

Our America with Lisa Ling: Families of Killers

March 12, 2013

Contents

Description	4
Transcript	5
Introduction	5
David's Story	6
Bill Babbitt's Story	8
Jeff's Story	10
Amber's Story	13
Jeff's Story Continued	14
David & Babbitt's Story Continued	15
Jeff's Story Continued	17
Amber's Story Continued	17

View here: <https://web.archive.org/web/20e_/http://wayback-fakeurl.archive.org/yt/M6-Y5fy-8gw>

Description

In moments of national grief, we look for answers. But what if you were related to the perpetrator, if they were your own flesh and blood? In this episode of “Our America,” Lisa Ling meets several individuals—the Unabomber’s brother, a serial killer’s daughter, a school shooter’s father—as they share their unique experiences of shame, guilt and love.

About OWN:

Oprah Winfrey Network is the first and only network named for, and inspired by, a single iconic leader. Oprah Winfrey’s heart and creative instincts inform the brand — and the magnetism of the channel.

Winfrey provides leadership in programming and attracts superstar talent to join her in primetime, building a global community of like-minded viewers and leading that community to connect on social media and beyond. OWN is a singular destination on cable. Depth with edge. Heart. Star power. Connection. And endless possibilities.

Transcript

Introduction

[Home movie footage]

Jeff: There's Andy.

Lisa Ling: This is Andy Williams.

[Home movie footage]

Andy: Hi daddy

Jeff: He was a daddy's boy.

[Home movie footage]

Jeff: There you go. That's it.

I got some videos of him riding the two wheel bike with the. Train wheels on for the very first time. You're really, really nice little kid.

He was the lead in Charlie Brown musical. It was pretty good to watch.

Lisa Ling: Within a year, Jeff Williams son, now 15, would step onto a much larger stage.

Jeff: I was in the car and I was at a stoplight and had the radio on and it came on that there was two kids got killed. And I sat there at that stop light screaming and Andy's name, saying why? Why? Why?

News Reporter: Before it was over, freshman student Andy Williams would shoot 15 people, killing at least 2.

Lisa Ling: What's it like to love somebody who commits an unspeakable crime? Tonight we hear from a school shooter's father, a serial killers daughter. A terrorist's brother.

News Reporter: Sir, are you the Unabomber.

David Kaczynski: For the rest of time, when people think of this name Kaczynski, they're going to think murder, madness, violence. In some sense Ted's bombs had blown up a lot of worlds, you know, including ours.

Lisa Ling: How does a family member live with the death? The devastation? The disgrace? America. It can be inspiring and beautiful. It can also be dark and ugly. It's so many things. But it's ours. It's our America.

David's Story

Lisa Ling: Ted Kaczynski was, by every measure a prodigy, a genius. He had an IQ of 165. He got into Harvard at the age of 16. He was a brilliant mathematician, a rising star of the academic world. And then he disappeared. The year was 1971. He moved to the woods of Montana and built himself a 1 room cabin with no water or electricity. Over the next decade, he would shut himself off from the world and become, in the words of his distant neighbors, a hermit. Only one person was close to Ted during this time, and he lived over 1000 miles away in a cabin of his own in the Texas Desert, his brother David.

David Kaczynski: Hi Lisa. How are you? Oh. Oh, welcome.

Lisa Ling: Hey, David, how are you? So nice to meet you. Thank you so much for inviting. Us to come. David Kaczynski looked up to his Big Brother, Ted. He followed distantly in his footsteps.

Lisa Ling: You come from Chicago, went to Ivy League schools, but yet you really saw this kind of isolated peaceful environment.

David Kaczynski: When we were children, our family went camping a lot and it was like we loved that, you know, we'd go 2 weeks vacation. My dad had from being a sausage maker, it was like. Just such a lovely time and a bonding time for the brothers too, to spend time together out in the woods.

Lisa Ling: It was a bond that lasted.

David Kaczynski: We loved each other. We loved the woods. We both were idealistic in our own ways.

Lisa Ling: By the 1980's, the brothers Kaczynski had retreated from the Dawning computer age, carving out rustic, solitary lives. David spent nearly a decade in his hand built cabin. Ted would spend 25 years in his. He wrote David dozens of letters from Montana. One of them stood out.

