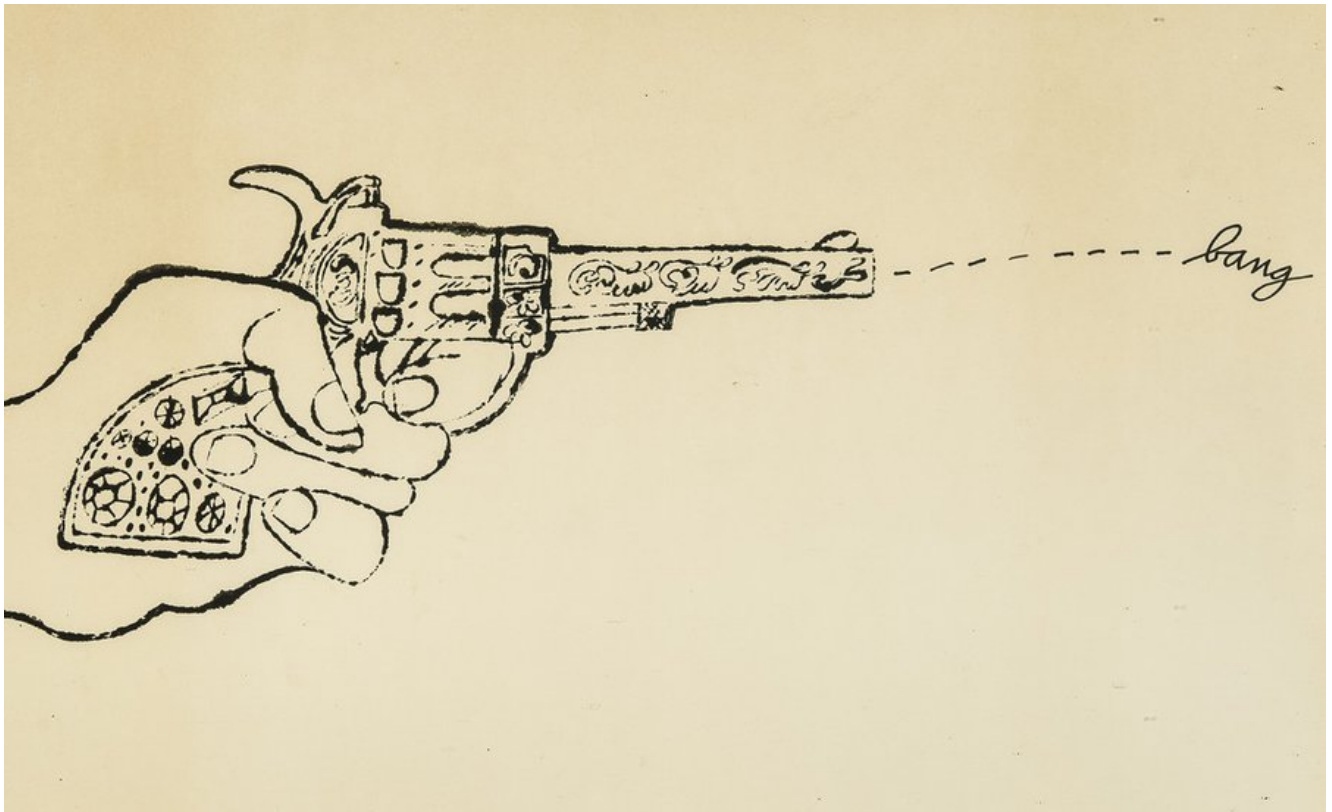


Gunfight at the PC Corral



Bang, Andy Warhol, 1960s

My definition of a man's man is a man who knows gun safety, and we all did.—Kurt Vonnegut

Reality is often stranger than fiction.

On October 21, Alex Baldwin, an outspoken Hollywood political activist, shot and killed his cinematographer, Halyna Hutchins, on the set of *Rust* in New Mexico. Early press reports characterized the incident as a “prop” (property department) gun “misfire,” immediately establishing a narrative suggesting that the shooter was innocent whilst the gun or safety procedures were at fault. As reporting escalated, the yarn changed to blame the assistant director who apparently handed Baldwin a “cold” gun—with a hot round.

Some reports suggest the set “armorer” was to [blame](#). Armorer is one of those Hollywood feather bed jobs you see in film credits that is supposed to ensure firearm safety on location.

Can you picture some union scale temp telling Alex Baldwin what he can or cannot do on set?

Baldwin apparently fired the gun while “practicing” or rehearsing for the next take. So far there is no discussion of what kind of gun safety training is required for actors like Baldwin before they are to allowed handle weapons on set. There is no filmed record of the shooting either—or so we are told.

Press reporting doesn’t explain why real weapons and live ammunition are required to film yet another horse opera. A true cowboy “prop” gun would be a reproduction revolver, not a lethal weapon. The use of the adjective “prop” to describe a weapon that kills someone is a little like using the adjective “accidental” to describe a drug overdose, or worse still a suicide.

Such is the reality of reporting and media servility today. To date, the polite phrase for press coverage of the latest Baldwin controversy might be “cover up;” indeed, another *bravo sierra*, fake news story gone viral.

☒ Alex Baldwin is a press darling, a Hollywood activist, an acerbic liberal with a history of [verbal child abuse](#), public thuggery (see Right), anger management issues, and vulgar outbursts. Baldwin has fantasized aloud about beating up the President of the United States. One of his most recent political rants [recommends](#): “Bury Trump in a Nazi graveyard and put a swastika on his grave.”

Given what we know about the shooting, the most generous assessment possible of the Hutchins tragedy is negligent homicide. Put aside for a moment, if you can, Baldwin’s history as an angry public bully. Alas, if you pull the trigger, you are ultimately responsible for the bullet.

Any other judgement is a bold lie, an excuse, or both.

A kid who has been through a basic NRA gun safety course knows the difference between a live round and a blank. A bullet doesn't look like a blank.

Adults know the difference between a hot or cold gun too, especially a revolver where ammunition is clearly visible, even without spinning the cylinder.

A slick-sleeve military private knows to clear any weapon before and/after use.

A child with basic gun safety training knows also that you never point a hot or cold gun at somebody or something you don't intend to shoot.

And even a novice knows that you don't pull the trigger, for fun or practice, on an empty gun. Dropping the hammer on an empty chamber can damage the gun and make it unsafe.

There are two grim speculations to be made here in light of known [labor](#) and safety problems on set. The *Rust* cast might have been using the guns for target practice ([plinking](#)) during down time and a live round was left in the gun—or some malcontent salted the “prop” guns with live rounds as some kind of sick message to management. In any case, press reporting to date doesn't pass the smell taste.

Ultimately, the man with his finger on the trigger is responsible for due diligence, checking the weapon before pulling the trigger. A revolver has to be cocked to fire, a very deliberate act. You can drop a fully loaded Colt revolver on the ground and it will not discharge unless it is cocked.

Calling Baldwin's negligence a “misfire” is another example of fake news, a lame attempt to blame the inanimate and exonerate the culprit. Sadly, given what we know about liberal media politics, Hollywood mores, and celebrity accountability these days; the Hutchins family may get compensation, but in the end see very little justice.