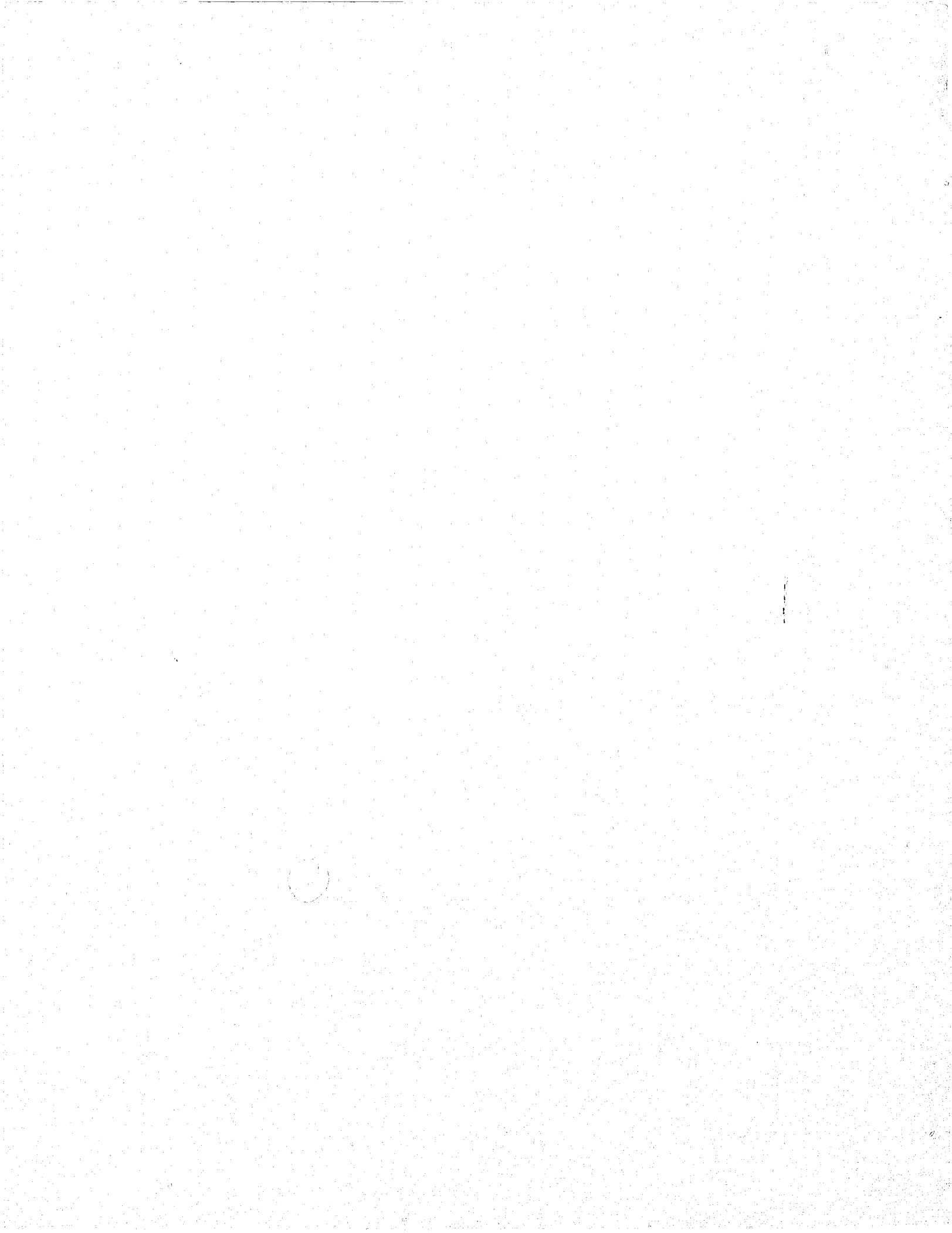
1. Call the police. Stay on the line until advised to hang up.
2. Protect the scene of the crime. This means keep people or other employees from the area of the store where the robbery occurred. Lock the door until the police arrive.
3. Detain any witnesses at the scene if possible. Get names and addresses if they do not remain.
4. Write down details of the robbery on suspect description forms (appendix A). Do not compare notes with others.

