

Spotlight on

Depiction

of Health and Social Issues

3rd Edition, Volume 2

Gun Violence, Safety and Injury Prevention

A resource encyclopedia for
the entertainment community.
Developed by the
Entertainment Industries Council, Inc.
with support from The Joyce Foundation



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Introduction

As most writers, producers, directors, and anyone else working within the entertainment industry are aware, good stories don't often come fully developed and camera-ready; they take a sound knowledge of the subject matter, prodigious creativity, and a great deal of compromise and collaboration before film can roll.

This publication is intended to serve as a tool for creative professionals involved in the passionate, sometimes painful, and hopefully, rewarding process of entertainment production. Within these pages are facts, statistics and scientific findings to aid in the development and implementation of manuscripts, in addition to anecdotal stories and depiction suggestions to expand creative choices.

The focus of this second volume of *Spotlight on Depiction of Health and Social Issues* is on an object that has become a conspicuous mainstay in films and on television: the gun. Almost since film first began rolling, audiences have been witnessing carefully choreographed gunfights, resulting in "bad guys" receiving their dues, and unscathed heroes walking away, only to fire their guns again in later scenes. While this and related scenarios are common onscreen, gun violence seldom results in such ideal outcomes. If creators of entertainment product find it necessary to incorporate firearm violence in their productions, it is the hope of the Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. (EIC) that these scenes will be represented with accuracy.

This book was created to reinforce EIC's principle interest in the accurate depiction of health and social issues. By showing true-to-life consequences associated with gun violence depicted on screen, the entertainment industry can reduce the allure of gunplay, while at the same time increasing dramatic interest in a storyline.

This volume of *Spotlight on Depiction of Health and Social Issues* is an effort to explore alternative ways of portraying and resolving conflict, as well as to offer creative new ways of portraying firearm violence, based on unbiased research and reality-based consequences of gun violence. This book was developed by the Entertainment Industries Council, Inc., with support from the Joyce Foundation.

Additional Resources

To supplement this resource material, EIC provides *Spotlight on Depiction* Briefings to the creative, marketing and standards and practices staffs of networks, production companies, studios, and individual productions. In addition to a presentation focused on firearm depiction, EIC also offers briefings on drug addiction and recovery.

Enhancing these educational resource services is *First Draft*[™], a free script and preproduction technical assistance service. All related EIC activities are listed in the back of this book.



PREFACE

Message from Brian Dyak

The Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. (EIC) sprang to life from one sentence I wrote for a policy paper, and that was "to bring the power and influence of the entertainment industry to bear on our nation's war on drugs." From this, the scope of our mission was established and then broadened to include a variety of health and social issues. Thus began the idea of encouraging the art of making a difference.

EIC operates from the core organizational principles of knowledge that the creative community is one small piece of the societal puzzle. We recognize that the industry makes a variety of positive contributions in addressing issues and that they always will. We especially utilize a non-judgmental process that respects the creative integrity and creative rights of all forms of productions.

From this perspective EIC entered into the area of decreasing gun violence and increasing firearm safety. As with the other issues we address, our primary goal is to empower the creative community with knowledge, both scientific and behavioral. The publication of this resource encyclopedia gives a vast array of ideas and perspectives from which the creative process can springboard to life. The very public debate that is occurring in the United States on almost every aspect of firearms is riddled with story ideas and very real conflict. Every American citizen will be directly affected in some way by how our nation solves its diverse interpretations of the Second Amendment, and with the consequences of these decisions.

Our approach simply emphasizes that it may be advantageous to society to reduce the depiction of gun violence while exploring other creative forms of conflict resolution. It may be beneficial to use alternative measures to deal with firearm safety and injury prevention. After all, it is the inherent power of the creative process to form entertainment that is exciting, enlightening and in some instances educational. This book is simply fuel for the process.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Dyak".

Brian L. Dyak
President and CEO
Entertainment Industries Council, Inc.



Special Message

Paula DiPerna

President, The Joyce Foundation

The power of culture is the power of humanity. Writers, painters, musicians, and performers in all media are gifted with the ability to express the infinite range of human passion, emotion, hope and concern.

To the artist we entrust the values we hope most endure.

