

# Fatal Friendship

How two suburban boys traded baseball and bowling for murder and madness

**By Lynn Bartels and Carla Crowder**

*Denver Rocky Mountain News Staff Writers*

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Their names will be intertwined forever.

Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.

So many things made them different:

Eric aced his classes. Dylan was an unrepentant slacker.

Eric lied about his age to woo an older woman he met at the mall. Dylan shyly waited for the right girl.

Eric got into flour fights at the pizza joint where they worked. Dylan watched.

"They weren't joined at the hip by any means," said Nate Dykeman, the classmate who probably knew them best.

But Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold will be remembered for what they shared:

A secret sickness and a hatred for their high school, a place where their teen-age angst spiraled into murderous rage.

Dylan and Eric forged their fatal friendship at Columbine.

Four months after they unleashed the deadliest school shooting in U.S. history, killing 12 classmates and a teacher before killing themselves, their families and friends still struggle to understand what went wrong.

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold. Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris.

How did goofy little kids who played baseball, loved their pets and wanted to please their mothers turn into killing machines?

In the months since the killings, a clearer picture has emerged of Dylan and Eric's bond, although there are questions that will never be answered.

This much is known.

Out of a nerdy misery, Eric and Dylan found acceptance in each other, then excitement in concocting bizarre and destructive schemes and finally deadly fulfillment, proving their

twisted loyalty with a death pact that horrified the world.

Each was the other's reinforcement.

If either had doubts about killing a classmate, then another and another and another, all he had to do was glance over at his soulmate, see the approving smile and feel the reassuring sting of the high five.

It was mob mentality. A mob of two.

Dylan Klebold & Eric Harris. Eric Harris & Dylan Klebold.

Something neither would have done alone, they did together.

### **In the beginning**

When did their friendship begin?

No one remembers exactly, although Eric and Dylan met sometime in seventh or eighth grade at Ken Caryl Middle School.

The school sits in the heart of Columbine, an unincorporated swath of Jefferson County where an endless maze of cul de sacs, bike paths and chain stores melts into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

Nate Dykeman swears they were already best friends when he moved to Colorado in middle school.

"I met Eric in Spanish class, and I met Dylan at Eric's house one day," he said.

But Brad Jenkins, who is pictured clowning around with Eric in the middle school yearbook, said Dylan was never part of their group.

"We hung out during school and Eric never mentioned his name or anything," Brad said.

Dylan was the local boy. He had gone to elementary school in Littleton, and was in a gifted program at Governor's Ranch Elementary School from third through sixth grades. Even though he was surrounded by smart kids, Dylan wowed them with his math skills.

Dylan's parents, Tom and Sue, hosted the graduation party for the gifted students.

Ken Caryl yearbook pictures show a pudgy boy, soft, with baby fat that would melt in high school as he grew into what *Rolling Stone* called "a gawky kid with a big beak and a Jay Leno chin."

"He played football and stuff with us every day," classmate Jake Cram said. "He loved baseball and he played baseball a lot. He was a little bit clumsy."

As for Eric, time and again he was the new kid in town, forced to start over to make friends, a military brat hopscotching the country until his father retired in 1993 and moved his family back to his native Colorado.

He, too, played baseball. But he was a timid player who wouldn't swing when it was his turn to bat, said Terry Condo, his Little League coach in Plattsburgh, N.Y.

"He was afraid to strike out and let his teammates down," Condo said. "It struck me as him really wanting to fit in."

After their move from upstate New York to Colorado, Wayne and Kathy Harris rented a house a few blocks stoplights south of Columbine. The girl next door, Sarah Pollock, walked with Eric to school.

She told her mother that Eric was "preppy and a dork," but otherwise nice. Polite, too.

### **New school; new friends**

Ninth grade. High school. And a remodeled one at that.

Eric and Dylan were part of the Class of 1999, the first students who would spend all four years in a bigger and better Columbine, which had undergone a \$15 million makeover, its first major renovation since opening in 1973.

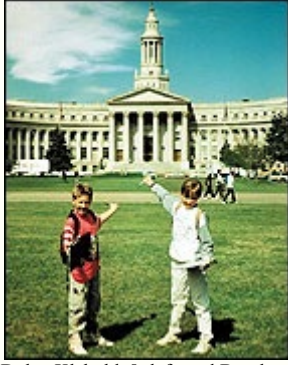
A ceremony that first day in August 1995 welcomed students to the new Columbine.

A new cafeteria, where four years later Eric and Dylan would plant a bomb. A new student entrance, where hundreds of panicked kids would run from Dylan and Eric's gunfire. A new auditorium where SWAT officers would train their weapons on shell-shocked students wading through the flooded room to safety.

Soon, Eric had a new friend, Brooks Brown, who lived nearby. They met on the school bus. Brooks had known Dylan since first grade. Eric, Dylan and Brooks began hanging out.



Dylan Klebold, left, gets hugged by Brooks Brown, center, as they clown around as Cub Scouts in 1989.



Dylan Klebold, 8, left, and Brooks Brown, 9, visit Denver's landmarks, including the City-County Building, during a school field trip in May 1990.

On cool fall nights they did what many high school freshmen do: They cheered on their football team. Eric's big brother Kevin, a senior, played tight end and was a kicker for the Columbine Rebels.

"Eric's dad would drive us," Brooks said.

Dylan drifted away from some of his middle school friends. Christopher Beets was one of them.

"I remember picking up Christopher from high school in ninth grade and Dylan was walking down the street," said his mom, Gail Beets. "I said, 'Gee, you don't seem to be buddy-buddy with Dylan anymore.' And he said, 'Well, he's got new buddies and I'm not into what they're doing.'"

What Dylan's new friends were into was computer games.

They played for hours, sometimes together, sometimes at their own houses, connected by modems, technology and a fascination with games where warriors mowed down enemies with pipe bombs and fire power, where victims never cried and their families never suffered.

They shared a wild, dark and disdainful intelligence.

They made fun of teachers and students behind their backs and even to their faces, especially those who were computer illiterate. They rolled their eyes at classmates' stupid questions.

When Brooks had to write an essay about his childhood, he didn't choose Disneyland or camping. He wrote about reading *Atlas Shrugged* by philosopher-novelist Ayn Rand because he considered it "life altering."

When Dylan wanted to put a nasty note in someone's locker, he hacked into the school's computer system to learn the combination.

Yet for all their smarts, they were too lazy, too uninterested, to make the honor roll.

None pursued sports either, though they were tall enough for a starting lineup that would've made any high school coach proud.

Brooks grew to be 6 feet 5; Nate, 6 feet 4 and Dylan, 6 feet 3. Two other friends, Ryan Whisenhut and Chris Morris, were 6 feet 4 and 6 feet 2, respectively.

Eric was the shortest of the group. He barely topped 5 feet 8.

Still, by all accounts, Eric and Dylan enjoyed their first year at Columbine.

And, at 14, they still fit in, at least from a distance.

"That's back when they were just like everybody else," classmate Katie Rutledge said. "They dressed normal, I'd even say preppie."

