The Columbine "Basement Tapes"

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold made several videotapes of themselves talking about their upcoming attack. These have not been made public in full, but parts of them have been released. The following are transcripts of the publicly available passages. Bracketed text is in the original. Some minor misprints have been corrected.

15 MARCH 1999 [EVIDENCE ITEM #265]

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold are sitting in the Harris home basement-level family room. Eric is sitting on the couch and Dylan's sitting in a chair nearby. They're drinking from a Jack Daniels bottle, which Eric points out. The boys begin to discuss a number of topics; they speak of their hope that the videos they're making will one day be shown all over the world, when their "masterpiece" is done and everyone wants to know why they did it.

DYLAN KLEBOLD I'd like to make a thank you to Mark John Doe and Phil John Doe. I hope you don't get fucked. [Eric laughs; Dylan continues] We used them. They had no clue ... Don't blame them. And don't fucking arrest them. Don't arrest any of our friends, or family members or our co-workers. They had no fucking clue. Don't arrest anyone, because they didn't have a fucking clue. If it hadn't been them, it would've been someone else over twenty-one.

They mention the time a clerk from Green Mountain Guns called Eric's home. Eric's dad, Wayne Harris, answered the phone. When the clerk told him, "Hey, your clips

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are in," Wayne — who owned guns himself — told the clerk he hadn't ordered any clips. *Eric said his father never asked whether the caller even had the right phone number.* Eric says if either the clerk or his father had asked just one question, "we would have been fucked."

KLEBOLD We wouldn't be able to do what we're going to do.

They then talk about Brandon Larson and how "you will find his body." The boys talk about the large propane bombs they plan to use on the unsuspecting students in the school cafeteria. They discuss bombs and two bags of "propane and napalm," and mention Mr. Stevens and the shotgun. "We're proving ourselves," they tell the camera, and go on to discuss their philosphies. Eric says he isn't spending much time with his family, so that there won't be any "bonding" and "this won't be harder to do."

ERIC HARRIS I'm sorry I have so much rage, but you put it on me.

Eric then complains about his father and how his family had to move five times. He says he always had to be the new kid in school, and was always at the bottom of the "food chain," and had no chance to earn any respect from his peers as he always had to "start out at the bottom of the ladder." He hated the way people made fun of him: "my face, my hair, my shirts." He's wearing a T-shirt that has the words "Wilder Wein" printed on it — he references the shirt several times during the video but never explains what it means. ["Wilder Wein" is a song by Rammstein.]

HARRIS More rage. More rage. [motions with his hands for emphasis] Keep building it on. KLEBOLD If you could see all the anger I've stored over the past four fucking years ...

Dylan then recalls how popular and athletic his older brother Byron was and how he constantly "ripped" on him, as did his brother's friends. According to Dylan, with the exception of his parents, his extended family treated him like the runt of the litter.

KLEBOLD You made me what I am. You added to the rage.

Dylan says that as far back as the Foothills Day Care center he hated the "stuck-up" kids who he felt hated him.

KLEBOLD Being shy didn't help. I'm going to kill you all. You've been giving us shit for years. Fuck you, Walsh.

The boys go on to discuss Walsh patrolling Deer Creek. [Deputy Tim Walsh primarly works the south end of Jefferson County. The teens then talk about how there's "a month and a half left." They mention Green Mountain Guns again and how they phoned the house, leaving a message on the answering machine: "Your clips are in." Dylan and *Eric brag about hiding their tools of death — and about the close calls along the way.* Eric shows the camera a black tackle box with his bomb-making equipment stowed inside. They boast about concocting their plan under the noses of unsuspecting parents and friends. Dylan recalls a time when his parents walked into his bedroom while he was trying on his trenchcoat to see if it would hide his sawed-off shotgun.

KLEBOLD They didn't even know it was there.

Eric tells about a day he was going to go shooting in the mountains. He had his shotgun in a gym bag: it was in his "terrorist bag, sticking out." When he walked by his mother, she saw the butt of the gun but she assumed it was nothing more sinister than his BB gun. Fooling people was a point of pride for both boys, one they gloat about during the video-taping.

HARRIS I could convince them that I'm going to climb Mount Everest, or I have a twin brother growing out of my back. I can make you believe anything.

