

BANG BANG

Peg Tittle

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CAST:

Malik Mendis
Chandrika Mendis
Karen Watson
Dave Watson
Billy Watson, young boy
Bobby Watson, young boy
Luce, reporter
James, camera person
Speaker #1 (off-stage, perhaps pre-recorded)
Speaker #2 (off-stage, perhaps pre-recorded)
Mr. Ingersoll, lawyer
Ms. O'Neill, lawyer
Judge
Jury members
Court extras, including media
Mr. Dharmadassa
Dr. McArthur

SETS:

Mendis' kitchen
Watson's living room
Watson's yard, bordering on sidewalk
News van, interior
Watson's kitchen
Courtroom
Courthouse, exterior

Scene 1:

Mendis' kitchen.

MALIK and CHANDRIKA MENDIS, a Sri Lankan couple in their 50s who came to the States five years ago, are having a comfortable breakfast on a Saturday morning in their kitchen, which is typically middle-class and neatly kept. He is dressed casually and reading a newspaper; she is still in her robe, fussing with making coffee and toast. The RADIO is on in the background.

Chandrika sets the table with cups, plates, and cutlery, then coffee, cream, sugar, toast, and jam. She then sits opposite Malik.

MALIK: So what do you have planned for today?

CHANDRIKA: Oh, a bit of cleaning, maybe a bit of gardening, it's such a sunny day.

MALIK: And more sun tomorrow, they're saying.

Beat.

CHANDRIKA: You remember Chandra is coming for dinner today? To introduce her latest beau?

MALIK: Yes. I remember.

CHANDRIKA: I thought I'd make some brownies for dessert.

MALIK: She's not a little girl anymore.

CHANDRIKA: No. But she still likes her chocolate.

He nods, with seeming disinterest.

CHANDRIKA: And what about you?

MALIK: Well, they said the car would be ready at eleven. I'll walk over to the garage and get it. Then I thought I'd pick up a bottle of wine for tonight's dinner.

Beat.

MALIK: And then go to the bakery and get some of those chocolate cream things she's so fond of.

He grins at Chandrika as she bursts out laughing. They sit a while longer, finishing their coffee.

Scene 2:

Watson's living room.

KAREN WATSON, a young mother and housewife, is vacuuming the living room. The room is clearly a mess. Her husband, DAVE, is sprawled on the couch, watching 'the game' on tv. He is a little annoyed when she repeatedly blocks his view, and he leans around her to continue watching. Two boys, BILLY and BOBBY, both aged around eight, are sprawled on the floor playing some sort of video game. After nudging them a few times with the vacuum cleaner, to no avail, she turns it off. It becomes apparent that what the boys are playing is a loud and violent game.

KAREN: Hey, why don't you two go outside and play for a bit? Fresh air'll do you good.

BILLY: Do we have to?

Bobby has continued to play, ignoring Karen.

KAREN: Yes, you have to. I'd like to clean up this room a bit, if you don't mind.

The boys stop playing the game, but don't put anything away. They grab a couple toy guns, one from a chair and the other from the floor, then chase each other out of the room. Karen turns on the vacuum cleaner and resumes, but then turns it off again as it's clear she has to pick up before she can vacuum. She sighs, and begins to pick up and put away.

DAVE: (getting up) I'm going to take the car to the carwash.

Karen is too tired to respond; she just nods, perhaps wondering why he can take the car to the carwash instead of washing it himself, but she can't call a housecleaning service instead of...

Scene 3:

Watson's yard.

Billy and Bobby are racing around, screaming, playing "Cops and Robbers" or some such 'chase and shoot' game. They wear ski masks or have tied kerchiefs around the lower half of their faces. They make suitable sound effects when they shoot, they fall down dramatically when they're hit, and so on.

Malik appears, walking along the sidewalk on his way to the garage. Bobby jumps out from behind a hedge onto the sidewalk, yelling and pointing his gun at Mr. Mendis. Malik reacts quickly, pulling a gun from his pocket and shooting the boy.

Bobby's toy gun falls out of his hand and then he too falls.

Billy stands, stunned, about ten feet behind them on their yard, his gun still in his hand, hanging limply at his side.

Malik also stands stunned, his gun also still in his hand, also now hanging at this side.

Scene 4:

Mendis' living room.

