



Columbine Revisited: What Have We Learned?

Have we learned anything from what took place at Columbine High School 13 years ago? In 2009, the first full-length investigation of the massacre was published with a great deal of mind-numbing information that no one knew about in 1999. The book *Columbine* was written by Dave Cullen, a liberal journalist, who did an excellent job of combing all of the sources of information now available to an investigative reporter. But his liberal mindset prevented him from looking into the humanist education these two killers had been given by their schools for 12 years. As Rev. R. J. Rushdoony had written: "Humanism is the institutionalized love of death."



In a way, the Columbine story reminded me of the 9/11 story in which the authorities in charge of our safety were so crippled by their humanist mentality that they couldn't see evil even if it hit them in the face. The two Columbine killers spent a year and a half planning their massacre and left a trail of clues that should have awakened the sleepest of police to look into what these two young men were up to. Indeed, they were warned by Randy and Judy Brown, parents of Aaron Brown, a Columbine student who knew Eric Harris and was aware that he was up to no good. According to Cullen:

Before Eric and Dylan shot themselves, officers had discovered files on the boys. The cops had twelve pages from Eric's Web site, spewing hate and threatening to kill. ... The Web pages had come from Randy and Judy Brown. They had warned the sheriff's department repeatedly about Eric, for more than a year and a half. Sometime around noon April 20 [1999], the file was shuttled to the command center in a trailer set up in Clement Park. Jeffco officials quoted Eric's site extensively in the search warrants executed that afternoon, but then denied ever seeing it.

Apparently, admitting that they had had this information a year and a half before the massacre and had done nothing about Eric's threats, was too embarrassing. The Browns told the *New York Times* that they had contacted the sheriff's department about Eric 15 times. Cullen writes: "Jeffco officials would insist for years that the Browns never met with an investigator — despite holding a report indicating that they had."

The dereliction of the sheriff's department to go after the potential killer reminds one of the dereliction of the FBI in following the trail of the 9/11 terrorists who spent over a year planning the hijacking of the four airliners and crashing them into the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and a third target, which was thwarted by the passengers on flight 93. Concerning the Columbine cover-up by those who were supposed to protect the community from evildoers, Cullen writes:

The officers knew they had a problem, and it was much worse than the Browns realized. Thirteen months before the massacre, Sheriff's investigators John Hicks and Mike Guerra had investigated one of the Browns' complaints. They'd discovered substantial evidence that Eric was building pipe



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bombs. Guerra considered it serious enough to draft an affidavit for a search warrant against the Harris home. For some reason, the warrant was never taken before a judge. Guerra's affidavit was convincing. It spelled out all the key components: motive, means, and opportunity. ...

At a notorious press conference ten days after the murders, Jeffco officials suppressed the affidavit and boldly lied about what they had known. They said they could not find Eric's Web pages, they found no evidence of pipe bombs matching Eric's descriptions, and had no record of the Browns meeting with Hicks. Guerra's affidavit plainly contradicted all three claims. Officials had just spent days reviewing it. They would repeat the lies for years.

A cover-up by the sheriff's department was the sort of thing bureaucrats do to protect their jobs and pensions. Their job is secondarily to protect the public. Their main job is protecting themselves. But the big question about the massacre was why these two intelligent high-schoolers planned and carried out such murderous cruelty on their own fellow students. What had driven them to behave in this strange, uncharacteristic manner, totally unlike the behavior of the average American teenager? The first targets in trying to unravel the motive behind the massacre were the parents of the two killers. According to Cullen:

Eric was a military brat. His father moved the family across five states in fifteen years. Wayne and Kathy gave birth to Eric David Harris in Wichita, Kansas, on April 9, 1981. ... He started school at Beavercreek, Ohio, and attended schools in rural air force towns like Oscoda, Michigan, and Plattsburgh, New York.

Kathy chose to be a stay-at-home mom so that she could focus attention on her two boys. Wayne coached baseball and served as scoutmaster. In the evenings, he would shoot baskets with Eric and Kevin. What could be more apple-pie than that?

In Plattsburgh, Eric played soccer and Little League. By junior high he had become obsessed with computers and video games. But in photos, he looked wholesome, clean-cut, and confident. The family moved to Ocode, Michigan, at the edge of Huron National Forest, when Eric was eight. There he played war games with his friends. He was always the protagonist, always the good guy.

At age 11 Eric began playing the video game Doom. Here is what Wikipedia says about [Doom](#):

Doom is a 1993 first-person shooter video game by id Software. It is widely recognized for having popularized the first person shooter genre, pioneering immersive 3D graphics, networked multiplayer gaming, and support for customized additions and modifications via packaged files in a data archive known as "WADs". Its graphic and interactive violence, as well as its Satanic imagery, also made it the subject of considerable controversy. In Doom, players assume the role of a space marine who must fight his way through a military base on Mars' moon, Phobos, and kill the demons from Hell. ... Doom was played by an estimated 10 million people within two years of its release, popularizing the mode of game play and spawning a gaming subculture.

