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Via Email to [Michael@Gripknife.com](mailto:Michael@Gripknife.com)

September 11, 2019

Michael C. Rice  
Inventor/Founder/Co-CEO of Gripknife LLC  
1250 Lincoln Way E. #306  
Massillon, OH 44646

Re: Gripknife

Dear Mr. Rice:

I have examined the sample Gripknife that you provided to me, and it is my legal opinion that it does not come under the *Federal Switchblade Act* definition of a “switchblade knife” found at 15 U.S. Code §1214.

Before I explain my basis for this legal opinion, I would like to set out some of my credentials regarding this area of law. I am the author of the book *Knife Laws of the U.S.* (Krause Publications 2015). I have written numerous articles for *Blade Magazine* and for the *Knives Annual*. I have handled numerous criminal defense knife cases, and I have been a licensed practicing attorney for over 30 years, and I am admitted to the United States Supreme Court.

Switchblade knife is defined under Federal law as follows:

§1241. Definitions

As used in this chapter—

- (b) The term “switchblade knife” means any knife having a blade which opens automatically—
- (1) by hand pressure applied to a button or other device in the handle of the knife, or
  - (2) by operation of inertia, gravity, or both.

The blade of the Gripknife is not one which "opens automatically." The blade is already 25% open when locked and stowed in the mount. The other 75% of the blade is retracted into the handle when locked and stowed in the mount. The blade is only fully revealed when extracted, similar to an ordinary fixed blade knife being drawn from a sheath.

Three distinct actions are required to withdraw the knife blade to its full open and locked position.

- 1) The release button on mount must be depressed to release the knife from the mount.
- 2) The knife handle then must be pulled/withdrawn downward from the mount which magnetically grips the blade, while spring in the handle assists in pushing the remainder blade out of the handle.
- 3) The magnetic hold on the blade must be overcome to get the blade to extend and to lock it into a 100% fixed position and then it must be physically pulled away from the mount.

At no time does the blade "open automatically." Although there is an additional internal spring that assists the blade in opening fully in conjunction with the magnet, simply applying hand pressure to the release on the mount does not cause the blade to "open automatically." The button in the handle of the knife is used solely to unlock the blade for retraction only. The magnetic hold, internal spring and downward pull all must work in unison to bring the open blade to its 100% locked position.

A common attribute of switchblade knives, especially the OTF (Out The Front) type of switchblade knife, is that the blade of an OTF is 100% enclosed in the handle of the knife and a single button in the handle of the knife is activated which then allows for the blade to "open automatically." The Gripknife does not function at all in this manner.

Additionally, the Gripknife does not utilize or operate by gravity, inertia or both, in anyway.

Based on the above, it is my legal opinion that the Gripknife is not a "switchblade knife" under Federal Law.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please email or call me at any time.

Sincerely,

*EVAN F. NAPPEN ATTORNEY AT LAW, P.C.*

*Evan F. Nappen*

By: Evan F. Nappen, Esquire  
For the Firm