

Video's release outrages kin

By [Kevin Simpson](#)
Denver Post Staff Writer

April 27 - Beth Nimmo, squeezing a videotape and a wadded-up tissue, stood in her driveway Wednesday and expressed outrage that footage of her daughter, slain Columbine student Rachel Scott, had just been made public.

Addressing reporters just a few feet from Rachel's maroon car, she described how the videotape, which includes footage from a hovering KCNC-News4 helicopter, had brought the April 20, 1999, ordeal too close for comfort.

"For the first time," she said, "I saw my daughter be dragged to the fire engine. I didn't need to see that - nobody else needs to see that.

"I'm outraged. It does so much harm to the victims and their families. I don't see any good coming out of this."

She said the release of the tape will "sabotage the community," and she felt compelled to speak out.

"I'm Rachel's mom," she said. "I raised her. I feel violated by seeing her body pulled through the grass. It was not a time to be silent."

"It crushed me to think people all over the country can watch my daughter be handled. .

. It's very humiliating," she added. "Rachel had a lot of dignity."

She also found it offensive that the Littleton Fire Department added music to scenes on the training tape that show the school library, where 10 students were killed.

"My son Craig was in the library," Nimmo said, "and he didn't hear music in the background."

She said the public broadcast of those images might set back any progress 16-year-old Craig Scott, who was not injured in the attack, has made in dealing with the tragedy. He saw friends die on either side of him, and later learned his sister had died outside the school.

Just last Thursday, on the oneyear anniversary of the massacre, Craig spent three hours in the library trying to come to grips with the events of that day.

"He felt he had to do that," Nimmo said. "It was a personal goal to re-create that day and walk out a better person. It made him sick the rest of the day - he had a fierce headache that just wouldn't go away - but he felt good about what he did, about what he accomplished.

"But when he sees something like this," she added, "everything he worked so hard for could easily be wiped away. At some point, Craig will want to see this, because he's a person who processes facts. I don't know if this is the time. As his mother, I'm choosing for him not to deal with this yet."

Nimmo said she also worries for other victims and their families, who could be re-traumatized by the tape's contents.

"I think about Richard Castaldo in here," she said, referring to the boy who was paralyzed below the chest by gunshot wounds a few feet from where Rachel Scott died. "His body being dragged, and it tears me up to think he might see this on TV."

Castaldo said he probably will watch the tape, but he thinks the images of his injury should go no further.

"I don't know what they were thinking" by releasing the tape, he said.

Castaldo's mother, Connie Michalik, said she was disgusted by the release of the tapes.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Columbine Connections, 303-972-7977, 9126 W. Bowles Ave., Suite 2C. After hours, call 303-425-0300.

SHOUTS (Students Helping Others Unite Together Socially), 303-972-2690, Ascot Theater second floor, 9136 W. Bowles Ave.

Jefferson Center for Mental Health, 303-425-0300, 24-hour emergency; south office at 9200 W. Cross Drive, Suite 421.

FACT (Family Adolescent Crisis Team), 303-271-4555.

"I'm appalled at the way they handled this," Michalik said. "They dragged both these kids? You're not supposed to do that, for God's sake. I keep thinking, 'If they'd put Richard on a stretcher properly, I don't think he'd have as much spinal damage as he has.' I'll be looking for doctors' opinions on this."

Nimmo has watched only 10 to 15 minutes of the tape but intends to watch the rest so she can be more informed about its contents. And she said she'll hold on to the tape for a while. "But at some point," she said, "it needs to be destroyed."