Interview with James R. Fitzgerald on arresting the Unabomber

Jim Clemente, James Fitzgerald

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Intro

JIM: Hello and welcome to real crime profile. Today I'm. Really excited to. Have amazing guest and it's actually anniversary that we're going to talk about. But my. Best friend from the FBI, my longtime colleague and buddy and law enforcement. James Fitzgerald, retired supervisory special agent, is my guest today on real crime profile. How you doing Jim?

FITZ: Jim, it's great to be here. Thanks for having me in your in your. Studios for this well.

JIM: I'm glad to have you and you just pointed out something that we're going to have to deal with, and that we're both named Jim. So I'm going to call you Fitz. If you're going to call me Jim and I think that will.

FITZ: Work out pretty well. I've been known as Fitz. Just about my whole life, so this will work for today.

Episode Begins

JIM: OK, all right well. Can you please tell our listening audience. What the significance of today is.

FITZ: Well, first of all today is April 3rd, 2016 and probably just about everybody in the world may be happy once they realize what this anniversary date. Except for one guy and that is it's the 20 year anniversary of the arrest. Of Theodore J Kaczynski, better known as the Unabomber and I was played in a very a pivotal role in that particular investigation and I was glad to say that I was part of that team that helped put him behind bars where he. A pivotal.

FITZ: Is right now, so just so.

JIM: People who weren't. Around or weren't aware of it at the time. Will understand the significance of that. Ted Kaczynski was one of the longest running serial murderers and serial bombers in U.S. He was engaging in a campaign of destruction that spanned over 17 years, and Jim Fitzgerald was actually the guy who ultimately was responsible for getting law enforcement into that cabin so they could arrest him.

FITZ: Yeah, I was a brand new profiler and I was a seasoned investigator, a police officer for 11 years and certainly agent in New York. For seven years after that, and the next thing I'm in profiling school for 12 to 15 weeks. Jim came a few years after me, and my first case was the Unabomber case and real quick so everyone knows Unabomber. For those younger folks out there is actually an acronym and it stands for university. Airline bombings Of course he bombed some other things and people after that, but that was an early code name. If you will. AA working name that the FBI came up with once they were directly involved in the investigations.

JIM: Yeah, the FBI. Does like to have acronyms they like military and other law enforcement agencies. They do like to. Acronymic is almost everything they do and case names, especially major case investigations. Are no exception to that rule so. Jim, why don't we first talk about? When you and I met.

FITZ: Well, it's funny. You bring that up Jim. Because as I know you're aware I'm writing my memoir in three parts. AJ journey to the center of the Mind and the first books already published. Second one is about to be published. Summer of 16, and the third book I just started is my FBI career and. The first three chapters have a name of a guy named Jim Clemente mentioned more than. Including the time that I saw you just about to walk on the FBI seal our second day at the Academy, I said, should I stop this guy or not? Because I was there a year before as a police officer in the National Academy, I said.

JIM: So you knew, let me just put this in context in the gymnasium of the FBI Academy where we trained to be new age. There's a big FBI seal in the middle of the gym, and when you line up to do wind sprints across the gym during any of the physical training or arrest procedure exercises, some people are unfortunate enough to line up right in line with the seal what? I didn't realize is that when I did that, when I ran across the gym and stepped on the seal that it would cause the our PT instructor Bob Rogers, Bob Rogers Great Guy very dedicated guy. To sort of flip out, I would say is a. Mild way of putting it. And I think the first time. I think he made me. Do 100 push-ups or something for stepping on it. But the fact is that I'd stepped on it on the way back so he said for the second time that I stepped on it. He made me stand there and he made everybody else in the class do 100 push-ups. That's the way they do things in the military and quasi military agencies like the FBIf they want you to change your behavior, they punish everybody else, and then they punish the person who's behavior needs to be changed.

FITZ: Well, Jim, apparently your behavior needed to be changed that day now. Yeah well yeah.

FITZ: Rogers saw it early on.

JIM: So we did go to the we met at the FBI Academy and were both going through new new agent training. Jim Fitz had been a cop in Bensalem, PA. I had been a prosecutor in New York City and we ended up sitting next to each other. In the FBI Academy's new agent class 88, two that meant that we would be the second class graduating in 1988. Although we started in November, November 16th, 1980.

FITZ: Seven I remember those dates very well and both of us went there with no paperwork in hand, but when we got there it was confirmed were to be hired and then yeah, we both chose New York City back then. You could choose New York and you would be most likely get it, and we actually sat next to each other in those identical battleship Gray old desk that the. Government was well known. For having right in.

JIM: New York in New York office. So we worked together on the joint, NYPD, FBI Bank Robbery Task Force and that was an awesome assignment. There was two. Thousand bank robberies that year in the in the in the city of.

FITZ: New York with back with no jobs tests.

JIM: Yeah, they when I'm saying 2000 it includes people who go in with guns and it includes people who go in with a note and say I have a gun. I have a. A bomb in the bag, whatever.

FITZ: That is my I have aids. I'm going to spit on everybody, yeah. And then they got they really.

JIM: Got nasty there, different threats and the teller usually hands over a small amount of money and raises the alarm. So there were 2000 such incidents in the first year that were on that squad in 1988. So we worked there a number of years. Then Jim got promoted to the behavioral analysis unit. Couple of years later, I got promoted to the Behavioral Analysis unit and we resumed our sort of professional partnership and we worked a wild and crazy number and types of cases. One of at one point, Jim

actually left the BAU to go to San Francisco for a long term investigation. That turned out to be.

FITZ: The Unabomber case and of course it was unknown subject at that point. Nobody ever heard the name. Theodore J. Thank you.