David Kaczynski: At one point he had written me a letter and said I was the only person he had ever loved, he said if anything ever happened to him, I should know that he had loved me.

Lisa Ling: And when you got that letter, did you suspect anything?

David Kaczynski: I thought he was thinking maybe, you know, an accident in the woods.

Lisa Ling: Or something. Did you have any idea of what he might be conspiring to do?

David Kaczynski: Absolutely none. My brother was never violent.

Lisa Ling: What David didn't realize was that Ted's retreat from technology in the modern world had escalated into a deadly assault against it. His cabin in the woods was, in fact a bunker. Inside, he fashioned bombs of wires, pipes and shrapnel. He mailed them primarily to universities and airlines, hence the eventual moniker, Unabomber.

When did you first hear about the Unabomber?

David Kaczynski: It wasn't until 1994 that I ever heard about a Unabomber. My wife, Linda, is a college professor, so we had some conversation. You know, hun' don't open any packages? You know, there's this Unabomber out there.

Lisa Ling: After 17 years and 16 bombs, the Unabomber's Trail had gone cold. Then, in June of 1995, a typewritten manuscript arrived at the New York Times. It called for a revolution against technology. The FBI urged the newspaper to publish what would become known as the Unabomber Manifesto, hoping somebody, somewhere would recognize the intellectual fingerprints of its anonymous author.

David Kaczynski: You know, I'd read my brother's philosophy about technology, his language, how he thought. I almost thought I could hear my brother's voice in the letters.

Lisa Ling: Now, David heard a very familiar cadence in the Unabomber manifesto. He faced a wrenching choice.

David Kaczynski: You know, if Ted were the Unabomber, there was a fair chance, probably even a likelihood, that he'd be executed. So, I had to ask myself, what would it be like to go through the rest of my life with my brother's blood on my hands? You know, I thought about Ted. I mean, here's this man with paranoia who says he's only loved one person in his life, and that's his little brother and his little brother ends up being the one who hands him over to an execution. You know, it was kind of, this was the moment of truth where I actually had to tell Mom what we suspected.

Lisa Ling: David broached the subject with his mother delicately.

David Kaczynski: Mom, has it occurred to you that you know the Unabomber has this manifesto against technology and, you know, Ted has this phobia about technology. Well, Mom, you know, was clearly connecting the dots. I mean, within 5 minutes, she just got very quiet and her first reaction, and I think, you know, it's very forgivable given that she's a mom. She says, oh, David, don't tell anyone. And I said, Mom, I've already told some people.

Lisa Ling: David had told the FBI. Weeks later, he watched the Evening News with his wife and mother.

David Kaczynski: He had a film clip of him being led out from his cabin between two federal marshals and I've never seen a homeless person that looked worse than Ted did at that moment.

Every pair of eyes in the universe is seeing this man and seeing a monster. What we're seeing is a brother, a son. Like my heart wanted to be there with him and to to say, you know, as much as we hate what you've done. We love you. You know your family loves you.

I can't tell you what it felt like. You know to know like for the rest of time when people think of this name kazinski like I think, murder, madness, violence.

News reporter: Ted, Are you the Unabomber?

Lisa Ling: Were you afraid of how Ted was going to react upon hearing that you had turned him in?

David Kaczynski: I guess, for sure, I mean, I found out later that apparently he had asked how did they ever find me? And one of the officers said, well, didn't you know your brother had turned you in and what was reported to me was that Ted refused to believe it. He said "my brother would never do that."

Lisa Ling: In 1998, Ted Kaczynski was locked away for life in a federal supermax prison. In 15 years, he has not responded to a single one of David's monthly letters. David had likely saved many innocent lives, but he was dead to his only brother. Who could ever know how that feels? A fellow traveller, another brother of another killer, but Bill Babbitt's story has a fatal twist. His choice to turn in his brother would lead to death row.

Bill Babbitt's Story

Bill Babbitt: Every time I go back east I make a side trip. Go to the Saint Patrick's cemetery. To my brother's grave. In this blessed soil of Cape Cod, MA. And stand in front of. This. Plaque on the ground, which says private manual Babbitt, USMC, Vietnam. Didn't say simplified brother Manny forever faithful. That's the Marine core model.

