Adrift in Solitude, Kaczynski Traveled a Lonely Journey

L.A. Times Staff Writers

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LINCOLN, Mont. — It had come to this.

Sometimes he smelled. His hair was matted. He owned no car. He got around on a red bike with no fenders. It splattered him with mud.

He lived in a cabin. It was smaller than a lot of closets. The walls were plywood. They were thinner than his little finger. The cabin had a tarpaper roof. When the tarpaper ripped, the roof leaked.

Daylight seeped in through two windows. Each was just a foot square. One was so close to the roof that it did little good. He slept on a narrow cot. He stacked his books–Shakespeare, Thackeray–against the walls. He had one door. It had three locks.

He had no running water; he dipped plastic jugs into a stream 75 feet from the cabin. He had no electricity; he read by candlelight. He had no outhouse; he used the outdoors. He had no clock, no calendar; when he needed to do something at a certain hour on an appointed day, he mentioned it to his neighbors, 300 yards through the trees, and he depended upon them to prompt him.

He had no phone. If his family back East had an emergency, they sent a letter with a red line drawn under the stamp. Otherwise he might ignore it. Except for essentials that he bought in town, he had no larder stocked with food. He grew parsnips and potatoes, and he fertilized them with his own waste. He killed deer, coyotes, squirrels, rabbits and porcupines, and he broiled them over a fire in the yard.

He did have, in the loft of his cabin and elsewhere, drills and bits and hacksaw blades and wire cutters and solder. He had 10 three-ring binders filled with notes and sketches. They showed the cross sections of pipes and the circuitry of bombs. He had pieces of pipe–plastic and copper and galvanized metal. He had three typewriters and a suspicious manuscript. He had notes describing chemical compounds that create explosions. He had many of the chemicals. He had batteries, and he had electrical wire, and he had one live bomb and one that was partly finished.

His name is Theodore John Kaczynski. He is 53 years old and in custody in a Montana jail. The FBI thinks he is the Unabomber. It is not just that he is brilliant, but there is that. It is not just that he is painfully shy, but there is that. It is not just that he carries a deep burden of anger, but there is that, too. Nor is it just that he is a loner, unable to form deep relationships with anyone; that he is highly focused, almost undistractable; that he is a perfectionist, down to his penmanship; a writer, whose words are similar to those in a manuscript the Unabomber wrote last summer for national publication.

It is also that Theodore Kaczynski's life had come to this: the classic denouement for a person who kills with bombs. Someone involved in the case of Los Angeles' own Alphabet Bomber, who like the Unabomber has slain three people, notes that controlling contact with the outside world is extremely important to these murderers, so important that they often remove themselves somehow from everything they cannot control–even if it means taking themselves out of society. Muharem Kurbegovic, the Alphabet Bomber who is in prison for life for his bombings in the 1970s, dropped out by pretending to be a deaf mute.

Sometimes there are no precipitating events that cause these killers to go wrong, says this person, who because of his relationship to the Alphabet Bomber asks to remain anonymous. Slowly, he says, their intense focus somehow gets channeled into paranoia and rage, and they begin a crusade of terror. Indeed, the Unabomber's dark and special genius never found expression in his explosive devices themselves, some of which, despite their laborious hand-crafting, were hardly more than serviceable.

Rather, his particular talent lay in his ability to turn routine, unthinking gestures into triggers for terror. His victims were going about the heedless business of daily life when something they had done countless times before–opening a letter, picking up something they happened to find, moving a parcel somebody had left behind–became the cause of inexplicable and deadly violence.

If Theodore Kaczynski is, in fact, the Unabomber, it might be instructive to ask: How did it come to this?

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"The system for good, solid practical reasons, must exert constant pressure on people to mold their behavior to the needs of the system. . . . Need more technical personnel? A chorus of voices exhorts kids to study science. No one stops to ask whether it is inhumane to force adolescents to spend the bulk of their time studying subjects they hate."

–Unabomber Manifesto, *Paragraph 119*

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His family called him Teddy John. He was born on May 22, 1942, in Chicago, shortly after the beginning of World War II for America. His father, Theodore Richard Kaczynski, was known as Turk. He worked at a sausage plant owned by a cousin. His mother, Wanda Theresa Kaczynski, was a full-time mom. The family lived in a blue-collar suburb called Evergreen Park.

Even as a child, Teddy John was brilliant. One of his father's close friends, Ralph Meister, was a child psychologist. One day, when Teddy John was only 6, Meister sat him down and gave him the Stanford-Binet intelligence test. Based on the results, Meister estimated the youngster's intelligence quotient at between 160 and 170. He was, Meister says, "a genius."

But the neighbors noticed something else. "He was always a loner," remembers Emily Butcher, now in her 90s. "He walked with his head down. Like this." Emily Butcher drops her head even more deeply onto her cane. "Even when he reached high school," says LeRoy Weinberg, who lived behind the Kaczynskis, "Ted never acknowledged a greeting. He just kept his head to the ground. . . . He was a loner."

It was not that he was strange. "Teddy wasn't odd," recalls Dorothy O'Connell, the family's next-door neighbor. "He was just shy." Among the 23 children within a two- or three-block area, Teddy John was the oldest. "There was no one for him to play with." On one occasion, when he was 11, he joined his mother, Dorothy O'Connell and another neighbor in a game of Scrabble. "Teddy came along and sat down and beat all

three of us," O'Connell says. "His vocabulary at that age was so great he could beat three grown women."

