

NewsDigest

Columbine tape released to public

■ Columbine victims' families are livid over decision to sell video.

DENVER (AP) — The families of Columbine High School shooting victims who fought for access to video taken during the massacre are outraged that authorities also are releasing a tape to the public — with a music soundtrack.

"This shows no regard whatsoever for the feelings of the victims," said James Rouse, a lawyer for the families, after learning of the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department decision on Tuesday.

The videotape — a Littleton Fire Department training tape that includes 25 to 30 minutes of footage from surveillance cameras in the school cafeteria, was to be made available to the public starting this afternoon for a \$25 fee. The package also includes two to three hours of news helicopter footage.

Sheriff's Department spokesman Steve Davis said he could not comment on the decision to release the videotapes because it involves the families' lawsuit. A spokeswoman for the County Attorney's office did not

immediately return a call for comment Wednesday.

Rouse said part of the training tape is set to a pop-music soundtrack.

One of the songs, "If It Were Up To Me" by Cheryl Wheeler, includes the lines "Maybe it's the movies, maybe it's the books/ Maybe it's the bullets, maybe it's the real crooks/ Maybe it's the drugs, maybe it's the parents," and concludes: "Maybe it's the end, but I know one thing/ If it were up to me, I'd take away the guns."

None of the surveillance camera tape shows students getting shot, Rouse said. But he said the cafeteria tape does show students scattering as the gunmen detonate a bomb and begin shooting.

In addition to the cafeteria scenes, the training tape includes footage taken later in the school library, where two seniors killed 10 of their 13 victims and themselves on April 20, 1999. The bodies were removed before the later footage was made, but there was still blood on the carpet and police tape showing bodies' locations, Rouse said.

The parents are "absolutely outraged and horrified. Each one of those pools of blood is where someone's child died or was seriously wounded,"

Rouse said today.

He also complained about the television news footage shot from a KCNC-TV helicopter. "It does show dead and wounded kids on the ground and rescue workers pulling the dead and wounded kids by their legs," Rouse said.

The Jefferson County Sheriff's office was ordered Monday to turn the tapes over to six families who wanted the footage to support their claims that officers mishandled the shootings. They did so on Tuesday.

County Attorney Frank Hufless then surprised the families by announcing that copies of the tapes also would be made available to the public.

"We really have less than 24 hours for the victims' families to review it and get over the shock," Rouse said Tuesday.

Phyllis Velasquez, whose son Kyle was killed at Columbine, wasn't surprised by the decision to release the tape.

"This is just how it's been for the past year. This is life on a daily basis for us, waiting to see what's next," she told KUSA-TV.

Littleton Fire Department officials have shown the training tape

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James Rouse
attorney for victim's families

about 50 times at presentations across the country, including an International Association of Fire Chiefs meeting in Kansas City, Kan., last May, city spokeswoman Kelli Narde told the Rocky Mountain News.

"They've been everywhere," she said. "They've been from coast-to-coast and back again."

Russian security negotiations continue

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov on Wednesday launched a new round of security negotiations with the Clinton administration. He pledged cooperation despite deep differences over anti-missile defenses.

Hedging his bets, Ivanov also met with probable Republican presidential nominee George W. Bush, outlining Russia's foreign policy goals and its objections to undermining a 28-year-old landmark arms control treaty.

"We want our relations not to be dependent on the direction of the political situation," Ivanov said.

The foreign minister's three-day visit is designed to prepare for a smooth summit meeting in Moscow on June 4-5 between President Clinton and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Ivanov struck a conciliatory stance even while objecting to a limited missile defense system that Clinton is contemplating and a far-

reaching national defense backed by Bush and other conservative Republicans.

The Clinton administration says America needs the system to defend against a missile threat from such countries as North Korea and Iran.

"If there are any threats and if those threats are realistic, then let us work together," Ivanov said.

He said negotiations on new security arrangements started Wednesday at his lengthy meeting with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, which military experts attended, and continued later at the Pentagon.

Among the Russian goals are limiting the long-range nuclear warheads in U.S. and Russian arsenals to 1,500, Ivanov said.

Last week, U.S. and Russian negotiators opened talks in Geneva, Switzerland, on a treaty that would impose ceilings of 2,000 to 2,500.

"We believe that it is important and it is our task to, in maximum detail, present our arguments and our

“If there are any threats and if those threats are realistic, then let us work together.”

Igor Ivanov
Russian foreign minister

concerns to the partners, listen to their position and then elaborate on a joint decision," Ivanov said in Russian.

"It would be too premature to speak of the concrete outcome of those negotiations yet," he said. "But I would like to tell you that we are holding a sincere, constructive dialogue on the whole variety of issues."

Meanwhile, Bush said that it was time to "redefine" U.S.-Russian relations. Aides said Bush told Ivanov: "I don't view you as the enemy, and you shouldn't view us as the enemy."

That's the old way of thinking."

