

# Gun Lawyer -- Episode 65 Transcript

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

knife, randall, blade, gerber, laws, switchblade, gun, buy, flea market, swiss army knife, new hampshire, bike, rights, wrote, lawyer, model, special commemorative, ban, mortician, evan

## SPEAKERS

Evan Nappen, Speaker 3

### **Evan Nappen** 00:19

I'm Evan Nappen and welcome to Gun Lawyer. So, I just received, and I'm very excited about it, my Randall 75th Anniversary Model 17 Astro knife. Randall is a great maker of knives. I'm sure many of you have heard the name Randall, and they came out with a special commemorative, which is rare. They rarely do commemoratives. This was commemorating their 75th Anniversary. For the 75th Anniversary Knife, they chose their Model 17 Astro. Now the 17 Astro is very a special Randall. It was a knife designed by Gordon Cooper for the seven astronauts on the Mercury Project, and it went into space. It was designed with Cooper and Bo Randall, and these were handmade. This model really has amazing space history to it. So, it made sense that they would honor it with this special commemorative knife, and it's very cool. I love Randalls, and it got me thinking about how I got started in knives. I realized that I was interested in knives even before guns. Actually, knives were my gateway weapon. I guess that would be the way to describe it.

### **Evan Nappen** 02:01

Going way back, when did I first have a knife? I started thinking and do you know what? My first knife was when I was in Cub Scouts. About eight years old, I guess, or so - Cub Scouts. My dad gave me his Swiss Army knife. Now this was a Swiss army knife that he had acquired on his honeymoon in Bermuda. Of course, a kid with a Swiss army knife, it's got to be like the coolest thing ever, and I love that knife. And do you know what? I still have that knife, believe it or not, that my dad gave me. It had all the cool Swiss Army Knife features, and I used it for all kinds of things, whittling and cutting and everything. Of course, I cut myself pretty good with it. Pretty much down to the bone on my thumb. You learn the hard way. All those adventures with the Swiss Army Knife were my introduction to knives.

### **Evan Nappen** 03:10

I remember somewhat after that, not too long, but a little bit after, I was trick or treating with a friend. We were going around to the different houses collecting all the candy that we could. My friend says, hey, I have a knife, and I said oh, really? What do you have? Because I have one. I have a Swiss army knife. He's like, no look at this. He goes in his pocket and takes out this very long, thin blade, long pocketknife. What it actually was and what's called, is a fruit knife or a melon knife. They are almost like the size of a pencil in its thickness, and the blade is pretty long relatively speaking for a pocketknife. A good four or five inches, but very, very narrow. It is mainly used for cutting melons and fruit. But I remember as a kid, he takes out this knife and he opens it up. I'm like, wow, that is really cool. Look at

the size of this blade. I thought that fruit knife was Neato. I did not know at the time what it actually was. I just thought it was a really cool knife with this long thin blade.

**Evan Nappen 04:30**

So, I would go with my dad every weekend to the flea markets and specifically the Englishtown flea market, which was a really fantastic flea market in its day. My dad collected many things but focused on political items. As a matter of fact, he wrote the Warman's Guide to Collecting Political Americana. Most of what he collected to write that book he bought at flea markets. He used his knowledge to find these things. I went with him. It was a great time with my dad on these weekends, Father and Son time. I remember going to a flea market as a kid, and I found a guy that had one of these fruit knives. It was like \$4, or something, maybe two. I don't remember. But I was able to buy it, and I was so thrilled to have one of these. I was just fascinated by it.

**Evan Nappen 05:32**

By going to the flea market with my dad, I saw there was a lot of different sellers of different knives. So, I kind of became a knife collector, by default, and going to the flea markets. In those days, it was before, of course, all the imports from China. It was before a lot of those things. But there was inexpensive, relatively speaking, knives from Japan. In those days, inexpensive stuff came from Japan, and there was a seller that had Japanese knives; new but reasonable. He had this black-handled, stiletto-type Japanese knife. It was a lock blade, but it looked like a switchblade. But it was a lock blade but a decent size. When he showed me this, even as a kid, I was like, Oh, wow, a lock blade. Now that's a great idea, considering I had cut my thumb with the Swiss Army Knife, and the fruit knife was not a lock blade. The idea that the blade would lock was great because I realized instantly how much safer and better the knife would be with that. So, that made me think along those lines.