FITZ: Kaczynski and they sent me out there. They more or less aspiring the Bureau. If you're asked it kind of means you're being. Gold, so they asked me to go out to San Francisco for 30 days. There are worse assignments in the Bureau and into 30 days. I was working well with the folks out there. The investigators and I told them you have a lot of written material here. You have this brand new manifesto. 35,000 words, 56 pages and you have 13 letters or notes he wrote before. That to trick people. Opening his bombs to the New York Times the ideologue letters I used to call them, and I said, has anybody really looked at these documents besides fingerprints and hairs and fibers and then writing, well, we took the book titles down this, that, and the other I said, how about giving me that assignment? I'm an avid reader, I like language. I do crosswords and I play.

JIM: Scrabble and you would go on to get your masters in forensic linguistics, right?

FITZ: I had a masters in psychology already, but then this really sent me off in the direction of language science and because it was language science that solved this case and the first time ever in federal court. A search warrant could be used for that.

JIM: During the course of that investigation, Jim actually utilized his interest in language and he was able to find a number of incredibly. Not coincidental, but connecting usages of language that helped actually solve this case. But before we get into that the same time, I remember Jim and I were both. Sort of working away from home. It's called temporary duty in the FBI. He was in San Francisco working with the Unabomb task force, and I went out to. Little Rock, AR. To do some investigation regarding this couple.

FITZ: What was her name again?

JIM: I think it was Hillary. And he was Bill. And he happened to be the President of United States. No, according to Hillary they. Were the President of the United States together? Who knows, she may be our next president of the United States and the first female President of the United States. That remains to be seen. We'll see, but at the time I remember Jim actually remarking that. I since I was working the Whitewater investigation and he was working the UNABOMB investigation. That were. Actually working the two biggest most notorious. Major cases in the FBI at the same time and the reason why I wanted to bring that up was because at the time of our of Jim's retirement, I handed him a cartoon that had been in The New Yorker magazine and a cartoon actually bought these two cases together. It was a picture of Ted's cabin the woods. With a couple of FBI vehicles out front and on the mailbox, it says Unabomb and there's a little dialogue bubble that's coming out from the cabin and it's an agent saying, hey. Guess what? I found Hillary's billing records and that was an allusion to the billing records that were found mysteriously in the room between

Hillary's office and her gym in the White House. And she claims to have no knowledge of how they got there, but those records were had been subpoenaed years before. In the Whitewater investigation and they just happened to show up in the White House. From an unknown origin, those records were sort of inculpatory, but Hillary, although she did appear before the grand jury and a grand jury was called. On this on that. Investigation she was never indicted by the grand jury.

FITZ: Well, maybe 20 years from now there'll be anniversary show we can do about something happening with. Hillary, this time we'll see. Yeah, we'll see.

JIM: Yeah she is in. A little bit of the midst of another. Big FBInvestigation. But we don't know what's going to happen with that cause. We're not on. The inside anymore we have to sit back like everybody else and wait and see. But let's get back to Ted Kaczynski. The fact is that here is a guy who nobody knew who he was, but they knew that he was. Smart right Jim?

FITZ: Yeah, everybody knew this guy had a great deal of intelligence, intellect, nobody, or very few people saw him as a pH. D in mathematics, which he was someone who entered Harvard University at 16 years of age. We didn't see him quite there, but what I picked up right away. Was that he was a wordsmith. He loved the English language and he was almost OCD about it in how he would, how he would, how he would write, and what he would try to say.

JIM: So that you're talking about from the letters, right? That he wrote that he. Left that he used to lure people. To open up packages that were actually bombs, right?

FITZ: Well, they were the 1st 2 letters. They were the ruse. Letters as I came to call them they. Never really had. Names before then that was in 82 and then again 85. Two Rouge letters. Then he took off from bombing and writing anything. For about 6.

JIM: Years and what was that?

FITZ: Jim, well, because the iconic poster, the iconic sketch, was that everyone pouring us out there knows of the guy with the hoodie and the aviator sunglasses and little curly hair coming down. That was all part of his disguise, because somebody at the computer store where he placed the bomb saw him.

JIM: Described right so at that point, what happened? Was he had placed the bomb? And there was an eyewitness who saw him putting the bomb there. I believe it was hidden in a piece of two.

FITZ: By 4 right that may have been the one before that. In Utah this was in Sacramento in 1987, his last bombing of this stage.

JIM: OK, and so she saw him and gave the information to a police sketch. Artist, they put out a sketch, a sketch of him. Nationwide and as a result of that, we would later find out he went underground for almost seven years.

FITZ: Just about and he was obviously scared. And I know from my days of handling bank robberies and any other kind of robbery or rape type case, when a sketch when a when a sketch artist looks at someone and draws that. Make sure gets ID information from it and the person actually thinks they look like it. That's when

they go underground, so were sure at least the Unabomber was scared that he came close to getting caught.

JIM: Hello, it's Jim Clemente and Francie Hakes with a special message about a new show that I'm hosting on Wondery called locked up Abroad. In each episode, people tell their harrowing stories of being convicted of crimes and jailed in foreign lands, or kidnapped and held hostage and war-torn countries.

Speaker 4: These are definitely worst case, worst case scenarios. They're truly frightening situations.

JIM: Yes, no best cases here.

Speaker 4: But it is fascinating to hear how they manage to survive these ordeals.

JIM: In the first episode, Midnight Express Billy Hayes tells us about being imprisoned in Turkey for smuggling, hashish, Oliver Stone even made a movie about. But that was the movie. This the real story. I even had the chance to interview Billy Hayes recently and he told me the whole story behind the story of how he escaped a Turkish prison. He even told me that he went back to Turkey years later. You have to hear his story to believe it.

Speaker 4: And now, in his own words, here is Billy Hayes.

JIM: That's right, so he took a break for a number of years, but the FBI did not take a break investigating him during those years, there were just no further clues to go on at that point. So what were you doing during that time when he went? Dormant, and why do you?