The subject shifts and they begin talking about several people they know. They make a comment about Dustin Harris [or Harrison], and how "everything you say is pointless."

HARRIS Shut the fuck up, Nick, you laugh too much! And those two girls sitting next to you, they probably want you to shut the fuck up, too! Jesus! Rachel and Jen ... and ... whatever.

KLEBOLD I don't like you, Rachel and Jen, you're stuck up little bitches, you're fucking little ... Christian, Godly little whores!

HARRIS Yeah... "I love Jesus! I love Jesus!" — shut the fuck up! KLEBOLD What would Jesus do? What the fuck would I do?

Klebold acts like he's shooting the camera with his hand, with sound to accompany it.

HARRIS I would shoot you in the motherfucking head! Go Romans! Thank God they crucified that asshole.

HARRIS AND KLEBOLD Go Romans! Go Romans! Yeah! Wooo!

Eric discusses "Arlene," his 12-gauge Savage shotgun.

HARRIS Thanks to the gun show, and to Robyn. Robyn is very cool. [Robyn was a friend of Klebold who had purchased the gun for him.]

The boys then decide to take a video tour of "Reb's room" and "all the illegal shit" in it. Dylan backs out of the room with the camera and pretends to be Eric's mother.

HARRIS [waves at the camera] Hi, mom.

Taping Eric Harris's bedroom, they record a desk with a hutch, where Eric points out a pair of gloves which he says he took from a doctor's office and uses for making bombs. He points out several packages of fireworks on top of a speaker, which is also on top of the hutch. He also calls attention to a soda can with several shots through

it, along with quite a few shotgun shells sitting atop the hutch. He then points out a small "black treasure chest" that he calls a "good hiding place."

Eric then points out a small bullet that he says is his "first bullet," then in a drawer he shows off a stash of solar igniters, batteries, pipes, clocks, and engines. He pulls out a black two-bell alarm clock that he discusses using to build a bomb with and then takes out what he describes as "completed pipe bombs" from a Home Base bag taken from one of the desk drawers. He pulls out another Home Base bag filled with more pipe bombs he calls the "beta batch," at which point Dylan mentions the "bunker." Dylan tries to film out the west window but it's too dark outside; all that records is the glare on the window.

KLEBOLD You can't see it, it's buried there. That's why it's called a bunker.

Eric says there are "four mortar grenades, ten crickets, and three alphas." He then points out a blue spiral notebook that he calls his "journal." Eric opens another drawer, revealing a piece of the handle of one of their sawed-off shotguns. Also filmed in one of the drawers are two clocks which the boys describe as "future bombs." They show off a box of "crickets" — small CO2 cartridges, duct-taped with fuses.

Dylan turns the video camera toward the dresser that's against the west wall. Eric opens up a door and points out a "Hell dog drawing" taped to the inside of the door. He says it was given to him years ago. Next to it is a piece of paper on which is written an "Anarchist substitute ingredient list."

Eric goes on to describe a "25 pound bag of #8 buckshot" which is inside the dresser, but isn't shown on the tape. Eric then pulls out a BB rifle from what he describes as the hall closet (though it appears, on the tape, to be a closet in his room). He says this is where he keeps his shotgun. He also takes a box out of the closet and tells the camera that this is his knife. From the box he pulls out a black-handled combat knife in a black sheath. He says that he paid \$15 for it. Eric says there's a swastika on the side and the camera zooms in to show the swastika etched into the sheath.

On the east wall, adjacent to the bedroom door, the teens point out a coil of green wire that they call a "50 foot cannon fuse." They move to the bookcase on the east wall, talking about a "Demon Knight" CD case, which Eric opens to reveal a receipt from Green Mountain Guns for "nine magazines" of 9mm carbine rifle bullets that they purchased for \$15 each. Eric then removes a CD rack to expose three large pipe bombs hidden behind it, which he calls the "biggest."

Eric then pulls out a black card box filled with "twenty-nine crickets" (more CO₂) cartridge bombs). Eric then points to an area of the room (though the camera doesn't follow where he points) and describes a "coffee can in the corner which is full of gunpowder." The camera then focuses in on a black plastic box with the word "explosives" scratched into the side, sitting near the north wall of Eric's bedroom on the floor. Dylan mentions how Eric's parents took it away from him. Eric adds that they only took the pipe bomb out of it, and gave the box back. Inside the box the camera shows clock parts, fuses, tools, and CO2 cartridges.

