

SKEETER



BITES

BY SKEETER SANDERS

It's a subject I had hoped I wouldn't have to write about. In the days immediately after the horrible massacre at Colorado's Columbine High School, much of the mainstream media zeroed in on the two young killers' adaptation of "Goth" dress as members of the self-styled "Trench Coat Mafia."

Not surprisingly, some authority figures started pointing fingers at the Goth kids, whose subculture evokes, in the eyes of its critics, images of everything from vampirism to devil worship.

Worst of all, these critics say, Goth kids were likely to commit the most evil acts of violence imaginable. What hogwash!

I know quite a few Goth kids and I can tell you that nothing could be further from the truth. Quite the contrary. The Goths abhor violence to the point that they are as pacifistic as an earlier generation of alternative-culture kids — the hippies.

Indeed, many Goth kids are so pacifistic, like their "flower child" predecessors, that they have come under constant harassment in school. This is particularly true of male Goths, whose androgynous appearance often brings taunts of "Faggot!" and other anti-gay slurs.

Some Goth boys really are gay or bisexual. Some appear so androgynous as to leave me wondering if they're actually transgendered. It's no secret that, particularly in the major cities, gender lines are often blurred in Goth culture. Just ask anyone who's attended screenings of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

Despite these misconceptions, I still didn't want to write about the Colorado tragedy. But articles that appeared in two of the nation's largest gay newspapers left me with little choice.

Both *The Washington Blade* and New England's *in newsweekly* reported that the Internet had been abuzz with rumors that Columbine killers Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold had been

"mercilessly" subjected to anti-gay taunts from other students, particularly from student athletes.

Because Harris and Klebold killed themselves after their

senior year, I was "outed" by the jocks in my phys-ed class — a full six years before I came out of the closet on my own.

Imagine if the roles were

stream America would react if the perpetrators of the worst high school mass murder in US history really did turn out to be queer?

I've argued previously in this

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shooting and bombing rampage that killed 12 students and one teacher and wounded 23 others, we will never know for certain their true sexual orientations. But I simply can't believe that Harris and Klebold were anything other than straight.

I can think of nothing that makes a straight boy in his teens totally freak out more than to be accused of being "queer." I can tell you from my own experience that there's no group of high school students more homophobic than the jocks. By 1972, my

reversed: How would you, a queer kid, react if you were subjected to merciless taunts of "Breeder!" and other heterophobic epithets? The point I'm making here is that you're being accused of being something that you know in your heart, soul, and erogenous zones you're not.

As for those of you in the queer community foolish enough to believe that Harris and Klebold were queer, let me ask you this: can you take your rainbow-colored blinders off long enough to imagine how main-

column that the time was long overdue for queers to resort to violent self-defense, if necessary, if they're physically attacked.

But there's a big difference between defending oneself when violently attacked and resorting to violent offensive attacks against others without provocation. And nothing justifies killing anyone unless you're locked in a situation in which you're forced to kill in self-defense.

For all our sakes, I pray that the rumors about Harris and Klebold being queer aren't true. ▼

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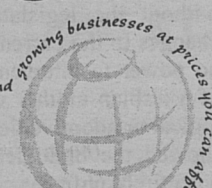
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