**Evan Nappen 06:49**

I bought these knives, and I built up a nice little collection of knives as a kid. I kept going and doing that. One day, my dad comes to me at home, and he says, you have been collecting these knives and all, but a lot of them are just inexpensive. Some of them are interesting, but why don't you think about getting a really great knife? And I'm like, what do you mean? He hands me a Randall catalog. I must have been at that point, maybe 15. He hands me a Randall catalog, and I don't even know what they were. I don't even know how my father knew about them. He wasn't a knife guy, per se. But somehow, he got hold of a Randall catalog, and he said, Evan, look at these. This is something you should buy and invest in. These are really quality.

**Evan Nappen 07:47**

So, I read through that Randall catalog and man, what a great catalog on knives. You can still get one. You can still get the Randall catalog today for free. Go to Randall's website ([www.randallknives.com](http://www.randallknives.com)), and they will send you this great catalog for free. About their custom, hand-built custom knives - just great. I remember back then the knife was somewhere around \$70 for what's called the Model 1 All Purpose Fighting Knife. That Model 1 looked so good, and it just hit me. I have to save up for that. So, I really saved, and I'll tell you, if you order Randall from the factory today, there is a five year wait to get it - 5 years. Back then it was about six to nine months, give or take, about nine months on the outside. I saved up, and I bought that Randall Model 1. It really was a fortune for me as a kid to save up. Boy,

when it came in, the knife was such a beauty. It was absolutely the most incredible knife I owned. I just love that Randall, and it showed me the difference of what a quality handmade knife can be.

**Evan Nappen** 09:14

The following year or so, I ended up going on a trip through Florida with my high school. It was a bike hostel, and we were all on our bicycles. There was about 15 or 16 of us high schoolers with the biology teacher and her husband doing a bike hostel through Florida. From Jacksonville, all the way down through to Orlando. All on our bikes with camping gear. It was quite an undertaking, I must say, and she swore never to ever do that again. But it was very interesting. When we got there, most of us had 10 speeds. That was the thing in those days, the English racers and what have you. We were all pretty well geared up, except for one person on this bike trip. Her name was Tracy, and she actually came on this bike hostel to do all these miles through Florida with camping gear on a bicycle, with a three-speed Raleigh bike. It was unbelievable. All of us said, ready to do this, right? She has this bike, and the teacher, knowing I was a responsible sort of person, and I was there with another buddy of mine, she said, Look, you have to make sure that Tracy makes it to camp every night. So, you have got to be the end of the line. Here we thought we would have a great time zipping through Florida are gone. My job was to make sure that she, on this three speed, made it in.

**Evan Nappen** 11:05

This buddy of mine stayed with me to help. His name was Tommy Kraeutler. Tom Kraeutler has his own radio show today. He is the host of the nationally syndicated show, The Money Pit Home Improvement Radio Show. He is a great guy. But this was when we were both kids. So, our job now is to make sure that she makes it to camp. We follow along, and we took our time. We would stop in at various stores along the way and relax there in Florida. We just took it easy and had a good time. Just making sure that she did it. One of these days, we were riding, and I looked up. We were on the Orange Blossom Trail, and I see Randall Made Knives. Then it hit me. I totally didn't put it together. The knife that I love was made here in Florida, and this is the place where it was made. So, I said, Look, man, we got to go in here. I have to see. I got to talk with them. This is great. I did not realize Randall was here.

**Evan Nappen** 12:22

So, we pulled in on our bikes. We went in, and Randall had the museum in the shop. That's when I first met Bo Randall. He was the nicest guy, and he personally gave us a tour of the shop and the museum. It was just great. When I look back now, I realize just how incredibly special that was. It just happened to work out that way. But, man, it was great. If you get down to Florida, check out their knife museum. They moved it to Bo's actual home there, and it's beautiful. Really great stuff. You can actually see the Astro Model 17 that Gordon Cooper took into space and brought back. You can get right up close and look at that knife that actually went into space. He had given it back to Bo in honor of his work; so, it's pretty cool. Anyway, we finished that bike hostel, and I remember some of the other places we stopped were these junk shops just for fun. At one of the junk shops, they had a cattle prod, and it was like \$1. We bought it, and with a black magic marker, we wrote Tracy prod on it. That was the Tracy prod to keep her going and to make it into camp every night.