Lisa Ling: Semper Fi, forever faithful. Bill Babbitt, was loyal to his brother Manny, to the bitter end. He desperately tried to save his life. Bills journey is a saga of guilt, sorrow and salvation of a killer's brother and a brother's keeper. It's a journey that has led him here onto this train, bound for Texas. But it began 3 decades ago in Sacramento. On the day a marine showed up at his. Door.

Bill Babbitt: Then he kind of surprised me. I was on the job and there's my brother and his Marine Corps uniform. So handsome. So strong looking such a warrior and. I was very proud of my brother Manny. But Manny was gone. He left it all packed in Vietnam. He wasn't the same. He wasn't the same Manny. He came home.

Lisa Ling: But you took him in anyway.

Bill Babbitt: Of course, my wife loved him.

Lisa Ling: Manny Babbitt had served 2 tours in Vietnam, surviving one of the most brutal battles of the war caisson.

Bill Babbitt: Back then, when Manny first came out of the war, we didn't know about the PTSD. Now he's fighting an imaginary war here in the streets. Of America.

Lisa Ling: When Bill took Manny in, he knew his brother was troubled, but he didn't know how troubled he would quickly learn. On December 19th, 1980, a 78 year old woman named Leah Schendel was found dead in her South Sacramento apartment, badly beaten and partially disrobed. The shock of the assault and an attempted rape caused her to have a fatal heart attack, according to prosecutors. The assailant left Shandell's apartment with a telltale souvenir.

Bill Babbitt: In those old fashioned cigarette lighters and had initials on it LS.

Lisa Ling: Bill Babbitt had found the monogram lighter among many things he had read about the attack in the paper and had thought nothing of his brother's disappearance the night of the crime until now.

Bill Babbitt: My first thought was to give my bus ticket. Send them back east to Massachusetts or Rhode Island. You know, if I hadn't done that, who knows how many other grandmothers would have found themselves in Manny's war, you know, and we just couldn't do that. So I made a phone call to the Sacramento Police Department, and I told them, I said, I think my brother's got blood on his hands.

Lisa Ling: Manny claimed to have no recollection of the attack, but his fingerprints were all over the crime scene. The victim's ankle was tied with a strap and her face was covered with a mattress. Bill speculates that Manny had left the body in the same manner as he might have tagged a fallen soldier in Vietnam, evidence of his brother's severe post traumatic stress disorder. Did you go to authorities because you thought somehow this could be a way that your brother could get help?

Bill Babbitt: Yes, most definitely.

Lisa Ling: Bill hoped his brother would be put into a mental institution. That's what the police suggested when he brought them to Manny.

Bill Babbitt: Cop, came over to me and goes Sir. Bill, we've got your brother? He's OK. You wanna ride there? Back with him. And I told the cop. He says I can't get in the car. You know, I can't go with him, you know. I felt like I betrayed my brother. They asked me if I want to say something to him and I go. You're gonna be OK. You know, he says I did it for you, brother. And he says, please, please forgive me. And he looked up at me and says, brother Billy, he says I've already forgiven you.

Lisa Ling: But Manny was not put into a mental hospital.

Bill Babbitt: One day I called the district attorney's office. That's when I found out that they were, in fact seeking the death penalty for nanny. They called Manny a March. Did they call him an animal? And I remember my mother telling me. What do you mean? He's an animal. You mean to tell me I had eight kids and one of them was an animal?

Train conductor: Our next stop will be El Paso, TX.

Lisa Ling: By 1999, with every appeal exhausted and every stay of execution denied, the Babbitt family was desperate and Bill was reeling with grief with guilt. Many had forgiven him, but other family members had not.

Bill Babbitt: Some of the young people probably referred to me as a. Snitch. You know which I've been called terrible words. I have nephews that they don't want anything to do with me and they hate me and I know they hate me and I'm thinking maybe I ought to hate me too.

Lisa Ling: Concern for Bill, Manny's lawyer placed a call to Texas to David Kaczynski, the Unabomber's brother.

