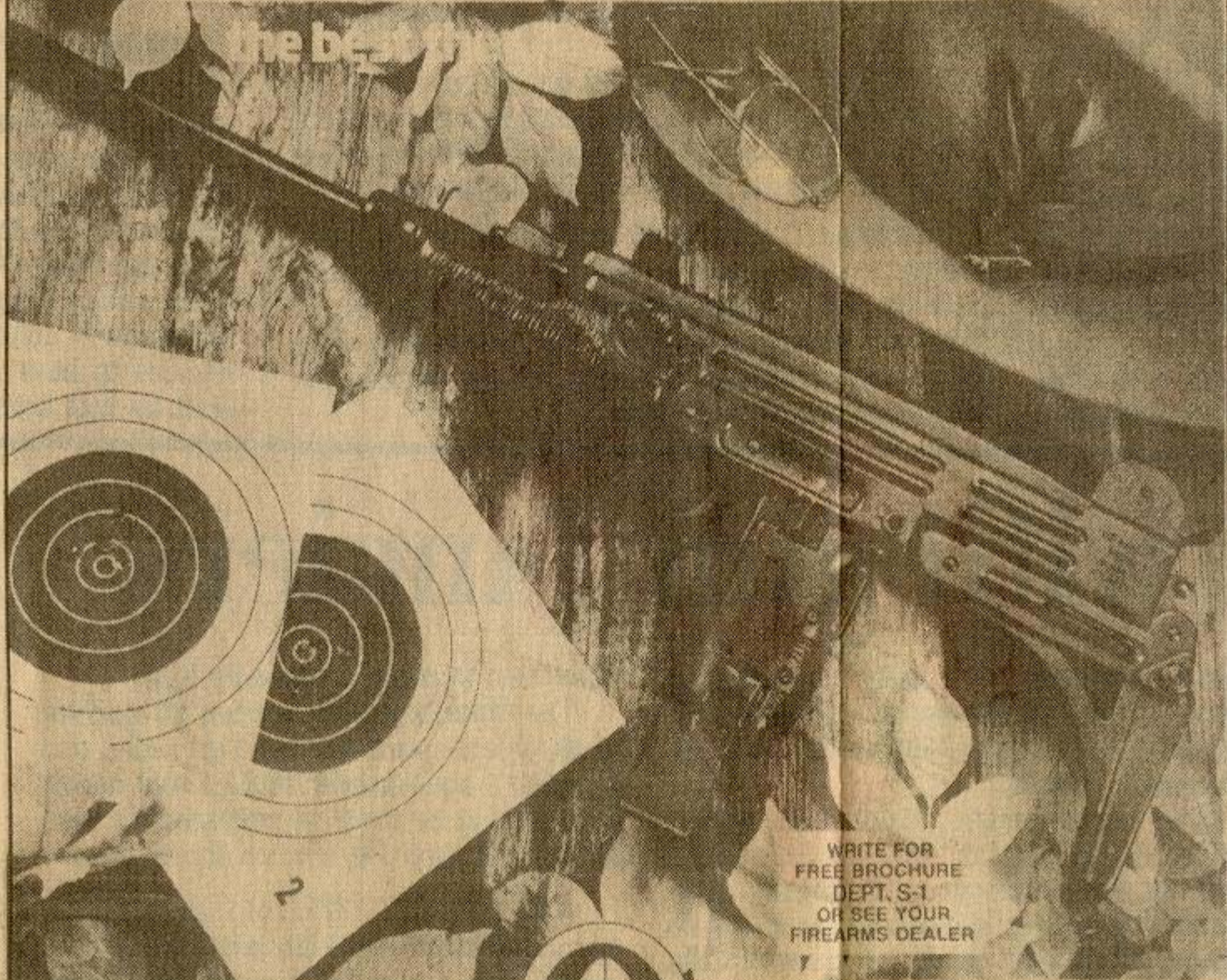


# UZI

the best



WRITE FOR  
FREE BROCHURE  
DEPT. S-1  
OR SEE YOUR  
FIREARMS DEALER

Imported exclusively by action arms ltd.

p.o. box 9573 philadelphia, pa 19124

The lure of the Uzi is seen in this advertisement in a recent issue of S.W.A.T. magazine, presenting the Uzi semiautomatic as a classy consumer item.



