

60 Minutes Interview with Kaczynski Family

David Kaczynski

September 15, 1996

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60 minutes interview of suspected Unabomber, Theodore John Kaczynski's family Wanda and David Kaczynski, Linda Patrick Kaczynski and attorney Tony Bisceglie. Interviewers: Mike Wallace & Lesley Stahl.

This was the first media interview with any of the Kaczynski family, and was done in order to try and save him from the death penalty.

This led to a final angry letter by Ted to David. Plus, he quoted from the interview in his book Truth versus Lies:

"My lawyers obtained both a tape of the program and a transcript of it from the producers. The transcript failed to include remarks by Leslie Stahl introducing Part Two. My lawyer's assistants reviewed the tape and added Ms. Stahl's remarks to the copy of the transcript that is included with these documents."

Originally aired on Sunday, September 15, 1996. Ted Kaczynski's Family/Raking It In, S29.E1. 60 Minutes, 15 Sept. 1996:

- <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2601898>

Then re-aired in abbreviated forms twice:

- <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2603174>
- <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2619368>

This transcript and video source is from one of the slightly abbreviated versions.

Full Transcript

Mike: If he is the Unabomber as the FBI thinks he is no one was more shocked by that first sight of him on television than his mother.

Wanda: It was a horrible moment, I couldn't believe it when I saw him, oh gosh I figured oh my god he's really gone over the edge, Ted's gone.

Mike: But the fact remains that it was his own brother who made the decision to turn him in.

David: One of the things that made my decision very, very difficult was trying to imagine how it must feel to him to be turned in by his own brother.

Wanda: But what can you do, you can't risk more lives.

Mike: Now most Americans think the FBI probably got the right man. When they arrested Ted Kaczynski as the Unabomber, a man the FBI says killed three (3) people and wounded twenty-three (23) more in a series of mail bomb attacks over a period of 18 years, his family may not be just as sure about it as the FBI but it was his brother, David, who turned him in and his mother Wanda, who said that David had no choice but to do it. Tonight they'll tell you why. His mother Wanda was widowed six (6) years ago, she is 79, self-educated and didn't get her college degree until she was 51, her younger son David a graduate of Columbia university, runs a shelter for homeless children, David's wife Linda Patrick, a philosophy professor at union college in Schenectady, new york. They all acknowledge that Ted's mental state had deteriorated over the years, that he'd become seriously disturbed, but they were hardly prepared for the sight they and the world saw on television, the day this Harvard graduate and Michigan PhD was arrested, the man they've known and loved and then felt they had to turn into the FBI.

David: Oh, seeing him come out of the cabin, ha, hair completely unkempt, clothes in complete tatters, I think I even noticed the look on his face which did not seem to be a look of full human recognition, my feeling was just a wrenching in my heart to think what he had come to, what was happening to him, what he must be going through at that moment.

Mike: And Wanda, you the same I'm sure?

Wanda: Oh yes, oh it was horrible, it was a horrible moment, I couldn't believe it when I saw him, oh gosh I figured oh my god he's really gone over the edge, Ted's gone.

Mike: How did all this begin? Wanda Kaczynski told Lesley Stahl and me that Ted's problems could have begun way back in 1942 soon after he was born.

Wanda: I use to pick him up out of the crib and he would be bouncing around and he would nuzzle his head in my neck and chortle and gurgle and pull my hair and he was a bundle of joy.

Lesley: But when Ted was 9 months old he suffered a painful and dangerous case of hives he was hospitalized for a week.

Wanda: In those days they did not allow you to stay with a child, I would remember how he'd grab the bars of the crib in this hospital and he'd scream and hold out his arms and I'd have to go out the door, when I finally came back to take him home, what they handed to me was not this bouncing, joyous baby, but a little rag doll, that didn't look at me, that was slumped over, was completely limp.

Mike: Wanda, back in those days that happened to a lot of youngsters I mean who whose parents couldn't see them in in a hospital just as with Ted and they did not become sociopaths if you will.

Wanda: Right, but can you judge one child by another.

Lesley: Wanda feels that marked the beginning of a lifelong pattern of withdrawal for ted, a pattern that continued after David was born when Ted was 7 she remembers Ted as apart, aloof, alone. Wasn't he always going upstairs and.

