

UPI Focus: Kids aimed to 'destroy the school'

DICK KELSEY
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A group of people gather around an angel made of snow in Clement Park adjacent to Columbine High School on April 25, 1999, as the public outpouring of sympathy continues to grow in the wake of Tuesday's shooting at the school in Littleton, Colorado. Photo by Jim Ruymen/UPI

LITTLETON, Colo., April 22 -- Law officers believe there is a "very good chance" that two gunmen had help setting up the Columbine High School slaughter and believe the duo aimed to finish their shooting and bombing spree by blowing up the school. Sheriff John Stone said today that the discovery of yet another bomb provides more evidence that, "These subjects were not only going on a killing rampage but they were going to destroy the school, they were going to burn the school up."

Fifteen people died in a bloody assault when two youths, who may have been disciples of Adolf Hitler, terrorized the suburban Denver school, shooting firearms and throwing homemade bombs throughout the building. The two gunmen fatally shot themselves.

Stone also told reporters, "There's growing suspicion out here that they would have time to put as much ordnance in that school as they did without some help." Sgt. Steve Davis said today a lieutenant on the investigative team told him, "We certainly think that there's a very good chance that we have more than two people involved." The discovery of an explosive device consisting of two 20-pound propane tanks in the school kitchen fueled suspicion that accomplices of suspects Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold are at large.

Attorney General Janet Reno pledged the Justice Department will help local authorities deal with the aftermath of the assault "in every way we can." Reno, in Colorado today to meet with law enforcement officers, victim advocates and others involved in the Columbine tragedy, said she is "inspired" by "the most courageous people she's ever met," especially Columbine students. She delivered a message from them: "They wanted me to make sure that the people of America knew that Colorado would not be known for a tragedy. It would be known for its ability to overcome adversity."

Vice President and Mrs. Al Gore plan to be in Colorado Sunday to attend a memorial service for victims of the Columbine massacre. The vice president is expected to deliver a eulogy at the service.

Law officers found 30 bombs in the school and in the homes and vehicles of the suspects. Today's discovery posed a danger to investigators who had just begun their crime scene work, so they left the building while bomb squads removed the device and searched for more.

Stone said investigators believe it will be "several more days before we pull out of the school." Bomb squad members are in the school at all times in case investigators come across additional explosive devices.

A steady stream of mourners went to Clement Park, which has become a huge memorial to victims of the assault and their loved ones. Thousands of flowers and messages of sympathy have been placed at the site near Columbine High.

Grieving friends of Rachel Scott, a 17-year-old who wanted to be a missionary, piled flowers and notes of condolences on Townsend's car in the school parking lot.

It was Scott's kid brother, Craig, who sat with the father of a victim and told NBC Today host Katie Couric how he prayed for the brothers and sisters of his classmates before learning he'd never see his sister again.

Scott's little brother clutched the hand of Michael Shoels, a big man whose son, Isaiah, was the only African-American to die in the assault. Shoels said his son had two strikes against him -- he was an athlete and he was black.

The National Rifle Association drastically scaled back its planned annual meeting in Denver on April 30 to May 2, but Denver Mayor Wellington Webb and city council members called on the gun group to cancel the event altogether.

A concert by shock-rocker Marilyn Manson scheduled for April 30 at Denver's Red Rocks Amphitheater was canceled by show sponsor Jacor Broadcasting Inc.