## **A look 'like he could kill'**

The unraveling began in their sophomore year.

Whether they had problems at home isn't known. Their families aren't talking.

But Eric, especially, felt mistreated at school by a small group of jocks, and ignored by teachers and administrators he believed looked the other way.

Eric and Dylan gravitated toward a small circle of students united by their differences. Combat boots and thrift-store grunge adrift in an Abercrombie & Fitch sea. This angry, rebellious group would become known as the Trench Coat Mafia.

Even then, Dylan and Eric were on the fringes of the outcast clique.

Classmate Kevin Hofstra said he's sure Eric and Dylan could have fit in with other groups, perhaps the super-academic kids.

"Both didn't have a whole lot of friends, but people liked them," he said.

Eric's anger began to emerge. He even turned it against his friends.

Classmate Ryan Whisenhut could never figure out why Eric liked him when they were freshmen, then wouldn't talk to him when sophomore year started.

"He just sort of changed," Ryan said. "He wouldn't say why. He would just sort of give you this look like he could kill you."

It was a pattern Eric would repeat. He hated his friend Brooks Brown for a while. He argued with Nate Dykeman over a girl. And he had a falling out with classmate Zack Heckler, who thought Eric's pranks were getting out of hand.

"You had to follow him (Eric) or get away from him," Zach's mother, Veronica Heckler, would later tell her pastor.

But Eric had one friend he never turned on: Dylan.

Dylan, the consummate follower. Dylan, who had a much broader circle of friends, but who remained loyal to Eric.

"Dylan," Ryan said, "was the least violent person I've ever known."

## **A silent theater soundman**

Dylan rebelled in quieter, more artistic ways.

He was always the boy in the control booth.

Early in his sophomore year Dylan joined a quirky, nonconformist crowd that chose theater to

express themselves.

"The people that were in the plays, he didn't mind hanging around," said Sam Granillo, a senior this fall. "They were in these plays because they had open minds, and most people in my school don't."

Theater required commitment. Dylan easily spent a dozen hours a week in rehearsal. All after school, all on his own time.

He found his role behind the spotlight, spending long nights hunkered in a cramped room at the back of the school auditorium. He usually ran sound, a job that appealed to his love of anything technical.

Chris Logan, who was heavy into theater, ran around with Dylan. Their circle of girls and guys bowled together and went to movies.

When Chris threw a Christmas party, Dylan was there. So was Chris' girlfriend, Robyn Anderson. Already she and Dylan had developed a bond.

But a melancholy side of Dylan began to appear.

Sarah Slater saw the sadness. She handled the spotlight in theater, working side-by-side with Dylan.

"I liked him," she said. "He was really shy, although he wasn't all that shy with me."

Too busy to talk during rehearsal or the shows, they spent hours communicating by e-mail when they got home at night.

"We talked about a lot of stuff, mostly about alcoholic beverages and how he hated the school," Sarah said.

She understood that hatred. With her baggy pants and spiked jewelry, Sarah didn't fit in until she started dressing more conventionally at the end of her freshman year.

She worked hard to change her negative attitude and discovered when she did that she enjoyed Columbine.

Dylan never did.

"Just when I talked to him, I don't know, it was like he would end the conversation with, '(Expletive) the school,'" Sarah said. "If I asked how he was doing, he'd say, 'I wish I didn't go here' or 'I wish I was somewhere else.'"

Sometimes during their online chats, Dylan would say he had been drinking. Sometimes Sarah could tell by his typing mistakes. Sometimes he would invite her to go out drinking.

But Nate Dykeman doesn't remember Dylan -- or Eric -- drinking a lot. He wonders whether Dylan was just trying to impress Sarah, trying to come across as a party animal, trying to

make her think he was living up to his nickname, VoDkA.

Sarah lost touch with Dylan after she dropped out of theater. But Dylan continued, handling the sound for *Go Ask Alice* as a junior and *Frankenstein* as a senior.

Last fall, theater students made a video for their beloved drama teacher, Sue Carruthers. Mrs. C, they called her.

Dylan was in the video. His brown hair had grown out below his ears. He looked shy, even though Brooks Brown, his friend for 12 years, was behind the camera.

### **Pepperoni and homemade bombs**

Eric liked pepperoni and green pepper pizza. That's all he would eat during his shifts at Blackjack Pizza. While other employees heaped on a smorgasbord of toppings, Eric didn't budge from his favorites.

Eric and Dylan started at Blackjack in the spring of their sophomore year, cooking pizzas for \$5.15 an hour. Their buddy Chris Morris, who was in the Trench Coat Mafia, already worked at the strip-mall pizzeria off Pierce Street south of Columbine. Chris had urged them to apply, saying it would be fun.

It was a blast.

There were flour fights in the kitchen and fireworks in the parking lot.

Two co-workers, Kim Carlin and Sara Arbogast, were in the same grade as Eric and Dylan.

Sara: "Eric was nice and talkative and funny and just a cool guy. He never expressed any hate toward anything, just the normal teen-age angst. A lot of people say they don't like school. I said it all the time."

Kim: "Dylan and me never got heart-to-heart like me and Eric would. I don't think Dylan fit into us very well. He was too quiet. We would get into massive food fights or water fights. He wasn't into playing with us. If you would ask him something embarrassing he'd turn red and give you this little grin."

On slow nights, the crew would sit behind the building and set off firecrackers or homemade explosives.

"We used to make dry-ice balls behind the store," Kim said. "You put dry ice and hot water in a 2-liter bottle. It just shoots up. We stole a cone one time when they did road construction in the parking lot. We would see how high we could shoot the cone."

One night Dylan brought a pipe bomb to work. The manager wrote him up and told him to never do that again.

Shortly afterward, Dylan quit Blackjack. Eric stayed.

Kim and Sara grew closer to Eric. He complained that some jocks were bullying him.

Sara never witnessed any taunting, but she did see classmates give Eric weird looks. She thought it was because of how he dressed. The boy who wore khaki when he started at Blackjack now draped himself in black cargo pants and black T-shirts, just like his friend Chris Morris.

But Eric drew the line at wearing a beret like Chris, opting for a baseball cap worn backward.

Kim and Sara couldn't understand why their classmates didn't like Eric.

"No one ever gave him a chance," Kim said. "People always looked at me because I would go over and hug him in the morning."

Sara would tease him about a co-worker he briefly dated. He would call Sara "Ohzay BooBoo," a phrase he picked up from the movie *Ace Ventura, Pet Detective*.

When Eric got his senior pictures taken and whined about how "stupid" he looked, Kim and Sara cooed about how cute he was and helped him choose prints.

When Eric harped that girls wouldn't have anything to do with him, Kim and Sara invited him to hang out with them. Sometimes he went bowling, but many times he refused, telling them he thought he wouldn't fit in.

Eric did join Kim and Sara and their friends homecoming night of their junior year. They had skipped the school dance for dinner at the Old Spaghetti Factory in downtown Denver. When they arrived to pick up Eric, they had to wait 10 minutes until his mother got home.

"He didn't want to leave without her knowing where he was," Kim said. "He didn't want her to worry."

