

The New Wave of Eco-Extremism and Nihilist Militancy

Jake Hanrahan & John Jacobi

March 9, 2021

HANRAHAN: This is Popular Front, a podcast focus on the very niche and kind of beauty details of Modern Warfare with me Jake Hanrahan.

Today we're speaking to John Jacobi. He's a researcher and writer focused entirely on radical environmentalism, John is going to be speaking about the underreported but new wave of eco-terrorism right now and how that's evolving into something that can only be described as militant nihilism, specifically speaking about a group called Individuals Tending towards Savagery or ITS. And yes, a militant eco extremist group in South America and Europe. ...

So John, firstly, can you explain what is eco-terrorism and we'll use eco-terrorism. I hate to use the word terrorism in any context, but you know for the sake of this podcast, let's say what is eco terrorism?

JACOBI: Ecoterrorism is... sabotage done in the name of protecting the environment. Or, sometimes it's not explicitly for environmental protection, sometimes the targets aren't necessarily related to any particular kind of environmental destruction, but the terrorists might believe that just the technological infrastructure overall needs to collapse for the sake of the biosphere and. And natural human needs. And so they just target tech companies in general. Things that are really crucial to the operating to the operation of the of the technological system overall, like computer companies.

HANRAHAN: Right, and I think when people think eco terrorism initially, they usually think Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber, but there's more to it than that, right? Maybe you can go into the history of eco terrorism a little bit for.

JACOBI: Us it really like blossomed in the 80s. It was going on for a while, you know there was a little bit of it in the 60s. There was quite a bit of it in the 70s, but it just didn't have like a name or an overall movement or any sort. Of like coherent set of. Things but it. Was fairly popular, especially in the West. There's this group called the Eco Raiders that was inspired by a novel by Edward Abbey who was a conservationist at the time and they started sabotaging developments in the West and they were, they were. They were high schoolers. They were. They were teenagers. I think the youngest one was 17 years old and the oldest one was 19 and the lead of the group was something like 18 years old. Known as the. Fox, they were published in the New York Times. Uh, and it caused quite a bit of damage after that. Ed Durnehviir wrote a book called The Monkey Wrench Gang, partially based off of these decorators and it inspired a whole generation of of conservationists to unite tactics from the 60s and some components some. Some some elements of political sabotage into the into the cause of protecting the environment, and it was especially popular among conservationists in the West, so this group called. Earth First sprouted out in. The 80s.

HANRAHAN: That was one of the biggest groups, right? Like Earth First was kind of the first. I don't know how you would say like militant group. Basically of you know echo militancy.

JACOBI: Yeah definitely, uh, they they're big, they're big, uh? The big stunt. That kind of that kind of skyrocketed. The membership was called the cracking of Glen Canyon Dam, where about 70 people stood at the bottom of the dam and listened to

Edward Edward Abbey give a speech. And as he was giving the speech, four people snuck up to the top of of Glen Canyon Dam and rolled down a piece of plastic that was tapered at the end. So that from. The distance it looked like the Canyon had. And and the FBI was quoted as saying that that they think this group was the harbinger of domestic terrorism, and it sort of was. Since then, lots of almost all the terror groups can be traced in some way. Their roots can be traced in some way back to Earth first. Most of the time directly.

HANRAHAN: And what kind of attacks did Earth First! carry out? cause you know, I know about this this sticker situation, but I know it was a lot more militant than that, right? It got a. Lot more nasty. Yeah, at first it.

JACOBI: Was just simple things like that that they called monkeywrenching things like. If you if there. Was a forest that they wanted to protect. Like a piece of force that was going to be logged and they wanted it. To be a. Part of an already designated wilderness area. They would go in and they would. They would take nails and spike them into the trees called tree spiking which would which would prevent. Loggers from using chainsaws or safely, and so it would delay development for a long time where people would sit in trees and things like that. Or they would build blockades, but later in the history of Earth first. People went on. To do things like tear down power. Lines and attack nuclear power plants and. Things like that and after the original group left. 22 huge things happened in history, both first one, Ted Kaczynski happened and he was fairly closely associated with Earth First! ideologically. And then two. This one is more. Important for for specifically? The A group called. The Earth Liberation Front popped up. This was huge in the 90s and and they did things. They committed a series of arsons across the US against biotech labs and and animal farms and animal testing companies and blah blah blah blah blah. Right?

HANRAHAN: Right, they built explosives as well, didn't they?

JACOBI: It did, but they mostly.

