

FUNCTIONAL ARTWORK

THE CRKT HOOTENANNY: FORM, FIT AND FUNCTION DEFINED

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOSHUA SWANAGON

I was immediately impressed.

There I was at the 2015 Blade Show, and the Hootenanny was on display at the CRKT booth. The knife opened easily, the flow of the design spoke to me and I knew I had to get my hands on one, which is generally the case with every Ken Onion design I encounter.

Like other projects between CRKT, known for their high quality knives that fit an everyday budget, and award-winning knife designer/maker Ken Onion, whose knives exemplify form, fit and function, this one is also a winner. When these two join forces, you have nothing short of functional artwork that you and I can afford.

Form First

With a closed length of 4.59 inches and a width of only 0.44 inches, the Hootenanny was almost invisible in my pocket for the weeks I carried it. But with the oversized pivot system and IKBS ball bearing system, actuated by the flipper-style opener, it can be out and deployed quickly and easily with one hand, bringing it to its full 7.94 inches.

The small pocket clip makes the Hootenanny inconspicuous and easier to deploy at a moment's notice. However, with the pronounced upsweep of the feed (allowing you to effortlessly slip it back into your pocket), I found that my shirt tends to catch on it from time to time, so I've almost yanked it out of my pocket inadvertently.



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**“WHEN THESE TWO JOIN FORCES,
YOU HAVE NOTHING SHORT
OF FUNCTIONAL ARTWORK ...”**

The blade also includes a small finger choil with jimping just forward of the finger guard — not common in folders, but something I was very impressed to see. I tend to utilize finger choils often for smaller work. The Hootenanny also includes jimping on the top of the bolster just behind the blade and along the top rear of the grip. It is clear that when Onion designed the Hootenanny, he intended the user to maintain a solid grip on this knife, even when wet.

Fit

With its thin frame, I was initially concerned that the knife would be uncomfortable in the hand, but I was pleasantly surprised to find that it was a good fit. The upsweep of the pocket clip, does tend to bite into my palm just a little when I am gripping it firmly and can create a hot spot after extended use, but the handle itself fit my hand perfectly.

The finger choil is placed perfectly for choking up on the blade for finer work and is not over-pronounced, which would make it obtrusive or take away from the blade area. The jimping on the spine is positioned at a perfect distance down for indexing — it could have been extended a bit for those with longer fingers, although that doesn't detract from its usefulness.

Function

After carrying it around with me for a few weeks and using it for all manner of household chores, from cutting cardboard boxes to splitting hairs, I found the Hootenanny to be an outstanding EDC pocket knife that I felt comfortable with in daily tasks and field crafting alike.

I found it to be great for making tent stakes, as a pot getter stick (for lifting cook cans out of the fire), snare parts, spare parts for my snare parts and everything in between.

Because it's a folder, I find that I tend to avoid major tasks that require rigorous blade use, due to the risk involved of the knife closing on my fingers. Even though the frame lock on the Hootenanny is very

IKBS BALL BEARING PIVOT SYSTEM

Short for Ikoma Korth Bearing System, IKBS was named after its inventors Ikoma Knives and Korth Knives. It utilizes small ball bearings to ease opening in folding knives. This was initially invented for balisongs.



I was able to get a very clean cut on my climbing rope by simply pressing down on it with the Hootenanny.

SPECIFICATIONS THE HOOTENANNY

OPEN OVERALL LENGTH: 7.94 inches

CLOSED LENGTH: 4.59 inches

WEIGHT: 4.8 ounces

BLADE LENGTH: 3.34 inches

THICKNESS: 0.13 inches

MATERIAL: 8Cr13MoV

BLADE-HRC: 58-60

FINISH: Satin

GRIND: Hollow

STYLE: Drop point

EDGE: Plain

HANDLE MATERIAL: Glass-reinforced nylon

LINER: 2CR13

LOCK TYPE: Locking liner

CARRY SYSTEM: 1 position clip (tip up)

