

The Unabomber's Ideas, Explained

Horses

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Introduction

Technology is making our lives mundane, unfulfilling and unnatural. Our spiritual and psychological health is in the gutter. Thanks to big tech and industrialized society, our planet is equally doomed. These issues do not know left or right, conservative or liberal. The problems brought upon us by technology will only get worse. So let's just. Blow it all up. It's time to start over.

That was the philosophy of the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, to ignite a revolution Ted anonymously mailed bombs to people he saw as critical in continuing industrial growth, including advertising executives, timber industry lobbyists and computer scientists. Ted wrote an entire manifesto as he was carrying out these bombings, which features predictions and analysis of humanity's future. Today, a lot of these predictions have proven to be eerily accurate.

Ted was not just some crazy person either throughout his life he displayed genius level intellect time and time again so let's talk about how and why Ted Kaczynski wanted to destroy the world.

Early Life

Throughout his whole life, Ted Kaczynski was incredibly intelligent. He skipped the 6th and 11th grades. He graduated high school at age 15 and began college at Harvard at 16. At 20, he graduated with a Bachelors in economics. But this is kind of when Ted's life started to fall apart.

At Harvard, Ted participated in a study about mind control techniques. See in this study, participants were told they would write personal essays about their aspiration and dreams, and then debate philosophy with other students. But in reality, the essays were given to an anonymous person who would use them to verbally abuse their respective authors.

The students brains were monitored once a week as they received intensely personal verbal attacks about their hopes and dreams. This experiment lasted 3 years.

Ted later said it had no impact on the trajectory of his life, given his intelligence, I could be inclined to believe him, but who really knows?

In 1966, Kaczynski was having fantasies about becoming a woman and decided to undergo a gender transition. Ted made an appointment to discuss this idea with a psychiatrist, but changed his mind. In the waiting room. After leaving, Ted felt disgusted by his "sexual fantasies", and said he wanted to kill the psychiatrist specifically in a way that would not lead to him getting caught so that he could kill other people too.

Ted did not kill his psychiatrist, but he later said this incident was a major turning point in his life. He wrote that he re emerged from this darkness "like a phoenix from the Ashes", emboldened with a new sense of hope.

After the incident with a psychiatrist, Ted resigned from his job as a college professor and relocated to a remote cabin in the woods of Montana. There, he lived without electricity or running water and took occasional odd jobs while receiving significant financial support from his parents. His goal was to eventually become entirely self-sufficient. He lived mostly on forged plants and wild rabbits.

It was here in Montana that Ted began his career as an eco terrorist.

Career

One day in Montana, Ted was on one of his favorite hikes through the woods around his cabin. When he arrived at his destination, a rocky Ridge near a waterfall, a road had been built right through it. Ted would later describe this moment.

You just can't imagine how upset I was. It was from that point on that I decided rather than trying to acquire further wilderness skills, I would work on getting back at the system ... revenge.

Indeed, Ted made true on his word. On one occasion, someone built a vacation home within a mile of his cabin. Ted broke into the house and vandalized it. He also destroyed snowmobiles and motorcycles that the homes owners had been riding through the woods. On numerous occasions, Ted sabotaged technology that he saw as invading the natural area. He caught a bulldozer on fire. He put sugar in the tanks of snowmobiles. Ted demolished the truck of a construction worker that he saw in the woods.

Still, though, this was small time compared to his now famous bombings. Between 1978 and 1995, Kaczynski anonymously mailed or hand delivered a series of bombs that killed 3 people and injured 23 others. Ted sent bombs to people he saw as foot soldiers for industrial growth.

In 1979, the FBI assembled a task force of 150 investigators for the Unabomb case, which was code named for the university and airline bombing targets. These efforts proved to be almost entirely pointless. In about two decades, the FBI made virtually no progress on identifying their so-called unabomber.

See as Ted sent his bombs he took great care to avoid leaving any evidence. He often included intentionally misleading clues in the packages. Many of the bombs included fingerprints that didn't even belong to Ted.

Still at large in 1995, Ted mailed his essay Industrial Society and its future to several media outlets. He demanded that it be published in a major newspaper, if his demands were met, Ted said he would stop the bombings and this essay, also called the Unabomber Manifesto, had outlined his philosophy and his motivations for the attacks.

Philosophy

Ted's manifesto opens with what is basically his thesis, "the Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race." Kaczynski argues that we have created a world that basically humans aren't evolved to live in. Throughout 35,000 words, Ted expounds on this idea and presents nature as an alternative to the problems plaguing modern society.

Technology has turned us into an industrialized society in this society, Ted argues, the system is prioritized above all other things, including human. Your behavior is regulated to make you more effective within the system and your well-being is defined by your ability to be a productive part of that system.

Take, for example, attention disorders. These impact one's ability to be productive within the industrial system, and so they are addressed, even though there's nothing inherently harmful about having a short attention span.

Clinical depression is on the rise. The societal conditions which cause this depression are left entirely unaddressed. Instead, people are given medicine that allows them to tolerate conditions they naturally find intolerable.

To varying degrees, Ted says this applies to all aspects of modern life. Kaczynski believed this was unavoidable in industrial society. Initially, technology seemed wholly beneficial. Plumbing, electricity, telecommunications. Who in their right mind would resist these conveniences? Kaczynski argued that one by one, though these technologies would integrate themselves so profoundly. Into our lives, they would erode personal freedoms.

