

# **Extra! interviews UNAPACK**

**The Liberty Cafe, Cambridge, April 21, 1996**

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**Extra!:** Why do you think the issue that the Unabomber has presented is so important?

**Korda:** The Unabomber is important because he is the only public figure right now who is raising the real questions, the real issues which are the destruction of Wild Nature and the dehumanizing effect that technology has on us.

I don't think that either the Republican, the Democratic or any of the third party candidates are going to address this question in any kind of important way.

**Eccles:** Mainstream electoral politics are dealing with trivial issues while we are headed for disaster. And there is a massive denial of the environmental disaster and the social disaster that is happening. So the object of UNAPACK, for the Unabomber Write-In Campaign, is for people to break away from the bond of politics.

Could we be more conversational? I think it works better if we can have a conversation.

**Extra!:** I just have to get these basic things down, that's what I do. Then we'll go into more things and chat. Chris, why are the issues of the Unabomber important to you? What made you so proactive about the Unabomber?

**Korda:** I personally feel that the Unabomber is very important because he's the only public figure right now getting any media attention who is going to raise the real questions, the real issue. And the real issue is the destruction of Wild Nature.

We are in the middle of a global environmental crisis. Humans have already destroyed almost one third of the species on earth. We are currently losing a species every forty minutes. That's actually up from every sixty minutes in the 70's. We lose an acre of trees every eight seconds in the United States alone. That's a tremendous crisis and I don't think that either the Republican or the Democratic or any third party candidates are going to address that issue in any kind of serious way.

The Unabomber was addressing that issue, his ideas have received major public attention, and that's a tremendous victory.

**Extra!:** Lydia, same question.

**Eccles:** To me, I was attracted to the Unabomber because he was recognizing the failure of our political system. He was recognizing that under what we are calling Democracy and freedom, the vital issues can never be addressed because the media is very involved in upholding the path of developing technology. That's why he targeted the media.

So it was a revelation to me to see someone break open the political discussion so that issues like our advance towards extinction could be addressed rather than issues like a fifty cent increase in the minimum wage.

When the Unabomber spoke, the rest of politics became ridiculous next to what he had to say. So he was the starting point and we feel like we have to pick up where he left off and push those ideas further. And the interesting thing is that the media immediately responded by trying to separate the ideas from the man, and what we are trying to do is just the opposite.

They are trying to say, we must talk about this man as a psychopath and say that what he was trying to say doesn't matter: the important thing is that he is a psychopath.

What we are trying to do is just the opposite and say the ideas really do matter. It was an intentionally political act with great commitment behind it. It was not gratuitous violence, it was extremely intentional violence. And our campaign is a non-violent campaign.

We represent the middle ground between a person like the Unabomber, who decided that the system was so closed off that no change was possible working within it, and people who believe that you can achieve change through the system.

We don't believe that we can achieve change through the system. So what we are going to do is vote against the system. We are using the classic democratic process to try and create a rupture in politics. And once that rupture is created, then we think that people can start looking at the real power issues in their life.

**Extra!:** A lot of people will immediately think that because you support the Unabomber's message, you also support the killing that he has done. Do you support the killings?

**Korda:** The first objection that people always raise is that the Unabomber is a killer, he is a terrorist. This is very interesting because there is a different way of looking at this.

We could say that the Unabomber was in fact fighting a guerrilla war. He was fighting a guerrilla war in defense of Wild Nature. And there have been, as in all wars, casualties. Now why isn't the Unabomber a war hero like General Colin Powell? Why isn't he considered a hero? Well, we can look at General Colin Powell and say that he was responsible for killing hundreds of thousands of people in Iraq, and he was fighting a war in defense of America's right to control the price of oil. The Unabomber, on the other hand, was fighting a war against technology, in defense of Wild Nature, and he is by comparison considered a serial killer or a terrorist. Well, this is very interesting. This is a double standard, and I think it is very important that people realize this.

It's one thing if you have an objection to all violence, if you completely object to all violent acts. That's admirable. I myself completely object to violent acts, and I don't believe in violence as a way to change society. But I think that...people like me are the exception and not the rule. I think in fact if you look at the matter honestly, most Americans *supported* the war in Iraq. They supported the war for oil. So really we can say that most people aren't opposed to the use of violence so long as it serves their ends, so long as it supports *their* way of life.

And I think that is very important to understand. That we need to be honest and not be naive, and understand that the Unabomber was fighting a war on behalf of Wild Nature and the media was his target. He knew perfectly well that his ideas would never receive wide discussion unless he used violence to blackmail the media into discussing them. So he had a very sensible and effective military strategy.

**Eccles:** The ideas that he is bringing up would never be allowed to be discussed under any other circumstances except as a media story of crime which frankly has entertainment value.

So when people say to us why don't you pick a mainstream candidate who is expressing precisely those views, even expressing them better? Our response is that we had Alan Keyes on a hunger strike to try to be heard in the election and he was mainstream. So even people who are an iota of the mainstream don't have a voice.