On Capitol Hill, Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., pledged to block any arms-control agreement that Clinton might negotiate with Russia in the closing months of his term.

Helms, who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he was fearful Clinton wanted to conclude an arms-reduction agreement with Moscow as part of his legacy as president.

"In a few months the American people will go to the polls to elect a new president — a president who must have a clean break from the failed policies of this administration," Helms said. "He must have the freedom and the flexibility to establish his own security policies."

Ivanov also vigorously defended Moscow's attempt to suppress a rebellion in the republic of Chechnya. Along with persistent U.S. criticism, the top U.N. human rights body this week accused Russia of widespread violations including indiscriminate use of force.

WEATHER

TODAY

Scattered showers
high 67, low 49

TOMORROW

Partly cloudy
high 66, low 47

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THE DAILY NEBRASKAN

WASHINGTON (AP) — Supreme Court justices struggled Wednesday over whether to let the Boy Scouts bar homosexuals from serving as troop leaders, role models in an organization that teaches its members to be "morally straight."

Without saying how they will ultimately vote, several justices voiced skepticism about how far the court could go to force open admissions upon private organizations.

"In your view, a Catholic organization has to admit Jews" and "a Jewish organization has to admit Catholics," Justice Stephen G. Breyer told Evan Wolfson, the lawyer for James Dale of New Jersey, a former assistant scoutmaster ousted when the organization learned he was gay. Dale subsequently filed suit against the Scouts.

Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and David H. Souter followed Breyer's line of questioning, asking Wolfson whether his argument meant

the Scouts could be required to admit girls.

Justice Antonin Scalia voiced his reservations another way.

"They think that homosexuality is immoral," he said, asking why the Scouts must accept as a leader "someone who embodies a contradiction of their message?"

Founded in 1910, the Scouts have an oath and law that long have required members to promise to be "clean" and "morally straight." But no written rule specifically addresses homosexuality.

Wolfson said the Scouts are not primarily an "anti-gay organization," and therefore Dale's presence did not burden the group's message.

Dale did not seek to use his leadership position to advocate homosexuality, Wolfson added. New Jersey's highest court ruled that the Boy Scouts' ban on gay troop leaders violated a state prohibition on discrimination in public accommodations.

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Editor: Lindsay Young
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World and Nation

Datelines

■ Vermont

Governor signs 'civil union' bill into law without fanfare

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — Gov. Howard Dean signed a first-in-the-nation law Wednesday granting gay couples nearly all of the benefits of marriage.

"I think it is a courageous and powerful statement about who we are in the state of Vermont," the Democrat said. "I also believe that this legislation speaks to the heart of this state, and certainly to my heart."

The legislation creating marriage-like "civil unions" reached the governor's desk shortly before lunch time, just a day after the House gave its final approval. And by the time of a 2 p.m. news conference, he had already signed it out of view of TV cameras, photographers and reporters.

■ Brazil

Catholic Church apologizes to Brazil's Indians, blacks

PORTO SEGURO, Brazil (AP) — The Catholic Church apologized Wednesday to Brazil's Indians and blacks for the "sins and errors" committed by its clergy and faithful over the past 500 years. Indians were reluctant to forgive.

The apology preceded a special Mass held on the beach where Franciscan Friar Henrique de Coimbra celebrated Brazil's first Mass on April 26, 1500, four days after the Portuguese expedition made landfall.

Organizers said some 15,000 people, including more than 300 bishops, attended the Mass under a steady drizzle in Coroa Vermelha, just outside this seaside resort in the northeastern state of Bahia. Italian Cardinal Angelo Sodano represented Pope John Paul II.

■ Texas

Five-hour prison fight kills one inmate, injures five others

LAMESA, Texas (AP) — Racial tensions fueled fights between 300 black and Hispanic inmates at a West Texas prison that left one inmate dead and five others in intensive care, authorities said.

Some prisoners wielded garden tools in the five-hour melee Tuesday night at the minimum- to medium-security Smith Unit, which remained under lock-down Wednesday.

"We believe it was very racially motivated," said Larry Todd, a Texas Department of Criminal Justice spokesman.

The fights began after a Hispanic inmate confronted a black inmate who was fondling himself in front of a female officer in a dining hall, said Larry Fitzgerald, also a Department of Criminal Justice spokesman.

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — In public gatherings, official statements and televised reports, Ukrainians on Wednesday marked the Chernobyl nuclear disaster with a degree of openness that contrasted sharply with the secrecy that once surrounded it.

When a reactor at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant exploded and caught fire April 26, 1986, in the world's worst nuclear accident, it was at first a nearly invisible tragedy. Soviet authorities tried to keep the accident under wraps, and its deadly consequences — radiation — could not be seen with the eye.

But the aftereffects are grimly visible: an estimated 4,000 deaths among those who took part in the hasty and poorly organized cleanup; 70,000 people disabled by radiation, accord-