

# **Ted Kaczynski's Letters to Juan Sanchez**

1998-1996

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# Introduction

Whilst Ted's brother David was living in the deserts of Texas in the early 1980s he developed a friendship with a Mexican farm worker named Juan Sanchez. In 1988 David suggested Juan write to Ted and they developed a fairly deep friendship that lasted up until he was arrested in 1996.

"Mr. Sanchez said he had received about 50 letters in all, many of them now lost, describing Mr. Kaczynski's reclusive life in a Montana cabin, his difficulties finding a job and hunting rabbit for food, his disappointment at not having a wife and children and his fascination with Pancho Villa, the Mexican revolutionary.

Though the two never met, the correspondence appeared to reflect one of the few sustained relationships Mr. Kaczynski had in the nearly 25 years he lived in Montana."

# February 17, 1994

My very dear and esteemed friend:

For now, just a short letter because I am in a hurry. It is not possible for me to spend two months with you. If it were a question only of going to El Paso to visit the immigration office with you, and then returning here right away, and if this were to make the difference between bringing your family with you to the United States or not, fine. I would go. But spending two months there is impossible. Aside from other reasons, I have much need of money, and here there is little work in the winter. The best season for work is summer, so the best time to look for work is spring, and so I must be here to look for work. If I did not find work for the summer, I would die of hunger when winter came.

I have just mailed two letters, looking for information that, with luck, could prove beneficial for you.

I don't have time to write more at the moment.

Fondly, one who values your friendship.

# May 17, 1994

My dear and esteemed friend:

It angers me and shames me that those merciless and lying officials want to take away your pension. They should live up to their promises. But it is not surprising that government officials do not live up to their promises, because they are either stupid and incompetent, or they are liars who twist the law to be able to commit any injustice. Well, keep me abreast of what happens with these matters of immigration and your pension, so that I can know how things are going.

Although what the officials are doing is a great injustice, consider that your fortune is not all bad, because you have a wife and three children and all are healthy. Even though you have to endure these difficulties, you will probably overcome them in the end, and your children will thrive and some day they will have children of their own. I wish I had a wife and children! Nevertheless, I know these things are very painful for you. Even though I can do nothing for you now, I never forget you; instead, I think of you and your problems often, and perhaps someday I can help you in one way or another.

But I do not have a lot of hope that I can visit you at Christmastime. Things are very bad for me. I still do not have work, and without work there is no money and without money there is no bus ticket.

But, with time, things will improve for us. In the meantime, I leave you with affection and esteem and good will, as always.

Your friend,

Teodoro Kaczynski  
P.O. Box 524  
Lincoln MT 59639  
Mayo 17 de 1994

Señor Juan Sánchez A.

Mi muy estimado y apreciable amigo:

Me enfada y me da mucha pena que aquellos desalmados y embusteros oficiales quieran quitarle a usted su pensión. Lo que han prometido deberían cumplir. Pero no sorprende que los oficiales del gobierno no cumplan sus promesas, porque o son estúpidos e incompetentes, o bien son unos mentirosos que tuercen el reglamento para poder cometer cualquier injusticia.

Pues, manténgame al corriente de lo que suceda con estos asuntos de la inmigración y la pensión, para que yo sepa cómo le van las cosas.

Aunque eso que le hacen los oficiales es una injusticia, considere que usted es un hombre muy afortunado del todo, porque tiene una mujer y tres hijos, y tienen salud. Aun cuando ustedes tengan que aguantar dificultades, probablemente las vencerán por fin, y sus hijos medrarán y algún día tendrán a su vez hijos propios. ¡Quisiera que yo tuviera mujer e hijos! No obstante, comprendo que estos problemas le son muy penosos. Aunque yo no pueda hacer nada para usted ahora, no lo olvido a usted, sino que pienso con frecuencia en usted y sus dificultades, y quizás algún día le pueda ayudar de alguna manera que otra.

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# February 15, 1995

My very dear and esteemed friend:

I am so sorry that you have had some problems, according to what you told me in your last letter. I hope they were not serious and are now in the past. In your letter, you expressed the hope that your family would get their papers. Does that mean there is a possibility that your wife and children will get the documents that would permit them to come and live with you in the United States? I hope they get them, because they have a right to live in this country, since the immigration officials promised it to you previously. But, even though they may be able to live in the United States, it is an injustice that the officials did not live up to their promise, and that they caused you so many difficulties and worries, and forced your family to return to Mexico. Do me a favor and write to me when you know whether your family is going to get their documents to enable them to live in this country, because I am very anxious to know.