### **Moving from state to state**

As teen-agers, Eric's parents traveled some of the same streets he later did.

Before Wayne Nelson Harris was a decorated Air Force pilot, he was a local boy.

Englewood High School, Class of 1966. Quiet and smart, according to former classmates.

Wayne's late father, Walter, worked as a valet at the Brown Palace Hotel. His mother, Thelma, stayed home with Wayne and his older sister, Sandra.

Wayne Harris met Katherine Ann Pool in the days of buzz cuts and beehives. She was a Colorado native, too. George Washington High School, Class of 1967.

Her father, Richard Pool, was retired military, and ran a hardware store on Holly Street in southeast Denver. The Pools still live in the house where Kathy and her two sisters grew up.

Wayne and Kathy had a church wedding at First Presbyterian in Englewood on April 17,



1970.

Three years later, Wayne joined the Air Force and it was off to Oklahoma for pilot training.

Harris and his young wife crisscrossed the country -- Washington, Kansas, Ohio. Their first child, Kevin, was born in 1978 in Washington. Eric David came along three years later while the family was stationed in Wichita, Kan.

At his 20-year high school reunion, Wayne Harris wrote that his goal was to "raise two good sons." The highlight of his life, according to the reunion questionnaire, had been the birth of his boys.

Kathy Harris stayed home when Kevin and Eric were young, busying herself with military-wives luncheons, volunteer projects and school functions.

Former friends in military towns describe Eric as a good kid. Smart. And cute, always cute.

By the time Wayne Harris retired from the Air Force, he'd risen to the rank of major and tackled some prestigious assignments as a test pilot and flight instructor. He earned a Meritorious Service Medal for his work on B-1 bombers.

Then, like many military bases in the early 1990s, Plattsburgh Air Force Base in New York closed.

In 1993, after 20 years of military life, Wayne and Kathy returned to Colorado.

Wayne got a job at Flight Safety Services, an Englewood company that makes military flight simulators. Eric's friends said his dad worked a lot. Kathy was hired by Everything Goes, an Englewood caterer.

At first, the Harrises rented. Then in May 1996, just as Eric ended his freshman year, they paid \$180,000 for a house a few blocks away, the place they finally planned to call home for many years. Two stories, brick, blue-gray trim, it sits on a cul de sac off Pierce Street, straight south of Columbine.

Wayne and Kathy drilled the value of homework and hard work into the boys. Kevin Hofstra, who hung around Eric mostly in middle school, said Eric and his brother Kevin always had to do homework before they could goof off.

Sports was big, too. Sunday afternoon football on TV, Wayne coaching Kevin's rec-league basketball team.

"His parents were always 100 percent awesome to me," said Derek Holliday, a 1996 Columbine graduate who is close to Kevin. "The Harrises are great parents."

The family pet, a tiny dog named Sparky, suffered from seizures. Eric sometimes took off work when Sparky got sick.

"Eric loved that dog," Nate Dykeman said.

At some point in high school, Eric's parents realized their son had problems more serious than they alone could fix. They took him to a psychiatrist, who prescribed Luvox, an anti-depressant used to treat obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Eric's bedroom was in the basement. His shelves were lined with boxes of old firecrackers and a collection of miniature cars. A poster with one of his favorite musical groups, KMFDM, was taped to the ceiling.

Another band Eric liked was Rammstein, a German band. Eric, who studied German, would play the group's CDs at Blackjack and translate for his co-workers.

KMFDM and Rammstein feature music with brooding and violent lyrics that Eric often copied and sent out to friends through the Internet.

Nate didn't visit Eric's house as much as he did Dylan's. No one did. It wasn't as much fun.

"Eric would just get on his computer," Nate said.

Most of Eric's friends outgrew their fascination with violent computer games. Eric never did.

His nickname, Reb, was inspired by a character in one of his favorite computer games, *Doom*, where the goal is to score high body counts.

One of the game's slogans: "DOOM -- where the sanest place is behind a trigger."

### Rebels in \$100 coats

Eric and Dylan seemed to relish their roles as outsiders.

"The impression I always got from them was they kind of wanted to be outcasts," said Dara Ferguson, a senior this fall. "It wasn't that they were labeled that way. It's what they chose to be."

That choice invited taunting by a group of jocks, many of whom graduated in 1998, and were known as bullies throughout the school. Students said they would block the hallways and make underclassmen take the long way to class. Even Kevin Hofstra, co-captain of the soccer team, said he was afraid of them.

Eric endured more of the taunting than Dylan.

Some of the jocks and their friends pushed Eric into lockers. They called him "faggot." They threw Coke cans at him from their cars.

"They wouldn't pick on Dylan because he was tall and lanky. Dylan was a pretty intimidating looking guy," classmate Patrick McDuffee said. "They picked on Eric."

Jessica Hughes, a 1999 graduate, defined Columbine this way:



A picture of the Trench Coat mafia appears in the 1998 Columbine yearbook. Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris are not in the photo, but they were friends with the group.

"There's basically two classes of people. There's the low and the high. The low sticks together and the high sticks together, and the high makes fun of the low and you just deal with it."

A small group of the 1,965 students dealt with it by bonding together in their unhappiness.

For the most part, these were bright, crafty kids. Computer whizzes. Video-game masters.

The Trench Coat Mafia.

The group got its sinister name in the most innocent way.

Tad Boles, who graduated last May, was the first to don a so-called trench coat.

In fact, Tad's mother, Terri Isaac, bought him *two* of the long cowboy dusters for Christmas his freshman year.

She found the coats on sale at Miller Stockman at Southwest Plaza for \$99, and bought one. Three days later, when it was time to wrap the coat, she couldn't find it.

"All I could think of was 'Oh my God, I left the hatchback open on my husband's car and somebody took it,'" she said.

So she spent another \$104.79.

When she was cleaning closets the following May she found the original duster. Her husband had forgotten he hid it there.

By that time, Tad's friends were wearing the coats, too. And kids at Columbine had started calling them the Trench Coat Mafia -- a name the group proudly adopted.

Eric and Dylan were not even official members. They were just friends of lead Trench Coaters Joe Stair, who graduated in 1998, and classmate Chris Morris.

The Trench Coaters resented the social system.

They refused to move out of the paths of jocks and their friends in the halls and lunch lines.

Their message to the locker-room elite: "Unless you do something to gain our respect, we're not going to bow down to you."

"We didn't actually tell them that," Joe said. "We *showed* them."

Among themselves, there was a lot of grumbling and wild fantasies about blowing up Columbine.

No big deal.

"Eighty percent of people talk about how much they hate school, or 'I'm gonna get that person,'" Joe said. "But we were never serious."

Chris Morris was known to be the most vocal in his Columbine hate. Even students who didn't know much about the Trench Coat Mafia knew Chris Morris.

Chris just didn't like many people. But he liked Eric and Dylan.

Chris' contagious darkness influenced others, particularly Eric, according to some Columbine students.

But Chris' friends say he is a nice guy, all bluff and no violence.

"One time Chris was going to get into a fight and I embarrassed him by saying, 'Come on, honey, go to class,'" said Kim Carlin, who worked with Chris at Blackjack.

