

Jeanne Boylan Draws Memories

2017

On Monday, December 12, 1994, Jim Freeman, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI's San Francisco office held a press conference asking the public for help in uncovering the identity of a serial bomber who had been mailing or planting bombs across the United States since 1978. Seven of the fifteen attacks up to that point either occurred in, or were mailed from, the San Francisco area. "He may appear to be a very nice guy. He might not stand out in the community. He could easily be the person living next door." The weekend before, Thomas Mosser, an advertising executive living in North Caldwell, New Jersey, was killed in his kitchen when he opened a package containing a bomb. Narrowly escaping the attack, Mosser's wife and young child had just left the room when the bomb went off. Investigators were startled by the advancing sophistication of this bomb over the bombs previously sent by the Unabomber. The package was believed to have been sent from Northern California.

In June of 1993 the New York Times received a letter postmarked from Sacramento from a terrorist organization calling itself 'F.C.' This letter took credit for the attacks that maimed a computer scientist in New Haven, Connecticut and a geneticist at the University of California. The letter also included a code so that further communications could be authenticated. A follow-up letter arrived at the Times four months after the murder of Mosser. "We blew up Thomas Mosser last December because he was a Burston-Marsteller executive. Among other misdeeds Burston-Marsteller helped Exxon clean up its public image after the Exxon Valdez incident. But we attacked Burston-Marsteller less for its specific misdeeds than on general principles. Burston-Marsteller is about the biggest organization in the public relations field. This means that its business is the development of techniques for manipulating people's attitudes." It was clear that the attacks would continue and with the deadliness of the bombs escalating, pressure to catch the Unabomber increased exponentially.

The FBI described "the suspect as a loner with at least a high school education and a perfectionist who is meticulous in handcrafting his explosive devices." Investigators knew that "FC" - "Freedom Club" - was a fraud and that they were dealing with one man. Richard Paddock of the Los Angeles Times reports that "investigators believe they are searching for one man and have found no other indication of political motivation." Still, Agent Freeman was careful not to reveal too much about what they did and did not know. "I don't want to speculate, because I'm not just speaking to you in the media and the general public, but I am also speaking probably to the UNABOM suspect." The FBI released a drawing by Jeanne Boylan, announced a hotline for tips at 1-800-701-BOMB, and posted a one-million-dollar reward for information leading to the identity and arrest of the Unabomber. This information was posted on the world wide web, the first time the FBI would reach out to the internet for help in finding a suspect.

At the tail end of Richard C. Paddock's December 13, 1994, Los Angeles Times report on the FBI's press conference, Paddock was careful to note that Jeanne Boylan is the forensic artist behind the new Unabomber image. By 1994, before her image of the Unabomber would become iconic, Jeanne Boylan was already famous. Boylan

is a freelance artist whose reputation to extract extraordinary likenesses from witness interviews had resulted in regular work with the FBI on the Bureau's most challenging cases. Cases that included the search for the Oklahoma City bombers and the kidnapper of Polly Klaas. Investigators have described the results as "eerie, almost like a photo of the guy they finally caught." Even the perpetrators admire her work. "I have had a convicted serial killer write to me from prison, asking for a copy of his portrait so he could send it to his mother for her birthday." Her methodology is as singular as her fame in the field. She says that her approach "is 98% psychology and 2% art." Typically after being victimized or witnessing a crime, the witness would be presented a catalogue of eyes, noses, and mouths by a forensic artist in order to construct an image of the suspect. Boylan doesn't show the witnesses any images and seeks, over the course of long interviews draws out the witness's original mental image of the suspect. "Memory is too fragile; each piece of new visual information pollutes and buries the memory further. By asking a victim to select from hundreds of features that might approximate those of the criminal, you add layers of contaminants over the original image, which is intact somewhere in the recesses of the victim's mind." Moylan specializes in a gentle, non-suggestive form of interview in search of the face of the perpetrator. "I listen," Boylan said to the AP's Helen O'Neill, "I just listen and sketch what I hear."

The FBI's 1987 description of this suspect was "white male, approximately 25-30 years old, 5'10 to 6' in height, 165 pounds, lean, wiry build, with reddish, rough looking complexion, and strawberry blond mustache with no other facial hair." A composite drawing by Robert Exter, much less specific than Boylan's 1994 image, was released. Kaczynski wrote in his journal that "the 'composite drawing' did not show any beard, although it did show a small mustache."

Kaczynski was quite active in his six-year hiatus between 1987 and 1993, perfecting his bombs and crafting an means to force the media to publish his ideas. The only person to have witnessed Ted Kaczynski in his eighteen-year terror campaign was interviewed by Boylan seven years afterwards when the Unabomber's terror campaign had resumed. Boylan interviewed the witness for 6 hours. "It's really important to understand the malleability of witnesses, in the Unabomber's case, we had the added factor of the one and only witness - the woman in Utah - being fully aware of the magnitude of the information she had." Boylan frames these interviews with "anything currently positive in his or her life - whether it's hobbies, sports, travel, fashion, movies or family." Interspersed with these congenial dialogues Boylan would ask about a facial feature. Slowly a portrait would evolve out of these relaxed conversations. An emotionally upsetting memory is retrieved in the context of the witness's normal life in effort to remove 'pollutants' from the original memory. Boylan listens for this moment of raw emotional recall. "The emotional involvement is really an underlying prerequisite for a good witness. There needs to be a reason for the mind to encode information into long-term memory, and emotions are the necessary ingredient." In Salt Lake City on February 20, 1987, Boylan's unnamed witness observed a man in a hoodie and aviator

glasses pulling an object out of a cloth bag and placing it under the rear wheel of her car. As she called a coworker over to see, the hooded man turned and looked at her. Gary Wright, owner of the computer store Kaczynski was targeting, pulled up in his car and picked up the object, which simply appeared to be a piece of wood with nails sticking out of it. The object exploded. Wright's face and left arm were severely damaged. Wright would later attend Ted Kaczynski's trial.

Jeanne Boylan's drawing of the Unabomber did not lead to Kaczynski's capture. The sketch did have an impact on the Unabomber himself. Allegedly, the image inspired Kaczynski to break his own nose in order to alter his appearance. It was Ted Kaczynski's 'publish or perish' media campaign that ultimately did him in. When on September 19, 1995 the Washington Post and the New York Times published 'Industrial Society and Its Future,' Ted's brother David Kaczynski and his wife, Linda Patrik, recognized Ted's writing style and contacted authorities. Kaczynski had hoped that the publishing of his utopian ideas of man without technology would bring about an awakening. Kaczynski's elaborate intellectual justification for murder, which had its origins in the undercurrents of the Cold War's "culture of despair" and landed at the dawn of a new era of right wing and religious terrorism, was drawn into the glitzy merchandising of look- book counterculture. Until Kaczynski's capture, the only image behind the writings, which were a grab bag of available anti-technology literature, was Boylan's drawing. When he was captured, Boylan recognized Kaczynski's face. "If I were capable of doing a cartwheel I would have done it. I am very pleased. He had this distinct jawline!" Boylan's drawing would come to serve a larger purpose. Reporting for the Chicago Tribune, Linda Goldstone wrote that "Boylan's now famous sketch of the Unabomber — which like all of her work, is copyrighted — has been such a hit after the arrest that the likeness is being sold, without authority, on everything from t-shirts and sweatpants to key chains and coffee mugs."

The Ted K Archive

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