

Was The Unabomber Right or Wrong?

ClandesTime

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**Ep. #133. Was The Unabomber
Right?**

Synopsis

Ted Kaczynski is most famous for both being the most prolific serial bomber in US history and for writing the Unabomber Manifesto – a political-philosophical tract that was published by major newspapers and by the FBI. This week I take a look at the life of Ted Kaczynski and conduct a philosophical analysis of *Industrial Society and Its Future*. I ask whether Kaczynski's early life and education – including being subjected to abusive psychological experiments and never being introduced to philosophy – resulted in an unresolved, traumatised mentality that made his life a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Transcript

I have been fascinated by the Unabomber for a long time. Ted “Theodore” Kaczynski sent numerous letter-bombs between 1978 and 1995, killing three people and injuring a couple of dozen more, some very seriously. To get the obvious out of the way – I am not saying he was right to kill and injure those people. While I’m not one of those people who is fundamentally opposed to politically-motivated violence, or terrorism, I think it should be used against very specific targets. This is why using a suicide bomber to blow up a pop concert or a tube train or a bus doesn’t make much sense – someone willing to kill themselves is a much more powerful and precise weapon than you need in order to do that. You could just leave your backpack bomb on a five-minute timer and walk away. That being said, anyone who is willing to become a suicide bomber is most likely severely depressed or just a lunatic, so applying rationality to their behaviour or alleged behaviour isn’t especially appropriate.

However, whether Kaczynski was crazy is a matter of some dispute. Many contend that he was a paranoid schizophrenic, though it seems this accusation was used as leverage by the Department of Justice to force him to plead guilty, and the fact he was deemed competent enough to enter that plea shows that they didn’t really believe he was insane.

This is all very well laid out in the TV series *Manhunt: Unabomber*, which I watched recently due to my ongoing interest in Kaczynski. I was expecting a relatively boring FBI procedural, this being the Discovery channel after all, who aren’t known for making high quality scripted dramas. Also, the series was sponsored by the FBI, they had FBI and ex-FBI technical advisors working on it, so I had every reason to dislike *Manhunt*.

Instead, I loved it. While they are overplaying the relevance of the FBI profiler (who is himself a composite of several people), I found the development of forensic linguistics – analysing the Unabomber’s manifesto and letters to try to figure out who he was – utterly fascinating. I enjoyed Paul Bettany’s performance as Kaczynski, I liked how they didn’t make him the central character and also portrayed him very sympathetically. This is the opposite of how most terrorists are depicted, and though no doubt it helped that Kaczynski was white and intellectually gifted, I think it was brave of the writers to go down that road.

And herein lies an interesting distinction between the FBI in the past and the FBI now, in terms of their influence on entertainment. In the Hoover era there’s no way the FBI would have supported a production that depicted an anarchistic serial bomber in a sympathetic way. These days it seems they’re primarily concerned with their own

public image, and as long as the FBI are the good guys and ultimately the heroes who catch the bad guys, they don't care that much about the rest of the show.

Getting back to the show itself – and for those of you who don't know this story – Kaczynski was a maths genius, a child prodigy who got into Harvard aged 16. On top of being the youngest kid in the class, and emotionally unprepared for moving away from home into this very new environment, Kaczynski was subject to humiliating psychological experiments. He signed up for a psychological study where participants were told they'd be debating each other on philosophical matters, so they had to write articles outlining their views of the world. These essays were then analysed, and the most promising candidates were selected, but instead of debating each other they were stuck in a chair once a week with a bunch of electrodes monitoring their physiology while someone insulted and mocked them. They used the articles as ammunition, telling Kaczynski and others that their ideas were childish, arrogant and stupid. They even read to the participants forged letters supposedly written by their parents, expressing deep worry and shame about their children. This went on for years – once a week, for years.

The man overseeing this experiment was Henry Murray – a former OSS man who apparently worked on the CIA's MKULTRA program. He has also reported to have been the supervisor of one Timothy Leary when he was conducting research with LSD and other strongly psychotropic drugs.

Some years later, after a somewhat unsatisfying and brief academic career, Kaczynski began withdrawing from conventional society. In 1972 he moved to Montana and started setting up a self-sufficient life. He was profoundly focused on living a life outside of the modern technocratic urbanity. As were quite a few others at the time – from survivalists to hippies. In 1975 this apparently changed when Ted was hiking to one of his favourite spots, and when he got there he found that someone had 'put a road right through the middle of it'. He was infuriated at the encroachment of modern society on the wilderness he had fled into, and resolved to strike back at the system rather than simply try to escape it.

In 1978 he started sending and planting bombs, mostly targeting universities and airliners. This led the FBI to call him the University and Airliner Bomber, and the case was codenamed Unabomb (like Tradebom for WTC93, or Kenbom for the '98 embassy bombings). Hence, the name 'the Unabomber' refers to a government codename for an investigation and attempt to bring down Kaczynski, a moniker I am certain he detests. In the mid 1980s Kaczynski perfected his primitive but clever bomb-building techniques and people started getting seriously injured and killed. After the first death in 1987, Ted stopped sending bombs for 6 years, only starting again in 1993. The reason for this break is the subject of a lot of speculation, but basically no one knows.

In total 16 bombs causing three deaths and 23 injuries are attributed to Kaczynski. However, the FBI concedes that none of the latent fingerprints on the bombs match the fingerprints on the letters also attributed to the Unabomber. It's also curious that the letters and the manifesto refer to multiple people, some sort of organisation or

gang, being behind all this. Also that the bombs and the letters were signed 'FC' or 'Freedom Club'. Nonetheless, as history tells it Kaczynski was a lone serial bomber who basically did all of this himself.

I am not sure what to make of this. On the one hand we have the likes of Ramzi Yousef, who pretended to have an entire terrorist organisation at his command when it was just him and one other guy in a hotel room in Manila. On the other, it is bizarre for someone who apparently believed in individual autonomy, individual freedom, to refer to themselves with collective nouns, for them to pretend to be multiple people. That said, Kaczynski did deliberately include contradictory clues so as to waste the FBI's time, he certainly wasn't without a sense of humour.

In the mid-1990s, having resumed his bombing campaign, he wrote to major newspapers saying that he would cease his terrorist activities if they published a lengthy article he had written – the so-called Unabomber manifesto. The FBI and DOJ decided to go ahead, in part hoping that someone would recognise the ideas and language in the manifesto and figure out who the Unabomber was. Bear in mind that this is after over 15 years of investigation turning up basically nothing and nobody.

In the end, Kaczynski's brother turned him in, providing the FBI with numerous private letters from Ted that compared very closely with the Unabomber letters and manifesto, and providing the probable cause to search Ted's cabin in the woods, where they turned up a load of bomb-making materials and the same sort of typewriter used to send the Unabomber letters. So they arrest Kaczynski, who wants to go to trial so he can use it as a platform for his ideas. The FBI and DOJ wanted to avoid this, so they manipulated the situation so that Kaczynski had to choose between being declared crazy and therefore incompetent to stand trial, or pleading guilty, which is what he did.