NOTE: If assignments are preplanned and carried out by employees, much time is saved and the amount of confusion limited. Even if the business has only one employee, assignments should be preplanned. A list should be made up incorporating the four points listed above and kept accessible for employees.


IV. SUMMARY

The crime of robbery is a traumatic experience for any victim. This manual has attempted to provide the business owner with vital information that can and will diminish the chances of one becoming a victim. Once a robbery takes place, additional information has been provided to not only assist law enforcement in apprehending the perpetrator, but more importantly to protect an innocent victim.

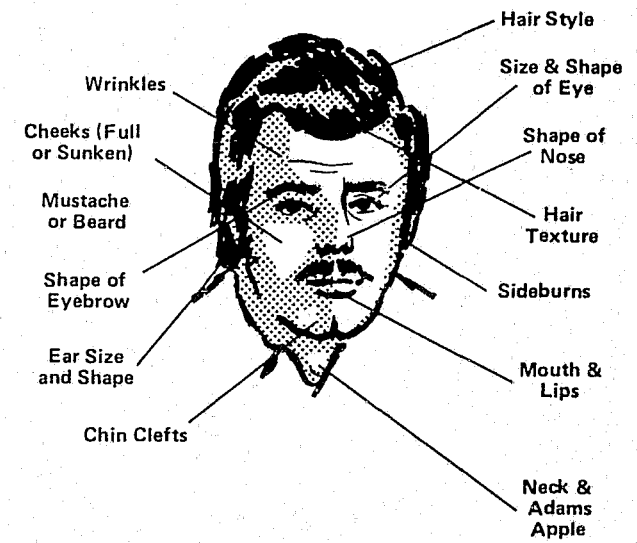
Crime prevention cannot be the sole responsibility of law enforcement personnel. Your commitment as a business owner is vital if the crime of robbery is to be reduced. By incorporating the suggestions provided in this manual into your business operation, the threat of robbery will be faced and appropriate protection afforded to those concerned. Additional information concerning the prevention of other business crimes (bad checks, shoplifting, breaking & entering, etc.) can be obtained by contacting Crime Prevention Units of city, county and State Police departments.



SUSPECT DESCRIPTION

SEX	RACE	AGE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	TYPE OF WEAPON						
											
						HAIR / FACIAL HAIR			HAT (Color, type)		
						GLASSES (type)			TIE		
						TATTOOS			COAT		
						COMPLEXION			SHIRT		
						SCARS/MARKS			PANTS / SHOES		
<p>STAY ON TELEPHONE...</p>			<p>DON'T HANG UP!</p>								
AUTO MAKE, MODEL, COLOR		LICENSE NUMBER	DIRECTION OF ESCAPE	TIME OF DEPARTURE							

FACIAL APPEARANCE



WRITE BELOW SPECIFIC FACIAL DETAILS—ONLY WHAT YOU DEFINITELY REMEMBER

WHAT DID SUSPECT SAY?

OTHER DETAILS

1 ACCOMPLICES: (number, description)

2 METHOD OF OPERATION:

3 ITEMS TAKEN: (merchandise, cash)

WITNESSES

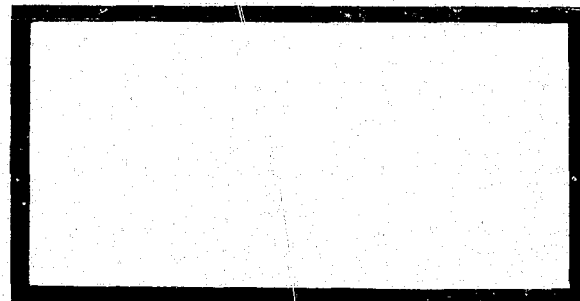
1 NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE _____