MSRP: \$69.99

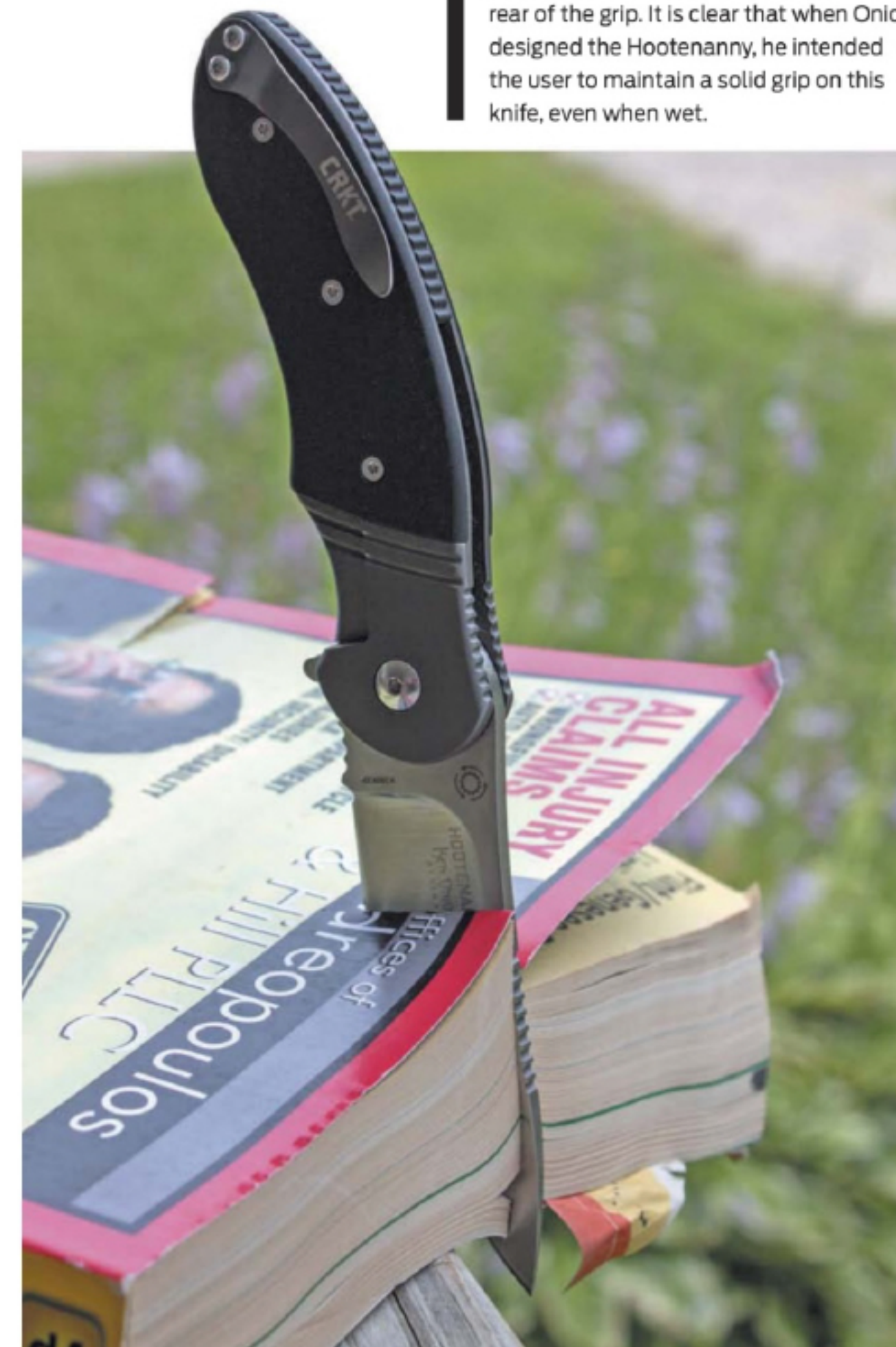
The lightly textured, glass-reinforced nylon handle scales give it a very grippy feel, and the 2CR13 bolster and liner make it quite stylish.

When deployed, the Hootenanny utilizes a frame lock to secure the blade in place. The 3.34-inch drop point blade has a concave spine giving it a bird-and-trout profile and the forward jimping toward the middle of the spine adds an extra level of control while indexing the blade for skinning tasks.

The 8Cr13MoV stainless steel blade lends a solid level of corrosion resistance and while it tends to lose its edge faster than high-carbon steel, it is a little easier to sharpen than most stainless steels. The high, hollow ground primary bevel, combined with the hollow grind edge, provides a low drag blade perfect for slicing chores.



The drop point blade's grooves on the spine provide you with detailed finger control.



I believe that I could have gone through the entire phone book if I wanted to.



"IT IS CLEAR THAT WHEN ONION DESIGNED THE HOOTENANNY, HE INTENDED THE USER TO MAINTAIN A SOLID GRIP ON THIS KNIFE, EVEN WHEN WET."

stable and I trust it not to unexpectedly fold on me, it is better to be safe than sorry.

Putting It to the Test

I believe a great test of a blade's ability is to cut, so I applied my press test to the Hootenanny and cut a piece of half-inch climbing rope by simply pressing the blade through the rope and making no slicing motion at all. The ease with which the Hootenanny cut through the rope had me questioning whether I could have cut it by simply showing the Hootenanny to it and telling it to split in two.

The Hootenanny impressed me so much that I was convinced that it could cut through an entire phone book, so that's what I did. Starting at the top of

the phone book, I made two slicing motions and was able to cut through the entire width of the phone book, burying the Hootenanny until its entire profile was deep into the pages. This amazed me.

I am a firm believer that if you can't find something you like, make it yourself. For that reason, I do a lot of my own leather crafting. I generally use a utility blade for cutting my leather because I really like clean cuts, but I wanted to know how the Hootenanny would hold up to leather for crafting. I was able to get very clean cuts that I would be happy to use in any project, making it a perfect go-to tool in the event I am away from my utility blade and just need something cut quickly.

But, any review of a bird-and trout knife would be empty without cutting up some meat and general food prep. After cutting up a roast and some vegetables, I felt that the Hootenanny was on par with most kitchen knives, cutting through fat and gristle with little to no resistance and processing vegetables quickly and without any tearing or squishing of the soft vegetables. With extremely clean cuts and its

corrosion resistance, the Hootenanny is perfect for food and game processing and would easily make itself at home in any camp kitchen.

Gets the Job Done

I believe that every man should have at least one knife on him at all times, and it should be well-rounded enough to fulfill most of his needs (within reason). The

Hootenanny certainly did. I have found it to be so proficient in every task I threw at it that it has become my every day carry knife, and I don't see that changing in the near future.

The Hootenanny has combined form, fit and function to provide a pocketknife that is just as comfortable in the boardroom as it is in the field.

Although the IKBS ball bearing system

has been utilized in CRKT knives for some time now, I am still always tickled each time I open it. I have always been a fan of the flipper-style opener; combine that with an oversized pivot system, and you're bound to find me sitting somewhere just opening and closing it.

If you want a \$200 folder for under \$100, then you can't beat the Hootenanny and its small \$69.99 price tag. **KI**

The Hootenanny is also very proficient at field crafting, and I was able to make a snare with very little effort.



I prefer to make things myself and the Hootenanny was able to give me a very clean cut on my leather, even after all the work I have put it through.

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