

# Blood Brothers

Both were brilliant, but one built a normal life while the other disintegrated. A portrait of the alleged Unabomber's tangled family saga.

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A law-enforcement official describes them as "anti-Mom diatribes." Beginning in the mid-1980s, Newsweek has learned, Ted Kaczynski wrote his mother, Wanda, as many as a dozen letters blaming her for turning him into a recluse. He castigated her for his inability to form relationships, particularly with women. Kaczynski told his brother, David, that he wanted nothing to do with their parents, then dismissed their mother as a "dog."

Blaming one's mother is the oldest and least original excuse in history. In Greek mythology, Oedipus railed against his mother, along with the Fates, after he inadvertently slept with her and killed his father. Teenagers will blame their mothers for almost anything. It may not be fair to hold Wanda Kaczynski, who is described by her neighbors as a sweet old lady, accountable for turning her son into a possible serial killer. Yet if Ted Kaczynski is, as the Feds insist, the long-hunted Unabomber – and a typescript of his manifesto has been found in Kaczynski's shack, the strongest clue yet – something must have caused him to go on an 18-year bombing spree that killed three people and wounded 23 others.

Why did he do it? Why did the shy, brilliant son of respectable parents become an alleged serial killer? Why did his brother – with the same blood and the same roots – become a gentle social worker? When both dropped out of society, why did only one return?

Perhaps it was biological. Or evil. Perhaps Kaczynski was abused or neglected in some way, although, as Jack Levin, a criminologist at Northeastern University, says, "If that is all it took, we would have a nation of Unabomers. It takes a lot more than a bad family life." Most likely, the Unabomber maimed and killed because of some lethal mixture of all these things, a critical massing of dark forces.

The mystery of Ted Kaczynski is heightened by the parallel existence, at once separate and intertwined, of his younger brother, David. Both boys left their modest Chicago suburb for the Ivy League (Ted to Harvard, David to Columbia) and later escaped into the wilderness. Yet David returned to the mainstream to marry his high-school sweetheart and care for runaway children, while Ted may have become a solitary assassin of men he had never met.

There are still huge gaps in what we know about Kaczynski's life. No one may ever really understand what drove him as he lay brooding in his 10-foot-by-12-foot cabin, winter after winter, deep in the Montana vastness. Psychohistory, in any case, is often psychobabble. Yet it is possible to draw a rudimentary map of his road to madness. In Kaczynski's life, there were a series of psychic wounds that, to some, might not have been damaging, but seem to have been cumulatively crippling to him. By piecing together now familiar details of Kaczynski's life with new revelations, NEWSWEEK has re-created how a troubled boy turned into a dangerous man.

The first clue is something that happened when Kaczynski was only 6 months old. According to federal investigators, little "Teddy John," as his parents called him, was hospitalized for a severe allergic reaction to a medicine he was taking. He had to be isolated – his parents were unable to see him or to hold him for several weeks. After this

separation, family members have told the Feds, the baby's personality, once bubbly and vivacious, seemed to go "flat."

Skeptics may scoff, but psychologists see lasting consequences from such episodes. "There is a lot of evidence that painful loss or separation or injury during infancy can be particularly grave," says Dr. Jerrold Post, director of the political-psychology program at George Washington University. "'The first two years of life are the time when a sense of security and self-esteem is laid down.'" If Teddy John was uneasy about his mother's love, he received another blow when he was 7 years old – his little brother, David, arrived. "Before David was born, Teddy was different," an aunt told the *Daily Southtown*, a community newspaper in suburban Chicago. "He'd snuggle up to me." But afterward, Teddy became withdrawn and diffident. "Maybe we paid too much attention to the new baby, like people do," she wondered. For most kids, sibling rivalry soon fades. But for Ted Kaczynski, it would become a curse.

Insecure children sometimes try to win their parents' love and attention by showing off. The Kaczynskis, particularly Wanda, demanded academic excellence. While other children played around the neighborhood, Wanda sat with Teddy on the porch reading *Scientific American*. She also kept a meticulous journal of his development. He did well enough to skip two grades, and some neighbors found him mildly cocky about his intellect. Others noted that while his brain raced ahead, his social skills lagged behind. According to classmates and neighbors, when Kaczynski graduated from high school at 16, he apparently had the emotional maturity of a grade-schooler.

