

# The Mary Gun

By Doc Barranti 2010

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I had been wanting a 4" Model 29 for nearly 30 years. My early gun-rag reading had introduced me to Elmer Keith, and he is the reason for wanting this gun...but there was always another sixgun, usually a single action that would get my money. I even picked up a few Smith & Wessons over the years, but the 29 eluded me until recently. Prior to obtaining this one, my intention, when the day finally came, was to visit local stockmaker Bob Leskovec for a set of his acrylic ivory Elmer Keith style magna grips with the carved steer head on the right grip panel. I first saw these grips of Bob's on one of Mr. Taffin's S&Ws. While they weren't the real deal, they were close enough to get me by until I could have a set made just like Elmer's from genuine ivory.

Then, this past February, came the passing of my mother, and two days later, a text from my good friend Fermin Garza, letting me know there was a 29-2 for sale on one of the forums. When the dust finally settled, the 29 was on it's way and it had a name; The Mary Gun...my mother's name...Fermin's idea.

A phone call was made to Bob Leskovec and arrangements were made for a visit to his shop. Once there, Bob showed me a few projects he was working on, along with some of his other hobbies. He showed me two flintlock rifles he built from scratch and several remote control airplanes that he put together. I immediately knew I was in the shop of a true artist. He then pulled out a Colt SAA grip frame assembly with a set of ivory grips with a carved horse head on one of the panels. The carving was exceptional and the ivory itself was beautifully colored.

We discussed the acrylic grips and a leather project that Bob was wanting to have done. When I left, the intention was to have him build the acrylic ivory grips. The drive back home took about 45 minutes...plenty of time for the mind to keep wandering back to the carved ivories that Bob showed me. By the time I reached home, I had convinced myself that this fine sixgun needed genuine ivory on her. The next day, I called Bob to discuss the project further and the final decision was made. Ivory!

Yesterday evening, I made the drive to Bob's shop. My jaw dropped when he handed me the Mary Gun. The color and grain of these grips was enough to leave me speechless, not to mention the beautifully executed carving. Like I said, Bob is a true artist, and I would not hesitate to refer anyone looking for carved ivory grips to him.



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Mary Irene Capizzi - around 1940 or so, a few years before she met my father...



Elmer Keith's 44s...the inspiration for this project. Photo courtesy of John Taffin...



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Fermin suggested I have the initials 'MB' carved on the lefthand panel, standing for a certain part of a monkey's anatomy. I thought it was appropriate, considering they were not only my initials, but my mother's! I found a font that I liked and made a pattern which I sent to Bob and he did a great job of matching it perfectly.





I couldn't be happier, unless of course, my mother was still here to show this to. I know in my heart though, that she is watching and smiling.

