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# F R 04 I 20 C H

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## Remembering Columbine

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*Note: The senior wills submission due date has been changed to April 24 at 11:59:59 PM. The will submitter will soon be accessible at [www.frichonline.com/seniorwills](http://www.frichonline.com/seniorwills). Thank you for your time.*

### Whose Fault Is It Again?

April 20. Ah, what a day. There are many different things it's associated with, most of them having to do with illegal substances and Hitler. The "forgotten child" of the day, though, came ten years ago in the form of the Columbine shooting. We've all heard the names and numbers of the victims repeated once a year for the past decade. We've also heard the names of the shooters and most of us have expressed our outrage and disbelief that someone would do such a thing. The ironic thing about that is it was people just like us who drove them to kill. It was their peers who simply wrote them off and refused to accept them. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold could just as easily have attended Niwot and the shooting that everyone now talks about could have been the Niwot High School massacre. We all profile and judge, it's simply the way our society is set up. What we do about these unfounded assumptions, however, is a completely different story. You make a conscious choice every time you poke fun at the freak in your math class. You choose to ignore the kid who wears weird clothes and just assume someone else will talk to them. How hard would it really be to just treat those people like the normal people they are? Would it really kill you to hold your tongue and not mock that kid in math? Would it be so terrible to simply say "hi" to that kid who dresses differently? I'm not saying Harris and Klebold were justified in their actions, but if people had simply accepted them for who they were, it would have been highly likely that Columbine never would have happened. Here's what I propose: let's all try to prevent another catastrophic school shooting. If we all go out of our way to say "hi" to one person we haven't before each day, maybe the one person who feels as ostracized as Harris and Klebold did will realize that they are accepted and won't go to the same extremes as the students at Columbine did.

π Phoenix π

### One Of Those Days

I won't start with a flashback because most of you know what the Columbine shooting was and still is. It was a tragedy in every right and a sad reminder of what not just society, but a few bullets can do. One bullet for Lincoln, one for Martin Luther King and two more for Kennedy shortly after. It seems for every good person in the world, there are hundreds who spit in their face. For a very long time now, good vs. bad has become a gray argument. With religious beliefs and conflicting interests, the line between conscience and instinct is fading. Who knows what's right or wrong anymore?

### Nowhere Near Columbine

I was asked to write a serious piece on the Columbine shootings that happened 10 years ago. I don't remember it very well and it hardly affected me at all, so I decided to explain the story from the point of view of a second grader living all the way across the country.

The first I had ever heard of the Columbine shootings was when I told my friends in late 1999 that I would be moving to Colorado. They joked that I was going to get shot in school because that had happened out here. I had no idea what they were talking about, but I laughed all the while wondering if getting shot was a common occurrence. After this conversation, I thought nothing more of it and was focused on leaving my friends and how sad it was.

Now, ten years later, I still don't know much about the shootings, but I know the gist of what happened. I know two boys went to school and shot a bunch of kids and a teacher. I know they were picked on and that probably pushed them over the edge. That is most of what I know. I do not know their names, nor do I know the victims' names. I do not even know where Columbine High School is. What I do know is that this was a big deal 10 years ago. Teenagers generally did not go shoot up their high school for no apparent reason. Maybe it made people think more about how they raise their children, or where they send them to school. Maybe it started our country's fear of terror. Maybe it was just another mass murder that somehow grabbed the media's attention and they ran with it. Who knows? All I know is that it was a horrible event and although it did not affect me personally in the slightest, I want to give my condolences to the families of the victims and hope that we have learned from this event for future generations.

π Fermat LT π

When an event such as Columbine happens, everyone goes into shock. Killing people without rhyme or reason? It's not unheard of, but when it's close to home it's scary, to say the least. Unfortunately, the darkest times in history are the ones that fill our books. Despite this there are lessons to be learned, memories to be remembered, and things to let go of. Columbine taught us one thing, if anything: do not judge. The two boys had nothing to lose in their eyes. They were depressed and angry at the world around them. People didn't care what they felt; many accounts say that they were bullied and didn't have many friends. Witnesses said that they never expected something so drastic. Sadly,

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people who shoot up a school are most likely ones who are not expected to do so.

On this day, be thankful for life. Hug your friends, enjoy your music,

listen when nobody else will, tell your parents you love them. I'm not going to preach about how life is precious and fragile and short; I expect most of you to know that already. The greatest love is love without bias. And remember, being happy is the best way to appreciate life. So smile and have a laugh. Even if it is Monday.