David Kaczynski: The lawyer talked about this man, Bill Babbitt. He said David, you know, you may be someone who could really relate to what he's feeling. I know

that horrible dilemma you're faced with where you either protect your brother or your protects a world of innocent people from your brother.

Lisa Ling: David came to California to stand by Billy's side and to plead for clemency on Manny's behalf.

Bill Babbitt: Hey, Dave, what's happening? We have. Hey, what's happening?

David Kaczynski: How are you? It's good to see you.

Bill Babbitt: Yeah, it's good to see you too, David.

Bill Babbitt: When Manny's neck was headed for the noose, David must have picked up on something because he says, Bill, I'm going to ask you right now. Promise me you'll never hurt yourself. Remember that?

David Kaczynski: Yeah I do.

Lisa Ling: Manny Babbitt was executed on May 4th, 1999. Bill watched his brother die. David attended the funeral.

David Kaczynski: At one point I saw Bill with his arm around his mother and Mrs. Babbitts like like her legs buckle. She starts to fall. She starts wailing. My son, my son. And here's Bill trying to hold up his mom, you know. And I'm thinking, wow, that could have been me and my mom.

Lisa Ling: For the next decade, Bill and David would find a common cause as brothers in arms, fighting against the death penalty.

News Reporter: I tell you over the last three years I've logged thousands of miles across the state of New York. I've gone to small towns. People feel differently about the death penalty than they.

Lisa Ling: And they would forge a deep friendship.

Bill Babbitt: Manny is gone. God has brought me another brother. I have another little brothers name is David. David, let me know in no uncertain terms that he will not reject me. He will always be my friend. It's a promise. It's a promise that he's made.

Lisa Ling: Bill and David found solace in their shared struggle. But I'm about to meet a father who had to shoulder the burden of a son's atrocity completely alone. On the morning of March 5th, 2001, there was a shooting at Santana High School in Santee, CA.

Jeff's Story

Police dispatcher: OK, honey. OK. Where's the shooter?

Student: He was in the boys bathroom.

Police dispatcher: And how many people have been shot?

Student: My friend has been shot, I think a few others have...

Jeff: I was at work and about 9:30. TV was on and there was a shooting at school and the school administrators have requested that the parents come get their children.

Lisa Ling: Jeff Williams, 15 year old son Andy was a freshman at Santana High.

Jeff: There's all the police, helicopters and media helicopters over and slots and sheriff's cars, and there's parking lot across the high school.

Lisa Ling: The school had been evacuated into a strip mall parking lot across the street.

Jeff: I was hoping he wasn't one of the victims. At the time you don't know how many people were killed, don't know how many injured, nothing like that. You're just out there.

Lisa Ling: I've traveled to San D. to meet Jeff in the parking lot where he went to search for his son after the shooting. It was here that his entire world would be turned upside down.

So, Jeff, today the shopping center looks like a typical one. But on March 5th, 2001, it was a very different environment, wasn't it?

Jeff: Ohh very different. I still get goosebumps. You know, thinking about that day and I can picture them injured being taken care of. I see all the police cars and stuff that are over here. I see the parents worrying about their children. It is disturbing and it probably won't ever go away.

Lisa Ling: It's a parent's worst nightmare. Something has happened to their child. After over an hour and no sign of Andy, Jeff was beginning to panic. Finally, he spotted some familiar faces.

Jeff: Here's these two young women. And these friends I recognize from apartment complex, and they're crying and I go, hey, have you seen Andy? Where is he? I've walked everywhere. And Andy did it. You could just like feel your. Heart. Just fall down, no, there's no way.

Lisa Ling: Andy Williams had opened fire in the boys bathroom of his high school, then continued shooting into a crowd of students gathered in the courtyard. He surrendered officers after killing two students and wounding 13 other people. While Andy was in police custody, Jeff was across the street alone in a crowd.

Jeff: There was nobody you know that was here that I could talk to. The only people I could talk to is the people I worked with that day. It still bothers me and I had a call there telling me that Andy did this.

Lisa Ling: It was a shocking and desperate act by a teenager who until recently had been a good student, well behaved and popular things began to change when Jeff, a single father since Andy was three, moved to San D. for a job. It was the fall of 2000.