Wanda: Yes.

Lesley: Closing the door.

Wanda: Yes and uh if he heard cars driving up he'd say ooh there's so and so he says don't call me down, I I don't want to see. Them, I don't want to see them and he'd go upstairs.

Lesley: Some of your neighbours have said that they can't remember that he ever smiled or that he ever laughed.

Wanda: Yes, this is true; he became a very sober sort of child.

Lesley: Why did you never seek help for him when he was a young boy and displaying all these unusual?

Wanda: Well, first of all.

Lesley: Qualities?

Wanda: There was nothing gross, you know he wasn't violent he was a good kid, no problems with delinquency, how do you tell people he's easily hurt and he goes off by himself, you know, the teachers liked him because he was such a good student.

Lesley: A good student with a genius IQ of a hundred-seventy (170). Ted skipped two grades and entered Harvard at sixteen (16). He made few if any friends, but he did earn a reputation as a brilliant mathematician and a teaching job at Berkeley. Kaczynski abruptly quit in 1969 and wound up buying land near Lincoln, Montana, there he built a primitive shack without electricity or running water. For a while David lived nearby, and once he and his parents drove to visit ted.

David: And as we were driving up his, uh, his road he was driving out the other way, we all waved at him and said "Ted hi" and again he had that, that veiled look on his face and he kind of held up his head and looked away and just drove off. We ended up returning to my apartment in great falls and found Ted sitting there on the

couch, this would have probably been early afternoon and he remained sitting there until nightfall. He would not...

Lesley: In the shutdown state?

David: In the shutdown state, and the next morning he was an entirely different person, he was cheerful, he was convivial, it was very, very puzzling.

Lesley: As if it hadn't happened?

David: As if it hadn't happened.

Lesley: Ted's last visit home came in the late 70's. He took a job at this factory in a Chicago suburb where his father was a manager and his brother David was a foreman.

Lesley: You had to fire him, why did you have to fire him?

David: Uh, he had begun dating, somebody was, who was a, a, supervisor in the factory, as it turned out the relationship didn't go anywhere. He wrote a limerick that was offensive and he pasted it in, in various places around the factory where we worked.

Lesley: About her?

David: About this woman who had rejected him. I approached him and I told him, in an angry way that he had to stop doing that, and if he didn't I would fire him, the next day he came up to the machine where I was working and pasted one of these limericks right in front of me and said to me "So what are you gonna to do about this?" and I said "Ted go home".

Lesley: That was the first time David thought something was deeply wrong with his brother. David didn't know that the Unabomber's first attack had taken place just a few miles from the factory and just a few months before Ted was fired. When Ted moved back to Montana, he communicated with his family through letters that grew increasingly hostile.

Mike: Let me just read you a little bit from one letter that he sent to you.

Wanda: Yeah.

Mike: Uh, you're not gonna be happy to hear it I'm sure, but.

Wanda:, I yeah, I know.

Mike: He says "So generally if I experienced any failure or showed any weakness I found that I couldn't come to you for sympathy, you're simply using me as a defenseless but on which to take out your frustrations, I was supposed to be your perfect little genius.

David: Mike, this is not the same family that I grew up in, that he grew up in, this is not the same mother that he's describing here, this is a fiction or a fantasy.

Mike: But this seems almost calculated to hurt Wanda.

Wanda: Yeah, I think so.

David: Yeah.

Lesley: Ted's fantasies his family says included accusations that his parents had verbally abused and rejected him. Accusations that became more and more bizarre.

Mike: He claims that because of the rejection he's shorter than David.

Wanda: Ooh, god.

Mike: The rejection I experienced at home and at school even affected me physically, in case you wonder why Dave is three (3) inches taller than I. I have brought up two (2) different studies that report to show that rejection during adolescence tends to stunt growth.

Wanda: I don't know, what do you do?

Mike: You (laughing) what, what do you do?

Lesley: (laughing) parents.

Mike: Mothers and fathers.

Lesley: Right.

Mike: Right.

Lesley: Blame the mother.

Lesley: And Ted blamed David for deserting him by falling for Linda.

