



Security guards stand at the entrance of Bonanza Creek Ranch in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Actor Alec Baldwin was the focus of investigations into a shocking and deadly on-set tragedy, after the actor fired a prop gun that killed a cinematographer and wounded the director of a Western he was shooting at the ranch. — AFP Photos



Prop guns are seen during an interview with props expert Guillaume Delouche at Independent Studio Services in Sunland-Tujunga, Los Angeles, California.

# GRIEF, ANGER OVER DEATH ON ALEC BALDWIN MOVIE

Actors and movie makers in Hollywood were mourning the death of a rising star of their business Friday, but there was also anger over how Halyna Hutchins could have been killed when Alec Baldwin fired a prop gun. "I am gutted and just so mad right now," tweeted filmmaker Rachel Morrison. "No shot, no scene and no movie is worth the loss of life. #RIPHalynaHutchins"

Hutchins was cinematographer on 19th-century western "Rust", which was filming at the Bonanza Creek Ranch in

the US state of New Mexico, when the incident occurred Thursday. The 42-year-old, who was reportedly hit in the stomach, was airlifted to hospital, where she was later declared dead. Director Joel Souza was also hurt, but was released after emergency care. Actor Elijah Wood, who worked with Hutchins on superhero thriller "Archenemy" said: "Absolutely horrifying and devastating news about cinematographer Halyna Hutchins. My heart goes out to her family."

Fellow "Archenemy" alum Adam Egypt Mortimer said he was "so sad" and "infuri-

ated that this could happen on a set." "She was a brilliant talent who was absolutely committed to art and to film." The tragedy recalled the death of Brandon Lee, son of the legendary Bruce Lee, who died from a gunshot wound incurred on the set of the 1993 film "The Crow." "Our hearts go out to the family of Halyna Hutchins and to Joel Souza and all involved in the incident on 'Rust'," said Shannon Lee, Brandon's sister and Bruce's daughter. "No one should ever be killed by a gun on a film set. Period."

Hutchins was born in Ukraine and lived

in Los Angeles. In 2019, she was named by American Cinematographer magazine as one of the industry's rising stars in 2019, according to the organization's website. "Deeply sad," wrote entertainment journalist Rebecca Keegan. "Halyna was talented and cool. Last time we talked was Cannes 2017 and she was brimming with energy and excitement." Innovative Artists, who represented Hutchins described her as "a ray of light. Always smiling, always hopeful."

"She decided early on she would take the craft of cinematography by storm and

the last couple of years proved she was well on her way. Her talent was immense." Filmmaker Rachel Morrison questioned the use of real guns during filming. "Why the f--- are we still using blanks when it costs like 50 (cents) to add gunfire in post (production)? If you can't afford to make a movie safely, you shouldn't be making it at all." — AFP



In this file photo, Alec Baldwin accepts the award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series for 'Saturday Night Live' onstage during the 69th Emmy Awards in Los Angeles.

## Killed on set: Famous Hollywood tragedies

With a cinematographer killed and a movie director wounded after US actor Alec Baldwin fired a prop gun during filming, we look at other deadly movie accidents.

### 'The Captive'

Gun related deaths go back to the dawn of cinema with extra Charles Chandler shot in the head in 1915 while filming the Cecil B. DeMille movie "The Captive". He died after a bullet was left in a rifle after soldiers shot at a door with live ammunition to give the scene more realism.



In this file photo, filmmaker Halyna Hutchins attends the 2018 Sundance Film Festival Official Kickoff Party in Park City, Utah. US actor Alec Baldwin fired a prop gun that killed a cinematographer and wounded the director on a film set in New Mexico. Halyna Hutchins and Joel Souza were shot when a prop firearm was discharged by Alec Baldwin, the sheriff in Santa Fe said in a statement, with Hutchins succumbing to her wounds. — AFP photos

### 'Twilight Zone: The Movie'

Actor Vic Morrow was decapitated and two Vietnamese-born child extras killed in 1982 when a helicopter crashed on them after being hit by pyrotechnics during the shooting of a night battle scene for the sci-fi horror movie near Los Angeles. Director John Landis was later acquitted of the manslaughter of the 53-year-old star as well as the children, aged six and seven, in the first such case in Hollywood history.

