

Colony Kai

BEER

BY SCOTT CONDITT



Martin Kove gets a custom wheelgun. Fit for the *Strike First* King Cobra

Large-frame revolvers

have earned longstanding iconic appeal and a cult following for their aggressive style, powerful capability, reliability, durability and distinctly classic, yet timeless, Western American aesthetic. In a way, many of these same badass attributes can be said of my buddy, film and television star Martin Kove. Marty gained widespread popularity with the release of 1984's *Karate Kid* as the mean-spirited sensei of the Cobra Kai dojo, John Kreese. Recently, an entirely new generation of fans has been turned onto the bad guy in the black gi as Netflix's *Cobra Kai* series has become one of the most highly watched shows on the platform worldwide. In another aspect of my life, making movies, I've had the distinct privilege of directing Marty on screen in a few films, along with his son and fellow actor/star Jesse Kove, who played a revelatory role in Season 3 of *Cobra Kai* as a varsity captain who bullies the younger version of his father's character, John Kreese. This serves as the

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catalyst for Kreese's journey to becoming a no-nonsense ass-kicker who doesn't back down from a fight and lives by the creed...*no mercy*.

Now, I hate to ruin the mystique, but contrary to their on-screen personas, in real life, Jesse and Marty are two of the nicest, most humble, witty, funny and hardworking dudes I know. That's not polite Hollywood ass-kissing either. These dudes are legit just great guys, who I've learned over the course of our time together, like me, love to have fun, love Western films and love shooting guns—especially revolvers. This is why when the opportunity to create something really special for Marty with some friends in the firearms industry arose, it was impossible not to strike first and strike hard on the chance. This is where Magnum Research and Outlaw Ordnance enter the scene.

THE STORYBOARD

Like good casting for a film, when it comes to creating cool artistic custom firearms there are a few brands and outfits that just gel and set the bar in successful collaborations over and over again. I reached out to friend and Director of Marketing for Kahr Firearms Group Jodi DePorter, who I knew had worked numerous times with laser engraving artisans Nakia Jackson and Chip Pierce at Outlaw Ordnance to produce some truly stunning custom pieces.

When asked about the number of unique custom pieces she's produced in collaboration with Outlaw Ordnance over the years, Jodi commented, "I've enjoyed the collaborations with Nakia and Chip. Some of the first ideas on the Auto-Ordnance 1911 were from something I personally envisioned wanting myself, a 'Victory Girls' theme, so we moved forward designing it with Nakia's help. That was a huge success. We just have fun during the creative process, and when a design comes together and we are ready to start cutting, I'm always so excited to see the first article.

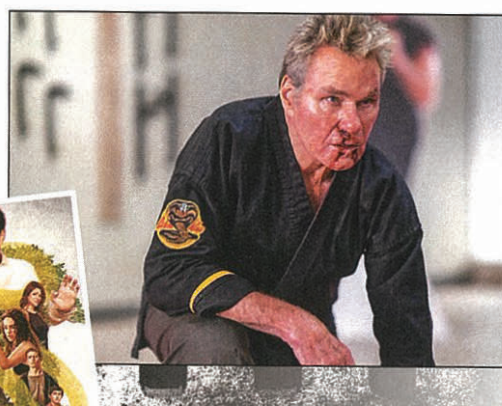
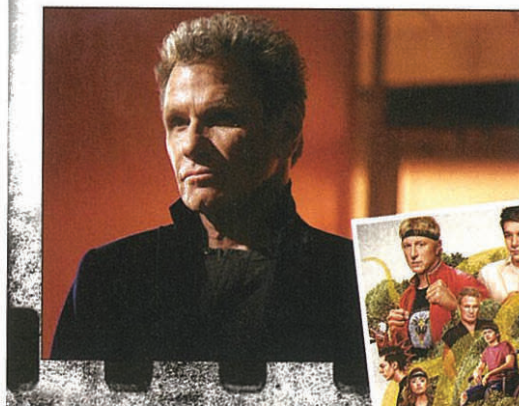
"We have done custom designs on guns from all the companies we (Kahr Firearms Group) own—Kahr Arms, Auto-Ordnance, Thompson and Magnum Research. Nakia, Chip and I all have many things in common, but most of all we are patriots. So, we have



The bad guy in the black gi is back! Martin Kove stars as John Kreese in the popular *Cobra Kai* series on Netflix.