**Evan Nappen** 14:00

After that and Randall and building up, I ended up finding what would become my everyday carry (EDC) back then. Prior to that my mother and father had bought me a birthday gift of a Buck 110. Now you all know the classic Buck 110 that you would wear on your belt. It was a good knife, and I still have that one. I enjoyed it, but you had to carry it on the outside of your belt. Along comes Gerber with their folding sportsman and that became my pocketknife of choice. The drop point Gerber, and this nifty little gadget that you could buy called a flick it. I don't know if any of you are familiar with the old flick it, but the flick it actually went on the spine of the blade. It made it so you could, particularly with the Gerber, open the Gerber with one hand because it had like a little lever on it. By putting these flick its on the Gerbers, it was the first version of the one-hand opening EDC of popular note back then. This was before there was even the idea of a tactical pocketknife or anything along those lines. That was as good as it got. Those knives are good. The Gerber has performed well. They were good. The flick its actually worked, and I still have my old Gerber with the old flick it even.

**Evan Nappen 15:47**

I ended up getting a job working in a knife shop. I ended up working at Herder's Cutlery in the mall. If you remember Herder's Cutlery, they were in a number of malls. At the time, you used to be able to find knife shops in malls. You had Hoffritz, Herder's and such. Now they have pretty much dried up and gone away. But that's where I worked. I worked in the knife shop on the weekends, part time. It was interesting to work in a knife shop in those days because it was right at the beginning of the explosion of folding knives and their popularity, particularly ones that you could open with one hand and carry. That is where we saw the first Spydercos come in with the hole that you can open with one hand. Particularly, the very popular police model came out. The Spydercos are very popular, and I ended up putting the old Gerber away and having a Spyderco for a while with the hole. I was fascinated at how great that worked with one hand opening.

**Evan Nappen 17:07**

Then this other up and coming company, Al Mar Knives came out. They had that beautiful line of Al Mars with the white handles. One day, a guy comes in from Al Mar, a sales rep, who says, oh, you work in a knife store, you can order one of these special Eagle models that have Rosewood handle and a sterling silver insert. They are just doing them limited, and since you work in a knife store, you can order one. I'm like, wow, I love that. So, I actually got one of those way back, and I still have it. Having worked in that knife shop as a young man, it was really great. It was interesting working in the mall, and that's actually where I met my wife, Beverly. While I was working in the knife shop, she was working at Friendly's, and that's how we met.

**Evan Nappen 17:58**

Interesting, it's all coming down to knives. I am reflecting back on this, and it was really some funny stuff. At one point in the mall, we had a board that had on display all the Swiss Army Knives, every model. Underneath them with the Dymo (you know, before P-touch, you had those Dymos, where you had to punch each letter out on a sticky label, we labeled every model with magnets on the wall of all the Swiss Army knives that they offered. There were some blank magnet spots at the bottom in case they got new models. Swiss Army has the Huntsmen, the Mechanic, the Fisherman, the Champion, and all these other models. So, as a joke, we made up one, and we called it the Mortician. We put the Mortician on a label under one of the empty magnets. People would come in, and you would be

surprised. Can I see a mortician knife? I'm like, oh, we're out of that right now, sorry. What's on the mortician? We would be like, oh, well, it has like a putty knife and stuff for cleaning teeth and a comb. We just make up stuff that Swiss Army put on it. But man, there was a big demand for a mortician knife that didn't exist. I can tell you. We had a good time with that. Well, when we get back, I will continue the story of my journey with knives.

**Speaker 3** 19:29

For over 30 years, Attorney Evan Nappen has seen what rotten laws due to good people. That's why he's dedicated his life to fighting for the rights of America's gun owners. A fearsome courtroom litigator fighting for rights, justice, and freedom. An unrelenting gun rights spokesman tearing away at anti-gun propaganda to expose the truth. Author of six best-selling books on gun rights including Nappen on Gun Law, a bright orange gun law bible that sits atop the desk of virtually every lawyer, police chief, firearms dealer, and savvy gun owner. That's what made Evan Nappen America's Gun Lawyer. Gun laws are designed to make you a criminal. Don't become the innocent victim of a vicious anti-gun legal system. This is the guy you want on your side. Keep his name and number in your wallet and hope you never have to use it. But if you live, work, or travel with a firearm, the deck is already stacked against you. You can find him on the web at [EvanNappen.com](http://EvanNappen.com) or follow the link on the Gun Lawyer resource page. Evan Nappen, America's Gun Lawyer.