You all moved to California from Maryland and he was really popular in Maryland and once. He. Started coming to this school. He was teased a lot wasn't he?

Jeff: Yeah, yeah. So teased for his being small in stature and our Hillbilly accent, so to speak.

Lisa Ling: So this wasn't a place that Andy likes to come to.

Jeff: Not at all.

Lisa Ling: But Andy did make some new friends at Santana High. He hung out with them almost every day after school, and when Jeff asked Andy about the bruises, he often came home with, his son told him they were from spills on his skateboard.

Andy confided in his friends back home in Maryland about the constant bullying. He became suicidal. By February. He felt he had nothing left to lose. He told some of his friends in Santee that he was going to, quote, pull a Columbine. They didn't believe him, according to some, they actually goaded him into it. According to others. Whatever the case, they didn't try to stop him.

In the days that followed the shooting, the apartment where Jeff and Andy lived was cordoned off with police tape and fingers were pointed at Jeff. It was, after all, his gun that Andy fired.

Jeff: I taught Andy how to shoot. We taught him how to respect the guns. You know, they were in a locked gun cabinet. I did not know there was any bullets in the gun cabinet.

Lisa Ling: The cabinet was locked, but Andy knew where Jeff kept the key. He made off with his father's 22 caliber revolver and 40 bullets.

Jeff: I'm Gilbert in today as I was then for what my son did. I feel sorry for the families. You lost your children that day and you know, for the ones that were wounded.

Lisa Ling: While Andy awaited Justice Jeffs, fatherhood would be put on trial.

Jeff: I'm at the grocery store. And here's my kids book bag and stuff is on Time magazine cover about school shooter and here I am portrayed at this hillbilly beer drinking. Camouflage, wearing long haired watching sports all day, sleeping on the floor guy.

Lisa Ling: How did it make you feel when you? Read. That Andy's father was negligent or neglectful.

Jeff: I'm single parent doing my best, you know to put a house. Over our heads beat us both. I thought I was pretty good. Parent. I missed 3 soccer games, you know, from the time he was five years old. Until you know, we moved to Santee, I think that was pretty darn good.

Lisa Ling: But do you think do you think there's anything that you could have done in terms of communication that that may have prevented him from acting out?

Jeff: I still can't answer that. It wasn't one of those. You know I love you, you know. And you know, and I hug. Am I reading? No, it wasn't that way. The funny thing is, three days after the school shooting is when the first time I was able to see him. At juvenile hall and I tell you about, he looked tiny in those jail cell clothes, and that was the first time I ever told my love. I think it might have been a little bit too late.

Judge: All right, Miss Anton. Are you ready for...

Lisa Ling: At 15, Andy Williams was tried as an adult and was sentenced to life in prison. He'll serve at least 50 years before he's eligible for parole. He lives here now at the Ironwood State prison in the middle of the Mojave Desert.

Amber's Story

Lisa Ling: Over 1000 miles to the north in Spokane, WA. I'll meet a young woman who is also paying for horrific crime. Amber is not a convicted killer, but her father is among the deadliest America has ever known. This used to be Amber Yates. Several years ago, she legally changed her name here in Spokane. The name Yates casts a long shadow.

Amber: Spokane is the place where he committed the crime, so. I like being anonymous and not having the negative attention on me. Oh, look, there she is. Serial killers, daughter. Stay away from her. Do you know who that is? You stay away from her. Don't go by. Her don't talk to her.

Lisa Ling: Amber's father was one of the most feared killers to ever stalk the Pacific Northwest.

Amber: I was at work actually. There I got a call from my mom saying my dad had been arrested for murder. There was two detectives that came and picked me up from work, and then we saw some of the the footage. The news on TV.

News Reader: By comparing his DNA to samples found at crime scenes, investigators say they have tied Yates to 12 homicides, possibly 18.

Lisa Ling: Robert Lee Yates killed at least 13 women in Spokane. Prostitutes he picked up from the Red light district. He shot them, tied plastic bags around their heads, then disposed of the bodies in wooded areas. And then he went home to his wife and five children.

Amber: We're in the old neighborhood that I used to live. In.