The King Cobra Magnum Research BFR is intricately engraved on nearly every centimeter of surface area—an exquisite tribute to actor Martin Kove's *Cobra Kai* history.



The Netflix series *Cobra Kai*'s huge popularity is largely due to its multi-generational appeal, with original cast members and new stars alike appearing in each episode.

done several patriotic themes and are working on more for 2021. The most popular designs from 2020 were the Auto-Ordnance 'Liberty' and the 'Revolution' 1911 models."

I asked Jodi if she thought we might be able to do something special with them for the King Cobra himself—a tribute revolver, if you will. She loved the idea and didn't hesitate to make the call. Within half an hour I heard back from her. "I talked to the guys at Outlaw," she said. "They're huge *Karate Kid* fans. Let's do it!"

King Making

Magnum Research is the maker of pistols like the Desert Eagle and the Biggest Finest Revolver, aka Big Frame Revolver (aka Biggest F&*\$%*& Revolver to the foul-mouthed amongst us). As the Magnum brand name implies, they don't do anything small. Manufactured in the USA, the BFR lays claim to being the most powerful production single-action gun made, complete with all stainless construction and a cut rifled barrel that delivers

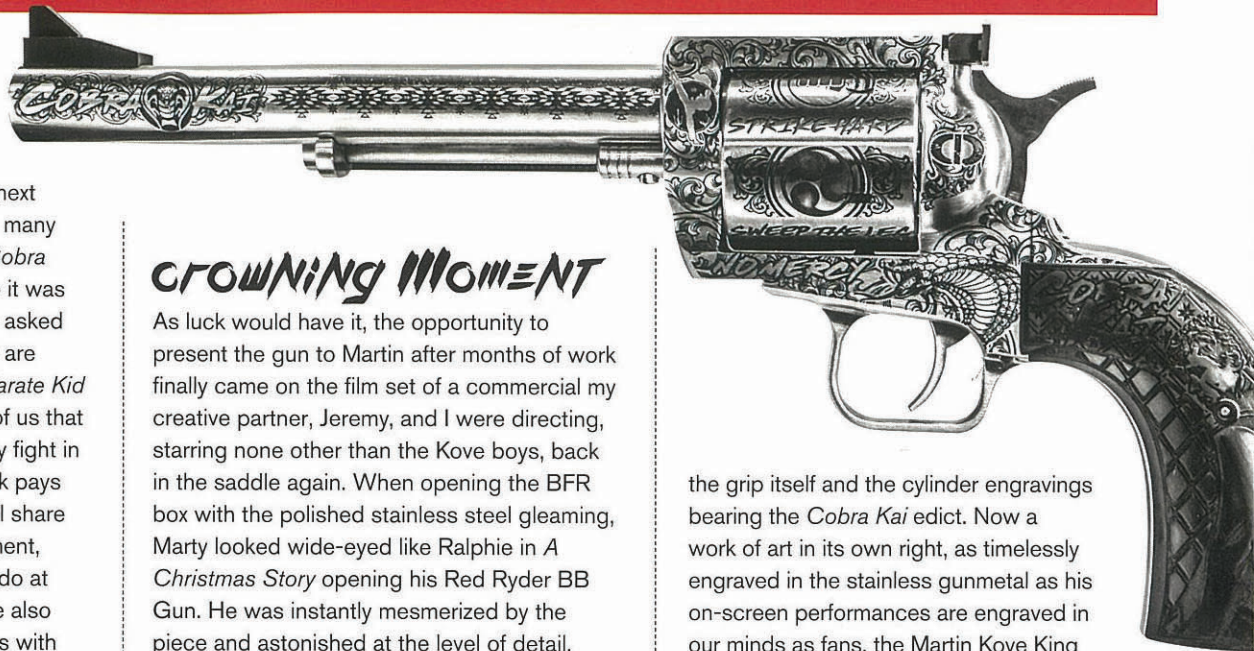
unmatched accuracy with lead or jacketed bullets and is available in 12 caliber options and two frame sizes. This was the perfect pistol for Marty, a larger than life character and rabid fan and history buff when it comes to Western American history and cinema. He has, in fact, appeared in TV's *Gunsmoke* and such films as *Earp* alongside Kevin Costner and *The White Buffalo* with Charles Bronson, among numerous other Western greats throughout his career.