HANRAHAN: The LFY.

JACOBI: Favored I think maybe there was one. Or two, but. I I think they actually favored. Fire with favorite arson. And because arson was more destructive and much simpler and harder to catch.

HANRAHAN: Maybe you can tell us how that kind of all came together, 'cause it seemed like the perfect storm almost. There was a buildup. You had the earth first, the monkey wrenching, and then you had, you know, Ted and Elfa, which was obviously a lot more militant.

JACOBI: Yeah, well, I mean it's. Not all related specifically. There's first, really. I mean that stuff was that stuff was a. Building up in the popular consciousness for a. Pretty long time. Like I said from about the 70s, people were getting fed up because you had all these environmental concerns like huge environmental concerns and pretty much nothing was addressing the problem adequately to the old guard Greens. You know we had. After Earth day. There was this faction of environmentalism that most people are familiar with today, like the Ralph Nader kind. Or like certain. Elements of

Greenpeace or or things like that? Uhm, they. They they're mostly asking for clean air, clean water, clean energy, things like that, but the like original environmentalism was about, you know, biocentrism was about protecting wildlife and wild lands and and and, and the importance of nature to the human psyche and and and and body and these things. They're largely incompatible with society as it operates today, so people were getting kind of fed up, and so you know the storm happened, but it happened, sort of predictably. Because you had this. Growing belief that the. The wild nature that wild nature was worth preserving, and the growing tension between wild nature and the direction of our economy and society overall. So the 90s sort of yeah. And then the 90s sort of kicked it. Off plus there. Was this layer of mainstream organization that was going on with? Huge conservation organizations and environmental organizations. A lot of them going global. And so, of course, you're. Going to have the radicals feel. They're going to have more power to do the things that they need to do. Yeah, so that's the reason. I do want to correct. You on one. Point though Ted. Kaczynski was much earlier than Earthfirst. He and the. Left were caught in. The 90s, yeah, but he he started operating from around 75.

HANRAHAN: Later, yes. Right, and do you think Kaczynski getting caught and what happened with the LF? You know that kind of brought an end to it for a while, right? Maybe you can explain that 'cause I know the LF. Were rounded up quite heavily. Yeah, the universe probably would.

JACOBI: Not have been caught at all heading up in. For one guy named Jacob. Ferguson, who was ironically probably the. Like who did the first LF bombing? Fire-bombing and he was a drug addict and the FBI used that and the fact that he had a daughter against him and and got him to snitch on almost the entire. One of the largest LF networks. And these people who? And if you're just following, historical President President would have gotten maybe 5 to 10 years. Ended up getting 20 years pretty much consistently. And they were caught on mass so that plus Ted Kaczynski getting caught and getting I think 3 consecutive life terms without parole. Something like that caused what was called the green scare where there was a drastic reduction in. Environmental terrorism that said, if you read like the military reports, the people who are like following these things like track who you might, I think probably know about them.

HANRAHAN: Yeah, although they they call anyone a terror group. Like if you've got a Tumblr page, you're a terror group on track, you know, yeah. You know?

JACOBI: The West Point journals things like that. They said there hasn't actually been really opened up. And just it's people are less public about it and it's less united underneath like a single name like the for example. There is Liberation Front.

HANRAHAN: Right, so there was the green scare. Maybe before we get into what's happening now. Maybe you can explain something for me now. I've read quite a lot of you know radical ecological text. Just because it's something I'm interested in with my work, and to be honest, you know it. It doesn't take a genius to realize that the kind of. Degradation of nature is bad for everybody. Uhm, but maybe you

can explain what is the difference between you know wild nature you keep saying wild nature. That's something that's used a hell of a lot by Ted Kaczynski as well. Maybe you can explain that.

JACOBI: So wild nature would be to put it more simply like nature. That's unmanaged nature. That, or in a positive way that you know conservationists. With some say it sometimes say that wild comes. That wild comes etymologically from. Uh, these words in German and Old English that means self willed or or is self willed animal. So it's basically just nature that operates outside of the context of human and technological control. And people sometimes have problems with that kind of definition, like it's defined negatively and things like that. But it's kind of like how you would say secular means, not religious.

HANRAHAN: Right got you. Back in the day when it was happening before, Uhm, there seems to be, you know there was. There was no specific dominance. Would you say politically, almost like I? I don't know no agreement on whether it's left wing or right wing.

