

Columbine tapes show extent of killers' rage

Published: December 13, 1999 12:00 am

DENVER (AP) -- In videotapes laced with anger and apologies, the two teenage Columbine High School gunmen said they planned to kill hundreds of people in their campus assault last spring, Time magazine reported.

"I hope we kill 250 of you," Dylan Klebold, 17, said on one of five tapes reviewed by the magazine, which reported on the videos Monday. According to Time, Klebold predicted the moments prior to the April 20 attack would be the most "nerve-wracking of my life. After the bombs are set, and we're waiting to charge through the school, seconds will be like hours. I can't wait."

But both Klebold and Eric Harris, 18, apologized to their parents during the recordings.

"They're going to be put through hell once we do this," Harris said. Addressing his parents directly, he added, "There's nothing you guys could do about this."

Klebold told his mother and father they had been "great parents" and he appreciated their teaching him "self-awareness, self-reliance."

"I'm sorry I have so much rage," he said.

Authorities allowed a Time reporter access to the five videos recorded in the weeks prior to the attack, in which the two seniors killed 12 students and a teacher before committing suicide. About 23 others were wounded.

Brian Rohrbough, whose son Daniel was one of the victims, lashed out at authorities after learning of the Time report.

"We were absolutely promised by the Jefferson County district attorney's office these would not be released," Rohrbough said. "Apparently, Jefferson County feels Time magazine has more of a right to know than the victims' families."

Undersheriff John Dunaway said Time violated an agreement not to refer to the tapes in its story -- a claim disputed by a magazine spokeswoman.

"No one ever asked us not to report on the contents of the tapes," Diana Pearson said. "We can assure you we had explicit discussions about how these tapes would be used, and that what we saw would be on the record."

But Dunaway said Time correspondent Tim Roche was allowed to see portions of the videotapes only for background on a story he was writing about the Columbine investigation and the response of SWAT teams.

Sheriff John Stone "was repeatedly assured by the Time reporter that they would not make reference to the tapes," Dunaway said.

Authorities have known since shortly after the massacre that Harris and Klebold had plotted a gun and bomb attack they believed would leave

many more than 15 people dead. The videos offered a more detailed glimpse into their motives and thoughts about the attack.