The way some Trench Coaters see it, Chris was a positive influence on Dylan and Eric.

"He just got them to start sticking up for themselves," said Cory Friesen, a 1997 Columbine graduate and Chris' current roommate.

The 1998 Columbine yearbook features a picture of the Trench Coat Mafia, with the inscription, "Who says we're different. Insanity's healthy!" Dylan and Eric are not in the picture.

There was no picture in the 1999 yearbook. The Trench Coat Mafia had lost momentum.

Eric and Dylan only needed each other to get into trouble.

### **Pathetic pair of thieves**

Eric and Dylan bumbled, rather pathetically, as thieves their junior year.

Jan. 30, 1998. Parked in a gravel lot near Chatfield Reservoir listening to a new CD in Eric's gray Honda Prelude. Bored 16-year-olds. Setting off a few fireworks, breaking some bottles. Still bored.

Eric and Dylan told police different versions of what happened next.

"Dylan suggested we should steal some of the objects in the white van. At first I was very uncomfortable and questioning with the thought," Eric wrote on a police report.

From Dylan: "Almost at the same time, we both got the idea of breaking into this white van."

They hauled a briefcase, electrical gear and sunglasses out of the van, then took off in Eric's car. They parked off Deer Creek Canyon Road to check out the loot.

A Jefferson County sheriff's deputy confronted them minutes after the crime.

Both insisted they found the property stacked by the roadside. Yeah, right, thought the deputy. They were arrested, charged with theft, criminal mischief and criminal trespassing and released them to their none-too-happy parents.

Eric finally confided to one of his Blackjack workers why he was grounded.

"He said, 'I wish I hadn't done it,'" Sara Arbogast said. "He said their parents were really mad at them and they weren't allowed to hang out together for a while because of it."

Dylan was so ashamed he didn't even tell Nate Dykeman, who found out about it third-hand.

"I said, 'Is this the reason you can't go out?' and he got all red and told me he didn't want to talk about it," Nate said.

Two months after their arrest, Dylan and Eric appeared before Jefferson County Magistrate John DeVita.

Both fathers were there.

Eric spoke crisply. Dylan mumbled. Eric told the judge he made As and Bs. Dylan said he was a C student, which got him a stern lecture from the judge.

"I bet you're an A student if you put your brain power to paperwork."

"I don't know, sir," Dylan said. The rest of his response was unintelligible.

"When the hell you going to find out? You got one year of school left. ... . When you going to get with the program?" the judge barked.

More hangdog mumbling from Dylan.

Both boys insisted this was their first crime. Their fathers backed them up.

Tom Klebold told the judge: "This has been a rather traumatic experience, and I think it's probably good, a good experience, that they got caught the first time."

To which DeVita responded, "He'd tell you if there were any more?"

"Yes, he would actually," Klebold said.

DeVita sent Dylan and Eric to a diversion program, a mix of community service and counseling.

When DeVita chose the sentence, he had no idea that Jefferson County detectives had just received information about other criminal activities by Eric and Dylan. No one had bothered to forward him the report.

They were sneaking out at night and setting off homemade bombs. The detectives knew this because Eric bragged about it in a Web site filled with his viperous writings.

### **Raging through cyberspace**

Randy and Judy Brown, parents of Brooks Brown, turned over 12 pages of Eric's violent

cyberspace rantings to detectives in March 1998, days before the court hearing.

"You all better hide in your (expletive) houses because I'm coming for EVERYONE soon, and i WILL be armed to the (expletive) teeth and i WILL shoot to kill and i WILL (expletive) KILL EVERYTHING!" Eric had written.

"No i am not crazy, crazy is just a word to me."

But Judy Brown thought he was crazy. She had become suspicious of Eric months earlier.

Eric had blamed Brooks for vandalizing a classmate's house. Someone had toilet-papered a tree, set a bush on fire and glued the locks.

But Judy knew her son had been home that night. Brooks, once again, had been grounded, this time for breaking curfew.

Judy and Randy Brown are the kind of parents who know a lot about their kids' lives. Judy is a stay-at-home mom who usually is gone only on Tuesday afternoons for watercolor lessons. Randy is a golf pro turned real estate agent whose flexible hours allow him to zip in and out.

They have two sons: Brooks, who graduated last May, and Aaron, a junior.

Much to the dismay of the boys' friends, Brooks and Aaron often told their bubbly mom all. What they didn't tell her, she managed to find out. When they lied, they usually were caught.

Judy talked to the homeowner whose house had been vandalized and she called deputies and told them Eric was responsible. The deputies said they would talk to Eric's parents.

Eric was furious. One day as Brooks was driving by the bus stop near his house, Eric threw a chunk of ice, breaking his windshield.

Brooks told his mother, who immediately drove to the bus stop and confronted Eric. She got his backpack and told him she was going to talk to his mother.

He grabbed onto her car, screaming, his face turning red. He reminded her of an animal attacking a vehicle at a wild-animal park.

Kathy Harris was in her driveway when Judy Brown pulled up. Judy can still recall the plaid flannel shirt she was wearing. Kathy's eyes teared up when Judy described Eric's behavior.

Later that day, Brooks talked to Kathy, too, telling her that Eric had been slipping out of the house at night, pulling pranks and setting off fireworks.

Wayne Harris called the Browns.

"He said his son was afraid of me and that's why he was hanging on the door handle," Judy Brown said. "I said, 'Your son's not afraid. Your son is terrifying. Your son is violent.'"

Wayne Harris drove Eric to the Browns to apologize. He waited in the car while Eric went

inside.

"He went through this whole spiel, how it was all in fun," Judy Brown said. "I said, 'Eric Harris, you can pull the wool over your dad's eyes, but you're not going to pull the wool over my eyes.'"

She told Eric if she ever saw him near her house again she would call the sheriff.

"I said, 'Stay away from my kids.' I just had a feeling about him at this point."

Judy and Randy Brown thought the problem had ended.

Then in March 1998, Brooks came home from Columbine one day. He said a friend had tipped him about a Web site Eric had created.

"He said, 'I can't tell you who it is, Mom, because he's afraid that Eric Harris will harm him,'" Judy Brown said.

The friend: Dylan Klebold.

What the Browns read on the Web page terrified them. Eric threatened to kill Brooks, but their son wasn't his only target. Eric said that meteorologists who make wrong predictions should be stabbed with broken baseball bats. He wanted to take a shotgun to anyone who blocked his path in hallways.

"I am the law, if you don't like it, you die. If I don't like you or I don't like what you want me to do, you die. God I can't wait till I can kill you people."

Eric bragged how he and "VoDkA" managed to sneak out of his house one night and set off a pipe bomb they had named "Pazzie" -- Italian for madness.

Eric said he and Dylan had built four other pipe bombs, "the first true pipe bombs created entirely from scratch by the rebels (REB and VoDkA)."

"Now our only problem," Eric continued, "is to find the place that will be 'ground zero.'"

The Browns gave Eric's and Dylan's home addresses and phone numbers to a detective. But the detective never returned their phone calls after that.