His reward for academic achievement – getting into Harvard – might have been an ego booster. But as we now know, his life at the college, which was just then becoming more meritocratic, was mostly humiliating. A shy Midwesterner on a scholarship, Kaczynski was assigned to the preppiest dormitory, Eliot House, where he lived in a room that had once been used as a maid's quarters. Kaczynski was a loner; he moved away when others tried to sit with him in the dining hall, and he hung out in his room. The smell of sour food and dirty laundry did not invite visitors.

FOR A TIME, KACZYNSKI DID FIND meaning in scholarship. Tellingly, he chose mathematics, where it is possible to search for days on end for absolute truth – without talking to another human being. At the University of Michigan, he won a prize for his doctoral thesis. But flouting the customs of academic collegiality, he made no acknowledgments – not to teachers or fellow students. At Berkeley, where he won a job as an assistant math professor, he avoided his own students, who found him hopelessly unapproachable. Indeed, he seems to have been outwardly oblivious to the social revolution raging around him. Kaczynski remained clean cut. Drugs and sex were not only enjoyed but flaunted at the Berkeley of that era. As he made his way past the carnival of senses, the shy scholar's alienation must have been magnified. Still, he kept a blank facade: a law-enforcement source recalled to *NEWSWEEK* that, as a prank, someone posted a Playboy centerfold on the blackboard in Kaczynski's classroom. Kaczynski just kept on writing his formulas.

Kaczynski was in Berkeley for the Summer of Love in 1967, but if he ever had a date, no one seems to remember. He had time only for his mathematics until one day in 1969, when he had no time for that, either. With a now famously terse letter of resignation and no explanation, he dropped out. Way out: he headed for the wild, camping and drifting until 1971, when he bought land in Montana on the west slope of the Continental Divide. He was not completely on his own – not yet. His younger brother, David, was listed on the deed for the 1.4-acre plot. The two were still close. As a little boy, neighbors recalled, David had followed Ted like a shadow. Both boys had enjoyed camping with their father, Ted Sr., or "Turk," as he was called. The father had taught his sons rudimentary survival skills, like how to kill and then eat a porcupine. Their childhood had been bookish and withdrawn. Together, they shared a romantic image of lonely quests into the wilderness.

In dropping mathematics, Ted gave up his whole identity. Math had served as a substitute for the re-wards of normal human relationships. Now he had literally nothing. The truck he drove to Montana broke down after three days. In the tiny shack he built, Kaczynski used a bucket for a toilet. He possessed only solitude, and he protected that with a vengeance. A distant neighbor recalls that a family built a weekend home not far from Kaczynski's shack. The family apparently drove their snowmobiles too close to Kaczynski's property, because he emerged one day screaming at them. The next time the family visited, they found that someone had hacked his way into their cabin with an ax, and then chopped up the furniture in the house. The family suspected Kaczynski, but no charges were ever filed.

By now, Kaczynski was well on his way to the edge. But in 1978, he tried to rejoin – for a brief time – the mainstream. He moved back to the Chicago area, where both his father and his brother, David, worked at a foam-rubber factory. He, too, got a job at the plant, but soon a disastrous romance intervened. He fell in love with a woman who was his factory supervisor, and, according to FBI investigators, she quickly dropped him. Crushed and bitter, he began writing crude limericks about her and spreading them around the plant. It fell to his brother, David, to tell him to stop. Ted was incensed. He angrily slapped one of his tasteless rhymes on the machine where David was working. David, who was also a supervisor, fired his brother on the spot.

These twin blows – rejection by a woman and apparent betrayal by his younger brother, someone who had once looked up to him – were cataclysmic. Most people, of course, bounce back from failed romances and lost jobs. Kaczynski, the FBI suspects, reacted by becoming a bomber.

IT WAS AT ABOUT THE TIME HIS BROTHER fired him, in the late spring of 1978, that Kaczynski allegedly mailed his first bomb. Addressed to a professor at the University of Illinois, Chicago, the package was sent back to a return address at Northwestern University, where it blew up, injuring a campus policeman. A year later a second bomb wounded a student at Northwestern's technological institute.