FITZ: Go dormant well, the FBI didn't go dormant as you said, and the point is, he obviously went underground because he thought he was identified, but at the same time we learned that guys that do this do it for a reason. And what we as investigators. Profiles try to figure out is was he arrested for some other crime? Was he injured or maybe even killed as a result of one of his bombings? Or did he get married and have some kids? That's always the mystery when serial offenders stop offending, but by 1993 he was back writing and bombing with a vengeance.

JIM: So when he came back, he came back with a bang right to him.

FITZ: Well he did and it confused some people because the Oklahoma City bombing occurred in 93 and some people thought that may have been the Unabomber, but he actually sent a letter the New York Times was one of his first letters, saying no, that's not his.

JIM: Style, and so. Right? There's also a theory that he came back. Out of hiding after all those years because of the Oklahoma City bombing because some other bomber had taken stolen, his Thunder basically was now terrorizing the nation in a much bigger way than Ted did, because although Ted had some deadly and very dangerous and damaging bombs. He was not doing. The kind of damage that the Oklahoma City bomb did.

FITZ: Yeah, and if you read that letter I think I numbered it. You 8 or 9 or something to the New York Times. He basically abhors that type of senseless bombing.

It's nice how bombers can kind of almost communicate with one another. What's senseless. What's senseful?

JIM: Yeah, making judgments. I mean, it's senseless if you kill a whole bunch of people at once, but it's not senseless if. You kill targeted people, apparently.

FITZ: And let's not. Forget and let's not forget. In, in 1979, he tried to bring down an American Airlines jet out of Chicago with a bomb that he put on board there with a now timoner hook to it. So that would have been his big number of over 200 people there, so he would really have no room to genuine in that regard.

JIM: There you go I. And a lot of people don't realize that he actually tried to take down a jet. A passenger jet filled with people, and probably the only reason why he didn't take it down, was because he sent it through the mail. In other words, he put his bomb in a mailbox, the mailbox. He was banking on the fact that it would go airmail to its destination and he put an altimeter in so that it would blow up while the plane was up in the air, not while the plane was on the ground. So he tried to kill people with it. The fact is that just coincidentally, his package was packed. In the middle of a bunch of other male on top, bottom sides. And that kind of absorbed a lot of the blast, and it didn't do significant damage to the plane, although it did create a serious problem and it could have ended up causing that plane to go down.

FITZ: Ironically, after his arrest I read everything that was in his cabin and in one entry in one of his journals, he wrote in a way he's glad that the plane didn't blow up and go down because somehow he would have killed some grandparents or grandkids, something like that. And maybe that would have bothered him. So that's why. From that point on, he stuck to representational targets, either at a certainstitutions like schools or airline companies, and certainly computer stores and things like that afterwards.

JIM: So when you look at his bombing. What do you as a profiler? How do you? Classify his bombing.

FITZ: Well, he was certainly. He was certainly very serious what he was doing and like with most bombers he was getting better as he went along. And his devices early on for his very first bombing device in 1978, the University of Chicago. It was found in a parking lot between several cars and but it was dressed. It was mailed. I'm sorry it was addressed. It had stamps. On it next to a post box and nobody could figure out exactly well why didn't you just mail it? Well, it turns out they took the dimensions of the device. After it blew up and they. The Unabomber made the package too big to fit inside a standard.

JIM: Right, so like many criminals, he could be intelligent as hell, but not criminally sophisticated. And that means he just didn't know exactly what the perfect MO was. But is he?

JIM: Is he would you call him a personal? Cause bomber or.

FITZ: Yeah, I mean people have debated his reasonings behind this. I mean, I can tell you the causes. Ultimately it had to do with a sawmill opening up down the road from his house, his cabin, and it also had to do with airliners flying 35,000 feet over his

head. So you could certainly say personal cause, but also mix in some schizophrenia. And paranoiand then and hatred of his parents hatred of himself. Don't forget, here's a guy that got his pH. In mathematics and about the same time he got his pH D. Be within a few years anyway. Handheld calculators are coming out and they were kind of big back then. Not like the iPhones we have today, but you can still carry it around into your arm and they could figure out the problems would take him a month to figure out you could do now in a matter of minutes and probably today in a matter of seconds, so all of a sudden his whole life's journey, certainly from an academic or professional. Point of view is now tossed out the window. He had some sexual identity issues. These are all things we learned. Of course, after the fact he desperately wanted a woman, but he just didn't want to go there.

JIM: And then he, he had a lot of interpersonal problems, right? He just didn't relate well with other people, and I think there are things in his background and so forth. And when you read Jim's book, we'll go into. He will go into great detail about this, and you'll learn a lot about how his personal behavioral issues. Really, sort of. Built up inside of him and came out and were manifested. In his bombing campaign.

FITZ: Yeah, and don't forget and I know this Jim. But I mean he so disliked people. He bought, 5 or 10 acres in the middle of nowhere in the middle of Montana to build his little cabin. He wanted no electricity, no phone lines, no running water. Anything to get away from? Society and he had no dealings at all with his neighbors. Maybe once or twice a year they'd pay him $50.00 to put some fence post in or something like that. They had no idea the guy who was doing this menial work for them was actually a doctor Kaczynski who used to teach at Berkeley for at.

JIM: Least two years, yeah, so after having. Been educated at Harvard, he got a job teaching mathematics. At Berkeley and he quit, he just walked away from all of that to become really a perfect example. Of a hermit. He literally wanted to get away from society and unfortunately he was unable to do that. He while he was in that cabin. They decided to open up a sawmill nearby and he was also, as Jim pointed out. He was very disturbed by planes flying overhead, despite the fact that flying flying at 30 thirty 5000 feet the noise would be minimal. It didn't seem minimal to him. In other words, he was hyper focused on that kind of, new technology and therefore he wanted to attack the people. His targets were new technology and the people that developed them mainly at institutions of higher education.