The Browns didn't know what to do.

Brooks told his parents to relax, Eric was a keyboard kind of tough guy. But brother Aaron was terrified. He slept with a bat by his bed.

Randy and Judy had one comfort: Dylan.

Dylan was one of the sweetest kids they knew. They figured Dylan would never let Eric get really violent.

The Browns thought about telling Tom and Sue Klebold about Eric's Web site but decided to let the detective handle it.

"Sue was the kind of mother who, if there was a problem when the boys were playing when they were little, she would say, 'Is it one of my kids?' Because if it was, she would take care of it," Judy Brown said.

"We knew that when she found out what Dylan and Eric were up to, that would be the end of it."

### **A family that banned toy guns**

Sue and Tom Klebold grew up in Ohio, but their childhoods were hardly similar.

Sue knew privilege, Tom knew tragedy.

Susan Frances Yassenoff lived in the well-to-do suburb of Bexley outside Columbus.



**Joe Mahoney/News Photo**  
Brenda Parker, 24, keeps pictures of Eric Harris in her computer. He taught her how to use the Internet during their brief fling.

The name Yassenoff means something in Columbus. Her grandfather, Leo Yassenoff, was a prominent developer and philanthropist who left his \$13 million estate to charity. The Jewish community center in Columbus is named after him.

Sue's father, Milton, was Jewish; her mother, Charlene, was not. Sue attended Temple Israel, said Solly Yassenoff, a distant cousin.

After high school, Sue studied art and math at Ohio State University.

Thomas Ernest Klebold was born in the Toledo area. His mother died when he was 6, his father when he was 12. His half brother, Donald, who was 18 years older, raised him.

Tom attended a small college in Springfield, Ohio, for two years before transferring to Ohio State, where he majored in sculpting and fell in love with another art student.

Tom and Sue were married in 1971. Tom was the thinker, the more reserved partner. Sue was artsy and extroverted and sensitive.

The Klebolds moved to Milwaukee where Tom got a graduate degree in geophysics from Marquette University. The oil-and-gas industry took them to Oklahoma City in the mid-1970s, and then to Colorado.

Their eldest son, Byron, was born in 1978. Dylan Bennet was born three years later, on Sept. 9, 1981, in Lakewood.

In the early 1980s, the Klebolds moved from Lakewood to a neighborhood just southeast of Columbus. They became good friends with neighbors Randy and Vicki DeHoff, who lived across the beltway.



Their kids were the same age. Vicki and Sue spent summers by the pool, talking as their children splashed away. When the DeHoffs had two more children, Sue Klebold passed on toys that Dylan had outgrown.

"You know how sometimes couples click?" Randy DeHoff said. "We just did. We had discussions on almost anything and everything."

Which was interesting, because the families diverged philosophically. The DeHoffs were evangelical Christians. The Klebolds searched for a spiritual niche. The DeHoffs voted conservative. The Klebolds considered themselves liberal.

"Their kids weren't even allowed toy guns when they were growing up," Randy DeHoff said.

"Dylan did not learn hate in that home."

Sue and Vicki eventually worked together at Arapahoe Community College. Sue's job was to make sure disabled students had access. She moved on to the same position with the state consortium of community colleges.

Tom, predicting the fallout in the oil-and-gas business, started looking for another career. He started a mortgage-management business. One of the rental properties he and Sue own is in Denver -- on Columbine Street.

In 1989, Tom and Sue paid \$250,000 for a stunning 3,528-square-foot home tucked between two red rock outcroppings on Cougar Road in Deer Creek Canyon.

A kid's playground, it had a swimming pool, tennis court and basketball court. But Dylan, sensitive like his mother, worried the cougars would eat his cats, Lucy and Rocky.

Dylan's friends loved to visit because there was so much to do and his parents were so cool.

"His parents were so nice to me," Nate Dykeman said. "Either they'd get doughnuts for me or they'd be making crepes or omelets."

The Klebolds had to have a lot of food for Dylan, whose appetite was legendary. He ate breakfast cereal from a metal mixing bowl. And it was nothing for him to eat a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken by himself.

His older brother, Byron, went to a private high school before transferring to Columbine when he was a senior and graduating in 1997.

When Byron moved into an apartment in 1998, Dylan inherited his bedroom. He repainted the room, two black facing walls and two white facing walls with red shutters on the windows. He stocked a miniature refrigerator that had been a 17th birthday gift from the family with candy bars and Dr Pepper.

Dylan hung posters of Roger Clemens and Lou Gehrig on the walls, along with music groups and models. One poster described how to make cocktails.

"And there was your typical teen-age pile of dirty laundry," Nate said.

Four or five years ago, the family attended St. Philip Lutheran Church in Jefferson County.

The pastor, Don Marxhausen, is not your traditional man of the cloth. A tough-talking New Yorker, he spent much of his ministry working with ghetto drug addicts. He says one of his goals is to be socially unacceptable. He swears on occasion.

Marxhausen said the Klebolds were looking for a sense of community, but Tom had "a bunch of issues" with organized religion and the family quit coming after about six months.

Marxhausen didn't push them. He understood the family's spiritual struggles.

"You're talking about a Jewish and Christian background," he said.

The family celebrated both Hanukkah and Christmas.

Tom and Sue imposed strict limits on how much money they spent on their kids, friend Judy Brown said.

"These kids were not spoiled," she said. "Tom and Sue wanted them to know the value of money and work."

One Christmas, Sue fretted because Dylan wanted a collectible baseball card that cost as much as she had planned to spend on all his gifts. She worried about only having one gift under the tree. But that's what Dylan wanted, and that's all he got.

Dylan drove an older BMW. It was already so beat up that when a classmate bumped into it with her car he told her it was no big deal.

As a senior, Dylan was out of class by 1 p.m. He often came straight home and spent time with his dad, who worked out of the house.

Tom treasured that time. He thought he and Dylan had grown extremely close.

**Kill, kill, kill. *Kein mitleid!***

Eric's Web site disappeared days after his and Dylan's court hearing. He now began putting down his thoughts in a journal, a mixture of typed pages and handwritten entries, a trail of a year-long plan to blow up Columbine on Adolf Hitler's birthday. April 20, 1999.

But his and Dylan's rage, concealed so well from their parents, was not entirely hidden. It showed up in Nate Dykeman's junior yearbook.

Their coded messages were an odd, adolescent mix of exclamation marks, jabs at vapid pop stars, video-game boasts.

Eric wrote: "I hate everything unless I say otherwise, hey don't follow your dreams or your goals or any of that (expletive), follow your (expletive) animal instincts. if it moves kill it, it it doesn't, burn it. kein mitleid !!!"

The last phrase is German for *nomercy*.

Dylan, in Nate's yearbook, had especially unkind words for musicians he didn't like:

*kill jiggy*

*kill puffy*

*kill hanson*

*kill RICHARD MARX!!!*

That summer, just before his senior year, Eric got a second job. Besides cooking at Blackjack, he worked alongside Nate Dykeman at Tortilla Wraps. Eric wanted extra money to help pay for a new computer.

