



# ALCATRAZ EAST

\*\*\* CRIME MUSEUM \*\*\*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Alcatraz East Crime Museum Puts Columbine Massacre Anniversary in Spotlight with New Exhibit**

*Alcatraz East Crime Museum, located in Pigeon Forge, is honoring the victims of the massacre*

**PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. (March XX, 2024)** — School shootings are something no one ever wants to hear about in the news. This year marks the 25th anniversary of one of the most infamous school shootings: the Columbine High School Massacre. On April 20, 1999, a mass shooting took place at Columbine High School in Colorado. Alcatraz East Crime Museum will be marking the anniversary of the tragedy in a new temporary exhibit beginning April 5, 2024.

"Columbine is synonymous with school shootings. It was one of the first modern mass school shootings and drew major media attention to the growing issue," says Ally Pennington, artifacts and programs manager at Alcatraz East Crime Museum. "We welcome guests to learn more about this tragedy and its impact through the new exhibit."

The new exhibit, "The Columbine Massacre: 25 Years Later," will be on display from April 5, 2024 through June 7, 2024. The display will share information about the massacre that took the lives of 12 students and one teacher and left at least 20 people injured. The Columbine shooting was carried out on the morning of April 20, 1999, when the pair went into their school with a plan of killing as many people as possible. They committed suicide before authorities got to them.

Guests can learn about the massacre carried out by two students of the school, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, and see artifacts related to the tragedy. Some of the artifacts on display include a 1999 graduation card from Columbine, a student's backpack with a Dave Sanders memorial patch, and a "We are Columbine" memorial shirt. Sanders was the computer and business teacher who was killed during the massacre.

"This is a tragic case that we can all learn from," added Pennington. "The more we understand crime, the better prepared we can be to help prevent it."

The Columbine massacre sparked national debates about safety at schools, with many new safety measures being put into place. Despite that, in March 2024, the American Academy of Pediatrics reported that the U.S. has had 57 times as many school shootings as all other industrialized nations combined. They report that since 1997, there have been 1453 school shootings, with the most recent five years having a substantially higher number of shootings than the prior 20 years. Further, they report that school shootings are at their highest recorded levels.

The museum features over 100 exhibits and interactives and four temporary exhibit spaces, with many famous items on display, including Al Capone's rosary, Ted Bundy's dental molds, and Charles Manson's acoustic guitar. They also hold various programs throughout the year, including an annual highlight of 9/11 and a biennial art contest that puts graffiti in the spotlight. This top museum is open at 10 a.m. daily. The last tickets are sold 60 minutes before closing. These interactive experiences are available for an additional fee for birthday parties, school groups, scouts, team building, or other [special events](#). To get a discounted rate for groups of 15 or more, complete the [online form](#) and allow up to 72 hours for confirmation. For more information about tickets, discounts, [temporary exhibits](#), and all the museum offers, visit the site: <https://www.alcatrazeast.com>.

Alcatraz East Crime Museum has updated its board of crime experts, which includes Derwin Bradley, a retired master police officer; James R. Knight, a crime writer; Robin Maynard, a certified crime scene investigator in Florida; Derek Newport, a law enforcement veteran who worked for the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation for 20 years; and Judge Belvin Perry, Jr., who presided over the notorious case against Casey Anthony, among others.

### **About Alcatraz East**

Alcatraz East is the most arresting crime museum in the United States. Guests of all ages can encounter a unique journey into the history of American crime, crime-solving, and our justice system. Through interactive exhibits and original artifacts, Alcatraz East is an entertaining and educational experience for all ages - so much fun it's a crime! This family attraction is at The Island's entrance, 2757 Parkway, Pigeon Forge, TN. The last ticket is sold 60 minutes before closing. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [www.alcatrazeast.com](http://www.alcatrazeast.com).

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Source:

American Academy of Pediatrics. *School shootings in the United States: 1997-2022*. March 2024. <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/doi/10.1542/peds.2023-064311/196816/School-Shootings-in-the-United-States-1997-2022?autologincheck=redirected>