JACOBI: Yeah, I don't think so. I'd say that it's kind of a new thing, which is part of the reason why it's hard. And so you know you have like communist groups for a long time. They've tried to attack on. They're like their their program of communism onto various social issues because it gives them a a base of a base of power. You know, if people are organized around. Gay rights. And you get. People to say, you know, we want gay communism, then you have you. Have you know communism? Has now subsumed that social movement. It's a way of. Accumulating power, and they've done the same thing with environmentalism. The fascists are doing trying to do a similar thing, especially these like third wave fascists over in Europe. And it's just how politics like generally. Works, but green politics kind of stands on its own and and originally like the Earth first, people like like Edward Abbey and people like Ted Kaczynski. They're not. They're certainly not leftists and have a lot of, you know, antipathy towards leftist politics. I think that that part is accented specifically because there's more trouble with that because the left has tried to be so you know, has tried to intrude itself so much into green politics, but really a lot of. Them have a sort of like. Libertarian like desert desert. Anarchist, kind of. Feel to them where it's not. It might be have antipathy towards leftism, but that doesn't automatically make it right. It's more like just the government is trash. All of society is trash. We just want to live our lives with autonomy and our small groups away from all this ****

HANRAHAN: Right absolutely. And that brings us, I think, to the point where green politics and so-called eco terrorism is at now. Now you know you said there was the green scare and it all kind of went quiet in terms of you know, promoting what these groups are doing, but now I've certainly seen in the last year or two a return to a very weird kind of mix now of nihilism. Eco terrorism anarchism all this kind of thing we've got itse these groups that we'll talk about but maybe you can. Explain where is eco terrorism now and would you agree that it's kind of seeing a new resurgence? At least in these kind of niche online communities?

JACOBI: Definitely online, I think Ted Kaczynski has entered the popular consciousness again with a lot of force. And his ideas even originally spoke to a ton of people. I wrote an article about it in Dark Mountain called Ted Kaczynski and why it matters. And I explained how the you know whenever the guy was caught a criminologist was you quoted as saying, I've never seen the likes of this. Millions of people seem to sympathize with him. You know there were. There were. Fan groups that popped up all over the. Internet a similar kind of thing. Happening now, especially after that Netflix series and and some online articles. So Ted Kaczynski entered the popular consciousness. Eco terrorism itself is getting bolder. Like I said, I don't think it ever died down as much as people want to say it did. Uh, But it's it's it's it's getting more public and more consolidated and more fierce. Uh, it's in particular, I think. Probably won't go. Much further than it has in Mexico and Europe, but they surprised everybody before soonest.

HANRAHAN: Let's talk about it. It's you know these are one of the main groups right now. Kind of coming under this banner of what I would call new wave eco terrorism or whatever. Who are it's and what are they up to.

JACOBI: I mean, it was a group that started in the in around 2011. Uh, and they they've changed a lot since then whenever they first came out, they were. Very much inspired by Ted Kaczynski and some of the original anarcho primitivist thinkers, people like Jones Aaron who were popular in the 90s and and kind of are again tie birth first. So they popped out of that. Their communiques sounded a lot like Ted Kaczynski. At the time. Ted Kaczynski had some people in Spain who were translating his works. They finish the Spanish translation pretty much right around the time that I TS popped onto the scene.

HANRAHAN: And they they started in Mexico. I TS, right?

JACOBI: Yeah, and their their language mimics both Ted Kaczynski style with all the heavy footnotes and the academic blah blah blah. But also their their language mimicked the in. The back of. That Spanish translation there was an essay by the. Translator A guy in Spain. Who is known as Ultimate reducto and the essay is called is cured gizmo which means leftism. And you are using a very specific kind of language. He was trying to be very exact, very kind of scientific, with the way that he was talking about these issues and a lot of the same kind of words that you would use like domain Adora like domination alagados which means like small group. These things would pop up in the, ITS communications, and so while they didn't explicit. We say hey, we're inspired by these people and they would later with the other places because they didn't. Want to get them in trouble? They also later revealed yes, we were inspired by them and and and so you know they're directly, they are direct lineages from Ted Kaczynski, but they changed later on.

HANRAHAN: Well and and they carried out some pretty serious attacks where I mean it's a what you know, like a militant eco terrorist cell at the star in Mexico. But they became something else, but at the start they were they were what blowing up. I think nanotech scientists. They shot some hikers or something.

JACOBI: Yeah, the hikers. Were much later on. Whenever they get a little bit more fuzzy. And ah. More of a nihilist group than than anything. But at first they were attacking. Mannatech scientists biotech labs universities atomics towers communications networks, things like that and they were pretty successful and as far as I. Know none of them have been caught.