Again, Eric's employer raved.

"He was a real nice kid," said David Cave, who hired Eric. "He would come in every day with nice T-shirts, khaki shorts, sandals. He was kind of quiet but everyone got along with him."

Eric provided two references when he applied.

One was Columbine English teacher Jason Webb, one of his favorite teachers.

"He loved Mr. Webb," classmate Jeni LaPlante said. "He even gave Mr. Webb a Christmas present."

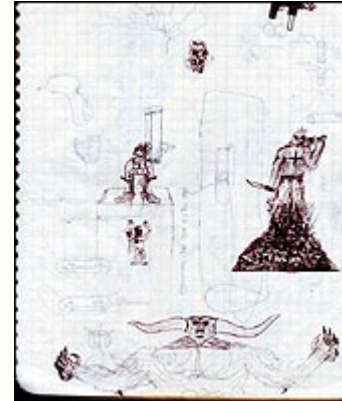
Eric's other reference: Sue Klebold.

### **Girls and guns**

They may have shared a hatred, but Eric and Dylan parted ways on a crucial part of high school life: girls.

Dylan rarely dated.

"He liked girls, you know, but he would never approach them because he was too shy or was waiting for them to approach him," said Sarah Slater, his friend from theater.



Eric Harris sent these and other drawings to his friends through the Internet.

Nate Dykeman has another opinion on why Dylan didn't date.

"Dylan wanted to wait," he said. "He didn't want to get into anything in high school."

Robyn Anderson had a crush on Dylan and they went out a couple of times, but Dylan never considered her a girlfriend.

Pals since ninth grade, both studied German. Both were a bit nervous around the opposite sex. But Dylan was always polite. He treated her with respect.

Eric asked a number of girls out, including a girl both he and Nate liked. The girl chose Nate, which made Eric so mad he didn't talk to his friend for a while.

Many girls told Eric no.

Brenda Parker said yes.

They had met at Southwest Plaza in late January 1998, his junior year, when Brenda and her girlfriends were certain a group of guys was following them.

"Dylan was really tall so you can't miss him," Brenda said.

She confronted the boys. They ended up talking about what they were going to do that night. Cruising in her 1996 Mustang, Brenda said.

That night Eric drove to Westminster, where Brenda lived.

Brenda would turn 23 in three weeks. Eric was 16.

Only she didn't know that.

When he talked about school, she didn't know he meant Columbine. She thought he meant a community college.

"He acted a lot older," she said. "And I'm immature."

They bowled. They cruised. They went to Bandimere Speedway.

She thought he was nice. He bought her Mountain Dew's -- "I didn't even have to ask." And he told her she was pretty.

Eric taught Brenda how to download *Doom* and other computer games, and how to use the Internet.

Eric liked to visit her Westminster apartment because she lived alone. Sometimes Dylan came along, but he rarely said a word. One night Dylan made Brenda laugh when he slipped out of his shell and lip synched to a Beastie Boys song on television.



Dylan Klebold and Robyn Anderson pose during Columbine's prom on April 17, three days before the shootings. They then met up with Eric Harris at an after-prom party.

Brenda visited Littleton a couple of times. She watched as Eric and Dylan shot crickets with a BB-gun in Eric's basement.

Once Eric called her late and whispered for her to come get him, that he was going to sneak out of the house. Then they drove to Dylan's house and waited for him. About an hour later, Dylan's tall figure appeared out of the dark.

The trio drove to the mountains and drank. They decided to spend the night in her Mustang because they were worried about drinking and driving.

"Eric was a little tipsy and we went for a walk and it was really dark. He was holding on to me and he tripped and he took me with him," Brenda said.

She described their brief relationship as a "friendship but more than a friendship." One of the reasons it ended was because Eric was grounded and couldn't get away to see her much.

Brenda thinks the last time she saw Eric was about five months before the shootings. They met at the Macaroni Grill in Westminster.

"He seemed like he was really bummed out. At first I thought it was because we were broken up. He kept calling and wanting to see me but I didn't want to because I had a boyfriend at the time," she said. "He just said he was bummed out. I asked about what and he wouldn't tell."

What Brenda didn't know is that Eric and Dylan had been shopping for guns with Robyn.

In December, they picked up three guns -- a Hi Point 9mm carbine rifle and two shotguns -- at a gun show.

A Gilpin County man named J.D. "Jimmie" Tanner has them monthly at the Denver Merchandise Mart on East 58th Avenue.

Robyn already had turned 18, and Dylan and Eric apparently thought they needed her along. Actually, at 17, either of them could have bought the guns from an unlicensed dealer at the Tanner show.

Robyn has said she figured Dylan and Eric wanted the guns for hunting, or maybe they were collectors. She wasn't sure. To her, these were just cool guys she had fun with.

They gave her cash. She showed the seller her driver's license. They got their guns.

About a month later, Eric and Dylan went to another Tanner show. They met up with one of their Blackjack buddies, Philip Duran, and his friend, Mark Manes.

Philip knew Eric and Dylan were scouting another gun. He put them in touch with Mark, who owned a TEC-DC9 semiautomatic pistol. The foursome discussed the sale at the January gun show, and Dylan and Eric later paid Mark \$500 for the gun, according to court records.

In early 1999, Brenda came home to find three messages from Eric on her answering machine. He kept calling back because her machine cut him off.

"He said, 'I'm sorry I lied to you. There's something we need to talk about. I'm 17. I'll be 18 in three months.'"

And then he told her it would be great if she wanted more in their relationship.

But it was something else he said that prompted Brenda to call right away.

He had left some Rammstein CDs at her house. He told her she could have them because he wouldn't be needing them anymore.

She wanted to see if he was all right. And she also wanted to make sure he was clear about their relationship.

"I told him I just wanted to be friends."

### **Cerebral subjects for high school**

Their senior year, Eric and Dylan went for some pretty cerebral subjects: psychology, creative writing.

One theme dominated Eric's homework assignments. Guns.

As part of Eric's government and economics class, students marketed a product and made a video of it.

"His product was the Trench Coat Mafia Protection Service," classmate Matt Cornwell said.

"Dylan was not in the class, but he was in the video. If you paid \$5 they would beat someone up for you. If you paid them \$10, they would shoot somebody for you."

Eric's video stood out, Matt said.

"There were some pretty crazy products. Some people did Hit Man For Hire. Most of them were funny. This wasn't funny at all. After it was over, everybody was like, 'Whoa, that was weird.'"

Matt and Dylan were in composition class, but they only talked once.

"That's because he wore this Soviet pin on his boot," Matt said. "One of the last days I was like, 'Why do you wear that pin on your boot?' And he was like, 'Just to get a reaction out of people.'"

Brooks Brown found himself in two classes with Eric in their last semester.

The two hadn't talked in more than a year. They decided to patch things up, mostly for Dylan's sake. That way, Eric could go along if Brooks invited Dylan for a smoke. Dylan wouldn't feel torn between his two friends.

Brooks shook his family up one night when he announced at the dinner table that he and Eric

were friends again. Judy Brown looked at her son in disbelief.

