

Killer's Parents Consider Suit In School Case

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In the first public sign of discord between the families of the teen-agers responsible for the killings at Columbine High School, the parents of one of the gunmen are considering a lawsuit against Jefferson County, contending that the authorities ignored indications that the other gunman had violent tendencies.

The parents of Dylan Klebold, Susan and Thomas Klebold, argued in papers filed with the County Attorney on Friday that the sheriff's office had been "reckless, willful and wanton" in failing to respond to complaints in 1998 that the other teen-ager, Eric Harris, had threatened to kill another student.

In Colorado, any lawsuit against a government agency must be preceded by a notification, an "intent to sue" claim, within 180 days of the event. The shootings, in which Mr. Harris and Mr. Klebold killed 12 students and a teacher before killing themselves, occurred on April 20.

The Klebolds filed an "intent to sue" claim against the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, as did the families of 14 other victims, 4 of whom died, and 1 teacher. Thirteen families filed papers with the county school district, and at least eight filed with the county probationary department because at the time of the shootings, both Mr. Harris and Mr. Klebold were on probation.

The filing by the Klebolds took many officials by surprise because it cited previous incidents involving Mr. Harris that it contended should have alerted the authorities to his potential for violent behavior.

The Klebolds argued that if the authorities had told them and the probation department that Mr. Harris once threatened to kill a student, the knowledge "would more likely than not have caused the Klebolds to become aware of dangers of which they were not aware and demand that their son, Dylan, be excluded from all contacts with Eric Harris."

William A. Tuthill 3d, an assistant county attorney, said the suit was "without any legal basis whatsoever." The Klebolds' lawyer, Gary Lozow, did not return a telephone call. Nor did Benjamin Colkitt, who represents the Harrises.

The rewards may be minimal in any case. Under Colorado law, a plaintiff suing a government agency can recover no more than \$150,000, and the agency is liable for no more than \$600,000 for any one incident.