If he is the Unabomber, it is not clear why Kaczynski may have chosen this form of revenge, or these targets. Were they surrogates for his brother or his romantic interest – or perhaps his mother? Did he choose a university because he had tried to find a substitute for human contact in abstractions, but failed? Judging from his later letters and his 35,000-word manifesto, he was developing a tortured philosophy to rationalize his violent acts. Man's goal in life, he wrote in several different ways and at various times from '85 to '95, is "autonomy." Having failed to form any lasting relationships, Kaczynski seemed bent on disproving John Donne's aphorism that no man is an island. What stood in his way, of course, was civilization. Scientific progress and technology were most to blame. Businessmen and technocrats, therefore, had to be eliminated. It was logical, in a cracked sort of way, though devoid of human sympathy.

By mid-1979, he had retreated to his hermitage in Montana. He read Shakespeare and Thackeray, *Scientific American* and *Omni* by candlelight. He hunted rabbits. He avoided people. Lacking any clock or watch, he had to ask distant neighbors what day it was, telling them he was planning a trip. They asked him why. He told them it was none of their business. Just curious, they said. "Curiosity killed the cat," he answered. The Unabomber began making better bombs out of wood and metal, and mailed them – to an airline executive, to professors at Vanderbilt and Michigan.

Interestingly, while Ted Kaczynski was drifting deeper into isolation, his brother, David, also headed for the hills. In 1983, David left Chicago and bought a few desolate acres in the Chalk Mountains of the Big Bend of Texas. He dug a hole in the desert, put some boards and tin over it, and called it home until he could build a cabin. He lived off the land. Some 1,400 miles away from his older brother, he was almost as alone.

BUT NOT QUITE. UNLIKE TED, DAVE did not entirely shun human contact. He chatted with his remote neighbors, trying to engage them in his philosophy, which, unlike his brother's, was distinctly non-violent. While his brother studied wiring diagrams, David admired Gandhi and Thoreau. While his brother learned to hunt, David was a vegetarian. "David is what we call around here a 'bunny hugger'," said Connally Wendt, a neighbor. In 1987, David's parents came to visit, but stayed in a motel. The father told David he was "loco" for living so primitively, according to Juan Sanchez Arreola, a laborer whom David had befriended.

In fact, David was quite sane. He went to Sunday services held by an Episcopal priest, though he did not take communion. He enjoyed vegetarian Thanksgiving dinners prepared by a neighbor, Mary Ann Dunn. "He even let me teach him how to dance," Dunn told *NEWSWEEK*. "The two-step and the tush-push." Sanchez taught him how to write a love letter. He had someone in mind to send it to. In 1989, David cut his beard and moved to Schenectady, N.Y., to join an old girlfriend, a steady soul named Linda Patrik, who had ignored the tumult of the late '60s and become a philosophy professor at nearby Union College. Linda helped bring David back to the world; they were married in a Buddhist ceremony in 1990. The newlyweds returned to David's

Texas cabin for vacation, etching a heart with their initials in the fresh concrete of a new foundation.

David's runaway brother was bitter over his brother's success at life and love. Ted had at least some stirrings of human feeling. He had also befriended Sanchez, writing to him in studiously formal Spanish for the next seven years. In one letter, Ted commiserated with Sanchez, who was having trouble getting his pension from the Mexican government. Kaczynski sympathetically raged against government officials ("liars who twist the law to commit any injustice"), but he added, somewhat wistfully, "Even though you have to endure these difficulties, you will probably overcome them in the end, and your children will thrive and some day they will have children of their own. I wish I had a wife and children!"

NOW TED'S LITTLE BROTHER HAD A wife, and the hope of children. The little brother who had once fired him was now ahead in the rest of life, too. "When David married, the problem between the two brothers became more serious," said Sanchez. "Ted didn't want to communicate anymore," a Justice Department official who has worked on the Unabom case for the last three years told NEWSWEEK. Ted continued to take handouts from his brother – a few thousand dollars in money orders over the years – but he never saw him again after 1990.

Nor did he see his mother. In the 1970s, Wanda Kaczynski had become a high-school teacher, but not a very effective one. The mother who had so determinedly pushed her own children could not connect with ninth graders. They mocked her, calling her "Six Toes," and meowed at the back of the class, saying they could not hear their teacher over the sound of the cats. Frustrated by the task of managing children, Wanda gave up the job.

