

A Shocking New Weapon

Detroit

Residents of crime-ridden cities may soon toss away their guns and arm themselves with a less lethal weapon that shoots out barbed hooks like an electric harpoon.

The hooks zap an assailant with an electrical shock that is supposed to stun rather

er than harm.

"Shooting a person is irrevocable," Eliot H. Bank, the Detroit marketing agent for the weapon, said yesterday.

"In terms of permanent injury, a baseball bat or a club will do more harm than a TASER."

The TASER, billed as "the

first alternative to the gun," sells for \$199.50. It was invented by John Cover, a California aerospace engineer who named it for the initials of the words "Tom Swift and His Electronic Rifle."

The TASER resembles a flashlight. It is nine inches

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long, weighs a little over one pound and works on a rechargeable battery.

When it is fired, a small gunpowder charge forces tiny wires outward and hooks on the end of the wires prick the victim's skin in less than a twentieth of a second.

The weapon sends out a 50,000-volt charge that can be continued or renewed by pressing the trigger. The hooks also will pierce up to 1½ inches of clothing.

The wires and hooks are contained in cartridges that slip into the front of the weapon. The cartridges cost \$10 each and are not reusable.

Bank said the victim reacts the same way as if he grabbed a live electric

wire—the shock causes a freeze-up of muscles.

Recovery takes about three minutes.

The weapon is marketed by a subsidiary of Advanced Chemical Technology of California. Alvin Simon, president of the firm, said the TASER has been tested on human subjects and the victims suffered no permanent ill effects.

"It isn't a very good offensive weapon," Simon said. "You're not going to hold up a liquor store with a TASER. Its value is mostly in the surprise."

One drawback to the weapon is the length of the wires—only 18 feet. To effectively stun an assailant, the TASER shooter must be within that range.

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