

Suspect makes court appearance in Columbine case

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Retired mechanic Chuck Smith acts as the eyes and ears of Littleton's West Alder Avenue.

And on Friday, he voiced the overwhelming sentiment of the neighborhood as he looked toward the well-kept home of friend Ruben Duran, whose son a day earlier became the second person arrested in connection with the Columbine High School massacre.

"These people have always been nice," said Smith. "I know he (Ruben) was working two jobs. He was driving a limo - taking kids to the prom."

Hours earlier, Ruben Duran escorted his 22-year-old son, Philip, through the Jefferson County Courthouse. Making his first court appearance, Philip Duran was advised of the felony charges filed against him.

Prosecutors allege he acted as a middleman in the sale of the semiautomatic handgun that killers Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris used in the April 20 rampage. They say he introduced Harris and Klebold to gun seller Mark Manes, 22, and passed along some of the money Harris and Klebold paid for the gun to Manes.

Duran worked with Harris and Klebold at a neighborhood Blackjack Pizza store. Duran - a former Columbine student whose younger brother and sister were students there the day of the rampage - is now working as a computer programmer in Chicago.

In addition to allegedly "unlawfully, intentionally, knowingly and recklessly" providing a handgun to a minor, a second charge alleges that on March 6, Duran went to the Rampart foothills southwest of Littleton and fired an illegally modified shotgun with Harris, Klebold, Manes and Manes' girlfriend.

It is illegal to use a shotgun with a barrel shorter than 18 inches.

If convicted of both charges, he faces up to nine years in prison and a \$600,000 fine.

Duran surrendered to authorities Thursday, was freed after posting a \$15,000 bond and at Friday's brief hearing sat shoulder-to-shoulder with his father and lawyer Matt DePetro. The Durans and DePetro declined comment afterward. Duran is due back in court Aug. 31.

Neighbor Smith said that even if Duran did help supply Harris and Klebold with the TEC-DC9 handgun, one of four guns used in the attack, "I don't think he knew in any way, shape or form what they were going to do with it." Another neighbor recalled how relieved Ruben Duran was when his younger son, Simon, who just finished his sophomore year at Columbine, was not hurt during the massacre. He had left over the lunch hour, the neighbor said. It was unclear Friday if Julia Duran, who graduated in May, was in school that day.

Philip Duran attended Columbine from November 1991 until he withdrew in February 1993, the Jefferson County school district said.