

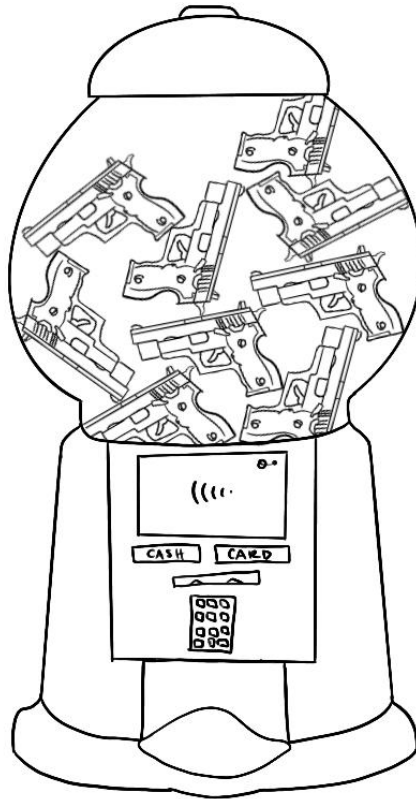
## Exercise 4: Critical Designs & Design Fictions

### Chosen Social Issue: Gun Violence & Control

I was not finding any inspiration in topics relating to project 3, so I decided to go in a drastically different direction and choose a highly controversial topic. I will be presenting ideas that may or may not reflect my personal opinion, however **I am not extremely knowledgeable about gun laws or regulations.** Gun laws in general tend to be a wicked issue- with currently no completely plausible alternatives, and I do not mean to **suggest that I know what could fix this issue.** With this exercise, I simply **hope to question and consider worlds we could live in.** ■

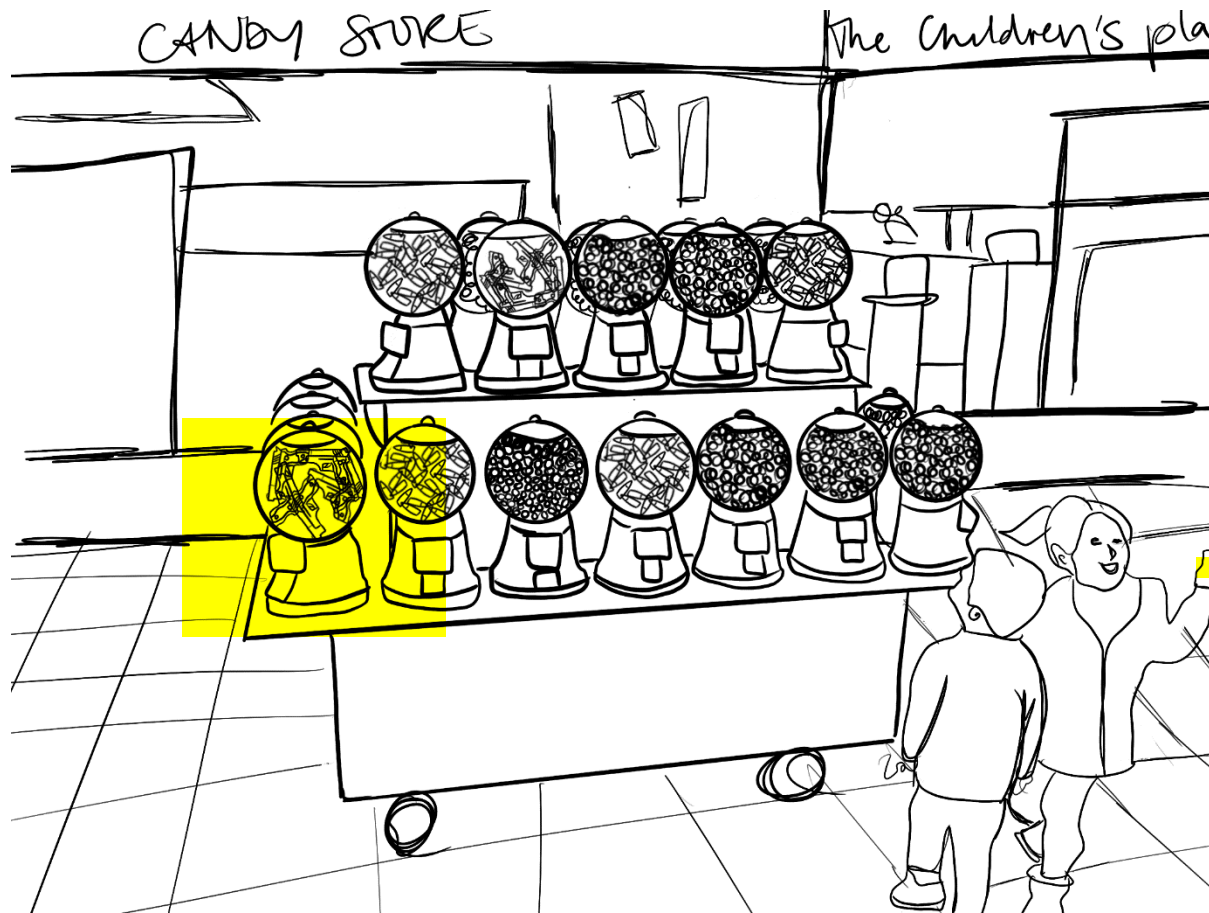
### *What could happen without gun laws?*