### 'The Crow'

US actor Brandon Lee, a martial arts legend and the son of Bruce Lee, was shot and killed on the set of "The Crow" in 1993 in a case which set off a whirl of conspiracy theories about him being murdered by Hong Kong gangsters. But investigators found his death was caused by negligence. An actor fired at Lee with a gun which was supposed to contain blanks. However, there was a bullet in the chamber and Lee, 28, died hours later from his injuries.

### 'Batman: The Dark Knight'

Rumours of a "Curse of Batman" circulated after the 2007 death of stuntman Conway Wickliffe during a test run for a scene involving the Batmobile in "The Dark Knight" was followed by the drugs overdose of Heath Ledger, 28, who played The Joker. Co-star Morgan Freeman was later badly injured in a car crash and Batman himself Christian Bale faced accusations of assaulting his mother and sister the day before the film's UK premiere.

### 'Jumper'

A set dresser was killed on the Samuel L Jackson sci-fi movie in 2008 when frozen sand, earth and ice from an exterior set collapsed onto staff below during shooting in Toronto. David Ritchie, 56, died instantly.

### 'A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood'

Emmy-winning sound mixer James Emswiller died after falling from a second-floor balcony during the filming in 2018 of a biopic about US television icon Fred Rogers for which Tom Hanks was later nominated for an Oscar. — AFP

## Guns on film: How are weapons used safely?

The fatal shooting of a crew member by actor Alec Baldwin during the making of a movie in the western United States has raised questions over the use of guns on film sets. Hollywood armorer Guillaume Delouche - who has been supplying weapons to filmmakers for three decades, with 75 titles to his name - says there are usually multiple safeguards against tragedy. Here are some of his insights into the use of guns in the movie business.

### Why are guns used on a movie set?

Even though adding digital effects in post-production is relatively easy and cheap nowadays, a lot of directors and actors prefer to use real guns, says Delouche, citing added authenticity. "The problem with dummy weapons is that you take away the recoil and the smoke, which adds something to the acting," he said. "When you give the actor a latex or plastic gun and add the effect of the bullet later with digital effects, there is still a clear difference."

### How are guns handled on film set?

Protocols are necessarily strict, says Delouche, comparing the double and triple checks with the way airplane safety systems operate. "We treat blank weapons as if they were real weapons. In many cases, they are real weapons that have been modified," he explained. "The weapons are kept in a safe. Once they are on the set, we organize the blank ammunition, which is marked and color-coded to differentiate it. "First, we show the crew and actors that the gun is empty before loading it. "When we put blanks in a gun we announce it, several times."



Props expert Guillaume Delouche at Independent Studio Services holds a prop gun while talking about them in Sunland-Tujunga, Los Angeles, California.

### When a gun needs to be fired

"We have very strict safety distances: you can't have someone less than 20 feet - or about six meters - in front of a weapon when it is fired. "Even with blanks, there can be small debris that is projected. It's better to never aim at someone directly, so we work with the cinematographer to frame the shot and give the illusion that the person is in the line of fire. "If we need to be closer we put up Plexiglas walls. We cover the operators and stagehands with fire blankets. They also have anti-noise helmets and safety glasses to protect against splinters."

### How can accidents happen?

It remains unclear what happened on the set of "Rust." According to Delouche accidents are extremely rare, considering

how many Hollywood productions feature characters wielding guns. They can occur, however, if live ammunition is being used on set for some reason. "But real ammunition has absolutely no place on a set because dummy bullets are also used and they could be confused," he said.

"A possibility is that a dummy bullet becomes separated from its casing and then enters the chamber of the gun. "If a blank is put in behind that dummy, it effectively becomes a live round. "This is what cost Brandon Lee his life (in 1993 on the set of "The Crow"). There was never a check by the prop maker, which would have prevented the accident." "For an accident to happen, there is always a chain of errors that precede it." — AFP



A sign points to the Bonanza Creek Ranch in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Actor Alec Baldwin was the focus on October 22, 2021, of investigations into a shocking and deadly on-set tragedy, after the actor fired a prop gun that killed a cinematographer and wounded the director. — AFP photos