FITZ: Yeah, and before that he was setting up tripwires in the woods where guys would ride their ATVs or motorcycles and they could actually cut their heads off if they hit right. He would put sugar in the gas tanks of the different types of derricks and trucks at the sawmill. And all because they would start buzzing away at 8:00 o'clock in the morning. Ted didn't like his serenity being. You know, stepped on there, and so he didn't do anything to these people besides minor things, but he sent bombs to other people to get his frustration out.

JIM: Yeah, and here's the thing. When you have somebody like this who is willing to sort of separate themselves from society and it's a little more difficult for law

enforcement to catch up with that person, he was not criminally sophisticated, but he was fairly forensically sophisticated, right Tim?

FITZ: Well, he was he.

JIM: And what's the difference between those two things?

FITZ: Well, obviously a with criminal sophistication. You know how to successfully carry out a crime and your motivation is clear. Whether it's for greed, for profit, or for hurting somebody his early bombs. He didn't do so well in the sophistication part, but he got better his bombs. Became more deadly as he made them. They were designed then to rip flesh, rip skin and kill people and the other part was.

JIM: Was his forensic sophistication.

FITZ: He was on the top of the pay scale in that department because his bombs were so intricately made with nothing that could be traceable. We knew this guy was taking months to make his IED's bombs and provides explosive devices.

JIM: Yeah, and what's crazy about it is the simplicity of them. Are we're we're. Actually, what made it more difficult for the FBI? To trace him. So instead of buying materials which is basically after a blast, the FBI bomb techs will collect all the pieces of the bomb and reconstructed, and usually those pieces were purchased at a different a particular type of hardware store or electronic store or whatever, and therefore we can work backwards. And find out who's buying stuff at those places and actually narrow down the suspect pool he was actually making these things on his own wasn't.

FITZ: He well he was and the. Little known secret is before this became. The unabomb investigate. This guy was known as the junkyard bomber for about a year, and of course the FBI got bored with that name. But the point is, before you and I were in the FBI, Jim back in the early to mid 80s. Every single junkyard in the US was visited by at least one FBI agent at least one time saying, do you have anybody coming in and they had pictures of parts of the devices? That survived little carved pieces of wood and metals, pieces of metal, and they said, do anybody coming in buying this kind of stuff and every every response was negative, just no no leads developed. Out of that?

JIM: So as it turns out, what he was doing was going to. It was sort of a local junkyard in around where his cabin was right and.

FITZ: Well, it's important to know this. He did move to the cabin Montana in 1972. He saved his money from Berkeley for two years work, bought some property. His brother David, who we know what David's role was. He eventually turned his brother in, but David helped him build the cabin and.

JIM: But one one thing about David turning him in that wasn't the only thing that actually pointed to Ted. Actually, that was sort of the confluence of events. David did that because of a decision you made and fought hard for right to get the manifesto published. But we'll get back to that later, right? Yes, we will. OK, so David actually helped him build the cabinet, yeah?

FITZ: And Ted, I read his writings, his Diaries years later, and he was kind of OK in the woods for those years, but it's like. Something struck Ted Kaczynskin about

1977 nineteen 78, that is, he had to come back to Chicago. His roots he moved back in with his parents. You know the former college professor turned hermit as you said, and actually it's in Chicago when his first bombings began. And his bombs are actually constructed. In the attic of his parents home in suburban Chicago, yeah, and there were some junkyard he would drive miles and miles to go to one junkyard to buy something, one to buy something else, or intricately carve other items up. He would take batteries. He would carefully peel the skin off each battery so even the lot number could not be.

JIM: Traced right? So you wouldn't know the make the model the lot number of the battery and it would be very difficult to reverse engineer that and figure out where it was purchased because of that. But he also did other things. He also got on a bus, right? With the bomb.

JIM: And delivered and basically went to other states, right?

FITZ: Well, he in the in his early years out of Chicago he mixed, placing the devices and mailing the devices and placing of course is a little bit easier because we just have a plunger on the bottom. As soon as somebody picks it up and goes off, or maybe a little timer mailing, you got to make sure it makes it through the mail and gets to its destination, and when the person actually pulls the wrapping off and opens the box takes the tape. All that stuff. That's when it blows up. So he was mixing both placing and sending. I should say mailing back then all with numerous stamps. Of course, he never walked into a post office and said, oh here, wait this for me, and I'll pay you the $4 whatever it costs. He made sure he bought 4 to $10 worth of stamps he would. Lick each one. And he got a little bit clever along the way and he it was in the media that there were no real clues or there was no real evidence on his bombing devices. So one time, lo and behold, in the laboratory, the technicians there are taking one of his devices apart. It blew up, but they're taking the remnants of it apart. And guess what they find under this one of the stamps a blonde human hair.

JIM: Yeah, and that would seem if it was placed the. The stamp was obviously placed on there by the bomber you would think. So that would give us. An important lead.

FITZ: And this a little before the days of DNA. But still you could do class evidence etc with the type of hair. And of course, you could say someone has blonde hair. If it's natural color not. You know animal versus human. Who's a human blonde hair and a lot of time and effort. One of that and people for years, thought the Unabomber had blonde hair. But guess what? When we read that diary? Years later, we found out when he was one of his bus trips to mail one of his packages. It turns out that. He happened to find a blonde hair in a public men's room at a Greyhound bus station somewhere. He picked it up. He put it in a little envelope, whatever he had with him, and then a day or two later when he was putting all the stamps on his bombs on the package, that's when he put the little piece of hair underneath just enough to throw off the FBI.