I initially wanted to highlight the issues with lax gun control laws by considering a worst case of what could happen if we continue to be relaxed about those laws. I was thinking about easily accessed items and I thought about gumball machines- so here we have the **Gun-ball machine.**



*The Gun-Ball Machine*

As you can see, this is a gumball machine with a card reader and cash insert area. However, instead of dispensing gumballs, this machine **would dispense guns.** This could be placed anywhere an average gumball machine would be placed. This allows **for easy access to guns from anywhere** a person might need quick access to a gun- shopping centers, gas stations, children's play areas, etc. All a person would need is a form of payment to receive a gun. With this scene, we can see the issue with such a device.

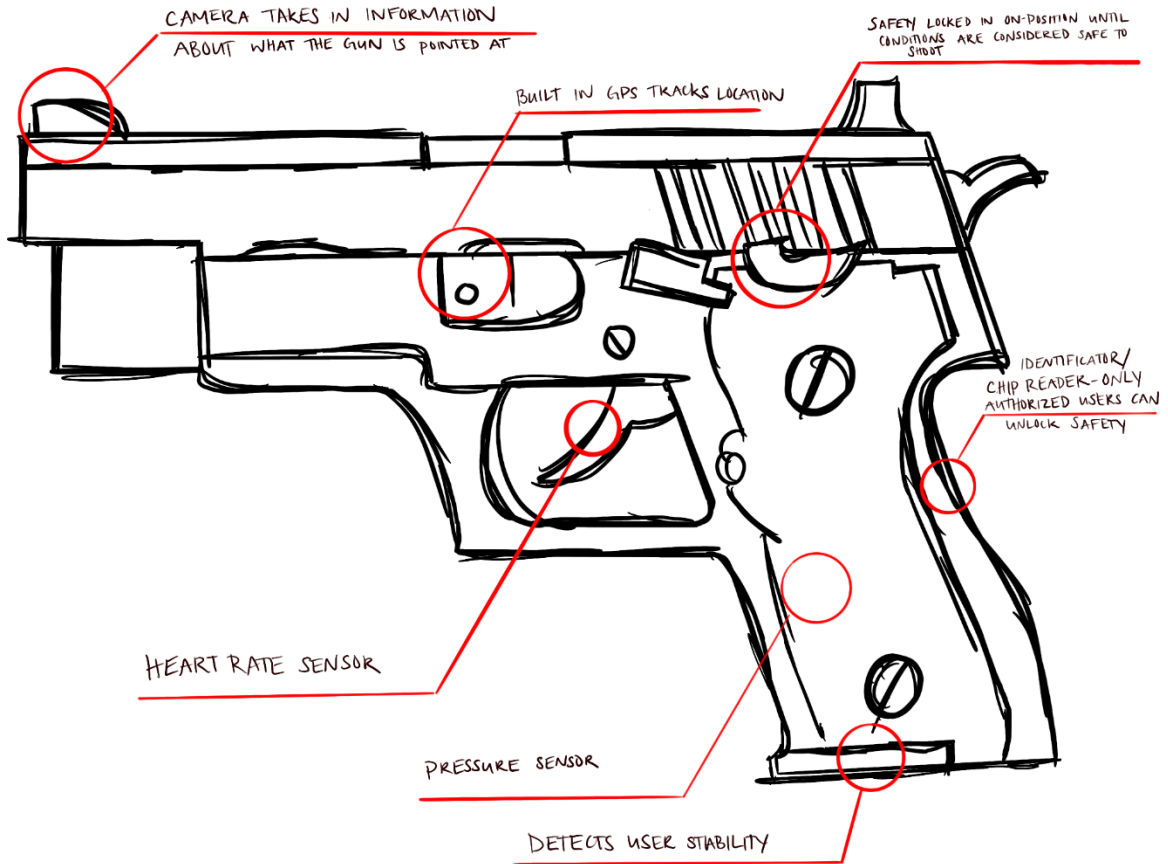


*A gumball machine area with Gun-Ball Machines, normal gumball machines, and ammo dispensing machines. Children are depicted being interested in the machines.*

This is an extreme form of what could happen if our society were to become more relaxed regarding gun regulation laws. We frequently see the issue of gun laws considered within politics and frequently we see people claiming that the US needs less gun control laws, however in states like Vermont (where you can buy a gun at 16) and Mississippi (where permits to carry or licenses to sell aren't required) already have very loose gun laws (Elliot, 2018). This does beg the question on how much looser gun laws can get, and whether they really should be loosened. The mindset that gun regulation laws should be loosened is what the gun-ball machine is meant to question and perhaps alter by raising the question of how far they should be loosened.