# Uzi scores a hit with gun fanciers

*Next best thing  
to their very  
own machine gun*

Free Press Staff and Knight-Ridder Newspapers

When Leo Stein goes to the range with his Uzi, he's the center of attention. "People gawk," the suburban Philadelphia dentist said. "It's almost like having a legend."

Stein is among an increasing number of gun buyers who want an Uzi simply because it's an Uzi. "To me it's a very, very exciting weapon," he said.

It wasn't until two years ago that gun enthusiasts like Stein could own an Uzi, but "they seem to be the fad right now," Virginia Lock of Lock's Philadelphia Gun Exchange said. "It's terrible to say, and the men wouldn't like me saying this, but it's like the latest toy on the market, and they all want it."

**WHAT HAS BEEN** drawing gun owners like Stein is the Uzi semiautomatic 9mm carbine — for most citizens, the closest legal thing to the Uzi submachine gun. They are willing to pay a premium price for the Israeli weapon. With a price of almost \$600, it's nearly double that of some comparable semiautomatics. At Detroit gun shops, prices range from just under \$500 for a

---

Mayor Young's security unit is studying the mini-Uzi.

---

slightly used Uzi semiautomatic to \$625 for a brand new unit.

The Uzi has been glowingly reviewed in gun fanciers' publications as well. "When someone thinks of a sophisticated submachine gun, they think of the Uzi," reports the September issue of S.W.A.T. magazine. "(It's) a delight to shoot, and a superb performer with little else to equal it in the field. Now over 30 years old, there is no sign that the Uzi's career is anywhere near over."

**"THERE'S NOTHING MAGIC** about it; it's just well-designed," Ed Owen said, chief of the firearms technology branch of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. But if any gun can be said to have charisma, it's the Uzi. The guns have appeared in several movies, although, to the occasional dismay of Action Arms Ltd., which is the guns' sole U.S. importer, they usually are in the hands of the bad guys, like the Russians, in the case of the latest James Bond movie, "For Your Eyes Only."

The Uzi submachine gun is a weapon

See **GUN**, Page 2B



**GUN**, from Page 1B

that has been thrust into the limelight by history. It first caught the public's eye during the 1956 Israeli Sinai campaign, and again was brought to public attention in March 1981, when U.S. Secret Service agents defending President Reagan whipped Uzis out of their discreet cases on the day John W. Hinckley Jr. made an attempt on the president's life.

Over the years, the Uzi has been popularized as the weapon that protects world leaders. The guns are known to guard Britain's Queen Elizabeth, and Jordan's King Hussein is said to carry one in his car. When France cut off relations with Israel during the 1967 war, Charles de Gaulle, then France's president, was said to have allowed only one exception to the embargo — Uzis for his bodyguards.

**EVENTUALLY**, Mayor Coleman Young's name may be added to the list of leaders who are protected by Uzi-equipped bodyguards. A request for information on the mini-Uzi, which is smaller, about three pounds lighter and more easily concealed than the original Uzi submachine gun, has been made by a member of the Mayor's Security Unit, according to Evan Whildin, supervisor of Action Arms' automatic weapons sales. Developed to meet the needs of law enforcement agencies, the first mini-Uzis will enter the United States in September.

"The mayor's protection service requested information on the mini-Uzi and exploded schematic diagrams of the gun. That usually means it's going to be used in training classes," Whildin said. The request was made by Officer Michael Blount, a longtime member of the mayor's security force. Blount was unavailable for comment, and Lt. Marshall Emerson, chief of the mayor's bodyguard unit, refused comment.

**THE UZI** has captivated the Detroit gun-buying public, as well. "They're available at every gun shop in town," the manager of a Detroit area gun shop and firing range said, who asked that his name not be used.

"They're a real conversation piece for people who like military-type arms," he said. "Police officers buy 'em because they're small, they conceal well and they make a super-dependable backup weapon. When your life's on the line, you want something dependable."

Perhaps part of the attraction of the semiautomatic version of the Uzi is that its automatic submachine gun version is off-limits to the ordinary citizen in the United States. (A semiautomatic weapon fires once every time the trigger is pulled; an automatic fires a series of shots when the trigger is pulled.)

It is legal under federal law to own U.S.-made submachine guns, provided permission is obtained from the the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. In many



states including Michigan, however, it is illegal for a civilian to own a machine gun of any kind.

