



Issue 2

This is the second in a series of bi-monthly emails that the Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. (EIC) thought might be of use to you when considering potential story lines. Cognizant of the criticism and scrutiny generated in Washington toward the creative community, we recently convened a Round Table of writers, directors, producers and other industry professionals to brainstorm alternative approaches to traditional "shoot-em-ups" -- approaches that are more aligned to what actually happens in the real world.

Hopefully, these depiction suggestions will not only be the impetus for fresh story ideas, but will imbue scripts with a realistic sense of gun violence consequences for people on both sides of a pointed weapon. They are designed to enhance the creative process -- not limit it.

DEPICTION IDEAS

Consider depicting the reality that women are far more likely to be shot by husbands or lovers than by an intruder. Odds are that a gun in her home will be used against her rather than in her defense.

Consider showing bartenders or bar owners being prosecuted or held civilly liable for gun injuries caused by a drunken patron who is known by them to carry a weapon (akin to the prosecution of bar owners for traffic deaths caused by drunk drivers).

When appropriate, incorporate parents having heart-to-heart talks with their children, especially teenagers, about guns not being an acceptable resolution to the problems they face with schoolyard bullies or anything else.

Emphasize, where possible, the legal penalties invoked against "straw purchasers" who act as intermediaries between gun dealers and persons who are legally restricted from buying guns themselves.

Consider showing someone who is attempting to use a gun in self-defense being overpowered by the attacker who then uses the gun against him or her.

Attempt to show safe ways school kids can tip off the police or school authorities that a fellow student has a gun, and show that this action can bring about a positive outcome.

Consider showing that even so-called "toy" guns, like pellet or BB guns or prop guns, can cause real injuries and even death.

Give thought to starting the story after any gun violence has already occurred, and confine the plot line to the aftermath -- detection, prosecution, coping of survivors, and so on.

Consider occasionally having "junk" guns misfiring or jamming at critical times, as these guns are prone to do so after a period of use.

Consider depicting people as feeling less safe, rather than more safe, when they find their neighbors becoming increasingly armed.

SOME RELEVANT INFORMATION

A gun in the home is 22 times more likely to be used to shoot a family member or a friend than an intruder (Kellerman et al., Journal of Trauma, 1998, 45.2).

Women are 12 times more likely to be shot by a spouse or loved one than by a stranger (Saltzman et al., Journal of the American Medical Association, 1992: 267; FBI Supplementary Homicide Report, 1997).

62% of shooters involved in homicides had alcohol in their blood (American Journal of Forensic Medicine and Pathology, analysis of 1982-85 data).

For more information on gun violence, safety, and injury prevention, please contact Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. at (703) 481-1418 or eic@eiconline.org.