

there take the 12 guns out of his clothing, I thought maybe we should do more in that regard.

A lot of schools are, for obvious reasons, reluctant to have metal detectors. But I think that the schools that have them have not had these instances, basically because you can't get in—at least inside the school.

[At this point, the discussion continued. A student from Heritage High School in Conyers, GA, told of an encounter with Thomas J. Solomon, Jr., in school in which Mr. Solomon showed the student a gun. The student later reported it to school authorities. Although school authorities took some interim action, they did not pursue the issue and some weeks later, Mr. Solomon allegedly shot six other students.]

The President. What do you think they should have done?

Student. I think they should have done a lot more than they did. I think at least if they didn't, they should have called his parents and maybe had them maybe even look for it. I was going to ask you what more could be done than what's already done about a suspected gun at school.

The President. These are questions that have also been asked in Colorado because of what was in the website, the kid's website and other places. And I think it's important that people like you, as I said, have a way to make these reports, and then, you know, they're going to be systematically followed up on, either by the school or the law enforcement.

I also think it's important that when a young person like that is obviously in trouble, you not only try to get the gun away, but you try to figure out what the real problem is and what kind of help the kids need. And then it's provided in some sort of systematic way. A lot of these kids, I am convinced, could be turned away from this before it's too late if they could have been identified early enough.

And so I think we need a combination of, you know, go after the source of the—go after the guns and all that, and trying to deal with the kids. And I think—again I would say, I've been amazed in how many of these cases—I don't know what the facts are in

Pearl or in Paducah—I do know in Springfield, Oregon, because I went out there to talk to the people there, that there are a lot of people who were really concerned about that young man before this happened.

So I think—we're going to have a mental health conference with Mrs. Gore and the Vice President, Hillary and I are, in a few days, and we're going to talk about what more can be done when the kids know that somebody is in trouble, to go really help them before this happens. Just like you knew. There should have been someplace else you could go where you would know not only would they try to get the gun, but there would be somebody all over that kid, in a positive way, trying to figure out what the deal was and how to help him move away from it.

[At this point, the discussion continued. One student noted that, while youth were exposed to violence, some were more sensitive to it.]

The President. But let's go back to what Missy said. I'm amazed that any of you said you were concerned about the video games, because most of the young people I've talked to, there's a lot of support for tougher gun control and for better security and for more support services, but a lot of young people I've talked to say—they say I'm an old fogey when I talk about the movies and the video games.

But here's the point I want to make. I want to make the point Missy did. Most of the kids are fine and will be fine under any culture. It's true, they show them in Japan and Europe, and they don't have the killings. But what do we know about America? We know that in America, number one, we know more and do more of it in the aggregate. The average 18-year-old has seen 40,000 murders, and 200,000 violent instances over the media, number one—more of it. Number two, in our country our folks work harder. They travel more. They spend less time at home—on average, 22 hours a week—than they did 30 years ago. That's 2 years by the time you turn 18. Number three, it's easier to get guns.

So if you have vulnerable kids, where the line between reality and fantasy blurs, they are more likely to be influenced by this. And that's something I'd ask the rest of you to

be sensitive to, because way over 90 percent of the kids are going to be fine, but it doesn't take many to change people's lives forever in a bad way.

[*At this point, the discussion continued.*]

The President. I'd like to ask a question. How many of you talked to your parents about this within 3 days of the Littleton shooting? I think that's very important, because one of the things that we don't know—you asked Hillary a hard question about the parents of the children involved; obviously, I don't know them; I've wondered so much—but I think it's important that we understand that a lot of children are strangers in their own homes, and that—including kids that will never commit crimes. And somehow, I think we've really got to do something to rekindle, to give both the kids and the parents the courage to start talking to each other again, because I think it would minimize the chances of those things occurring.

[*A student from Littleton, CO, stated that a friend had told her that Dylan Klebold's parents were concerned about him and planned to talk to him when he got home from school on the day of the shooting and stated that other children played violent video games and listened to violent music without the same reaction. She suggested that affection and acceptance had to be part of the solution.*]

The President. I agree. Can I ask you one question? I'd like to ask all of you a question about this. And again, all I know about this is what people like you have told me. That is, you know, Hillary and I, we watched the television, we talked to the families of the children that were killed when we went out there, and some of the young people who are still hurt. But I'd like for all of you to help us with this.

All the reports say that one of the things that drove these two young guys over the edge was that they felt that they were totally disrespected in the school, that they felt that there were groups that looked down on them and badmouthed them and tried to humiliate them, and that as a consequence, they not only wanted to get back at the people they thought had dissed them, but they were look-

ing for somebody to look down on. And that's one of the things that made the African American young man a target.

