

Harris told of ambition to blow up Columbine

Students say attacker was obsessed with explosives; investigators study tapes

By Kevin Vaughan, April M. Washington and Ann Carnahan

Denver Rocky Mountain News Staff Writers

April 29, 1999

Eric Harris boasted to friends as long as two years ago that he wanted to blow up Columbine High School.

But none considered it anything more than a teen-age fantasy -- until Harris and his friend, Dylan Klebold, stormed Columbine last week with bombs, assault weapons and shotguns.

"Every once in a while, Eric would talk about blowing up the school -- but we all talked about blowing up the school, or 'going postal' and shooting someone you're mad at," said Justin Preziodi, 20, who graduated from Columbine in 1997. "But you would never think someone would actually do it."

When the siege was over, Harris, Klebold, 12 fellow students and a teacher lay dead. Another 23 were injured -- 21 by gunfire.

Harris' obsession with explosives was a frequent topic of his conversations with fellow students.

"He used to talk about how he found stuff for bombs on the Internet," said Stephanie Hommel, a 17-year-old junior at Columbine. "No one took him seriously.

"He would talk about blowing up the school."

Preziodi, who took a second-period Internet class with Harris two years ago, said Harris loved to play a video game called Duke Nukem. In the game, each player tries to kill as many people as possible.

Preziodi said Harris and Klebold often came into the video store in Southwest Plaza where he worked. They favored violent martial arts movies.

"I know killing is wrong," said Preziodi, who also enjoys violent action movies. "That stuff would never cross my mind. I thought Eric and Dylan knew the difference, too."