

THE COLUMBINE HIGH SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

The Columbine High School shootings occurred on Tuesday, April 20, 1999 at Columbine High School in Colorado in the United States. Two teenage students shot twelve fellow students

and a teacher before committing suicide. More than twenty people were wounded.

The two student gunmen were Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.

- 1 Read the two entries below written by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.
 - a. From reading these notes, do you think the shootings had been planned for a long time, or was it an impulsive decision? Explain.
 - b. One of the boys was the leader. From looking at the notes, who do you think it was?
 - c. Imagine you are Dylan Klebold's or Eric Harris' teacher. What would you have done if you had found these notes? What would you have done if you had been a friend of the boys?

Klebold's notebook entry

Walk in, set bombs at 11:09, for 11:17
Leave,
Drive to Clemete Park. Gear up.
Get back by 11:15
Park cars, set car bombs for 11:18
get out, go to outside hill, wait.
When first bombs go off, attack.
have fun!



Harris' dayplanner entry

Bring suitcase, black sheets,
duffel bag, black duffel bag
5:00 Get-up
6:00 meet at KS
7:00 go to Reb's house
7:15 he leaves to fill propane
I leave to fill gas
8:30 Meet back at his house
9:00 made d. bag set up car
9:30 practice gearups
Chill
10:20 set up 4 things
11: go to school
11:10 set up duffel bags
11:12 wait near cars, gear up
11:16 HA HA HA

VOCABULARY EXERCISES

In the following exercises you will work with the vocabulary used on these pages as well as words you will find in the chapter in general. Work with a partner and look up the words you do not know.

- 1 Below are some of the words used in the non-fiction texts in this chapter. Match the English and Danish nouns.
 - outcast – mercy – purchaser – shooting – availability – taunt – jock – murderer – writings – gun legislation – suburb – news coverage – rampage
 - sportsidiot – forstad – barmhjertighed – tilgængelighed – våbenlovgivning – nyhedsdækning – skriverier – hån – udstødt – skudepisode – morder – stormen og rasen – køber
- 2 Pretend that you have read an article about the two boys who shot and killed their schoolmates in the Columbine High School shootings. Use the words above, and write a 100 word summary describing the content of the article. Begin your summary with the words, "This article deals with the issue of ..."
- 3 Below are some of the words used in the fiction texts in this chapter. Match the English and Danish nouns.
 - humanity – firecracker – carnage – hypocrite – warrant – blabber – pregnancy test – clique – fatalities – locker – conspiracy – invasion of privacy – blowout – casket
 - hykler – sladderhank – sammensværgelse – klike – ligkiste – menneskeheden – opgør – aflåst skab – krænkelse af privatlivets fred – ransagningskendelse – dødstilfælde – graviditetstest – fyrværkeri – blodbad
- 4 Pretend that you have read a novel about the two boys. Use the words above, and write a 100 word summary describing the content of the novel. Begin your summary with the words, "This novel deals with ..."
- 5 The Sheriff's report on the shooting rampage at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado:

"On a sunny spring day in April 1999, a suburban high school in Jefferson County, Colorado, found itself under attack by two of its own. In less than fifteen minutes of the first-lunch period on that Tuesday, two student gunmen killed 13 and wounded 21 before they turned the guns on themselves – the most devastating school shooting in U.S. history."

Is the Sheriff's report non-fiction or fiction? Why/why not?

Anatomy of a Massacre

DYLAN KLEBOLD, "I DIDN'T LIKE LIFE VERY MUCH."

ERIC HARRIS, "I KNOW MY MOM AND DAD WILL BE IN

SHOCK AND DISBELIEF, I CAN'T HELP IT ...

THAT'S IT. SORRY. GOODBYE."

Videotape made by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold
on the morning of the shootings.



Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris became known all over America minutes after the Columbine High School shootings because the media covered the tragedy in great detail. After the Columbine High School shootings, parts of the American news media were heavily criticised for going too far in their coverage of the tragedy in order to increase sales numbers and ratings. Somewhere between 400 and 500 reporters were on the scene at the height of the media coverage. They brought 75 to 90 satellite trucks and up to 60 television cameras. The following article is from the American magazine *Newsweek*. It is the second-largest weekly magazine in the United States; in 2003 worldwide circulation was more than 4 million.



PRE-READING

In pairs

- Part of the subheading of the article is 'portraits of the killers'. What difference would it have made if the journalist had referred to Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold as 'poor outcasts' or 'just kids' as Devon Adam describes them in "Mourn for the Killers, Too"?