### *How could we address gun violence differently?*

I wondered next how we could change the pattern of gun violence. I learned throughout my research that it seems as though recognizing an individual's possibility of violence is one of the most promising ways to address gun violence (Colarossi & McAlpine, 2019). I decided to take this information and incorporate technology and I created the **What's Your Intent-gun?**



*The What's Your Intent-gun*

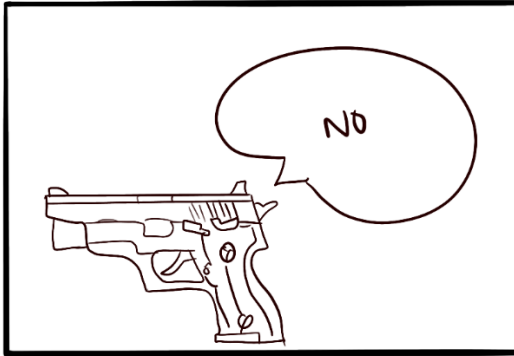
This gun has AI capabilities and uses it to **detect the intention of the user**. It is labelled with the capabilities it could have. The safety would be unable to be turned off unless the AI deems the situation safe for a gun to be fired. Possible capabilities it could have are as follows:

- The camera would take in informational surroundings, such as what the gun is pointed at to recognize human faces or bodies. This would not be the sole factor in whether the safety could be turned off, as self-defense is one of the common reasons to want to own a gun.
- It would track GPS location to take into account whether the person is in their home/ in public/etc.
- There could be a way to identify the person using it such as Smart Guns do already.
- It could also take into account the body signals that could signal how much distress the user is in.

This AI, given all these factors combined, would be able to make a correct decision mostly accurately about a subjective situation. With the added incorporation of AI and technology, this gun questions much more than current gun laws and norms of gun violence. **The gun also questions technology and intelligence**, and whether AI will ever be smart enough to put the lives of humans on its shoulders, such as we've already had to consider with self-driving cars (Purdy et al., 2019).