Mike: He was devastated when he learned that you were happy with Linda and that you of all things married Linda.

David: It was entirely unexpected, he had never met Linda, and I got a letter that was pages and pages and pages long, full of, uh, criticisms of Linda, criticisms of me, it was as if I had somehow betrayed him.

Mike: He wanted nothing to do with the family, for instance in one of the letters he says "There is nothing that could ever be important enough so that you would have to get in touch with me even if ma dies I don't want to hear about it.

Lesley: Wanda, are you okay?

Wanda: I'm okay, I'm alright, okay.

Lesley: When his father died in 1990, Ted didn't even return for the funeral. David and Linda became so concerned about what they called Ted's deterioration that they took two (2) of his letters to a psychiatrist in 1991.

Linda: Um, a psychiatrist advised us that Ted was mentally disturbed, seriously disturbed and that not only was he disturbed, but that there was a possibility of violence, that stuck in my mind and it stuck in my mind all these years, so that.

Lesley: Is it true that you had actually talked about having him committed?

Linda: We were advised that it was extremely difficult to get someone committed.

David: We were told that he had to be a demonstrable danger to himself or to others in order to.

Lesley: Well we should point out that by this point he was all those things.

Wanda: But we didn't know that.

Lesley: But you didn't know that.

Linda: We didn't know.

David: We did not know.

Linda: So we did the next best thing that we could think of and that was that um we got in contact with one of his doctors up in Montana and David called the doctor and asked the doctor to please refer him to therapy.

Lesley: And did anything come of this?

David: Unfortunately no, um (cut off).

Lesley: That was five years and four letter bombs ago, letters had always been Ted's weapons.

David: The only way he really related to people or spoke his mind or feelings to people was through letters.

Lesley: Isn't it ironic that the anger was written in the letters and then he used letter bombs.

David: Uh hmm, sure.

Lesley: Have you ever thought that through as to why he would choose this distant form?

David: A part of me very strongly believes that if Ted harmed and maimed and even killed people he could not have done it face to face he had to in some way distance himself from the consequences of what he was doing.

Lesley: Again we remind you that Ted Kaczynski has not gone on trial yet so legally he must still be presumed innocent. But what made David think that his brother could possibly be the Unabomber.

Lesley: Bomber was one of the longest man hunts in FBI history hundreds of federal agents spent millions of dollars chasing down more than 50,000 leads and it ended not because of all that detective work but because Kaczynski's own family turned him in. Ted had never met his sister-in law Linda, but she was the one who started to suspect him. Half-jokingly she told her husband "You've got a screwy brother maybe he's the Unabomber" David laughed it off. But then Linda realized that the Unabomber had struck in some of the same places Ted had lived. After the Unabomber forced the Washington post to publish his manifesto by threatening more attacks, Linda dragged David to the local library to read the manifesto.

Linda: Well, I watched David's jaw literally dropped.

Mike: What'd your jaw drop about David?

David: I was feeling something I really didn't expect to feel at all which was a deep sense of unease, fear, profound dismay.

Mike: Because of what you read?

David: Because of what I read.

Mike: Because it sounded like ted.

David: Because that it sounded enough like him that I could not say to myself or to Linda that this is not Ted's writing.

Mike: David still hoped to rule Ted out by comparing Ted's letters with the manifesto but again their tone seemed similar.

David: I would swing back and forth like a pendulum, one morning I would wake up and find some reason to believe that it had to be him, that the truth was looking in my eyes, and I had been in denial about it, I would wake up another morning and find a reason to believe that I had dreamed this up.

Mike: To finally figure it out, David thought he should visit Ted in Montana, but Linda thought that would be too dangerous the last time David saw Ted 9 years ago,

David spotted a bullet hole inside Ted's front door. Still David wrote Ted offering to come.

David: I hoped perhaps that he would invite me out and I would go and I would be able to convince Linda that it was safe to go and that I would meet Ted and feel reassured and convinced that he could not be this person.

Mike: To Linda's relief Ted wrote back telling David not to come.

Lesley: It was to say the least not a friendly response. This is from your brother "I get just c ~ked with frustration at my inability to get our stinking family off my back once and for all and stinking family emphatically includes you". This was a man who was your best friend for a while, and he goes on "I don't ever" this is in block letters "I don't ever want to see you or hear from you, or any other member of our family, again.

