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Editor's Note

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EDITOR'S NOTE

On April 19, 1999 in a suburb of Denver, Colorado, a most frightening kind of violence took place. Two teenage boys, Dylan Kleebold and Eric Harris, killed eleven of their high school classmates, a teacher at the school, and themselves. They committed these murders with intent, with calm execution, with guns designed for warfare. Theirs was not a random act of violence. The violence they unleashed that day was a thoroughly planned act of terrorism. Terrorism from teenagers—teenagers who were from upper middle class families, good schools, and a good neighborhood—teenagers from a segment of society where “it wouldn’t happen.”

Since the massacre took place at Columbine High School, everyone has sought answers. People have blamed the boys, society, video games, the boys’ parents, the schools, the teachers at the schools, the police, music, jocks at the school, gun control laws, the principal . . . the list could go on and on—and regardless of who or what is blamed, it is impossible to know what caused the two boys to do this terrible act. Grand fingers of blame point to society: the decline of the family unit. More pointed fingers of blame point to individuals: the boys, their parents, the police. At the end of the day, the finger of blame is useless.

Certainly, it would easier to resolve this problem if we knew the source of the problem—which, optimistically, is why such blame is being laid. If we knew that the source of the violence *was* a certain movie, we could simply ban the movie. If we had evidence that it *was* the bullies who pushed Kleebold and Harris to their horrible acts, we could simply institute a 12-step bully recovery program. These resolutions are ridiculous, not because they wouldn’t work—they might—they are ridiculous because the problem of youth violence is bigger than any one cause. Thus, the problem of youth violence can only be resolved by more than one response.

The act of violence at Columbine High School affected all of us in the Denver community, and students at the University of Denver College of Law have responded in many ways. In this issue, we at the *Denver University Law Review* are responding in a way uniquely possible for a law review to respond. Each year, we publish an interdisciplinary symposium on law and policy relating to a specific issue. In light of the tragic events in our community, we have dedicated this issue to an interdisciplinary examination of the law and policy surrounding youth violence. We invited politicians, community leaders, and academic scholars from various disciplines including law, social sciences, media, and communications to contribute. Broadly, the articles address what happened at Columbine, what factors contributed to it, what legal and societal issues are raised by it, and what to do now. Of course, the legal issues are highlighted, but so are the societal factors, the role of government, and

the impact of the media. Our intent was to address the issues raised by Columbine in a way that challenges the reader to reconsider both why these things happen, and how to respond. Ultimately, our intent is to encourage response.

Because this is an interdisciplinary issue, many of the articles are not in standard Bluebook format. As much as possible, the articles have retained their original format and form of citation. The editors of the *Denver University Law Review* would like to thank each person who contributed to this Symposium, both the live symposium that was held in the Spring of 2000 and the articles herein provide a thought provoking and excellent examination of this sadly timely issue. More generally, the editors of the *Denver University Law Review* would like to thank anyone who responds.