To better to consider a world in which this gun is the only type of gun on the market and the only gun people are legally allowed to use, I drew up this little storyboard.

A FUTURE WITHOUT GUN VIOLENCE?

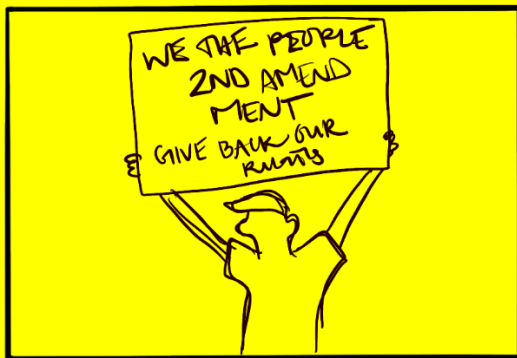


SUICIDES LIKELY DECREASE

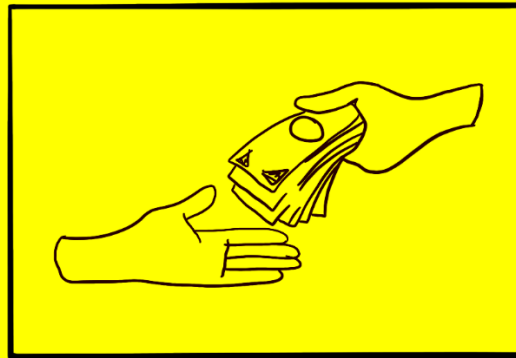


~11,000 LESS PEOPLE DIE A YEAR

- HOWEVER -



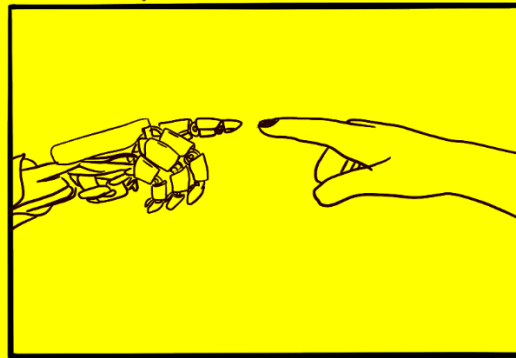
PEOPLE WOULD CONSIDER IT LOSS OF AMENDMENT RIGHTS



REGULAR GUNS WOULDN'T GO AWAY THEY'D BE WORTH MORE



VIOLENCE WOULD STILL OCCUR- ON A SMALLER SCALE WITH OTHER WEAPONS



QUESTION OF LIABILITY RAISED WITHIN LAWSUITS

This storyboard shows a few of the good things this gun could cause, however it focuses most on the most negative outcomes of this gun being the sole legal option to own such as underground markets, AI liability, and violence not being eliminated but committed with other weapons, perhaps makeshift ones that are even deadlier.

## Reflection

**This exercise was extremely outside my comfort zone.** However, I do see the benefit of using design fiction and critical design approaches to better understand problem spaces and to think outside the box. In all honesty, I don't think my designs overall do a phenomenal job of addressing the social issue I chose. I think that for critical designs and design fictions to be relevant and useful within society's viewpoint, I **need to be a lot more knowledgeable in the topic and do a lot more research into these issues**, something I have not done in a long while and something I did only minimally for this exercise. I also think that my designs don't seem to possess the flair that creators such as Dunne & Raby have, most likely due to lack of experience with these approaches. I had a lot of fun with these designs, though, which very well could have been a failure of mine within such a serious social issue. Most importantly, however, these designs were extremely successful in **allowing me to explore and traverse a problem space I was highly uncomfortable in.** This appears to be where critical design and design fictions are the most useful for me, and I enjoyed this opportunity to challenge some of the opinions I and others have regarding this problem space, as well as connecting this issue to other problem spaces to better understand it.

## References

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