HANRAHAN: So what I found really interesting about it was. You know, like you said, they were inspired by Ted Kaczynski but then Kaczynski, the Unabomber, had this exchange with them or at least there was letters passed back and forth. I saw them published online where Kaczynski kind of I think. He said they're idiots and they said they you know he's an idiot or whatever. What was that about?

JACOBI: Kosinski didn't talk to them directly or anything like that. He wouldn't be able to. He's actually very, very explicit about not really even wanting to talk about them to anybody writing him letters and. Prison, but he has issued a few statements like on my website. I talk, I quote one of them where he says that it has two main problems. One, they spend a message of hopelessness. They say that a revolution against. Well, technological society is impossible, so they're just attacking as terrorists because they they want revenge or because. They're going to do what they can and and it's like this is not the right solution. Like if you're going to do anything you want to be effective, and so you're going. To have to. Organize politically and that relates to a second problem with ITSI, where he says that they have no political prowess and they don't really are. They are very much a criminal group. They are very much. They're they're trying to attract a certain psychology for sure. They're bombastic. They make you know they use Spanish slang words that they are the equivalent of, like the N word or fagot in English explicitly to. Uh, explicitly to just be provocative and to distance themselves from social activists and to attract to sort of like criminal type. And they issue any sort of like large scale political organization which Kaczynski believes is absolutely necessary. He thinks that it, you know when I agree with him that violence is kind of the less important question at the moment. At the moment we want to prepare politically for responding to. Do things like you know economic disruptions. If there's are, or if there is a natural disaster, then whoever is organized up until that point will have an opportunity to actually respond to the issue powerfully, and they're more interested in causing immediate damage as individuals. And they're very explicit about that.

HANRAHAN: Sure, how did it become? And this what I describe now is anarcho nihilist group, because I remember when I first started reading about them, they were, you know, eco terrorists and I TS, what does it mean like tending towards the wild or something their name? And they were all about saving, you know, Earth and whatever and blow up scientists. And then they took this kind of this kind of turn where they started. Saying in their communications like no, we don't care about anything like we're the mafia. We want to kill people, we laugh and we kill innocent civilians. And how did that happen? Because I'm seeing that in a in a quite a few different circles of

what were anarcho, primitivists or whatever. Now turning to this kind of weird nihilist mix.

JACOBI: I do get what you mean and I think it's personally pretty odd. Uh, uh, but there's two thoughts about this one. I think some of it might be instrumental, like I, I think that people might be using the language to have a certain effect. And like I said using you know, provocative language to. Distance yourself from. Social activists and leftists. You know that it works. For sure, and I think it also might be. Attracting the kind of psychology. That these groups want to have to achieve the specific goals that they want to. Because so many people that I talked to don't explicitly disagree with Kaczynski ideas, they just don't see how they can be put into practice at the moment and they think they. You know, so these people. Might think, for example, that at least a component of it needs to look similar to. Uh, like what it is and the. The reasoning here is. That yeah, you might. With this sort of strategy, attract people who aren't really that interested in issues of environmentalism or things like that. You'll attract a lot of kooks, but also, you'll have people who are pretty much absolutely willing to do anything. That needs to be done. To to attack this technological system and it's it's believed by some of these people that it's important. To have that kind of group organized and on reserve. And that makes the most sense to me. On the other hand, there are people who tend to be kind of true believers in the whole thing. And say, you know, this situation really is utterly hopeless, and. That you know the. Whole human race is irredeemable and. I can, I mean, a lot of people do hold these views without going to the you know, actual bullet streams that IDF does, so it's not completely surprising. Extinction ISM has been a part of environmentalism for a very long time.

HANRAHAN: That that's a. Good word to use for them, right? They're like extinct. Dentists, they basically hate every ***** thing around. They just want to destroy everything, right? It's not destroyed society to save nature. It's just nuclear attack bomb everything right?

JACOBI: Yeah, I'd say that the most dominant part of ideas definitely is that now and there are like it's. It's always been kind of fragmented and there are some communiques from certain groups that claim the name and also explicitly say we don't want to see the destruction of the human race. We just want to see a disruption of the technological system, but they're few and far between. At this point, I think mostly the ideas brand. Has associated itself largely with the sort of nihilism and extinction ISM. But the groups differ. They they care more about whether or not everybody agrees on on being able to commit terrorist acts against technological society and and or the human rights. Then whether or not people believe the same thing.