Chandrika is being interviewed in her living room for a local television news program. LUCE, a young woman in her twenties, is doing the interview; JAMES, a young man in his twenties, is operating the camera.

LUCE: So the first question everybody's probably asking is 'Why was your husband carrying a gun?'

Chandrika is silent for a moment, processing this.

CHANDRIKA: (disbelief then anger) That's the first question? Why was my husband carrying a gun?

Luce looks a little uncomfortable, perhaps a little confused.

CHANDRIKA: Why don't they ask why was the boy carrying a gun?

LUCE: It was a toy gun.

CHANDRIKA: And my husband was to know this because ... ?

LUCE: Well ... it was a child.

CHANDRIKA: In my country, children carry guns. They are — soldiers. They are taught to use a gun almost before they can hold one.

LUCE: But you're in this country now —

CHANDRIKA: Yes. (misunderstanding) At least back home you knew who your enemies were. It was political. But here — (She waves at the television.) It's not even personal. People are all the time shooting each other. At random. And you ask why was my husband carrying a gun.

LUCE: But that's just tv. It's not real.

Beat.

CHANDRIKA: You don't show what's real on your news programs?

LUCE: Yes, of course we do. I thought —

CHANDRIKA: (with disdain at the insult) I was talking about your news programs.

LUCE: Well, yes, we do show what's real. But — (She glances at James for help.) We show — if it's happening every day, it's not news. So what we show, it's not like that all the time.

Beat.

LUCE: (trying again) Why would your husband do such a thing? Shoot a child?

Chandrika finds her stupidity, or her suggestion, incredible.

CHANDRIKA: Because he thought the boy's gun was real!

Beat.

CHANDRIKA: What was the boy thinking, pointing a gun at Malik?

LUCE: Well, he was just a boy.

CHANDRIKA: Yes, you're right. (misunderstanding again) What were his parents thinking letting him run around like that?

Scene 5:

News van, interior.

Luce and James have returned to their van and just sit there processing the interview they just had. It did not go well.

LUCE: She's right, you know. That's what we show. All the time.

JAMES: But it's not representative. Like you said. We show what's out of the ordinary, what's new. That's why it's called 'the news.'

LUCE: People might know that, with their head — but the overall impression, psychologically? They come away with the impression that it's all the time, all over the place. Just like she said.

Beat.

LUCE: And we always, we only, show the bad stuff. The shooting, the killing, the crimes. The conflict.

JAMES: (he shrugs) Peace isn't exciting. People living in harmony, getting along — that's boring.

LUCE: Yeah. And what does that say about us?

There is a pause as James doesn't voice the expected answer.

JAMES: That we watch tv for excitement?

LUCE: (surprising James by not being surprised at this answer) Yeah, and maybe that's the problem.

JAMES: We shouldn't watch tv for excitement?

LUCE: We shouldn't watch tv for the news.

Scene 6:

Watson's living room.

Karen leads Luce and James into the room. Billy is watching a movie, with lots of violent noises, including gunshots.

KAREN: Turn that off.

BILLY: No.

Karen glares at Billy, then she walks to the television and turns it off. Billy punches her in the thigh and stomps out of the room.

Luce and James give each other a wide-eyed look, as they efficiently set up for the interview. Karen catches the look or feels embarrassed without it.

KAREN: He's having a hard time of it.

LUCE: I imagine you are too. I'm sorry for your loss.

Karen nods.

LUCE: Thank you for agreeing to this interview.

Karen just nods again. She's not particularly enthusiastic, but ...

LUCE: (starting the interview) Is there anything in particular you want to say?

KAREN: Well — I guess I want to say that that man shouldn't have been carrying a gun. I mean, why would he need one? In this neighborhood?

LUCE: But your son had a gun.

Karen looks at Luce as if she's an idiot.

KAREN: It was a toy gun.

LUCE: Yes, but obviously Mr. Mendis wouldn't have known that. Couldn't have known that.

Karen doesn't have anything to say to that. Dave walks in during the next bit.

LUCE: Some might say that we shouldn't be letting our children play with toy guns —

DAVE: What, you want them to play with dolls instead? And grow up to be fairies?

LUCE stares at him. Rather unprofessionally.

DAVE: There's nothin' wrong with toy guns. Hell, my daddy even took me hunting when I was a kid and it never did me no harm.

