

Film armorer blames ammo supplier in deadly 'Rust' shooting

Fact checkers say YouTube lets its platform be 'weaponized'

Technology

NEW YORK, Jan 13, (AP) — More than 80 fact checking organizations are calling on YouTube to address what they say is rampant misinformation on the platform.

In a letter to CEO Susan Wojcicki published Wednesday, the groups say the Google-owned video platform is "one of the major conduits of online disinformation and misinformation worldwide."

YouTube's efforts to address the problem, they say, are proving insufficient.

"What we do not see is much effort by YouTube to implement policies that address the problem," the letter says. "On the contrary, YouTube is allowing its platform to be weaponized by unscrupulous actors to manipulate and exploit others, and to organize and fundraise themselves."

The problem, these groups said, is especially rampant in non-English speaking countries and the global south.

The fact checkers are all members of the International Fact Checking Network and include Rappler in the Philippines, Africa Check, Science Feedback in France and dozens of other groups. They lambasted YouTube, saying it frames discussions about disinformation as a "false dichotomy" of deleting or not deleting content.

Displaying fact-checked information is more effective than deleting content, the fact checkers wrote.

They propose that YouTube focuses on providing context and debunks that are "clearly superimposed" on videos. They also called for YouTube to act against repeat offenders and beef up efforts against misinformation in languages other than English.

In a statement, YouTube spokesperson Elena Hernandez said the

company has "invested heavily in policies and products in all countries we operate to connect people to authoritative content, reduce the spread of borderline misinformation, and remove violative videos."

She called fact checking "a crucial tool to help viewers make their own informed decisions," but added that it is "one piece of a much larger puzzle to address the spread of misinformation."

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A new lawsuit accused an ammunition supplier Wednesday of creating dangerous conditions on a movie set where a gun held by actor **Alec Baldwin** killed a cinematographer, by including live ammunition in a box that was supposed to include only dummy rounds.

The lawsuit was filed in New Mexico state district court by **Hannah Gutierrez Reed**, the armorer who oversaw firearms, ammunition and related training on the set of "Rust" along with two colleagues. Cinematographer **Halyna Hutchins** died on Oct. 21 from a gunshot wound during a "Rust" rehearsal at a ranch on the outskirts of Santa Fe in northern New Mexico.

The Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office that is leading an investigation into the cause of the death has said it is too soon to determine whether charges will be filed. Investigators have described "some complacency" in how weapons were handled on set.

The lawsuit from Gutierrez Reed places blame on ammunition supplier **Seth Kenney** and his company PDQ Arm & Prop for introducing live rounds to the set where only blanks and dummies were supposed to be present.

"The introduction of live rounds onto the set, which no one anticipat-

ed, combined with the rushed and chaotic atmosphere, created a perfect storm for a safety incident," the lawsuit states.

Kenney could not be reached for comment. He has said previously that he was sure his company did not send any live rounds to the set of "Rust."

The lawsuit adds new details to the chain of custody for guns and ammunition on the "Rust" set on Oct. 21, describing the appearance of a new box of ammunition — presumed to be harmless dummy rounds with no explosive — shortly before a revolver was loaded and passed to Baldwin.

Baldwin has said he didn't know the gun he was holding contained a live round when it went off while pointed at Hutchins. Investigators are trying to find where the live round came from, searching the Albuquerque premises of PDQ Arm & Prop in December.

The new lawsuit seeks damages at a jury trial on allegations of unfair trade practices, introducing dangerous products, and false labels and misrepresentation.

It states that authorities found on set "a suspected seven live rounds distributed inside the ammo box, on the ammo cart and in the bandoliers."

The lawsuit also accuses Kenney of inserting himself in the investigations and attempting to implicate Gutierrez Reed.

Authorities recovered hundreds of rounds of ammunition at the "Rust" movie set — a mix of blanks, dummy rounds and what appeared to be live rounds.

Authorities have issued a search warrant for Baldwin's phone, seeking text messages, images, videos, calls or any other information related to the movie.