A year or so later, the Kaczynskis took a vacation. Teddy had a favorite book. He knocked on Dorothy O'Connell's door with the book under his arm, and he gave it to her for safekeeping until he got back home. She put it out of harm's way, on top of her refrigerator. One day she happened to take it down and look at it. She was stunned. The book was called, "Romping through Mathematics, From Addition to Calculus."

Teddy John was a kind and thoughtful youngster. By now he had a younger brother, David, born in 1950. He and David would sneak the O'Connell children bites of their ice cream. "They were very giving kids," Dorothy O'Connell says. In 1952, her daughter, Janice, contracted polio. The O'Connells were quarantined. "Wanda would leave food outside for us." Finally Janice had to be hospitalized. The Kaczynski family visited her. The little girl recovered, but she was left with a speech difficulty. One day, after the toddler had returned home, Dorothy O'Connell heard her daughter cry out excitedly, "Hassgropper!"

"Oh, no, Janice," Teddy John Kaczynski explained, quietly and patiently. "Grasshopper. This is an insect."

Then Dorothy O'Connell listened with fascination as Teddy John told the child just how many legs a grasshopper has and what biological phylum, or classification, it belongs to.

Turk and Wanda Kaczynski were intelligent and well read. They wrote letters to newspapers, and their letters reflected politically liberal views. They were not particularly outgoing. "They kept more to themselves," says LeRoy Weinberg. "When we had parties, they weren't the type to let it go, have a drink, dance, live it up a little." Both of them lived for their sons. "They were always with the children," Weinberg says. "My wife and I, we'd go off sometimes and have a baby-sitter. Maybe there was too much closeness."

The Kaczynskis pushed their boys to excel. Teddy's mother, says Tom Lebensorger, who knew Teddy John when they were youngsters in the neighborhood, "was very big on education." Lebensorger went to Teddy John's house to study the moon through a telescope. The Kaczynski family, he remembers, went to museums on Sundays: the Museum of Science and Industry, the Adler Planetarium. Lebensorger says of Teddy John: "He was pushed." Some of his aunts and uncles worried about it. Wanda, particularly, seemed to be turning her sons into bookworms. She urged Teddy John to read Scientific American and tutored him at home.

"Every other kid in the neighborhood came out to play," remembers LeRoy Weinberg, the neighbor in back. "[But] we never saw them [either Teddy or Dave] in the backyard. They were never out. They stayed in. They had this book knowledge. They played chess. . . .

"The thought occurred to me," Weinberg says, " 'Did [Turk and Wanda] push too hard?' "

In addition to book-learning, Turk Kaczynski, a yellow-toothed man who smoked a pipe, taught his sons to love the outdoors. He would recall fondly for his neighbors the things that would happen when he took them on weeklong camping expeditions. The Kaczynskis, father and sons, would live off the land.

Once they ate a porcupine, Turk told one neighbor. He sounded proud of it.

In junior high school, Teddy Kaczynski began to show signs of trouble. He exploded his first bombs. "I would ride my bike over to his house, and we would do things together," says Dale Eickelman, now a professor of anthropology and human relations at Dartmouth College. "He wasn't exactly gregarious, but he was extremely articulate," Eickelman told a suburban Chicago newspaper, the Daily Southtown. "I remember Ted was very good at chemistry. And we would do the things that kids do when they're learning about chemicals. . . .

"We would go out to an open field and, I remember, Ted had the know-how of putting together things like batteries, wire leads, potassium, nitrate and whatever, and creating explosions. We would just blow up weeds. . . . We would go to the hardware store, use household products and make these things you might call bombs. I remember once we created an explosion in a garbage can."

Teddy sailed through Evergreen Park Community High School. "He was the kind of student a teacher doesn't forget," says Robert F. Rippey, who taught math and science. "Ted would use the school library for more intensive studies beyond the texts. There was a four-volume set on mathematics in my basement. Ted borrowed that." He took all of the hard courses, and he skipped at least one grade. Rippey gave him straight A's. He ranks Ted Kaczynski among his top four or five students in 50 years of teaching.

"I'd say the estimates of his genius–160 or 170–were maybe a little low," Rippey says. "He may have scored a couple of points higher, perhaps as much as 180. What made him special was the way he thought. He had original thoughts. From time to time, he'd go off and work on problems totally independent from what he was learning in class. He'd take a mathematical proof and find different ways of doing it, without any instruction from me. It's the hallmark of a truly penetrating mind. He'd have very penetrating questions in class."

Socially, however, Rippey says, Ted was immature. He had a particular fascination with magnesium ribbon. When the ribbon is lit, it flashes into an extremely bright flame. Rippey thinks Ted might have taken other chemicals out of the laboratory to play with. "He'd play pranks on other students. He'd put nitrogen triiodide on the floor. It looks kind of yucky. [He would] sprinkle it around on the floor or put it on the desktop. It made a small popping noise."

A classmate, Jo Ann De Young, says Ted Kaczynski once rolled up a piece of paper in chemistry class and twisted it in the middle. On either side of the twist, she says, he put chemicals. Then he sealed the ends of the roll. Ted handed it to her and asked her to unwind it. "When I twisted it, there was like a pop," she told the San Jose Mercury News. "The thing had gone off, like he had made a little hand bomb."

On one occasion, she says, she opened her locker to find the hide of a cat that had been dissected earlier in class. Ted was watching. She believes he had planted it there.

