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RIPOSTE (rī-pōst')

n 1. A quick thrust delivered after parrying a lunge in fencing.
2. A quick, clever reply; retort.

By
Lynn C. Thompson

Whether you are striving to be the last immortal swordsman on the planet with his head still attached to his shoulders, the heavyweight champion of the world, President of the United States, or Super Bowl champion, one fact will always be staring you dead in the face. There can be only one!

It is the same in the knife industry. There can be only one manufacturer who can lay claim to making the best knife, or knives, in the world and back that claim up with facts. When I started Cold Steel® in 1980, I was determined to someday be able to say that Cold Steel® was the best knife manufacturer in the world. In the last few years, I have felt confident enough in our products to adopt the slogan "World's Strongest, Sharpest Knives" and have even made a 70-minute video entitled Proof to back up this claim.

Now, in 1999 we find the market absolutely flooded with a host of knife manufacturers challenging our claim of being the best without providing a single shred of evidence! What these manufacturers

COLD STEEL® VERSUS THE COVERT™

Let's start with our 4 inch Tanto Point Voyager® with serrated edge. This knife bears a manufacturer's suggested retail price (MSRP) of \$75 and weighs 3.3 ounces. In contrast, the Gerber® Covert™ sports a 3 3/4" blade, weighs 4 ounces and carries a hefty MSRP of \$153. This means that the buyer of a Covert™ gets a knife that weighs 20% more than our 4 inch Tanto Point Voyager®, has a 1/4" shorter blade, and costs \$78 more. That's more than twice as much! How's that for comparison shopping? Do you think you're getting twice as much knife for the money?

We've Got The Look

The 4" Tanto Point Voyager® has a black Zytel® handle and comes with a high gloss satin polished blade constructed of premium AUS 8A steel. A blade ground and honed so sharp that it has been proven capable of severing as much as 1 3/4" of free-hanging manila rope in a single stroke, a feat widely compared to severing a man's arm at the wrist! How about it Gerber®? Can your \$153 Covert™ with its glass

THERE CAN BE ONLY

have found out is the same thing President Bill Clinton has relied on for most of his political career, namely that if you tell the public something loud enough and long enough, a great many people will believe you.

Due to space limitations, there just isn't enough room in this issue of Riposte to examine the claims of all our competitors who assert that they make better knives than Cold Steel®. So, in this issue of Riposte we will deal with the one claim I feel is the most noticeable.

In my mind the most noticeable claim has to be that of Gerber® with their ad on the Applegate-Fairbairn Covert™ as seen in the February 1999 issue of Guns and Weapons for Law Enforcement, page 11. In this ad Gerber® makes several claims for the Covert™ that we cannot let go unchallenged. The first is "the Applegate-Fairbairn Covert™ is the best tactical folder you can own". At the end of their ad, they state, "Combat tough, pocket carry convenient, the Covert™ sets the standard for tactical folders."

Talk about bragging! This time Gerber® has bitten off a whole lot more than their folding knife can chew. According to Webster's Dictionary, the word Best means: "exceeding all others in excellence and quality. Most satisfactory, suitable, useful or desirable".

Notice that Gerber® has placed no qualifications on their use of the word Best. They make no distinction as to whether the Covert™ is the best tactical folder for its size, weight, or class. Nor do they say that it is the best looking, handling or performing tactical folder, or even the best for the money.

And what about this claim of "setting the standard for tactical folders"? Is any evidence presented to back up this claim? Do they say their Covert™ sets the standard for beauty, construction, materials, sharpness, edge retention, cutting power, point strength, piercing power, overall strength, or most importantly lock strength? No, again they just make a blanket claim.

Well, since Gerber® didn't mind making claims of being "the best tactical folder you can own" or setting the standard for tactical folders, they shouldn't mind if we challenge these claims with a few hard questions and do a little comparison shopping against Cold Steel's® tactical folding knives. How does Gerber's® Applegate-Fairbairn Covert™ stack up against our products. Here are the facts.

filled nylon handle and tumble polished gray ATS-34 blade match the sharpness and cutting power of our \$75 Voyager®? Remember Gerber®, you made no qualification in your ad when you said the Covert™ was "the best tactical folder a person can own". This means your Covert™ will actually have to "beat" the cutting power of the Tanto Point Voyager®, not merely duplicate it. Come on. Prove your Covert™ is "best".

Lock And Load, Gerber®

Shouldn't the best tactical folder you can own have the best lock? After all, no one can grow new fingers. Your ad in Guns and Weapons for Law Enforcement says, "Patented Interlock® safety" prevents the liner lock from disengaging. Again, you offer no qualifications when you make this claim. Does this mean you assert that your "Patented Interlock®" is a safer, stronger or more durable lock than the one found on our \$75, 4" Tanto Point Voyager®? Before you answer, you might want to lock the blade of your Covert™ in a vice and hang a 100-pound weight 4 1/2" from the pivot point. This is just one of the ways we have tested our Voyager's® lock, and it held 100 pounds. Can your Covert™'s "Patented Interlock®" hold more weight without collapsing?

