

BALDWIN 'RECKLESS' IN FATAL FILM SET SHOOTING: NEW LAWSUIT

US actor Alec Baldwin "chose to play Russian roulette" with safety in the minutes leading up to the fatal movie set shooting of a cinematographer, a new lawsuit alleged Wednesday. The suit is the second to be filed in a week over the killing of Halyna Hutchins during rehearsals for low-budget Western "Rust" in New Mexico last month.



Script supervisor Mamie Mitchell—who made an emotional 911 call moments after the accident—is accusing Baldwin and his fellow producers of assault, intentional infliction of emotional distress and deliberate infliction of harm.

"The events that led to the shooting by Mr Baldwin of a loaded gun do not constitute simple negligence," Mitchell's attorney Gloria Allred told reporters in Los Angeles. "Instead, in our opinion, Mr Baldwin chose to play

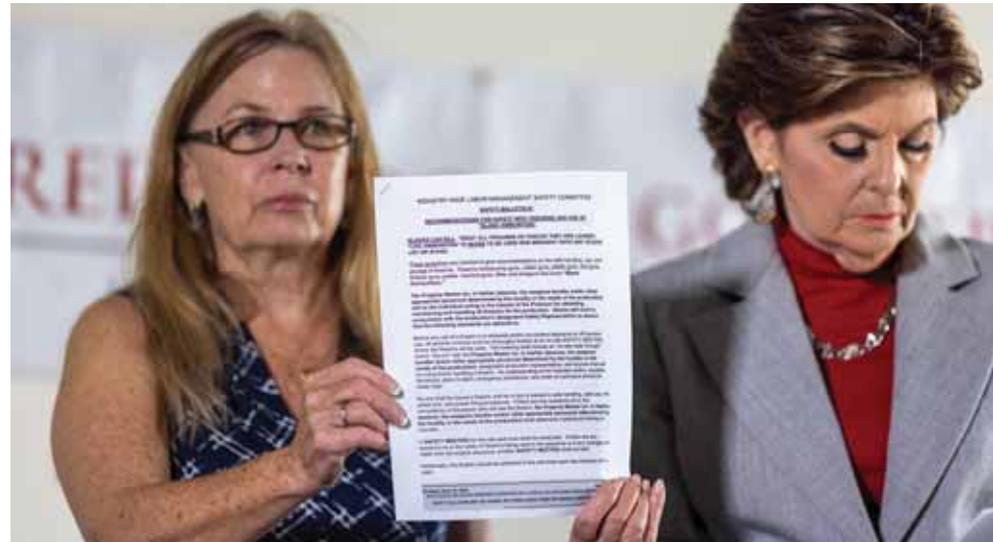
Russian roulette when he fired a gun without checking and without having the armorer do so in his presence. "His behavior and that of the producers on 'Rust' was reckless." Armorer Hannah Gutierrez-Reed and assistant director Dave Halls are also named in the suit. Cinematographer Hutchins, 42, was shot and killed as Baldwin rehearsed a scene in which he fires a gun at the camera.

The Emmy-winner was handed the firearm by Halls, who declared it "cold"—industry lingo for an inert weapon. Halls later told investigators he had not fully checked it. The live bullet passed through Hutchins and hit director Joel Souza in the shoulder. "Mr Baldwin, and industry veterans knew that the gun in question should never have been given to him by the assistant director. And then he could not rely upon any statement by the assistant director as to whether or not the gun was safe to use," said Allred. Industry practice is for the armorer to demonstrate the gun is safe and for that person to hand it directly to the actor, she said.