At the Joyce Foundation, we have found that many public policy issues increasingly touch and concern people at the cultural level. Therefore, organizations like the Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. are important translators of what matters to people, what moves their hearts and minds. Public policy issues are really just reflections of the great human narrative. But there is nothing remotely romantic or adventurous about the story of gun violence in our country. The Joyce Foundation became active in the gun violence area because so much injury and death can and should be prevented by sound public policy and informed public scrutiny.

It is often claimed that the US has a crime problem. We do, but our crime rates are similar to other developed countries. It is often claimed that the US has a violence problem. We do, but our rates of violence are similar to other developed countries. What is out of line is our lethal violence, and most of our lethal violence is gun violence. And sadly it is our nation's young people who pay a disproportionate price for this epidemic. A comparison of violent deaths of 5-14 year olds between the US and the 26 other developed countries in the 1990s shows that the US has 10 times the firearms suicide rate (and the same non-firearm suicide rate), a 17 times higher firearm homicide rate and a 9 times greater unintentional (or "accidental") firearm related death rate—again, for children 5 to 14 years of age.

However, we ought not be powerless against this public health scourge.

It is heartening to know that so many members of the entertainment industry are committed to the art of making a difference, and we are proud to support the work of the Council and its efforts on behalf of responsible entertainment. It is not every generation that is given an opportunity to protect the next in such a direct and concrete way. Thank you.

Spotlight on Depiction
Special Message
Paula DiPerna



Special Message

Stephen W. Hargarten, MD, MPH

Chairman, Department of Emergency Medicine
Director of the Firearm Injury Center, Medical College of Wisconsin

Dear Creative Professional:

As an Emergency Medicine physician, I am routinely asked to try to mend the broken bodies of those who are lucky enough to reach the hospital, all too often with little medical care to offer. As a public health practitioner, I know that, with better information and a common purpose, our communities and nation can do significantly better in preventing firearm violence.

The Entertainment Industries Council (EIC) has produced a timely and important publication that will serve as a valuable resource for members of the entertainment community interested in reducing the toll of firearm violence. With more than 30,000 firearm deaths annually, and uncounted additional injuries, the United States continues to experience far more gun violence than the other industrialized nations of the world.

Unfortunately, public debate has been mired in the rhetoric of gun rights versus gun control. Violent events are too often followed by energies misspent on fixing blame and on wringing of hands rather than on seeking effective prevention. It is time to change the nature of the debate. Gun owners and non-gun owners alike have a common interest in preventing firearm injuries and in promoting safe homes and streets. When firearms are viewed as consumer products, a variety of new and potentially effective prevention strategies can be explored. We have had success with other inherently dangerous products from cars to medicines. Why not with guns?

We applaud the EIC for developing an excellent resource and commend it to the entertainment industry. It offers a very real opportunity to change the nature of the public discussion about firearm violence by attacking myths, promoting more complete understanding of these events and motivating audiences to take effective action to stop the violence.



Special Message

Paul Haggis

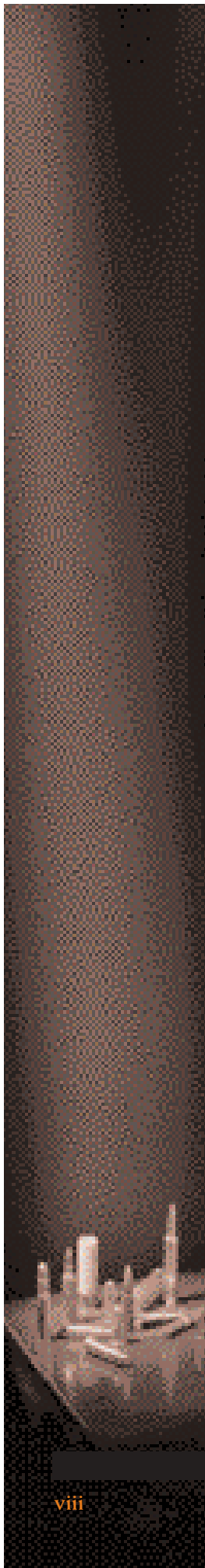
Writer/Producer/Director

Like most of us, I'd grown accustomed to the standard-issue "shoot 'em ups" on TV. But an EIC-hosted conference on gun violence I attended last year spurred my taking a fresh look at firearms. When one of the speakers stressed the potentially lethal combination of guns in the home and curious children, I got an idea for a story line for the show I produce and often write, *Family Law*.

