

'EVERYONE'S GONNA DIE'

Hero Columbine Survivor Reveals He's Stopped 12 Copycat Shootings Across the Country and Relives Horror of Notorious Massacre 20 Years On

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"EVERYONE'S gonna die...we're gonna blow this library up!" the schoolboy killers yelled during their murderous rampage - as they gunned down fellow students and threw bombs through the air.

Craig Scott still vividly remembers the unhinged teens' vile taunts, his ears ringing from their shotgun blasts, then lying on the floor in his two friends' blood - as they lay dead beside him.



Craig Scott survived the shooting by hiding under a table - but sadly his older sister Rachel did not

What started like any other school day at Columbine High School ended in unimaginable slaughter - an event that shocked the world and became one of America's most notorious school shootings.

"I heard some popping noises coming from outside the school," Craig, who was aged just 16 at the time, told Sun Online.

“It was near the end of the school year, so I thought maybe some seniors were pulling a prank and brought some firecrackers to school.

“And then this teacher ran into the room. She was completely frantic. She was screaming that there are two kids outside the school with guns shooting other students and she yelled at all of us to hide.

“So I got underneath the table with two of my friends, Matt and Isaiah. My friends were very scared. I was scared too but they were kind of freaking out and I felt a voice within telling me to become very quiet and get still.



Craig travels the country trying to teach students the value of life



Craig and sister Rachel in happier times

"The last thing he said was, 'I want to see my mom'"

"The shooters came into the school and the popping noises of the gunshots were getting louder and louder. We realised that this wasn't a prank and the library was the first room that they came into immediately.

"They're shooting off their guns, they were taunting or making fun of students before they shot and killed them.

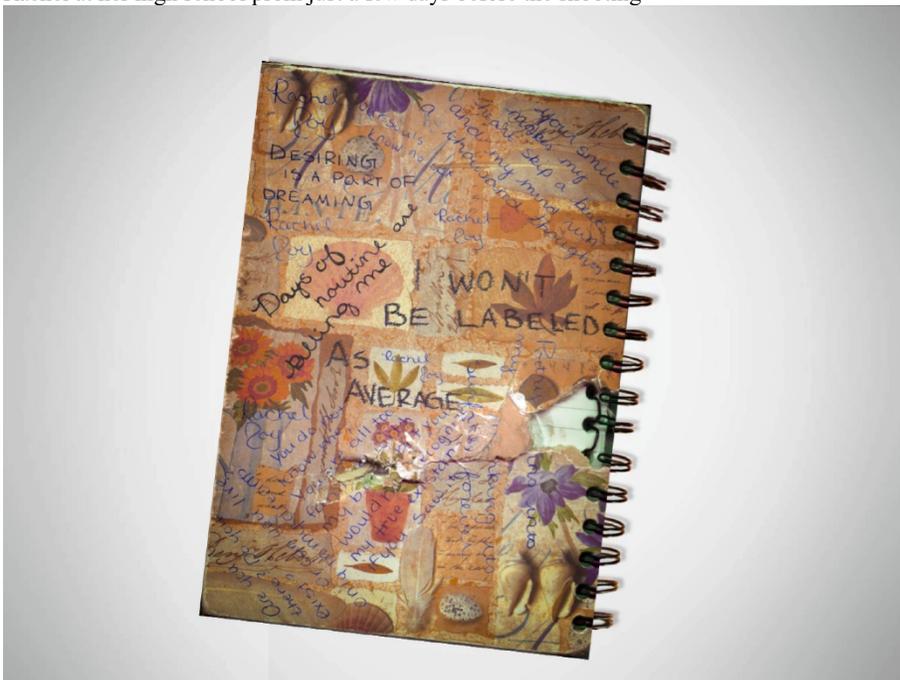
"They came over to where I was and saw my friend Isaiah. Isaiah was one of the very few black students in my school. And so they dragged him from out from underneath the table and they were calling him racial slurs.

"And the last thing that he said was, 'I want to see my mom'. Then they shot and killed him and then they shot and killed Matt - and left me underneath that table.