Karen looks at him as if to say 'Oh yeah?' Dave sees the look. Clearly they've had this discussion. And are about to have it again.

DAVE: Learned some important lessons.

KAREN: Oh yeah? Like what?

DAVE: Like killing's a part of life. (not seeing the irony of what he's saying) We can't all live in a dollhouse and bake cakes all day.

Karen snorts. Like that's what she does.

DAVE: Out in the real world, it's kill or be killed.

Beat. Karen is speechless.

LUCE: Apparently Mr. Mendis agrees with you.

Scene 7:

News van, interior.

Luce and James have returned to their van again, and again process the interview they just had.

JAMES: I played cops and robbers when I was a kid.

LUCE: So did I. Cowboys and Indians. Had a cute little red skirt and a little red cowboy hat. And two guns. In a red holster.

JAMES: And it was fun, damn it!

LUCE: Yeah.

Beat.

JAMES: And neither of us grew up to be a sociopathic killer.

LUCE: Yeah. But maybe we grew up to be a little desensitized to it all. I mean, we accept it. Seeing kids make-believe shooting each other. So much so that we wouldn't do what Mendis did. React the way he did.

JAMES: I dunno. I might've, if I'd had a gun on me. Reflex. And because I've seen it done so often. On tv.

Luce nods.

LUCE: We're censoring the wrong stuff.

JAMES: What do you mean?

LUCE: On tv. I'd rather see two men touch each other than kill each other. But that's considered obscene.

JAMES: Yeah.

LUCE: All that macho crap — The anger, the taking offense, the fighting — I've been doing research, for another story, and I swear 99% of the articles in biology journals are about predation or reproduction. What is it with you guys?

James reacts in a 'Hey, not me!' way.

LUCE: You make everything — okay, not you — but men in general. Men like Dave. And all those scientists. Everything's about fighting or fucking. If the nest is soft and warm, it's not

because it's nice and snuggly, it's because it "increases reproductive success." And when animals play? It's not just for fun, no, it's either to practice predator behavior — which means you get to eat, which also increases reproductive success — or it's to practice fighting. Which increases "reproductive access". "Reproductive *access*." (She snorts with disgust.)

JAMES: So it's not all about fighting and fucking. (grins) It's all about just fucking.

LUCE: Is it? Is life, for men, all about fucking?

JAMES: (a bit ruefully) Not my life.

LUCE: I wonder what research would look like if most of the scientists were female.

Beat.

LUCE: And if most of the tv producers were female ...

Scene 8:

Watson's kitchen.

Karen is in the kitchen, doing whatever. The radio is on. Billy wanders in.

BILLY: Is Bobby a hero?

KAREN: What?

BILLY: The kids at school, they say Bobby's a hero. 'Cuz he got shot.

Karen is flabbergasted.

KAREN: No. No. What makes you a hero is doing something heroic. If he'd gotten shot because he was protecting you, then he'd be a hero.

BILLY: So what is he?

Karen can't bear to say it. 'He's dead.' She turns her attention back to her task. Billy wanders out of the kitchen.

Karen's attention is caught by what's on the radio.

SPEAKER #1: Well, over 90% of all violence is done by men. And my guess is that over 90% of all violent toys are played with by boys.

SPEAKER #2: So are you saying the one causes the other? Playing with violent toys as children leads to violent acts as adults?

SPEAKER #1: Perhaps. Along with all the other ways we allow, even encourage, immaturity in men. After all, men are also responsible for over 90% of the littering.

SPEAKER #2: You're suggesting violence is an immature response.

SPEAKER #1: Often. Yes, I think it is. But it may not be that playing with violent toys leads to adult violence. It could be that both are caused by something else. Maybe males have some fatal flaw, maybe there's something in their biology that makes them enjoy violence.

SPEAKER #2: Wow. Well, if that's the case — what's the solution?

SPEAKER #1: You tell me.

Scene 9:

Courtroom.

Malik, Chandrika, Karen, Dave, Luce, and James are present. Also present are MR. INGERSOLL, Malik's lawyer, and MS. O'NEILL, prosecutor. JUDGE and JURY and various other courtroom personnel also present. Chandrika is on the stand.

MR. INGERSOLL: Ms. Mendis, you are married to Malik Mendis, are you not?

CHANDRIKA: Yes. We have been married for thirty years.