HANRAHAN: And their their attacks are spreading right? They started off in Mexico. There have been a few very small attacks in Europe. I mean the ones I have documented are mostly just like ***** fireworks in a tube, you know, but the one in Chile recently they blew up a bus stop and that was quite a big deal. It was on the news and everything.

JACOBI: Yeah no, it's spread. They've definitely gone international. They're in Greece, there in. There are some groups at Rome that via allied themselves with it. And they're all over South America. They've grown much further than I ever expected them to. I followed them from around the time they were beginning and I didn't really expect them to go very far. Uh, but they have they have spread. For sure.

HANRAHAN: And why do you think that is? Why is this hopeless? But destructive nihilist kind of militant attitude spreading to these groups? Because I know a lot of these groups that are now I TS aligned a long time anarchist. For example, I heard that you know, CVR conspiracy of cells fire in Greece are kind of falling into that anarcho nihilism. Camp now as well.

JACOBI: Yeah, exactly. That's yeah, I was just about to say that a lot of these groups who are claiming this this moniker this this, this brand of ideas, though it's like they. Didn't just pop out of. Nowhere these are. A lot of them are like they're using older infrastructure. Like groups from an anarchist terror group in in Europe like that you mentioned, since you have conspiracy cells of fire, some of them seem to have you know in it. It's it the communicates kind of indicate that some of the people have. Adopted the itse. Brandon left the conspiracy cells of Fire brand. A, uh? Yeah, and so it's spreading, but it's not like it's necessarily. It what it's doing is it's attracting other groups to adopt the brand, which I mean. Honestly, is kind. Of what al Qaeda did whenever Al Qaeda started al Qaeda in the word means the base, and there were. Different Islamic nationalist terror groups in different regions and part of the work of bin Laden and the original Al Qaeda group was to get people to adopt the brands us to create an al Qaeda network. And so he would go into these different fronts. And try to get them. To to to claim the initial main claim. The name of Al Qaeda in exchange for you know, you know. An easy way. To communicate with other groups and organizers. Other groups somewhat of you know, some funding things like that, and it had that strategy worked and there's indications that it's. I followed this. Strategy a little bit. Taking some inspiration from the jihadists. They've kind of quoted them a little bit, they they read their magazines. It's they quote the magazines and their own online magazines and one of their strategic inspirations is this text that was used by Islamists called the management of savagery, which. Which, yeah, right? I think you might have even talked about this before on your podcast. Yeah, just this idea that you you wreak a lot of havoc in a place. To destroy the basis of power that's there, and then you come in with your own **** and. And you know you can come and do it you want, whenever it's. In so much disarray.

HANRAHAN: Right, but I think it's we should point out as well, like other than kind of weirdos like myself. Not many people are even paying attention to their attacks. They're normally so small they go completely unnoticed, like there's there's evidence that they actually put a pipe bomb on a statue in Scotland, and you know that was last year and no one gave a **** and already even noticed it. That was it. You know it was kind of over, but they are. They are certainly kind of causing a habit within this eco. You know, green politics world.

JACOBI: Yeah, yeah, a lot of the problem. There's two. There causing havoc in the. Green politics web. Just just in terms of rhetoric, a lot of that is just spectacle. What they're trying to do right now is. So because Al Qaeda didn't, people didn't pay attention to a lot of their attacks at first either. And then we got big enough to. To do something like 911 and but what they did the the how they got there was attracting people with a certain psychology for a long runtime with certain rhetoric and through small actions like random bombs that didn't get a lot. Of media attention. But made people feel powerful. And it sort of fed the whole psychology. Of the network and blah blah. Blah yeah, and then you are on the other end. You have a pretty. Powerful group that says they're emboldened, and so the. Strategy works, they're just in their preliminary stages.

HANRAHAN: Right, and for me like I was trying to work out where this its ideology kind of came from. And I read desert and then I was reading about attossa. Maybe you can explain what that is 'cause I know that that's kind of, I guess the starter manual for this kind of anarcho nihilist ideology.

JACOBI: Yeah, ah Tulsa. Tulsa was a group. Attention was created by some publishers. It was published by this group by this anarchist publishing house called Little Black Cart, and it was mostly texts that were written by its during their fairly early phases. And translating them into English for a Spanish speaking audience, along with some essays by me and some other people giving context for how the group of rows where they came from, who their influences were, the text caused a lot of controversy and anarchy scenes it actually. It's gotten a little black cart banned from certain anarchist bookfair's because because it is just such a controversial group that some some anarchists don't believe they should be given any sort of life at all.

