

In Japan, where the crime rate is very low and the gun crime rate practically nonexistent, the only people who have guns are the Yakusa (the Japanese Mafia) and they only shoot each other if someone gets out of line. Rarely does a stray bullet hit someone other than the intended target. Other countries with prohibited gun ownership have much lower gun death rate statistics.

Consider this scenario somewhere in the U.S:

You just went out after hours to relax and unwind and perhaps had a glass of wine for what you feel is to be a special evening. You go home afterwards and arrive at about 10:30 PM. You are sitting at your study desk reading and at about 11:30 PM you hear a rustling sound outside of your patio window and notice a person. Panicking, since you live in a rural area where there are usually no people around -- especially in the back lawn of your residence -- you reach for your military rifle capable of firing many rounds of bullets and turn to the window and yell "Freeze" to the person who continues moving. You see another person behind him standing in the darkness. Frightened, you fire your gun at the first person who then falls and then at the other person, who also falls. Turning around you see a face through the translucent glass, as if looking to see what had just happened. All occurring within fractions of seconds, you shoot directly at his face and chest and then at yet another person, who you noticed behind him, both of whom fall to the ground. Turning around quickly you see another person run by the open patio door. You shoot at that person who falls. Beyond him you see three people running away, out towards the woods in the darkness of night, lit only by the half moon. You shoot at them hearing one of them say something like "Please, don't shoot" but you shoot in the passion of the moment and strike one in the back and the others in the back of their heads. They all three, at different distances, drop like exterminated flies after being hit. Spinning around you see four shorter people running around the corner of the house. You quickly crouch in military position and shoot at each of them and they all fall one by one after being shot. Stunned by what has just occurred, you survey the carnage in incredulity. But this is no video game; this is real. You look at the person who was shot in the face through the window. Where the bullet had struck the forehead above the eyes is a hole where the skull had caved in leaving a hollowed out cavern like a silent, yawning mouth in the middle of the forehead. The bullet had exploded in the brain and pushed the right eye out of its socket and the eye is now hanging by a single cord as blood continues to ooze from all the orifices of the head. All of this is occurring within fractions of seconds yet it all seems to be moving in slow motion as you absorb every detail of the gory scene. As you are scanning the scene, one of the people who was shot by the patio is lying face down and slowly raises his head. A horrible chill of terror fills your being as your eyes meet his and you recognize the face of your best friend who you have known since the second grade. "Oh My God!" you scream as you run over to him. You crouch down to lift his head knowing that any attempt to rectify the situation at this point is pointless. As you are holding his head in stunned silence you hear him say, "We were just trying to" he pauses as he gasps for breath, then continues: "surprise you on your birthday" and then his head drops after taking his last breath. In another few minutes, at midnight, the beginning of a new day will be your birthday. Yes, surprise you they did! Looking around in disbelief, amongst the massacred bodies you see several of your school buddies. In the lawn you see Mary, your prom date and the Homecoming Sweetheart. Your mind flashes back to the first grade when you first knew her and when all of the children used to tease Mary by singing "Mary Had a Little Lamb" to her. What was once a pleasant memory will now be forever replaced by a haunting image of terror. Now, you look up toward the hill at the three who were shot while running away towards the woods and wonder what significant others you mowed down as if they were only insect-minded members of the faceless masses. You run over to the four who were running around the corner of the building and look into the faces of the four people and you see immediately that they are children in costume, one with a painted red clown smile — not only is the next day your birthday but tonight is Halloween Eve-- as your birthday is November 1! The dark eyes and the black bangs of the foreheads the children make it unmistakable that these are Asian children. Could these four once adorable children be the Asian visitors you read about in the newspaper who were visiting America to experience American culture? Your heart sinks and your stomach sickens at the thought. Well, experience it they did. You run back over to your best friend who you have just slain. As you bend down to lift and hold the head of your buddy, you see the approaching blinking blue lights of the cars of the police who were probably notified by the neighbors after hearing the commotion. Realizing that, even if you are able to utter any sound after the devastating effects of such a trauma, trying to justify such an incident would be impossible. You realize that your days of freedom are over and your days of

living are probably few. Holding the head of your buddy and as the police approach you begin sobbing like a baby and crying, "My God! What have I done?" as you wait in the pool of blood you have created.

The above surreal and hyperbolic story is only intended to express a feeling accompanying accidental gun death, say of people looking for a party, asking directions, or Halloween trick or treating.

Gun deaths can include: murder, suicide (the highest percentage), and accidental death including children playing with guns as if they are toys, in addition to the few as a result of self defense. There was even a recent occurrence of a six-year-old boy fatally shooting a six-year-old girl classmate in a fit of anger. So the issue of handgun ownership and usage is a complex one with its arguments in shades of gray and not in clear cut black and white.

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