Almost all of this is in the Manhunt: Unabomber series, so I do recommend it. They have talked about making a second season set in the same period because you have the World Trade Center bombing, Ruby Ridge, Waco, Oklahoma City and other events that lend themselves to this format. I hope they do, because this first season has shown they are willing to provide a multi-dimensional view of these crimes and these criminals, which is a refreshing change from the binary black and white approach that entertainment so often takes where either the cops or the criminals are glamorous heroes.

The logic of anarchist bombings

While at one point in Manhunt, Kaczynski's lawyer tells him that he bombed a bunch of innocent people so that a newspaper would publish his writings, and therefore he's obviously mentally defective, I'm not sure that logic is cast iron. After all, he didn't make the demand for publication until he'd been sending and planting bombs for 17 years. And after the manifesto was published he didn't send any more bombs, even

though it was over 6 months before the FBI finally caught up with him. Also, he took a six-year hiatus from bombing between 1987 and 1993. So I don't think he planned to use these bombings to extort space for himself on the front page of the Washington Post and the New York times. That seems like rather a late addition to what was a prolonged campaign of violence.

If we look at the targets he chose – they were all symbolic to some extent. Geneticists, engineering and computer science professors, owners of computer shops, airliners and even an airline president, and a lobbyist for the timber industry. They are all symbols of the ever-increasing, ever-enhancing technocratic society, the never-ending growth of industrial capitalism. To Kaczynski – who is broadly an anarcho-primitivist – all this was accomplished at the cost of massive destruction of the natural world, and systemic violence and oppression of human beings. And I don't think he's wrong about that.

So I can see the logic in the bombings, even though I think very few if any of these people deserved to be bombed. The Unabombings served the dual purpose of highlighting the violence inherent in the technocratic, industrial system, and of taking low-intensity revenge against that system. To pretend that someone who thinks like this is a paranoid schizophrenic is, to my mind, a sign of a lack of compassion and a very limited imagination. Our system is incredibly violent in its everyday operations, but most people conveniently ignore that because their attention is rarely drawn to it. Meanwhile, low-level violent crimes are reported as major events, making people think that violence is the product of a certain lunatic, criminal minority, rather than the inevitable by-product of our lifestyles. To re-emphasise: while I disagree with this as a justification for random bombings and I'm not encouraging anyone to start sending letter-bombs, I do think the logic is sound, albeit horrifying.

As an anarchist, and a student of anarchist history, I've come across a lot of this stuff. Some anarchists, like Narodnaya Volya, got it together to bomb major government buildings and officials, including the Tsar of Russia. Of course, they were infiltrated by Russian intelligence and it seems that one spymaster was actually working against the Tsarist system, so one wonders whether their 'success' was partly a result of that curious and unusual dynamic. But a lot of anarchists are just violent idiots – Auguste Coulon, the police spy who entrapped the Walsall Anarchists, celebrated the bombing of a cow in Belgium. Other anarchists around this time set off bombs in cafes, supposedly to try to disrupt and assault bourgeois society. Well, I'm all in favour of disrupting and assaulting bourgeois society, but I do wish these anarchists would have a bit of decorum and intelligence about it. Rather than blowing up the coffee shops, try hijacking trucks that deliver supplies to Starbucks thus damaging their reputation and forcing their customers to go to smaller businesses for their caffeine fix. Just a thought.

This also brings up the problem of how the distinction between sane and insane is wielded by people and institutions in order to maintain and enhance their power. Those of you who have read Foucault, particularly the book *Madness and Civilisation*, will be aware of his observations that factories look like schools which also looks like hospitals which also look like prisons. In particular, is a mental hospital a prison, a hospital or

a school? It is all three simultaneously. And what does that imply about education, criminality and insanity? It implies that mass education is not primarily motivated by producing intelligent, informed citizens capable of doing the things necessary to make for a better society. It is primarily motivated by producing people who will obey the existing power structures, who will work to maintain them.

In truth, I'm not sure mass education is as effective as religion in this respect, and I'm not sure religion is as effective as blood ties. Back in the days of nomadic and situated tribes the notion of belonging to a specific people was stronger, and provided the social cohesion necessary for us to start developing metallurgy, stonemasonry, maths, philosophy, law and so on. Then, as human populations grew and tribes started intermarrying, we got city-states, the prototypes for the nation-state. Religion began to replace the ties of blood – the first move to a metaphysical basis for social bonds. Over time religions have changed and adapted, newer ones like Christianity and Islam have risen up, but for at least 3000 years they were the main foundation around which societies united. This allowed for the development of complex mathematics, physics, and of nation-states.

Then we got to the Enlightenment, a term for a period somewhere around the later-middle of the second millenium which isn't very well defined. Older knowledge was rediscovered, new methods of spreading knowledge became available and these two factors changed everything. Economically it allowed for industrialisation – the biggest economic shift in human history. Politically it gave rise to secular liberalism, secular republicanism, Marxism, socialism and numerous other political philosophies whereby the state was seen as some kind of rational agent, a tool for good. Naturally, out of this grew a kind of society where technology – the most simple and obvious manifestation of human rationality – plays a critical role in much of what we do. Whether capitalist or socialist, liberal or conservative, almost all societies on earth spent the 20th century becoming more technocratic.

However, it also gave rise to anarchism – a political philosophy that defines itself primarily by its opposition to the state. As the state in general has spent the last three centuries growing in size, power and technological capability, so has anarchism. From the earliest days of the internet anarchistic hackers have been using it to explore and discuss state secrets. From the earliest days after the invention of dynamite, anarchists have been using it to blow stuff up. And to be honest, blowing things up and exposing state secrets are both damn good fun, though both can be done in a highly irresponsible way that is ultimately self-defeating. Whether Kaczynski's bombings were self-defeating, I leave it to you to judge.

The Unabomber Manifesto

In 1995 the FBI published Kaczynski's article on their website, and it was published by the Washington Post and the New York Times, before being picked up by loads of

other outlets. It is widely available online in multiple languages, so if Kaczynski was trying to draw attention to it then he certainly succeeded. It has drawn praise and criticism from various camps, but I don't intend to get into all that. I want to offer a philosophical analysis.

The general theme of the Unabomber Manifesto is that industrialisation has been a disaster for the human race. However, it begins and continues with a lengthy critique of what Kaczynski's perceives as 'leftists'. He bemoans political correctness, which just like today he perceives as a left-wing phenomenon. As I have said before, I consider it to be a centrist liberal and neoliberal phenomenon, and inasmuch as leftists do participate in their forms of political correctness, so do rightists. The hypersensitivity towards using language such as 'broad' and 'dame' to refer to women is matched only by the hypersensitive overreactions to that hypersensitivity. Kaczynski is 100% guilty of this hypocrisy, and seems totally unaware of it.