JIM: Right, so that is what we call a forensic countermeasure. In other words, a deliberate. Piece of forensic evidence that is left there now, how could he know he would never be able to know whether that stamp and that hair would actually survive the blast, but it did survive the blast and it did throw off the FBI for a number a number of months. However, there were a number of other false leads, red herrings in this investigation. And we're going to get right to them in a minute. So what were the other? Red herrings that the investigation went off on.

FITZ: Well, when he started writing to the New York Times in 1993, remember all we know is the Unabomber. We don't have any any name on anybody and he would. He would end each letter, so the New York Times knew it was authentic and it was really him with that. 9 digit number which happens to also with the dashes in it look just like yours or my Social Security number.

JIM: So it's 3 digits, A-2 digits, a dash, and four digits.

FITZ: So that's the bottom of this letter. Now nobody in the FBI thought our serial bomber was actually putting his real Social Security number. But Gee, what could this be? And we still have to check it out, so the FBI, of course, through their records and through Social Security, tracked it down, and it could have been. A Social Security of almost number of almost anybody a nun, a priest, a doctor, a lawyer. A kid, you name it. In this particular case, it so happened to come back to a man serving time in the California penal systems.

JIM: So he was actually convict. Was he a?

FITZ: Bomber, he was not a bomber, he was a low level drug dealer, car thief and just kind of just a guy that do three years in gets out four years in, gets out. So of course the FBI felt we got to talk to this guy somehow. His number. If it is a serial number, is being used by the Unabomber and they knew it was him because the Unabomber is writing about other things, he's done whatever, so they go out and interview this guy and they spend, a few hours with them doing all the background they can. They confirmed that was his number and basically they walked him through slowly. Have you heard of the Unabomber? You know anything about bombings, blah blah blah. Nothing in his background like that. But eventually they and they said, do who the Unabomber is? And he said no agents, but I'll tell you what you Get Me Out of prison. I'll find them for you in. A week And the agents came back and said, I'll tell you what you tell us who the Unabomber is.

JIM: There you go.

FITZ: And it is him. Then we'll work on getting you an early release.

JIM: There you go. Yeah, obviously he was just making a play for it. Like any good slick convict would. So what about the other major red herring in the. OK.

FITZ: In yet another letter sent to the New York Times, the FBI eventually took it, and at this point now the Unabomber wants to get his manifesto published, and we'll come back to that in a minute. But these early letters were kind of setting up that whole stage, so of course every letter was turned over to the FBI by the New York Times. And it was in fact sent to the lab. And the typewriter font is matching up every

single letter, even the early ruze letters from from the early 80s, nineteen 801985. So every.

JIM: Yeah, and just the FBI would be tearing this apart. They would be seeing where the paper came from, where the ink came from, what, what kind of typewriter it was, and all this stuff. But that was leading nowhere, however.

FITZ: Well, they had in the lab and they put under their special lights with microscopes and all that stuff. And lo and behold, what do they see on the piece of paper? Itself invisible to the naked eye, but visible through. You know, ultraviolet lighting and those. Types of things is a simple four letter, four word message and that is call Nathan R Wednesday 7:00 o'clock. And the FBI said, whoa.

JIM: This was an indented writing.

FITZ: Indented writing invisible to the naked eye. But the laboratory picked it up. And it was clear, and anybody who knows about and then in writing, maybe as a kid, you'd put one piece of paper over top of another. You write on it. You throw the top piece away and you have a secret message on that bottom piece of paper. So in a way, they that's what they had here, and they figured the Unabomber finally made a mistake with all the non evidence and all of his bombing. Devices, including all of his writings up to this time, we finally may have a clue. So as you can imagine, Jim and we've all covered leads something like this in our agent days. This one out to every division in the US, 56 of them, and they said contact and find every Nathan RR period, middle initial or R as their last name. Interview him and find out if they know anything about the Unabomber.

JIM: Last name.

FITZ: They're pretty sure this not the Unabomber himself, meaning Nathan are, but we still get to the bottom of this lead.

JIM: So there are thousands of people with the names Nathan are something or Nathan R as their first letter or their last name. So FBI agents spread out across the country and interviewed every single one of. These guys as it turns. Out what was the deal with?

FITZ: That lead yeah, and just to throw back just to remind people this was before Internet days and it wasn't quite as easy to look these things up. Phone books, other directories. Bottom line is no, Nathan R came up, but before we even solve that part of the clue there's a DJ who has an evening talk show in Colorado. And he's on every night from like 6 to 9. His name was Nathan R something I actually forget his last name after all these years. He was convinced he was the Nathan R. That was supposed to be. Called at 7:00 o'clock on a Wednesday night. So this enterprising DJ for either legitimate reasons or to boost his ratings. Who knows? He said from now on everybody Wednesday night. 7:00 o'clock the lions are dead except for the Unabomber, and he waited for like 4 weeks in a row for the phone to ring. And all you heard is crickets in the background, of course, and some crank callers, hey, I'm the Unabomber, go ? Blankety blank. It turns out that was all false lead, because when the agents finally said we've got to go back to the very beginning, which as Jim sometimes in crime and

criminal investigations you got to do that. They go back in time and they interviewed the actual guy who opened the letter at the New York Times. He had since moved on to a different department and they said look, we just got it. You opened this letter, right? Yeah, I did, and you then turned it over to him. Well, yeah, did you write a note to yourself or well what do you mean? Do what Nathan are? You have a good friend, Nathan are. Would you maybe have called him that night or Wednesday night? It turns out it was the copy Boy Mailroom boy. Whomever at the New York Times who wrote a letter to himself note to himself, put in his pocket. He wrote it over top of the Unabomber.

