

Searching for Unabomber's radical ties

Jane Meredith Adams
Globe Correspondent

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JIM FLYNN, *Earth First Journal*

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— Letter from the Unabomber to the New York Times, April 1995

SACRAMENTO — The Unabomber wrote in the royal “we” and said he spoke for a group of anarchists dedicated to the destruction of industrial society and for a return to “wild nature.”

Now, as the FBI builds its case against Unabomber suspect Theodore Kaczynski, agents are seeking to identify radical groups and their journals that might have provided this recluse in the Montana wilderness with kinship and, more damagingly, the names of potential victims.

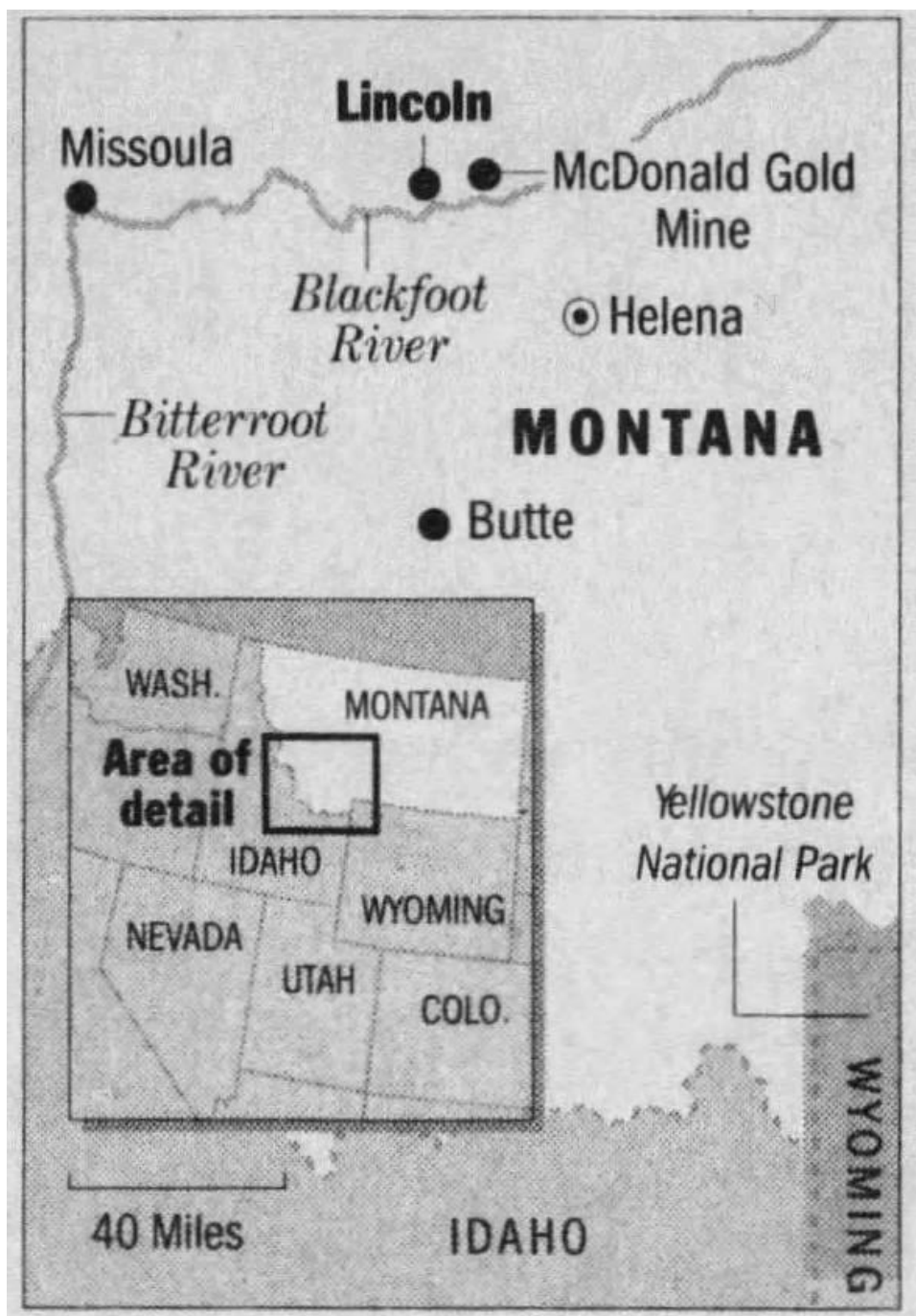
The search by the FBI's Unabomber task force, based in San Francisco, is part of an effort to solve a mystery that has baffled investigators in their 18-year manhunt: How did the bomber choose his targets?