From what we can tell, Doom did not turn Eric into a potential mass murderer. But if it had any effect on his psyche, it probably whetted an appetite for the excitement of war. As for Eric's parents, they seemed to be nice people, not outwardly religious, but law-abiding and productive. They were concerned about Eric's future, but respected his privacy, which is why they hadn't a clue about what he was up to. If they were guilty of anything, it was their lack of curiosity about his dark side. Wayne used the sort of punishments on his boys that were considered appropriate: denial of privileges.

Dylan's parents, Sue and Tom Klebold, were another pair of nice people. Sue Klebold had been born



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Sue Yassenoff in a prominent Jewish family in Columbus, Ohio. Tom was a Lutheran, so the Klebolds celebrated both Easter and Passover but had little interest in organized religion. Cullen writes:

In the mid-1990s, they took a stab at a traditional church. They joined the parish of St. Philip Lutheran Church; the boys went to services along with their parents. Their pastor, Reverend Don Marxhausen, described them as “hardworking, very intelligent, sixties kind of people. They don’t believe in violence or guns or racism and certainly aren’t anti-Semitic.” They liked Marxhausen, but formal church service just wasn’t a good fit for them. They attended for a brief time and then dropped away.

Sue spent her career in higher education and became a program coordinator at Colorado Community College helping vocational and rehab students get jobs and training. Tom had been in the oil business but then got into renovating apartments. He was good at remodeling and repairs. They were clearly good parents, but hadn’t a clue about Dylan’s suicidal side. That is why they were totally devastated by the massacre. Tom could not imagine his boy as a killer. “This was not my son” is what he told Rev. Marxhausen. “What you see in the papers was not my son.”

Not only were the boys quite skilled in deceiving their parents, but their parents were incapable of imagining that their own child, brought up by honest, intelligent, loving parents, could ever be involved in anything so evil as a massacre of their fellow students.

What was overlooked by everyone was the philosophy of the school the boys attended. Columbine was as much a humanist seminary as a Catholic school is a Catholic seminary. And the most important underpinning of humanist education is the theory of evolution, the rejection of biblical religion, the belief in natural selection, situational ethics, and the teaching of death ed, sex ed, drug ed. To what extent this humanist curriculum influenced the thinking and behavior of Eric and Dylan we shall never know. What we do know is that somewhere in their sophomore year both Eric and Dylan began to hate life and love death, and these two overwhelming obsessions became the philosophy behind all of their planning of the massacre for a year and a half. They acted as if hypnotized in the Manchurian candidate mode, unable to resist the need to murder. All of this comes out in their journals and diaries. They knew that what they were planning to do would hurt their parents, but they simply could not help themselves. They were driven by a power they could not resist or disobey. What was that irresistible power?

In February, two months before the massacre, Dylan wrote a story in his creative writing class in which he practically told the reader what was going to happen in April. The story so upset his teacher, Judy Kelly, that she called Tom and Sue Klebold and discussed it with them at length. They did not seem too worried, she later told police. Kelly had never read a story so sadistic. Indeed, it was the most vicious story she had ever read.

I suspect that this was just one of the clues the boys dropped in the hope that someone would pick it up and save them from themselves.

What we also know is that shootings in schools did not occur before the progressive humanist curriculum was adopted by virtually every public school in America. Cullen writes:

A terrifying affliction had infested America’s small towns and suburbs: the school shooter. ... In February 1997, a sixteen-year-old in remote Bethel, Alaska, brought a shotgun to high school and opened fire. He killed the principal and a student and injured two others. In October, another boy shot up his school, this time in Pearl, Mississippi. Two dead students, seven wounded. Two more sprees erupted in December in remote locales: West Paducah, Kentucky, and Stamps, Arkansas.



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Seven were dead by the end of the year, sixteen wounded. The following year was worse: ten dead, thirty-five wounded, in five separate incidents.

Two teachers volunteered information about the behavior of the boys that disturbed them. But there was no attempt by the investigating psychologist to analyze the boys' sophomore year curriculum or question the teachers about their efforts to change the values and beliefs of the students. Eric and Dylan came from secular families in which religion was a minor cultural influence. Their diaries and journals were full of hatred of God, hatred of life, and love of death. They were obsessed with suicide. Perhaps someday an investigator may want to find out what it was they were taught in that sophomore year that made such a difference in the future of Columbine High School.



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