

Firearm Consequences: You Do the After-Math *Emotional Consequences*

Depiction Suggestions

- ◆ Try to emphasize the emotional ramifications for the gunfire victim, such as trauma, suffering, shock, depression and flashbacks.
 - ◆ Consider highlighting the emotional consequences for the shooter, such as feelings of guilt, remorse, personal angst, and so on.
 - ◆ Where indicated, take into account the negative impact the shooting incident has on the victim's family and friends, such as their grief, fear, loss, and so on.
 - ◆ If appropriate to the story, consider exploring a gun dealer's or a gun supplier's remorse about the harm done by someone to whom he or she furnished a firearm.
 - ◆ Try exploring the guilt a gun owner would feel about the harm caused by someone he or she allowed to use the gun.
 - ◆ Similarly, try exploring the remorse that might be felt by a gun owner for leaving a weapon, subsequently used to injure or kill innocent victims, unsecured where the shooter could get at it.
 - ◆ Attempt to show gang members or others expressing regret over the accidental injury or death of girlfriends, boyfriends or family members who were inadvertent victims of their gunfire.
 - ◆ If consistent with the story line, show friends and/or family members holding memorials for loved ones who have died from gun injuries.
- ◆ Think about showing the negative impact the shooting incident has on the perpetrator's family - guilt, shame, losing a loved one to jail, expenses of legal representation, and so on. The shooter's family may be ostracized by the community and made to absorb the blame for the offender's actions.

The mother of a student paralyzed in the Columbine High School shooting walked into a pawn shop, asked to see a gun, then used it to shoot herself to death.

—Reuters, 10-22-99

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Physical Consequences

Depiction Suggestions

- ◆ Attempt to emphasize the physical repercussions for the victims, such as pain, scars, paralysis, and other lifelong disabilities.

When a frail 68-year old woman, disabled by emphysema and auto injuries, overheard her daughter discussing plans to put her in a nursing home, she grabbed a gun and shot the daughter. The bullet severed the daughter's spine and left her unable to move or breathe on her own. She petitioned the court to take her off life support and let her die with dignity - touching off a legal debate about whether the mother should face a murder charge when the daughter dies, even if it is the daughter's decision to end her life. The mother was left with no one to care for her except the criminal justice system.

—APB News, 3-20-99

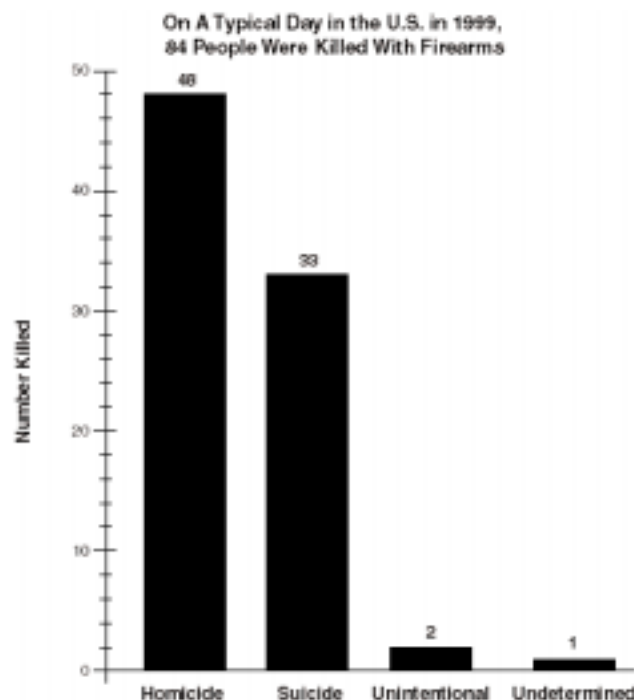
- ◆ Consider addressing or emphasizing the enormous costs to cities and, ultimately, to taxpayers for medically treating gunshot victims.
- ◆ If depicting people fooling around or playing with a gun, consider showing it accidentally discharging during their horseplay, causing injury and turning a playful situation into a tragic one.
- ◆ Since young people tend to consider themselves immortal, when a teen gang member is shot, try portraying his or her shock at being the victim rather than the killer.
- ◆ Think about opportunities to show tough kids being exposed to the severe injuries sustained by gunshot victims by having them visit an emergency room.
- ◆ Look for ways to have physicians and other medical personnel graphically describe the exact damage to muscle, nerves and bone that occurs when bullets rip through the human body.
- ◆ Consider showing someone incurring a hearing loss due to repeatedly using a gun for hunting or at the shooting range without proper ear protection.
- ◆ Attempt to utilize realistic reactions after a gun is fired indoors or in a car: immediate disorientation, panic, ringing in the ears, and so on.

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Firearm Injury and Death

Fact Sheet

- ◆ More Americans died from noncombat gun violence between 1979 and 1997 than were killed in all wars since 1775.¹
- ◆ In 1998 a total of 30,708 people were killed by guns in the U.S. Of these:
 - 17,424 were gun suicides.
 - 12,102 were gun homicides.
 - 886 were unintentional or accidental shootings.
 - 316 were shooting deaths of undetermined intent.²
- ◆ In 1997, there were 32,436 gun-related deaths in the United States - an average of 88 every day.³
- ◆ Gun-related deaths are the second leading cause of injury death in the United States.⁴
- ◆ Each year, approximately 100,000 people come to emergency rooms with firearm injuries. Of these, 60% are injured seriously enough to require hospitalization.⁵
- ◆ A teenager today is more likely to die of a gunshot wound than of all natural causes of disease.⁶
- ◆ Survival of a shooting is often accompanied by severe disability. Nationally, 16.5% of spinal cord injuries are caused by gunshots.⁷
- ◆ In 1990, firearm injuries resulted in over \$20.4 billion in both direct costs for hospital and other medical care and in indirect costs for long-term disability and premature death.⁸
- ◆ Firearm injuries were the second leading cause of death for young people between 10 and 24 years of age.⁹



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,
National Vital Statistics Reports for 1999, Vol. 48, 2000.

- ◆ In one year from 1994 to 1995 an estimated 87,844 persons were treated for nonfatal firearm related injuries in U.S. hospital emergency departments.¹⁰
- ◆ The rate of nonfatal injuries was 2.6 times the national rate of firearm fatalities for 1992.¹¹
- ◆ In 1996 and 1997, 15% more Americans were killed by firearms than were killed in the entire 11 years of the Vietnam War.¹²
- ◆ The public pays approximately 49% of the costs of gun-related injuries and deaths.¹³
- ◆ Among 36 high and upper-middle income countries, the U.S. has the highest overall gun mortality rate (eight times the combined rate of the other high income countries) and the highest gun suicide rate (five times more than other high income countries and seven times upper-middle-income countries).¹⁴
- ◆ Firearms are the second leading cause of injury-related death in the United States.¹⁵

- ◆ Each year in the U.S. approximately 30,000 BB and pellet gun-related injuries are treated in hospital emergency room departments.¹⁶

Sources

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