Rippey, however, doubts it. "They didn't dissect cats in biology." But then he adds, "We did use animal skins in advanced physics to make friction. . . . "

The practical jokes could have been an attempt to fit in. "He was a 15-year-old going to school with kids who were 17, 18 years old" says Bill Widlacki, another classmate. "He was a nice kid, polite, courteous, easygoing. But he was out of place.

"Like with girls. I never saw him dating anybody."

Ted wore his hair in an Elvis pompadour, and he played slide trombone in the band. But he also joined the Biology Club, the German Club, the Math Club and the Coin Club–all of them considered by the in-crowd to be nerdy pursuits.

Some classmates say he had no close friends.

But to his academic success this hardly mattered. He was one of five National Merit Scholarship finalists in Illinois in 1958.

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"A person is said to be well socialized if he believes in and obeys the moral code of his society and fits in well as a functioning part of that society . . . . The moral code of our society is so demanding that no one can think, feel and act in a completely moral way. For example, we are not supposed to hate anyone, yet almost everyone hates somebody at some time or other, whether he admits it to himself or not."

–Unabomber Manifesto, *Paragraphs 24 and 25*

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Barely 16 years old, he went to Harvard. In the late 1950s, it was a men's club, wealthy, WASPy and elitist. When Ted Kaczynski, the shy, Polish-American son of a sausage maker, arrived, eyes down and wearing a garish plaid jacket, he was met by students who wore suits and ties to class.

Housing at Harvard was assigned during those years according to a price ladder. Ted moved into an inexpensive dorm on the wrong side of Harvard Yard. It was a small house at 8 Prescott Street, tucked away from the tonier parts of campus. Seventeen freshmen lived there. One of Ted's housemates, Ronald L. Bauer, now a California judge, called Prescott Street "the low-rent district."

If Ted was a misfit in high school, he virtually disappeared in college. "With only 17 people in that place, you would think I would remember everything about this guy," Bauer says. "I don't." It was not that this was 38 years ago. "If you had asked me that question a year after graduation, I would have given the same response."

Mishell J. Stucki also lived at Prescott Street. Like Ted Kaczynski, he was concentrating on mathematics. But even Stucki cannot remember him.

In his second year, Ted was moved to Eliot House, which was filled with rich prep-school graduates. Eliot House was the patrician dormitory, and Ted was one of a handful of Midwesterners assigned to live there to tone it down. It was a terrible mismatch. Eliot House relegated Kaczynski and six others to a suite that once had

been the maid's quarters. Each of the suitemates had a tiny sleeping room. There was one, slightly larger, common room.

Ted spent almost no time in the common room. He was "extremely reclusive," Patrick S. MacIntosh, another of the Midwesterners, told the Boston Globe. In the three years that Ted Kaczynski lived in Eliot House, MacIntosh says, "I don't recall more than 10 words being spoken by him. Ted stands out only for being completely without relationship to anyone in the suite."

Ted holed up in his sleeping room and rocked endlessly, banging his chair against a wall. Late at night, he played his trombone. His suitemates sensed anger. One day, MacIntosh told Newsweek magazine, Ted used soap to scrawl a message on the bathroom mirror: He drew a pig and wrote a rude remark.

The suitemates also remember Ted's housekeeping. "His room was an unholy mess, the worst mess I've ever seen in my life," MacIntosh says. "Sometimes it smelled like he had left his lunch in there for weeks."

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"Consider the hypothetical case of a man who can have anything he wants just by wishing for it. Such a man has power, but he will develop serious psychological problems. At first he will have a lot of fun, but by and by he will become acutely bored and demoralized. Eventually, he may become clinically depressed."

–Unabomber Manifesto, *Paragraph 34*

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But Ted did well academically. He graduated in 1962 with a bachelor of arts degree in mathematics. He had just turned 20.

He was offered a teaching fellowship at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He typed a one-sentence acceptance. When he arrived at his single room in a dormitory called East Quad, he was lean and clean-shaven and wore the coat and tie he had come to accept at Harvard. But he was out of step again: Michigan was a crucible of 1960s campus radicalism, and coats and ties were frowned upon.

He spent five years at Michigan. He left no pictures and no yearbook entry, but he taught algebra, calculus and analytic geometry six hours a week. He helped professors grade papers, and he earned a reputation as a serious researcher who was likely to go far in theoretical mathematics. "He was one of the best students in a good graduate class" remembers Peter Duren, a professor who taught Ted Kaczynski in his first year of graduate work. "He did very original and powerful work that was very impressive."

He received a master's degree in mathematics in 1964. Two years into his doctoral dissertation, he discovered that the esoteric, complex mathematical problem he had chosen as his subject already had been solved. Prof. Allen Shields, his dissertation director, told him he would have to pick another subject. Ted hardly blinked. He took over a problem two other professors, including George Piranian, who was his mentor, had been working on without success. "It was extraordinarily difficult," Piranian says. "He took possession of it; Ted Kaczynski just went at it."

The problem involved boundary functions, an abstraction that deals with varying points on Euclidean planes and Riemann spheres. "He had to use his imagination," Piranian says, "and he used devices that I never thought of, did things that would never have occurred to me. Ted solved the problem within a year. He was an independent thinker and looked at the problem a different way. I respected him highly."

The dissertation won the Sumner B. Myers Prize at Michigan for thesis of the year.