"He said, 'He's changed,'" she recalled. "I said, 'Stay away from him. It's a trick.'"

Brooks didn't believe her. In their creative writing class, he even volunteered to read Eric's essay describing a childhood memory.

Eric wrote about playing war with his brother Kevin, two little boys using the forest as their battlefield and pine cones as their grenades.

"It was real good," classmate Domonic Duran said.

Students were asked to describe themselves as an inanimate object. Eric chose a shotgun and a shell.

Brooks doubts Eric took the assignment seriously. Although some students in the class adored the teacher, Judy Kelly, they said Eric clearly felt superior to her.

Dylan also chose violent themes, and once wrote about a killing.

Kelly was concerned enough about Eric and Dylan's papers to talk to their parents at parent-teacher conferences in March.

Wayne Harris had justified his son's fascination with weapons by saying he had been in the military and Eric hoped to join the Marines.

But then there was the dream.

To psychology teacher Tom Johnson, Eric's dream wasn't much weirder than a lot of others that landed on his desk.

It was February. Eric and Dylan were in the class together fifth period, after lunch. They would show up early, sit side-by-side and talk openly with other kids in the small, friendly class.

Dream analysis was optional. Students would type up a recent dream and hand it in. No names, no grades.

But the class figured out which one was Eric's because it had so many references to "me and Dylan."

"It occurred in a mall and the boys were being put upon by someone, and they retaliated," Johnson said.

Guns were involved, and the dream was somewhat violent. But at the time it seemed fairly normal in the surrealistic dream world.

"Whenever there are guns involved, there's anger. But it didn't strike me as being particularly obsessive or compulsive," Johnson said. "You do 100 dreams a day and many of them are in

the same ilk."

Johnson had taught Eric freshman government and economics. To him, Eric wasn't much different his senior year, just more gothic, longer hair and darker clothes. Eric was still motivated and worried about grades. He had a 99 percent.

Dylan, well, he'd missed a test and hadn't made it up. Johnson couldn't remember Dylan's exact grade average, but knew it was lacking.

Eric and Dylan's first class during spring semester was bowling.

At 6:15 a.m.

"It's just to have fun," classmate Jeni LaPlante said.

It was the only class she had with her closest friends: Sara Arbogast, Kim Carlin and Cindy Shinnick. Dylan and Eric bowled on a team with Nate Dykeman and Chris Morris.

One reason Kim and Sara liked the class is they could catch up with Eric. They hadn't seen him much after quitting Blackjack in the fall.

"Eric bowled like an idiot," Kim recalled, giggling.

"He'd throw it," Sara said. "A lot of people laughed because it worked and he would get strikes and stuff."

Sometimes Eric and Dylan shouted "Sieg Heil!" when they made strikes.

But something else stands out for the bowling partners: Dylan's explosive temper.

"Dylan would get so mad when he didn't get strikes," Jeni said. "One time he hit the bowling return machine really hard."

In fact, a tendency to flash quick anger was a trait Eric and Dylan shared.

"Eric had a short fuse," said friend Joe Stair. "You could just tell he got mad easier than most people."

But the way Joe saw it, Eric's anger was a reflection of Eric's passion.

"He got angry. But with other things he was really happy," Joe said. "He was a very passionate person."

### **Countdown to graduation**

Graduation was only two months away.

Eric and Dylan were weeks from being free of the place they hated.



Parents attended a graduation meeting at the school in March.

Judy Brown and Sue Klebold slipped into the auditorium to catch up. The two old friends talked. And talked. And talked. Finally, they looked at their watches. It was 10:30 p.m. They couldn't believe it. They were alone in the school.

Sue couldn't contain her excitement. Dylan was going to the University of Arizona in the fall to study computer science.

"We were just so excited for him," Judy said. "Sue was ecstatic."

Dylan was on his way.

He and Eric sailed through the classes and community service they were forced to do after the van break-in. They took anger management sessions, gave urine samples for drug tests and spent 45 hours helping at a recreation center.

Eric and Dylan so impressed their counselor they were let go a month early.

Feb. 3, 1999. The counselor praised Eric on a diversion termination report:

"Eric is a very bright young man who is likely to succeed in life."

Eric impressed the counselor with his intelligence.

Prognosis: Good.

Dylan, likewise, made a good impression on the counselor. "He is intelligent enough to make any dream a reality but he needs to understand hard work is a part of it."

Prognosis: Good.

A month later, Eric and Dylan hauled out their sawed-off shotguns and a new assault rifle.

It was time for target practice.

Colorado 67 twists through Douglas County's lonesome foothills through miles and miles of lush forest.

The shooting range isn't marked. But lots of people target practice in the Rampart Range area of Pike National Forest. They leave behind grubby evidence of their sport. Shotgun shell casings in every color, torn paper targets. Trees whose waifish trunks didn't stand a chance against a clip of .40-caliber shots.

You can hear it from the highway. Pow. Pow. Pow. All around the lemony smell of ponderosa pine.

Eric and Dylan warmed up here.

On March 6, they loaded up their TEC-DC9 and the two shotguns -- now illegally sawed off - and went into the woods with Mark Manes and Philip Duran, the friends who got them the TEC-DC9.

They blasted away with the shotguns -- the same ones Robyn Anderson had bought. And they all fired the TEC-DC9, an aggressive, sloppy pistol that turns up in a lot of drug killings.

Eric and Dylan videotaped the action.

### **Friday night, April 9**

The AMF bowling alley dimmed the lights and brought in a DJ from midnight to 2 a.m. Eric loved the disco lights and rowdy music and camaraderie he found at Rock N' Bowl. He was there most Friday nights.

Only this night, many of his pals had early-morning Saturday plans. Only two made it to the bowling alley, Dylan and Robyn.

Dylan wouldn't let Eric down, wouldn't let him be all alone.

Not on Eric's 18th birthday.

### **Thursday evening, April 15**

A Marine recruiter huddled with parents in their living room. A painful conversation about their teenager's psychiatric problems. Rejection.

This was one of Eric Harris' last nights.

Eric had no plans for college. Though he was a brilliant student with a brain that could wind through Shakespeare or HTML with equal ease, Eric lusted after the military. Like his Air Force pilot father and his World War II veteran grandfather.

Eric told friends he wanted to fight in Kosovo. Bombs and explosions, the brutality of it all. Eric told a classmate he'd like to be on the front lines so he could kill a lot of people.

Eric wanted to join the Marines to pursue the toughest challenges, to prove himself. Something he felt he could never in the Columbine atmosphere.

"He said it's unlike here, where they go for the lowest common denominator, like the teachers helping out the stupid kids," Brooks Brown said. "There, they're going for the best."

But Eric's Marine Corps goals were crushed.

The recruiter told the family that Eric would never be a Marine because he was taking the drug Luvox. The Marines would have none of that. He told Eric he would have to be Luvox-free for six months before trying out again for the Marines.

That same day, Tom Klebold turned 52.

## **Friday, April 16**

Eric and Dylan cooked pizzas at Blackjack.

Dylan had gone back to work at the pizza joint several months earlier. They didn't always work together, but they did on what turned out to be their final shift.