In Montana, FBI agents have been fanning out to bookstores, coffee shops and libraries, including the University of Montana Library in Missoula, to see what journals Kaczynski obtained or might have stumbled across. In their minds are the last two men killed by the bomber: Both Thomas J. Mosser of New Jersey and Gilbert Murray of Sacramento worked for organizations that have been criticized as anti-environmental.

Working from the anti-industrial philosophy presented in the Unabomber's 35,000-word manifesto, and ideas prevalent in the radical environmental movement, the agents' focus so far includes:

- A November 1994 environmental conference in Missoula a month before Mosser, formerly with the public relations firm Burson-Marsteller, was killed by a package bomb.
- A 1994 issue of the Earth First Journal, which published an article critical of Burson-Marsteller.
- A 1990 anarchist publication called “Live Wild or Die” that ran a “hit list” of so-called anti-environmentalists, including Exxon, which hired Burson-Marsteller, and the name of Murray's predecessor as president of the California Forestry Association in Sacramento.

In turn, Montana environmentalists, members of the radical group Earth First and Northern California anarchists say their names have been sullied by the suggestion that they knowingly might have condoned the work of a serial killer. While many of them share the Unabomber's stated belief that industrial progress has come at



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the expense of nature, they say Kaczynski would have been drummed out if he had proposed sending bombs as a way to get companies to alter their practices.

"The tactics he used are unacceptable," said Jim Flynn, an editor of *Earth First Journal* in Eugene, Ore. "It's his tactics that need to be looked at, not his ideas."

In Berkeley, an anarchist collective that publishes a newspaper called "*Slingshot*," printed an article titled "*Unabummer*" that began "Thanks a lot," and criticized the bomber for discrediting anarchists.

If Kaczynski had suggested mailing bombs, he immediately would have been suspected of being an FBI agent, said Bron Taylor, author of "*Ecological Resistance Movements: The Global Emergence of Radical and Popular Environmentalism*" (State University of New York Press, 1995).

"If he'd gone into these groups and started expressing any of his intentions, he'd be assumed to be a federal agent and they'd run from him," said Taylor, who has tracked radical and anarchist groups for five years.

The Unabomber's apparent opposition to the timber industry was made more clear last week when at least two forestry executives said the FBI had telephoned them to say their names were found in writings in Kaczynski's cabin.

"It was described to me as a list," said Jim Geisinger, president of the Northwest Forestry Association in Portland. He said the FBI had said four Portland, Ore., groups were on the list as well as the now-defunct American Forest Resources Alliance in Washington, D.C.

The FBI added that the groups should watch their mail in case a bomb had been sent before Kaczynski was taken into custody April 3, Geisinger said.

A second timber executive who said the FBI had found his name in the cabin was David Ford, president of the Independent Forest Producers Association in Portland.

If Ford was indeed a potential target, Kaczynski's information about his agency's name was out of date; the Unabomber had a similar habit of misaddressing packages. Kaczynski listed the Independent Forest Producers group by its 1994 name, the Western Forest Industries Association.

Aside from a general philosophical link, agents as yet have been unable to firmly establish what, Kaczynski read or whether he was one of the 500 people who attended the 1994 conference in Missoula, sponsored by the Native Forest Network, the theme of which was "focus on the multinationals," according to conference organizer Tom Fullum.

Anne Petermann, who kept the registration list for the conference, said there is no listing for Kaczynski under any spelling of the name, including "Casinski." None of the organizers recall seeing a man, who looked like Kaczynski at the conference, which took place about 60 miles from his mountain cabin.

The link, as tenuous as it is, has to do with the multinational focus of the conference and the Unabomber's own writings. After Mosser was killed, the bomber wrote in an April 1995 letter to *The New York Times* that he had targeted Mosser because he was an executive with New York based Burson-Marsteller. The bomber also wrote,

erroneously, that Burson-Marsteller had been hired by Exxon to repair its image after the 1989 Valdez oil spill. While Exxon was a client, Burson-Marsteller has said it did no work related to the Valdez spill.

Kaczynski might have been particularly interested in environmental writings because his adopted hometown of Lincoln, Mont., was in the throes of a fight over the development of a gold mine about 10 miles from his cabin.

But others say the “we” Kaczynski wrote of was all in his mind. His only kindred spirits, said Taylor, who is director of environmental studies at the University of Wisconsin at Oshkosh, were the fringe of the fringe.

Said Richard Ofshe, a sociology professor at the University of California at Berkeley who joined the faculty in 1967, the same year. Kaczynski was hired as an assistant math professor: “His political statements are all a facade erected to hide his own personal disturbances.”

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