"I was lying there in their blood and my ears are ringing from the shotgun blast. I thought my ears were bleeding and I felt like I heard a voice speak to me and tell me, 'Get out of there'. I felt like God spoke to me and told me get out of there.



Rachel at her high school prom just a few days before the shooting



A bullet went through Rachel's diary before she died

"They had no rights to do what they did"

"So I was the first student in the library to stand up. I wasn't sure if the two shooters were still there or not, but they had left, and I yelled at everyone, 'C'mon, let's get outta here'.

"I heard someone asking for help. I turn around and behind me it was a girl rocking back and forth and she had her shoulder blown off from a shotgun blast and she's asking for help over and over and how, pick her up."

Heroic Craig saved the life of the girl Kacey Ruegsegger Johnson, who had her shoulder blown off, and many other students who managed to escape the library before the shooters returned.

Outside he hid behind a police car reeling from shock and grief, but grateful to be alive.

But Craig was soon dealt another heart-wrenching blow. His beloved sister Rachel, 17, had been shot and killed outside the library - she had become one of the 13 victims massacred by fellow students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.



Craig and his family found pages of inspirational writings after her death which they now share with others



Shooters Eric Harris, left and Dylan Klebold appear in this CCTV still of footage shot in the school cafeteria

Struggling to deal with the trauma and loss he'd experienced Craig, now 36, describes himself as a "zombie" for the next couple of years following Columbine.

"I was in shock a lot of times," he said. "I was just in my own world and I kind of disconnected a little bit. I dealt with a lot of emotions - obviously sadness and grief, but I also dealt with a lot of anger and even hatred where I hated the two shooters and what they did.

"One kid gave me a hit-list"

"They had no rights to do what they did. And I carried that around with me for a few years. Then I met someone who went, who went through something worse than I had gone through and lost his whole family in a tragic situation and he talked to me about the power of forgiveness and letting go. And so after a few years of being the kind of person that was hard to be around where I lost my temper and took it out on people, I started to forgive and let go."

Since then Craig - and his family - have dedicated themselves to sharing Rachel's story and sharing inspirational writings and diary entries she made before her death.

Craig, who now lives in nearby Denver, has also set his own schools programme called Value Up in which he tours the country teaching kids the value of life in a bid to stop school shootings.

His talks are so powerful that he has helped stop at least 12 potential copycat school shootings - including some where potential mass killers even had weapons and plans ready to go - but confessed to their planned crimes after hearing Craig talk.



Each of the 13 victims are remembered with a black cross bearing their name and picture



Craig now tours schools in a bid to stop further mass shootings

"There were 12 documented cases of kids who were planning school shootings and changed their minds after our work," he said.

"I know at least actually six of those where they actually had plans and weapons ready.

“One kid in Texas gave me a hitlist he had on him after I spoke. I talked with him and told him I’d have to let his principal know and he understood.

“They got police involved and he was put on probation, but they realized he had a change of heart.

“All our lives are important - every life has an inherent value and we need to come back to a place where we believe that.

“I think if a student believes that they have value and others have value, they’re not going to go kill themselves or kill other people.

“Take the shooters at Columbine, if you read through their journals, they both had self hatred and they didn’t think like they had value or that other people have value.

“I think the biggest answers to school shootings and how we stop them lies in the hearts of young people.”

"A kid my age isn't supposed to go to that many funerals"

Twenty years on the town of Littleton, Colorado, is still reeling from the massacre at its high school.