One of the customers that night was Susan DeWitt, a Columbine junior, who was a receptionist at Great Clips next door.

When she came to pick up dinner for a stylist, Eric asked her if she wanted to do something that weekend. She said sure.

She thought he was cute. Adorable even. He always talked to her when he ran into her at school.

## **Saturday, April 17**

Cigarettes. A white stretch limo. A girl in a royal-blue prom dress and soft blonde curls. She's holding his hand.

This was one of Dylan Klebold's last nights.

Prom night for Columbine. Hardly the outsider, he was one of a dozen dressed-up kids who piled into a limo and dined at a ritzy LoDo restaurant. Then it was off to the dance at the Design Center on South Broadway in Denver.

Dylan wore a black tuxedo, a pink rosebud tucked into his lapel. His long wavy hair slicked back into an uncooperative ponytail.

His date was Robyn Anderson, now a valedictorian contender with her straight-A average. She asked him to the prom -- just as friends.

In recent months, Robyn and Dylan's relationship had been wobbling along that murky territory between friendship and romance.

Robyn later told a friend that Dylan behaved gentlemanly on prom night, complimenting her on her dress.

"They were holding hands and stuff," said Jessica Hughes, one of the limo crowd.

Jessica sat next to Robyn and Dylan during dinner at Bella Ristorante. There was a lot of silly joking between them, playing with knives and matches.

"They were pretending to light themselves on fire," Jessica said.

Dylan ate a big salad, followed by a seafood dish with shells, mussels she thinks, then dessert. "I was like, my Lord," Jessica said.

Jessica and Dylan chatted about a party both planned to attend in a couple weeks, a reunion for kids who'd been in the gifted program in elementary school.

"He was all excited to see everyone," Jessica said.

Dylan even agreed to bring pizza because he worked at Blackjack.

Back in the limo, no one was drinking anything stronger than Pepsi, Jessica recalled.

The car's TV was off. The radio was turned to a hard-rock station and on so low the kids drowned out the music. They were being, well, normal goofy teens enjoying themselves. Cameras flashing. Lipstick smiles. Whisking through the night in a mirrored-ceiling car.

"We were flipping people off because the windows were so dark. We were making fun of people," Jessica said.

Dylan even talked of everyone staying in touch after he left for college in three months.

"He was in a really great mood that night," another friend in the limo, Monica Schuster, said.

Eric didn't have a prom date. At least one Columbine girl turned him down after he sent her a late, convoluted invitation through a classmate. Friends have said he tried a few more times for dates.

So he and Susan DeWitt, the girl he had talked to the night before at Blackjack, made plans for prom night. She came to his house and they watched *Event Horizon*, a 1997 box-office dud about a spaceship, the futuristic, gory kind of movie that Eric liked. His favorite films were *Alien* and *Starship Troopers*.

"He seemed fine," Susan said. "I was a little nervous because, like, dates are nervous."

They talked about friends they knew. He didn't mention Dylan. If he had, she wouldn't have known who he was talking about. She can't recall ever seeing them together -- even at Blackjack.

Wayne and Kathy Harris had gone out to dinner to celebrate their 29th wedding anniversary. Susan met them when they got home. They were "super nice."

Eric invited her to the after-prom party at Columbine's gymnasium, the affair that parents throw for kids as an alternative to drinking and driving when the prom ends.

Susan said no, she had to be home, so Eric joined up with his buddies. He ran into Sara Arbogast and Kim Carlin, who were with their dates.

"I hugged him and I picked him up," Kim said. "Me and him always pretended we fought. We sucker-punched each other. We were goofing off."

"He seemed normal to me. He was with Dylan."

## **Monday, April 19**

Eric and Dylan ditched their second to last class of the day, creative writing, with two other classmates, Brooks Brown and Becca Heins.

They decided to go to McDonald's for lunch. But first Eric and Dylan wanted to drop by Eric's house. They told Brooks and Becca they would meet them at the restaurant.

Eric and Dylan never went back to school for their last class, psychology.

That day someone was making strange noises in Wayne and Kathy Harris' garage. A man hanging wallpaper in the next-door neighbor's home heard glass breaking and other jolting, explosive sounds.

Eric asked Mark Manes to buy ammunition for the semiautomatic pistol, although Eric was old enough to buy it himself. Mark went to Kmart and bought 100 rounds for \$25. That night, Eric drove the few blocks to Mark's house to get the ammo.

They talked in front of the Manes house. Mark asked if he planned to go target shooting that night. Eric told him no, he needed the ammo for the next day.

## **Tuesday, April 20**

Dylan and Eric skipped bowling.

Nate Dykeman wondered about that because Dylan usually told him if he wasn't going to be at school.

Eric and Dylan finally arrived. They were dressed to kill. And their secret sickness wasn't a secret anymore.

Brooks Brown, who had walked outside to have a cigarette, saw Eric pull up and he confronted him in the parking lot, telling him he was an idiot for missing an important test that morning.

It doesn't matter any more, Eric told him.

"I like you, Brooks. Get out of here."

At 11:21 a.m., stunned students ran for their lives as two gunmen in trench coats sprayed them with a relentless accumulation of firepower. They giggled and screamed "Death to the jocks!" as they killed their classmates at random.

Pain and death all around. Human suffering did not distract them. They had each other. This was fun, a game. And they were the winning team.

They would leave 13 dead: schoolmates Cassie Bernall, Steven Curnow, Corey DePooter, Kelly Fleming, Matthew Kechter, Daniel Mauser, Daniel Rohrbough, Rachel Scott, Isaiah Shoels, John Tomlin, Lauren Townsend and Kyle Velasquez, and teacher Dave Sanders.

And they would wound more than 20 others.

When Nate heard about the shootings, he called the Klebold house and asked if Dylan were there.

"No, Nate, he's at school," Tom Klebold said.

Nate told him about the shootings, about the trench coats, about Dylan not coming to school.

Tom Klebold checked Dylan's closet for his coat.

"Oh my God," he told Nate. "It's not here."

### **Fatal friendship**

Eric's and Dylan's grand plan for a high body count failed.

Teachers warned hundreds of students to run.



A huge homemade bomb Dylan and Eric planted in the cafeteria never exploded. The boys who had built so many pipe bombs in preparation for this day had manufactured a dud.

And the weapons they had diligently practiced shooting jammed repeatedly.

In the end, Eric and Dylan returned to the library, where 10 of their victims lay dead and two wounded students drifted in and out of consciousness.



Art teacher Patti Nielson, hiding in a cabinet, heard voices in unison count, "One! Two! Three!" Then she heard a loud boom.

Dylan and Eric died next to each other.

If Eric had been afraid to kill himself, Dylan was there for encouragement. If Dylan had contemplated backing down -- even for a second -- he had Eric depending on him.

They were a team. Best friends.

Blood brothers.

*August 22, 1999*

**AP Photo**  
Crosses for Dylan Klebold, top, and Eric Harris stand on Rebel Hill near Columbine just days after the shootings. The family of one of the slain students destroyed them, saying it was wrong to honor such evil.