

Controversy Helps Send Derry Drive-By Fashions Into Clothing Stores

By HILLARY CHURA
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CONCORD — The businessman who prompted criticism for shooting clothing full of holes isn't running away. Frank Allgeyer says his Drive-By Fashions is bigger than ever and will be sold in stores by the end of the week.

"This is a general trend. I think the controversy has died down," he said yesterday. "This is turning a fashion corner."

Allgeyer branched out from shooting clothes to order — \$35 for trousers and \$15 for shirts with the weapon of your choice — because people demanded catalogues, he said.

So he came up with one that advertises T-shirts, muscle shirts, vests, long-sleeve T-shirts, boxer shorts and other items. Some of the items carry both the Drive-By Fashions logo and bullet holes, others just the logo.

The 44-year-old Derry carpenter — once stung by critics who said he capitalized on violence and crime — predicts his creation will be America's next fad.

Tom O'Reilly agrees and said he wanted his TC's — The Clothing Store in on the ground level. His Laconia and Manchester shops initially will sell Allgeyer's T-shirts — complete with DBF logo, bullet holes and certificate of authenticity. But he said he'll diversify as Allgeyer expands his clothing line.

"We're kind of the forerunner of the latest fashion, and we like to keep ahead of the market," he said yesterday.

O'Reilly said he was concerned about the negative publicity Drive-By Fashions has generated but is more skeptical of politicians who criticize Allgeyer.

"I guess I am an atypical American. Anything politicians think is wrong, I think is right," he said.

O'Reilly said he was impressed Allgeyer plans to donate proceeds to charities designed to stop violence.

"We'll be involved as long as the emphasis is to discourage violence not encourage it, which I think is Frank's intent," he said.

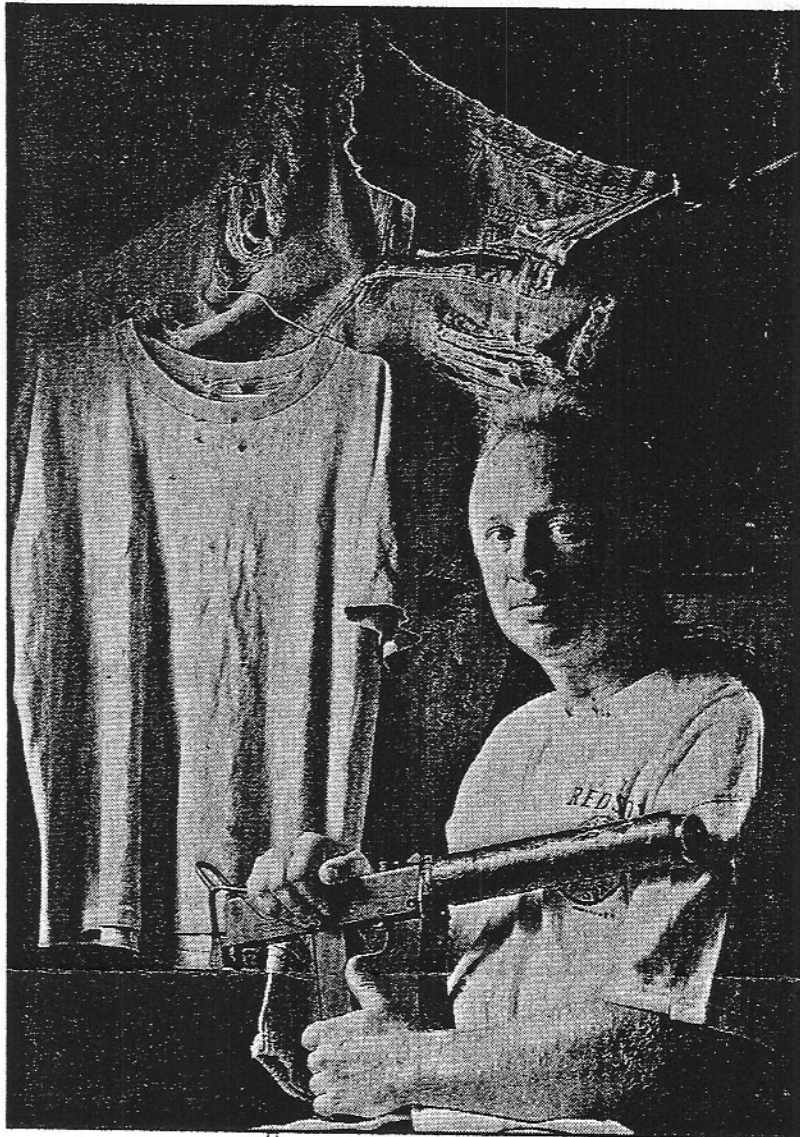
Sen. Barbara Baldizar, D-Nashua, has been a vocal critic of Drive-By Fashions.

"If you are a responsible person, you don't reinforce crime and violence. I think this certainly desensitizes people to the realities and senselessness of drive-by shootings," she said yesterday.

Several school districts are considering banning Drive-By Fashions, she said.

"This is America. People can choose to buy it. But I think now before a purchase is made, families will discuss it, and (they will say) 'is this the kind of business you want to support?'"

Allgeyer said he started Drive-By Fashions on a lark and that he's only upset with New Hampshire politicians.



AP File Photo

SELLING WELL — Frank Allgeyer of Drive-by Fashions is making it big with his bullet-ridden clothing, despite the fact he's drawn criticism from some people who say he's cashing in on gang violence.

"I think the more serious you take it, the more you lose the original intent," he said.

He no longer seems bothered by the negative publicity. He said he's gotten two pieces of negative mail but dozens of supportive telephone calls from people in the Live Free or Die state and else-

where. People, he said, have begun to recognize him on the street.

"They come up to me and say, 'When will we see your stuff? When is it available?' Some say, 'I'm not sure I would wear your shirts, but I would defend to the death your right to do it.'"

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