

Pattern Emerges in Bomber's Tract

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Aug. 2, 1995

In what was described as an important advance in the hunt for an elusive serial bomber, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said yesterday that it had traced a years-long pattern of academic involvement that took the self-described anarchist from the Chicago area to Salt Lake City to Berkeley, Calif.

By matching his 17-year record of carnage against an analysis of a densely argued 35,000-word tract he sent to The New York Times in June, Government officials say they have concluded that the bomber is a student of the history of science who may have taken classes at or hovered around major university campuses from the late 1970's to the mid-1980's.

These include Northwestern University, the Chicago Circle campus of the University of Illinois, the University of Utah, Brigham Young University and the University of California at Berkeley, the officials said.

Federal agents are particularly interested in his activities in the Chicago area, where they believe his intellectual passion first developed in the late 1970's, and how they relate to his current life of mystery and destruction, thought to be centered in northern California. The F.B.I. now believes that the man they call the Unabomber lives somewhere in the Sacramento or San Francisco Bay areas.

The bomber has killed 3 people and injured 23, many of them seriously, in 16 incidents going back to 1978. His last victim was Gilbert Murray, a timber-industry lobbyist who was killed when he opened a package bomb sent to the California Forestry Association in Sacramento.

"By sending out the manuscript, he's given us the greatest insight into his own personality and education that we've ever had," said Terry D. Turchie, the senior F.B.I. official overseeing the bureau's wide-ranging investigation.

Mr. Turchie said the bureau, in a break from its normal practice, would make the single-spaced 62-page document available to scholars and professors in the hope that further leads would be discerned from its phrasing or its fierce arguments against a society evermore based on technological advances.

"We would hope the right people out there might see it and might call us and might be able to bring this entire thing together," he said, adding that agents were already showing the document to 50 to 60 academics who study the history of science and technology, psychology and sociology.

The manifesto shows that the writer is familiar with these academic disciplines. It sneers at scientists, conservatives and particularly liberals, broods about the meaning of freedom and the causes of anomie, and calls for a revolution against a complicated, bureaucratic, technological society that its author maintains robs people of their essence.

"The industrial revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race," the tract opens. "They have greatly increased the life-expectancy of those of us who live in 'advanced' countries, but they have destabilized society, have made life unfulfilling, have subjected human beings to indignities, have led to widespread psychological suffering (in the Third World to physical suffering as well) and have

inflicted severe damage on the natural world. The continued development of technology will worsen the situation.”

Two hundred numbered paragraphs later, he concludes, “Until the industrial system has been thoroughly wrecked, the destruction of that system must be the revolutionaries’ ONLY goal.”

In late June, the bomber sent to The Times and The Washington Post copies of the huge manuscript, titled “Industrial Society and its Future,” and bearing the byline “FC,” the name of the revolutionary group the bomber claims to be acting on behalf of. Although the bomber refers to the group, the authorities believe he is acting alone. In accompanying letters, he wrote that if the full manuscript was printed by one of the papers within three months and if one of them agreed to print three annual follow-ups, he would stop trying to kill people. He left open the possibility that he would still direct bombs at property.

Neither paper has decided whether to print the full document. Like The Times, The Post ran excerpts from it in its Wednesday issue..

In a statement yesterday, Arthur Sulzberger Jr., publisher of The Times, said: “We have yet to make a decision on whether or not to meet the demands of the Unabomber. Tonight’s story and the excerpts we’re running represent the judgment of our editors as to what is newsworthy.

“The tough decision of whether we publish the entire document is still ahead. As I’ve said before, the demand that the Unabomber have access to our pages for three years is especially troubling. There’s no easy way to open negotiations with this person and for the moment we’re stymied.”

Mr. Turchie said that what fascinated the bureau was the bomber’s intellectual interest in the history of science, a relatively small field when compared with broader scientific disciplines, and in such precise areas as behavior modification. In 1985, the bomber mailed a device to a psychology professor at the University of Michigan who specializes in behavior modification. A secretary was injured.

By overlaying his interests on the pattern of his bombings, the F.B.I. developed a sense of where he lived and what circles he may have traveled in at different times: his first two bombs, in 1978 and 1979, injured two people at Northwestern University, including one in its Technological Institute. His next two in 1979 and 1980 were also sent from the Chicago area.

In 1981 and 1982, he sent bombs from Salt Lake City, including one at the University of Utah in which no one was injured.

From mid-1985, the bombs and a growing collection of letters were sent from northern California, with the exception of two package bombs postmarked from Salt Lake City.

Almost all of the universities of interest to the bureau have courses or programs in the history of science, Mr. Turchie said.

“Our efforts right now are concentrated on trying to tie in the Chicago and California aspects,” he said. “One of the predominant themes in the manuscript involves this entire

idea of the negative impact of technology on society and he discusses it in the context of the history of science. He's obviously spent a lot of time thinking it through. Those are probably the most important elements of that manuscript. They seem to echo this whole idea of the history of science."

For the most part, historians who study science look on it as progressive, with its breakthroughs and intellectual triumphs seen as a social boon. But a small subset of scholars has long focused on its social ills and unexpected cultural repercussions, and is sometimes strongly anti-technology.

In the 1970's, this cautionary sentiment was accented by fervor against the Vietnam war and was formalized by groups that employed confrontational tactics to disrupt scientific meetings and lobby for more debate on the social implications of science and scientific warfare.

The members of one such group, Science for the People, once tossed a tomato at a speaker at a podium at an annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and one of them was stabbed with a knitting needle in retaliation for such acts by the irate wife of a scientist.

Science for the People was active the Chicago area in the 1970's, with some of its members at Northwestern and at the University of Illinois Chicago Circle Campus. In the main, however, the faculty at Northwestern and the University of Illinois Chicago Circle Campus tended to be of a more conservative mold.

"None of the people I can think of were in the rabble-rouser category," said Michael Radnor, who headed a Committee on the Interdisciplinary Study of Science and Technology at Northwestern during the 1970's. "There were weird people who showed up at our sack-lunch seminars. But who knows from where."

Current and former faculty members at the two universities said they could remember no lecturers who espoused a strong anti-science stance or similarly minded students.

In recent weeks, the F.B.I. has been questioning some leftist and environmental figures in the Berkeley area, causing criticism from some who are suspicious of the agency's motives. But Mr. Turchie denied the bureau was using the case as a pretext for investigating political groups. He said all files gathered in the inquiry will be kept separate from the agency's general files.

The bomber's manifesto includes 21 footnotes, two pages of spelling and grammar corrections and references to such diverse thinkers as the sociologist Eric Hoffer, the social scientist James Q. Wilson and a book on Chinese political philosophy by Chester C. Tan.

At its heart, it paints a picture of a technological society that is increasingly ruinous to the ability of people to set goals and achieve them by themselves or in small groups in the manner of 19th century frontier society. The result, the bomber maintains, is a listless, dehumanized society that will only become harder to revolutionize as the march of technology moves on.

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The New York Times, August 2, 1995, Section A, Page 1.
<www.nytimes.com/1995/08/02/us/pattern-emerges-in-bomber-s-tract.html>

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