

自食其果

zi4 shi2 qi2 guo3

A 31-year-old Florida woman bragged on Facebook about how good her son was with a gun. Her son was four years old. The woman, a pro-gun activist, also posted the image of a poster proclaiming: “My right to protect my child with my gun trumps your fear of my gun.”

The next day she was driving in a truck with her son when the boy picked up a .45-caliber handgun from the rear seat and shot her in the back. Apart from sustaining very serious injuries, the woman was also facing possible charges for failing to keep the gun safe.

This is a clear case of “自食其果” (zi4 shi2 qi2 guo3). “自” (zi4) is “self,” “食” (shi2) “eat,” “其” (qi2) “that,” “his,” “hers,” and “果” (guo3) means “fruit,” “effect,” “outcome.” Literally, “自食其果” (zi4 shi2 qi2 guo3) is “self eat his/her fruit.”

It means “to suffer the consequences of one’s own actions,” “to reap what one has sown.”

Idiom by Lon Yan

Not that anyone wants the woman to get hurt, but netizens were right to point out that the boy could have shot himself or someone else. When the woman “自食其果” (zi4 shi2 qi2 guo3), it is comeuppance (罪有應得、報應).

The expression “Whatever goes around comes around” means if you start something bad, it will come back to hit you in the face one day, which is “自食其果” (zi4 shi2 qi2 guo3).

Most bullets are made of lead. “Eat lead” is slang for being hit by gunfire. In this case, instead of eating fruit, the irresponsible woman ate her own lead.

Terms containing the character “果” (guo3) include:

- 後果 (hou4 guo3) – a consequence, an outcome
- 果斷 (guo3 duan4) – resolute, decisive
- 果園 (guo3 yuan2) – an orchard
- 果然 (guo3 ran2) – just as expected