But he brings up an interesting point that I'd like to examine:

'Many leftists have an intense identification with the problems of groups that have an image of being weak (women), defeated (American Indians), repellent (homosexuals) or otherwise inferior. The leftists themselves feel that these groups are inferior. They would never admit to themselves that they have such feelings, but it is precisely because they do see these groups as inferior that they identify with their problems. (We do not mean to suggest that women, Indians, etc. ARE inferior; we are only making a point about leftist psychology.)

Feminists are desperately anxious to prove that women are as strong and as capable as men. Clearly they are nagged by a fear that women may NOT be as strong and as capable as men.'

I think this is often true, that people compensate for fears about their own prejudices by projecting them onto others. Those of you who follow English football may have seen this story earlier in the season about a terrace chant by Manchester United supporters about their striker Romelu Lukaku. The chant involved Lukaku having a big black dick, and some people objected because they felt this was racist. Firstly, no one considers someone telling them they have a big dick to be an insult. It's always considered a compliment. Secondly, the chant did not say he has a big dick because he's black, they're simply noting the conjunction of his blackness and big dickedness.

So, this wasn't an objection to racism, so much as an objection to the chant making certain people think about things they feel guilty for thinking about. I'm guessing at least some of these people actually deep down quite like thinking about big black dicks, but they don't want to admit that so they project that insecurity onto others, imply or accuse them of being racist, and the chant got stopped. And since then Lukaku has been in pretty poor form, whereas while the crowd were chanting about his big black dick he was playing very well. I don't know if those two things are connected.

Returning to the manifesto, time and again Kaczynski illustrates his ideological blind spots – ranting on and on about leftists but never once considering that capitalism and the capitalist culture that commodifies human identity and human rights might have something to do with this behaviour that irks him so greatly. The feelings of inferiority and the oversocialization that he objects to in the opening pages are very much a part of this culture, and while liberals will use progressive rhetoric to make excuses for capitalist culture that doesn't mean the problem originates with them. Indeed, if you ask most leftists that I know they loathe liberals for running interference for the capitalists, for reducing any rebellion against capitalism to some diluted, progressive reformist agenda. It seems that Kaczynski never encountered this perspective, or if he did he never incorporated it into his own thinking.

Another example that illustrates what I mean:

The system does not and cannot exist to satisfy human needs. Instead, it is human behavior that has to be modified to fit the needs of the system. This has nothing to do with the political or social ideology that may pretend to guide the technological system. It is not the fault of capitalism and it is not the fault of socialism. It is the fault of technology, because the system is guided not by ideology but by technical necessity. Of course the system does satisfy many human needs, but generally speaking it does this only to the extent that it is to the advantage of the system to do it. It is the needs of the system that are paramount, not those of the human being.

Here Kaczynski commits the classic mistake made by so many scientific minds when discussing politics – he blames technology. Because science in the 20th century was largely in the service of developing and producing better technology, they see technology as an end in itself, a thing in itself with some kind of will or agenda. In reality, it's a bunch of inanimate stuff that we produced for various reasons. Technology, by and large, is morally neutral. You can use a hunting rifle for morally good ends – to get dinner for your family, or to kill your boss – or for morally bad ends, like shooting at trees or murdering schoolchildren. The rifle itself doesn't give a damn what it is shooting at.

Likewise, despite ranting on and on about how leftists are all collectivists and the importance of individual freedom, Kaczynski also blames 'the system'. This is perhaps the greatest mistake leftist, particularly Marxist, social critics make. It's like blaming God, or fate, or the fact that the sky is blue. It's a generic cop-out, which offers nothing specific enough that we have any hope of solving it. It holds no-one individually responsible, except for maybe everyone all at once. Which is very collectivist. It identifies no specific dynamic within the system that could be disrupted in order to change how the system works or turn it into something new and better.

Something that occurs to me over and over when reading the Unabomber manifesto is that this is someone who – as much as they are a genius in the closed rational

system of mathematics – lacks education in the area they seem most interested in, namely philosophy. Kaczynski says that this situation isn't the fault of capitalism or socialism, but of technology. If he had a proper philosophical and historical education he'd have realised that capitalism predates industrialisation, that industrialisation was embarked upon so quickly and thoroughly largely for capitalistic motives – because it makes production and selling that much more efficient – and that socialism emerged as a response to this. I'm not saying that therefore 'capitalism is to blame' as such, merely observing the order of events and how Kaczynski's lack of a philosophical education is why he keeps making these elementary mistakes.

If anything, this is a tragic story. Ted Kaczynski grew up in a technocratic, capitalistic society where the most efficient place for a boy genius to be is at a university studying mathematics so that one day he can save an airline a lot of money by designing a more efficient wing. He was also subject to crude, psychologically scarring experiments designed to make him feel insecure, inadequate and dependent on the approval and validation of others. Because of this he grows up with a desire for autonomy that can never be fulfilled. I'm not saying this is necessarily what happened, merely that it is one narrative that can be sustained by this sort of reading and interpretation.

One other constant problem throughout the manifesto is Kaczynski's declarations about autonomy and individual freedom. For a long time I've felt these are childish or at least adolescent notions. Humans aren't empowered by a sense of freedom, they're empowered by a sense of purpose or of duty or something else that they don't have a choice over. People with lots of personal freedom and few constricting factors rarely end up excelling at anything. Like I say, look at adolescents. They protest that they can 'do what they want to' but they're slaves to their hormones and they spend a lot of time lounging around watching bad TV, playing video games and not cleaning up after themselves.

Perhaps the best example of this in Kaczynski's piece is the section titled:

TECHNOLOGY IS A MORE POWERFUL SOCIAL FORCE THAN THE ASPIRATION FOR FREEDOM

Note again that he's attributing technology with some kind of will or ability to pursue a set of aims or an agenda. I hate to break this to all those people who like to blame technology but if you leave an iPhone to its own devices all it will do is drain its battery and then turn off. I'm not frightened by teenagers wielding Samsung Galaxies.

Ted goes on to use the example of cars, saying that when they were first introduced they were a tool for greater freedom. No one had to have a car, but anyone who did have one could travel faster and further than anyone could on foot. He goes on:

But the introduction of motorized transport soon changed society in such a way as to restrict greatly man's freedom of locomotion. When automobiles became numerous, it became necessary to regulate their use extensively. In a car, especially in densely populated areas, one cannot just go where one likes at one's own pace; one's movement is governed by the flow of traffic

and by various traffic laws. One is tied down by various obligations: license requirements, driver test, renewing registration, insurance, maintenance required for safety, monthly payments on purchase price. Moreover, the use of motorized transport is no longer optional. Since the introduction of motorized transport the arrangement of our cities has changed in such a way that the majority of people no longer live within walking distance of their place of employment, shopping areas and recreational opportunities, so that they HAVE TO depend on the automobile for transportation.

He makes a case that many people will find persuasive, but not me. I've never owned a car, partly because of all this stuff that Kaczynski is talking about that make it seem like a waste of money. Or at least, the extra work I'd have to do to earn the money to pay for all this stuff versus the actual pleasure I'd get out of having a car, given my priorities and ambitions in life, make it seem like the right thing to do, at least for now. I don't have a lot of choice about most of that, but I'm not butthurt and whinging about it, let alone sending letter bombs.