2 NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE _____

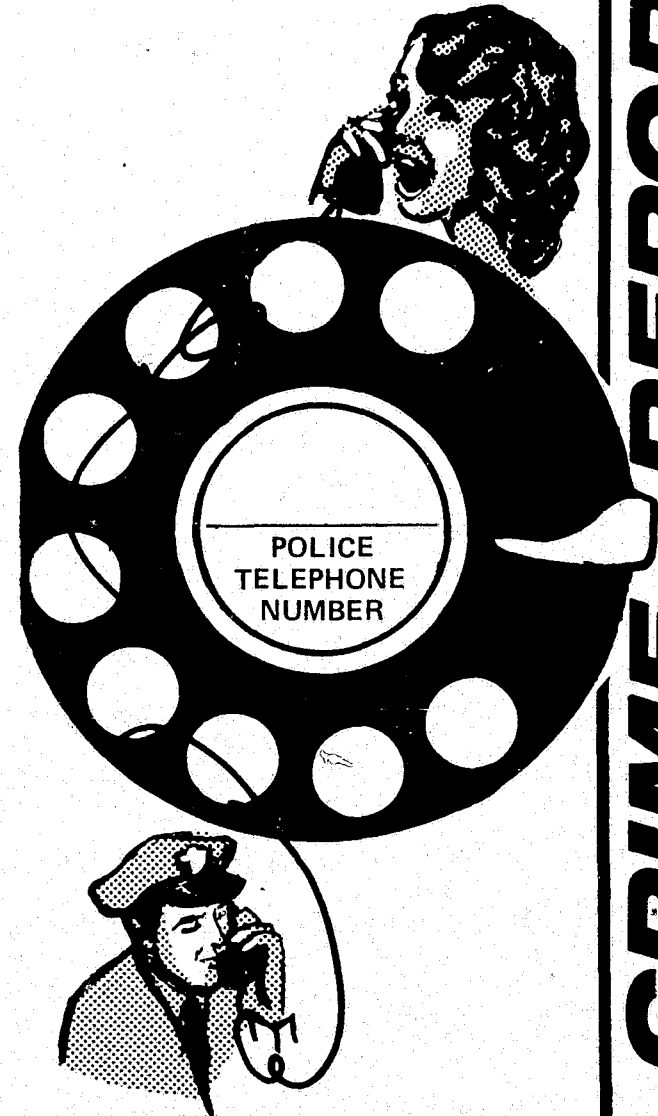
3 NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE _____



**DENY
OPPORTUNITY**



Developed and printed by the Michigan Department of State Police Crime Prevention Center under a grant from the Office of Criminal Justice Programs.



CRIME REPORTING

The following information is presented for use by the investigator to aid in the general classification of firearms used in the commission of a crime.

The two photographs in each class are representative of a larger group of weapons that are similar in size, shape and type, but not necessarily caliber.

The photographs are reproduced approximately 7/8 actual size. Holding the photographs a distance equal to that which the victim observed the weapon should facilitate accuracy.

