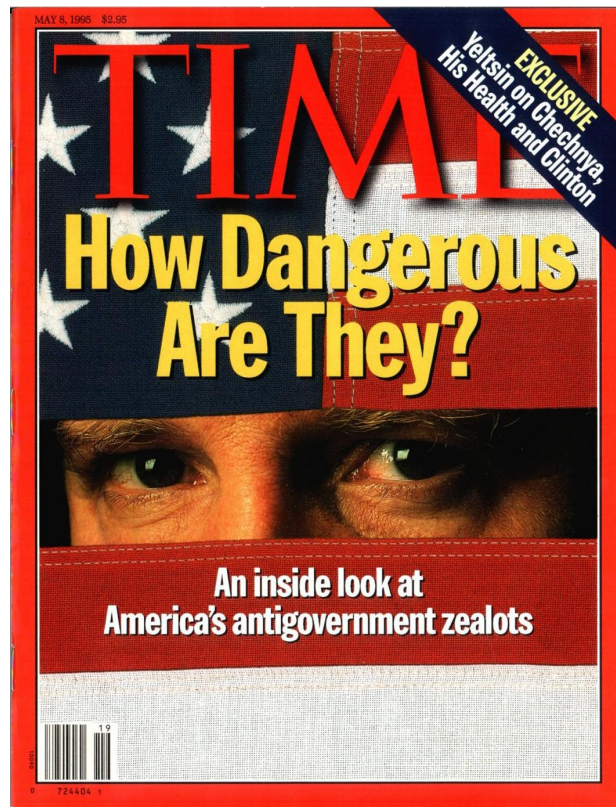


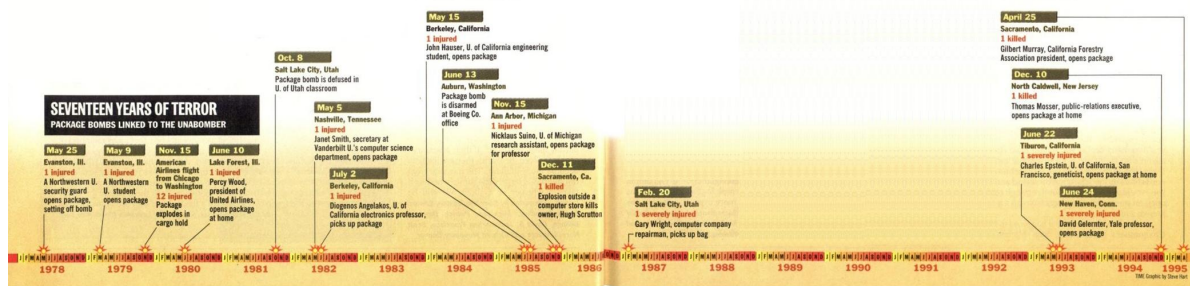
# The Bomb is in the Mail

The Mysterious Unabomber Strikes Again. But for the First Time in 17 Years, He Wants to Explain Why