**Speaker 3** 20:43

You're listening to Gun Lawyer with Attorney Evan Nappen. Available wherever you get your favorite podcasts.

**Evan Nappen** 20:59

Hey, folks, okay, so back on the knife journey here, and it's just interesting to me looking at how this grew and grew and grew. And it did, because I met some interesting folks in the knife shop, and I ended up going to a small local gun show. This was the time when you could actually have these in Jersey on a limited basis. I went to this local show and that's where I met a guy about my age, Mark. He's still a good friend of mine, and I know he is an avid listener. We were about 17 or 18 at the time, and we definitely hit it off. Mark really knew a lot about knives, and I learned a lot from him. He introduced me to what we affectionately called Cole's Book of Knives. Cole wrote the book on U.S. military knives, and it expanded my horizon into the whole area of military knife collecting. When I would go to the flea markets, I could really find some great pieces very reasonably, and I used to great extent that book. The key was that book to know what to look for and what to buy. From there, we went to the larger shows including Forks of the Delaware in Allentown, PA. I have been going there since I was about 17 or 18, and I am proud to be a Life Member. They honored me with a life membership, and I have purchased and acquired so many knives through the years.

**Evan Nappen** 22:49

In February of 2000, I wrote my first article for Blade Magazine. A friend of mine at the gun club, whose name was George Raskulinecz, was actually at Pearl Harbor. He was on the Oklahoma, and when the torpedoes hit the Oklahoma, the ship capsized and about 429 of the crew died. George was at one of the gun turrets, and he told me he had to wait for the order before he was allowed to abandon the ship. He jumped off the ship along with a number of others. There was a 50-foot drop into burning hot water.

With oil and fire and just a mess, he jumped off and was able to survive. He had with him a pocketknife, a military issue pocketknife, and he carried that pocketknife throughout the entire war in the Pacific. Then he was put on the Yorktown, and believe it or not, he had to jump into the sea again. So, the Japanese made him jump in twice. In battles throughout the whole Pacific war, he carried this knife with him. He gave me this knife, and I am so honored. He was such a nice guy and gave me this knife. So, I wrote up his story with this knife for Blade Magazine and it's February 2000 issue. I really wrote it as a tribute to George and I just so appreciated it.

**Evan Nappen 24:48**

This article started my knife writing career, writing all different articles for Blade Magazine and for Knives Annual. I have an article in the most current edition of Knives Annual just out now on the oldest knife laws in America. I really did a lot of research to find the earliest knife laws, and it's very interesting to read the history of the knife laws. Through the years, I have written articles on knives that are hidden in plain sight. The concealed knives that are part of other things, and you can't even tell they are a knife. I wrote about the miracle in New Hampshire that I am going to talk to you about, knives by gun makers, and knuckle knives. My good buddy, Ed Fowler, and about his knife making and about tacticals and assisteds, and on and on everything, the whole gamut.

**Evan Nappen 26:04**

I wrote one piece on the most illegal knife in America, which you may find interesting to know, is the Ballistic Knife. I wrote articles on knowing your knife rights. I did a lot of articles on switchblades. I did a whole series, a three-part series, on switchblades. I talked about the worst knife jurisdictions and other knives of historic interest from other individuals. I really had a great time writing all these and still do. It grew in such a way that they asked me to write the book on U.S. Knife Laws, which I did. The same company that published Gun Digest, the U.S. Knife Laws book, all growing out of this. I attended the Blade Shows, which if you ever get a chance, it's the greatest knife show in the world. The Blade show is in Atlanta, Georgia, and you meet everybody who is anybody, and you get to see all the great products, all the great makers, all the great stuff. What a great time the Blade Show is. I would highly recommend going to the Blade Show.

**Evan Nappen 27:24**

In 2010 I spearheaded what really became an important moment in knife law history. Working closely with Knife Rights, of which I am proud to be counsel to, we were able to get New Hampshire's knife laws repealed. New Hampshire had these knife laws from the 50s that banned switchblade, dagger, Dirk, and stiletto. These laws needed to go because they were archaic. By the way, the whole ban on knives, particularly switchblades, came about thanks to Hollywood, West Side Story, and James Dean, etc. Of course, America loves to ban symbols instead of actually doing something about substance. So, in the 50s, the switchblade became the symbol of youth violence. If we ban the symbol, well, that's how you cure the problem, right? Well, of course not. But that's why these switchblade laws got passed, which are just another absurd violation of our Second Amendment rights.