They also tape a white plastic file case that holds "nails for pipe bombs, caps to be filled with gunpowder," two boxes of 9mm rounds (50 bullets in each), 12 shotgun shells in a box, another box of shotgun shells, clips for a gun, and webbing. "What you will find on my body in April," Eric tells the camera.

LATER FOOTAGE

Dylan Klebold sits in a tan La-Z-Boy recliner in Eric's basement bedroom, chewing on a toothpick while Eric Harris messes around with the now-stationary video recorder. When he's done Eric moves to sit in another recliner with the bottle of Jack Daniels whiskey, and his sawed-off shotgun named "Arlene" on his lap. He takes a small drink and tries not to wince at the taste.

HARRIS [in reference to the Kentucky and Arkansas shootings] Do not think we're trying to copy anyone. We had the idea before the first one ever happened. Our plan is better, not like those fucks in Kentucky with camouflage and .22s. Those kids were only trying to be accepted by others.

They go on to talk about how they hate all races: "niggers, spics, Jews, fucking whites." They also mention enemies that abused them and friends who didn't do enough to defend them. In one segment, Eric and Dylan spend more than an hour discussing their hatred for humanity and their fellow students, whom they vowed to kill. They name some of the classmates they hope to murder. A couple of times during the rants Dylan warns Eric to talk more quietly so as not to wake Eric's parents who are sleeping upstairs.

HARRIS We need a fucking kick start. If we have a fucking religious war — or oil or anything. We need to get a chain reaction going here. It's gonna be like fucking Doom man — after the bombs explode. Tick, tick, tick, tick ... Haa! That fucking shotgun [he kisses his gun] straight out of Doom. Go ahead and change gun laws how do you think we got ours?

The boys talk about starting a revolution of the dispossessed.

HARRIS We're going to kick-start a revolution.

They discuss coming back as ghosts to haunt the survivors, to "create flashbacks from what we do and drive them insane," Eric tells the camera.

HARRIS You guys will all die, and it will be fucking soon! I hope you get an idea of what we're implying here. You all need to die! We need to die, too! We need to fucking kick-start the revolution here!

KLEBOLD The most deaths in U.S. history.

HARRIS [kisses his shotgun] Hopefully.

KLEBOLD We're hoping. We're hoping. I hope we kill 250 of you. It will be the most nerve-racking 15 minutes of my life, after the bombs are set and we're waiting to charge through the school. Seconds will be like hours. I can't wait. I'll be shaking like a leaf.

HARRIS Ihope people have flashbacks. [making shooting noises while aiming his shotgun] Isn't it fun to get the respect we're going to deserve? We don't give a shit because we're going to die doing it.

It's getting late; Eric looks at his watch and says it's 1:28 am on March 15. Dylan says people will note the date and time when watching it.

KLEBOLD [predicting his parents' feelings of regret] If only we could have reached them sooner, or found this tape.

HARRIS [also predicting] If only we would have searched their room. If only we would have asked the right questions. [talks about his mother being thoughtful, bringing him candy and Slim Jims] I really am sorry about all this.

KLEBOLD They gave me my fucking life. It's up to me what I do with it.

HARRIS [shrugs] My parents might have made some mistakes that they weren't really aware of.

KLEBOLD [talks about how his parents taught him to be independent and self-reliant] I appreciate that.

They talk about how they want movies to be made about their story. Eric says he wants the film to have "a lot of foreshadowing and dramatic irony." He mentions a poem he wrote where he imagined himself as a bullet.

KLEBOLD Directors will be fighting over this story. I know we're gonna have followers because we're so fucking God-like. We're not exactly human — we have human bodies but we've evolved into one step above you, fucking human shit. We actually have fucking self-awareness.

The boys discuss whether Steven Spielberg or Quentin Tarantino should direct the film.

18 MARCH 1999 [EVIDENCE ITEM #265]

The tape starts again and Eric and Dylan are once again in the Harris family living room. They state that it is March 18th, "in the middle of the night." They talk about "Echo and Delta" pipe bombs and whether or not they should put nails on them. They state that "religions are gay" and for "people who are weak and can't deal with life."