Lisa Ling: We're getting close to your. Old house, yeah.

Amber: It's this house right here. Which one? This one right here.

Lisa Ling: It was here that Amber's father would park the family van after a night of killing. Did you or your family members ever notice any kind of odd things? Like, I mean, he had this van with a bed in it. Did you ever think?

Amber: Anything of it? My mom knew he was cheating, but he was able to explain things away like he said. He ran into a dog and he put it in the back of the. And so that was the explanation for blood. We had nothing to suspect.

Lisa Ling: Amber was a teenager at the time of most of the killings, the mid 1990s. Her father, a career Army officer, was so comfortable behind his suburban facade that he buried one of his last victims in the yard.

Amber: Where the gate is and where the the poles are. That's the proximity where she was buried, the victim.

Lisa Ling: So your father buried this woman's body while you guys were living there? Yeah.

Amber: How does it make you? Feel we didn't know it was. There. It's not creepy any longer. It probably was when it first came out, but. Is, to me, he was hiding the body. Just another place to hide another body.

Lisa Ling: When you've lived through the horror that Amber has, maybe detachment is the only form of self-defense. What was going on behind these?

Amber: Doors abuse. Violence. Dysfunction. There were times when it felt like St. was coming through the door.

Lisa Ling: What are some of the things that he? Did.

Amber: To you? Well, when I was five, he picked me up by my ankle and shook me until I peed on myself and then just dropped me on my head. And then when I was a teenager. He was screaming at my little brother and sister and he was calling them stupid and dumb and I told him stop. And I'll quit saying that to them. And he came over and he picked me up at the two. Big Cross the room. I'm sorry you had to break.

Lisa Ling: Her father's arrest marked the end of both the killings and the physical abuse of his family.

Lisa Ling: But for Amber, a new struggle was about to begin.

Amber: I went to living in a home to living in shelters and struggling to try to survive.

Lisa Ling: Why did that happen? Like, why did you go from middle class and affluent community to shelters?

Amber: My dad was a provider for the family. And when he was arrested, everything just crumbled.

Lisa Ling: What did it do to you all as a family unit?

Amber: Caused a lot of depression and there was much more fighting and arguing discord. Some of the dysfunction is still there.

Lisa Ling: While her father spent the last decade on death row at the Washington State Penitentiary, Amber has spent her 20s in Arrested Development. She abandoned school and has had trouble holding down a job. And why couldn't you keep a job?

Amber: There was fear that I was the same as my father. I'm afraid of her. No, no. You know who her dad is? He's a serial killer. Let's go tell the boss she shouldn't be working here.

Lisa Ling: So people didn't want you on their teams or? On their staff.

Amber: I've had people say like father, like daughter. They would try to make me seem like I was a monster. I couldn't be like normal. Have normal feelings or a normal life.

Lisa Ling: A normal life. It's all Amber wants, but is it really possible for a serial killers daughter or a school shooter's father or a terrorist brother to ever have a normal life?

Jeff's Story Continued

Lisa Ling: A year after his son Andy was sent to prison for shooting up his high school in Southern California, Jeff Williams moved to a suburb of Phoenix.

Jeff: These are some of the baseball teams that he played on.

Lisa Ling: It was his partner, Donna's Idea.

Jeff's wife: I moved Jeff out of there, I said. Jeffrey, you're gonna find a new job. We're gonna move out of Santee and out of this area. I'm sure that when they see me. That I am I am in the same level that they believe Jeff is and that's OK very at the very bottom.

Amber: What's that level?

Lisa Ling: Do you think initially you judged Jeff based on what Andy did?

Jeff's wife: No, I cannot say that other than I knew that this man. Just by looking in his eyes, I could feel that he had been through hell and back. I know Andy did a horrible thing, but I also knew I was standing in front of a father and I. Was by himself.

Jeff: Hey is it, is it storming there yet?

Andy: It's raining hard.

Lisa Ling: That's Andy. On the phone, they talk about the usual things, sports, the weather, familiar banter for the middle-aged Dad and his 20 something son.

Jeff: That was the funniest thing, Andy. We had ice chest and I had. I bet you I had a case of sodas in there.