There are no such state restrictions on semiautomatics, such as the imported Uzi model. Hence, when U.S. Secret Service agents whipped Uzis out of their briefcases in March 1981, sales of the next best thing, Uzi semiautomatics, jumped.

In the two years since the Uzi carbine entered the U.S. market, "it's been quite a hit, to say the least," Mitch Kalter said, vice-president of sales and marketing of Action Arms. "People say, 'If it's good enough to protect the president, it must be very, very good.'"

**IN MANUFACTURING** the semiautomatic, the government-owned Israeli Military Industries (IMI) was looking primarily at the U.S. commercial gun market, a market off-limits to the Uzi submachine gun since the passage of the 1968 Gun Control Act, which allowed only the military or law enforcement agencies such as the Secret Service to own foreign-made submachine guns.

U.S. consumers have bought 30,000 of the semiautomatic firearms since they were first imported from Israel in June 1980, Kalter said in a recent interview.

Sportsman's Emporium, Action Arms' wholesale distributor for the Uzis in the Philadelphia area, has sold about 400 semiautomatics since they came on the market, the distributor's buyer, Tom Cole said. (There is no Detroit-based distributor for Uzis; local gun dealers buy Uzis from distributors nationwide, making sales figures for the Detroit area difficult to obtain.)

**ACTION ARMS** originally brought the Uzi's designer, Col. Uziel Gal, from Israel to Philadelphia to design a new military rifle. But along the way, the now-retired Israeli army officer redesigned the Uzi.

The biggest challenge was to design the

gun so it would be virtually impossible to retool it into a machine gun. Federal law prohibits converting a semiautomatic to an automatic weapon.

The semiautomatic, Kalter said, is designed to jam after one bullet is fired if the gun has been tinkered with illegally. And Action Arms refuses to sell spares of any of the parts that must be altered to convert the gun to an automatic weapon. Moreover, if the company receives in exchange any parts that obviously have been tampered with, it notifies the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Nevertheless, gun experts say that a good gunsmith can convert almost any gun into a machine gun, and there is evidence that it has been done. Gun magazine advertisements offer kits that allegedly allow gun owners to do the conversion themselves.

Federal agents were not too surprised when they were alerted to an ad in July's Shotgun News, a Nebraska publication, in which a Pennsylvania gunsmith offered to convert the Uzi semiautomatic to a machine gun for \$150. An agent of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms borrowed a bolt and trigger housing from Action Arms and sent it in answer to the ad. When the modified parts came back and were put on the Uzi, the gun fired 30 times with one trigger squeeze, one federal prosecutor said.

The alterations led to the conviction two weeks ago in U.S. District Court in Philadelphia of Kevin Kelly, 30, of Chadds Ford, Pa., who was found guilty of illegally making a machine gun. The case was one of the first convictions in the country involving the conversion of an Uzi carbine into a fully automatic weapon. Kelly is to be sentenced Sept. 27.

The Kelly case led to the indictment of another Chadds Ford man, William Berquist, a real estate developer, accused of possessing an arsenal of unregistered weapons, including three Uzis that allegedly had been



converted to machine guns by Kelly.

The three Uzis were among 10 machine guns, plus silencers and hand grenades, that Berquist's housekeeper said he told her he kept so that he could be prepared for war. Berquist is awaiting trial on the charges.

**A REPRESENTATIVE** of the Detroit Police Department crime lab said Uzis have not been used in any major crimes in the Detroit area; they are considered too expensive for most criminals. A handful of the guns have come to the attention of law enforcement authorities elsewhere, however. One case was that of Paul Evalds, 18, who went drinking with friends Easter eve and wound up at 4:45 a.m. at a Dunkin' Donut shop in suburban Bryn Mawr, Pa.