HANRAHAN: How very anarchist of them?

JACOBI: Yeah, yeah yeah that's what obviously says. But yeah, the the the IT I think it's got two issues out so far. I don't know if there's going to be a third one that comes out. Yeah yeah, and it. Was kind of. Successful and spreading the. The idea that. So that one Ted Kaczynski is still relevant to. Eco terrorism is still relevant 3 like all terrorism, not just eco terrorism. Violent resistance is taking on a really odd weird turn. There's there's this weird mix and all social all radical, like the really radical factions of all social movements. That just is sort of mixing these root strands of, you know, religiously. They don't really seem to care so much about ideology, they're just united on that. There the resistance to what exists, and that's what I find most interesting about Itso, which is that I don't really give a **** about. A lot of the rhetoric that they spit out, I think a lot of what they say is theoretically nonsensical, but it doesn't matter because they they don't even really care about it that much. It seems it seems like they repeat over and over that the point is to attack, and that seems to be more relevant to where resistance. Is going you have people who? Are consistently realizing that whatever they call it, capitalism, globalism, industrial society, blah blah, you know whatever and whatever they want, you know, maybe they want communism. Maybe they want agrarian socialism. Maybe they want some common none of it can happen

unless their enemy, which is all the same. Or they really call it their enemy is destroyed unless the current system starts declining and collapsing, at least in some regions to build out space for the alternatives. So you see, these groups sort of not caring so much about ideology and more and. Uniting themselves and their resistance. It's to to to the society that. Exists, and that's what's really. Interesting to me about it.

HANRAHAN: Yeah, definitely. I think I've I really know. It's that kind of mixing of weird ideologies like you said because I saw the ETS were, you know, publishing and kind of promoting information from a fascist group called Temple of Blood. Now I've I've done a lot of work on Atomwaffen Division, this militant neo-Nazi group. And they're linked with Temple of Blood, which it's like anarchist nihilist. Just esoteric hitlerist occultist like the most weirdest **** you can imagine. All kind of mixed in. And then I saw a TS promoting them and I was like, well, **** ain't that weird situation to be in and I think maybe we should talk about that. What's the situation now with the? You know I'm seeing a lot of green fascist groups kind of popping up. Admittedly, most of them just pop up on the Internet, but there are definitely some that are kind of, you know, definitely starting to organize, you know militant fascist groups that are using environmentalism as as one of their key things, and unfortunately I'm seeing a lot of like. Kind of lazy journalists just go right? Any you know? Green activism now is probably involved with fascism, which isn't true, but they are.

JACOBI: There yeah, yeah yeah. I mean, like I said, Green stands on its own and and and so it's going to be. You know it's going to mix with right or left and and esoteric. Stuff and and all the stuff that's kind of traditionally been considered political or non political are just otherwise outside of the conventional political spectrum. So you're going to see Green fascists just like you're going to. See green communists.

HANRAHAN: Do you think it's kind of like a trend? You know, a little bit of a trend, not green politics, of course, but this kind of re emergence of eco militancy.

JACOBI: There's a little bit of a fed to it. Yeah, yeah, The thing is is like green issues are so popular and not being dealt with very well by the dominant society so. So it's easy for radical. Groups to mobilize around that issue because it's a constant point of tension with the current order and they're popular sentiments so. It's easy to get. People to like, you know, enter into whatever ideology you happen to want them to enter into through, you know. Environmental issues. The FBI listed as the. Top domestic terrorism threat in the US.

HANRAHAN: Really now.

JACOBI: Yeah yeah, even now.

HANRAHAN: Wow, wow, I didn't know that.

JACOBI: Yeah, yeah. And a lot of the military. Uh, terrorism publications. We'll talk about how the next you know there's this. Article that said. The next wave of terrorism will be green or extremism or something like that. People know like military analysts know that environmentalism is going to be sort of the Nexus, on which a lot. The violent ideological terrain will happen in the coming years.

HANRAHAN: So you think it's going to be really dangerous like this is going to be a real threat?