They say they need to discuss secondary objectives to place the bombs, places that are "out of the way." Dylan mentions a trail near Wadsworth, "by your old house" (7844 South Teller Court, according to Eric's home computer). They then talk about how they should "rig something up with a trip bomb between two trees, so when someone goes down the path it will go off." The boys then discuss the possibility of "placing time bombs down there." They mention it would be "harder and take more resources." They say, "This will add a few frags to the list" and that the "fucking fire department is going to be busy for a month."

They talk about a couple of people, one of whom Eric says he wants to "shoot in the groin area." They talk about someone named Jesse Gordon and "the Goof Troop." They then go on a racist tirade, talking about how that "nigger stopped us that day"

and how black people talk in "Ebonics." They bash on "spics." Then the subject turns to bowling and how each individual in the bowling class has a designated culture group to use as a target on the bowling pins to kill, and that this helps them bowl better.

They talk about how "world peace is an impossible thing" and mention how you can look on the Internet to learn how to make "bombs, poison, napalm, and how to buy guns if you're underage." They also talk about how "Mrs. x-y-z bought our guns."

Eric and Dylan say that there are "only two weeks left, and one more weekend" and that "it is coming up fucking quick." They say the "napalm better not freeze at that certain person's house." They talk about "Chris's pizza's house" like they're trying to disguise a name and discuss "Yoshi" in a negative way. They say that they need a "lot more napalm" and may just use "gas and oil." They express concern that it will be tough, and opening the zipper may make it go off. They say they need some "back-ups." They talk about how the sprinkler system may "put out a fire" and Eric says he should possibly keep the battery out of the device, set the bag, put it in and leave so it doesn't "blow up in the commons."

They discuss credit card fraud; Eric raises his hand like he's admitting to having done it. Then they talk about "tests," saying: "We wouldn't be where we are without them." They talk about gas and oil and how it will be "one hell of a mental picture." They wonder about the possibility of people catching fire. The topic then shifts to graduation and how it will be a "graduation memorial service with lots of people crying." They theorize there will probably be a candlelight memorial.

Eric says he's got "100 bullets and 10 loaded clips," and that he needs lasers for his carbine.

HARRIS [looking directly into the camera] You're lucky it doesn't hold more ammo.

Dylan says he has a "50 round clip, two 36's, and a 24."

"There's a lot of shit to do," they say. They need to set up more propane bombs and get more containers. Dylan says he still needs to get his pants, fill his clips, and get his pouches to load shells in. They say they need "devices" for the propane tanks and they need more "bomb holders." Eric says they need to go to Radio Shack because he heard they had a "thing to increase the voltage" through a clock and speaker, igniting a solar igniter. Eric says that he'd tell people that he was doing special effects for a movie; "that will be a good excuse."

The boys insist, "We are but we aren't psycho."

Dylan asks Eric if he thinks the cops will listen to the whole video. They then theorize that the video will be cut up into little pieces, and the police would only show the world what they wanted it to look like. Eric and Dylan said then that they wanted to distribute the videos to four news stations. Eric says he's going to [word missing in original: publish?] his journal and send copies via email to distribute blueprints and maps. He then talks about "Tier" and calls it "My life's work," saying he wants to get it published. [Investigating officer Zimmerman recognized the term as "some of the direction type booklets for the video game Doom" which the officer took from *Eric Harris's bedroom during the search following the shootings.*]

Eric Harris is in the driver's seat of a car, Dylan Klebold is in the passenger's seat, holding the camera. "We are on our way to get the rest of our gear," they say. They then tell the camera it is "Monday, April 11th." It's daytime. Dylan says he has \$200 dollars on him; Eric says he's going to "cash a check for \$50."

KLEBOLD We've been planning this for over eight months. HARRIS At least.

They pass the intersection at Sante Fe and Mineral and the filming stops.

It's still light out when the camera comes back on. The car is now on Broadway, north of Hampden. Eric's still driving. They're stopped at a red light or stop sign on the east side of Broadway. Eric's smoking a large cigar now which he says is his "birthday cigar" [Eric's birthday was on the 9th]. He and Dylan say they have just purchased two large fuel containers and three propane bottles. Dylan says he now has his pants. The camera is turned off once more.