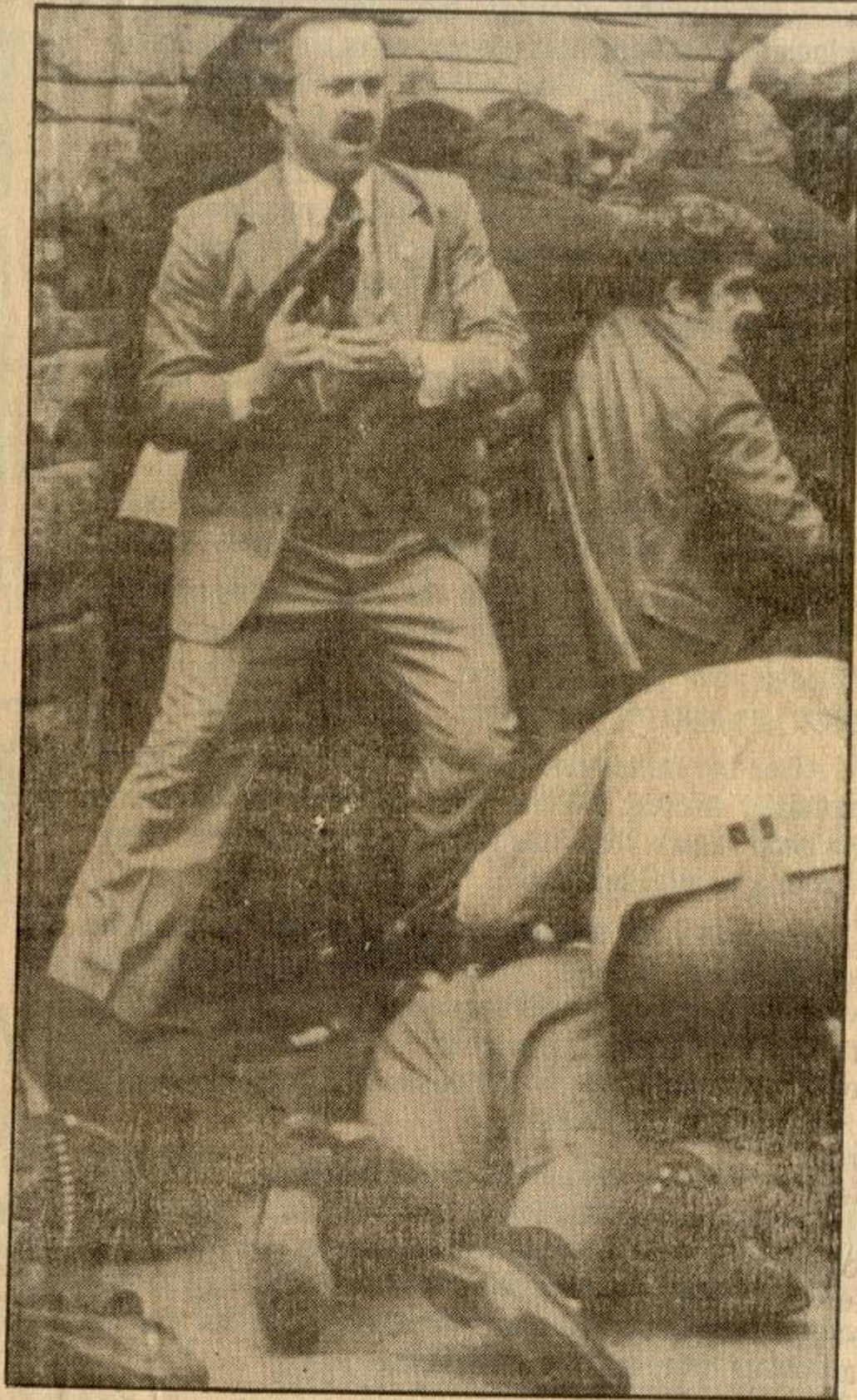
From a telephone booth there, one of his friends called the Toyko Hilton and ordered champagne and strawberries for Room 309, and they dialed the White House and said they were going to kill the president, according to former Assistant U.S. Attorney Cecil Jones, the prosecutor on the case.

A telephone operator who had stayed on the line alerted police, and the trio was arrested. In the back seat of Evalds' car, police found an Uzi semiautomatic, which a receipt showed Evalds had purchased for a \$100 down payment.

A federal magistrate required that the weapon be turned over to the Secret Service and that Evalds undergo psychological counseling. The complaint against him was dismissed.

*Free Press Staff Writer Colin Covert and Jan Schaffer of Knight-Ridder Newspapers contributed to this report.*





UPI Photo

**The Uzi semiautomatic captured the imagination of gun enthusiasts when this Secret Service agent brandished his similar-looking Uzi submachine gun during John Hinckley's attempt to assassinate President Reagan.**