"Mr Baldwin knew that this was the norm and that it was not followed. And he did not check the gun himself." Last week chief lighting technician Serge Svetnoy sued Baldwin and others alleging negligence. Experts say a rash of civil legal action is expected in con-

nection with the tragedy. Adan Mendoza, sheriff of Santa Fe County, where the incident happened, has spoken of "complacency" on the set. Mendoza said previously his officers seized more than 500 rounds of ammunition from the set, which they believed to be a mix of blanks, dummy

rounds and some suspected live ammunition. District Attorney Mary Carmack-Altwies has previously refused to rule out criminal charges over the incident, which has sparked calls for the banning of functional weapons on Hollywood sets. — AFP



Mamie Mitchell (left), script supervisor on the film "Rust", and attorney Gloria Allred hold a copy of safety recommendations for the use of live ammunition at a press conference.— AFP

Quentin Tarantino sued over 'Pulp Fiction' NFT plan

Quentin Tarantino is being sued by Miramax Studios over his plan to sell digital rights to parts of cult hit "Pulp Fiction" in the form of NFTs. The visionary director is auctioning script pages from seven scenes that did not make the final cut of the 1994 movie, along with audio commentary, he said this month. But Miramax, which produced the film, say Tarantino is overstepping, and impinging on its own plans to sell NFTs, so is suing him for breach of contract.



Quentin Tarantino

According to the complaint filed Tuesday in Los Angeles, seen by AFP, Miramax wrote to Tarantino to ask him to give up his NFT projects, claiming to hold all the rights on the script of "Pulp Fiction," including sections that did not make the final cut. He refused, claiming he owns the rights to the film script in written form. "Tarantino's conduct has forced Miramax to bring this lawsuit against a valued collaborator in order to enforce, preserve, and protect its contractual and intellectual property rights relating to one of Miramax's most iconic and valuable film properties," the company wrote in its lawsuit. "Left unchecked, Tarantino's conduct could mislead others into believing Miramax is involved in his venture.

"And it could also mislead others into believing they have the rights to pursue similar deals or offerings, when in fact Miramax holds the rights needed to develop, market, and sell NFTs relating to its deep film library." Miramax was founded in 1979 by now-disgraced mogul Harvey Weinstein and his brother Robert. It is now owned by BeIN Media and Viacom CBS. NFTs or Non-Fungible Tokens, are unique digital objects that confer ownership. While their content may be copyable, the NFT is "the original", in much the same way that there are innumerable prints of Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa", but only the Louvre museum has the original. Investors and wealthy collectors have clamored in recent months to get involved in the latest digital craze, which relies on the same blockchain technology that powers cryptocurrencies and cannot be forged or otherwise manipulated.—AFP

Police guard Indian actor after hit film sparks caste furore

The star of a hit new Indian film tackling the oppression of marginalized communities was under armed police guard yesterday after threats of violence. "Jai Bhim" is a legal drama based on the true story of an activist lawyer fighting for a tribal woman whose husband was wrongly arrested and killed in police custody in 1993. The movie is the latest to highlight the plight of India's millions of tribal people and low-caste Dalits—"untouchables"—at the bottom of the Hindu caste system. The film, released on Amazon Prime, has received rave reviews and unusually for a Tamil-language

movie has been successful right across the vast country of 22 official languages.

"Jai Bhim" was briefly the highest-ranked film on movie database IMDb-owned by Amazon-beating Hollywood classics such as "The Godfather" and "The Shawshank Redemption". But it has also angered many people in the southern state of Tamil Nadu where it is set, in particular the Vanniyar caste community who say that the film portrays them in a bad light. Vanniyar Sangam, a body representing the community, has issued a legal notice to the filmmakers seeking damages and demanding the removal of certain scenes. A member of a local political party even offered 100,000 rupees (\$1,340) to anyone who physically attacks the main actor Saravanan Sivakumar, better known as Suriya, who is also the film's co-producer.

Police have since opened an investigation into the politician, and Suriya's home in Chennai is now guarded by five armed officers and the actor—a major star in Tamil cinema—has additional security when he travels. This and other threats to Suriya have prompted an outpouring of support for the actor, with the hashtag #WeStandWithSuriya trending on social media. — AFP



A sanitation worker walks past a poster of actor Suriya Sivakumar from the movie Jai Bhim in Chennai.— AFP