

'There should be no live round anything ever on a movie'

Stars stunned by 'mismanaged set' in fatal prop-gun shooting

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 26, (AP) — As questions linger about safety protocols on the movie set where Alec Baldwin killed a cinematographer with a prop gun he'd been told was safe, Hollywood professionals say they're baffled by the circumstances and production crews have quickly stepped up safety measures.

Jeffrey Wright, who has worked on projects including the James Bond franchise and the upcoming movie "The Batman," was acting with a weapon on the set of "Westworld" when news broke of the shooting Thursday at a New Mexico ranch. "We were all pretty shocked. And it informed what we did from that moment on," he said in an interview Sunday at the Newport Beach Film Festival.

"I don't recall ever being handed a weapon that was not cleared in front of me — meaning chamber open, barrel shown to me, light flashed inside the barrel to make sure that it's cleared," Wright said. "Clearly, that was a mismanaged set."

The shooting on the set of the film "Rust" killed 42-year-old Halyna Hutchins and wounded director Joel Souza, who was standing behind her.

The gun Baldwin used was one of three that a firearms specialist, or "armorer," had set on a cart outside the building where a scene was being rehearsed, according to court records. Assistant director Dave Halls grabbed a gun off a cart and handed it to Baldwin, indicating that the weapon was safe by yelling "cold gun," court papers say. But it was loaded with live rounds, according to the records.

Baldwin, 63, who is known for his roles in "30 Rock" and "The

Hunt for Red October" and his impression of former President Donald Trump on "Saturday Night Live," has described the killing as a "tragic accident."

"The Umbrella Academy" actor Justin Min, also at the Newport festival, said "it's been a very somber time" in recent days on set as he's been filming the indie thriller "Detained."

"After that — I mean we have obviously already been careful, but it's just another level of precaution," Min said.

A prop maker and licensed pyrotechnician who worked with Halls, the assistant director, on another production said she had raised safety concerns about him in the past.

Complaint

Maggie Goll said in a statement that she filed an internal complaint with the executive producers of Hulu's "Into the Dark" series in 2019 over concerns about Halls' behavior on set. Goll said in a phone interview Sunday that Halls disregarded safety protocols for weapons and pyrotechnics and tried to continue filming after the supervising pyrotechnician lost consciousness on set.

Halls has not returned phone calls and email messages seeking comment. Rust Movie Productions has not answered repeated emails seeking comment.

The fatal shooting and previous experiences point to larger safety issues that need to be addressed, Goll said, adding that crew member safety and wellbeing are top issues in ongoing contract negotiations

between a union that represents film and TV workers and a major producers' group.

"This situation is not about Dave Halls. ... It's in no way one person's fault," she said. "It's a bigger conversation about safety on set and what we are trying to achieve with that culture."

A vigil for Hutchins was held Sunday in Southern California, where attendees exchanged tearful hugs and speakers echoed calls for heightened safety standards.

Actor Rosanna Arquette joined many in Hollywood in calling for a move away from using real weapons, whether armed with blanks or bullets.

"I hope this wakes people up. Because there should be no live round anything ever on a movie. We have enough CGI, we have enough — it's absurd," she said. "All of us are shaken to the core in the industry about this."

Actor Ray Liotta agreed with Wright that the checks on firearms are usually extensive.

"They always — that I know of — they check it so you can see," Liotta said. "They give it to the person you're pointing the gun at, they do it to the producer, they show whoever is there that it doesn't work."

Baldwin, who is a producer on "Rust," met with Hutchins' husband and 9-year-old son Saturday at a hotel in Santa Fe where the actor had been staying during filming. Baldwin and Hutchins' husband can be seen embracing in a photo published by the New York Post.

Film

Variety



This aerial photo shows a film set at the Bonanza Creek Ranch in Santa Fe, N.M., Saturday, Oct. 23. Actor Alec Baldwin fired a prop gun on the set of a Western being filmed at the ranch on Thursday, Oct. 21, killing the cinematographer, officials said. (AP)

Film

Move seen as 'a pause rather than an end'

Baldwin movie halted after fatal shooting

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 26, (AP) — Production of the movie that Alec Baldwin was making when he shot and killed a cinematographer last week has been officially halted, but producers of the Western described the move as "a pause rather than an end."

In an email to crew members, the movie's production team confirmed that work on "Rust" has been suspended at least until the investigation is complete. The team said it is working with law enforcement and is conducting its own internal safety review. The production company is also offering grief counseling.

The sheriff's investigation continued Monday. The team said that it could not respond to comments made in news reports or on social media. The email suggested that production could resume at some point.

"Although our hearts are broken, and it is hard to see beyond the horizon, this is, at the moment, a pause rather than an end," the email read.

Moments before the shooting, Baldwin was explaining how he was going to draw the revolver from his holster and where his arm would be positioned, court records show.

The actor had been told that the gun was safe to use for the rehearsal of a scene in which he was supposed to pull out the weapon while sitting in a church pew and point it at the camera, the records said.

Cameraman Reid Russell told a detective that he was unsure whether the weapon was checked before it was handed to Baldwin, and he did not know why the gun was fired.

The movie was not rolling when the gun went off and killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins, Russell told authorities, according to a search warrant affidavit released Sunday.

Authorities said Friday that the assistant director, Dave Halls, had handed the weapon to Baldwin and announced "cold gun," indicating it was safe.

When asked about how Baldwin treated firearms on the set, Russell said the actor was safe, citing a

previous instance when Baldwin made sure a child actor was not near him when a gun was being discharged.

The affidavit released Sunday also included statements by director Joel Souza, who was standing behind Hutchins and was wounded.