MR. INGERSOLL: So you know him pretty well.

CHANDRIKA: I think so, yes.

MR. INGERSOLL: Would you say he is a violent man? A man with violent tendencies?

CHANDRIKA: No, not at all. In fact, that's why we left Sri Lanka.

MR. INGERSOLL: Could you elaborate upon that please?

CHANDRIKA: Well, as you should know, there is a civil war in Sri Lanka. There is much shooting, much killing.

MR. INGERSOLL: And the people who do this shooting, this killing — what can you tell me about them?

Chandrika is unsure of how to respond.

MR. INGERSOLL: Sorry, let me be more specific. Are they professional soldiers, trained men and women —

CHANDRIKA: Yes, of course. But there are also many children. They are forced into the army. They are taught to use a gun. They are told that if they do not shoot, they will be shot. It is awful. As I said, that is why we left.

MR. INGERSOLL: Thank you.

Mr. Ingersoll takes his seat. Ms. O'Neill rises to question Chandrika.

MS. O'NEILL: Ms. Mendis, you say you have been married to Mr. Mendis for thirty years.

CHANDRIKA: Yes.

MS. O'NEILL: You must love him very much.

CHANDRIKA: Yes, of course. (She smiles at Malik.)

MS. O'NEILL: So you would say anything to keep him from going to prison.

CHANDRIKA: Well — I — I suppose, perhaps, but what I have said here is true.

MS. O'NEILL: Thank you.

Ms. O'Neill returns to her seat; Chandrika leaves the stand.

MR. INGERSOLL: (rising) May I call to the stand, Mr. Dharmadassa.

MR. DHARMADASSA, a Sri Lankan man, takes the stand.

COURT CLERK: "Do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?"

MR. DHARMADASSA: Yes.

MR. INGERSOLL: Mr. Dharmadassa, you are originally from Sri Lanka?

MR. DHARMADASSA: Yes, I emigrated just two years ago.

MR. INGERSOLL: And do you know, by any chance, Malik or Chandrika Mendis?

MR. DHARMADASSA: No. I'm afraid I do not.

MR. INGERSOLL: Very good. Now when you were living in Sri Lanka, there was a civil war going on?

MR. DHARMADASSA: Yes. It had been going on for quite some time. It goes on still.

MR. INGERSOLL: And the soldiers fighting that war. Could you describe them? For example, are they men, women, or children?

MR. DHARMADASSA: Mostly men. And some children. In some areas, many children.

MR. INGERSOLL: Now, when you say children, what age are you talking about?

MR. DHARMADASSA: Well, I don't know for sure.

MR. INGERSOLL: Under eighteen?

MR. DHARMADASSA: Oh surely.

MR. INGERSOLL: Under fifteen?

MR. DHARMADASSA: Many, yes.

MR. INGERSOLL: Under twelve?

MR. DHARMADASSA: Some, yes. I myself have seen some as young as ten.

MR. INGERSOLL: Thank you.

MS. O'NEILL: (standing) No questions, your Honor.

MR. INGERSOLL: May I call to the stand, Malik Mendis.

Malik takes the stand.

COURT CLERK: "Do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?"

MALIK: Yes.

MR. INGERSOLL: Mr. Mendis, could you please tell us what happened on the morning in question.

MALIK: I was on my way to the garage —

MR. INGERSOLL: You were walking?

MALIK: Yes, sorry. I was walking on the sidewalk, along the street, Pine Street. That is my neighborhood. I was on my way to the garage. Benny's Garage. My car was there and it was ready to be picked up.

MR. INGERSOLL: Do you remember what day it was?

MALIK: Saturday. Late morning.

MR. INGERSOLL: Thank you. And then what happened. As you were walking along on the sidewalk in your neighborhood.

MALIK: Well, suddenly this, this boy, he jumps out. He is pointing a gun at me. I reacted.

MR. INGERSOLL: And when you say you reacted, you mean —

MALIK: I shot him. (to the parents, with sincere remorse) I am so sorry.

Beat.

MALIK: I thought he was going to shoot me.

Mr. Ingersoll nods, then takes his seat. Ms. O'Neill stands up to question Malik.

MS. O'NEILL: Do you always take a gun with you when you walk along the sidewalk in your neighborhood?

MALIK: Yes, it is for protection.

