

Father had hunch son was involved

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Denver Post Staff Writers
April 22, 1999

In one family, the mother worked with disabled kids. The father, friends say, supported gun control.

The other family was quiet; neighbors knew them little beyond a friendly wave between backyards on a Saturday.

The parents of Eric Harris, 18, and Dylan Klebold, 17, remained in seclusion Wednesday as a global media horde encamped at their houses after the murderous rampage Tuesday at Columbine High School. Almost equally elusive were the family settings from which the two teens emerged.

At least one of the parents, however, had a wrenching hunch about his son. Before any victims or suspects were identified Tuesday, Dylan Klebold's father contacted authorities, saying the boy might be involved and offering to help, Jefferson County District Attorney Dave Thomas said Wednesday.

"He asked if he could be of assistance at the scene," Thomas said. But SWAT teams told Thomas they didn't think Klebold could help them.

Thomas said he didn't know why Klebold felt his son was one of the shooters. Don't blame the father for the sins of the child, said Ed Berg, who worked with fellow geophysicist Thomas Klebold for five years.

"There is not a thing in his character that would indicate a thing like this would happen," Berg said. "It's got to destroy his life."

The only words from either family were conveyed by attorneys. From Wayne N. and Katherine A. Harris, 50 and 49, came this message:

"We want to express our heartfelt sympathy to the families of all the victims and to all the community for this senseless tragedy. Please say prayers for everyone touched by these terrible events."

And an attorney for the Klebolds issued this statement:

"We cannot begin to convey our overwhelming sense of sorrow for everyone affected by this tragedy. Our thoughts, prayer and heartfelt apologies go out to the victims, their families, friends, and the entire community. Like the rest of the country, we are struggling to understand why this happened, and ask that you please respect our privacy during this painful grieving process." Co-workers and Cougar Road neighbors of Thomas E. and Susan Y. Klebold, 52 and 50, said the parents are grieving.

Berg, until recently Thomas Klebold's co-worker in Downtown Denver, described Klebold, who explored for oil and gas for mostly small independent companies in Colorado, as a liberal who strongly favors gun-control laws.

"I would be very surprised if he had a gun in his house," Berg said.

Although Klebold, now self-employed, had mentioned some disciplinary troubles with his son, to Berg the issues sounded typical for a teenager. Records show the Klebolds run Fountain Real Estate Mortgage Management from their home, a large, modern, cedar-and-glass structure with a matching guest house, both wedged between two huge sandstone slabs.

Susan Klebold is also assistant director to Access to Employment Projects for the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System in Denver, according to her boss, Sharon Wink.

She started in the college system in September 1984 at Arapahoe Community College as director of disability services, working with deaf, blind and other disabled students.

County records show the Klebolds bought their home, which sits on about 5 acres, and another vacant 5 acres, in 1990. The holdings in unincorporated Jefferson County are worth about \$500,000.

Six miles away, South Reed Street neighbors of Wayne and Katherine Harris said he recently re tired from the military. Wayne Harris, a major in the Air Force, was stationed in Plattsburgh, N.Y., from 1993 to 1996.

Neighbors said they weren't sure where Katherine Harris worked. An older brother often played basketball with neighbors on rare trips home from college.

"They worked in their yard on Saturdays every so often," said Kip Smallwood, a neighbor. "They'd wave and we'd wave back."

Late Tuesday, authorities confiscated from the Harris house duct tape, matches, fireworks, gallon jugs, sections of PVC pipe, documents, posters and a computer. Earlier, a bomb squad had detonated a couple of devices at the house, neighbors said.

The Klebold house was swept for bombs Wednesday afternoon. There were no detonations, but investigators refused to disclose whether any bombs were found. Investigators then searched the house for evidence.

Search-warrant documents for their home - as well as the Klebold residence and a third undisclosed location - have been sealed by the Jefferson County District Court.

The Harrises bought the neat, two-story house, with an assessed value of \$184,000, in May 1996, county records show.

Late Wednesday morning, four people pulled up in a Ford Explorer outside the Klebold home. They declined to talk with reporters as one nailed a poster board to the fence with red, blue and black letters.

"Sue and Tom, we love you, we're here for you. CALL US. Pam, JoAnna, Kathy, Mary, Teresa, Mickey, Diana, Karla, Sharon, Linda, Linda, Bill, Dennis, Diane and Tami."

"I'd like to ask the whole community to try to be supportive here and recognize that they're going to suffer for a long time - maybe more than some of the other parents," said neighbor Jerry Jentz.

The family, like most residents of the exclusive and rugged subdivision in the foothills southwest of Littleton, have mostly kept to themselves over the years, Jentz said.

Like many of the Klebolds' neighbors, Jentz said he visited with Tom and Sue Klebold only rarely. Also echoing other neighbors, he said he didn't know the Klebold children. He doesn't remember Dylan Klebold or his older brother, Byron, attending the occasional neighborhood picnics and gatherings over the five years he said he's known the family.