Lisa Ling: There's close now, perhaps as they've ever been.

Jeff: Yeah, them kids drink all that soda.

There's times you know that when I talk to him on the phone, the only thing I see is the little 3 year old boy on the bicycle with training wheels. And that kind of like makes it OK, just for a little bit.

[On the phone to Andy] ..and that was my first time.

Automated voice: This is a recorded call from an inmate in a California correctional facility.

Jeff: How many times can you do that? It's going to tear on you, you know? So some part of it, you gotta put some of this stuff away.

Automated voice: You have 20 seconds left on this call.

Jeff: But how do you do that? I still haven't quite figured that part out yet.

Jeff: Alright, love you.

Andy: Love you.

Jeff: Bye bye.

David & Babbitt's Story Continued

Lisa Ling: It's a struggle every family of every killer tries to figure out somehow.

David Kaczynski: OK. Dry wood that will catch.

Lisa Ling: When the person you love commits an unspeakable act of violence, what do you do with that love? Can you ever put it away? Few can understand what David Kaczynski went through when he turned in his only brother, Ted the Unabomber. Bill Babbitt, can he turned in his brother Manny for. Murder Ted Kaczynski was sentenced

to life in prison for his crimes, and Manny Babbitt was executed. You 2 both lost your brothers, but in many ways you've kind of become brothers yourselves. What does that mean for you to have brothers?

David Kaczynski: Shared similar tragedies. That his journey was much longer and much more difficult than mine. His brother was executed, and I can never know if I would have the grace that bill has had. I will never know if I have what you have in terms of the ability to. To reconcile. To not hate others or to feel guilty yourself.

Bill Babbitt: I you know, I was always embarrassed because I got out of school. The 1st 88th grade, but I don't have to prove nothing to David. See because David is not looking into my head to read what's in my head. He's already read what's in my heart.

We opened up our hearts to one another. You know, to me that's what it's all about. I could feel very sad. One minute. Next minute. We're poking fun at one another.

You've cooked over the campfire a lot. I guess you know what you're doing. Do your thing.

David Kaczynski: I think a lot of people would recognize that when you go through tough times, sometimes humor is a great gift.

Bill Babbitt: Well, I had some of your rice and beans and you know what you're doing.

David Kaczynski: Oh, thanks. Yeah, that's my specialty.

Bill Babbitt: Your rice and beans is the bomb. No pun intended. (laughs)

Amber: Hey! (laughs)

Lisa Ling: Bill has come here to Texas to share a milestone with David.

So Bill, it's your 70th birthday today. Why did you want to come spend it with David?

Bill Babbitt: 70 years old!

Lisa Ling: That's a big that's a monumental achievement. 70. That's pretty cool of him to allow you to eat steaks in his home because he's a strict vegetarian.

Bill Babbitt: Yeah, I know, I hope you'll forgive me, you know? You know, being 70 years old and 1 foot in the grave and one foot on the Banana peel. This might be the last time I'll come down here I think in those terms. In other words, I would like to live life to the fullest. That's why it come limping down here. I wish Manny was here. I wish Ted was here. I wish all four of us could be here together, but it's not to be.

David Kaczynski: I think back about my brother and I think, gosh, all the times I should have really realized how fragile it all might be.

Bill Babbitt: Thank you, little brother, David.

David Kaczynski: The biological brother that I have and that I've loved. He's he's gone. You know, he's he's in my heart. That's about the only place I can find him.

With Bill, we're we're here today. We're alive. Were reasonably good health, good spirits.

I want to make a toast to Mr. Bill Babbitt, the best friend a man could have. Happy birthday. Happy birthday.

Bill Babbitt: Well, thank you. Thank you.

Jeff's Story Continued

Lisa Ling: It's Christmas time, for better or for worse, the holidays bring families together. For Jeff Williams, that means getting ready for a long drive to visit his son Andy.

Jeff: I want to be able to drive to my son's house for Christmas.

OK, we're ready to go. Well, I do drive to this house, but it just happens to be behind four or five walls, Bob, or you know, and and the garage at the gate.

