

Exhibit A: Cast of Characters

Jefferson County Sheriff's Office

John P. Stone—Sheriff
 John Dunaway—Undersheriff
 Dave Walcher—Lieutenant
 Terry Manwaring—Lieutenant and SWAT commander
 John Kiekbusch—Lieutenant
 Steve Davis—Public information officer
 Phil Hy—Sergeant
 Barry Williams—Sergeant and SWAT team leader
 Allen Simmons—Deputy and SWAT team leader
 Neil Gardner—Deputy and school community resource officer
 Paul Magor—Deputy
 Scott Taborsky—Deputy
 Paul Smoker—Deputy

Littleton Fire Department

William Pessemier—Chief
 Ray Rahne—Battalion Chief
 Chuck Burdick—Division Chief
 James Olsen—Paramedic Captain
 Wayne Zygowicz—Division Chief for emergency medical services

Arapahoe County Sheriff's Office

Patrick Sullivan—Sheriff
 Robert Armstrong—Captain
 Mark Campbell—Captain
 Bruce Williamson—Lieutenant and SWAT commander
 Louis Perea—SWAT team leader
 Joe Dempsey—Deputy Inspector and bomb squad team leader
 Dan Davis—Deputy and bomb squad member

Littleton Police Department

Bob Brandt—Commander
 Bill Black—Sergeant

Arvada Police Department

Ron Sloan—Chief
 Daryl Hoffman—Sergeant and member of the Jefferson County Regional SWAT Team
 A.J. DeAndrea—Officer and member of the Jefferson County Regional SWAT Team

Denver Police Department

Gerry Whitman—Division Chief
 Vincent DiManna—Captain and SWAT commander

Golden Police Department

Russell Cook—Chief

Columbine High School

Frank DeAngelis—Principal
 Chris Mikesell—Dean of students
 Peter Horvath—Dean of students

had assumed office in January, at the same time bringing on board a new undersheriff, John Dunaway (see Exhibit A for a partial list of individuals involved in the response to or aftermath of the Columbine High School shootings). Although Stone had been out of law enforcement for more than a decade, earlier in their careers both men had been patrolmen for the Lakewood Police Department—the county's largest police department—and Dunaway, who had risen to police captain at Lakewood, had most recently served as director of the

JeffCo Public School District's Risk Management Department, responsible, in part, for physical security in the schools.

While Stone was new to the Sheriff's Office, though, he was well acquainted with the county's overall emergency response capabilities. Outside of routine SWAT team training, the Sheriff's Office hadn't invested significant time or resources over the years in pre-incident planning—for example, for hostage situations in major public buildings. But both the Sheriff's Office and the

county had extensive experience in coordinating disaster and emergency responses because of the regular incidence in the region of major brush and forest fires, often in difficult and mountainous terrain. In addition, in 1997, while still a commissioner, Stone had helped organize a trip to Emmitsburg, Maryland, for county representatives and local organization leaders to attend a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster training course.

The four-day session, which FEMA designed specially to address the needs of Jefferson County, Stone says, included training and "tabletop" exercises that had improved the county's implementation of "incident command"—a clearly defined incident management structure designating, among other things, command roles, tasks to be accomplished, and a system to assign responsibility for each task. According to some law enforcement officials, the county's focus had paid off. "JeffCo is one of the most interactive places I've ever worked, in terms of people working together," says Ron Sloan, chief of the Arvada Police Department, "and that's not only the law enforcement agencies, but all the human services agencies."

Nevertheless, like most other law enforcement agencies in the area, the JeffCo Sheriff's Office rarely held inter-jurisdictional exercises with the police or fire departments in the county, other than an occasional natural disaster response exercise. Joint exercises were even rarer with agencies outside of the county. In addition, while the Sheriff's Office often helped out police departments within JeffCo, it had not often had to call on other agencies for mutual aid. Criminal responses and investigations, in particular, Stone says, were almost always handled with the county's own internal resources.

