A disturbing in-game video from World of Warcraft recently circulating online shows an organized, premeditated attack on an in-game funeral held for a real girl who had passed away. The incident sent shockwaves through the WoW community and sparked heated debate about MMO ethics and behavior.

It all began on the public WoW forums, with a posted announcement regarding the real-life passing of a member of the Horde faction on the Illidan server. It stated that the girl, known online as Fayejin, had died from a stroke, and that all were invited to a virtual memorial service in Winterspring—an area deep in contested territory—where people could meet and mourn.

On the day of the funeral, as both Horde and Alliance players queued up to pay their respects to Fayejin’s avatar (logged on by friends for the event), a large guild of Alliance players descended upon the peaceful gathering. Catching everyone off-guard, the raiders slaughtered every last Horde player in attendance. The group responsible, a guild called Serenity Now, then released a video of the attack, eliciting a hell-storm of public outcry over the depravity and lack of respect the massacre showed.

We sought out a pink-haired Gnome Warrior known as Bronnieman, the acknowledged leader of the Serenity Now raid party, to uncover the motivations behind what, on the surface, appears to be a case of griefers assaulting griefers. But Bronnieman claims there was an underlying message buried within the offensive.

"Essentially, it was to encourage PvP, which has been lacking on Illidan since the introduction of Battlegrounds," he explains. "We feel that Blizzard has yet to address the issue of PvP, and instead just shrugs them off as a small voice."

The desired result of the "Funeral Bombing," as Serenity Now has dubbed the event, appears to have been achieved, as countless forum threads can attest. While most find the guild's actions reprehensible, the topic of PvP is certainly hotter than ever. "For or against it doesn't matter much, so long as people have been made more aware that PvP still exists," says Bronnieman. "We achieved our goal."

Bronnieman is quick to point out that every member of the raid was sorry to hear of the real-life girl's death. Nevertheless, Serenity Now stands by its actions, reiterating that Illidan is a PvP server and that Winterspring is a contested zone where PvP is allowed and encouraged. No one disputes that the memorial could have been held in a zone where the massacre would have been impossible; organizers have stated that Winterspring was chosen because it was the girl's favorite zone.

While flame wars continue to rage over the issue, it's clear that Serenity Now has accomplished the goal of inspiring a full-swing PvP discussion. However, the achievement may be bittersweet—members of Serenity Now now find themselves on countless Horde faction kill-on-sight lists. Deservedly so? E-mail to us at letters@pcgamer.com and tell us what you think.

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