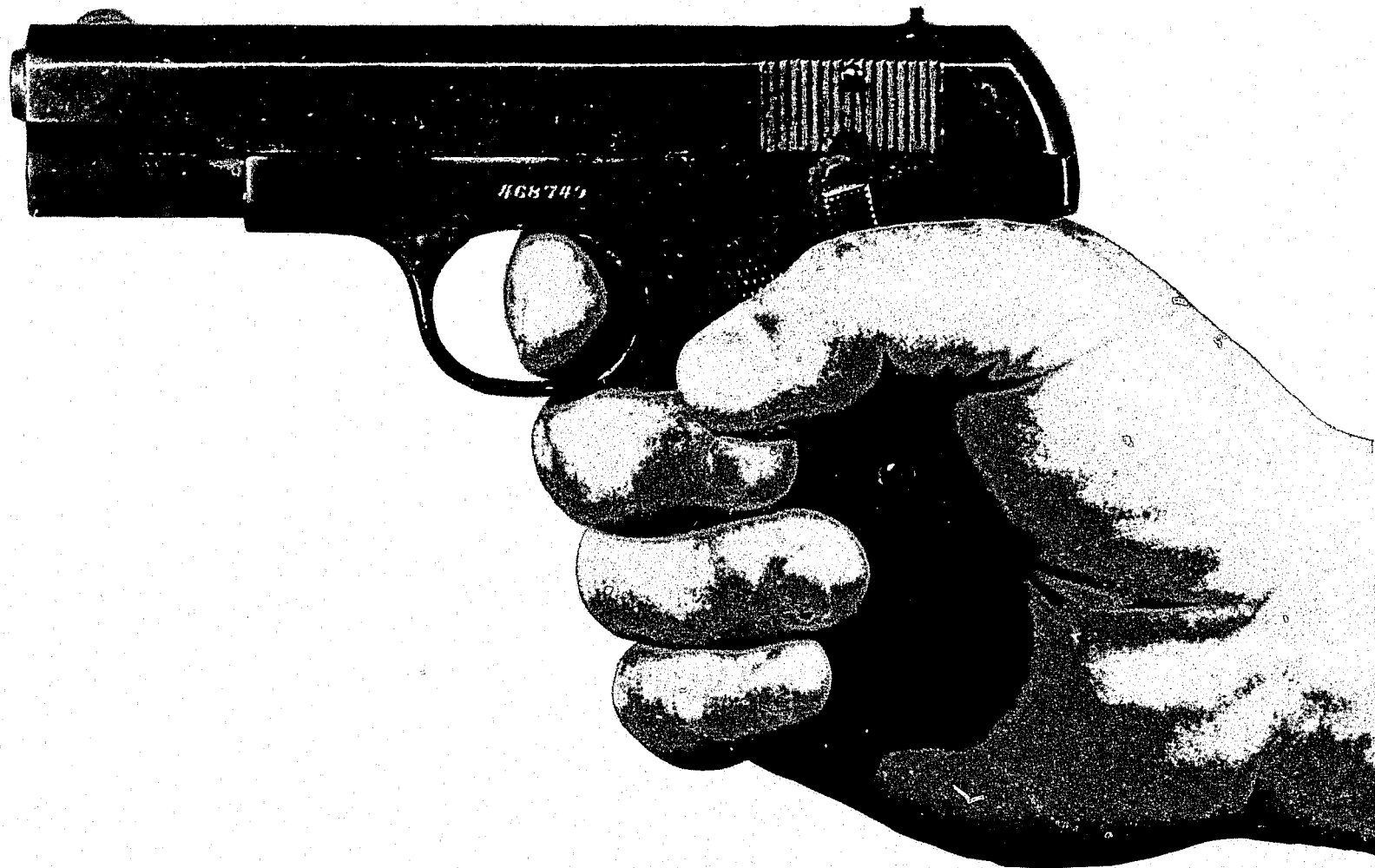
- Class 1 Small automatics
- Class 2 Medium size automatics
- Class 3 Large automatics
- Class 4 Luger type automatics
- Class 5 Small revolvers
- Class 6 Derringers
- Class 7 Pocket revolvers
- Class 8 Snub nose revolvers
- Class 9 Large revolvers
- Class 10 Sawed-off weapons