π Katow-Jo π

## Guns in Schools and Such

As it turns out guns have a habit of killing people. That's essentially the premise behind the state law against having guns at an educational facility and instances such as the tragic Columbine and Virginia Tech shootings would indicate that this is inherently correct. In the hands of someone who is deranged, or merely careless, a gun is a weapon of extreme destruction. But these cases light the fire under a larger question. Why is it that as a society we impose laws making the possession of anything that even looks like a gun on a school property a felony, but anywhere else a permit justifies their existence? For people that are extraordinarily pro-firearms, let's put it this way: a gun requires a person to operate it and that is how more than 28,000 people die in this country every year. Somewhere along the line we missed the step in the logic that dictates what can kill us in high school can still kill us later in life.

Now maybe this isn't such an issue and maybe the statistics blow it a little bit out of proportion. For example, there are now about 300 million people in the US, so 28,000 is only a fraction of a percent and doesn't even compare with the total mortality rate for the country. "Gun Control" is and has always been the predominate policy in the US: the restriction of firearms to only those who are willing to obtain a permit. The idea is simple enough, that guns can be tracked and hence, the crimes committed by them. However, this policy has not stopped the US from becoming the most developed country with the highest rate of gun crime. Illegal firearms constitute a large part of black markets in this country and are part of an underworld difficult for police primarily because the perpetrators are well armed. In all, this gun issue divides the country and support for firearms comes chiefly from those only looking to defend themselves from danger. At its core, the rights and ability of the individual is one of the principles this nation is based upon.

As long as firearms exist no consensus can be reached which is why it only makes sense to ban them outright. From the standpoint of civil liberty, the pro-firearm stance becomes the antagonist. The issue is similar to slavery; at the time, there were people who were upset about its dismissal and were even hurt financially, but the country grew past that. With time, the Second Amendment will come to be viewed as slavery was: a necessary evil that was dealt with at the proper time. Our future generations will think nothing of a life without a gun. From here, where do we move as a society if not toward a greater peace? Why not extend an act of faith toward our fellow Americans and expose ourselves to the dangers of this world in order to save those 28,000 lives? It will be well worth it, I promise.

π Machiavelli π

## Why We Judge

Today is a day of mourning, a day of conspiracy, and overall, a day that must be remembered. Today is remembered (and celebrated) for a large number of things. Today is 4:20 (4/20), Hitler's 120th birthday, as well as the tenth anniversary of the Columbine High School massacre. 4:20 makes an impact yearly; thousands of people nationwide join together in brotherly love and peacefully smoke marijuana in order to commemorate such love. Hitler's birthday makes little to no impact whatsoever, due to the fact that he is deemed "bad" and he died over 60 years ago, so no one really cares. Columbine is rarely mentioned in today's society—maybe a moment of silence is paid before the day moves on as scheduled, but nothing more. But today, as ten years have passed since that fateful day, I kindly implore you to give more than just a moment of silence; please really give thought to how this was allowed to happen and what drove Klebold and Harris to kill 13 others.

Some have blamed this tragedy on the violent video game Doom, but as high school students, we know that this is simply not the case. In actuality, the reason this occurred was rather due to the fact that those two students were pariahs. They were the ones that the popular kids made fun of to feel better about themselves. They were the ones who were whispered about behind their backs, the ones who, unfortunately, snapped after years of this treatment. Simple mockery and judgment was what brought about the untimely deaths of 15 people. Klebold and Harris killed the popular kids: the jocks, the rich kids, the kids who increased their self-esteem by mocking the other undeserving pair (in our school, the judges would be the wall-sitters). Hatred and prejudice is what killed them all.

So today, I ask for you to do more than just stop talking to your friends when Daly comes across the intercom asking you to do so. I ask you instead to enjoy your life for what it is. Even if it is only for today, do not envy others, do not talk about them behind their backs, and do not spread rumors. Go out and make a new friend; talk to the person who no one likes. Be courteous to others by opening doors for them, or lending that dollar they need for lunch. Respect your teachers, for without them there would not be school. For just today, even if you only do it only during school hours, be a decent person. Do this to remember those lost in the shootings, to try to ensure that nothing like it will ever happen again. If you can do this for one day, just one, it will make the school more tolerable for those in the same positions as Klebold and Harris and it might just stop anything like the shootings from happening again.

Thank you for your kindness and your time. And for today, enjoy your life for what you have.

π Averonatus Tint π