Indeed, Ted was more than an independent thinker. He was independent, period. While most students wanted help with their research, Duren says, Ted Kaczynski worked alone. He was meticulous. He wrote his explanations and proofs in greater detail than Duren and other professors considered necessary, and he printed the proofs in neat, square, evenly spaced letters.

Ted Kaczynski was a loner socially, as well. John Remers, who lived in East Quad, took classes with him. He remembers that Ted always ate by himself. "I doubt I ever exchanged a word with him," Remers says. "What struck me is that he was never with people. He didn't seem to socialize. He was totally self-absorbed, always at the library and focused on math." In his second year, Ted moved off campus and lived in small rooms on nearby streets. "He behaved well to other people," Duren says, "but he was wrapped up in the work he was doing."

One classmate, Joel H. Shapiro, says Ted published research papers without telling anyone. Shapiro stumbled onto one while reading a national mathematics journal. Very few students published original research while they were still in graduate school. "Most of us were just trying to learn how to arrange logical statements into coherent arguments," Shapiro says. "Ted was quietly solving open problems and creating new mathematics. It was as if he could write poetry while the rest of us were strugging to learn grammar." What struck Shapiro most was that Ted never said anything about it.

He went to no math department meetings, and he participated in none of its social events. One result was that here, too, he left no lasting memory of himself among many of his classmates. Alan Heezen, a fellow graduate student in mathematics, for instance, does not even recall Ted's face. David Gregory, a fellow Ph.D. candidate, says that Kaczynski's name and picture mean nothing to him.

On campus, radical politics boiled. Students for a Democratic Society was founded there. Two of Ted Kaczynski's thesis advisors, Allan Shields and Maxwell Reade, joined 74 mathematicians nationwide who urged colleagues and students to refuse to let their work be used in war research.

There was no sign that Ted even listened. Shapiro says Ted engaged other students only to talk about math courses and how to solve problems.

On anything else, Ted Kaczynski was never heard to express a memorable opinion.

He won his Ph.D. in 1967.

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"There is no law that says we have to go to work every day and follow our employer's orders. Legally there is nothing to prevent us from going to live in the wild like primitive people or from going into business for ourselves.

–Unabomber Manifesto, *Paragraph 73*

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His brilliance at Michigan landed him a tenure-track job at UC Berkeley, which had one of the best math departments anywhere.

A course catalog at Berkeley shows that he was named an acting assistant professor even before his Ph.D. arrived. This means, says Lance W. Small, a UC San Diego math professor who studied at Berkeley, that "they thought he was really good."

They did, indeed, from the very top of the mathematics department to the bottom. Kaczynski was simply brilliant, say John Addison and Calvin C. Moore, who were chairman and vice chairman at the time. "He could have advanced up the ranks," Moore says, "and be a senior member of our faculty today."

His ability to mix with others, however, was getting even worse. On one occasion, Moore asked him to speak about his research at a seminar. Ted did.

"The tradition was that we'd go out for beer and pizza afterwards," Moore remembers. "So we said, 'Come along!'

"He said, 'No, thank you.' "

Then, Moore says, he turned and walked off.

Ted had no close friends, Addison says, and this, again, left many of his colleagues with no memory of him.

James Dowling, now a producer of software living in Michigan, told the Chicago Tribune: "I have looked at the pictures, and the face means nothing to me." David Tartakoff, a professor at the University of Illinois in Chicago, says: "I was at Harvard at the same time he was and at Berkeley with him, but quite frankly I have no memory of him whatsoever."

His inability to connect seemed to hamper his teaching. Student evaluations, generally snotty, as they often are, were consistent. In advanced calculus, students said, he showed no concern for the people he was teaching. "He absolutely refuses to answer questions," one student said. In an introduction to the theory of sets, another said, "Kaczynski's lectures were useless and right from the book."

Outside the classroom, protest swirled. If Michigan had been political, Ted was now at ground zero of the 1960s revolution. "Discontent and conflict were literally in the air," says sociologist Todd Gitlin, a chronicler of the '60s. There was Vietnam. There were regents appointed by then-Gov. Ronald Reagan. There was a nasty relationship between the university and the community of Berkeley. The tension erupted in riots over the university's plan to reclaim a one-block piece of land, known as People's Park, because it had been occupied by street people.

Ted lived nearby. He rented a tiny apartment on Regent Street, one block east of Telegraph Avenue. The apartment was dark. The front door opened into a small living room/kitchenette, barely big enough for a bookshelf and a couch. Through an inside

door was a cramped bedroom and bath. His shortest walk to work took him north on Regent, over one block west to Telegraph, then north all the way to where it runs into Bancroft Way. Once he crossed the street and stepped onto campus, he walked across Sproul Plaza, synonymous with dissent.

Nor was the math department any haven. Addison, the chairman then, says it was at the forefront of conflict. "The math department, more than some departments," he says, "didn't like to be told what to do." One of Addison's top professors went on strike with the nonacademic staff. Others petitioned President Lyndon Johnson to stop the war. One assistant professor was deeply involved in Sen. Eugene McCarthy's presidential campaign. Many contributed to antiwar ads.

No one remembers Ted getting caught up in the ferment. Certainly he heard the shouting, and he smelled the tear gas. He might have felt some revolutionary urges, or he might have hated what was going on. Apparently he said nothing.

In any case, on Jan. 20, 1969–the day, as it happened, that President Richard M. Nixon took office–he sat down at a manual typewriter, rolled in a blank, white sheet of paper and wrote:

"Dear Professor Addison:

"This is to inform you that I am resigning at the end of this academic year. Thus I will not be returning in Fall, 1969.