For this top-secret custom piece, I looped in Jesse Kove, wanting his input on the design and his help to select the caliber and frame combination. Marty and Jesse are not only father and son, but they're best friends as well who hit the range regularly and embark on annual week-long horseback trail rides together. No one knows what Marty would love to see on a custom wheelgun better than Jesse.

After going over options, Jesse selected the 7.5-inch-barreled BFR in .44 Magnum with a black micarta grip. We brainstormed graphics, icons and imagery from *Cobra Kai* and *Karate Kid* that could be worked into the polished stainless steel, and then the gun was sent off to the team at Outlaw Ordnance, who took all of the rough design ideas to the next level. Outlaw managed to work every icon into the layout and design, including the *Cobra Kai* snake logo on both sides, snakeskin diamond patterning, Western flourishes throughout and the 1984 All Valley Karate Tournament emblem. They even managed to etch and extrude the black grip with the profile of John Kreese himself. Every available inch of the gun turned out beautiful and was beyond our wildest imaginations. The crown jewel, though, was the cylinder with the words, "STRIKE FIRST...STRIKE HARD...NO MERCY," etched between each groove. It was an absolute knockout piece that, as I learned, required "Miyagi"-caliber patience and craftsmanship to achieve.

When asked if the piece posed any difficulties during the process, Nakia humbly noted:

“Not going to lie, it is a challenging firearm to engrave. With the finish and the curvature of the parts, it is very time-consuming. But we enjoyed the challenge and look forward to the next one.” With Nakia having worked on so many special pieces, I had to inquire if the *Cobra Kai* revolver was special, knowing who it was going to belong to. “Every time we are asked to work on a project of this caliber, we are honored and humbled,” Nakia said. “*Karate Kid* had such a profound impact on most of us that grew up in the '80s. It taught us to only fight in self-defense, honor, and that hard work pays off in the end. These are lessons we all share in our defense of the Second Amendment, our work ethic and pride in all that we do at Outlaw Ordnance. These lessons have also carried over to the younger generations with *Cobra Kai*, and after watching all of the seasons and becoming a big fan of the show, it was an enormous honor to do this project and see the reaction to our work from Martin Kove (John Kreese), who we all have tremendous respect and affection.”



CROWNING MOMENT

As luck would have it, the opportunity to present the gun to Martin after months of work finally came on the film set of a commercial my creative partner, Jeremy, and I were directing, starring none other than the Kove boys, back in the saddle again. When opening the BFR box with the polished stainless steel gleaming, Marty looked wide-eyed like Ralphie in *A Christmas Story* opening his Red Ryder BB Gun. He was instantly mesmerized by the piece and astonished at the level of detail. He couldn't help but turn the gun over in his hands repeatedly, finding new treasures engraved into the surface of the fine firearm at every rotation.

The biggest “Ah-Ha” moment had to be seeing the full-body profile of John Kreese on

the grip itself and the cylinder engravings bearing the *Cobra Kai* edict. Now a work of art in its own right, as timelessly engraved in the stainless gunmetal as his on-screen performances are engraved in our minds as fans, the Martin Kove King Cobra BFR has been struck and is ready to show no mercy on the open range. ●

Editor's Note • Don't fret, the story doesn't end here! For in-depth interviews with both Martin and Jesse Kove, visit ballisticmag.com.