

Renowned Actress, Wendy Wilkins, Examines Alec Baldwin's On-Set Firearms Accident and How Sets Should be in the Future

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, November 17, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Before pursuing my career fully as an actress, I was a real-life cop on the streets. My training consisted of six months in the Police Academy and then two years' probation on the streets. The more junior you are, the more you see. You are called to every type of job, murders, robberies, domestic violence, and often you are the first police presence and then you call in the detectives if it is a serious crime. You assist with preserving the crime scene etc.

As part of my duties, I carried a Smith & Wesson 38 whenever I was on duty. I don't particularly like guns but felt it was necessary to 'carry' as a cop. Wilkins a best-selling short memoir, "Sex, Love & Cops", available at Amazon, about her young years as a cop on the streets.



Wendy Wilkins on the set of "Iron Man", 2008

My first role I ever booked as an actress was the lead of a short film, I was a "Mafiosa Style Boss /Real estate agent". We had an armory expert on set (he was an ex-cop actually, with a ton of experience). I remember very carefully checking the firearms before they were handed to us and we carefully checked also. The final scene involved me shooting at someone and them shooting at me and "I get shot in the chest". I was wearing a squib, which is a remote-control tiny explosion where "blood" spurts out as I am "shot". There were tiny shrapnel pieces in the squib that was taped to my chest and I recall that on that day I got a tiny little burn on my leg, after the explosion from one of the sparks. I was quite shocked they used real ammunition even in these tiny quantities.

I am about to direct my first feature locally, where there will be firearms and a shootout scene, an ode to the classic movie "Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid", but we will NOT be using any real firearms on set. Why? Having been a real-life cop on the streets and now on a variety of film sets, from small to huge scale such as "The Lady in Red" in the first Ironman movie to no budget student films, I do not think live rounds and live guns should ever be used on a film set. It is an

unnecessary risk and creatively as artists we can and should be able to "endow" a disabled or fake firearm as to be "real". Part of our job is to create a feel of "real circumstances" in "imaginary circumstances".

Through performance, sound effects, special effects and creative editing, I think it is possible to create the necessary feel to tell the story and move your audience. For me personally, watching a film or tv show as an audience member the anticipation of danger, death, violence and the imagination can be far worse than actually "seeing the violence occur on screen". I particularly like how Quentin Tarantino often does this in his films. Often, he stops just short in the scene of the actual event.

As an actress that has worked on all types of film sets, I have experienced many times when "accidents happen" and I've had my share of minor injuries, certainly not anywhere near as dangerous as my time as a cop of course. My first week out of the Police Academy I was punched in the face by a drunk prostitute as we were attempting to arrest her, for amongst other things, outstanding warrants. Most of the time I feel very 'looked after and protected' on set. Now that I am going to be directing also, looking after the cast and crew is paramount to me, not just safety wise but for people to enjoy their working environment.



Wendy Wilkins

In light of the recent tragic death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins, this should be a time to honor her and ban live guns and ammunition on film sets in the future. I feel for Alec Baldwin in this tragic accident and he will have to live with this. I do not agree with his idea to have police on film sets. Human error could still occur and being a real ex-cop, many cops are not even that well trained in firearms anyway, I believe, as mentioned, take away the weapons and make the sets safer that way. Also, adding another member on set to the filmmaking process, especially for low budget filmmakers is starting to make this creative art more cost prohibitive and not necessarily safer.

As a Hollywood based SAG/AFTRA actress there is currently a lot of discussion here in the industry about banning guns and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson publicly stated he will no longer allow real guns on his sets. I hope this happens soon. The tragic loss of this cinematographer, a female trailblazer, cannot be in vain. We must learn from this so that it doesn't occur again. At the end of the day, we are creating entertainment, make believe, and there should not be this type of danger.

There are so many developments in the creative arts, telling stories, modern technology that

movies and tv series can be made without using real guns. Challenges in the creative arena often make for a better result and when it comes to preventing a loss of life that is surely a reason to put this in place. As I embark on directing my first feature this tragic event made me think of some more creative ways to film the "shoot out scenes" also.

[Wendy Wilkins](#)

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