It detailed the moments before the shooting and showed that there was turmoil on the set the day of the shooting. Several members of the camera crew walked off the production in a dispute over payment and lodging, Russell said, and he was left with a lot of work to do. Only one camera was available to shoot, and it had to be moved because the light had shifted and there was a shadow.

Safety

Souza said he was focused on how the scene would appear on camera. He said he recalled hearing the phrase "cold gun" before the shooting, the affidavit said.

He said the scene did not call for the use of live rounds. After a lunch break, Souza said he was not sure if the firearm had been checked again. Souza was looking over Hutchins' shoulder when he heard the gunshot, according to the affidavit.

On Sunday, a crew member who worked with Halls on another project said she had raised safety concerns about him in 2019.

Maggie Goll, a prop maker and licensed pyrotechnician, said in a statement that she filed an internal complaint with the executive producers of Hulu's "Into the Dark" series in 2019 over concerns about Halls' behavior on set. Goll said in a phone interview Sunday that Halls disregarded safety protocols for weapons and pyrotechnics and tried to continue filming after the supervising pyrotechnician lost consciousness on set.

Halls has not returned phone calls and email messages seeking comment.

The fatal shooting and previous experiences point to larger safety issues that need to be addressed, Goll

said, adding that crew member safety and well-being were top issues in recent contract negotiations between a union that represents film and TV workers and a major producers' group.

"This situation is not about Dave Halls. ... It's in no way one person's fault," she said. "It's a bigger conversation about safety on set and what we are trying to achieve with that culture."

The film's chief electrician, Serge Svetnov, blamed producers for Hutchins' death in an emotional Facebook post on Sunday. Svetnov said he had worked with Hutchins on multiple films and faulted "negligence and unprofessionalism" among those handling weapons on the set. He said producers hired an inexperienced armorer.

Since the shooting, other production crews have stepped up safety measures.

Jeffrey Wright, who has worked on projects including the James Bond franchise and the upcoming movie "The Batman," was acting with a weapon on the set of "Westworld" when he learned of the shooting Thursday at a New Mexico ranch.

"We were all pretty shocked. And it informed what we did from that moment on," he said in an interview Sunday at the Newport Beach Film Festival.

"I don't recall ever being handed a weapon that was not cleared in front of me — meaning chamber open, barrel shown to me, light flashed inside the barrel to make sure that it's cleared," Wright said. "Clearly that was a mismanaged set."

Actor Ray Liotta agreed with Wright that the checks on firearms are usually extensive.

"They always — that I know of — they check it so you can see," Liotta said. "They give it to the person you're pointing the gun at. They do it to the producer. They show whoever is there that it doesn't work."

Baldwin, who is known for his roles in "30 Rock" and "The Hunt for Red October" and his impression of former President Donald Trump on "Saturday Night Live," has described the killing as a "tragic accident."

Features

ARABIC TIMES

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2021

NEW YORK: Denis Villeneuve's "Dune" debuted with \$40.1 million in ticket sales in its opening weekend in North America, drawing a large number of moviegoers to see the thundering sci-fi epic on the big screen despite it also being available to stream in homes.

Warner Bros launched the Legendary Entertainment production simultaneously in theaters and on HBO Max. When the studio first charted that course for all its 2021 releases due to the pandemic, how the strategy would affect "Dune" — one of the year's most anticipated spectacles — was always one of the biggest question marks. Villeneuve vehemently protested the decision.

"I strongly believe the future of cinema will be on the big screen, no matter what any Wall Street dilettante says," Villeneuve wrote in a lengthy statement to Variety last December.

Warner Bros. has continued to maintain it will return to exclusive theatrical releases next year. For now, the \$165 million-budgeted "Dune" marks the best domestic opening for any of the studio's hybrid releases, surpassing the \$31.7 debut of "Godzilla vs. Kong" in March. Expectations had hovered closer to \$30-35 million for "Dune."

"This was a tremendous result as we're ramping out of the pandemic," said Jeff Goldstein, distribution chief for Warner Bros. "Once we get out of the pandemic, if we have a movie like this, clearly you'd want to go into theaters first. There's no question of that."

Goldstein estimated the film would have debuted with approximately 20% more in box office had it not also been streaming simultaneously. (The studio didn't release streaming figures.) Coming into the weekend, "Dune," which first premiered at the Venice Film Festival in early September, had already grossed \$130 million internationally. This weekend, it debuted with \$21.6 million in China, where Legendary and Wanda handled distribution. Altogether, "Dune" added \$47.4 million internationally for a global cumulative gross of \$220.7 million.

"Dune" is the second big-screen attempt to adapt Frank Herbert's 1965 epic, following David Lynch's much derided 1984 version. Villeneuve's "Dune," which

adapts only the first half of the book, stars **Timothée Chalamet**, **Oscar Isaac**, **Rebecca Ferguson**, **Zendaya** and **Javier Bardem**. Legendary and Warner Bros have yet to confirm a sequel to "Dune," which chronicles a violent power shift on the desert planet Arrakis, where a valuable mineral called "spice" is harvested.



Chalamet



Zendaya

Moviegoers gave "Dune" an A-CinemaScore and critics (83% on Rotten Tomatoes) have praised the operatic sweep and visual craft of Villeneuve's film. It fared particularly well on large-format screens, with IMAX accounting for about \$9 million in ticket sales.

"What I think Warner's strategy has proven is that movie fans, by

and large, will choose the movie theater experience when given the choice — particularly for movies like this," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for data firm Comscore. "This should be a very encouraging sign for theater owners. The allure of the movie theater remains whether a piece of content is available at home or not."

Last week's top film, Universal Pictures' horror sequel "Halloween Kills," also launched well while streaming at home, on Peacock. After debuting with \$50.4 million, "Halloween Kills" slid steeply in its second week with \$14.5 million, good for second place. In two weeks, it has grossed \$73.1 million domestically. (AP)