

Just For Openers January-December 2025 1

Bernard Lutsky's Rooster Dubiety By Don Thornton

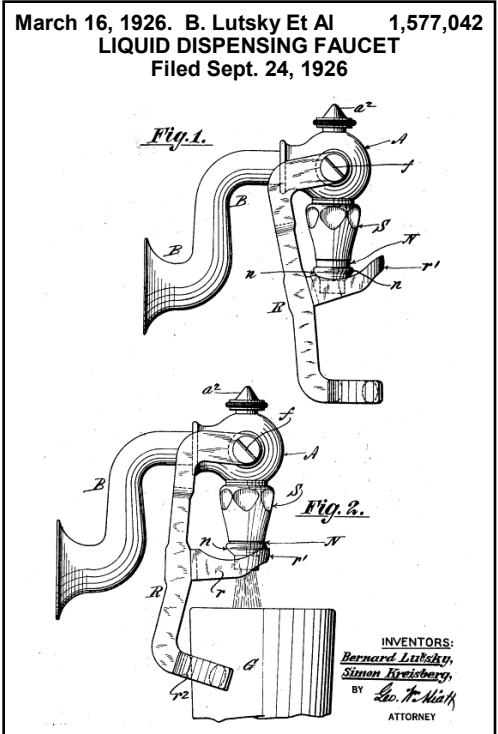
Bernard Lutsky was an entrepreneur who lived the American Dream. Lutsky, who came to New York from Palestine at the age of 13, launched a small machine shop on Franklin Street in 1918. His company, Franklin Machine Products, got its start making specialty components for commercial coffee urns.

Lutsky, only 21 at the time, quickly expanded the product line to include specialty plumbing fittings for the food service industry. Over the years he was granted at least half a dozen patents for mostly plumbing valves and pressure liquid faucets. His 1926 patent for a "liquid dispensing faucet" proved to be super successful -- especially at the end of Prohibition as barkeepers lined up to buy his "beer faucet" for kegs.

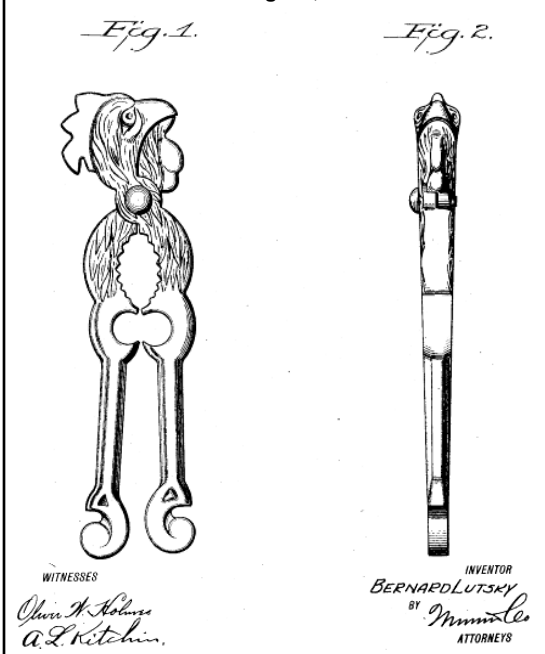
In 1948 Franklin Machine Products moved to Lumberton, New Jersey, where it remains in business today as part of Diversified Food Supply. Bernard Lutsky guided the thriving business until his children, who had changed their last name to Lewis, took over, with the company in family control for generations. Lutsky died in 1977 at the age of 80.

One product, based on Lutsky's very first patent, had more to do with roosters and nuts than plumbing. Lutsky was granted Design Patent No. D60,929 on May 2, 1922 for a "combined nutcracker and bottle opener." But there is a problem – there have been so many reproductions and copies over the years it is impossible to tell what came first.

One model – which appears to match the patent drawing perfectly – is 5 1/2-inches in length, heavy (8+ oz.) with a detailed rooster head. But it seems impractical – the beak opens on 1/2-inch (small for most nuts), although the center circles open 1 1/2-inches. The squeeze-tight bottle opener opens only 1-inch (it would have to be a real skinny bottle top). The curved head comb is obviously not designed to open crown caps.



May 2, 1922. B. Lutsky D60,929
COMBINED NUT CRACKER AND BOTTLE OPENER
Filed Aug. 20, 1921



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Other models on the Internet market range up to 6-inches long with three different combs. There's even one currently being cast in India that is marked: CHICKEN RANCH TEXAS. An advertisement in the New York Daily News in 1950 offered a ROOSTER BOTTLE-OPENER & NUT-CRACKER for \$1.89. It said in part: "Useful for BARS, KITCHEN. Coxcomb is bottle-opener!" That last claim is very doubtful if it is cast like the model pictured.



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