- Read the first section of the text below. How would you describe:
 - the atmosphere created by the journalist?
 - the style of writing?

Choose between the following adjectives, and discuss your choices with a partner. Look up the words you do not know.

- catchy, unpleasant, moving, professional, uneventful, exciting, biased, manipulative, involving, frightening, trustworthy, pushy, objective

Anatomy of a Massacre

by Matt Bai

May 3, 1999

For a long, tragic day two teens, armed with guns, bombs and a relentless fury, laid brutal siege to Columbine High. The hours of horror – and portraits of the killers.

- It was a phone call that will stay with Denver Police Officer John Lietz for the rest of his life. Shortly after 11 last Tuesday morning, he picked up the line to hear the voice of Matthew Depew, the son of a fellow cop: Depew and 17 other Columbine High School students were trapped in a storage room off the school cafeteria, hiding from kids with guns. Lietz himself had a daughter in the school, and he could hear bursts of gunfire in the background. Lietz told the kids to barricade the door with chairs and sacks of food, and to be ready to attack the gunmen if they got in. Several times Lietz heard the shooters trying to break into the room; they were so close that he could hear them reloading cartridges. At one point, as they pounded on the door, Depew calmly told Lietz that he was sure he was going to die. "Please tell my father I love him," he said.

- For a few horrific hours in Littleton, Colo., last week, the school outcasts finally had all the power – and they wielded it without mercy or reason. As scores of students like Depew barricaded themselves in classrooms and closets, praying for deliverance, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold casually decided which of their classmates should live and which should die, and laughed triumphantly as they meted out fate. "They were, like, orgasmic," says 19-year-old Nicholas Schumann, who heard the worst of it from a room under the library. Harris and Klebold made at

a'natomy (her:) indgående
analyse
re'lentless ubarmhjerlig
fury raseri
lay siege to belejre
pick up the line (her:)
tage opkaldet
trap fange
'storage room lagerrum
burst geversalve
re'load lade igen
cartridge patron
pound hamre løs på
hor'rific rædselsvækkende
'outcast udstødt
wield udøve
mercy barmhjerlighed
scores snesevis
de'livance befrielse
'casually skødesløst
mete'out udmåle
fate skæbne
or'gasmic orgastisk

least two female hostages answer a question: did they believe in God? When they said yes, the gunmen shot them at point-blank range. By the time the terror ended with the killers' own suicides, 12 students and a teacher were dead, and 23 students were wounded, four of them critically. Klebold and Harris hoped to get the last laugh: it took days for police to find and defuse about 30 propane-tank and pipe bombs they had planted in the school for maximum carnage.

10 Many mysteries surround the most lethal school shooting in history. Just how many members of the Trenchcoat Mafia might have been involved? Several eyewitnesses told police and NEWSWEEK that they had seen a third gunman; at least two possible suspects have approached Denver lawyers about their role in the melee. Police sources expect
15 further arrests this week. But the most vexing puzzle, perhaps, is the motive. How did brainy kids from seemingly stable, affluent homes become killing machines without a hint of remorse? The murders fascinated and appalled the country, not least because the mayhem unfolded in an archetypal place (a suburban high school) and touched on cultural forces (the Internet, violent movies and videogames) familiar
20 to all Americans. Still, there is one overarching question: why? The tragedy's roots are most likely twisted, ranging from the availability of guns, to biology and possibly troubled family lives, to the taunts of more popular classmates – and the beginnings of an explanation can
25 be found only in the portraits of the killers.

Harris and Klebold had been steadily losing their way in the world for some time. Neither set of parents was talking last week, except to issue
30 terse statements of regret. Harris's father is a retired Air Force officer who moved the family frequently. Before coming to Littleton, Harris lived in upstate New York, where he played Little League like any other kid – although it was his older brother, Kevin, who was the star athlete. His parents were supportive, recalls the team's coach, Terry Condo: "I
35 wouldn't mind having 12 sets of parents just like them." Like Harris, Klebold was an exceptional student who played in a fantasy baseball league and quoted Shakespeare easily. His father, a geologist, owns a sprawling contemporary home with a guest house and a half-dozen vintage BMWs. "Dylan was a follower," says Nick Baumgard, a child-
40 hood friend whose prom date, Rachel Scott, was among those killed outside the cafeteria. "He always needed someone to follow. Then he got hooked up with Eric."

