

On April 20, 1999 Eric Harris and Dylan Kriebel entered Columbine high school at 11:05 AM. They carried a hi-point model 995 carbon rifle, a sawed-off pump action Savage Springfield 67 shotgun, a tack DC-9 9 MM semi automatic handgun and a double-barreled savage 311 D sawed-off shotgun. They also brought along 48 carbon dioxide bombs, 27 pipe bombs, 11 1.5-gallon propane bombs, 7 gas or napalm bombs and two 20 pound propane bombs (A Columbine Site).

They carried the four guns into the school with them and scattered bombs throughout the school to be set off at a certain times. Their original plan was to set off two 20-pound propane bombs killing 600 people, while shooting as they fled from the flames. They then planned to go back in after and kill any survivors that they saw. Luckily they were so bad at wiring that most of the bombs did not explode. If they had exploded they could have killed as many as 600 people. Eric Harris's total rounds fired were 121. Dylan Kriebel's total rounds fired were 67. Together they killed 13 people. Their names were Cassie Bernail, Seven Curnow, Cory Depooter, Kelly Fleming, Matthew Kechter, Dan Rohrbough, William Sanders, Rachael Scott, Isaiah Shoels, John Tomlin, Lauren Townsend, Kyle Velasquez and Daniel Mauser all of whom were killed in the library. Thirty one people were injured, though they survived. The two boys committed suicide at 12:08 PM in the school library (*A Columbine Massacre*).

Eric Harris was born on April 9, 1981 in Wichita, Kansas. He grew up in Colorado. He lived in a very nice neighborhood where everybody was loving and caring. Students at Columbine high school said that he was unsettling and unapproachable. Even Eric himself said so... that he didn't want to meet new people because he hated them all. He was an only child. He worked at Blackjack pizza. He was Dylan's only friend and vice versa" (A Columbine Site).

In response to the horrid events that took place in Columbine, almost every school in America now has a lockdown plan in place. A school lockdown is when a procedure is initiated in the case that school officials believe there is a culpable threat to student and staff safety. Lockdowns are classically used to protect students from school shooters, bomb threats, and other forms of violence. "There are many precautions that schools have taken; doors were installed that can be locked from the inside, and the same with intruder out-facing windows/vision panels that are more than 10 inches wide. Many classrooms now have phones that ring to alert teachers to a lock down while students are ordered to remain as quiet as possible and to avoid engaging with anyone who is unknown ("*Columbine*"). I feel that each school should have a system so that they will be prepared to deal with any bad situations at hand.

This simple system has greatly affected my life by assuring while at school I am at the least safer than I may have been in the past. From the time I was 11 years old, I was told what to do when there was a threat on campus. We were told to close all the windows and blinds, then get under the desk and keep quiet until our teacher told us that it was safe to come out. The system made both me and my family feel better knowing that I was safe in a place that we could trust. This program has prevented over 65 school shootings—a huge accomplishment (A Columbine Site).

After the events at Columbine, the number one question on everyone's mind was how could these two quiet boys do something like this? What was their mental state at the time? Of course there were studies done on the psychological brain patterns in these two boys, Eric Harris and Dylan Kriebel. Doctors diagnosed Eric Harris as a psychopath. There are many contradictory characteristics of a psychopath. They are charming, and appear remarkably normal, yet at the same time they are self-centered, dishonest, and undependable. Normally void in feelings of guilt, empathy and love, psychopaths routinely offer excuses for their recklessness and often

outrageous actions (Scientific American). This perfectly describes Harris, according to friends and family. As a brilliant killer, he was able to plan every month, week, day, and hour leading up to and during the killing spree. Ordering exactly what they needed to make their weapons, he was the brain behind the operation. When the actual day of the event arrived he was more than happy to step in and take action; killing people for pleasure, feeling no emotions, he only wanted more (Scientific American).

Dylan Kriebel's case it is a completely different story. Something most people do not know is that when the doctors looked at Dylan, they discovered that he was a depressed suicidal teenage boy. What was significant was that the only thing he wanted in life was to be in love. He wanted nothing more than to be accepted by people, and in turn, wanted to accept people into his life. Unfortunately, he felt no matter how hard he tried to talk to people no one would listen. His only friend was Eric Harris and he thought that even though his friend was a little awkward and cold, it was better than having no one at all. He had been prescribed a drug for his depression called Zoloft. This drug has many side effects that could have contributed to the actions on the day of the massacre.

