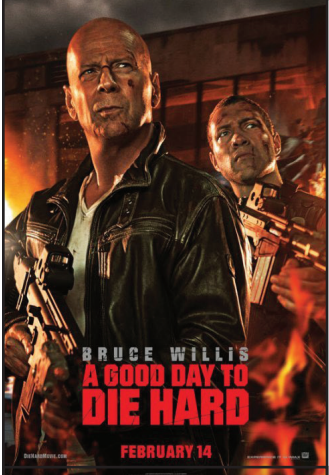




## Movies change how we think about guns

How Hollywood portrays them can have an effect on how we think about firearms

by MacClement Gunthrie



When I watched the Korean zombie thriller “Train to Busan,” what was most shocking to me was the relative absence of guns.

In the two hour movie, there is at most two minutes with guns in a frame. American movies on the same topic, such as “World War Z” and “I am Legend,” have guns in almost every scene.

Following the Las Vegas shooting, a Media Research Center press release noted “in just four of the biggest movies showing around the country at this very moment — “Kingsman: Golden Circle,” “American Assassin,” “It,” and “Mother!” — there are no less than 212 incidents of gun violence.”

“[Guns] are glorified and portrayed as being very cool,” said junior Greyson Etheredge. He said they are used in movies to make characters appear tougher.

The frequency and type of gun violence that appears in movies is “unrealistic,” said freshman Maya Crystal. “There’s unnecessary violence” that permeates the American film industry, she said.

Organizations like Common Sense media have said that in the wake of events like Sandy Hook and Las Vegas, “the nation’s attention has turned once again to the role that violent media may or may not play in such horrible national tragedies.”

According to Ege Bosut of Movie Pilot, a critic site, guns are often shown being used improperly in an unsafe manner. “Action movies are generally people cluelessly swinging around guns spraying evil henchmen one bullet at a time” he explained.

The National Rifle Association (NRA) has similarly condemned what they consider reckless portrayal of firearms in Hollywood. The organization stressed that “many of Hollywood’s top actors don’t have military experience and lack proper gun-handling skills.” They added “some of their errors are comical, and others display behavior that is downright dangerous.”

“Sometime action movies use guns but don’t show the real consequences” said senior Alex Kulp. Laughing, he stated “if you have [Dwayne] The Rock [Johnson] shooting a machine gun at bad guys, you don’t see how dangerous guns are.”

There have been many attempts in the past to limit people’s — in particular children’s — exposure to violent media. However, when the state of California attempted to regulate video games more similarly to alcohol or cigarettes, the Supreme Court overturned this law in the case of Brown v. Entertainment Merchants Association.

The late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia wrote in the majority opinion “under our Constitution, esthetic and moral judgments about art and literature ... are for the individual to make, not for the Government to decree, even with the mandate or approval of a majority.”

Numerous studies have failed to find a link between violent movies or video games to violent tendencies in real life.

“The evidence just isn’t there” for a connection between violence in media and society said Christopher Ferguson of Stetson University in an interview with CBS News. His study, published in the Journal of Communication in 2014, found “no clear relationship between the increasingly graphic nature of movies and games and the frequency of societal violence from the early 20th century to today.”

Kulp explained that he feels that the presence of guns in movies is prominent. “As long as a message gets across that using weapons in movies is not the same as using them in real life — as long as viewers understand that — then the number isn’t too high.”

He continued “not enough viewers understand that, because we idolize guns and how they make people look cool, but guns rarely bring about any good to the normal individual.”