But more importantly he's making the simple error of blaming this all on the introduction of a new technology, and then just on the existence of the technology itself. He doesn't ask 'why was the technology introduced?' or 'why was it adopted en masse so quickly?' or 'are there other reasons for all the regulations and additional costs beyond merely the existence of automobiles?'. Why not? Because he has no training in philosophy.

So what Kaczynski failed, horribly and tragically failed, to realise is that humans don't feel free because they aren't, and that in many ways that's a good thing. If you could just choose to stop loving the people you love, that's not a good way to be. That's how psychopaths behave. A human with no sense of duty, no moral conscience restricting them and guiding them, is more free than someone with those things. But they are a worse human being for it.

So, he fetishised autonomy but never bothered to define it – like so many people, especially Americans and Western Europeans. He objected to 'the system' while largely misidentifying how and why that system did what it did. He attributed to technology a greater autonomy than he did to himself, and thereby became a self-fulfilling prophecy. He projected his internal struggle with himself outwards onto the world, and especially onto technology. His desire for autonomy, to my mind, is a psychological metaphor for his desire to be free from guilt, shame and feelings of inadequacy. I have no doubt those feelings were exacerbated by the experiments he was subjected to, and a lack of philosophical education meant that he could never find resolution in not being free from them, he could never conceive of a resolution in simply living with them or even turning them into strengths.

**Ep. #257. Was The Unabomber
Wrong?**

Synopsis

Ted Kaczynski a.k.a. the Unabomber died earlier this year. As a tribute, in this episode we look at the latest film on Kaczynski – Ted K – and review the 2015 edition of his book *The Anti Tech Revolution*. I discuss the ways in which his philosophy evolved while he was in prison, and whether he was right or wrong.

Transcript

[TV Clip]

Speaker 1: Detectives, they don't get up. Arthur Tolan, deputy director of the. Unit just wanted to drop by and make sure. We're progressing your case, yeah.

Speaker 2: Great, thanks. You might recognize the director from television. He's done all.

Speaker 1: Of them, you know, those new shows always want to talk in head when the case comes up. And Greta Van Susteren, Nancy Grace, Chris Matthews, that fellow with the big. Ford, what's his name? Yeah, yeah, yeah. What the hell? It's chance. Get the word. Out for the Bureau and. I sell some books. Human hunters, the rise of the American serial killer. They've used a lot of my stuff on those CSI shows. I've consulted for them. You you haven't heard. So how long you been doing death investigations? 8 years.

Speaker 3: I don't see a lot of cereal stuff, actually.

Speaker 4: St. robbery every now and then.

Speaker 1: Case now so. I'll leave you to it. Was actually lead investigator on the unit.

Speaker 5: That was like 16 years, right?

Speaker 6: Yeah, yeah. Then his brother ratted him out.

Hi everyone and welcome back to clandestine. I'm Tom Secker coming to you from the Spy Culture headquarters and this is episode 257 Was the Unabomber wrong? Ted Kaczynski, AKA the Unabomber, died earlier this year. As a tribute in this episode, we look at the latest film on Kaczynski, Ted K, and review the 2015 edition of his book The Anti Tech Revolution. I discuss the ways in which his philosophy evolved while he was in prison, and whether he was right or wrong.

Speaker 9: From the Medical Center. Hey, we got our guy that was hanging, you know, and then the telephone number. They didn't give him that information yet. OK. So is he deceased?

Speaker 1: Or what's going on with him?

Speaker 9: And they're doing this. I guess they got a crash card a bit now. So what information do you know? Pretty much all they did was tell me to call you guys and give me. His name, OK.

Longer-time listeners will remember episode 133, Was the Unabomber Right? We looked at the original Ted Kaczynski manifesto, Industrial Society and Its Future, and the season of Manhunt devoted to the Unabomber case. Well, Ted died recently so to commemorate a fellow anarchist I thought we'd do a followup and look at his 2015 book and the 2021 film about his life.

First, a quick recap. Ted 'Theodore' Kaczynski was born in May, 1942. A maths genius, he was promoted two years ahead of schedule at school and went to university early as well. While this helped him develop his intellectual talents to a fairly extraordinary degree, it stunted him socially and socio-sexually, being around older teenage girls and young women who, themselves, typically go for older guys anyway.

He was also a test subject in psychological experiments run by Harvard psychopath – sorry, psychologist Henry A Murray, which were backed by the CIA. This was apparently part of MKULTRA, or at least the various programs and experiments that people lump together under that codename. While we don't know if drugs, particularly LSD, were used on young Ted as part of these experiments, we do know they involved being emotionally abused, being made to write letters to himself from his parents that insulted and criticised him, things of that nature. And that this went on for around three years.

Nonetheless, he earned his PhD in 1967 and became a professor, lasting one year before he quit. Ted and his brother bought a small plot of land in rural Montana in 1971 and built a small shack or cabin, where Ted would live until his arrest decades later. He worked as a maths tutor, and in various short-term manual jobs, living cheaply and off the land.

He witnessed the destruction of the forests and lands around his home, by logging and mining companies. In particular, the sounds of industrial machinery, dynamite for oil exploration, and military jets flying overhead disturbed Ted. He began writing radical anti-technology and anti-technocracy materials, much of which has not been published, and making homemade bombs from very basic materials. He sent these to various people he considered responsible for the industrialisation of society, including universities, computer companies and airlines.

Though the FBI began their UNABOM investigation in 1979, it wasn't until 1996 that a tip from his estranged brother following the publication of parts of the manifesto that they caught up with him. Ted was arrested at the cabin and put in jail.

This is where the legal case gets complicated – Ted's lawyers were convinced he wasn't sane and couldn't be held responsible for his actions in a criminal sense. Ted objected, declaring he wasn't mentally ill. He wrote a letter to the judge asking to represent himself, but the judge denied the request. His lawyers abandoned the insanity defence as a trial strategy and tried to persuade him to let them use it when the case

got to sentencing. Ted insisted he was not mentally ill, again demanded to represent himself but in order to do so had to submit to a psychological evaluation.

The evaluation concluded he suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, and hence could not represent himself but likewise, couldn't be prosecuted without a serious risk of mistrial, being found not guilty, or appeals. So the prosecution offered him a plea deal, taking the death penalty off the table, and Ted accepted. From then until his death in June 2023 he resided at the Federal Supermax prison in Colorado, alongside people like Ramzi Yousef and the Blind Sheikh. He died aged 81, apparently from suicide.

When it comes to the morality of Ted's actions – bombings are bombings, but not all bombings are equal. Dropping a bomb on someone who is a region-wide serial killer is not the same as dropping a bomb on a wedding full of innocent people, though of course if you're male and over a certain age you're a de facto enemy combatant rather than an innocent victim.