CLASS 1





CLASS 2





CLASS 3



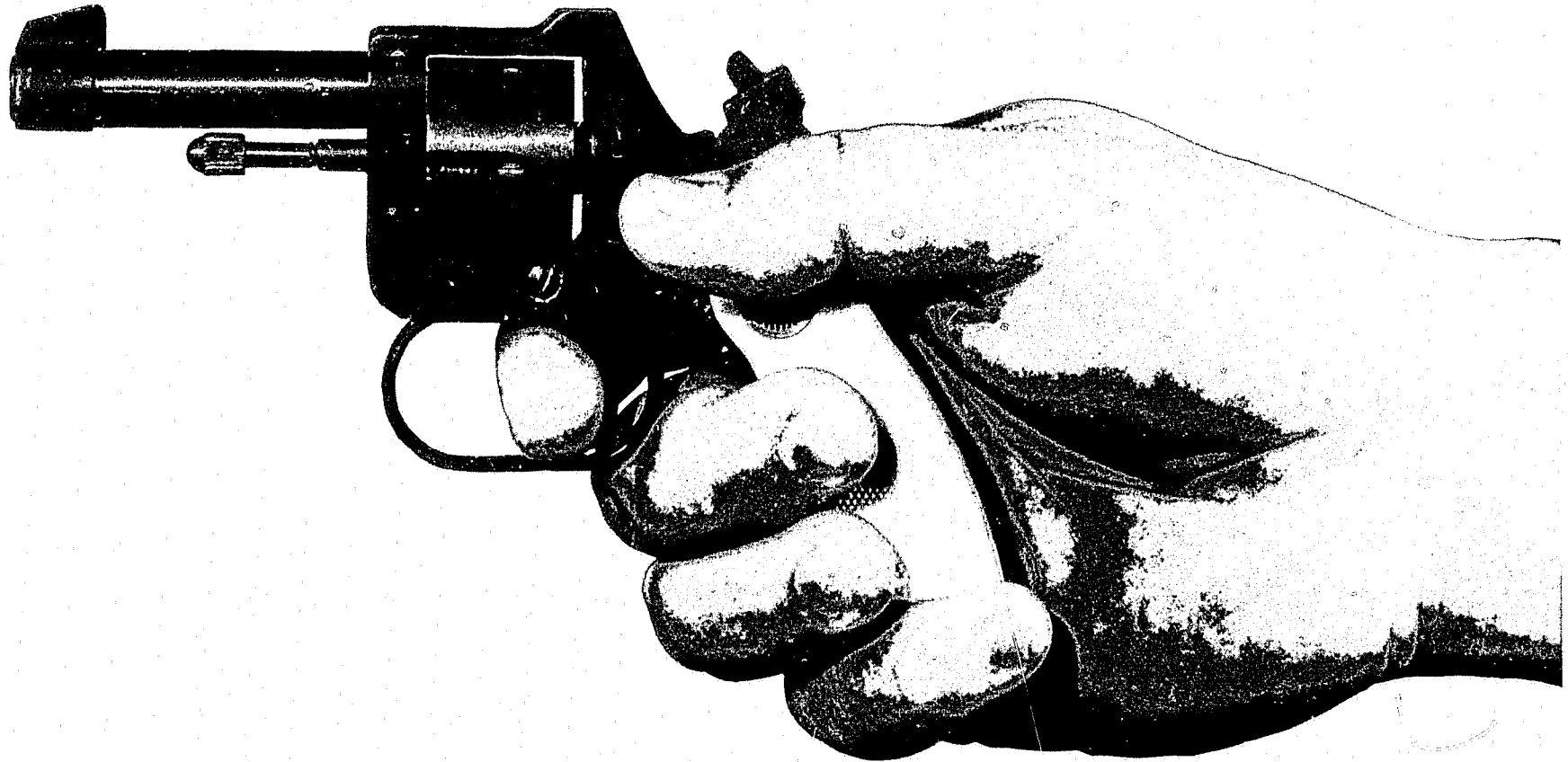


CLASS 4