Previous to the Columbine massacre, Eric and Dylan were arrested for breaking into a car and were sentenced to 100 hours of community service. They were also ordered to see a psychiatrist to talk about their actions. The two boys made a game out of this to see who could convince the doctor he was more charming (Scientific American). Eric Harris was released from service first because the doctor felt that there was nothing seriously wrong with him. In Dylan's case, she prescribed an antidepressant. If maybe she had looked a little further maybe she could have prevented one of the worst school shootings in America.

The second Amendment states that all men are allowed to carry firearms but not everybody agrees with this law. There are two sides to this amendment. One side being everyone should be allowed to own a firearm to protect their family and themselves from harm. Their belief is that "Guns don't kill people, it's people who use guns in terrible ways that kill people." They feel as if they should be the ones to take care of the problem. Why wait for the police when you can take care of it yourself? The other side believes that there should be no firearms allowed in the United States because bad things happen when people are allowed to have guns freely. That if there were no guns there would be less violent crime. If there are no guns then they will have no need to protect themselves from other people with guns. I feel as though both sides make a very powerful point, though in the end I feel as if there should be no firearms in the United States. I imagine the country would be a much better place if there were less guns and less violence.

As a mountain state, Colorado has a history of broad support for Second Amendment rights. Most people believe that they should be able to handle the situation at hand. Why should we wait for the police when we can take care of the issue? Some gun restrictions include requirements governing the sale of firearms at gun shows, a law that regulates people's ability to carry concealed weapons and legislation banning purchases of weapons for people who would not qualify to buy them legitimately ("Bowling for Columbine"). Growing up in Littleton, Colorado, guns were a casual thing to have on your person. You are allowed to have a firearm in your vehicle as long as the gun is intended for lawful use like personal protection or protection of property. Harris and Kriebel grew up knowing exactly what firearms were, what purpose they served and what they did. Their interest was in finding out more about what guns could really do, how they could be used to harm people. This was very appealing to them. So much so that they would go into their father's closets and take their hunting rifles out on the weekends to shoot

animals for game. While planning for the Columbine massacre, Harris knew exactly what guns they needed and how they could make them as deadly as possible. They learned to wrap the guns so that it would be easier for them to carry and shoot. But these guns alone were not enough. They needed more so they went to their friend's house whose father had a closet full of guns that he used for hunting. The boys broke in and stole the guns the day before the tragedy.

When looking at a case such as the Columbine massacre you cannot help but wonder what motives could there possibly be to drive a person to do something so terrible. Dylan Kriebel and Eric Harris were known at school for being outcasts. They wore all black, making it seem as if they were unapproachable, and they only had a few friends. A day in their life is something most people cannot even begin to ponder. They were physically and mentally bullied by everyone around for no reason other than the fact that they looked different from everyone else. They were pushed into lockers, stuffed into trashcans with their heads being forced into toilets. For four long years this is the pain they had to endure and, when the 12th grade came, they decided that they couldn't take it anymore... that they had to do something that would show the nation what type of school system we had.

In the case of these two boys, every teacher on campus knew how far the bullying had gone but decided not to do anything about it. It was happening so often and so frequently, yet they felt that there was no need to step in and take action. Having this happen to someone on a regular basis makes him or her depressed, suicidal and angry. It makes them lose confidence in themselves, hiding as much as possible and running away. As a result, Eric and Dylan decided to fight back in an atrocious way. They wanted to get back at the jocks, all the girls that would not go out with them, as well as teachers and kids of different races. And to think all of this could've been stopped if someone were to have just stepped in ("Bullying").

It was not just the bullying that gave these boys a motive. They didn't believe in America's governing system and Eric Harris had a deeply rooted hatred for America. He idolized Hitler and called himself a Nazi. He wrote in his journal every day expressing the utmost hate for where he was living. In Dylan's case, he was only mad that he had been tortured for four years and nobody did anything to help. He wanted revenge on the people that made him suffer so much.