For the most part, my objection to Ted's terror campaign is that he chose a lot of the wrong targets. While he started out in Luddite style, sabotaging vehicles and equipment used by the companies to destroy the forest and the natural world, when he progressed onto sending letter bombs his aim got a little wobbly. I understand targeting universities, and in one case he managed to injure a police officer called to look at the suspicious package, so that's all cool, but in some cases random students and secretaries were hurt. Similarly, he killed an executive at a PR firm who helped Exxon clean up their public image following the Exxon Valdez spill, at the time the largest oil spill in US history. Since then it's been overtaken by Deepwater Horizon, and sadly Ted's been in prison the whole time so no nail bomb for Peter Berg.

Speaker 8: I am a still being 2 feet wide. £426 per foot. I am also the bridge made from that beam. I am that power line. These freight tracks. Under 20 million tons of concrete that hold back the river, I am this stretch of black top that takes you home every night. I turn sunshine into your night light. I make the world work as it should. I am a welder. I am an ironworker. I'm a linesman. A longshoreman, A fisherman, A logger. I am an American worker and our country depends on my strength.

That is to say, revolutionary violence against an inherently violent system is not immoral, but culpability and targeting the people truly responsible is what distinguishes legitimate anarchist violence from illegitimate anarchist violence. When Auguste Coulon, the police informer who infiltrated and set up the Walsall Anarchists, was involved in the blowing up of a cow in Belgium, I consider that a crime against nature and an act of wanton stupidity. I imagine Ted would agree with me on that.

The flipside is who among us can say we've never been guilty of misdirecting anger? Anger, rage, fury – these are the emotions that are perhaps the easiest to misdirect, to visit upon the wrong people. Rather than directing them towards the people who've got it coming to them, we often take things out on others. I've broken more than one

household appliance because of this, though also because deep down I am a bit of a Luddite.

I guess we should also clarify that term – it comes from a guy called Ned Ludd who may or may not have existed but allegedly smashed two knitting machines in 1779 and helped spawn a movement of radical textile workers protesting against automation and industrialisation. This kind of anarchism goes back to the very earliest years of the industrial revolution in this country. Indeed, it precedes the first anarchist text in this country – William Godwin’s *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*.

So, Ted is in good company both as a writer and as an activist. I myself refuse to use self-service checkouts precisely because they’re a big step towards fully automated supermarkets with fucking ED-209s at the door to mow down suspected shoplifters. I do sometimes try to explain this to the staff who badger me to use the self-service tills, that they’re basically selling their own redundancy, but it rarely gets through to them. I’d like to say I don’t use sex bots for the same reasons, but it wouldn’t be true. Not that I do use sex bots, I don’t, but for other reasons. Though if anyone wants to make that action comedy about a group of underemployed sex workers who become Luddites attacking the sex bot industry, the email contact box is on my site.

Admittedly, I’ve never sent a mail bomb to a PR executive. Hate mail, sure, the occasional bit of grotesque pornography, of course, but no letter bombs. I do wish Ted had gone more Weather Underground, sent a couple to the Pentagon, maybe one to the CIA, but none of us is perfect and people in glass houses shouldn’t throw letter bombs. It’ll hit the glass wall and bounce back.

Ted K – The Latest Unabomber Film

Naturally, Ted’s antics drew the attention of the culture industry as soon as he was arrested. A flick through IMDB shows up a film from 1995, before he was even picked up by the FBI. Then we got the TV movie *Unabomber: The True Story* with Dean Stockwell, from *Quantum Leap*, *The Story First: Behind the Unabomber*, episodes of *Time and Again*, *The F.B.I. Files*, *20/20*, *Undercover History*, *Aftermath* with William Shatner – you get the idea.

I haven’t seen all of these, but the best depiction I’ve watched is the opening season of *Manhunt*. Indeed, the second season which is all about the Olympic Park bombing in 1996 – just a couple of months after Ted was arrested – and how it was wrongly blamed on Richard Jewell, a man who saved lives, is also very good. The *Unabomber* season stars Paul Bettany as Ted, and it portrays him very sympathetically, at least in terms of his life, if not his mischievous misdemeanours. I felt sorry for him in moments, totally understood most of the decisions he made – it isn’t the demonisation you get in all the endless true crime serials. As per usual, you get more truth from non-factual entertainment based on real life than you do from so-called documentaries.

For example, many of these documentaries portray Ted as a sociopath, someone who targeted innocent people in a totally uncaring way. This isn't true – from his own writings we know that he felt guilt and shame, regretted some of what he had done and not done. He was an introverted anti-civilisation type, not an outgoing sociopath who charmed people and lied his way into a position of influence. I bring this up because it is not just an issue of who gets labelled a sociopath, but why. If you're a cop or FBI agent or CIA black ops specialist who moonlights as a racist serial killer – or just does that as part of your job – you're a bad apple. But if you're someone who withdraws from normal society and sends bombs to people you hold responsible for the technocratic-industrial nightmare being inflicted on all of us, you're a dangerous lunatic.

As per usual, true crime is propaganda for the police state.

The latest film that I've seen about Kaczynski is Ted K, from 2021. It claims to be based on tens of thousands of pages of his writings recovered from his cabin in Montana, but to my knowledge that stuff is all held by the Feds, so I'm guessing that's a bit of cinematic bravado. It was, however, filmed in the area in Montana where Ted lived, with the help of the US Forest Service, and the town of Lincoln, so some local authorities are credited too.

It stars Charlto Copley as Kazcynski, who you may remember playing the lead in District 9. He does a very good job, certainly a compelling performance and a compelling film, and I can understand reviewers praising him, and Tony Stone, the director.

Speaker 10: To the editor. I would like to warn people of the danger of picking berries and power line Rd. cuts. The Montana Electric Company sprays cancer, causing herbicides without any warnings to the public.

Speaker 6: Then there was a very loud Sonic boom. This was the last straw and it reduced me to tears of impotent rage. But I have a plan for revenge.

Speaker 10: People say violence and the taking of human life is not a way to resolve human problems. Can't work. As a matter. Of fact history shows that it very often does work. I want to kill some people. Preferably a scientist, a Communist businessman, or some other big shot. You shotgun powder in the last hoping it would do more damage than rifle powder. Spent 350 bucks on the last bombing mission and barely. Blew a finger off. Absolutely frustrating. I can't seem to make a lethal bomb. Seemingly increasingly infeasible without more money.

You get a real sense of life in the wilderness, interrupted by industrialisation. There are some magnificent shots of the logging vehicles with giant chains on their tires, ripping up the land. The noise, too, is a big part of the film, whether it's the jets flying overhead or the snowmobiles roaring around.

We see how Ted begins by breaking into a holiday chalet and busting up some snowmobiles, before taking on bigger targets, as well as his life, some nice scenes of him assembling these primitive yet clever bombs – it’s a good watch. Done in a European style, there isn’t much dialogue (which is also realistic), it relies on visual storytelling which, for the most part, is very well executed. I certainly enjoyed a lot of things about this film, especially the opening act where we’re getting to know Ted and see his life, feel his anger about the destruction of nature and the fucking noise of industrial machinery.