In this region where I live, there has been little snow this winter. It seems as though there is less snow every year. When I first came here, it snowed about four feet, or almost 1.25 meters, near my little house. But nowadays it is rare to have more than a foot, or 30 centimeters, near my house, and this winter I don't think there has been more than four or six inches or 10 or 15 centimeters of snow on the ground near my little house. The bad thing is that the snow there melts when it is not very cold, and it freezes when it grows cold again, so that many parts of the ground are covered with a layer of ice. This is very dangerous, especially on the hills, because one can slip very easily if you don't step on the ice carefully, and you can fall very suddenly, so that you can break a bone. But up until now I have not broken any bones, and I hope to continue to avoid that by being very careful.

Well, give my regards to your wife and children. Good health and good luck to you and your wife, and I hope you get the papers you need. (And do not hesitate to write to me when you find out whether you will receive them.) With affectionate greetings, I am your friend who esteems you.

# November 28, 1995

My esteemed and valued friend:

It is time to send you a Christmas greeting. It is almost December, and here there is a good snow cover on the ground, and at this moment more snow is falling, a sign that Christmastime is approaching.

I am fine here. I am poorer than ever, but I am in very good health, and this is more important than anything. As to my poverty, I have \$53.01 exactly, barely enough to stave off hunger this winter without hunting rabbits for their meat. But with the rabbit meat and a little flour and other things that I have put away, also a few dried vegetables from my little garden, I will get through the winter very well. And when the spring comes, perhaps I will have better luck with work and money, so that I can go visit you. We will see.

About these rabbits, which are called “liebres de raque- tas” (“snowshoe hares” in English), they are very beautiful and interesting, and also very useful, because often they have provided me with meat when, without them, I would not have been able to eat any. I can hunt them freely, without buying a license, and I do so with a .22-calibre rifle in the following way: during the night, I go out into the woods and I walk until I find some fresh tracks made by rabbits, then I follow the tracks until I find the rabbits. In general, this is easy if it has snowed within one or two hours before dawn, and then stopped. But when snow has fallen during the first part of the night and not during the rest of the night, then it is hard to track rabbits, because they rest during the day and they move around at night, and they change directions constantly, so that they cross their own trails repeatedly and the trails of other rabbits, and so in the course of a single night they leave trails that are very tangled and hard to follow.

Anyway, when it is known from the freshness of the tracks that the rabbits are near, you must look closely, because these rabbits are white in the winter, and they are not so easy to see in the whiteness of the snow. In general, what you spot first are the black eye and the black tips of their ears, which stand out against the snow. Then you must find a good position from which to shoot, and you must take care not to frighten the rabbit, because if it becomes frightened and runs, sometimes you have to chase it two hours before you get another chance to shoot. But once you get a good shooting opportunity, you hit [OBSCURED TEXT] on the head, and you have a pound, more or less, of good meat. By “pound”, I mean a North American *pound*, which is approximately half a kilogram.

I haven't received a letter from you since early February, so I don't know how you're doing. I hope all things go well for you and your family. I heard on the radio



that Mexico is suffering economic difficulties. I hope these do not affect your family, if you are still in Mexico.

I will have to go to the post office around the first day of January, but after that I will probably spend the rest of the winter without going to the village of Lincoln, and so I will not visit my mailbox at the post office until spring.

Well, it only remains to say that I wish you and your family a very happy Christmas and a very prosperous new year. May God bless you and your entire family.

Your friend who esteems and appreciates you so much,

Teodoro Kaczynski

Teodoro Kaczynski  
P.O. Box 524  
Lincoln MT 59639  
Noviembre 28 de 1995

Sr. Juan Sánchez Arreola

Mi muy estimado y apreciable amigo:

Es tiempo de mandarle a usted un saludo navideño. Casi es diciembre, y aquí hay sobre el suelo una buena capa de nieve, y en este momento está cayendo más nieve, señal de que se está acercando la época de Navidad.