So just as you are talking to us right now because of the fact that he is a killer, if we were here working for some no-name person you wouldn't be talking to us. And I think that the very fact that your network has covered the Unabomber with your response knowing that he struck a very important chord. Part of you doing the story is knowing that there is a fascination with the man and that he really did speak to everyone in what he did.

**Extra!:** Do you think there are more people out there who support the Unabomber than are actually admitting to it?

**Eccles:** We already claim as a constituency all the people who have taken the first step and stopped voting. When people stop voting they have taken the first step of voting for the Unabomber because they have decided that they have no power by voting. So I think that gives us the majority at this point, probably more than Clinton or Dole. So we can build on that foundation. We are really looking for the apathetic voter.

**Extra!:** And you Chris?

**Korda:** I agree. If everyone who usually stays home and doesn't vote gets out there and votes for the Unabomber, we will win in November. Because everybody knows perfectly well that the media interprets apathy as an affirmation of the system. That is the only way it could be interpreted.

It has to be interpreted that way because otherwise it would be too destabilizing to the whole notion of political freedom in this country. What if the media interpreted the apathy of the voters in this country as a rejection of the system? What would we have then?

Would we declare the elections null and void? In some European countries this happens. In some European countries if enough people don't vote, they have to redo the election. That doesn't happen here, and we have to ask why that doesn't happen here, and the reason that doesn't happen here is that the media is controlled by corporations.

It's not very good, for the corporations that control the media, if the message gets out that the political system is an illusion and nothing is really being decided. That's bad. That is not going to sell stuff. So it's very important that people realize this and instead of staying home and doing nothing, which would be interpreted as affirmation, they get out there and cast a vote for the Unabomber. Because a vote for the Unabomber can never be interpreted as anything but protest.

**Extra!:** Do you have any idea what the numbers are like of the people that actually support the Unabomber? Lydia, how many people in the area are actually more supportive than we known?

**Eccles:** Well first of all, a lot of people have directly contacted me and people already call up and know about the campaign already. But more importantly, when we look to the experts to see what the psyche of the voter is and the incredible importance the press has placed on the Unabomber, especially in terms of trying to take the politics out of the Unabomber.

Together with many, many letters to the editor, and columnists in every major paper writing empathetic columns. And on top of that, all you have to do is look at advertising and you see that the majority of advertising appeals to people on the basis of the kinds of desires for freedom and self realization that the Unabomber is talking about.

So we feel like is a certain number of conscious supporters, a lot of people who are very interested, and then a lot of people who are unconsciously connected to our campaign. And our tactic is to make them conscious of it, and make that act of liberation, actually going into the voting booth and actually freeing themselves that way.

We got a letter from someone who said I have never in my life voted, I never wanted to vote, and for the first time, I want to vote, I have a reason to vote, would you please put on your web page how I can register to vote. And that is stuff we are working to do.

**Extra!:** Why do you want the Unabomber to be president? Is it just because we are in a campaign year or if we weren't would it be something different? Is that the most important thing you could think of or is it specifically him?

**Korda:** The Unabomber can't be president: if elected he will not serve. So obviously, this isn't about the man, it isn't about actually getting him elected. It's about creating a utopian moment. It's about creating a rupture in the media system, the system that covers the political election.

If enough people actually get out there and actually vote for the Unabomber in November, it will be a stunning moment. It will be historical. Nothing like that will have ever happened before in American history and that's what we are really shooting for.

We are trying to create a situation in which the media will have to acknowledge that it is not business as usual. That things can't go on the way they have been going on. That's why we have the three R's.

We have to *reveal* the resignation that people feel. People feel resigned to their technological fate. They feel dependent. They feel powerless. They feel that things can't be any other way than the way they are. They are surrounded by plastic. They are surrounded by asphalt. They are surrounded by computers. Their lives are artificial and shallow and they don't know how to change it. They feel resigned to their fate. So we have to reveal that resignation.

We have to be honest about it and then we have to try and use that resignation to *rupture* the media system, to get people to be angry about their resignation and go out there and vote for the Unabomber as an act of protest. If they do that, that would rupture the political system, the political illusion. Then we have a *rapture*, a rapturous moment. A utopian moment where people can actually permit themselves, even if it's only for a minute, to begin to imagine a society based on pleasure and freedom, rather than punishment and control and expropriation.

**Extra!:** If this gentleman is actually the Unabomber, he doesn't have a computer, he doesn't have a web site. Why do you guys have a web site?

**Eccles:** That would be like saying why did the Unabomber go to the New York Times. He's critical of the media, why would he want the New York Times to publish his manifesto?

For the very same reason, we are dealing with a control system and we are trying to crack open that control system. That control system controls our ability to, as people, communicate amongst ourselves. And we have a false dialogue imposed upon us which isn't our dialogue so that state of dependency is a problem. We use it as a tool because that is the only way we can communicate.

We have no interest in being purists, our only interest is in winning by what ever way we can by non-violent methods.

People find it paradoxical but it's not paradoxical at all. We are using the Internet for the same reason that the Unabomber used the New York Times. Because the media is controlling the communications system. They are controlling the ideas that we are allowed to consider. It's all part of one system so that is our problem.