In October 1990, Ted's father died. By most accounts he had been an affable man, although possibly disappointed over his failure to make more of his abilities as an engineer (while working at a Polish-sausage factory in Chicago, he had tried and failed to get a patent on a type of sausage casing). Riddled with cancer at the age of 78, he put his affairs in order and shot himself with a .22-caliber rifle. David wrote Ted to tell him the sad news, using a code devised by his increasingly paranoid brother. Ted had instructed his family to draw a red line under the postage stamp to signal if their letters to him were "urgent." NEWSWEEK has learned that when Ted got word of his father's death, his only known response was formal and weird: according to investigators, he praised his family for "appropriate use of the coded message."

Kaczynski was drifting farther and farther away. We know from his letters to Sanchez that his life as a hermit was becoming bleaker. "I badly need money, and here there is no work in the winter," he wrote Sanchez from his "casita" – little house – in May 1994. Kaczynski was spending wearying days tracking rabbits for his supper. The same rabbits and deer would attack his vegetable patch, eating the meager roots he grew to sustain himself through the long winter.

Powerless in life, Kaczynski may have become obsessed with power in fantasies. In his occasional writings, the Unabomber taunted the FBI for failing to catch him – a sign of a perfectionism born of always being pushed to be the brightest kid in the class. He bragged that he wiped off his fingerprints, and even sanded down the wood he used to make his bombs, lest any telltale body oils seep in. "I think [the Unabomber] enjoyed his killing spree," says Jack Levin, the Northeastern criminologist. "He had fun with the game of cat-and-mouse he played with the FBI. It gave him a sense of being special."

Kaczynski's grandiosity betrayed him to the man who knew him best, his brother. Reading the Unabomber's manifesto at home in Schenectady in October 1995, David Kaczynski thought he recognized the addled philosophy and even certain words and phrases. He moved cautiously to confirm his suspicions, contacting his own investigator before going to the FBI (page 34). But he was deliberate. David Kaczynski's friends testify to a strong moral streak in the younger brother. A neighbor in Texas recalls that David once collected an ancient Indian artifact on a hike. When an expert in the local heritage chided him for disturbing native ghosts, David hiked 40 miles back into the mountains and replaced the object at its original resting place.

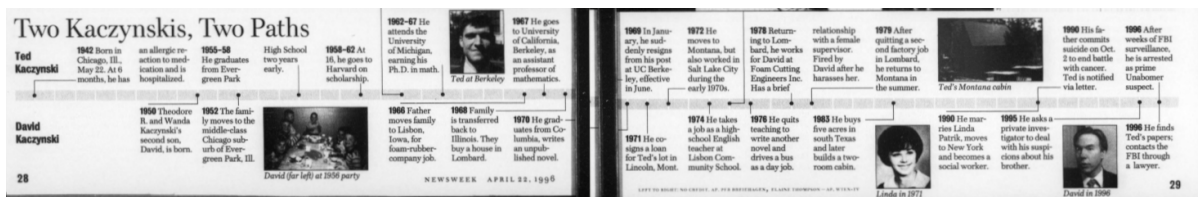
In effect, David became his brother's keeper. He overcame the normal taboos against betraying an older brother in order to save lives – possibly his own family's. When David first went to the authorities, he told them he was worried that if his brother found out he was tipping off the Feds, Ted might seek revenge. It was the final inversion of the happy image of two boys who tagged along together in the '50s.

Last Sunday, David called Mrs. Dunn, his oldest friend in Texas, and explained why he had to turn his brother in. "I love him," he said, "and I can't help but love him. But I can't condone what he did." Down in Texas, David Kaczynski's friends tried to make sense of the tragedy of the two brothers. Melvin LaFollette, a 65-year-old Episcopal priest who had shared confidences with David, thought of Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Master of Ballantrae," "about a good man grappling with the deeds of an evil brother in 18th-century Scotland." Sanchez, the Mexican laborer who knew both brothers, had never heard of the Master of Ballantrae, but he has read Ted Kaczynski's letters, and he thinks he knows the answer. "I told David for a long time to get over his fear of women and get married, and he listened to my advice not to be alone," Sanchez told NEWSWEEK. He thrust out a photo of himself with Linda and David. "Ted did not," continued Sanchez. "And if I could meet Ted even now, I would tell him what I always told David: a man alone isn't worth anything."

With DANIEL KLAIDMAN IN WASHINGTON, TIM PADGRTT IN TEXAS. KAREN SPRINGES and MARK MILLER in Chicago, NADINE JOSEPH in Berkeley, MARK HOSENBALL in Montana, GREGORY BEALS in Schenectady, RANDI COLLIER in Phoenix and STEVI RHODES in Iowa



# Two Kaczynskis, Two Paths



## Ted Kaczynski

1942 Born in Chicago, Ill., May 22. At 6 months, he has an allergic reaction to medication and is hospitalized.

1955-56 He graduates from Evergreen Park High School two years early.