MS. O'NEILL: Your neighborhood is a particularly bad neighborhood? There is a lot of shooting there?

MALIK: Well, no, but I see on tv all the time how people here, well, sometimes it seems worse than in Sri Lanka. People shooting — there is no war going on here, I do not understand it.

MS. O'NEILL: But Mr. Mendis, surely you knew the boy was playing.

MALIK: No, I did not. I am sorry.

He appeals to the parents once again.

MALIK: I was surprised. I did not expect it. It was a beautiful Saturday morning. I was thinking about my car — and my daughter who was coming to dinner that night, with her new beau. And the boy had on — his face was covered — like a mask, like you see on tv when people rob a bank. I thought — well as Chandrika said, in my country, young boys have real guns. I thought he was pointing a real gun at me.

MR. INGERSOLL: If it please the court, I'd like to introduce Exhibit A.

He walks to the exhibit table, which is strewn with guns.

MR. INGERSOLL: Actually, exhibits A through K. Let me see ... (pretending to choose) This one —

He picks up a gun, and turns, pointing it at the jury. Several jurors flinch, then recover, a little embarrassed.

MR. INGERSOLL: (he clearly planned that) I'm sorry.

Beat.

MR. INGERSOLL: And this is a toy gun.

MS. O'NEILL: Objection, your Honor.

The judge raises her eyebrow as if to ask 'On what grounds?'

MS. O'NEILL: The law requires toy guns to be marked with an orange streak so they're distinguishable from the real thing by anyone who cares to look carefully. The gun in Mr. Ingersoll's hand has black tape wrapped around, presumably, the orange markings. Mr. Ingersoll has obviously tampered with —

MR. INGERSOLL: Not only is this a toy gun, this is Bobby's toy gun. I suspect it was he who did the tampering. After all, no self-respecting eight-year-old would be caught dead playing with an orange gun.

Beat.

MR. INGERSOLL: Regardless, am I to understand that you would have my client, indeed anyone who is unfortunate enough to have a gun pointed at him or her, to ask "Excuse me, is that a real gun or a toy gun?" (He turns to the jury.) Then, I suppose, one really must ask "And is it loaded or not?" And then, surely, "And do you really intend to shoot me or are you just bluffing?" By which time, if it had been real, and loaded, and pointed with full intent, my client, or indeed anyone, would be dead!

Mr. Ingersoll takes his seat; the Judge nods permission for Malik to leave the stand.

MS. O'NEILL: I call Dr. McArthur to the stand.

DR. MCARTHUR takes the stand.

COURT CLERK: "Do you solemnly affirm that the evidence you shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?"

DR. MCARTHUR: I do, yes.

MS. O'NEILL: Dr. McArthur, would you state your profession and accreditation, please.

DR. MCARTHUR: I have a Ph.D. in Psychology, and I am a social psychologist.

MS. O'NEILL: Thank you. Would you say, in your expert opinion, that it is normal for children to play aggressive games such as "Cowboys and Indians" or "Cops and Robbers."

DR. MCARTHUR: Yes, that is normal.

MS. O'NEILL: And since it is normal, would you say that it is reasonably expected?

DR. MCARTHUR: (shrugging at the odd question) Yes.

MS. O'NEILL: Thank you.

Ms. O'Neill returns to her seat; Mr. Ingersoll rises to question Dr. McArthur.

MR. INGERSOLL: Dr. McArthur, you say that aggressive games are normal.

DR. MCARTHUR: Yes.

MR. INGERSOLL: Would you also say they're healthy?

MS. O'NEILL: (standing) Objection, your Honor. Relevance?

MR. INGERSOLL: (nods) I'll get to that. Dr. McArthur, would you say aggressive games are healthy?

DR. MCARTHUR: Well, there are many psychologists who would argue that repeated acts of aggression, even repeated exposure to simulated acts of aggression, as on tv, desensitizes the person to such violence. Partly this is the result of the sheer numbers: by the age of sixteen, a boy will have seen 200,000 thousand acts of violence. So it becomes rather ho-hum.

Beat.

DR. MCARTHUR: Furthermore, on tv at least, the consequences of violence are, well, they're not real. Often there isn't even the portrayal of real consequences. We seldom see the pain, the shattered lives — (He looks at the Watsons with condolence.) So, unless the viewer has a rich and active imagination, or is encouraged to think, he simply doesn't connect the action with any such consequence.