Our choices would be to not communicate at all or to use a system to which we've been put in forced dependency upon in order to have a dialogue. The only thing that makes it at all possible is the Unabomber's original act. The crime is what makes it possible. That's what gave us the power to communicate.

The reason that we have to use the tool of the control mechanism that we are opposing is because they have stripped us of every other means of communication. It's forced us to be dependent upon it. So we don't have a choice of another tool besides various forms of mass communications at this point.

We are on the Web to do this. We are not on the Web browsing. In fact there are lots of articles about why do computer people have so much interest in the Unabomber. And I think people forget that people who are working with computers on the Internet, these are people who are forced to spend their whole life in front of the screen. Of course they are the ones who are most interested in the Unabomber. And furthermore, half the time when they come and hit on our Web page, they do it at work.

**Korda:** People keep asking if we are such luddites, if we support the Unabomber's ideas, why are we on the Internet? And the answer is, mutant times call for mutant tools. The best tools to dismantle something are the tools that were used to create it.

In this case, technological society is composed of whole layers of control and hierarchy, education, entertainment, advertising, the newspapers, the radio, the television.

All of these are layers of control by which humans are adapted to technological society. Psychiatry is another layer of control. People are actually encouraged to accept themselves, to accept their fate, to be resigned.

So we feel that the best way to attack these layers of control is to use them against themselves. That's why we try and engage you, the media. We try and engage the media and transmit messages that are essentially viruses. These are messages that are antithetical to the whole corporate system of control.

**Extra!:** Why would people support the Unabomber?

**Eccles:** I'm glad that people ask that question. And it's a question that we ask ourselves. They should sit down and ask themselves, why am I being presented with certain deaths and not others. For instance, when our enslavement to the automobile means that every year there are going to be more cases of deadly skin cancer, auto fatalities, death from stress, from working, deaths from eating high fat foods, from a sedentary lifestyle. Is there any place that those deaths are ever counted? And because they are never counted, they are anonymous. We subject ourselves to an anonymous serial killer. If you took that anonymous serial killer, that technological system with corporations, you would find that the Unabomber's killing would be nothing next to that.

**Extra!:** How do you explain that to a kid in eighth grade?

**Eccles:** I have no problem. Eighth graders understand this campaign immediately. We have no problem with young people. They understand that we are dealing with their future. The best person for this campaign is someone just out of college and realizing that they are supposed to give up the rest of their lives for something meaningless, in order to further a system that is drawing us to extinction.

I mean basically technology is the opposite of adaption. I mean normally what animals do is they adapt themselves to live harmoniously with the environment they are in. And what man has done is created technology which is a counter-adaption to the earth. It's a system of conquest and we are getting to the end of that now.

We are getting to the point where we are going to make ourselves extinct because we are unwilling to adapt to our environment. It's a collision course and people can either say we are going to remain on this path and create a bigger and bigger artificial environment or they can take the opposite path and say no, we are going to try and live in equilibrium and harmony with the earth.

But there is no middle ground, there is too much denial going on. People can push out of their minds uncomfortable truths, but we are on cars to the death camps and we're not willing to talk about it.

**Extra!:** Could you get the person who is whistling? Someone is whistling! These are great answers but the reality is this is probably going to be a two minute piece.

**Camera Person:** Try and shrink the length of your answers a little bit.

**Extra!:** Lydia, you just talked about a collision course, do you think it is too late, is there any point, why bother?

**Eccles:** I don't think it is too late at all. As long as we are in a trance, as long as we are in a collective trance, it is too late. But if we can make a rupture...I'm a very hopeful person and this whole campaign is about the opportunity that the Unabomber created. That is exciting.

**Extra!:** How's that sound in the background? We'll just have to deal with it. We are in a cafe.

(a lengthy discussion about B-roll and production issues)

**Korda:** I have something I want to add.

**Extra!:** We'll get to that, keep it in your mind. We probably pulled something from the wire on you right?

**Korda:** We sent you a press release.

**Mass High Tech:** What's your interest in this? Why did you come here to interview these folks?

**Extra!:** Because it's my job.

**MHT:** But what's your personal interest in this?

**Extra!:** It's my job. I'd be in New Hampshire skiing if this were not my job.

**MHT:** You have no personal interest in this?

**Extra!:** No, I'm just a reporter.

**Korda:** We should tell you about our reporter self-help group.

**Extra!:** Reporter self-help group.

**MHT:** How long have you been reporting?

**Extra!:** About two years.

**MHT:** Do you like it?

**Extra!:** Yes.

**MHT:** Is this one of the more interesting stories that you have done?

**Extra!:** No. I'm an entertainment reporter.

**MHT:** And this isn't entertainment?

**Extra!:** Well, I normally do actors. That's my thing. I'm an actress. We have to get on with this because they have only booked these people for half a day.



## The Ted K Archive

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Partial transcript of Chris Korda and Lydia Eccles' TV interview with Extra!

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