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CHAPTER 1

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that attempted to explain the cause of the Columbine shooting. Some analysts blamed the availability of guns, others violent pop culture, and others right-wing extremism.

4. A British Magazine Questions America’s Attitude Toward Guns

The Economist

The editors of a British newspaper maintain that the Columbine school shooting was one of an unsurprising series of school shootings in the United States. They question why no US commentators consider the nation’s lax gun laws as a possible cause.

5. The Vice President Speaks at the Columbine Memorial

Al Gore

At a local memorial the Sunday following the shooting, the vice president shares the grief of the nation with families of the shooting victims. To honor the victims, he says, parents should become more involved with their children, set a good example, and promote a less violent culture.

6. The Columbine Killers’ Pre-Shooting Videotapes Are Released

Wendy Murray Zoba

A journalist talks about the controversy surrounding the release of the shooters’ pre-rampage videotapes and the mixed reaction of the victims’ families. At a time when the community was beginning to heal, people felt betrayed by the local sheriff who released the tapes before the victims’ families saw them.
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   A criminal justice professor asserts that bullies—most of whom were athletes—roamed unchecked in the halls of Columbine
   High School, leaving students at the bottom of the social structure feeling powerless. The Columbine shooters endured repeated bullying and humiliation.
4. Antidepressant Drugs Contributed to the Columbine School Shooting

_Kelly Patricia O’Meara_

A journalist explains why a surviving Columbine shooting victim sued the manufacturer of Luvox, a drug taken by shooter Eric Harris. The victim’s attorney maintains that the drug causes mania and psychosis, which led Harris to plot and carry out the shooting rampage.

5. Racial Hatred Motivated the Columbine School Shooters

_C. Stone Brown_

An activist and political columnist argues that the shooting of African American Columbine student Isaiah Shoels was motivated by racial hatred. He claims that Americans ignore at their peril the growing number of hate crimes committed by white males filled with racial hatred.

6. Inadequate Law Enforcement Was a Death Sentence for Columbine Victims

_Dave Kopel_

A libertarian policy analyst questions the police response to the Columbine school shooting, arguing that the job of police officers is to risk their lives to save others. He claims that a policy in which police must stand idly by while shooters systematically kill children is horribly flawed.
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   David Winkler
   
   A Denver high school student and gun control advocate observes that the Columbine shooters obtained guns purchased at gun shows. He argues that closing the gun show loophole and limiting handgun purchases are reasonable ways to prevent school shootings while protecting gun owner rights.

8. Stronger Gun Laws Would Not Have Prevented the Columbine School Shooting
   
   Dave Kopel
   
   The author claims that strict gun laws would not have prevented the Columbine school shooting. Even if stronger gun laws existed, he maintains, the shooters would have found another way to obtain their weapons.

9. The Media Covered Columbine Better than Previous School Shootings
   
   Natalie Pompilio
   
   A journalist asserts that the media covered the Columbine shooting more ethically than previous shootings. Although coverage did lead to some flawed theories, the author believes journalists were more cautious after Columbine.

10. The Reaction to Columbine Led to Violations of Student Civil Liberties
    
    Ethan Bronner
    
    An education columnist argues that overreaction to the Columbine school shooting has led
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Brooks Brown and Rob Merritt

A friend of the shooters describes his uncomfortable encounter with Eric Harris in the school parking lot the day of the shooting, and his growing realization a few minutes later that Harris was on a killing spree. Not until later did he learn that his childhood friend Dylan Klebold was also part of the rampage.

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