The two elements I had problems with were the attempts to characterise Ted’s mindset, and the fantasy sequences that play into this. There are several sequences where the film-makers employ surrealism or magical realism to try to explain what’s going on inside Ted’s mind as he amps up the violence and begins his terroristic bombing campaign. I found this wholly unnecessary and they took me out of the remote, but very real location of the rest of the story.

Overriding this stylistic gripe, there’s a serious thematic concern here. Early on, the film tries to establish that Ted is some kind of incel misogynist, presumably to try to appeal to all the Twitter feminist movie critics out there. He is seen spying on a couple with his hunting rifle, the woman in underwear, commenting to himself about her body. To my knowledge there’s no evidence of this happening. Then there’s a bit where he gets a job with one of the logging firms, doing manual labour on the wood, but he gets bitchy with the boss lady so she fires him. To my knowledge, this didn’t happen but may be a reworking of an incident in Chicago that did happen, where Ted was briefly involved with a female supervisor but got into trouble for writing dirty limericks about her.

There’s a long phone conversation where he’s ranting at his mother about how he’s never had sex, only had two relationships with women and neither went very far physically. There’s a whole load of stuff about him fantasising romantically, and hallucinating that women he interacts with are the woman from his fantasies. They go to such lengths in this film to try to portray Ted’s actions as somehow the result of his sexual inexperience and frustration, which isn’t something he ever cited himself. If anything, the real Ted comes across to me as asexual – possibly as a consequence of his experiences in the education system.

But of course, in *Industrial Society and Its Future* he took a shot – a very accurate shot in my opinion – at the liberal Left and feminists, saying:

Many leftists have an intense identification with the problems of groups that have an image of being weak (women), defeated (American Indians), repellent (homosexuals) or otherwise inferior. The leftists themselves feel that these groups are inferior. They would never admit to themselves that they have such feelings, but it is precisely because they do see these groups as inferior that they identify with their problems. (We do not mean to

suggest that women, Indians, etc. are inferior; we are only making a point about leftist psychology.)...

Feminists are desperately anxious to prove that women are as strong and as capable as men. Clearly they are nagged by a fear that women may not be as strong and as capable as men.

He explicitly says he doesn't believe women are inferior but because this is the post-metoo world, you have to work that crap in there somewhere. As I say, I don't think it applies to Ted, however much it may apply to some men, and it has become a hateful cliché.

Let me explain.

Much like the original metoo movement, the original use of the term 'incel' was a kind of online support group for men who were struggling for a date, struggling to get laid. Noticeably, this started in America, where everyone is obsessed with sex and who is fucking who and who isn't fucking who and where everything from children's bathing suits to military helicopters is sold using sex, or sexual implication. There is an enormous pressure in American society, originating in high school, to prove that you're successful – either by making lots of money or fucking lots of people or otherwise doing something easily quantifiable. Hence why almost everyone in their 50s in that country is miserable and three-times divorced.

My point being that in both cases these phenomena started out as empathetic – metoo was an ad hoc online support network for victims of sexual and domestic violence, 'incel' was a term used to self-identify as a 'victim' (if you like) of this rather sad and adolescent dating culture which is extremely shallow and reduces sexual partners to status symbols and 'hook ups'. I have no problem with either of these things, as such.

Then, the feminists got involved and turned both things into a means of generating hatred and fear towards men, trying to eradicate any right they have to the presumption of innocence, and reducing them to pure sexuality. That is to say, the term 'incel' and particularly 'incel misogynist' is itself rapey, misogynistic and misandristic. It echoes the old lie that mothers tell their daughters about how men are only interested in one thing, that they want it all the time with any woman they can get their hands on.

This is not only a nasty and wrongful stereotype (albeit true of some men), it teaches young women that men's sexual consent isn't a thing. Not just that it doesn't matter, but that it doesn't even exist. This coming from a bunch of feminists for whom women's sexual consent is so sacrosanct that women can withdraw it after the fact. The implication that the only problem men have with women's behaviour is that women 'won't sleep with them' is insulting, and totally lacking in empathy regarding men's actual feelings. But of course, I doubt any of the men or women saying this crap have ever actually spoken to a man about he feels, they've simply presumed how he feels and then used that to demonise him. Because they're vile bigots.

Furthermore, this thinking encourages women to see men in solely sexual terms, and to see themselves in those same terms. The only meaningful interactions between men and women are supposedly soaked in sexual effluvia and no other kind of relationship becomes possible. Do you think this might be because this myth originated in a bunch of rapey women who want to convince men of this so as to increase sexual supply while making other women scared and hateful of men so as to reduce sexual competition? It would add up, since they're projecting that exact attitude onto everyone and then blaming them for it, which is exactly what people like that do with literally everything.

Getting back to Ted – as I say, there isn't much sign in his writings of this mentality. In *Industrial Society and Its Future* he writes:

One who believes that women, homosexuals, etc., should have equal rights is not necessary a leftist. The feminist, gay rights, etc., movements that exist in our society have the particular ideological tone that characterizes leftism, and if one believes, for example, that women should have equal rights it does not necessarily follow that one must sympathize with the feminist movement as it exists today.

Indeed, one might argue that if you believe men and women have equal rights – or should have – then you're at odds with the feminism that existed when Ted was writing this, let alone today. As I say, I don't hear a lot of feminists even acknowledging men's right to sexual consent and bodily autonomy, let alone promoting them as equal to women's rights regarding the same things.

When it comes to the film's depiction of Ted's alleged paranoid schizophrenia, Ted K is lurid and nicely crafted, but much as with the undercurrent of 'incel misogyny' it trivialises the film's powerful opening act, that shows the very real reasons for his mindset and his actions. It trivialises the destruction of nature to make way for industrial society, or in many cases just to keep fuelling it. The metaphor of permanent destruction to keep something going temporarily, and how insane that is, comes across well in the first half of the film, but then Ted starts sneaking around stealing underwear or whatever and the point gets lost.

So, we see in Ted's imagination a world where he's living on a tiny patch of green land with two trees and his cabin, while all around him giant vehicles turn the land into nothing but mud and dust. A powerful image, but it makes it seem like this is all in his head, that there isn't a real problem here, when there clearly is. Look at how much worse pollution, air quality, water quality has become since the Unabomber's campaign of violence. Look at the loss of biomass and biodiversity, green spaces and wildlife. Look at how sick everyone is, with constant afflictions and illnesses.

So, while I appreciated Ted K and felt around half of the film is excellent, two hours is too long for the story they're telling and the things they added both padded it out and made it longer, while also detracting from the story and playing into a bunch of tired, cruel stereotypes. Ted didn't go around blowing things up because he 'couldn't

get a girlfriend' but because he felt deeply that human society, or at least industrial society, was a horrible mistake. Call him insane, call me insane, but he wasn't wrong.

The Anti-Tech Revolution

Back in episode 133 I offered some criticisms of Ted's philosophy as expressed in his manifesto. Nowhere near the criticisms I have of Anders Breivik's manifesto, which is largely just a bunch of copy-pasted crap about immigration and cultural Marxism and other incoherent, repetitive right wing drivel.