"Sincerely yours,

"T.J. Kaczynski."

Addison and Moore, his vice chairman, were astonished. They sat down with Ted and had a long talk. "We tried to persuade him, 'Please don't do this. We value your work, and we'd like you to stay on.' "

But it was to no avail.

On June 30, 1969, Ted finished at Berkeley and left.

Prof. Allen Shields at Michigan, who had been his dissertation supervisor, wrote to Berkeley asking why. Addison replied that it had happened "quite out of the blue." He said Ted had told him "he was going to give up mathematics and wasn't sure what he was going to do." Addison added: "Kaczynski seemed almost pathologically shy, and as far as I know he made no close friends in the department. Efforts to bring him more into the swing of things had failed."

But why had Ted quit?

"He simply didn't know himself," Addison says.

It was the first time in recent memory that anyone at Berkeley had abandoned mathematics altogether. It gave people pause, and speculation shivered through the math community. The social protest was causing other Berkeley mathematicians to reconsider their goals. "One quit and went to medical school," recalls Prof. Lance Small. Another math professor, Keith Miller, says that Vietnam created a revolt against technology. "Ted may have gotten into that."

Back at Michigan, George Piranian, the professor who had been Ted's mentor, assumed that he had gone into social work. Giving up his secure, prestigious job, Piranian

thought, meant that "he must have a strong social conscience." To this day, Piranian says, "I think Ted had decided that math was an abstract luxury that he could not afford to work on in the presence of all the misery that was among the poor.

"It was the late 1960s, during the rejection of conventional values and a move to change things. [Maybe] Ted thought he should help by engaging some of the worst problems. Social work was one way to do it."

Back in Illinois, Turk Kaczynski gave his friend, Ralph Meister, the child psychologist who had tested Teddy's intelligence, a reason in line with his own concerns.

He said Ted had quit so that his math would not help engineers build nuclear weapons.

In truth, says Anthony Bisceglie, the family's attorney, "they don't know.

"And we may never know."

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Wednesday, May 9, 1979, Chicago: John G. Harris, a 35-year-old graduate student in Northwestern University's department of civil engineering, was glad to find an empty cubicle in the second-floor study room in the school's Technological Institute. He passed the copying machine on his way in and, as he began to settle down to work, noticed a cigar box sitting on the bare table between his cubicle and the next. Its lid was taped down. Curious, Harris reached for the container. He pulled at the tape. Half way across the room, fellow student Bushan Karihaloo heard a sound "10 times louder than a door slamming," and then a scream. "I've got to get out of here," he thought. Joel D. Meyer, a teaching assistant in a nearby classroom, heard the sounds, too. He dashed to the study room. There was fire near the table and what appeared to be paper or rags scattered about. Looking down, Meyer saw "a lot of wires attached to flashlight batteries. It's a bomb," he thought. He grabbed a fire extinguisher and doused the flames. As the smoke cleared, Meyer realized the floor was covered with match heads–"thousands of them." Harris was taken by ambulance to nearby Evanston *Hospital and treated for minor burns and cuts. An hour later, he was released. No one knew it, but he was the first casualty in the Unabomber's one-man campaign to bring 40,000 years of technological progress to a halt.*

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Ted's high school classmate, Bill Widlacki, heard that he was back in Illinois doing menial work. "Then, all of a sudden," Widlacki says, "he disappeared."

Dorothy O'Connell, the next-door neighbor in Evergreen Park who had put Teddy's calculus book on top of her refrigerator when he was 12, heard that "he went off into the woods.

"The neighbors," she says, "were aghast."

Why, wondered Robert F. Rippey, his high school mathematics and science teacher, "would someone like Ted give up a good teaching job at Berkeley to go live in the woods?"

The only thing Rippey could think of was that "he was just out there planning to write some advanced math studies."

In fact, by now Ted was in Montana. He and his brother, David, had bought a cabin site near Lincoln from Cliff Gehring, whose family owned a lumber mill close by. The property was in a gulch along Humbug Contour Road, a pair of dirt ruts that wound up Baldy Mountain into Stemple Pass, hard by the crest of the Continental Divide. It was on the edge of the Helena National Forest and lush with larches, tamaracks and Ponderosa pines.

David was living in Great Falls, at the Chinook Apartments, a small, one-story, yellow brick building on Sixth Avenue North. City directories say that in 1971 he was a tank man at Anaconda, the smelter and refinery for the company's mines. The smelter boasted the tallest smokestack in the world. The next year, the directories say, David worked in the refinery laboratory.

Ted lived in a tent on their property in Stemple Pass. He built his plywood cabin. Part of the time, however, he stayed with David. He worked for two weeks at Kibbey Corner Truck Stop, owned by Joe Visocan, in Raynesford, population 50, about 35 miles east of Great Falls. Then, in another angry outburst, Ted quit.

His letter of resignation, published by the Great Falls Tribune, said:

"Dear, sweet Joe:

"You fat con man. You probably think I treated you badly by quitting without notice, but it's your own fault. You gave me this big cock-and-bull story about how much money I could make selling tires and all that crap. 'The sky's the limit,' and so forth. If you had been honest with me, I would not have taken the job in the first place; but if I had taken it, I wouldn't have quit without giving you a couple of weeks' notice. Anyhow, I have a check coming. I am enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope in which you can send it. I had better get that check, because I know what authorities to complain to if I don't get it. If I have to complain about the check, then, while I'm at it, I might as well complain about the fact that you don't have a proper cage for putting air in split-rim tires, which, if I am not mistaken, is illegal.