Variety



This image released by Paramount Pictures shows Melissa Barrera in a scene from 'Scream.' (AP)

Film

Berlin Festival taking place in person despite pandemic

'Scream' calls again, with self-mockery

By Jake Coyle

**R**ing, Ring. Twenty-six years after the original, "Scream" calls again. We're now up to the fifth film in the franchise, but the first since 2011's "Scream 4." Enough time has passed that this one, titled simply "Scream," bears no number, no caller ID. That's presumably because this "Scream," which features the original cast and introduces a new generation of callers and stabbers, is sequel and reboot in one. Or, as one character explicitly defines in "Scream," a "requel."

Part of the charm of the original "Scream," a glossy, couldn't-be-more-'90s slasher, was its knowingness. Wes Craven's film, written by Kevin Williamson, made a plaything of genre conventions by having the characters openly discuss horror tropes while also being bludgeoned by them. The bright idea of the new "Scream" is to double down on the meta. Here, the long-running "Stab" movies — the fictional stand-in for the "Scream" franchise — is mocked as cheeseball shlock. In the movie's opening phone call, one that mirrors the call Drew Barrymore received in the original, Tara (Jenna Ortega) — after initially ignoring a strange call on "the landline" — tells the strange voice on the other end (again Roger Jackson, franchise MVP) that she prefers "elevated horror" like "The Babadook," "Hereditary" and "It Follows."

It's easy to chuckle (and agree) with such winking pronouncements. There's a lot of such self-referential jokes in the new "Scream." — and that's about all there is.

What really is the legacy of "Scream"? Most, I suspect, hardly recall the three sequels. The original got a big boost from the personalities of its performers, among them Neve Campbell, Courteney Cox, David Arquette and Matthew Lillard. (All but Lillard return here.) But, like Tara suggests, the "Scream" movies seem like quickly aged relics — particularly when you consider that they were the products of Harvey and Bob Weinstein. If anything, "Scream" persists mostly because Ghostface, its killer's trademark Edward Munch-like mask, remains a Halloween staple.

Filmmakers Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett

(who helmed 2019's "Ready or Not"), working from the script by James Vanderbilt and Guy Busick, don't offer up much reason for a reread beside some kitschy killer nostalgia, more fun with phones and enough self-mocking irony to almost distract from how thin the movie is.

Working in their favor is a solid young cast, including Ortega, Melissa Barrera ("In the Heights") and Jack Quaid (son of Dennis). Tara's near-fatal encounter in the film's first scene draws her estranged sister, Sam (Barrera), to her bedside. Sam arrives with her boyfriend, Richie (Quaid), who professes unfamiliarity with the "Stab" films but proves a quick study at their rules of survival. We are back in Woodsboro, California, the setting for all the "Scream" films and site of the murders said to inspire the "Stab" movies. When Ghostface begins slashing again, the kids appeal to an earlier Woodsboro generation (Arquette, Cox, Campbell) for help.

Remakes

It's a basic format that's been trotted out for plenty of reboots before. But aside from its frequent stabs at self-referential comedy, "Scream" proceeds with a dull repetitiveness. None of the characters get filled in much, and instead are offered up like mere fodder for Ghostface's knife. In the end, "Scream" becomes a commentary on remakes, reboots and "requeles" in a way it doesn't quite intend. It captures the horror being trapped inside a never-ending loop.

"Scream," a Paramount Pictures release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for strong bloody violence, language throughout and some sexual references. Running time: 114 minutes. One and a half stars out of four.

Also:

**BERLIN:** The Berlin International Film Festival is going to take place in person next month despite rising virus numbers in Germany, especially in the capital, organizers said Wednesday.

"We are aware of the challenges posed by the unpredictable course of the pandemic," the festival management said in a statement, adding that strict pandemic

measures would be applied to the 72nd edition of one of the world's most famous film festivals.

"We want the festival to send a signal to the entire film industry, to cinemas and moviegoers, and to culture as a whole — we need cinema, we need culture," Germany's State Minister for Culture and Media, **Claudia Roth**, said.

"Of course, in today's times, this can only be managed with some painful cuts and with constant vigilance," she added. "The pandemic situation is dynamic, and the Berlin Film Festival is adapting to the resulting challenges."

