

U. S. Department of Justice

Bureau of Investigation

311 Hurley-Wright Building  
Washington, D. C.

June 30, 1933

Director,  
United States Bureau of Investigation,  
Washington, D. C.

RE: .38 Special Police Positive Revolver.

Dear Sir:

With further reference to my recent memorandum concerning arms in use and to be used by the Bureau, I desire to submit for our record and for your possible future use, the following facts relative to the .38 Special Police Positive Revolver, already furnished to each field office of the Bureau. These facts are submitted for the reason that some field offices, Oklahoma City in particular, have requested .45 Automatic Pistols, and have inferred that the latter arm is superior to the one now in use by the Bureau. Such is not the case.

I tabulate below the ballistics of the two weapons:

<u>.45 AUTOMATIC</u>	<u>.38 SPECIAL</u>
(1) Bullet weight - 200 grams	158 grams
(2) Muzzle velocity - 910 foot seconds	1125 foot seconds
(3) Energy - 368 foot lbs.	444 foot lbs.
(4) Penetration in (7/8 in. pine boards) - 8 inches	8 inches

Even with a heavier bullet than the 200 gram bullet mentioned in the above tabulation, the .45 Automatic Pistol does not compare with the .38 Special. With a 230 gram bullet, the .45 Automatic has a muzzle velocity of only 809 foot seconds, an energy of only 335 foot seconds, and a penetration of only 7 inches. //

Special Agents may be advised that by procuring .38/44 Colt Special Cartridges, with the flat nose, an even greater amount of

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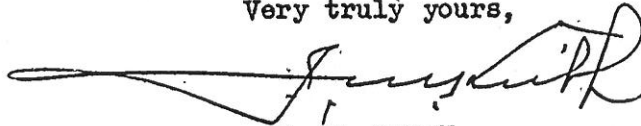
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pounds of energy may be procured from the Pistol now in use by the Bureau. However, it is to be noted that ordinary .38 Special ammunition, loaded with smokeless powder, gives better results than the best .45 Automatic Cartridge.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. M. Keith". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

J. M. KEITH,  
Special Agent in Charge

JMK:ps