David: It's his feelings about our family, there no relationship to the reality of the family life that we experienced these were loving supportive parents.

Mike: Then David and Linda spotted a potentially devastating possibility, twice after they had sent money to ted, supposedly for medical bills, the Unabomber had struck killing two (2) people.

David: We realized that our first loan to Ted had preceded a bombing by 6 weeks to 2 months and that our second loan to him had preceded a bombing by about the same amount of time.

Lesley: You began to fear that your money?

David: Linda felt extremely angry, even a sense of responsibility that we had, we were somehow responsible for these acts.

Lesley: that you may have financed in some way.

Linda: But we didn't know, I mean we really didn't know.

Mike: But now they did know it was time to get outside help. Linda turned to a childhood friend, Susan Swanson, a private investigator in Chicago to find an expert to compare Ted's letters with the Unabomber's manifesto. A few weeks later Swanson called David with the results. David - she said it was nothing to knock my socks off, as it turned out it was something to knock my socks off. The analysis suggested that there may be a chance of 60% that Ted was also the author of the manifesto.

Mike: That did it, David and Linda agreed that they simply could not risk having any more people hurt. They wanted to contact the FBI and they wanted the FBI to take them seriously, but they didn't want agents immediately storming Ted's shack. Swanson brought in Washington attorney tony Bisceglie, a former assistant us attorney who had worked with the FBI.

Mike: Then tony has his first meeting with the FBI and comes back to you and says?

David: Says their taking it seriously, in the meantime I happen to find in a trunk, a copy of an essay that Ted had written maybe 25 years ago that I had remembered in which bore on some of the same topics as the manifesto.

Tony: Quite frankly the essay made all the difference in the world to me, it was an anti-technological piece, it expressed concern about, uh, the course of genetic engineering, uh, mind control surveillance.

Mike: Really?

Tony: The implantation of electrodes in human brains.

Mike: A quarter of a century before?

Tony: Yes, so when I saw, the essay and saw those references and saw the same references in the manifesto and it was at that point that I took a deep breath, went outside, took a walk and I said this this is very serious this is.

Mike: This may be it.

Tony: This may be it.

Mike: Bisceglie got the FBI to agree that agents would not even question Ted until they could verify some of the families suspicions and they promised to keep David, Linda and Wanda's names confidential. After investigating for two (2) months, agents said they wanted now to talk to Wanda. So David finally had to tell his mother what he suspected about his brother.

David: I had wanted for so long to protect my mother because I knew how painful this would be for her, I was concerned about her health as well, I mean if, if you could imagine the agony of thinking that I might not only end up with my brother in prison but, but my mother perhaps dead a, as a result of this decision. I spent pretty much of a sleepless night the night before.

Wanda: He had a hard time getting it out, and he said its about ted, and I said "Oh my god is he dead", no I said "Oh my god is it ted" and he said "He's not dead, he's not dead", and then he proceeded to tell me and he was walking back and forth and the tears started raining down his face and I sort of sat there in shock. I realized I knew that David loved his brother and he always had so I knew that what he had done he hadn't done lightly.

David: She got up from her chair and she put her arms around me and she hugged me and she said "I think your wrong, I don't think Ted is this person, but I feel so badly about what you have been going through" and I felt such a sense of relief, and, and release, mom, that, that the part of me that was just agonized in my conscience about all this, um.

Wanda: I thought it, it, it couldn't be Ted it, it, it just couldn't it must be a mistake and I said I'm, I'm sure the investigation will rule him out.

Lesley: How soon after this emotional scene and your first awareness that that your son might be a suspect do you have to talk to the FBI?

Wanda: Half an hour later.

Lesley: Half an hour.

Wanda: Yes.

Mike: The FBI gathered more than 90 items that n essays and a wooden box.

Tony: We were aware from the public profile that one of the characteristics of the, the Unabomber, was wood carving, we also knew that Ted had the ability to carve

intricate boxes and we knew that he had carved such a box for his mother. This in fact is the box and it is a cylindrical box.

Mike: And the bombs themselves had been sent no in carved wooden cylinders.