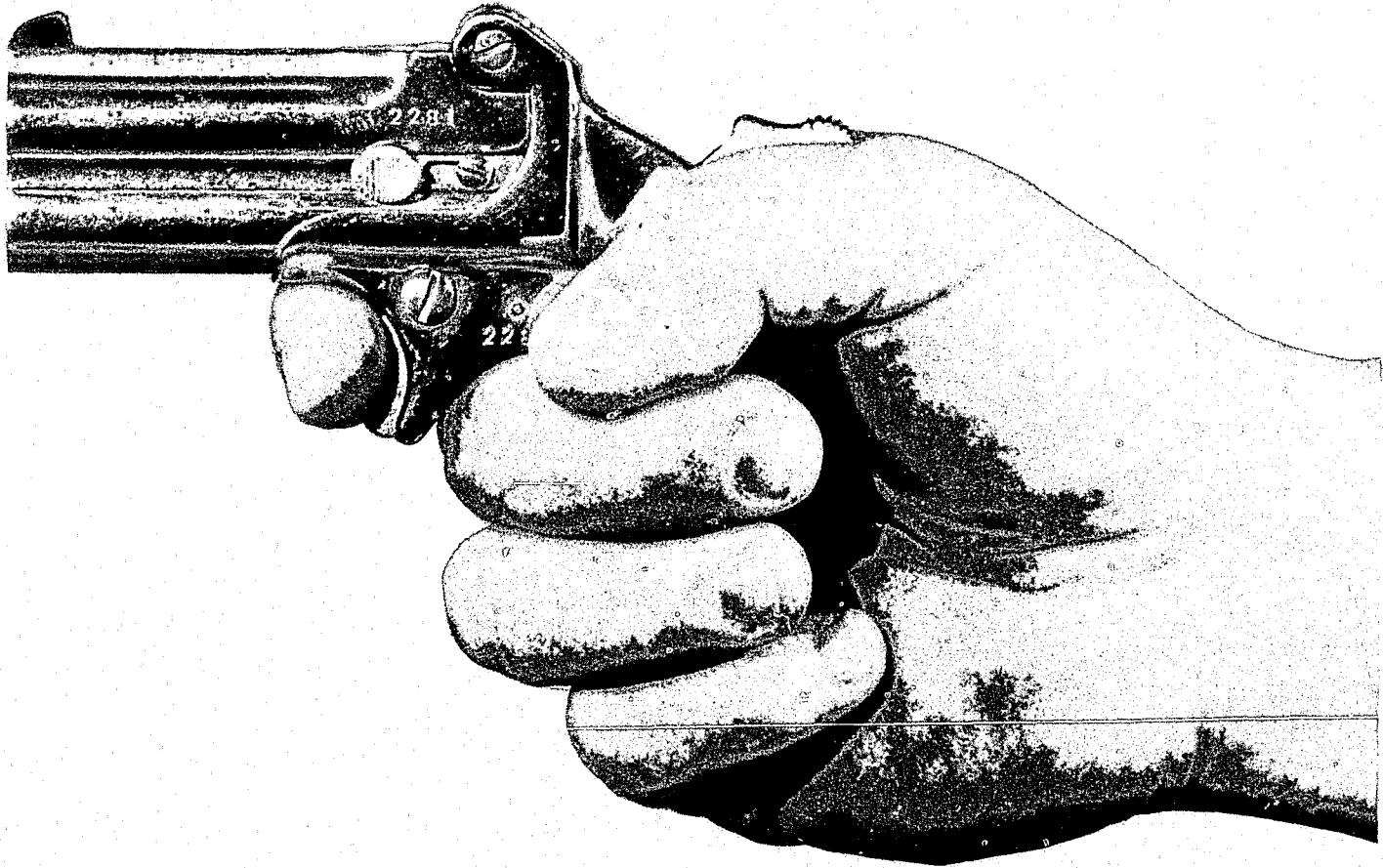


CLASS 5





CLASS 6





CLASS 7