MR. INGERSOLL: Thank you. As to relevance, I hope to establish that my client, Mr. Mendis, acted out of self-defence. Assuming that an act of self-preservation is healthy, if games of aggression are unhealthy, how can we find the one whose action is healthy guilty while the one whose action was unhealthy ...

Ms. O'Neill stands up to save her position.

MS. O'NEILL: Dr. McArthur, you stated that many psychologists hold the view you describe. There are some who hold a different view?

DR. MCARTHUR: Of course. Many argue for the cathartic value of games of aggression.

MS. O'NEILL: By 'cathartic value' you mean ...

DR. MCARTHUR: The games provide a safe outlet for our aggressive impulses. Without them, more people might be expressing their anger off the playing field, so to speak.

Mr. Ingersoll stands up to interrupt.

MR. INGERSOLL: Forgive me, but — I can understand that if you're angry and need to let off steam, perhaps you should have a go at a punching bag. But if you need to let off steam by pretending to kill people — shouldn't you go see a psychiatrist?

Dave rises from his chair in the court.

DAVE: Are you saying there's something wrong with my son?

There is outcry in the court.

JUDGE: Order!

MS. O'NEILL: Objection, your Honor. Slandering the deceased is not only distasteful and irrelevant, but misguided. The boy in no way shares the blame for what happened. He was playing a harmless game. A game with lots of running around, lots of noise. I suspect he didn't even connect pulling the trigger with —

Mr. Ingersoll looks pointedly at her as she is about to make his case for him — and she realizes that too late.

MS. O'NEILL: (finishing lamely) Causing someone's death.

Scene 10:

Courthouse — exterior.

Luce and James are sitting on the courthouse steps during a break in the trial.

LUCE: Do you know that toy companies make about \$50 million a year selling toy guns? 'Course that's nothing compared to the \$2 billion made selling real guns. And that's just domestic sales.

JAMES: 5,000 guns are sold each month in California alone.

Luce is surprised that he knows this.

JAMES: Might be 'nothing' compared to, but it might be proportional.

LUCE: What are you saying, the toy gun market is just training ground for the real gun market?

JAMES: (nods) Get 'em when they're young.

They are quiet for a bit.

LUCE: Isn't it illegal to point a gun at someone. Why hasn't that come up?

JAMES: Because the boy isn't on trial, Malik is.

LUCE: Ah. Right.

Beat.

JAMES: And it might not be illegal if —

LUCE: (anticipating) How is it that when kids do something, it's okay, but when adults do the very same thing, it's illegal. Isn't that a bit ... weird?

JAMES: You're right. Maybe the Maliks should countersue the parents for corrupting a minor. Or something.

LUCE: Oh wouldn't that be interesting.

Scene 11:

Courtroom. As before.

Ms. O'Neill is giving her closing.

MS. O'NEILL: Malik Mendis should have known. He should have known that Bobby's gun was a toy gun. He should have known that it wasn't, therefore, loaded. And he should have known that Bobby had no intent of really killing him.

Beat.

MS. O'NEILL: Because this is not Sri Lanka. This is the U.S. of A. And we don't arm our children.

Ms. O'Neill sits. Mr. Ingersoll rises to give his closing.

MR. INGERSOLL: Oh but we do. As we speak, I suspect there are hundreds, thousands, of fathers teaching their young sons how to use a gun. No doubt believing it'll make a man of him. What kind of man — I don't really know ...

Beat.

MR. INGERSOLL: Use of force is justified when a person reasonably believes that it is necessary. 'Reasonably' according to whom? To the individual person? But then we must admit all sorts of personal idiosyncracies.

According to the community? But Mr. Mendis was new to our community. In the community in which he lived most of his life, children carry real guns. Ms. O'Neill has argued that it is the standards of our community that should prevail. Well then surely we have a responsibility to newcomers to clearly inform them about our community. In citizenship classes, we should be sure to say "Welcome to our country. By the way, we have made killing into a game for our youngsters. You should know that about us."

Furthermore, with all due respect, Your Honor, I question the wisdom, indeed the reasonableness, of using a sick standard over — no, scratch that. A country that conscripts its children into its armies and gives them real guns compared to a country that says "Here's a fake gun, go have fun pretending to kill people" — it's a toss-up as to which is the more sick, isn't it.