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**TV CANDIDS**  
by  
**Terrence O'Flaherty**

I've just spent the day with the fastest draw in the world and I've got the powder burns to prove it. He's an American-born Finn named Arvo Ojala. He's a ridin' fool who began from scratch and he don't bat an eye in a shootin' match. Just like the song says.

Ojala is at the fair in an all-star shooting act called "Quick Draw Theater." Locked behind his cocked pistol are the secrets of most of Hollywood's "tough-guy" television heroes. He has taught almost all of them how to handle a gun so that viewers will get the idea they were born with a holster around their hips instead of a make-up towel.

Ojala is a short five-foot-five with a round face and a happy personality. You see him every week on the opening title shots of "Gunsmoke." He's the guy who gets shot by James Arness.

"That was filmed ten years ago and I still get paid every time it's used," he said. "It was kind of embarrassing getting out-drawn but for that kind of money—who cares?"

"Most Finns are good shots—they didn't do too badly against the Russians, you know, but I learned how to shoot on an apple ranch in Washington State. Used to practice shootin' the heads off rattlesnakes. Got so I never missed one. It was good practice for working in the movies. Lots of rattlers down in Hollywood, you know.

★ ★ ★

"As slow as they might be, almost any television cowboy could probably out-draw the marshals of the old West because they had a different kind of holster. In those days they had an envelope-type holster—one with a flap top. The gun set deep into it so it had to be pulled out before it could be cocked."

To speed up the killings in Hollywood westerns, Ojala has developed his own kind of holster that is now used by every leading movie and television star. It has a special metal foundation so that the gun cylinder does not touch the holster. While making a fast draw the cylinder can be revolved in the holster at the start of the draw.

"I got a patent for it right away—No. 2832519," explained Ojala. "Nobody had ever thought of it before.

"I guess I've taught most of them—from Arness to Peter Brown and the Lawman, but the fastest learner was Robert Culp, who's going to do the new Wild Bill Hickock series. I've taught Wade Preston, Jerry Lewis and Michael Rennie. They're good. So's Hugh O'Brian, and if you don't believe it, just ask him.

"The first thing I try to teach 'em is safety. You take most of these Brooklyn cowboys and they're green. A gun's not a toy. Even a blank can cause trouble. One actor used his gun to scratch his temple and blew his sideburns off. You've got to watch 'em all the time at first. After that, watch out for yourself."

★ ★ ★

Ojala is dead set against the private eye shows on television. "I don't like 'em. All those guns hidden under their coats. It's corruptive for the kids. Now the Western is a different matter. That's history. The guns were in the open and used with skill."

When it comes to eating habits, the Fastest Gun on Earth is a health food addict. "I'm a roots, fruits and nuts man," he said.

"A few years ago I had arthritis so bad I couldn't even use my wrist. But now, after I've watched my diet—oham." He pulled his Colt out of patented holster No. 2832519 and shot at an Indian who was sneaking up on a blonde cowgirl. The Indian turned out to be a Hollywood actor named X. Brands, who co-starred with Jack Mahoney in "Yancy Derringer." He's also in the show.

"Really ought to use a knife on him," explained Ojala. "I'm pretty good with knives, too. For family fights."

How does his wife feel about his shooting-acting career? "She shoots, too," he said. "She's an actress named Naga Norgen. She looks like Marilyn Monroe. We have three kids and the oldest boy is in the movies."

Ojala once wrote a book on the fastest draw that was used as a give-away premium for Listerine.

"I never did learn if it could stop bad breath, but it didn't clean a gun worth a damn."

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**Garden Checklist**

1. Feed, water and spray roses regularly to keep them healthy and full of bloom.
2. Make another planting of zinnias this month to lengthen the time you will have this wonderful flower in bloom.
3. Tomatoes may still be planted. Shade the young transplants from the sun for a day or two.
4. Dahlia tubers may be set out in June for fall bloom.
5. Delphiniums that have had their first bloom should be cut back to within six inches of the ground, then fed and watered to encourage another flush of growth and bloom.