point-blank range på meget nært hold
defuse desarmere
propane propan: farve- og lugtfri gas (se også THE ARSENAL, s. 40)
pipe rør
'carnage blodbad
'lethal dødbringende
'Trenchcoat Mafia en gruppe af udstødte elever opkaldt efter deres favoritbeklædningsgenstand. Eric Harris og Dylan Klebold befandt sig i yderkanten af gruppen
'melee (her:) voldsepisode
vexing foruroligende
puzzle gåde
'seemingly tilsyneladende
'affluent velstående
hint antydning
re'morse samvittighedsnag; anger
'appal forfærde
'mayhem lemlæstelse; ødelæggelse
unfold udvikle sig; ske
suburban forstads-
'touch on berøre
over'arching altoverskyggende
twisted (her:) viklet ind i hinanden
ranging from ... to lige fra ... til
availability tilgængelighed
taunt hån
issue udsende
terse kort og klar
'statement udtalelse
re'tire trække sig tilbage
'frequently tit
'Little League lokal baseball-liga for børn og unge
re'call erindre
sprawling (her:) omfattendende; som spredt sig uregelmæssigt
con'temporary moderne
'vintage (her:) veteran
hook up slutte sig sammen med

The two became "obsessed" with the violent videogame Doom – an interactive game in which the players try to rack up the most kills – and played it every afternoon. They worked together at a pizza place, and Harris worked at a fireworks stand. A few years back they fell in with
5 the Trenchcoat Mafia, given its name by the jocks who made fun of the group. Though much has been made of the group's ties to the "Goth" culture of black clothing, nihilism and funereal rock music, those who knew Harris and Klebold say it was primarily a way of fitting in with other kids. "They'd walk with their heads down, because if they looked
10 up they'd get thrown into lockers and get called a 'fag,'" says junior Makala Scrodin.

Harris and Klebold got into real trouble in January 1998, when they
15 were arrested for breaking into a commercial van and stealing electronics. The two boys paid weekly visits to a "diversion officer" and were subjected to a range of reform programs, from community service to a Mothers Against Drunk Driving panel to an "anger-management class". They were also prohibited from owning weapons or explosives.
20 The program officers for both boys marked their prognosis as "good".

"Dylan is a bright young man who has a great deal of potential," Klebold's officer wrote. "He is intelligent enough to make any dream a reality but he needs to understand hard work is part of it." "Eric is a very bright young man who is likely to succeed in life," said Harris's case officer. "He is intelligent enough to achieve lofty goals as long as
25 he stays on task and remains motivated." In an interview with NEWSWEEK, the program's supervisor defended those conclusions as reasonable at the time, if not altogether accurate. "They were absolutely compliant, and they did a good job," said Bobbi Spicer, director of the
30 probation program. "No one can predict lethality. If every murderer looked like Charles Manson, it would be easier. But if they look like Ted Bundy, you're in trouble."

Both Harris and Klebold became enamored of Nazi culture, and learned enough German to berate their classmates. Harris's Web site and e-mails apparently referred to Hitler's birthday – the day of the shooting – as the occasion for something big. "Kill'em AALLL!!!" Harris allegedly wrote in his America Online profile. Their work in school took on a chilling tone as well; an English teacher brought one of the boys' work to the attention of a guidance counsellor because his writings
40 were so violent, according to students and teachers. The boys made a tape for a video-production class in which they pretended to shoot all the jocks – with a real rifle. In fact, Harris and Klebold had forgot-

become ob'sessed with blive besat af
rack 'up score; vinde (points)
'fireworks stand fyrværkeri-bod
jock sportsidiot
'nihilism nihilister tror ikke på, at Gud eksisterer og mener, at livet grundlæggende er uden mening
funereal begravelsesagtig
fag bøsse; homoseksuel
diversion 'officer person med ansvar for tilsyn af ungdomskriminelle
subjected to underlagt
range række
co'mmunity 'service samfundstjeneste
anger-management en metode hvormed man kontrollerer eller reducerer ekstrem vrede. Voldelige lovovertrædere kan blive idømt kurser i vredeskontrol
be prohibited from må ikke
lofty (her:) ambitiøs
stay on task fokusere på opgaven
com'pliant imødekommende
probation program program som den dømt skal gennemgå i forb.m. en betinget dom
pre'dict forudsige
le'thality evne til at dræbe
Charles Manson leder af gruppen "The Family". Han spillede en indirekte rolle som planlæggeren bag en række rituelle mord
Ted Bundy en amerikansk seriemorder der tilstod flere end 30 mord, men fremstod som en veluddannet, nydelig og charmerende ung mand
become e'namored of blive optaget af
be'rate overfuse
al'legedly angiveligt
America Online internetudbyder
chilling isnende
'guidance 'counsellor studievejleder