Only people who have already been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 or have recently recovered from an infection will have access to the festival's grounds. In addition, a daily rapid test and masks will be required for everyone attending. Movie theater attendance will be reduced to 50% capacity and all parties and receptions — usually an essential highlight of the film festival — will be canceled.

Last year's film festival was revamped due to the virus and split into two parts — one for the industry and one that screened movies during the summer.

The opening is still scheduled for Feb. 10 and the awards will be given out a little earlier than initially planned, on Feb. 16, the German news agency dpa reported.

The festival's opening film will be "Peter von Kant" by French film director and screenwriter Francois Ozon. The movie is a free interpretation of Rainer Werner Fassbinder's film "The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant."

The film, which stars **Denis Ménochet**, **Isabelle Adjani** and **Hanna Schygulla**, is part of the festival's international competition and will celebrate its world premiere on Feb. 10, the organizers said.

The festival's jury will be headed by American filmmaker **M. Night Shyamalan**, and French actress **Isabelle Huppert** will be awarded an Honorary Golden Bear for her lifetime achievement.

"Huppert is one of the most versatile actors in the world and has played an impressive range of characters in almost 150 cinema and television productions," the festival management said. (AP)

**LOS ANGELES:** Jason Momoa and wife **Lisa Bonet** have ended their 16-year relationship.

A joint statement posted on the "Aquaman" star's Instagram page Wednesday that he and his wife were parting ways.

"We have all felt the squeeze and changes of these transformational times... A revolution is unfolding (tide) and our family is of no exception," the post said, adding that they were announcing the split so "as we go about our lives we may do so with dignity and honesty."

Momoa, 42, and Bonet, 54, met and started dating in 2005 and officially married in late 2017. They have a son and daughter together.

Bonet, who rose to fame playing one of **Bill Cosby**'s daughters on "The Cosby Show" and its spinoff, "A Different World," was previously married to rocker **Lenny Kravitz**. (AP)

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**LOS ANGELES:** Megan Fox and **Machine Gun Kelly** are engaged.

The actor and rapper have decided to legalize their dramatically eccentric coupling, according to Instagram videos that each posted Wednesday.

Fox shared video of Kelly taking a knee at the top of a flight of outdoor stairs under the tree where the two say they fell in love in July of 2020.

"Somehow a year and a half later, having walked through hell together, and having laughed more than I ever imagined possible, he asked me to marry him," Fox wrote in the post. "And just as in every lifetime before this one, and in every lifetime that will follow it, I said yes."

An Instagram video from Kelly shows Fox wearing the two merged rings he had made for the occasion, with a diamond and an emerald that form "the obscure heart that is our love."

It's the second marriage for Fox, the 35-year-old star of the "Transformers" films. She was married to actor **Brian Austin Green** from 2010 to 2021. The two have three sons together.

It's the first marriage for the 31-year-old Kelly, who has a daughter from a previous relationship. (AP)

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**NEW YORK:** Judge **Steve Harvey**? At least for its first week, having the comic serve as a reality show

arbitrator seems like an inspired idea.

His show's premiere was the most-watched non-football program on ABC last week, its audience of 5.2 million people nearly two million more than a season-opening episode of the much better known "The Bachelor," the Nielsen company said.

Just before the debut, the Daily Beast's **Kyndall Cunningham** pre-



Fox



Momoa

dicted "Judge Steve Harvey" would leave viewers laughing and in awe of the host's branding capabilities.

"Despite the innate absurdity of the project — mainly in that Harvey is not a judge nor has any legal experience — his entry into the ecosystem of network court shows is an undeniably astute move," Cunningham wrote.

He arbitrates disputes, much like any TV judge, but his show lacks the self-serious demeanor of other shows that try to replicate a real-life courtroom, she said.

Despite the good vibes, Harvey couldn't much help the well-reviewed sitcom, "Abbott Elementary," that premiered in the next time slot last week to an

audience of 3.45 million people, Nielsen said.

CBS was the most popular network in prime time last week, averaging 5.5 million viewers. NBC had 5.2 million, ABC had 4.8 million, Fox had 3.3 million, Univision had 1.7 million, Ion Television had 1.04 million and Telemundo had 950,000. (AP)

Features

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