Lisa Ling: Once a month, Jeff and Donna leave their home in Arizona at 5:00 AM to make the four hour drive to visit Andy at Ironwood State Prison in California. So Jeff and Don are having their monthly visit with Andy, and we're not allowed to bring cameras inside, so we're waiting at a local truck stop, but this will be the last visit. That Jeff has with his son before Christmas. I catch up with Jeff and Donna one last time on their way back to Arizona. So how was the visit?

Jeff: Everything worked really smooth. We got a couple pictures here.

Lisa Ling: The prison has its own photo studio. Wow. It's so interesting to see him because the picture that the world is familiar with are him. Just a little boy. And he's like such a. Tall man, now Andy is 6, three, nearly a foot taller than he was in 2001. What does it feel like to watch your son become a man in prison?

Jeff: Yes. These. To the point where half he spent almost half his life behind bars and it's hard to believe. For me, that has been that long. As of March 5th, 2001, expectations of what any of us were going to do were drastically changed and you just settle for what you can get for the good stuff.

Lisa Ling: Andy will be a senior citizen by the time he's eligible for parole.

Do you think about the fact that you might never see your son outside of prison walls during your lifetime?

Jeff: Yeah, he's up for parole when I'm 90 years old and granted he's alive. I'm not visiting a tombstone or a memorial. I'm visiting him. There's parents that don't get to see their son. There's parents that can't hug them. Well, at least I can do that. Each year it comes, it's a little less painful. But then you know, it's Christmas time. I'm gonna go see my son. I go see him in person garb. And that's our Christmas.

Amber's Story Continued

Lisa Ling: For Amber Yates, Christmas is also a reminder of the family she's lost.

Amber: I'm going to spend Christmas Day by myself. I don't have family around and I don't have the resources to go and see them. It's. Similar to some of the past, the holidays that I've experienced just by myself.

Lisa Ling: Amber's mom and her four siblings have moved away from Spokane and her relationship with them is strained. But I'm surprised to learn that Amber is still in touch with the father who caused the disintegration of her family over a decade ago.

Amber: I've worked on a lot of forgiveness, but it it's hard with my father. I mean, there was a period of time. I did hate him. And they're still anger and unforgiveness towards him. But that's my father. That's my flesh and blood.

Lisa Ling: To his victims and their families, Robert Yates will always be a monster. But Amber has chosen to let go of her hate for him, not for his sake, but for her own. She's chosen to let go of her shame. Amber has never shared her story publicly before. Now she hopes to begin writing herself a new chapter. If you could. Will anything to happen like what would that be?

Amber: Going back to college for sure.

Lisa Ling: Amber has begun a degree program in nursing and with the assistance of a local charity, she's moved out of the homeless shelter and into an apartment of her own. Last night was her first here.

Hey, amber. Wow, this is it.

Amber: Hi.

Lisa Ling: How was it to sleep here last night?

Amber: It was good, felt peaceful. So this is my bed, no mattress yet, and then I don't have any dresser, of course. So it's my clothes and all my personal items.

Lisa Ling: Since your father's arrest, have you felt any period of normalcy?

Amber: No, no, not at all. Everything's just been all out of whack.

Lisa Ling: So in a way, this little apartment means something, huh?

Amber: Yeah, it's my own space, my own atmosphere. A step to normalcy in my life and do better things.

Lisa Ling: And you feel like that's within your grasp.

Amber: I think so.

Lisa Ling: The killers are gone dead or in prison. In their wake. They've left a trail of shattered lives, orphans, widows, parents of murdered children. Victims, families with an unknowable sorrow. We grieve for them in the only way we can. But in the shadows of our vigils and memorials, there are anonymous survivors among us. Fathers and brothers, mothers and sisters. The killers family. And together they mourn alone.

Oprah: I'm excited to give you an update about our own YouTube channel. Now you can find new videos every day. They're the kind of videos that will make you look

at life differently. They may even make you laugh a little bit, subscribe to the OWN channel today and we'll see you on YouTube.

The Ted K Archive

Our America with Lisa Ling: Families of Killers
March 12, 2013

<web.archive.org/.../youtube.com/watch?v=M6-Y5fy-8gw>
Oprah Winfrey Network TV (OWN TV)

www.thetedkarchive.com