As an example, Kaczynski points to the automobile. Owning a car was once an optional luxury, but slowly over time our society was constructed with cars and mine. Cities were designed around the idea of people owning cars. Now you're virtually required to own a car, so you are then required to do all that entails. Working to pay for one, registering and getting educated on the use of a car, etc. Even the pedestrians freedoms have now been limited by cars. There are designated sidewalks and walkways, and even then the pedestrian is constantly at risk to get killed by a reckless driver. Those who do not own cars rely on public transportation, which also limits your freedom of movement. You must go where the bus goes. You must go where the train goes, et cetera, et cetera.

Ted recognizes that we do live in a so-called free society, but he argues we are only free up until a point where our actions impact the functioning of the system, whether legally, morally or socially, threatening the system is the line at which behavior is

considered unacceptable. He asks what kind of freedom does one have if one can use it only as someone else prescribes. A dog on a leash is not free.

Kaczynski further argues that you have no agency to change this system because modern industrial production is so complex. The world relies on the cooperation of very large numbers of people and machines. Decisions must impact millions of people, so by necessity, those decisions are made by employers, politicians or other authority figures. In this way your life is determined by the choices and actions of other people, choices that you can have no measurable impact on, even in a pure democracy if a 100 million people vote on something, each individual has one one millionth of a share in the decision. Kaczynski says there is no way to fix this in a hyper connected, industrialized society.

In such a society, our basic needs are met with pretty much no challenge. Most of our jobs require little more than showing up and doing what you're told, so we must seek out other goals. We are forced to engage in what Kaczynski says are ultimately meaningless hobbies that can never really bring us fulfillment, a serial money maker will never have enough. A political activists work has never really finished. There are endless stamps to collect.

Kaczynski argued that the lack of a meaningful goal fulfillment process causes unrest and distress. Ted asks how can you live if you don't have anything truly meaningful to strive for and attain. Kaczynski argues that being subjected to this level of control and suppression puts us in unnatural, detrimental circumstances. Altering humans to fit a system rather than vice versa has far reaching consequences.

Kaczynski theorized that this trend would only continue until technocrats one day are able to edit the genetic makeup of humans to better suit the system. At this point, the human species would change from something natural and to a designed, manufactured good. Kaczynski theorized that eventually our systems would become so complex that we simply wouldn't be able to see the far reaching. Consequences of any decisions only computers and artificial intelligence would have the ability to make good decisions, while AI wouldn't be sentient, it would be the only thing capable of governing our industrialized system. Them effectively control of our world would be given over to artificial intelligence.

Kaczynski did not believe this system could be reformed. He found the concept of reform to be naive, saying that technology only got more and more prolific across the entirety of human history. Any truly significant reforms, he said, would bear far reaching consequences that could very likely be disastrous. He did not believe traditional reformers would be willing to take this risk, especially given they are benefited by the system.

Furthermore, Kaczynski argued against technophiles who believed science would solve all of these issues. Ted said 'we've been hearing that for 200 years.' The Industrial Revolution was supposed to solve world hunger. For example. The result had been quite the opposite. By Ted's estimation technophiles, he argued, continued to ignore that their solutions brought new problems. "For example, scientists boast that they will end

famine by creating new genetically engineered food plants.” But ”this will allow the human population to keep expanding indefinitely and it is well known that crowding leads to increased stress and aggression.”

So, Ted called for revolution, he said that it was basically time to start overtime to destroy everything. Kaczynski recognized that this revolution would cause a lot of suffering. He justified this by pointing out that increasing industrialization would lead to even greater suffering. Further, Kaczynski believed that the larger the system was allowed to grow, the more suffering its eventual collapse would cause. So by destroying things now, he was actually choosing a more humane option.

As much as he hated technology, he loved nature. Ted believed that nature was the antidote to all of these problems. Primitive man, he believed, dealt with virtually none of the issues we have today and lived quite contently.

Only in nature could you have true freedom over your base needs. Those which Ted believed would create authentic fulfillment. When all industrial systems were removed, people would be forced to live in accordance with nature.

A lot of these opinions sound very left wing by today’s standards, but head Kaczynski hated liberals. A huge portion of this manifesto is dedicated to declaring all the problems with leftists, many of which I would say are pretty accurate today. And likewise, he hated the right wing as well. Ted pointed to the hypocrisy of demanding constant economic growth while also resisting any significant social change. Economic growth, he argued, inevitably caused social changes.

Death and More

You see, Ted was convinced that no division, no label mattered other than the people trying to suppress freedom in those being suppressed. After Ted's manifesto was published in the Washington Post, his brother David saw the essay recognized Ted's writing style. David alerted the authorities, who arrested Ted at his Montana cabin in 1996. Ted was given 8 consecutive life sentences with no possibility of parole, was found dead in his cell on June 10th, 2023. Likely from suicide.

In many ways, I believe Ted was objectively correct in his analysis of our modern world. Many of his predictions have also come true since he wrote the essay. Now, if you subscribe entirely to Ted's philosophy, then sure, his solutions seem like the only way forward. But for most people, myself very much included sending bombs in the mail seems like a pretty bad solution to very real problems. Indeed, it would seem to me like his 20 years of domestic terrorism had basically no impact on the world.

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The Ted K Archive

A critique of his ideas & actions



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The Unabomber's Ideas, Explained

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www.thetedkarchive.com