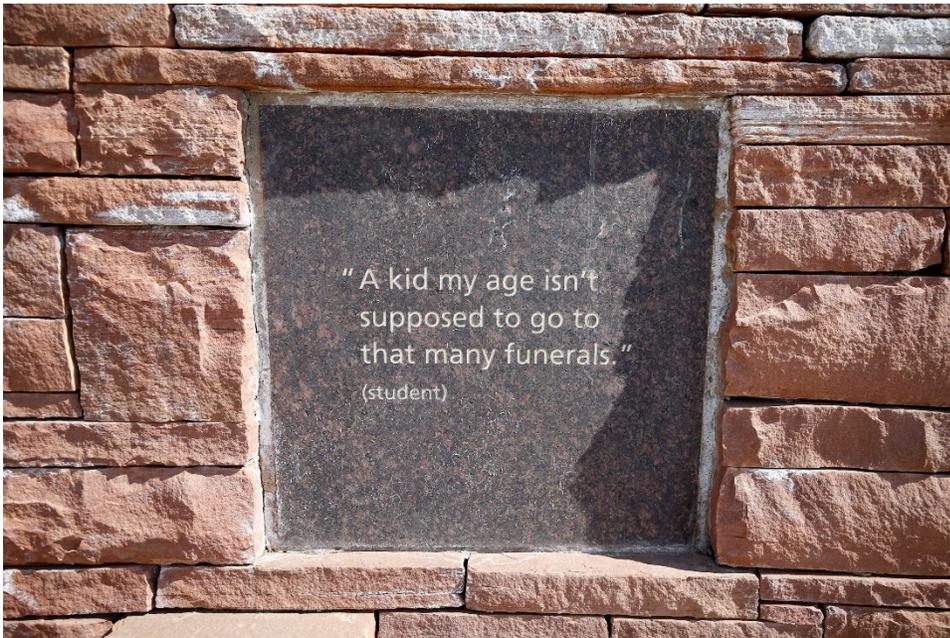
Thirteen black marble crosses stand at the edge of the quiet Littleton cemetery – one for each of the innocent youngsters and one teacher murdered.

Well wishers leave coins on the grave stones, each one featuring a smiling picture of the deceased – a heartbreaking symbol of the senseless loss of life.

While in the park next to Columbine school, a memorial features 13 heartbreaking tributes to the victims from their grieving parents, relatives and friends.



12 students and one teacher were slaughtered on April 20, 1999



A memorial to the Columbine victims and survivors was built in the park near Columbine High School

A "wall of healing" contains quotes from those who lived through the tragedy.

One plaque from an anonymous student reads: "A kid my age isn't supposed to go to that many funerals."

Driving past Columbine High School, you can't help but be struck by its ordinariness - this could be any high school anywhere in America.

And sadly the Columbine massacre was not a freak occurrence.

Since shooters Harris and Klebold entered the school's library, there's been 193 school shootings across the country.

"People are still impacted by this"

While Columbine has been overtaken by last year's massacre in Parkland, Florida, as the worst school shooting in American history, Columbine retains its significance as the first.

And twenty years on the community is still reeling from the massacre.

Even kids who never saw any bullets, and managed to hide in safety until the worst was over - struggled to cope with what their peers had done over the years.



The community surrounding Columbine is still reeling from the tragedy

Parents became angry and paranoid - many terrified to send their kids back to school.

Some parents tried to channel their grief into campaigning on gun control - including Tom Mauser, whose son Daniel was shot dead, aged 15.

Tom told Sun Online how "things had regressed" since Columbine in terms of gun control - he's still determined to honour his son's memory by campaigning for change.

Other former students and parents have suffered from mental health issues - and depression and suicide blighted the community in the aftermath of the event.

“Even in the community now you’ll hear about kids who were just there at the school but they didn’t get injured, who weren’t really impacted because they managed to hide somewhere or something but you hear how they are not doing well at all,” Darcy Ruegsegger, mum of survivor Kacey, who still lives in the area said. “There are lots of stories like that.

“It’s a very present thing still here. All the families dealt with it differently. Parents who lost her kids have been dealing with whole different things than we were and they have dealt with it in a lot of different ways.



Daniel Mauser was shot dead aged 15 at Columbine High School



Greg and Darcy Ruegsegger, whose daughter was almost killed, said the community is still impacted by the tragedy

“Some went the gun control route. Some parents are very angry and still are. Others are very private and don't talk about it at all.

“There's certainly a sense in the community that we're all part of what happened. And we've had other events here at other high schools where this has happened again.

“You know, we all worry about when's the next one is going to happen. Because it's going to happen.”