The Initial Attack: The JeffCo Sheriff's Office Responds

On Tuesday morning, April 20, 1999, JeffCo Sheriff's Deputy Neil Gardner, the school community resource officer assigned to Columbine High School, was eating lunch in his car near an area northwest of the school known as the Smokers' Pit. Just minutes earlier, a sheriff's dispatcher had reported a brushfire and explosion in a field about three miles south of Columbine, but that wasn't Gardner's concern. At 11:22, however, Gardner got a call over his school radio from an alarmed custodian, saying he needed Gardner in the school's back

parking lot. One minute later, a sheriff's dispatcher, responding to a 911 report of a "paralyzed" girl in the south lower parking lot of the school, radioed Deputy Paul Magor, who had been heading towards the brushfire, and directed him instead toward Columbine, saying, "Female down in the south lot of Columbine High School." Gardner, who was already driving toward the school, heard the message and turned on his lights and siren (for a chronology of events, see Exhibit B).⁴

Gardner later recalled that he expected to find nothing more than a car accident victim when he reached the school But the reality was far grimmer. Two Columbine seniors, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, had just launched a brutal armed attack on their fellow students. When students and staff first heard shots at 11:19 that morning, many assumed it was part of Senior Prank Day, or that the two, who were toting guns and wearing long black dusters, were filming a video. By the time Gardner arrived five minutes after the shooting began, however, Harris and Klebold had already shot at 11 students on the west and southwest side of the building, killing two and injuring six.⁵

As Gardner pulled to a stop at 11:24, he saw students running from the school and smoke rising from the south parking lot's west end, and heard explosions and gunfire. The next several minutes would seem horribly unreal. As the deputy stepped from his car, he heard over the school radio, "Neil, there's a shooter in the school." Almost at the same moment, a gunman, who had been firing into the west entrance of the school along with a second shooter, turned and shot at Gardner from about 60 yards away with a semi-automatic rifle. Gardner, armed only with a 45 semi-automatic handgun, returned fire. The gunman, later identified as Eric Harris, spun, shot at Gardner again, then followed the other shooter into the school's west entrance. The two would never emerge from the school again alive.

Inside Columbine, the chaos worsened. At 11:25, Patti Nielson, a teacher hiding in the library who had been sprayed with glass and metal fragments when Klebold and Harris shot at the west doors, called 911 on a cell phone to report shooting outside the library. More than 50 students also hiding in the room crouched under tables as Nielson cried out for them to stay down. A minute later, William "Dave" Sanders, a teacher who had run upstairs after heroically warning students in the cafeteria to escape, was shot in the hallway outside the library and critically wounded. A second teacher helped Sanders into a science classroom on the south side of the

Exhibit B: Chronology of Events

April 20, 1999

- 11:19 a.m.** Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold begin shooting at fellow Columbine High School students after bombs planted inside the school fail to explode.
- 11:21** A Jefferson County Sheriff's deputy heads towards a reported explosion in a field about three miles from Columbine High School.
- 11:22** A Columbine custodian radios Deputy Neil Gardner, the school community resource officer, for help.
- 11:23** A JeffCo dispatcher sends an alert about a "female down" at Columbine High School.
- 11:24** Deputy Gardner exchanges gunfire with Eric Harris outside the school.
- 11:26** Deputy Gardner calls for reinforcements.
Deputies exchange shots with Eric Harris, who is just inside the school.
Teacher Dave Sanders is shot and critically wounded.
- 11:29** Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold enter the library and during the next seven minutes kill ten students, wound 12 more, and shoot out the windows at students and deputies. Deputy Gardner calls for emergency medical help.
- 11:32** A JeffCo Sheriff's Office deputy broadcasts a call for mutual aid.
- 11:52** JeffCo Undersheriff John Dunaway appoints JeffCo Lieutenant Dave Walcher as incident commander.
- 12:00 p.m.** Local television stations begin full-time live coverage of shootings at Columbine.
- 12:02** Littleton Fire Department paramedics rescue three student shooting victims from behind the school.
- 12:06** A first SWAT team led by JeffCo Deputy Allen Simmons enters the east side of Columbine as JeffCo Lieutenant Terry Manwaring leads a second group around the school.
- 12:08** Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold commit suicide in the library.
- 12:10** Littleton Fire sets up the first of four medical triage sites.
- 12:25** Leewood Elementary is established as the primary debriefing site.
- 12:34** Lieutenant Manwaring's SWAT team rescues one shooting victim outside west end of school.
- 12:40** Incident command post begins operating out of JeffCo's mobile command bus.
- 1:09** JeffCo Sergeant Barry Williams leads SWAT team into west side of school.
- 1:26** SWAT team led by Williams evacuates large group of students from kitchen area.
- 1:30** JeffCo Public Information Officer Steve Davis holds his first hourly news conference in Clement Park.
- 1:57** SWAT leader Sergeant Williams hears first accounts alluding to critically injured teacher Dave Sanders.