JIM: 's letter before he opened the letter. It was sitting. The letter was sitting in a pile on his desk. He was going to go deliver these letters to the people they were addressed to. Takes out a notepad, puts, takes out a note piece of paper, writes call Nathan R 7:00 PM on that note. But it was sitting on top of that letter when he did it, so the indented writing went on to the letter, and there you have it. Thousands of FBI agent man hours wasted not really wasted because you have to check out every lead, but in the end it turned out it went nowhere.

FITZ: Yeah, at one point Louis free our director. Back then even went to the public airwaves and said everybody we need your help. If your name is Nathan or anything. As I explained before, middle last. Could you please contact your local FBI office? You're not in trouble, we just need help on an investigation. They did get people actually calling up, but it all went nowhere. Right?

FITZ: Of course, when the copy boy was.

JIM: Finally interviewed, so we've been talking about forensic countermeasures and false leads that they produced. What about linguistic countermeasures well?

FITZ: It wasn't till I got involved in the case and I said to the bosses there and they were great bosses that worked the case. Jim Freeman, Terry Turchi and I said Max Knoll was one of the investigators. I said look, let me, you guys have done all the fingerprints. You've reinterviewed everybody. You've done this, you've done that. Have you really worked with reading the actual documents from a content analysis perspective? Well, not really. We know there's some books he mentions, and there's a place or two. OK, let me focus on that as a brand new profiler. I was not a linguist at the time. Just to remind you and the listeners, Jim.

JIM: Right, you weren't actually a degreed linguist, but it was your hobby. You did love language and linguistics, and you played word games all the time. It was a focus that you just naturally had in.

FITZ: Your life right? It was. And actually when I got into this case I sat down and read the 1st 20 pages of the. Stationary I don't mean where it starts a. I mean the stuff before that where. It just tells you it breaks down the language from the different language families. Proto Indo European, which of course is English. It comes from Germanic and I walk through all that to just learn to the best of my abilities. How language works I know certainly informally. Most of us do. But from a more formal perspective.

JIM: Well, that is a very unique perspective. I wanted you to know Jim not everybody, and I'm sure our listeners if you want to weigh in on whether or not you have ever read the 1st 20 pages of the dictionary, I know I haven't so.

FITZ: That's before the letter A, just to. Make it clear.

JIM: There you go before the letter A, alright? Oh, linguistic countermeasures.

FITZ: Yes, so one of his letters to the New York Times. It wasn't the same one we talked about. It was that. One coming up later. You know I'm going to stand by that. Was this actually a letter to Doctor Gelernter from Yale University? Basically, the very first sentence was. I guess people without advanced degrees don't count. Period, then he goes on to some things about technology and the evils of computer science. But think of that first sentence. I guess people without advanced degrees don't count. Jim, I would ask you use right that on the surface, you're not a profiler. The author does he have an advanced degree or?

JIM: Not, he's trying to say that he does not.

FITZ: He is trying to say through an implicit style, not explicit implicit. He doesn't about 6 lines. Later he puts a line in there. Very, very similar. I guess if you don't have a college degree you're not can. You're not considered smart, something like. That, and he's almost saying the same thing as if well, look at me, the author, I don't have a college degree and people people were building their profile or their investigative leads on that. And I looked at this. I read every single thing he had written at that point, the manifesto only once or twice in my first month there, and that one letter and those two lines stuck out. As yes. Linguistic countermeasures. What I also? Called Contra indicators. Why would he put something biographical in here? Twice in the same letter and.

JIM: We'll be somebody who's so. Careful not to give any away any clues. And that seems a little bit. I'm sorry I can't take off my profiling hat right now, but. That seems a little bit like overselling. Why didn't you just say it once? Why did you say it twice? And didn't you recognize something about the manifesto itself? The format of?

FITZ: It well, yes. When I finally I tried to read these letters in order and the 1st 13 were just one or two pages relatively. Simple, although very well written. As I said, all typed on a 1934 Underwood typewriter. Finally, the manifesto comes in and I read that 56 pages, 35,000 words, 212 paragraphs, 26 notes. And what? He numbered each paragraph.

JIM: Are you getting? The feeling that Jim Fitzgerald is a little OCD when it comes to words come.

FITZ: On and some numbers there right? But yeah, I read every single word of his backwards, not literally backwards, but I would start of the 50th chapter sometimes the next day I'd start the 100th. Chapter so I'm fresh. And yes, it was formatted like a 1950s or 1960s dissertation or thesis.

JIM: Like a doctoral thesis, one could say that right? OK, so here is the actual format that's actually leaking out information that is trying to be contradicted in the text itself. That's where forensic linguistic profiling was born, right?

FITZ: I would say it certainly nurtured its way and hits. Near its peak at that point, but the point is, I just knew something wasn't right about this. I knew there were clues in there that nobody else was look. At he had corrections pages, the 1st 3 pages of his manifesto. Its title was of course industrial society and it was all about industrial society and it was about how it ruined the world and his theory was everyone should live industrial society and his future was the name of the. Of his manifesto, which he never used that word, the media gave him, gave it that name. He just called it his article, right? So it went on about we should be living in an agrarian Society of groups or tribes of 30 people or more living. Off the land, and since nobody was willing to do that, he had to bomb and kill people to remind them that's the way.

JIM: Well, obviously that's faulty logic. It's actually incredibly criminal. It's incredibly brutal to do what he did. In fact, why don't you tell us about the last two packages that he sent?

FITZ: Yeah, the last two were particularly brutal. He was definitely getting. He was definitely becoming a better bomber at this point, and in November of 1994, a marketing executive in North Caldwell, NJ received a package on a Saturday afternoon. It was overstamped handwritten on the box. Tape all around it and his wife and young daughters are right there, Tom. Do you recognize this? Who would this be from? I don't know. Let me take a look at this. He walks from whatever the living room, the lobby, wherever he was with his wife and two young kids. He walks over into the kitchen, opens it up there and blows up and rips them. In half.