ten their pledge not to have weapons. Classmate Peter Maher says they waved a pistol at him out the window of Klebold's black BMW last July 4. Matt Good, a 16-year-old neighbor of Harris's, says that in recent weeks the boys were always in Harris's garage, and last weekend they were loudly smashing glass; cops now say that was for the shrapnel in their bombs.

pledge (højtideligt) løfte
'shrapnel' sprængstykke
wraparound shades store
solbriller der svøber sig
rundt om ansigtet
'trenchcoat' lang regn-
frakke med bælte
oilskin duster lang frakke
oprindeligt brugt af cow-
boys som beskyttelse mod
hårdt vejr (fungerede også
som skjulested for våben)
'sophomore' andetårs-elev
knoll lille høj
re'veal afsløre
'firecracker' kineser;
fyrværkeri
brandish svinge
a'spiring aspirerende;
kommende
'playwright' skuespilfor-
fatter
prank gavtyvestreg
'freshman' rus (førsteårs-
elev)
swivel dreje
shatter knuse
whizz suse

Harris and Klebold didn't do much to disguise their intentions last week. Tuesday began for them as it always did, with a popular 6:15 a.m. bowling class. On this day, as on many others, Klebold wore a shirt that read SERIAL KILLER. Classmates recall that when he and Harris would hit strikes or spares, they would shout "Sieg Heil!" in celebration. Today was no different. By 11 a.m., Harris and Klebold were wearing wraparound shades and their trademark black trench coats – the kind of oilskin dusters popular in Colorado ranches – as they came over the small hill toward Columbine's cafeteria. Denny Rowe, a 15-year-old sophomore, was among the first to see them coming. Sitting on a knoll not far from the cafeteria entrance, he watched as one of the two took off his coat to reveal what looked like grenades. The other lit a brick of firecrackers and threw it toward the school entrance. Rowe watched as one of the boys then brandished a semiautomatic rifle and pointed it at 17-year-old aspiring playwright Rachel Scott. An instant later, the boy shot her in the head.

Rowe's first thought had been that the kids were filming a video, as the two members of the Trenchcoat Mafia often did. When he saw the blood, he figured it was paintball, part of a senior prank. The next target was Danny Rohrbough, 15. A quiet freshman who hoped to one day join his father's electronics business, Rohrbough was standing just outside the entrance when a first shot hit him in the thigh. He stumbled and tried to run away, but the gunman wasn't finished. He shot Rohrbough in the back, killing him.

Then the killer swivelled toward Rowe and his friends. The next shots shattered the knee of one of the boys next to Rowe and hit another in the chest. Rowe ran for cover, bullets whizzing overhead. Like Matthew Depew, who was on the phone with Officer Lietz, he managed to escape unharmed.

'Just like a war zone'

When Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold arrived at their 6:15 a.m. bowling class, there was no reason to suspect that the day would end in a horrific bloodbath. By late afternoon, 15 were dead – 12 students, a teacher and the gunmen. Then the questions began. Were there other conspirators? Could the attack have been prevented? And the big question: why?

THE ATTACK

Police found a diary at the home of one of the gunmen stretching back to April of 1998 that detailed Harris and Klebold's elaborate plans. How the attack unfolded:

1. Around 11:15 a.m., a Denver police officer's son calls in, reporting shooting at the high school.
2. Harris and Klebold enter the Columbine High cafeteria and open fire. They throw pipe bombs, which explode, filling the air with smoke and setting off the fire alarms.
3. Teacher Dave Sanders runs into the cafeteria to warn students, then heads upstairs. Harris and Klebold, following behind, shoot him in the hallway. Sanders crawls to a nearby room. Students try to save him, but he later dies.
4. The killers enter the library. Laughing and taunting students, they shoot many of their victims at point-blank range. Terrified students barricade themselves all over the school, from a kitchen freezer to the bushes outside. Several call relatives and police on cell phones.
5. About 12:30 p.m., SWAT teams enter the east side of the school and begin a room-by-room sweep of the upper level.
6. On the west side of the building, two other eight-man SWAT teams break a window of the teachers' lounge and begin securing the lower level.
7. About 2:30 p.m., police begin freeing groups of hiding students. They are searched and treated before meeting waiting parents at Leawood Elementary School.
8. 17-year-old Patrick Ireland, shot multiple times in the head, dangles from a second-floor window until SWAT-team members pull him to safety.
9. About 4:30 p.m., police find Harris and Klebold in the library. Apparent suicides, their bodies are close enough to touch. They are surrounded by the corpses of 10 of their victims. Police declare the site secure. About 10:30 p.m., a bomb explodes. No one is hurt.