The video starts again and now Eric's alone. He's propped the camera on his knee or a similarly close location, filming his face directly. Behind him the headboard of his bed at home can be made out along with a bulletin board above. He talks about his parents and the cops who may want to have his "parents pay."

HARRIS My parents are the best fucking parents I have ever known. My dad is great. I wish I was a fucking sociopath so I didn't have any remorse, but I do. This is going to tear them apart. They will never forget it. [He then addresses his parents directly, if briefly There is nothing you guys could have done to prevent any of this. There is nothing that anyone could have done to prevent this. No one is to blame except me and Vodka [Klebold's nickname]. Our actions are a two man war against everyone else.

Eric goes on to say that it's been "hard" on him lately. His parents have been on his "back for putting things off"; things like "insurance, and the Marine Corp." He talks about how "this is my last week on earth."

HARRIS To all you coolios out there still alive, sorry I hurt you or your friends.

He says this is total "KMFDM" and that "there are 7 and 1/3 days left." He gets an odd look on his face, then says, "Fucking bitches." He then lists five names and says that he's going to be "one tired motherfucker come Monday, then BOOM! I'll get shot and die."

Eric then films his planning book, calling it the "Writings of God." He says his beliefs have changed somewhat during the year, over the course of time he's been writing. He turns to a page where there are figures drawn complete with ammo, bombs, and guns, all labeled. He says it's a "drawing of gear, back when we thought we could get calicos." He then points to a picture that depicts two backpacks labeled "napalm." He calls this the "suicide plan."

The next page Eric discusses is one that appears to be inventories of bombs. He points to the top of the page and says that's how many bullets they're going to have.

He then points to some of the drawings in the back of the book, saying they are "Doom drawings." He also points out other pages that have different drawings, including different types of weapons, and says they are "plans for rocket launchers and stuff. Most will not see the new world." He points out more drawings close to the back, calling them "Doom drawings with a KMFDM twist to them." The tape ends.

LATE MARCH / EARLY APRIL 1999 [EVIDENCE ITEM #333]

Eric Harris is filming in his home with Dylan Klebold. Eric is operating the camera. There are numerous pipe bombs on the floor, including three that Eric refers to as the "Charlie batch." He says they're 2 inches in diameter and 6 inches in length. Six appear to be about 1 inch in diameter and 6 inches in length. All are wrapped in duct tape. Also on the floor is Eric's sawed-off shotgun (he calls it "Arlene" — the name can be seen etched on the side of the gun in the video). He identifies another gun on the floor - a long black one - as a carbine. There are thirteen clips on the floor, which Eric says were purchased at Green Mountain Guns.

"Yes, they did have the right number," he notes.

There are two white boxes of 9mm bullets on the floor as well. Eric then points out something he calls "my bandolier of stuff" and said it will be filled with napalm. There's a black plastic box on the floor filled with twenty-nine CO₂ cartridges wrapped with duct tape, fuses protruding from the end of each of them. The duct tape secures buckshot to the homemade mini-grenades. Eric refers to them as "crickets" and says they are his grenades. Dylan takes the camera then and he tapes Eric holding some of the guns.

The tape stops, then starts again, showing Eric wearing black BDUs (battle dress uniform style pants), no shirt and a web-type harness. He's carrying the carbine attached to a sling and he is holding the shotgun. Eric sticks the shotgun into one of the cargo pockets and secures it with a web strap at his side.

Dylan makes a comment then about how Eric is a "soon to be 18 year old" [placing the taping sometime before April 9th, Eric's birthdate. He goes on to refer to "my TEC" and how he wants to do something with it "this weekend, maybe tomorrow." He also says "My parents are going to fucking Passover." [Passover 1999 began on March 31, with Good Friday on April 2, and Easter on April 4.]

With Klebold still using the camera, the teens move from the lower level family room of the Harris residence to Eric's bedroom. Dylan aims the camera toward the west window and calls it a "bunker." "You can't see it," says Dylan. "It's buried there. That's why it's called a bunker."

The tape stops again and when it starts, Eric Harris is alone in a moving car. The camera seems to be mounted on the car's dashboard. It's dark out and there are raindrops on the window. At one point he passes a street sign that reads "Federal." There's music playing loudly, making it hard at times to understand what Eric is saying. At one point he mentions "The Blackjack Crew" [Eric and Dylan worked at Blackjack Pizza], specifically mentioning "Jason" and "Chris."