This idea culminated in an episode this year that explored both sides of the guns-at-home-for-protection debate - whether, as a chapter in this book puts it, they're more empowering or imperiling.

Though my ultimate goal was simply to tell a good story, I hope that the show also raised the awareness level of viewers about the inherent dangers that guns in the home may pose. I became even more invested in the script when yet another tragic round of school shootings occurred during our filming.

I applaud the efforts of this *Spotlight on Depiction* book to emphasize realistic portrayals of firearm use and bring to the foreground what TV programs and films often omit: the consequences of both violence and carelessness. Hopefully these depiction suggestions will prompt others in the entertainment community to go down creative paths less traveled and perhaps that may make all the difference.



S P O T L I G H T O N D E P I C T I O N O F H E A L T H A N D S O C I A L I S S U E S

Acknowledgements

As an amalgam of creative options and factual information about firearms, this publication drew upon the expertise of two diverse, but equally fruitful, sources: the entertainment industry and the academic community. The former supplied the imagination and inventiveness, the latter the accuracy and foundation. The Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. (EIC) gratefully acknowledges the assistance and support of members of both these groups, along with others who lent their time and considerable expertise to this effort.

From the entertainment industry, we extend our appreciation to Paul Haggis of Paul Haggis Productions for taking time from his busy schedule to offer some valuable insights and suggestions. We would also like to thank members of EIC's Creative Advisory Committee for generating many of the suggestions contained within these pages: The Academy of Television Arts and Sciences; Lori Anderson; Lydia Ash; Gail Berman; Leroy Bobbitt; Gerard Brown; Disney/ABC Cable Networks; Peter Engel; Jonathan Fernandez; Fox Broadcasting Co.; Fox Family Worldwide; Michael Greene; Debra Hill; Arthur Hiller; Peter Hyams; Michele Lee; Meryl Marshall; Rick Mater; Roland McFarland; Anne Mendelson; National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences; Lana Nichols; Rob O'Neill; Yooli Pak; Peter Engel Productions; Sheldon Pinchuck; Regency Television; John Romano; Jacob Vargas; The WB Television Network; John Wells Productions, and Dick Wolf.

Also, we would like to acknowledge Arnold Shapiro Productions for its *Teen Files* programs dealing with gun violence, which served as an inspiration for many of our depiction ideas. The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts (IATSE), all deserve our gratitude for contributing their recommendations concerning the safe handling of theatrical firearms.

From the academic community, we owe our thanks to the expertise and assistance of Stephen Hargarten and Richard Withers of the Firearm Injury Center, Medical College of Wisconsin, for contributing much of the Glossary information as well as the "Firearm Anatomy" and safety device material. Likewise, thanks are owed to the erudite Steven Teret and Jon Vernick, along with the rest of the staff of the Center for Gun Policy and Research at Johns Hopkins University, for their substantial contributions to the Glossary and review of Chapter 12, "Guns and the Law."

We drew particularly on the extensive research and knowledge of Professor David Hemenway of Harvard University's School of Public Health, as well as the informative publications of the Firearm Injury Center at the University of Pennsylvania. Other academic scholars and community organizations which enhanced this book with their time and expertise: the Violence Policy Center; Philip Cook, Sanford Institute of Public Policy; the Northeastern University College of Criminal Justice; Professor Susan Sorenson of UCLA School of Public Health; the American Bar Association;

Physicians for Social Responsibility; Jeffrey Cole, UCLA Center for Communication; Diana Winningham, National Emergency Medicine Association; Garen Wintemute and the Violence Prevention Research Program at University of California, Davis; and Dr. Mark Shuster of the Rand Institute.

Additionally, we would especially like to thank and acknowledge Bruce Colodny, an attorney specializing in firearms law, for his informative material and generous donation of time devoted to Chapter 12, "Guns and the Law." Join Together, a program of the Boston University School of Public Health, provided us with invaluable information in the form of media articles and firearm data, as did the Bell Campaign.