con'spirator sam-
mensvoren
pre'vent forhindre
e'laborate detaljeret
'relative pårørende
SWAT Special Weapons
And Tactics; specialiseret
paramilitær politienhed
sweep gennemsøgning
dangle dingle
a'pparent tilsyneladende

THE WARNING SIGNS

While some described them as bright and well behaved, Harris and Klebold had started showing signs of trouble:

January 1998 Klebold and Harris, then 16, are caught breaking into a van to steal electronics. As first-time-offenders, they are considered low risk and assigned to a county juvenile-diversion program.

July 4, 1998 The Trenchcoat Mafia runs into fellow Columbine students Peter Maher at 7-Eleven. After an exchange of words, Maher says Harris and Klebold wave a pistol at him from the window of Klebold's BMW.

1998 Harris and Klebold make a video in which they pretend to shoot friends dressed as jocks.

1999 At least one teacher and two parents reportedly warn authorities that the two boys are violent.

Harris's profile on an America Online Web site includes the quote "Kill 'em AALLL!!!"

April 20, 1999 Harris arrives at school wearing a T-shirt that reads SERIAL KILLER. Later, after changing into all black, he tells a classmate that he likes him and advises him to go home immediately.

THE ARSENAL

Harris and Klebold used four high-powered guns and homemade explosives for their killing spree:

Double-barrel shotgun This older-model shotgun was sawed off "as much as you possibly could," said a federal agent, allowing for the buckshot to spray widely and cause more damage.

TEC 9 semiautomatic Popular with criminals, this handgun was one of the assault weapons banned by the 1994 Brady Bill.

Pump shotgun Also sawed off, this shotgun fires shells with BB-size pellets.

9-mm semiautomatic rifle Fires 10 rounds as fast as trigger can be pulled.

Propane tank A 20-lb. gas tank was rigged with wiring, an egg timer and a fuse. Was set to blow up a sizable part of the school.

Pipe bombs More than 30 of these 'very basic bombs' were found. The cylinders were packed with gunpowder, nails and broken glass – to be more lethal.

first-time-offender første-
gangslovovertræder
assign overdrage
county (omtr.) stor kom-
mune
juvenile-diversion pro-
gram alternativ til straf-
afsoning for unge første-
gangslovovertrædere
reportedly efter for-
lydende
high-powered stærk
spree (her.) orgie
double-barrel shotgun
dobbeltløbet haglgevær
federal agent politimand,
der opererer på tværs af
statsgrænserne i USA
buckshot dyrehagl
TEC 9 halvautomatisk
håndvåben udformet som
en maskinpistol
assault weapon angrebs-
våben
1994 Brady Bill En lov
kaldet the Brady Handgun
Violence Prevention Act
der kræver bag-
grundstjek forud for køb
af håndvåben og fire
dages ventetid, inden
våbnet kan overtages
pump shotgun haglgevær
shell patron
BB-size pellets en stør-
relse hagl til haglbøsse el.
luftbøsse
lb. pund (454 g)
wiring elektriske ledninger
fuse lunte



Mourning Columbine students on April 20, 1999

WHILE-READING

In pairs

- 1 Note down a title for each of the first six sections of the article on a piece of paper, and compare your titles with your partner's.
- 2 Discuss the following questions:
 - a. What do we know about Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold? Write down two keywords for each of the following categories: family background, personality, work, school life, spare time activities.
 - b. The article poses the question, "How did brainy kids from seemingly stable, affluent homes become killing machines without a hint of remorse?" What possible answers does the article offer?
 - c. "No one can predict lethality," says Bobbi Spicer. What do you think?
 - d. Who should have picked up and acted upon the warning signs?
 - e. Matthew Depew's final comment is "Please tell my father I love him." What effect is that comment meant to have on the reader?
 - f. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold asked two girls if they believed in God before they shot them. Why do you think this piece of information is included in the article?