Another method of really testing lock strength for resistance to impact is to strike the back of the blade hard on the edge of a table. In October 1998, we subjected our \$75 Tanto Point Voyager® to a public test of its lock strength in this manner. The test was performed at an assembly during the 1st Gunsite™ Tactical Knife Symposium. Quite a crowd looked on as Robert Vaughn, who stands 6-3 and weighs 240 pounds, struck the back of our Voyager® blade on the edge of a table more than 35 times — and he was hitting hard! Plenty of people witnessed this test of our 4" Tanto Point Voyager's® lock, and it never did fail. After this many hard hits, we gave up. Can your \$153 Covert™'s "Interlock®" stand up to this test, let alone exceed it?

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ONE



Cold Steel® 5" Clip Point Voyager Challenges Covert™'s Claims

Wait a minute now Gerber®. We have a couple more knives that will compete with your Covert's™ claim of being the "best" and setting "the standard for tactical folding knives". For instance, how do you think our 5" Clip Point Voyager® with serrated edge would stack up against your Covert™? Its MSRP is \$85, and it comes with a black Zytel® handle, 5" AUS 8A stainless blade, and weighs 4.8 ounces. While we admit that it does weigh 20% more than your Covert™, it is \$69 cheaper, and look what you get for your money, an individually polished, satin finished blade that is 1 1/4" longer and 43% wider than your Covert™'s dull, gray ATS-34 blade. But wait, there's more. Our 5" Clip Point Voyager® is so sharp and efficient that it has been proven capable of severing as much as 2" of free-hanging manila rope in a single stroke. Very, very few fixed blades can match this cutting power. Can your \$153 Covert™ out-cut this knife?

Let's get back to lock strength. After all, you seem awfully proud of your "Patented Interlock®". In fact, one writer

has even referred to it as doubly safe (*Tactical Knives* 3/99, page 67). Our 5" Clip Point Voyager® has held as much as 125 pounds on its lock (weight placed 4 1/2" from the pivot point). Do you think the Covert™'s "doubly safe" lock can hold this much weight? In our opinion, it should. After all, it costs \$69 more!

Cold Steel®'s Gunsite™ Contends With The Gerber® Covert™

At the risk of sounding repetitive, Cold Steel® has a bunch more knives that can challenge Gerber®'s claim as being "the best tactical folder you can own". The El Hombre™, Vaquero™, Vaquero™ Grande, Scimitar™ and Triple Action™ can each dispute Gerber®'s claim, but we'll close with our third most expensive knife. How about putting our \$100 MSRP Gunsite™ folder up against Gerber®'s \$153 MSRP Covert™?



To demonstrate the enormous point strength of our Gunsite™ folder, we stabbed it deep into a car door by hand with no damage to the point!



The Gunsite™ with its black Zytel® handle is undoubtedly a bigger knife than the Covert™, weighing approximately 30% more. But hey Gerber®, you made no qualifications when you said your knife was the best, so let's go! To start, let's look at cost. After all, it seems like everybody is trying to get the most for their money these days. The Gunsite™ costs \$100 MSRP, while the Covert™ costs \$153. That means the Covert™ costs \$53 or a full 50% more.

Next, let's compare blades again. The Covert™ sports a 3 3/4" ATS-34 blade that is .888" wide at its widest point and comes with a flat, gray, tumbled or vibrated finish. In contrast, we present the Gunsite™ with the biggest, longest, widest Tanto point folding knife blade on the market. It is a full 1 1/4" longer than the Covert™'s blade and 23% wider at its widest point. What is more, the Gunsite™'s razor sharp blade has been proven to sever up to 2" of free-hanging manila rope in a single stroke. Can your Covert™'s 3 3/4" blade out-cut it?

We're sure Gerber® is tired of hearing about lock strength right now, but we wonder if they are aware that the Gunsite™ folder can hold up to 130 pounds 4 1/2" from its pivot point without failing. We worked for over a year to improve its lock to this level. In our last test it held this enormously heavy weight for over 30 seconds without collapsing. How about it Gerber®? Why don't you slap your Covert™ in a vise and hang 130 pounds 4 1/2" from the pivot point, or as close as you can get to this, and tell us how the

We have plenty of tactical folders that can challenge Gerber's claim of making "the best tactical folder you can buy."

"Interlock®" performs? We'd love to know.

One final point of comparison we haven't even touched on yet is that it is crucial when evaluating a tactical folding knife (read folding fighter, because that's what it is) is to test point strength and piercing power. To demonstrate the enormous point strength and piercing power of our Gunsite™ Tactical Folder we have driven it deep into a thick car door by hand with no damage to the point (see photo of actual knife used). Admittedly, this is an extreme test of point strength that few fixed blade knife manufacturers would like their products to be called upon to duplicate, but it's also an extreme test of lock strength in a folding fighter. Imagine stabbing down into a thick steel car door with all your might.

The only thing between the blade and your fingers is the lock, and our Gunsite™'s lock didn't fail. What do you think Gerber®? Can the Covert™'s spear point match, let alone exceed this test?

Cut To The Chase, Gerber®

A few of our readers may think we have been a little hard on Gerber® and their Applegate-Fairbairn Covert™ tactical folder. But, please keep this in mind. Gerber® has run an ad in several national magazines claiming, boldly and without any qualification whatsoever, to make "the best tactical folder you can buy" without providing a shred of evidence to back up this claim.

In boxing this is akin to claiming to be the heavyweight champion of the world without defeating all challengers first. Remember, when it comes to being the best in swordsmanship, boxing, politics, football or knifemaking — THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE.