

Suspect fits profile fairly well

John Howard
The Associated Press

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SACRAMENTO, Calif. — The FBI's psychological profile of the shadowy Unabomber depicted the killer as a bright, lonely white man. highly educated and no longer young, with a passion for exactitude, a love of books and a macabre sense of humor.

Unabomber suspect Theodore John Kaczynski, a 53-year-old Montana recluse, fits most of those criteria remarkably well: Age, race, temperament, educational attainments and isolation all are consistent with the characteristics that the FBI detailed in its 1993 psychological profile.

The study, updated as investigators chased new leads, was a basic tool in the hunt for the Unabomber.

But Kaczynski departs from the profile in some areas. And, as personal details become known, he dramatically contradicts the popular notion of a serial killer as a failure in life thirsting for power and vicarious recognition.

"We know he was a smashing success professionally. He graduates from Harvard at the age of 20, gets his Ph.D. at Michigan and then gets a job in the mathematics department at Berkeley," said Michael Rustigan, a criminologist at San Francisco State University who assisted in crafting the investigative profile used by the Unabom task force.

"This is absolutely the premier mathematics department in the nation, and he gets a job there as an assistant professor. He has one of the most brilliant careers in the country before him. and then he quits after two years. What happened? That's the question. What happened?"

"This kind of success is truly an exception for serial killers," Rustigan said.

Few professors who were at Berkeley in the late 1960s recall Kaczynski.

John Addison, chairman of the mathematics department when Kaczynski taught there, told the San Jose Mercury News that several professors believed he "left and didn't go into math again because he wanted to pursue social causes."

But no one could remember what those causes were.

Acquaintances said Kaczynski lived like a hermit, grew some of his own food and shunned modern conveniences — all characteristics that fit the profile.

Kaczynski's isolation was a trait recalled by fellow students and others.

"He is a social isolate, and this goes well back in his life. We learn this from his Harvard classmates, that he didn't form relationships, that he was sullen, that he kept to himself and even stayed in his room for days," Rustigan said.

But the study also described the Unabomber as meticulous and neat — a description apparently inconsistent with the long-haired Kaczynski's shaggy appearance at the time of his arrest, although notebooks seized at his home contained meticulous writing.

The Unabomber also was believed to be "a prolific reader on law enforcement, technical and scientific subjects, history and psychology." but it was unclear whether books on these subjects were found in his dwelling. He pedaled into town on an old bicycle to check books out of the library, neighbors said.

Federal investigators believed that the Unabomber had ties to both the Chicago area and to Northern California and that he lived in Northern California and may have attended school in the area.

But Kaczynski's ties to California appear to be limited to the two-year stint at Berkeley.

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The News & Observer, Page 12a. <www.archive.org/details/img-3992_202607>

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