How many of these kids do you think are violent because they think their contemporaries, kids treat them in a contemptible way?

[*The student from Littleton, CO, responded that she did not believe that they were after any one specific but had just shot people in the lunchroom randomly. Ms. Sawyer then suggested that it might be helpful if politicians refused to take money from entertainment company's that put out violent movies or videos.*]

The President. Well, would it have an impact? I don't think so, because then that would increase the relative influence of other people's contributions. I don't know. I think—let me just say this, our administration has taken on not only the gun issue, we have taken on the entertainment issue ever since '93. And I would like to point out something. Your network and others have adopted a TV rating system, supported the V-chip, which is coming in all the new televisions. The Internet people have helped us with screening technologies for parents, with closing loopholes in the rating systems for the games. I mean, I think there has been some progress here.

I think the real problem we've got in the media is that this violence sells, and I think that the rating system for the movies and for television is a little porous there. Again, I think it's more the exposure of young people before the lines between fantasy and reality are fully clarified. That's the one thing that I would say to the young man in the back that defended the "Doom" game.

Look, I like to go to action movies. I love movies. But what happens is, if you look at the aggregate amount of violence—and it's not any one movie; it's the aggregate amount that young people see, and in video games, participate in—by the time they're grown, in their young years, when they're most vulnerable, they are desensitized to the consequences of violence. There are over 300 studies which show this. This is not a matter of debate.

And I think the question is, what can we do to reduce the volume of violence to which our youngest people are exposed? And that's why we're doing what we can do on this, on the entertainment. But I will say this, the entertainment industry, at least in the beginning, has been more responsive to a lot of these things than the gun industry. Now the gun manufacturers are coming along, but I think the entertainment industry is going to have to do a lot more, a lot more.

Mr. Gibson. But just a quick question. Sony makes the "Doom" game—I don't mean to pick out that one game—but Sony is a huge contributor to the Democratic Party. So you have access to the president of Sony. If you picked up the phone and were talking to him, what would you say to him?

The President. I would ask him to change the game. And I think that we need to take steps to make sure that younger people don't get it. I think people get this stuff too young.

What you say, by the way, is right. Again I will say, most of the people that—you can show them things; they can play games or whatever; and they're not going to be affected. But what you have to be sensitive to is if you fill a society with this and you have more kids that are more vulnerable anyway because they have less supervision at home than in other societies and they have easier access to guns, then you have created a combustible mix which will lead you to more instances of young violence. That's the deal.

That's why—that's the argument I make to the entertainment industry all the time; that's why they should do more. And that's why the gun people should do more. And that's why parents and communities should do more. It's why you should do more to try to help identify children like this.

[At this point, the discussion continued. The next question directed to the President was by a student who asked what he thought about smart guns.]

The President. First of all, I think it's very important. I think that one of the things we've been trying to do and that the gun manufacturers—and I want to say something positive about the people that are trying to help. The gun manufacturers, most of them, have agreed to work with us and now support

legislation to require child trigger locks, which will be somewhat helpful. Now, older children can figure out how to undo them, but still they'll have a lot of accidental deaths, and they're important.

Pretty soon, you will have technology available which you can put into the guns that will raise the costs some in the beginning, like all technology does, but like all technology, the costs will come down quickly, which will mean that only people who have the right fingerprints can fire the gun. And that will be a huge thing.

Then, we'll have to do a lot of gun buy-back programs and other things in communities that will increase safety, and it's important.

[A student who was cocaptain of her schools rifle team stated that the first thing she learned was safety.]

The President. It's one thing that I would like to see, actually, the NRA do. When I was Governor of my State, I worked with them, and they did a lot of very good work on hunter education programs just like you're talking about, and nobody should have a gun that hasn't been trained to use it. You can't get a driver's license unless you can drive a car, and I completely agree with you about that.

[A student asked if the President could explain what purpose automatic guns and semi-automatic rifles served.]

The President. No, but I tried to ban them all in 1994, and we were able to ban 19 kinds of assault weapons. But the people who were against what I was trying to do were able to keep some loopholes in the law, one of which we're closing now, to have these big magazines in the guns, you know, the big clips. And a lot of the imported weapons are still legal. So I spent the last 5 years trying to get rid of all them. I think they should all be rendered illegal. They also grandfathered in those that were in existence before '94, but I think all of them ought to be taken off the markets. That's what I think. And I'm going to try to keep making progress with Congress to do that.

[A student stated that it sounded like the President thought it would be good if gun