Lesley: Similar cylinders?

Tony: Similar to a

Lesley: Cylindrical box.

Tony: Pipe bomb design yes.

Mike: Eleven days later the FBI told tony Bisceglie they were about to search Ted's shack, and within hours the family also learned that their names had been leaked to the press. Then the press began to mass on your lawn.

David: At Wanda's house, we were there. There was lots of commotion outside lots of people ringing her bell, notes.

Mike: Ringing Wanda's bell?

David: Yes.

Linda: Yes, until 2 or 3 in the morning, it was ridiculous.

Mike: At four in the morning we woke up t0, uh, we had. Cats that needed to be fed, so we had to go back to our place and at the moment a camera crew was there holding lights and a camera asking my mother whether she thought her son was the Unabomber, and that was an extremely painful moment for me.

Mike: What was that moment like Wanda?

Wanda: Oh, complete nightmare, complete nightmare.

Mike: Now Ted Kaczynski is awaiting trial on murder charges in a Sacramento, California jail.

Tony: He is isolated, he is reading, he is writing, which he does, um all the time and uh, and I believe he is helping organize material for his case. But all efforts on the part of the family to reach out to, to Ted um have, have been rejected.

Mike: The whole reason that David you and Wanda and Linda are talking to us now is because you would like if he is found guilty, to be able to save your brother's life, but people who are looking in at this moment are saying he killed at least three people and he wounded twenty three more.

Wanda: It's a horrible thought.

David: And it's uh.

Wanda: It's a horrible thought.

David: It's like a double tragedy for us because there's not only the worry and concern and, and horror of what has become of Ted but the thought that a family member, our flesh and blood may have been responsible for harming other people, destroying families is uh, it, it brings such deep regret and sorrow.

Mike: Have you made any effort to say anything to the families of the victims?

David: I have uh, written letters to them.

Lesley: You are the one that basically brought him to light, do you feel that because you did this that society in a way owes you the sparing of his life.

David: I don't think that's a claim I could make but what an awful irony if I were to take action to prevent the loss of the, further loss of life and it ended up in the loss of my own brothers life.

Tony: I don't think there's any question, this country would be better off embracing the values that David Kaczynski brought to this matter by sparing the life of his brother, and allowing David to live his life without having the blood of his brothers on his hands.

Wanda: There are people in this world that are mentally ill and are we going to start killing them, what kind of a barbaric society are we heading for. I agree that as far as possible we should restrain people from doing harm to other people, but should the answer be let's kill 'em?

Mike: Inside Ted's shack officials say they found detailed analysis, evaluations of each bombing. Why would a former college professor send bombs to college professors? His family believes that if he is the Unabomber, he was on a mission to change the world.

David: It's an attempt to change the course of human history by sending bombs in packages to people, by publishing a manifesto, that he may have assumed he would have an extraordinary effect on public opinion. I think he believed that he was making a difficult choice to do something good for the world, and, and, and no sane person would, would think that as plausible.

Mike: The Kaczynski family is not arguing that Ted's mental condition, whatever psychiatrists call it, means that he should be found not guilty by reason of insanity, but if he is found guilty they want him locked away and treated not executed, and that is all they want.

Mike: The FBI has offered a million dollars for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the Unabomber, a million dollars conceivably to you to Linda.

Wanda: We are not going to profit one cent from that, we have determined that we would not in any way profit from my sons conviction.

Linda: It's blood money.

David: Yes, we could not.

Linda: We can't take that

Mike: So now this very private family has had to become very public and they are certain that Ted will not understand why they turned him in or even why they're on television talking about it.

David: Certainly one of the things that made my decision very, very difficult was realizing, trying to imagine how it must feel to him to be turned by his own brother, the only person who had been close to him for a long time.

Wanda: But, I but I dread to think how deeply hurt he'll feel but it, what can you do, you can't risk more lives, Dave couldn't, none of us could.

Mike: And apparently some lives were saved for when the FBI arrested Ted Kaczynski they say they found a live bomb wrapped under his bed ready for mailing, the only thing missing was a name and address.

The Ted K Archive

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTCaeE3FGM8&ab_channel=TVTimeWarp

www.thetedkarchive.com