HARRIS You guys are very cool. Sorry, dudes. I had to do what I had to do.

HARRIS Bob is one of the coolest guys I've ever met in my life, except for being an alcoholic. Eric says he's going to miss Bob. It's a weird feeling knowing you're going to be dead in two and a half weeks.

Eric says he can't decide "if we should do it before or after prom." At the end of this section of the tape Harris says he wishes he could have re-visited Michigan and "old friends." He falls silent then and appears to start crying, wiping a tear from the left side of his face. He shuts the camera off.

When the tape starts again, Eric Harris has the camera and he and Dylan Klebold are in Dylan's bedroom at the Klebold house. Dylan's wearing black BDUs and a black t-shirt with the word "Wrath" printed on it in red letters. Dylan is attaching something to his pants which seem to be black suspenders. He then attaches what looks to be a tan ammo pouch to the suspenders or his belt. He attaches a green pouch to his right shin. Dylan then removes some items from an open case [small suitcase or hard-sided briefcase] that's on the floor. Dylan takes out a sawed-off shotgun and puts the barrel of it into a cargo pocket on his pants, attaching it with webbing so it stays put. He has the TEC-DC9 [the same that was removed from his body after the shootings] on a sling over his shoulder.

Dylan makes a comment about his "50 round clip." He mentions Brandon Larson and his head being on his knife. He talks about going to the prom with Robyn. He says he didn't want to go but that his parents are paying for it. Eric says something about having three bags to use and they talk about wanting to "practice" the next couple of nights. Eric says they got "lasers and more propane today." He also mentions four big black containers and two of some other sort of fuel. The boys talk about writing poems "in Kelly's class today" and how ridiculous it was.

They start talking then about the double-barrel shotgun.

KLEBOLD Thanks, Mr. Stevens. [He then says to Eric] He knew I was fucking buying it.

Dylan gets dressed, pulling on a black trenchcoat. "I'm fat on this side," he says and starts talking about how he looks "fat with all the stuff on." He tries to toss the TEC-9 into his hand from where it's hanging on the sling but his coat prevents the move.

KLEBOLD I'll have to take the coat off.

Dylan complains then about how he doesn't want to take off the coat — he says he likes his coat. The boys begin discussing how "fucking snow is gay" and that they "hope the shit clears out by Tuesday, actually Sunday." Eric says he needs "dry weather for my fires."

20 APRIL 1999 — ABOUT 30 MINUTES BEFORE THE ATTACK [EVIDENCE ITEM #333]

Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold are once more in the family room of the Harris home. Eric is filming. Dylan is wearing a black baseball cap on backward, exposing a "B" embroidered in white on the back of the hat — the Boston Red Sox logo. He's wearing a plaid shirt, either dark blue or black with white; the shirt's untucked. He's wearing black BDUs (military-style pants) tucked into military-style boots. There are several bags on the floor, including a large maroon one.

HARRIS Say it now.

KLEBOLD Hey mom. Gotta go. It's about a half an hour before our little judgment day. I just wanted to apologize to you guys for any crap this might instigate as far as [inaudible] or something. Just know I'm going to a better place. I didn't like life too much and I know I'll be happy wherever the fuck I go. So I'm gone. Good-bye. Reb...

Dylan takes the camera then and begins filming Eric. Eric's also wearing a plaid shirt that's either dark blue or black with white, with a white t-shirt on underneath. His lower half can't be seen.

HARRIS Yea ... Everyone I love, I'm really sorry about all this. I know my mom and dad will be just like ... just fucking shocked beyond belief. I'm sorry, all right. I can't help it.

KLEBOLD [interrupts] We did what we had to do.

HARRIS Morris, Nate, if you guys live, I want you guys to have whatever you want from my room and the computer room.

Dylan adds that they can have his things as well.

HARRIS Susan, [referring to his friend] sorry. Under different circumstances it would've been a lot different. I want you to have that Fly CD.

HARRIS [eventually] That's it. Sorry. Goodbye.

KLEBOLD [sticks his face in the camera] Goodbye.

The tape ends with a brief glimpse of a sign on the wall of Eric's bedroom, someone's arm partially blocking it from sight. It's the letters CHS along with a drawing of a bomb with a lit fuse and, in bold black letters, the word "clue." SS.I