Whereas Kaczynski's manifesto isn't fundamentally wrong, it is philosophically immature, in part because its writer was emotionally stunted. As I said in that episode, his biggest mistake is attributing technology some kind of autonomy in itself, while constantly fetishising his own autonomy due to his inability to attain it. Many scientists and other STEMs think like this – they see technology as the driving force behind politics and history because that's all they know. It's the typical engineering mindset of being able to relate to a mechanical creation more easily than another human being.

In reality, technology does serve authoritarian, colonialist, capitalist societies just as it serves captive market state-run societies, but it is also enabled to do that by those societies. Martin Heidegger, the Nazi-sympathising philosopher defined technology as that which extends human capabilities, or enhances them in some way. But all technology is created by humans, it isn't an end in itself, it doesn't have its own agency. A toaster left to its own devices has no political influence.

For all Ted is labelled a terrorist and a madman and all the rest, this mistake in his manifesto has become more popular the more technocratic our societies have become. Increasingly, we talk as though the technology is in charge and we have no choice in the matter. Endlessly I hear journalists talk about the influence of 'social media', which irritates me for several reasons:

1. All these fucking journalists are social media addicts, desperate for the attention and following and most of them define their success as human beings by the size of their following and their public reputation as expressed on an integrally dishonest platform.
2. Social media is just a bunch of websites. That are anti-social. And produce no media themselves. All the content is produced by people, not by social media companies.
3. The platforms are designed to incite narcissism, insecurity, jealousy, infantilism, inattention, addiction, desperation, neuroses, bigotry and simple-mindedness. The answer to this problem is not to generically blame 'social media', but to stop using them because they're a poor technology.

4. The main reason people don't stop using them is their own weakness, egoism, insecurity and so on. That did not originate in social media, it originates in each of us, social media companies just incite it and exploit it because they're parasites.
5. It is the corporations in charge of these platforms, and the people in charge of those corporations, who should be blamed for this, first and foremost. But instead people blame 'social media' as though it isn't a bunch of people using a website or app owned and controlled by other people. As though people aren't at the centre of every point in the causal chain.
6. The net result of this, like all delusionary deflections, is that no one addicted to social media will ever address these things within themselves and so the whole damn cycle continues. And trust me, the psychopaths – sorry, psychologists hired by social media companies know this very, very well. Despite all my rage, I am still just a rat in a cage. Indeed, perhaps because of my rage, I am still just a rat in a cage.

I do wonder what Kaczynski would make of Twitter. I hope that – like me – his first instinct would be to blow it up.

Speaker 12: OK, let's go.

Speaker 0: Well, I think I've marked them a bit. Too what?

Speaker 10: We've got keep.

Speaker 12: On you've got a plan wedge.

Speaker 0: Blow something.

Speaker 12: Up, we're gonna blow up, wedge.

Speaker 4: Were brought the Internet for brother Fesel. Mujahid brother, yeah.

Speaker 0: Bring it up and yeah.

Speaker 12: You know you're not a mujahid while you're a ***** idiot. Do you think about do you think he gets his name from a book called a Cat that went to make a book that he can't even finish because it's far too ***** advance?

Speaker 4: For him, I tell you what, bro. I got a plan for you. Why don't you go with with. Panda balloon and vishakha Barbagelata go lose yourself in the forest, right. Grenade. Choose truck. There are such a laptop to cook.

Naturally, having been locked up since before the days of Friendster and MySpace, Ted lived out his days blissfully unaware of the feeling of being turned into a serial

killer in slow motion that is the Twitter experience. Indeed, had he stayed in his cabin in Montana he'd probably have avoided it too.

Anyhow, after the episode where I laid out some of my criticisms of Ted's philosophy in *Industrial Society and its Future*, a listener (or reader) got in touch asking if I'd read Kaczynski's later works, especially *The Anti Tech Revolution*, which he obviously wrote while in prison. Ted, that is, who wrote it, not the listener.

At that time I had not read it but it's freely available on archive.org, at least the 2015 edition that we'll look at, so I downloaded it and gave it a look. It is much better than *Industrial Society*, a far more human and intelligent book that recognises many of the limitations of Ted's earlier works and addresses them. Call me insane, call the listener insane, but they weren't wrong about that. It is far more stoic in its emotional articulations, possibly a result of Ted calming as he got older, or possibly him realising that without the ability to send bombs to people he had to find another way, namely, radical philosophy.

I particularly enjoy his arguments about why centralised, supposedly rational human control cannot produce a well functioning society, and he lists various examples from ancient and modern history demonstrating this. The folly of so many political idealists, supposedly rational people who managed to impose their will on the world, only to meet with totally unexpected consequences, is a recurring motif of human society.

The story of Otto von Bismarck, the statesman who united Germany and thereby created the German empire, helping cause World War 1 and the destruction of that empire, is my favourite of the illustrations in *The Anti Tech Revolution*. While Ted doesn't go as deeply into these examples as I might like, he isn't wrong. Enlightened monarchs, benevolent despotism, market capitalism, state socialism – all of these things have been tried, and all have produced unexpected, unpredicted consequences.

Why? Well, Ted blames what is popularly known as the Butterfly Effect, a principle of Chaos Theory whereby complex systems are subject to sometimes large scale change very suddenly, due to a seemingly tiny, irrelevant event. A butterfly flaps its wings in Hong Kong and the weather in Abidjan is different as a result.

Thus, to try to predict how human society will react to any given policy decision, or any specific implementation of policy, is essentially impossible. As Ted puts it:

Problems in economics can give us some idea of how impossibly difficult it would be to predict or control the behavior of a system as complex as that of a modern human society. It is convincingly argued that a modern economy can never be rationally planned to maximize efficiency, because the task of carrying out such planning would be too overwhelmingly complex. Calculation of a rational system of prices for the U.S. economy alone would require manipulation of a conservatively estimated 6×10^{13} (sixty trillion!) simultaneous equations. That takes into account only the economic factors involved in establishing prices and leaves out the innumerable psychologi-

cal, sociological, political, etc., factors that continuously interact with the economy.

As I'm sure you can see, this book is a little drier than Abbie Hoffman's *Steal This Book*, but it is no less anarchistic. While it might appear at first blush that Ted is still trying to cling onto some notion of self-aware autonomy or rational self-interest, he goes on:

A society's ability to predict its own behavior moreover would seem to require something like complete self-knowledge, and here too one runs into paradoxes. We need not discuss these here; some thought should suffice to convince the reader that any attempt to envision a system having complete self-knowledge will encounter difficulties.

This is not only a problem for statist systems but also for anarchistic societies, especially anarcho-capitalism. The notion that 'the market' (which, like 'social media' just means 'a bunch of people doing some stuff') will make rational, efficient decisions presumes that people have perfect knowledge – not just of the products or services available for different prices, but also of themselves and their own motivations.