JACOBI: Yeah yeah, totally 100% and I think I I think again, it's not just the thing about it is that it will infiltrate everything. It won't just be a just green thing. You know it'll be. It the green part of everything of all the ideologies is going to consistently bring them to more and more radical conclusions, because that part is not being dealt with, and that part is getting in the way. Again, of all these all these ideas. Because people don't have autonomy under the technological system, they they need it to decay, and the only alternative to the technological system would be more natural setting, whether it's agrarian or wild nature or whatever. So the green component is just going to bring people into conflict more and more, and if it doesn't get dealt with adequately, then. That resistance will get more violent and it is. It's happening right now and it's happening in groups that you know are very different from each other and include fascists.

HANRAHAN: Yeah, yeah, certainly. I think I've noticed that the ideas within kind of radical ecological ideology are starting to become almost organically more mainstream. For example, I read you know the the tech kuszynski manifesto years ago. As a teenager, I didn't really think anything of it. And then I read it again. And then I read. His other book, technological Slavery, last year. And not that I agree with him and I think what he did was was kind of mad. But you know obviously, but you read it and I gave it to my friend and he said the same thing. There are bits in it where you're like. Well, yeah, you know like we're ***** like we we're actually getting eaten alive out here you know people have got 12 hours of their head in their phone everybody mind is warped. cause of some ***** social media now even on that basic level, I think it's clear there's a problem, you know. And that's not hard to to become apparent in a society anywhere. I think that's why a lot of young people are drawn to it as well. They're feeling this despair, you know Duma, it's kind of a meme, or you're a doomer. But you know, it's out there.

JACOBI: Yeah yeah, Ted Kaczynski's ideas. I mean weren't new, but they sort of summarized kind of like pretty much popular American sentiment. Most people do have a sort of a sort of resistance to this technological change and and you feel pretty frustrated about the fact that the government and corporations control pretty much every aspect of their life. And Kuszynski kind of showed how those two things are related and it gave voting pretty simplistic terms, but with a lot of strong academic backing. The the reasons why all those problems. If you take them to. Their logical conclusion bring you to. The revolution in his opinion.

HANRAHAN: Yeah, yeah yeah, but I mean a lot of these kids surely? I TS like they said they don't believe they're going to have this revolution. Yeah, I TS.

JACOBI: Doesn't I? I think they might be. Talking past each. Other because I. Think some groups in its do want to see. The the decay of technological infrastructure. They just don't necessarily believe that it would be a like a worldwide technological revolution, which I think not even type kuszynski necessarily believes that. Not not in

the sense, not in. Not in the sense that you initially think. When you hear the phrase worldwide technological revolution. So I don't. I don't know there's people who are more. You know more sympathetic to the revolutionary thing and less sympathetic, but certainly the branding. You know, is is explicitly. We should act now because, again, the main emphasis is creating a group of people who are willing to just. Do anything.

HANRAHAN: Sure, and other than it's are there any other militant ecological groups out there that you think are worth you know, researchers keeping on?

JACOBI: Yeah, no, I think most I. Think most of the. Groups that the government is trying to. Keep track I think. The government is not so much tracking the explicitly radical groups more the mainstream groups because they believe that they want to catch people before they're radicalized, essentially. So they're trying to keep tabs on things like Greenpeace and Earth First! and certain wilderness conservation. Organizations because they know that young people are easily radicalized and that it starts largely in those kinds of organizations.

HANRAHAN: Right, and I think it's worth saying like these hardline radical ecological. Some groups absolutely laugh in the face of groups like Greenpeace, right? And I mean, I can kind of understand, you know, you see these campaigns of like, oh, let's let's stop having plastic straws. And everybody celebrates like it's way too late to save the environment. Now you know what I mean? So, so that's true, right? They don't, they don't equate themselves with any of these groups like you know, like they say in Dark Mountain, the guys that started that kind of realized they weren't really doing anything, right?

JACOBI: Uh, exam. They they just believe that things like like for example, clean energy. It doesn't really make a lot of sense whenever you're saying that the actual structure of society is is contrary to the biosphere and natural human needs, then that means things like like roads and dams and servers. Farms, and so if you're saying we want clean energy, you know we want to get off of coal and get onto you know solar panels that. Only makes sense with a really sort of mainstream capitalist kind of environmentalism. Because how where do the? How do you make solar panels? They cut with minds and transportation systems, and those are the main causes of the environmental crisis. So it, the critique does not go very deep. Whenever you get into these mainstream groups. But it doesn't go very deep at. All, it's largely just trying to patch. Problems on the the overall system so. You know in. Terms of like. Facts and theory. Logically the radical Greens are much more correct on this issue.