JIM: Right, so it would have killed his entire family and just, by the grace of God I guess. Or chance he didn't actually kill the wife and children. And then the next one is actually. A little ironic, huh?

FITZ: Well, it is in a in a very deadly usage of the word, but at this point the media is all over this Unabomber person. The post office is putting notices in post offices. I think they're even sending it through the mail to different businesses. If you see overly stamped boxes. With handwriting on them, you don't know who they're from. Do not open it. Call us we will come and take it. And open it. Lo and behold, a forestry lobbyist in Sacramento, CA comes into work one April morning in 1995, and he opens and he walks in his two secretaries, Mr So and so you have a box here, and it's kind of lots of stamps. And it's I don't know who this from. The guy jokes out loud and says, huh? Maybe it's from that Unabomber guy. And the women kind of snicker. He walks into his office, opens it up. It was in fact from the Unabomber, and it killed him, yeah?

JIM: So it's a very very tragic day. And unfortunately were no closer to catching Ted Kaczynski at that time. But because of the manifesto.

FITZ: And forensic linguistics.

JIM: We did catch them, we'll be right back to talk about that. So now we're actually at the point of the story where Ted has sent the manifesto. Into the New York Times, right? Yep, and he wants it to be published now. The New York Times doesn't want to publish it, and he actually internally in the FBI. There was a lot of debate on the task force about whether or not we should sort of succumb to the threats of the Unabomber and actually.

FITZ: Cyrus is it.

JIM: Yeah, he was definitely a terrorist. He was a murdering terrorist and we didn't. Nobody really wanted to do it. What did you argue?

FITZ: Well, UMI argued it should be published. I said get it out there, word for word don't violate. Remember the deal he wanted with the New York Times? Was you published my article again? He called it article and I will cease from bombing to kill. Any many more. However, he put a little caveat in there. I do reserve the right to bomb for purposes of sabotage and I'm not sure what that means. Bring down radio towers or something, whatever he would more or less cease killing but the New York Times wasn't the only one who received a copy. Some other people did too, including Penthouse magazine. And because if the New York Times The New York Times was debating on its own pages whether they should publish this or not. So the public was kind of brought in on this. There's only one or two like cable shows at the time that was covering things like this I think was Nightline one of the broadcast networks and they go back and forth. Should we accede to the demands of a turret?

JIM: But you came up with a very critical need that we needed to publish it, because if we could get it out there.

FITZ: What someone will recognize his writing style because as I learned later, as a linguist we all have distinctive idiolects, and that's a linguistic term for a personal dialect.

JIM: Like an individual dialect.

FITZ: It is it's spoken language as well as written now 3 words. You can't tell a whole lot. You have 30,000 words and you can tell a lot more and that's what we had at a. Minimum with this guy right?

JIM: So you decided that was the thing that were going to have to do to get a lead. In fact, it was published at the time they were. Actually we're not going to get intoo much details about that, but they were actually staking out. Places that sold these newspapers to see if he would come and get a. Copy and so forth. That the real reason was to see if somebody out there recognized this kind of writing and this kind of ranting. And in fact it worked because Ted Kaczynski's sister-in-law was reading it in London. If I'm not mistaken, Paris OK? And she called up Ted's brother and said, I think this Ted and Ted and then his brother actually. Came in to the FBI and reported that he thought it was his brother.

FITZ: Well, that's the short version of the story.

JIM: Yes, very lots of stuff, but the important thing is what were you doing actually before his brother came in.

FITZ: There's lot of stuff in there. I was looking at every piece of written material that anything even resembled this manifesto, including doctoral dissertations from the 50s and 60s. This helped us age, the Unabomber, his profile. His profile earlier was a college student in 1978. With that first bomb. At the University of Chicago, where it didn't fit in the mailbox, but no, he was already in his late 20s at that point and we had to age this guy a little bit more, and we in fact did and it helped us put more of a prospect. The one this and lo and behold, it gets out there. And I gotta tell you, in the summer of 95, near the end of 95, at the unabomb task force we had 2500 different suspects. Not all were named, some descriptions, some a guy driving the Bart. You know. In San Francisco Metro, wherever lot of ex husbands are in there lawyers.

JIM: And yeah, there were a lot of people who called in tips on people they just hated and wanted them to get in trouble. So there was a lot of false leads in that, but Jim was painstakingly going through every doctoral thesis he could get his hands on in the mathematics and science area. So that he could try to match that up with the manifesto. When Ted's brother came in and put him in the pile of suspects, Jim went through that both of his doctoral thesis, Ted's doctoral thesis, and the manifesto.

FITZ: And also a Magic 23 page document that Ted wrote in the early. 70S sent it to David, which was essentially an outline in exact order of the manifesto. So we had this letter. This document, 23 pages written by Ted Kaczynski turned over to us by David Kaczynski and he's and I know nothing about any names. At this point I'm actually back at Quantico. My boss has called me back. To work some other serial murder and serial killer cases, I look at this document and lo and behold, I call up the task force. People SAC Jim Freeman, special agent charge and said, unless this an elaborate forgery, someone took the manifesto in the newspaper and then typed. You know, a version out of it or this 23 page document. You've got your guy. Use those exact words you've got your guy.

JIM: Right so then, what Jim did at that point was basically go through the manifesto and Ted's doctoral thesis, and basically he made a linguistic comparison matrix, right?

FITZ: Well, it wasn't just his thesis, it was 178 documents. The family eventually turned over to us. I was brought back out to San Francisco.