Many people have written about this event for many reasons. It was very powerful because it was the first time a massacre of this magnitude carried out by two young men and because, took place in a place that until that point was considered safe or sacred. So many people were hurt both physically and emotionally in the aftermath. Everyone wanted to know why, how could somebody do this to innocent people who did nothing wrong. The idea of two senior boys coming to school heavily armed with the rifles and bombs was bone chilling to all. The FBI stepped in, bringing their best detectives to the scene along with doctors that specialize in mass murders. To figure out the reasoning behind this event, I searched for a very long time through books and websites that I felt best gave information. I found a website called "A Columbine Site," which had to do with everything that happened on that day at Columbine high school. On this site it gives you everything from Eric and Dylan's everyday life, even the specific time that they spent each day planning for the massacre. They gave their reasoning as to why Eric and Dylan chose to do what they did. The site said that it was because they were bullied mercilessly for years and were acting out of anger. They have a video of the two boys expressing their hate for Columbine and everyone in it, as well as their journals explaining in detail how they felt about their daily lives. When reading these I can't help but feel sad and angry at the same time. Though there is no excuse for what they did, their loneliness spilled out onto every page. This

gave me a different perspective than the one the media had. Though I believe that bullying did play a huge part in the outcome, I also feel that their poor mental health played an equally large part in this outrage. Eric Harris was a psychopath who couldn't control himself physically or mentally because of his disease. Dylan Kriebel was suicidal and homicidal to the point where he couldn't even make the right decisions. If we were to look further, we may find out more about why they wanted to do this. A couple of the other sources I found agreed that it had to do with the boys' mental state and was not only because of the bullying.

I began my research thinking it would be easy to find an artist who creates artwork on the same premise as I do. I searched for a really long time through many books and different resources. In the end I only found a couple of artists that I felt best interpreted the world in the same way I do when I am making my artwork. My number one choice is Chris Burden. He creates his sculptures in a way that let's you know there's more to the work than just what you see. This is exactly what I'm trying to do with my next piece. He has various installation pieces that the viewer can interact with to get a better feel for what the artist is trying to say or express. I intend to allow people to submerge themselves into a new environment and see how it changes their perspective. When Chris Burden creates his pieces I feel as if they are supposed to change you. I want to do that same thing. To give the viewer a different feeling or emotion so they can really physically and mentally feel the piece. Not only making them think, but actually having the viewer experience different emotions. It's a powerful moment when you are in a certain state of mind and you realize that your body is connected to the work.

In a completely different direction, Edward Kienholz is an artist who specifically works in the "dark part" of the art world, making everything in your whole body and soul shake with curiosity and fear when you observe his work. His pieces make you step back because of how powerful and frightening they are. He creates a space in which you would never want to be in, something like a nightmare very dark and cynical. I have personally never worked on a dark piece before. I normally create soft, fun and psychedelic pieces of work. For the first time I am working on something dark to see where it will take me. In doing so I feel it is important to try new things to convey something that I didn't know I was able to convey.

In doing my research for this project I have come across new ideas that I didn't previously think of putting into my work. I want to have several different points of view to present to the observer, the first being that you immerse yourself in a completely different environment from the one that you were just in. And, secondly, to take you to the point where you recognize it and leave knowing that I've somehow changed your opinion of the world around you.

Researching a touchy subject like the Columbine massacre, I've come to know that you have to be delicate when trying to go into something so personal. You need to approach it with caution and the utmost care because you never know who your audience is going to be. Seeing Burden's and Kienholz's work I know exactly what elements I want to take from each, making a dark piece yet having it still be approachable from the outside. Even though it may be tempting to walk away, you're still drawn to it. On the inside, it's a completely different story that you wouldn't expect to find from just looking at it from the outside. It will be pure and sweet on the outside. You will feel happy and welcomed into something that looks so approachable. If I can achieve this I feel that my project will be a success and will help me to reach my fullest potential as an artist at this point of my life. In this project I will be pushing myself further than I thought I could. If you had asked me a few months ago if I could make a huge installation piece I would have said, "No!" Now I know I have the confidence to do so.

I think I now know more about what really happened on April 20, 1999 at Columbine High School. This topic is really important to talk about because it brings up a great point: people are bullied every day and, in so many cases, no one's doing anything about it. No one really knows who these kids are because in so many cases no one cares. This is why I chose this subject because I feel it is very important that we continue to try to find a solution to the problem. I am one of the lucky ones. In every school I've attended there has been a "no bullying" policy and a lockdown system in place. I hope that my project conveys all the points I have made in my paper. I will try to express the information written in my piece so that observers can really feel what I'm trying to say without my saying anything at all.

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