And while the professional psychopaths – sorry, psychologists – will claim that self-knowledge is possible, and even I concede that some degree of emotional self-awareness is absolutely possible, one cannot be both the observer and the thing being observed at the same time. This is the paradox Wittgenstein pointed out – I cannot see myself because I cannot draw a line around myself and then step outside of it.

Ted goes on to quote Friedrich Engels, the benefactor of Charlie Marx and co-author of the *Communist Manifesto*, who wrote:

History is made in such a way that the final result always arises from the conflicts among many individual wills, each of which is made into what it is by a multitude of special conditions of life; thus there are innumerable intersecting forces, an infinite collection of parallelograms of forces, and from them emerges a resultant-the historical event-which from another point of view can be regarded as the product of one power that, as a whole, operates unconsciously and without volition. For what each individual wants runs up against the opposition of every other, and what comes out of it all is something that no one wanted.

Welcome to the Hotel California, folks. I would go further than Ted and argue, as I did when we looked at *Touch of Evil* and *If* and some other favourite movies of mine, that it isn't simply about predictability. No surprise a mathematician focuses on this, but to me it goes deeper. Government, technology, technocratic markets and so on are attempts to bypass or escape the dark side, what Jung called the Shadow. Instead of

confronting it, we seek to evade it and create edifices of deluded rationalism then stand around denying that it's failing while it collapses around us.

Hence, modern society.

I am left wondering as I read *The Anti Tech Revolution* whether Ted has seen and read *Jurassic Park* and been deeply influenced by Jeff Goldblum's character Ian Malcolm. I know I was.

Speaker 2: Don't you see the danger showing inherent in what you're doing here? Genetic powers, the most awesome force the planets ever seen. But you wield it like a kid that found his dad's gun. If I may, I'll tell you the problem with the scientific power that you're using here, it didn't require any discipline to attain it. You know, you read what others had done and you took the next step. You didn't earn the knowledge for yourselves, so you don't take any responsibility for it. You stood on the shoulders of geniuses to accomplish something as fast as you could, and before you even knew what you had you patented it and packaged it and slapped it on a plastic lunch box. And now you're selling it. You sell it well.

Speaker 5: I don't think you're giving us our due credit. Our scientists have done things which nobody's ever lived on?

Speaker 2: Before. Yeah. Yeah. But your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not. They could. They didn't stop to think they should.

Speaker 5: Combos are on the verge of extinction, and if I was to could not know if I was to create. A flock of. Condos on this. Island you wouldn't have. Anything to say?

Speaker 2: This isn't. This is some species that was obliterated by deforestation or or the building of a dam dinosaurs had their shot and nature selected them for extinction.

Speaker 5: I simply don't understand. There's a ladite attitude, especially from a scientist. How can we stand in the light of discovery and and not?

Speaker 2: Act. Oh, what's so great about discovery? It's a violent penetrative act that scars would have explores what you call discovery. I call the rape. Of the natural world.

Speaker 13: Well, the question is, how can you know anything about an extinct ecosystem, and therefore, how could you ever assume that you can control it and you have plants in this building that are poisonous. You pick them because they look good, but these are aggressive living things that have no idea what century they're in, and they'll defend themselves violently if necessary.

Speaker 5: Photograph. If there's one person here who could appreciate what I'm trying to do.

Speaker 3: It was just changed so radically and we're all running to catch up. I don't want to jump to any conclusions, but look, dinosaurs and man 2 species separated by 65,000,000 years of evolution just been suddenly. Throwing back into the mix together, how can we possibly have the slightest idea what to expect?

Speaker 12: I don't believe it. I don't believe it.

Speaker 5: You're meant to come down here and defend me against these characters, and the only one. I've got on my side. Is the blood sucking lawyer.

Speaker 0: Thank you.

When you consider that Jurassic Park is a story of trying to create, through scientific rationalism or secular humanism, an idealised version of the past that's also an idealised version of the future, but it all breaks down unexpectedly, and you'll see the parallels I'm seeing.

Indeed, the whole vibe of the book reminds me of the line in the latest Jurassic World movie, where Ian says

Speaker 11: 'I gave my opinion robustly for years. As expected, the sum of our human endeavors has led to our annihilation, and the only play now is to take the time that we have left and, uh, you know, just like we always do, squander it.'

However, that's not quite what Ted is saying – he does advocate for sabotage, resistance, non compliance, disengagement and other fairly well established anarchist tactics. If only the French anarchists were still around, they'd have been putting sugar into the concrete used to build the Supermax prison and it'd have fallen down before it even opened to the criminal public. Then what would they have done, stick Ted in a cell next to Epstein?

Just as an aside, if anyone wants to write an odd couple comedy about Ted Kaczynski and Jeffrey Epstein being cellmates, the email contact form is on my site.

Of course, Ted is applying these subversion and resistance tactics specifically to technologised society, but it echoes a lot of what anarchists have been saying since day one. And when he says that there is no overall strategy, just fluid tactics aimed at an end goal – the elimination of centralised, technocratic society – he's right. This is where supposed opponents of the system such as liberals and socialists go so badly wrong. They think that protest and demonstration and the occasional boycott is going to get the job done.

And it might, if you're dealing with the occasional racist or homophobic bakery, but we're taking on something much bigger and more powerful than that. We can't protest billionaires out of their positions of wealth and power any more than we can infiltrate the UN and dismantle it from within. However, if some bright spark decided to, say, cut off the electricity to the UN headquarters every day for a year, they'd get the message. Especially if this was combined with other insurgency, asymmetric warfare tactics.

When you don't have the power and wealth, and are taking on the people with power and wealth, you cannot play by the established rules. This has been shown time and again in the last couple of decades – people petition and protest and these days descend into clicktivism and trying to create big social media moments. While in the past these things made the centres of power nervous, they've come to realise that if they wait it out and just carry on doing what they're doing, most people won't evolve onto doing more effective things.

Whether that's subversive entryism, whereby you try to use the systems tools against itself (crowdfunding lawsuits being a great, and sometimes effective, example) or direct action from outside (cutting off electrical supply being a non-violent but extremely effective example), there are options. Imagine if the Weather Underground reformed and attacked those massive data centers that drive google and twitter and facebook and youtube and consume literal percentage points of the global electricity consumption.

It'd certainly be more consequential than hashtags and waving signs at the White House.

And on that recommendation, I'm going to wrap it up here. Obviously, I am recommending the anti tech revolution. It isn't a long book, but it is one of the more provocative and simply true political manifestos that I've read. I'm also recommending Ted K the movie with a few caveats. It's got problems, but it's still better than most films that have been released this decade. On the next one, I think I'm going to do something. I've been meaning to do for a while and go through a big batch of Marine Corps ELO reports from the 70s now, over 45 years old with a great time capsule of military propaganda. Or I might do something else. Until then, you've been listening to clandestine with me, Tom Secker. So thank you for listening and take care.

The Ted K Archive

A critique of his ideas & actions



ClandesTime
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Ep. #133 & Ep. #257

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