

Unabomber's book finds publisher in Port Townsend

Charlie Bermant

September 28, 2010

PORT TOWNSEND — The Unabomber — who argued that technology is at fault for society’s current problems and pockmarked his argument with bombings for nearly two decades — has published a book through a small Port Townsend publisher.

But his publisher is short of the accolades book publishers usually place on their authors.

“He is a murderer, and he is a sociopath,” said Adam Parfrey, who published *Technological Slavery* by the now-imprisoned Theodore J. Kaczynski.

But Parfrey said in an interview Monday that Kaczynski “is also provocative and intelligent.

“He is a genius and a very good writer who can add to the discussion about technology,” said Parfrey.

Kaczynski, 68, sent 16 package bombs between 1978 and 1995 which exploded, killing three people and injuring 23.

He blackmailed The New York Times and The Washington Post into publishing his manifesto in 1995, saying that he would continue his bombings unless the papers ran the document.

After publication, Kaczynski’s brother recognized the writing style and made the identification that led to an arrest in a Montana cabin in 1996.

Technological Slavery is a reworked version of the original manifesto that includes Kaczynski’s other writings that have been edited only slightly, according to Parfrey.

Prior to publication Kaczynski, Parfrey and a University of Michigan professor corresponded frequently, and the author — serving a life sentence in a federal maximum-security prison in Colorado — provided strict instructions to his publisher.

“He had some very strong ideas about how he wanted the book to look,” Parfrey said.

“He did not want to have any typos, which were present in the last edition of the book.”

The last edition had been published in Europe.

Kaczynski did not have any control over the *Technological Slavery* cover, which shows a picture of an FBI replica of one of his bombs.

He also had no say in the cover copy, promotion or marketing.

In his introduction, Kaczynski apologizes for the parts over which he has no control.

“The [previous European] edition was riddled with errors, most of which were not my fault,” he wrote.

“If the publisher has done his work properly, the errors have been corrected.”

Kaczynski wrote that he expected the book “to be advertised and promoted in ways that I find offensive, [but] think it is important to make the book available in its corrected and improved form.”

His forward goes on to apologize for the organization and content of the book because “agencies of the United States government have created unnecessary legal difficulties for me.”

Parfrey has given the book a 3,000-copy first printing, the low number due to the “conservative” tastes of bookstores and the public.

Interest could catch on, he said, if readers are able to separate Kaczynski’s ideas from his crimes.

“The system needs to bring about deep and radical changes to match the changed conditions resulting from technological progress,” he writes.

“The frustration of life under the circumstances imposed by the system leads to rebellious impulses.”

Parfrey, 53, began his book career as a “Dumpster diver” who explored the books that were tossed away by the Goodwill store near his California home.

“I found that the books they were throwing away were far better than the ones they kept, so I struck a deal where they would give me those books, and I would sell them,” he said.

He opened a wholesale book business and moved to New York to work for a publisher.

Twenty years ago, he founded his company, Feral House, publishing an average of 10 books each year.

He and his wife moved to the Port Townsend area about three years ago.

Parfrey also has an imprint called the self-reliance series, publishing books about urban survival and sustainable life.

As a publisher, he “figures out what books need to be written and then finds someone to write them.”

He said he does not share Kaczynski’s anti-technology opinions, although he sees how innovation has harmed publishing.

“A lot of people resist the idea of paying for anything digital,” Parfrey said.

“It has become hard to make a profit as a publisher.”

Kaczynski is forbidden by the so-called “Son of Sam Law” from profiting from his crimes, so he won’t receive book royalties.

Parfrey has said he will donate an acceptable royalty rate — 10 percent of any profits — to the American Red Cross.

The remaining profits will be channeled back into his company to support publishing ventures.

“We want to recoup some of our costs,” he said.

“These days no one makes a lot of money in publishing.”

Jefferson County Reporter Charlie Bermant can be reached at 360-385-2335 or charlie.bermant@peninsuladailynews.com.

The Ted K Archive

Charlie Bermant
Unabomber's book finds publisher in Port Townsend
September 28, 2010

<peninsuladailynews.com/news/unabombers-book-finds-publisher-in-port-townsend>

www.thetedkarchive.com