1958-62 At 16, he goes to Harvard on scholarship.

1962-67 He attends the University of Michigan, earning his Ph.D. in math.

1967 He goes to University of California, Berkeley, as an assistant professor of mathematics.

1969 In January, he suddenly resigns from his post at UC Berkeley, effective in June.

1972 He moves to Montana, but also worked in Salt Lake City during the early 1970s.

1978 Returning to Lombard, he works for David at Foam Cutting Engineers Inc. Has a brief relationship with a female supervisor. Fired by David after he harasses her.

1979 After quitting a second factory job in Lombard, he returns to Montana in the summer.

1990 His father commits suicide on Oct. 2 to end battle with cancer. Ted is notified via letter.

1996 After weeks of FBI surveillance, he is arrested as prime Unabomber suspect.

## David Kaczynski

1950 Theodore R. and Wanda Kaczynski's second son, David, is born.

1952 The family moves to the middle-class Chicago suburb of Evergreen Park, Ill.

1966 Father moves family to Lisbon, Iowa, for foam-rubber-company job.

1968 Family is transferred back to Illinois. They buy a house in Lombard.

1970 He graduates from Columbia, writes an unpublished novel.

1971 He cosigns a loan for Ted's lot in Lincoln, Mont.

1974 He takes a job as a high-school teacher at Lisbon Community School.

1976 He quits teaching to write another novel and drives a bus as a day job.

1983 He buys five acres in south Texas and later builds a two-room cabin.  
1990 He marries Linda Patrik, moves to New York and becomes a social worker.  
1995 He asks a private investigator to deal with his suspicions about his brother.  
1996 He finds Ted's papers; contacts the FBI through a lawyer.

# On the Trail of a Serial Killer

Confident they have their man, federal investigators are tracing Ted Kaczynski's whereabouts, acquaintances and finances to try to link him with as many of the 16 Unabom attacks as possible. A primer on the case:

## 1978

**1. May 25, Northwestern Univ. bombing:** About this time, Ted Kaczynski is in Lombard, Ill., working at a foam rubber plant. After a brief relationship with a female supervisor, he is fired for posting dirty limericks about her.

## 1979

**2. May 9, Northwestern Univ. Bombing:** Kaczynski who has been working at a restaurant machinery factory in Lombard, quits and returns to Montana.

**3. Nov. 15, American Airlines bombing.**

## 1980

**4. June 10, United Airlines president's home bombed.**

## 1981

**5. Oct. 8, Univ. of Utah bomb defused:** Witnesses say Kaczynski sought jobs at a temp agency near the Univ. of Utah in 1978 and stayed in hotels nearby.

## 1982

**6. May 5, Vanderbilt Univ. bombing:** Professor Patrick Fisher is the intended target. His father taught at the Univ. of Michigan when Kaczynski went there.

**7. July 2, UC Berkeley bombing:** Kaczynski was an assistant professor at UC Berkeley in 1967, mysteriously resigning in 1969.

## 1985

Kaczynski attended Univ. of Michigan from 1962-67.

The shop's owner attended UC Berkeley in 1967.

A witness sees a man in aviator glasses and a sweatshirt leave the bomb; similar glasses and garb have been found in Kaczynski's shack.

Bomb is mailed from Sacramento; eyewitnesses claim to have seen Kaczynski in Sacramento near Royal Hotel.

Fischer (the Unabomer target in the Vanderbilt explosion) has a brother who worked down the hall from Yale target David Gelernter. Bomb is mailed from Sacramento.

In Nov. Kaczynski received a \$1,000 money order from his brother. The victim's company had worked for Exxon, and was listed as an environmental enemy in a publication Kaczynski may have seen. Bomb is mailed from Northern Calif.

Early in 1995, Kaczynski received \$2,000 from his brother. Bomb is mailed from Oakland, Calif., to timber association listed as an environmental enemy in a publication.

## The Ted K Archive

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Both were brilliant, but one built a normal life while the other disintegrated. A portrait of the alleged Unabomber's tangled family saga.

Archive.org. Newsweek (International, Atlantic Edition) 1996-04-22: Volume 127, Issue 17.

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