"Love and kisses,

"Ted Kaczynski"

For a while, Ted's family lost track of him. "I believe," says Anthony Bisceglie, the Kaczynski family attorney, "[that] he was working . . . in the Salt Lake [City] area. . . . We believe he worked as a laborer, but I'm not certain of that."

The family had moved to Lisbon, Iowa, where Turk Kaczynski managed a plant for a company called Cushion Pak, which cut foam rubber for pillows and mattresses. Wanda attended the University of Iowa, just to the south. Turk told Earl Ratzer, the president of Cushion Pak, based in Chicago, about his son Ted, the mathematician. He beamed with pride, Ratzer says, "[and] he gave me a copy of [Ted's] doctoral dissertation.

"He said, 'Earl, look at this. I can't understand it.. . .'

"I looked at it, and I couldn't understand it [either]."

Once in a while, Ted came to Lisbon to visit. His parents told friends he was starting a new life in the wilderness. Mike Conklin, a Chicago Tribune columnist who happened

to meet the family through mutual friends in Lisbon, says that "Wanda, at the time, worried about Ted Jr.'s ability to make it on his own."

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Wednesday, May 15, 1985, Berkeley: It was shortly after lunch in the small laboratory in Cory Hall, where John Hauser, a 26-year-old Air Force captain, was hard at work pursuing the doctorate in electrical engineering he hoped would launch him into the manned space flight program. Suddenly weary, Hauser looked up from his personal computer. He glanced at a nearby table and noticed a black, three-ring binder and a beige plastic container the size of a cigar box bound together with a rubber band. Maybe somebody has forgotten their lunch, he thought. Maybe their name is inside. He reached over and flipped open the box. A deafening sound–more buzz than explosion filled his ears; an irresistible force jerked his arm to the right. Then there was blood everywhere. Hauser looked down: a chunk of his forearm and parts of every finger on his right hand were missing. His Air Force Academy ring had been ripped from his finger and blown against a wall six feet away. It struck with such force that the word "Academy" was stamped clearly into the plaster. Hauser's colleagues came running. The first to reach him was Professor Diogenes J. Anelakos, who used a tie to fashion a tourniquet around Hauser's mangled arm. Three years before, Anelakos had suffered similar, though less severe, injuries in a then-unsolved bombing that had also rocked Cory Hall. Hauser never flew in space *and he never regained the full use of his right arm and hand. The Air Force gave him a medical discharge. He earned his Ph.D. and became a professor of engineering at the University of Colorado.*

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A few years later, Turk and Wanda moved back to Illinois. Not long afterward, son David, who had an English degree from Columbia University, took a teaching job at Lisbon High School, where the superintendent had known his father. Bob Bunting, a math teacher, says David told him his brother Ted was smart. "I knew he had taught at Berkeley and had that cabin in Montana."

At one point, David bought a cabin of his own, in the Chalk Mountains of West Texas, near Big Bend National Park. But Bisceglie says that Ted never visited.

Instead, Ted spent time in Montana. He acquired an old pickup. Three days later, it broke down. He abandoned it. Near his cabin, he built a drying shed, about six feet square. Inside, he kept his red bike, which he had gotten from a fireman. He also acquired a green one. He cannibalized it for parts. He nailed a board high between two trees. He put a five-gallon bucket on it, for a shower.

He dug a root cellar for his parsnips and his potatoes. He took pride in his garden and tried to develop his own seeds for hardier strains. Occasionally, he tried to find work. By now Cliff Gehring, who had sold him his cabin site, had died, so he asked another Gehring, named Butch, for a job at the family sawmill. Ted complained, Gehring told the Associated Press, that his cost of living was rising to $1 a day.

Gehring hired him to peel the bark off logs. But he disliked the job, Gehring says, and he quit on his first day.

Ted's parents and brother fretted about him, but they refused to think that anything was seriously wrong. They sent him money–a gift for Christmas or his birthday: $100 here, $100 there, sometimes a money order for $1,000.

He rode his bike into Lincoln to the Grizzly True Value hardware store. It was an important fixture in a village so small that walking through it took only 15 minutes. The town had a variety of establishments, including four bars and four churches. People called one church the flying diaper, because of the shape of its white roof.

Ted stayed out of the bars. He did not drink or smoke.

But he frequented the hardware store. Jack Ward, who happened to be there one day when Ted came in, remembers that it did not have something he wanted.

Ted, he says, flared angrily.

It reminded Ward of a confrontation between Ted and a group of loggers who had wanted to cut some trees. Ted Kaczynski pitched such a fit, Ward says, that he scared the loggers off.

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Wednesday, Dec. 11, 1985, Sacramento: It was another dreary winter day in the Central Valley, when 38-year-old Hugh Scrutton decided to take a midday break. He walked out of the back door of his Rentech Computer Rental store and into the parking area behind the shopping mall. He looked down and spotted what looked like a polished block of wood. He bent to pick it up. There was a shattering roar. Scrutton, his chest pierced by shrapnel, was found some distance away. Later, pieces of the bomb that killed him would be found 150 yards from the scene of his death. The Unabomber had escalated his private war on human ingenuity.

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Ted also spent time at the Lincoln library, a small building with wood siding and a green tin roof. He sat in a front corner, where the newspapers were, and read. He also spent time in a back corner, where research books included an Encyclopedia of Associations, a Who's Who, and postal guides from everywhere.