This publication is the result of countless hours of research and writing by Barbara Demming Lurie, and editing, coordination and design work on the part of EIC staff, including Thomas Beckner, David Conner, Larry Deutchman, Kathy Herdman, Elana Mitchel, Kenneth Paule and Emily Powell. We also acknowledge the support of our Board of Directors: Brian Dyak, Ralph Andrews, Leroy Bobbitt, Lionel Chetwynd, Nancy Dockry, David Goldsmith, Michele Lee, Roland McFarland, Herman Rush and William Utz.

Finally, this publication would not be possible without the on-going support from the Joyce Foundation and particularly its extraordinarily helpful and knowledgeable Program Officer, Roseanna Ander.

How To Use This Book

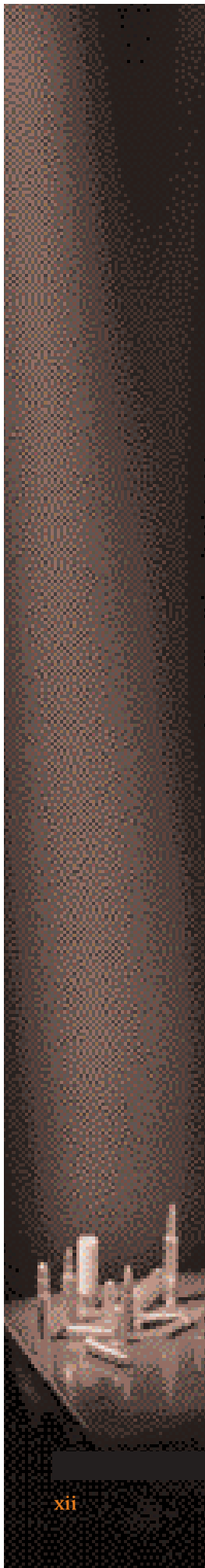
One of the chief virtues of *Spotlight on Depiction of Health and Social Issues* is that it can quickly, easily, and clearly satisfy the immediate needs of its reader, directing that reader, where appropriate, to further sources of information.

This publication contains depiction suggestions, recent findings and statistical information, and resource listings for technical assistance. It is further supported by a free 60-90 minute *Spotlight on Depiction* briefing which is available to the creative staffs of networks, studios, production companies, and individual productions on request, tailored to specific informational needs.

EIC also provides *First Draft™*, a free technical resource service linking creators with experts who can respond to particular questions, advise on script accuracy, or merely serve as a technical sounding board on all areas of gun violence and safety.

This book has several sections, designed for quick access. Included are:

- ◆ **Glossary:** Contains definitions of commonly used terms, both with regard to firearms and firearm laws.
- ◆ **Depiction Suggestions:** Provide points to consider when portraying guns, or opting for other means of conflict resolution.
- ◆ **Fact Sheet:** Provides the most current statistics and information about a particular area, along with the informational sources.
- ◆ **Technical Resource Listing:** Provides contact information for a variety of experts and organizations knowledgeable about the various facets of gun violence and safety.
- ◆ **True-life Stories:** Bring to life the statistical and academic information contained elsewhere in this book. Taken from newspapers from around the country, these stories about gun use may provide ideas for plot lines. They are interspersed throughout the "Depiction Suggestions" section.
- ◆ **Safety Devices:** Describes both internal and external devices designed to ensure the safe use of firearms.
- ◆ **Guns and the Law:** Discusses various State and Federal statutes pertaining to the purchase, possession and use of firearms.