Yo aquí estoy bien. Estoy más pobre que nunca, pero estoy muy bien de salud, y esto es lo que más importa. En cuanto a la pobreza, tengo cincuenta y tres dólares y un centavo exactamente, y apenas si podría evitar el hambre este invierno sin cazar las liebres por su carne. Pero con las liebres y algo de harina y cosas semejantes que tengo almacenadas, además de unas legumbres secas, pasaré el invierno bastante bien. Y cuando llegue la primavera, tal vez yo tenga mejor suerte con el empleo y el dinero, de manera que pueda ir a visitarlo a usted. Veremos.

En cuanto a estas liebres, que se llaman "liebres de raquetas" ("snowshoe hares" en inglés), son muy hermosas e interesantes, y además muy útiles, porque muchas veces me han provisto de carne cuando, sin ellas, no habría podido comer carne alguna. Se las puede cazar libremente, sin comprar licencia, y las suelo cazar con un rifle .22 de la manera siguiente.

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cuando de mañana hay nieve fresca que haya caído <sup>②</sup> durante la noche, salgo al monte y camino hasta encontrar unas huellas de liebre frescas. Luego sigo las huellas hasta encontrar la liebre. Por lo general, esto es fácil si ha hecho nieve hasta una o dos horas antes del amanecer, y después ha cesado de hacer nieve. Pero cuando la nieve ha caído durante la primera parte de la noche y no durante el resto de la noche, entonces suele ser difícil rastrear las liebres, porque descansan durante el día y se mueven durante la noche, y caminan en direcciones siempre cambiantes, de manera que cruzan repetidas veces su propio rastro y el rastro de otras liebres, y así en el curso de una noche hacen rastros muy enredados y difíciles de seguir.

De todos modos, cuando se sabe por lo fresco de las huellas que la liebre está cerca, se tiene que mirar bien, porque estas liebres se vuelven blancas durante el invierno, y no son tan fáciles de ver en la blancura de la nieve. Por lo general, los que ~~primero~~ se echan de ver primero son el negro ojo y las negras puntas de las orejas, que se destacan contra la nieve. Luego se debe buscar una buena posición desde la que tirar, y se debe tener cuidado de no espantar a la liebre, porque si se espanta y corre, a veces se tiene que seguirla dos horas antes de conseguir una oportunidad de tirar. Pero una vez conseguida una buena oportunidad de tirar, se le pega un tiro en la cabeza, y se tiene una libra, poco más o menos, de carne buena. Con "libra", quiero decir un pound norteamericano, que es un medio kilogramo aproximadamente.

No he recibido carta de usted desde principios de febrero, así que no sé cómo le va. Ojalá que todas las cosas les vayan muy bien a usted y su



familia. Escuché por radio que México está sufriendo <sup>(3)</sup>  
dificultades económicas. Espero que éstas no afecten a  
su familia, si está todavía en México.

Tendré que ir a la oficina del correo cerca  
del primer día de enero, pero después, con probabilidad  
pasaré el resto del invierno sin ir a la aldea de  
Lincoln, y por esto no visitaré mi buzón en la oficina  
del correo hasta la primavera.

Pues, queda por decir solamente que les deseo a  
usted y su familia una Navidad muy feliz y un año  
nuevo muy próspero. Que Dios los bendiga a usted y  
toda su familia.

Su amigo que tanto lo estima y aprecia,

Teodoro Kaczynski

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Credit: F. Carter Smith

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## A hand-crafted wooden cylinder present (unknown date)

In addition to the letters, Mr. Kaczynski sent Mr. Sanchez a bright memento of their postal relationship: a wooden cylinder that Mr. Kaczynski had carefully carved, stained and painted. Mailed as a Christmas gift in 1994, the cylinder bears the motto: "Montani Semper Liberi," Latin for "Mountain Men Are Always Free."

Carefully incised in the hardwood, the decorations include vines stained green, berries stained red and a rabbit stained white. Polished smooth, the wooden cylinder has a small, detachable cap and hollow interior. ...

"I think it's for carrying pens," the old man said, turning over in his hands what looks like a model for a wooden pipe bomb.



The Ted K Archive

Ted Kaczynski's Letters to Juan Sanchez  
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New York Times Sources #1, #2 & #3. Plus Gettyimages. And finally, the book  
Mad Genius.

**[www.thetedkarchive.com](http://www.thetedkarchive.com)**