At his request, says Beverly Coleman, who volunteered at the library, she always saved extra copies of newspapers from Billings, Helena and Missoula. Ted used them to build fires in the stove at his cabin. The library did not get any outside papers, but Ted always asked them to order books from other libraries, often in foreign languages. "He liked stuff that was really off-the-wall and hard to get," Coleman says. "A lot of stuff he wanted was out of print, and a lot of stuff he wanted was in the original. He didn't want to read the English translations.

"God, the man must have had a brain on him that's unreal."

Ted would stop at a self-service laundry, then wander next door to Garland's Town and Country variety store. "He'd buy stuff like socks and fishing lures," says Teresa Brown, a clerk. "He always paid with small bills–just to the dollar more–and get some change back." But Brown stopped trying to strike up conversations with him. "Gossip here is very, very big. But [with] him, no one tried. You got the impression after the second time talking to him that he didn't want to talk."

One day, Ted asked Becky Garland, whose family owned the store, for advice about job hunting. He gave her a handwritten letter. In it, Becky told Newsweek magazine, he said he had been "a genius in a kid's body" and stuck out "like a sore thumb in his surroundings as a child." Becky's sister, Teresa, says he also "talked about his education. He talked about the fact that in his childhood, [schoolwork] was what he spent time doing. He didn't have time to do anything else. . . . He had missed out on his childhood."

He acknowledged his shyness. "He knew he wasn't so good at talking to people."

Teresa thinks that Ted opened up to her sister because they shared views about preserving the environment. "Becky certainly is interested in the Blackfoot River and the quality of it. She's been written up in the paper and [been on] TV for her support of the environment around Lincoln. She was in support of clean air and clean water, and so was he."

Ted asked Karen Potter, too, about work. Karen and her husband, Jay, owned the Blackfoot Market, where Ted bought flour to bake bread. He preferred Amber Waves, certified, organic, 100% whole wheat flour: $4.24 for 10 pounds. "I probably saw him a dozen times before we actually got around to speaking," Karen Potter says. She told Ted that she preferred to give someone else the clerk's job that she had posted on a bulletin board outside her store, because she did not think he would be able to get through the snow on his bicycle to work during the winter.

Ted took her rejection politely. But she was put off at first by his way of speaking. "It was more or less rather formal, snobby. His initial way of talking to you is a rather formal diction. Maybe that's the 'Hah-vahd' in him. Each word is softly but distinctly spoken–not a monotone, but not a lot of inflection. No raised voice. No 'ain't' or 'can't.' He would say 'cannot.' "

Eventually, though, Karen came to like the sound of it. "It's a very full and rich way of speaking," she says. "I thought he was rich and eccentric. I thought he was an artist."

She chuckled when she found out he had a Ph.D. in math. Once, she recalled, "he thought I had overcharged him two cents. He looked at his receipt, told me what he had bought." Karen added his bill again.

Ted was wrong.

"Had I known he was a math teacher," she says, "I would have ribbed him."

Ted was very precise, however, when Lincoln's weekly newspaper, then called Western Spurs and now the Blackfoot Valley Dispatch, ran a contest to find the reader who could pick out the most errors in one of its issues. Ted won, hands down. He sent in a copy of the newspaper almost covered with corrections.

The next issue announced his feat, under a headline saying, "Pobody's Nerfect." The announcement said that he had found 147 undisputed errors. "Thanks, Ted, (we think)," the announcement said.

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Saturday, Dec. 10, 1994, North Caldwell, N.J.: It had been a busy week for Thomas J. Mosser, the newly appointed general manager and executive vice president of Young & Rubicam, one of New York's leading advertising agencies. The prospect of a day spent with his wife and children, ages 13 years and 15 months, in their handsome suburban home was a welcome relief. But first, he would have to deal with the unopened mail that had piled up on the kitchen counter. Among the items was a package about the size of a videocassette, neatly wrapped in white paper. It had come in Friday's mail and bore a San Francisco postmark and an unfamiliar return address: "H.C. Wickel, Department of Economics, San Francisco State University." What Mosser made of that, no one will ever know. As he ripped the packing from around the box, it exploded. Mosser didn't see his family that day–or ever again. The blast that killed him tore a hole in the kitchen counter and filled the house with smoke. Fifteen years into his battle with progress, and nine years almost to the day after his first killing, the Unabomber had returned to murder.

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Sometimes Ted would go to Helena. He went with Dick Lundberg, a mail carrier who has been serving Lincoln since 1965. Lundberg drove what townspeople call the Lincoln stage. At least once a year, Ted rode with him to Helena to buy a large load of groceries. "He'd buy, oh, canned goods, dry foods and stuff like that," Lundberg says. "Sometimes big boxes of dry milk. Staples. . . .

"I'd drive him in one day and back the next," Lundberg says. "He'd always stay at the Park Hotel." It was downtown, on a street called Last Chance Gulch. Ted stayed there 31 times in the 15 years between 1980 and 1995. He always rented the cheapest room available, which started at $9 a night in the early years and crept up in $1 increments until it cost $14 last year. Nearly half the time, he rented Room 119, with no bath, no phone and no TV. It was right off the lobby.