HANRAHAN: Yeah, like I've read into that clean engine into me. It's like, well, that will work for like rich white people in LA who are a bit guilty that they throw so much rubbish out every week. You know what I mean? It doesn't seem like a realistic idea that will save anything you know? I don't know. In my opinion, I feel like it's kind of too late, which I think that makes me sound like it's. Definitely not.

JACOBI: Well, yeah, that's why the nihilism part isn't that surprising. Probably more more green groups are going to attend a little bit more towards. Nihilism and

maybe not in the sense of hopelessness. Overall, like not, not necessarily hopelessness. That nothing can be done. cause obviously I TS is hopeful at least to the point that they think. That there's something they can do. Yeah, maybe not to change the issue, but at least you know to do something that's worth doing. But moralism, in the sense that's. That they're not trying to fix anything, but it's a rejection of civilization as it exists completely wholesale vision of fixing it.

HANRAHAN: Yeah, which is really scary because anything and everyone can be a target.

JACOBI: It is scary. It's why I think I agree more with people like kuszynski than IDs because like for you know kuszynski will point out that. Yeah, even if you can, you know logically say. That a rejection civilization wholesale. You know, if you had a. Magic button and you. Made all civilization collapse that a lot of people would die. This is like you, yeah, but you're not going to have a magic button, and whenever in these coming years we're going. To see you. Know a sort of uneven decay of civilized institutions? And in places where. Most week you do have actual political opportunities for for action, for like seizing that territory for making actual headway. For actually, you know, maybe large scale transformation and technological infrastructure in in that region. And that seems to be a lot more exacting and politically promising and more effective for the actual issues. That said, you know I guess has motivated a lot of people. And again, whenever it comes down to it. If there's turmoil, it's. People who. Are of the mind divides us? They might not. cause all the disruption they like you know you know and put in their rhetoric. But because it's no, they're reading people psychologically, then, then the outcome. The effect during those times would be probably people a little bit more. Loose with their ability to. Whatever cause blackouts or whatever they want to do.

HANRAHAN: Where are I TS learning to make their bombs? I saw some of the images, some of them are a joke, you know, but some of them do look quite complicated. What do you think?

JACOBI: They get some of their inspirations from Inspire, which is an online magazine. By the jihadis.

HANRAHAN: Yeah, Taliban magazine, right? Al Qaeda rather.

JACOBI: Yeah, and there's also a lot of texts from the early radical environmental movement like the RF put out this pamphlet called how to start fires with electrical timers. And so they do that a little bit, and then it seems like they have just picked up through the Internet random information about how to make things like pipe bombs, which actually aren't that hard to make. From everything that I've read.

HANRAHAN: I think it'll be interesting if you could tell us a little bit about your work and where people can get hold of you if they want to.

JACOBI: I I work. On this website called the Wild World Project, I've put up a complete online archive of all the writings of Ted Kaczynski. I I talk a little bit about his feelings about it. I quote him, I've reviewed his books. I have done a lot of my own work. I published this magazine whenever I was at university. That kind of put

together some of the concepts from TEDS associates in Spain, along with my own ideas and just kind of articulating. The the problems with technological society and why it's incompatible with nature and natural human meat, wild nature, and. Natural human needs. I write a lot about the political idea of rewilding. Both rewilding the land and rewilding in terms of like a political response to. To industry in the way that we organize our societies and I talk a little bit about the opportunities for how to bring that about in the US in on the small scale and on the large scale.

HANRAHAN: But without bombs.

JACOBI: Yeah, without bombs. Like Kuszynski, I talk I. I'm more along his lines where I'm saying that. A lot of this will involve political prowess and organization, and violence is certainly something we need to have a discussion about and and not condemn from just because it's violence, but that it's not the most important question, or even the most important thing to do. So yeah, if. You go to www.wildweb.net. I'll talk about Warren Wall anti technology and stuff.

HANRAHAN: Thanks very much son. That was really interesting and I know no one else could have come on and spoken about this for so long. Definitely not. It's so neat.

JACOBI: Pretty pretty.

HANRAHAN: All right, have a good night. Thank you very much.

JACOBI: Yeah, you too thank you.

HANRAHAN: 2nd so that was John Jacobi speaking about the new wave of eco terrorism and how it's turning often into militant anarcho-nihilism. In the case of it's like we just spoke about.

The Ted K Archive

Jake Hanrahan & John Jacobi
The New Wave of Eco-Extremism and Nihilist Militancy
March 9, 2021

Popular Front Podcast

www.thetedkarchive.com