JIM: So this was an. Investigation that happened. In other words, somebody comes in and says yeah, my brother's, the Unabomber. That doesn't get the Unabomber arrested, we have to covertly now still do a major investigation. So all these documents. But this was the first time in the history of law enforcement anywhere where a serial bomber, a serial murderer, was actually captured and arrested. Based on his use. Of language this was this was a turning point in the history of law enforcement and Jim Fitzgerald. Is the one who did it. I mean not because he thought it was gonna change law, change history or change the way law enforcement did work. But because of his interest in language, his insights into language and it would drive him on to get a masters in forensic linguistics from Georgetown University so. He, after having made

those lists of and comparisons of the of the documents that he had. He was able to put that into an affidavit. For a search warrant.

FITZ: 50 pages long, 625 separate comparisons. I didn't render one opinion in my report. I was not an expert. I knew enough about the court system that I could be challenged on that, but it was for a judge to read and make his or her own mind up. The judge in Montana did in fact read to the federal judge and said, ? These all match up here, including this one particular phrase who would write. You can't eat your cake and have it too. Well, I found that in the manifesto. If you notice, the verbs are transposed there.

JIM: From what we usually say, we usually say you can't have your cake and.

FITZ: Eat it too. There it is in the manifesto and I actually thought, wow, I found his first mistake. This so cool, it doesn't meanything right now. In the early days, but guess what? David Kaczynski calls Ted Kaczynski. 's brother has identified finds and us some writings, there's a 1972 letter he wrote to the Saturday Evening Post that his mother saved. We have it and it signed Theodore Kaczynski at the bottom. And guess what? The very end of his three paragraph letter to the editor blah blah blah. But you can't eat your cake and have it too bingo.

JIM: And I remember I remember we us having this conversation and I also remember being in a in a playing a word game with my. Brother Tim, who was like incredibly fastidious about rules and stuff in these games, and he had looked up that quote as well, and the original quote is actually.

FITZ: The 15th century proverb actually reads, as ye cannot eat ye cake and have it too something like that. The point is, the Unabomber had it right. Yeah, we all say it wrong, but it didn't matter, it was evidence.

JIM: Yeah, that's all.

FITZ: It's the context of how language is used, which makes it valuable in an evidentiary. Sense right?

JIM: So that led to the search warrant at Ted's cabin. When law enforcement knocked on the door and got him out of there, they found a bomb sitting there all all completely manufactured, wrapped in aluminum foil. If I'm not mistaken, which I think is the last stage that he does before he wraps it in paper to mail it. Or hand deliver it and. They actually were able to arrest Ted Kaczynski, ending the entire terror spree 17 plus years.

FITZ: By the Unabomber. 16 Bombings 3 dead. Dozens injured, almost 212 killed at the if the flight went down.

JIM: Right, so it was an amazing thing that you did Jim and I'm proud to have been your colleague at the time and certainly very happy that we're friends. Still after all these years so. So later on, though, while he was in jail, you did try to go. Visit him, didn't you?

FITZ: Yeah, the quick version of the story I'm at the US Air Force Academy doing some lecturing, so I'm already in Fort Collins, Co and a month before I reached out to the prison. People in the in the supermax in Florence Co. Today I helped put this Ted

Kaczynskin jail. Few years ago, how about come out and visit them? Let me see back and forth over much of phone calls. Doctor Kaczynski would be willing to see me real quick here so Jim I know. You know this, but for your for. Your listeners supermax is 23 hours a day by yourself in a cell about 10 foot by 10 foot. Coincidentally, the size of his cabin, he gets out one hour to take a shower, maybe work out and he's back in. So this what the Unabomber's life is like every single day now. So I'm finally out there. I finish up my duties at the Air Force Academy. And driving S on the Interstate. I get a call from the correctional officer and it's all arranged to meet him like 11:00 o'clock that day. He said, oh Mr Fitzgerald, agent Fitzgerald at the time. Yeah, the meeting is not going to happen. I said well, what happened? Well Mr Doctor Kaczynski told me he wants to give you a very specific message. He wants me to give it to you. I said OK, what's that? He said he'd love to meet with you agent Fitzgerald, but he's very busy today. Now this a little bit of unabom humor and this a little way to stick it back to me. The guy he knows helped put him in prison.

JIM: Yeah, well, maybe one day he will talk to. You, but we'll. See, but in the meantime. We have some great news, some amazing news and since this case happened, Tim and I have been talking about it and what many people don't know is that while were in the Academy, Jim and I, Fitz and I put together, I guess were a little bored. We decided to put together sort of a video, sort of mocking. Or at. Least having fun, having fun. Done with our experience at the Academy. And so we made a video we used. We brought in all of our classmates and Ethand some of our teachers and counselors and so forth. It was really. It was really a lot of fun. Well, that would be foreshadowing for what we would do now, and since we retired, Jim and I have been working really hard. We teamed up with Tony Gittleson. Tony and I wrote a pilot called Manifesto about the hunt for the Unabomber, based on Jim's story and all the work that he did. We teamed up then with Trigger St Kevin Spacey's production company, and we sold the project to Discovery. And you may have noticed in early April that. Discovery Channel actually announced that manifesto is going to series so shortly you'll be able to. Watch actors portraying Jim Fitzgerald and theroic work he did in order to bring down the Unabomber. It's a wonderful thing. It's an amazing thing you should be really proud of yourself Jim, I'm proud of.

FITZ: You well thank you Jim and all this will be in my book a journey to the center of the mine. There's one out there already and the one to be published and we're gonna cover a lot of this stuff in the third. Book as well as. And you'll see on the Discovery Channel too. At some point when it comes out. In 2017

Outro

JIM: So were very happy to have this opportunity at real crime profile to bring in Jim Fitzgerald and hopefully we'll do this from time to time. We'll have Jim come back. We'll have other experts, people that I've worked with. People that I've interacted with people that Laura Richards has worked with and interacted with, and we will actually keep you informed on the cases. Behind the scenes of the cases that you never knew about. Thank you very much for listening to real crime profile.

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