It was clean but more than a little depressing. Its most recent decor was a napless brown carpet tinged with orange, a dark brown bureau under a mirror, a small, scarred brown desk that did not match, a lamp with a fake parchment shade, an orange chair and a red vinyl chair with chrome arms. A small pastel picture of Indians on horses hung over the desk, and a dim autumn landscape hung over the bed, which had a cream bedspread decorated with orange and gold flowers. Against a wall was a small white sink. Under the window stood a radiator. It was painted silver.

"When he first started coming here in 1980, I had a little uneasiness," says Jack McCabe, the owner. "Was he going to run right down to the bar and get drunk and then pick up a girl and try to sneak her up here? I don't tolerate that. After a couple of times, I forgot about him. He was always quiet and polite. Didn't smoke or drink, didn't do anything. Wouldn't even talk.

"He always wore the same type of clothing, Levi jacket, Levi pants, all dark. His bag was dark colored, too. It wasn't very big, about the size you could put a basketball in. He would always check out by 11 a.m."

Sometimes Ted did not ride back to Lincoln with Lundberg. When that happened, Lundberg assumed he had come home with someone else.

The Park Hotel, however, was within walking distance of a regional bus station. Cheap transportation was available to Butte, Missoula and Bozeman. From there, buses went to cities throughout the West and the rest of the nation.

In Butte, Tom Gilbert, a ticket agent for Greyhound, says another agent and at least two drivers recall seeing Ted getting on buses.

Desk clerks Frank and Gloria Hensley say Ted stayed at the Royal Hotel, next to the bus depot in Sacramento, several times starting in 1992. His room cost $31.90. Mike Singh, a manager at a nearby Burger King, says Ted ate there twice in 1994.

Greg Nance, a restaurant laborer who rented a room at the Regis, a transient hotel in Salt Lake City, says he is 99.9% sure he saw Ted there in 1978, as well as at a nearby employment agency, where he seemed to be waiting for a job.

Ted seemed intense, Nance says, and standoffish, and he was reading a chemistry book.

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Monday, April 24, 1995, Sacramento: It was shortly after 2 p.m. on an unexceptional afternoon in spring, when a clerical worker at the single-story brick headquarters of the California Forestry Assn. put a shoe box-sized package wrapped in brown paper on the desk of the timber industry group's president, Gilbert Murray, 47. The only notable thing about the parcel was that it was addressed to Murray's predecessor, William Dennison. Murray never had a chance to notice much more because, as he ripped at its paper cover, the bomb inside exploded with a sound like train cars colliding. Murray was dead before the echo was. The blast blew out the building's doors and windows; it brought down fixtures and ceiling tiles. It ignited a fire, but miraculously none of the other five people at work in the office, including a pregnant woman, was injured. The Unabomber's toll stood at three dead and 23 maimed or injured. No one knew it at the time, but Gilbert Murray may have been the last casualty in a lonely madman's self-declared war on cars and flush toilets.

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In Montana, people could see that Ted Kaczynski was starting to slip. At the Park Hotel in Helena, Jack McCabe's wife, Barbara, noticed it. "This last visit [seven months ago], he really looked more tacky than normal," she says. "His hair was less well combed. I said, 'Gee, if we didn't know him, I don't think I'd want to rent to him.' "

Some thought he needed a bath. Carin Claramonte, who lives on Stemple Pass road, saw him riding his bicycle in the snow. "He was pretty ratty," she says. "He had matty hair. Of course, it was dirty–no running water." He was dressing poorly, says Betty Love, a longtime resident of Lincoln. "Ragged clothes. Very ragged. Kind of like you knew he didn't have the money to buy a new set of clothes. He looked kind of like a bum."

He got into trouble with a game warden for roasting a coyote. He did not pay his property taxes. At the end of last year, he owed $114.27, including penalties and

interest. Looking back, it seemed like his troubles were picking up speed. This lastest round was of a piece with troubles that had begun when his family moved to Lombard, Ill., another suburb of Chicago, which he visited in 1978. Ted went to work with his father and brother at Foam Cutting Engineers, a successor plant to Cushion Pak. A relationship–it is unclear what kind–with a woman supervisor turned sour, one employee says.

Ted's anger flashed again: He spoke of her crudely and posted crude limericks about her all over the plant, according to the Washington Post. His brother, David, who was his immediate boss, fired him.

Back in Montana, he envied David's marriage, and wrote to Juan Sanchez Arreola, a pen-pal who was a Mexican laborer and his brother's friend: "I would love it if I had a wife and children!"

He seemed to withdraw even more. At one point, his father came to visit him and remarked proudly upon his return to Lombard about Ted's ability as a woodsman. But then his father was stricken with cancer. He shot himself to death in 1990 with a .22-caliber rifle.

His mother and brother told Ted about it in a letter with a red line under the postage stamp.

But he objected to their use of the important-letter code, federal sources say, and he wrote back that his father's death did not warrant it.

He did not attend his father's funeral.

The way life seemed, it might have been no big thing when Ted finally learned that David had read the Unabomber's manuscript and had grown suspicious of him; that his mother had decided to move to New York to be near David and his wife, who had gotten jobs there; that David had grown more suspicious when he cleaned the Lombard home for sale and found some of Ted's writings and offered them to the FBI.

Ted was lying on his cot in his cabin when an agent opened his door.

"Ted," the agent said, "we need to talk."

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"If we had never done anything violent and had submitted the present writings to a publisher, they probably would not have been accepted. . . . In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people."

–Unabomber's Manifesto, *Paragraph 96*

L.A. Times Staff Writers
Adrift in Solitude, Kaczynski Traveled a Lonely Journey
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