

Among the Junipers, a Loner 'Not That Remarkable'

John Kifner

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There were no fancy woodworking tools visible in the simple, rustic cabin where Theodore J. Kaczynski spent much of the last 18 or 20 years, nothing that would suggest the exquisite craft that marked the mail bombs that Federal officials say he made.

Rather, Gene Youderian remembered, the one-room shack was a rough affair built of boards and two-by-fours, its faded brownish barn blending into its wooded surroundings three miles south of here along the road winding up from Stemple Pass.

Set way back from the dirt road in clumps of juniper trees, the house that Mr. Youderian, a volunteer fireman, visited six years ago to take the census reflected an apparently simple life style: no electricity, water from a hand pump, a white gas Coleman stove on which he made coffee, a chopping block for firewood with an ax stuck in it, and stones and a metal grill in the yard for cooking.

But Mr. Youderian, known to all here as Joe, was struck by the books that lined the spare cabin.

"There were quite a few books," Mr. Youderian recalled. "Shakespeare, Thackeray."

Mr. Kaczynski seemed to him to be a quiet loner who seemed "not that remarkable," even with his long brownish hair and beard. "It seemed like he was quite intelligent," Mr. Youderian said. "He either read a lot or was well educated. It wasn't like some people who use fancy words to impress you. But you could tell by his choice of vocabulary."

Tonight, agents of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms stood guard on the muddy path leading to the cabin high in the Bear Tooth Mountains where this afternoon they seized the quiet man they say was the nation's most wanted bomber.

Residents of Lincoln find nothing too unusual about people who go into the woods and stay. An old miner has been living up in this mountainous landscape since World War II, they said, and he only comes into town twice a year.

Nestled in the boughs of several national forests – the Lewis and Clark and the Helena National Forest – the place is a haven for loggers, and shows some of the desperation of an industry that has seen better days. Most ranchers and miners are also barely clinging to what city dwellers would consider a meager existence.

To the north is the great Bob Marshall Wilderness area, a vast terrain that is home to grizzly bears, elk, cougars and bobcats. There is still snow in the high elevations around Lincoln, but down here in town, the grass is just this side of turning green, and the streams are starting to swell.

Lincoln's bragging rights turn to its fish – bull trout, cutthroat, rainbow and brook. The Blackfoot River, which Norman Maclean described in his book, "A River Runs Through It," runs through Lincoln. Outfitters bring thousands of tourists to this area in the summer.

The main street through town, Route 200, has only a smattering of motels, mostly scruffy places to spend the night before you get out on the river, or onto a horse for a packing or hunting trek.

For most locals, the town is quiet and friendly, and well, gossipy, too. Mark Mercill, owner of a stream reclamation business in the area, said today that six bars in town

keep the daily chatter in motion. "I can think of something, and the whole town knows it before I've done it," he said. "But that Terry, he's not a major guy. No one even knows him."

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