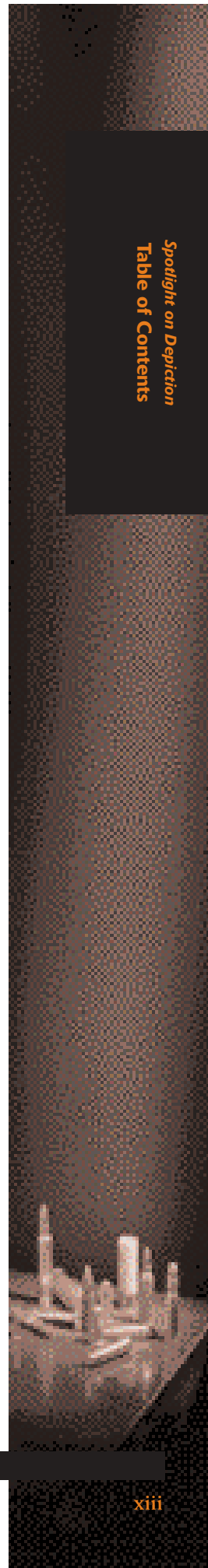
S P O T L I G H T O N D E P I C T I O N O F H E A L T H A N D S O C I A L I S S U E S

Spotlight on Depiction of Firearm Violence and Safety

Table of Contents

Section I: Depiction Suggestions and Fact Sheets

Chapter 1	Crime and Punishment — <i>Looking Down the Barrel</i> ■ Depiction Suggestions <i>Legal Consequences</i>	1.1
	■ Fact Sheet <i>Tools of the Trade</i>	1.3
Chapter 2	Guns, Drugs and Alcohol — <i>A Dangerous Cocktail</i> ■ Depiction Suggestions	2.1
	■ Fact Sheet	2.3
Chapter 3	Firearm Consequences — <i>You Do the After-Math</i> ■ Depiction Suggestions <i>Emotional Consequences</i>	3.1
	<i>Physical Consequences</i>	3.3
	■ Fact Sheet <i>Firearm Injury and Death</i>	3.5
Chapter 4	Firearm Safety — <i>Bullets Astray</i> ■ Depiction Suggestions	4.1
	■ Fact Sheet <i>Unintentional Shootings</i>	4.5
	<i>Safety and Storage</i>	4.7
Chapter 5	Guns for Protection — <i>Empowering or Imperiling?</i> ■ Depiction Suggestions	5.1
	■ Fact Sheet <i>Taking Aim at Friends and Lovers</i>	5.3
Chapter 6	Kids and Guns — <i>A Major Minor Problem</i> ■ Depiction Suggestions	6.1
	■ Fact Sheet <i>Kids on the Trigger Side</i>	6.3
	<i>Kids in the Cross-Hairs</i>	6.5
Chapter 7	Prevalence of Guns — <i>Here a Gun, There a Gun</i> ■ Depiction Suggestions <i>Putting Guns Back in Their Holsters</i>	7.1
	<i>Deglamorizing Gun Play</i>	7.3
	<i>Providing a Positive Role Model</i>	7.7



Chapter 7	Prevalence of Guns — <i>Here a Gun, There a Gun</i> (Continued)	
	■ Fact Sheet	
	<i>The Numbers</i>	7.9
	<i>Firearms and the Sexes</i>	7.11
Chapter 8:	Suicides — <i>Guns Turned Inward</i>	
	■ Depiction Suggestions	8.1
	■ Fact Sheet	8.3

Section II: Safety Devices, Safe Handling, and Gun Laws

Chapter 9	Understanding Firearms — <i>Anatomy Lessons</i>	
	■ Anatomy of a Revolver	9.1
	■ Anatomy of a Pistol	9.1
	■ Anatomy of a Bullet	9.2
Chapter 10	Safety Devices — <i>Build a Safer Mousetrap</i>	
	■ Definitions	10.1
	■ External Devices	10.1
	■ Built-In Devices	10.3
	■ Locks, Boxes and Safes	10.7
	■ Combinations and Computer Chips	10.8
Chapter 11	Handling of Theatrical Firearms — <i>Making Sets Foolproof</i>	
	■ IATSE Recommendations	11.1
Chapter 12	Guns and the Law — <i>Legal Ammunition</i>	
	■ Statutory Provisions	12.1

Section III: Terminology and Resources

Chapter 13	Glossary	13.1
Chapter 14	Resources	
	■ Resource List	14.1
	■ Technical Resources	14.3
Chapter 15	In Remembrance — <i>The Entertainment Industry Toll of Firearm Deaths</i>	15.1
	EIC Board of Directors	15.2
	EIC Mission and Operating Principles	15.3
	EIC Programs	15.4