

Presidential candidate seeks donations for NRA 'birthday gift'

Sen. Gramm is allowing the National Rifle Association to use his name and letterhead for a fund-raising campaign.

Public interest and gun-control groups denounced the strategy as ethically questionable. But aides to the Texas lawmaker defended it as a common fund-raising technique.

Gramm's undated letter praises the NRA's executive vice president, Wayne LaPierre, as "my friend ever since I came to Congress."

NRA, whose membership has declined, to recruit 100,000 new members by year's end.

an official one. Both the gun lobby and Gramm's office said the letter was produced and mailed by the NRA.

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Phil Gramm, a Republican presidential candidate, is allowing the National Ri-

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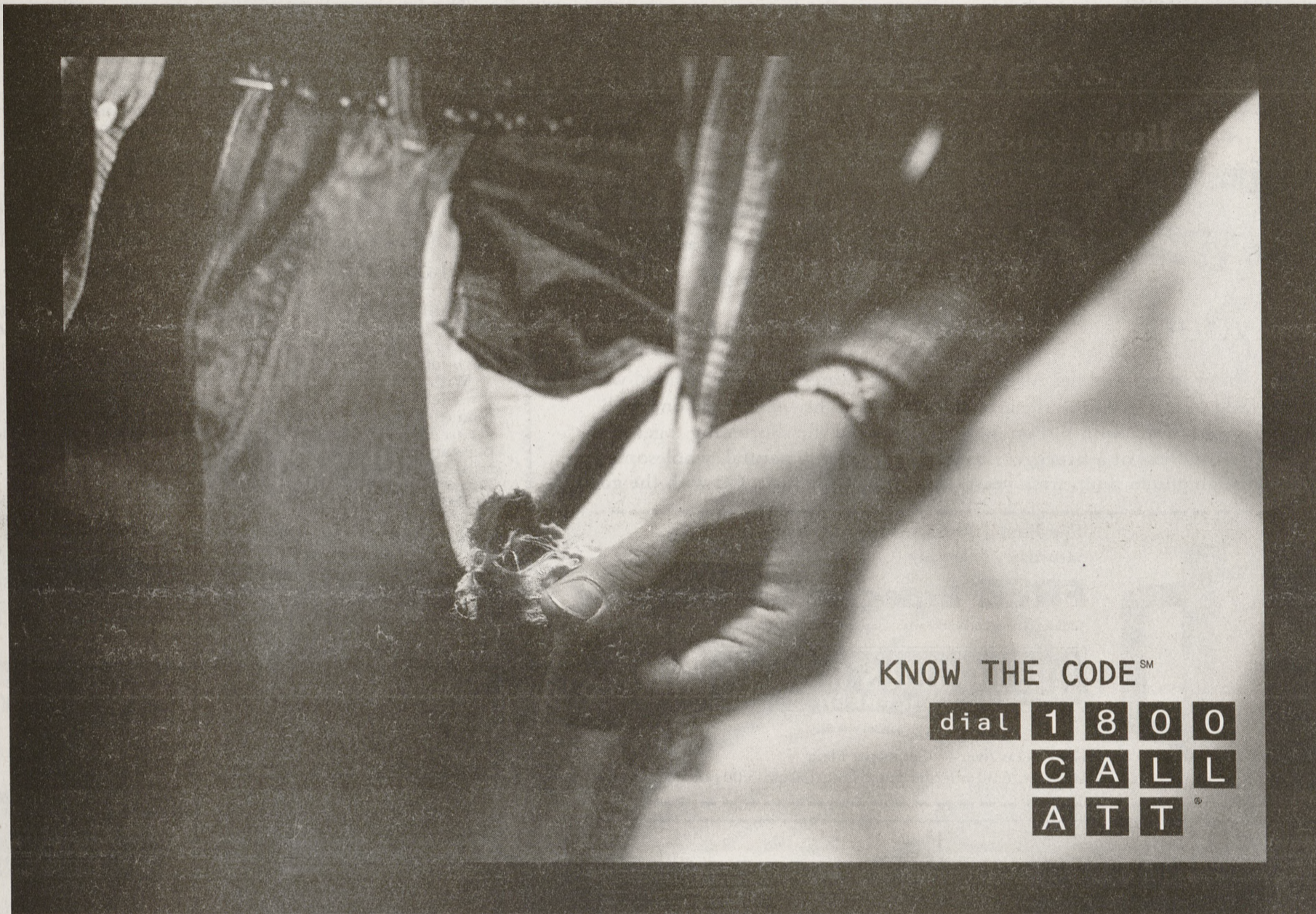
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