Michael D. Lemonick



May 08, 1995

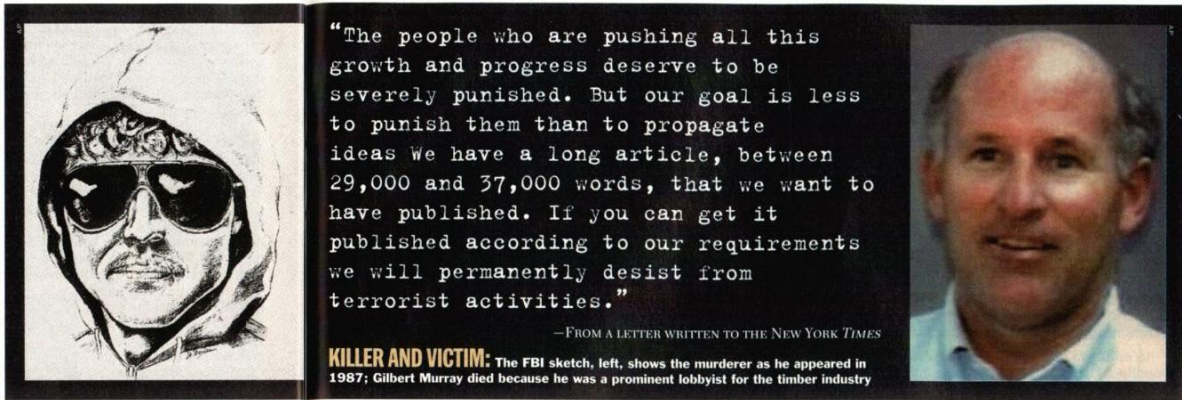


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The letter to the Times makes it clear that they were right-that the Unabomber, like the right-wing extremists believed to be responsible for the Oklahoma City blast, views terror as a way to fight what he sees as a pernicious trend in modern society. Just as the right-wingers fear intrusive government, the Unabomber evidently has a big problem with the Industrial Revolution and all that came out of it. "Through our bombings," says the letter, "we hope to promote social instability in industrial society, propagate anti-industrial ideas and give encouragement to those who hate the industrial system."



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Whether a loner or not, the Unabomber clearly craves attention and publicity. Complaining in his letter that "it's no fun having to spend all your evenings and weekends preparing dangerous mixtures" and "filing trigger mechanisms out of scraps of metal," the Unabomber offers "a bargain." The campaign of terror will end, he says, if the Times or another nationally prominent publication, such as Time or Newsweek, publishes a long tract explaining the group's ideas.

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If nothing else, the letter to the Times and three more letters – one to victim David Gelernter, a Yale computer scientist seriously injured in a 1993 blast, and the other two to potential targets whose names are being kept secret – have given investigators their best clues yet. An additional 100 agents were quickly added to the 30-person,



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That evidence leads investigators to suspect that the Unabomber may be based in Northern California: he has placed bombs in Sacramento and Berkeley; last week's letters and bomb were all mailed from Oakland; and he used a Sacramento State University faculty member's name on a 1993 bomb's return address. Moreover, the Times letter refers to "searching the sierras" for bomb-testing sites. But while he's clearly familiar with the territory, says FBI special agent Jim Freeman, who heads the joint task force, that "doesn't necessarily mean he lives or works in this area."

To construct a psychological profile of the terrorist, investigators have tried to figure out his motives and how he thinks. In particular, they have studied his choice of targets and bomb-making style, which has always been quirky and meticulous. The Unabomber's devices are generally handcrafted, with many parts, including tiny levers, carved from wood. FBI forensics experts have found everything from scrap wood to pieces of mahogany and other hardwoods used in furniture. One bomb contained a twig from a cherry tree. The bomber makes some of his own metal parts too, including pins and even screws. Then the whole thing is generally placed in a homemade wooden box before being mailed or delivered.

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According to former FBI bomb expert James Ronay, who worked on the case for years, the Unabomber's extraordinary attention to detail points to an obsessive personality. Says Ronay: "If the bomber were only interested in producing a bomb that worked efficiently, he could do it a lot more easily. It's more of an uncontrollable urge to fool with this thing as much as possible." It also suggests a loner: nobody could easily keep up much of a social life while building and testing such intricate contraptions. And because his first devices were relatively unsophisticated, the FBI and other agencies believe he has no formal training with high explosives. Says Ronay: "These bombs are in a lot of ways Neanderthal, but every one of them worked."

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As time went on, he may have broadened his hatred to include not just computer scientists but all of industrial society, and embraced a pro-environment, back-to-the-woods philosophy. That could explain his obsession with using wood in his bombs and last week's targeting of the California Forestry Association, which represents logging companies. And in the Times letter, the Unabomber declares that last December's murder of Thomas Mosser, a former executive with the Burson-Marsteller public-relations firm, was in protest against the company's representing Exxon, whose oil tanker fouled Alaska's Prince William Sound in the great oil spill of 1989.

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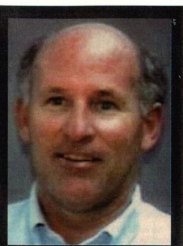
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—FROM A LETTER WRITTEN TO THE NEW YORK TIMES

**KILLER AND VICTIM:** The FBI sketch, left, shows the murderer as he appeared in 1987; Gilbert Murray died because he was a prominent lobbyist for the timber industry



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## SEVENTEEN YEARS OF TERROR

PACKAGE BOMBS LINKED TO THE UNABOMBER





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