

All fall down...

6 May 1995

THE UNABOMBER has killed again and, this time, he has spelt out who he sees as the enemy. In letters written to The New York Times and to two surviving victims of his earlier parcel-bomb attacks he explains that he is out to get “scientists and engineers, especially in critical fields like computers and genetics”.

The Unabomber has struck 16 times, killing three people. Since 1978 his bombs have gone off at seven well-known universities in the US.

In his letters, the Unabomber claims to represent a group of “radical environmentalists”. His latest victim was the president of the California Forestry Association, a group which opposes restrictions on logging in national forests. The Unabomber has long appeared obsessed with wood. Several of the bombs have been contained in handmade wooden cases.

It is hard to understand the Unabomber’s hatred of scientists. The environmental movement has some of its strongest supporters among researchers at the campuses the Unabomber has attacked. And if his goal is, as he claims, to save us from “the worldwide industrial system”, then he would be better off supporting the research that leads us into the postindustrial system than trying to go backwards.

One thing the Unabomber does have in common with scientists is a burning desire to be published. In his letters, he offers to end his attacks if a well-known magazine will print a “long article, between 29 000 and 37 000 words, that we want to have published”. So far, only Bob Guccione, publisher of Penthouse and Omni has said he is prepared to take him up.

The Ted K Archive

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New Scientist. <www.newscientist.com/article/mg14619760-200-all-fall-down>

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