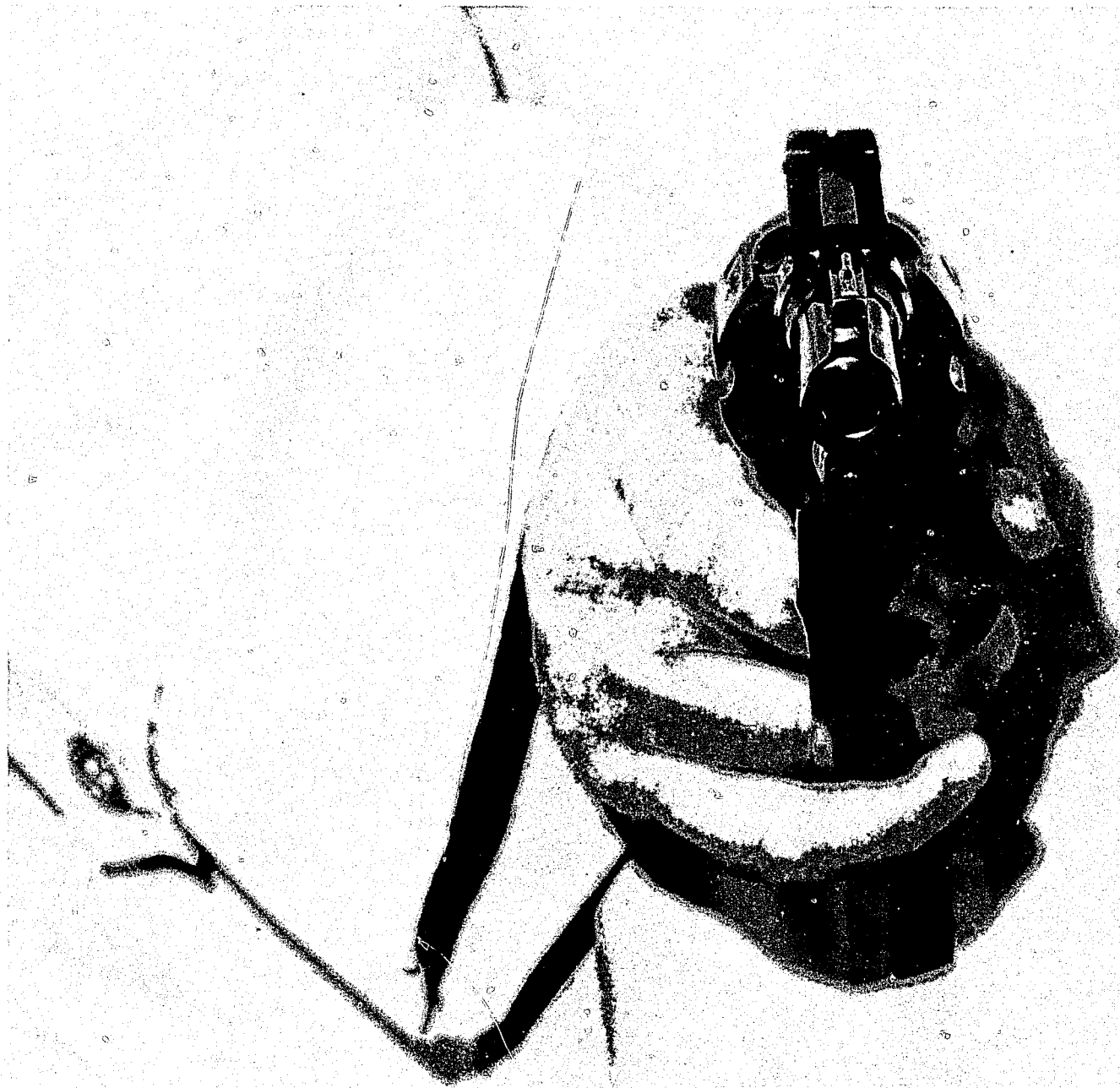
CLASS 8





CLASS 9





CLASS 10





END