

## Guns

Peg Tittle

Funny thing about guns. They have a tendency to kill people. Usually when injury would have sufficed. What to do. Hm. Tough one. I know! Let's replace all lethal bullet guns with non-lethal stun guns. Something that temporarily disables or immobilizes the person, that causes an hour of paralysis or unconsciousness. Or severe nausea. Or diarrhoea.

Nah, that's too humane. It's okay for elephants, but for people?

Or probably, more importantly, it's too expensive. I would guess that a tranquillizer dart costs more than a bullet. But maybe only because of supply and demand. And surely if we add in the lawsuits for accidental injury and death, the price of bullets increases substantially. (We won't add in the loss of limb or life because apparently that doesn't count for much--otherwise we wouldn't have so many bullet guns in the first place.)

Or well, it wouldn't work. What if you missed, what if, in a shoot-out, the police shot some innocent bystanders instead of the bad guys? They'd be the ones lying there unconscious. Well gee. Some might think better that than lying there dead.

The police might even think that. Even for the bad guys. In fact, I can't think of any police work situation in which instant and total, though temporary, disability wouldn't serve the purpose. (Reluctant cops might want to take a minute here to review that purpose.) Permanent injury and death is simply unnecessary. (Well, except for the really bad guys. That's why we'd bring back the death penalty right after we ban all the bullet guns.)

And as for non-police situations, well, again, a stun gun would be sufficient: if attacked, one could just fire the thing and then watch one's assailant collapse; an hour should be long enough to escape and arrange for police to be present when he or she regains consciousness. (And if not, well, let's make it for two hours. We surely have the technology--the elephants, remember?)

As for illegitimate uses, well, first, any adult who without just cause uses a stun gun would probably have done the same with a bullet gun. Second, such an idiot could safely assume that his or her victim would return fire later. Probably on more than one well-timed occasion.

What if said victim didn't have a stun gun with which to return fire? Well, why wouldn't he or she? I mean, why not allow every adult to own one? Most men already have the ability to knock someone unconscious for an hour. So do most women, but they tend to be crippled by socialization. This would just even things out.

But it would make fighting so easy, surely violence would triple overnight. Hm. One, to judge by young male behaviour, fighting is already pretty easy. Two, my guess is that a fight in which one of the guys goes unconscious immediately, and stays that way for an hour--or starts vomiting copiously or suddenly gets severe diarrhoea--I don't think that's going to be a very fun fight. So I don't think stun guns will detract from the popularity of fists, knives, or baseball bats.