**Evan Nappen 28:50**

In New Hampshire, it was kind of funny because not only did they have a ban on switchblades, but also daggers, dirks, and stilettos. As some of you may know, dirks are either a short sword or a naval sword,

which I don't believe is what they were talking about, or the classic short stabbing weapon dirk. The most classic of all dirks is the Scottish Dirk. And why is that so funny? Well, New Hampshire every year would run what's called the Highland Games, where 1000s of people would come to New Hampshire carrying Scottish Dirks. What could you buy and sell at the Highland Games? Scottish Dirks. So, there's a ban on dirks, and it is dirk city. It was really time to go. So, the law was repealed, and that repeal was done with Democrats in control of both houses and the Governor's seat, and it was done unanimous. New Hampshire has 400 reps. It is the third largest legislative body in the world - 400 in their house, 24 senators and a governor. 425 politicians, not a single vote against repealing the ban on switchblade, dagger, dirk, and stiletto.

**Evan Nappen 30:25**

Since that time, Knife Rights has gotten many, many, I think it's 17 or 20, I lost count, of other states to repeal their knife laws. It is really an incredibly effective effort with Knife Rights of the knife liberty movement, and I was proud to be a part of and still am a part of it. So much so, that after the great victory in New Hampshire, I was proud to receive from the folks at Blade Magazine and at Knife Rights, the publishers Choice Award and was given the Knife Rights Sharper Future Freedoms Point Award in 2010. Those mean a lot to me, and it is not about just getting an award, but what they stand for. They stand for the beginning of the modern knife liberty movement, and I encourage you to check out Knife Rights. ([www.kniferights.org](http://www.kniferights.org)) We have had Doug Ritter, who's the head of Knife Rights, on Gun Lawyer. Some of you may recall that show. And it's really great work because remember, the Second Amendment isn't the right to keep bear guns. It's all about arms, and knives are just as much a part of the Second Amendment as our firearms.

**Evan Nappen 32:02**

I was also proud to help change and work toward changing the Federal law. With the help of other gun groups and other folks, we were able to get assisted openers specifically removed from the definition of switchblade under Federal law. Now, of course, the ultimate goal is repeal of the Federal knife laws; so, there will be no more federal knife laws, and just getting rid of the state laws. We will probably just have a handful of states, the known, usual suspects, you know, that will have their anti-knife laws. But the overwhelming majority of America has already removed their knife laws. Now we just need to get it done nationally, and a number of other states need the reforms, but it's really doing very well.

**Evan Nappen 33:02**

Throughout this, I have met and known some really great people. One of them is a really good friend, Ed Fowler. Ed is the Field Editor of Blade Magazine and has great skill at making knives. He is a master bladesmith, and he focuses on what is called the High-Performance knife. He is just taking steel in its ability to cut and endure beyond anybody else I know, even know of. You can check out Ed Fowler's knives. His most famous is the pronghorn, which is an absolute favorite of mine for everyday carry. If you are going anywhere in the woods with any kind of job to do, you can't do any better than a Fowler pronghorn. I highly recommend checking it out. I had the honor to go for 10 days out in Riverton, Wyoming, and actually make knives with it. Not that I see myself in any way as a knife maker. But it really was an eye-opening experience to understand what goes into the making of knives. It gave me such a deeper, better appreciation and understanding of the entire art of hand making knives. It was just wonderful.

**Evan Nappen** 34:31

It has been an interesting journey. Of course, it is still continuing from the day that my dad gave me his Swiss Army knife to all the things that I have experienced. I am able to enjoy and spread the word about knives and help people know their rights about knives and enjoying the entire field of knives. I am sure many of you do, too. Hopefully, this gave you a little more insight and perspective. This is Evan Nappen telling you that gun laws don't protect honest citizens from criminals. They protect criminals from honest citizens.

**Speaker 3** 35:25

Gun Lawyer is a CounterThink Media production. The music used in this broadcast was managed by Cosmo Music, New York, New York. Reach us by emailing [Evan@gun.lawyer](mailto:Evan@gun.lawyer). The information and opinions in this broadcast do not constitute legal advice. Consult a licensed attorney in your state.