

“NERF Assassins has been going on for way longer, just because of Parkland doesn’t mean we’re going to stop doing something that’s been going on for so long.

Charlie McAllister, sophomore



STAFF EDITORIAL



photo: Lily Smith

To continue the legacy of Parkland survivors, it’s time for self-reflection

Starting April 13, students will start walking into HHS wielding guns. Not real guns, obviously. Rather, dozens of students will stash NERF foam blasters in their backpacks, lockers, and cars. Because on April 13, HHS’ annual game of Assassins begins. Assassins involves working in teams to generate “kills.” Kills are awarded when a player shoots a member of a different team while trying to stay alive themselves. For the longest surviving player and their team, a cash prize. For everyone else, an intense, time-consuming, and even deadly game. The game continues for months, and the tradition has continued year after year. But this year, Assassins takes on a new meaning in the wake of the

tragic shooting in Parkland. Students buy the highest-capacity NERF guns, carry them everywhere they go, and shoot each other at malls, parks, and public spaces. Is this the future that students walked out for on March 14 or marched in Washington, D.C. for on March 24? People may argue that students have an understanding that NERF guns aren’t real. Many students probably do. But Assassins still poses real dangers, including the tragic death of two students at Lakeville South High School three years ago. The game also trivializes the very idea of murder. While we protest and are horrified by the actual killings of students, here in Assassins we glorify the act of killing and reward the number of kills.

Even the simulation of gun violence through Assassins poses some very important questions and ethical dilemmas about teens’ willingness to care about an issue. Thanks to the tireless efforts of Parkland survivors, the #NeverAgain movement has brought teens to center stage. The generation that’s been criticized for the Tide Pod challenge, our constant use of social media, and other cultural phenomena is now geared to be taken seriously by lawmakers, reporters, and adults. If students play Assassins, they’re showing the world that’s watching us that they’re hypocrites. What kind of image does it portray for the same students who organized or participated in walkouts and marches across the country to be firing NERF guns at one another only weeks

later? This isn’t just about Assassins, though. More importantly, it represents the idea of activism when it’s convenient. HHS students walked out of class for 17 minutes on March 14 because they could easily do so— administration’s accommodations for the walkout arguably detracted from it being a protest in the first place. While the March for Our Lives in Washington, D.C. was less convenient, it still landed on a weekend the middle of many students’ Spring Breaks, allowing for them to find the time to protest. As soon as protesting or advocating for a cause becomes inconvenient, however, we’re unwilling to make any changes to our own lives to participate. If supporting gun control means we have to stop Assassins, then

HHS students will stop being activists. The students who organized the walkout on March 14 did a great service when they organized protests, lobbied for gun control, and rallied support on social media. Protesting against public figures is easy. Protesting against your peers is harder. Why isn’t HHS Responds coming out against Assassins? Of course there’d be backlash. But if you’re not afraid of backlash from the NRA, you shouldn’t be afraid of backlash from your classmates. Sure, Assassins is fun. But are high school students willing to sacrifice even a little bit of fun for something that’s greater than them? The walkout is over; the March for Our Lives is over. Right now— how we move forward— is the time that matters.

Before you think about putting your money into the pot for Assassins, think about the impact it might have. Think about the legacy of the victims in Parkland. Think about the future.

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