# The Cry of a Child

**The Unabomber Suspect's Explosive Family Boundaries**

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The torment of Unabomber suspect Theodore John (Ted, Teddy John) Kaczynski's family is intense and tragic. His mother Wanda wonders what went wrong in the early development of her older son. She does not want to believe that her precocious offspring used his education to frighten, hurt, and kill people: in her mind the bomb he had helped other boys build in chemistry class at age 13 was just a childhood prank. Mrs. Kaczynski, after all, had been an extremely devoted mother who even kept a diary of her child's early life, and had encouraged his development as a genius. His brother David, who looked up to his older brother's "purity," wonders now if he is partially responsible for the destruction by unknowingly helping to finance the Unabomber suspect's crimes. David, a social worker who believes in the Biblical injunction to be his brother's keeper, wonders if he will be indirectly responsible for another death — his brother's: if Ted is found guilty of the Unabomber crimes, he probably will face the death penalty. This tormented family, while wanting to protect the legal position of their loved one, struggles to determine where the story of the Unabomber begins. The answer is clear to us: it begins with the cry of a frightened child.

On February 27, 1943, nine-month-old "Teddy John" screamed in agony, but nobody seemed to listen. During his week-long stay at the hospital, he was strapped down so that photographs could be taken of his hives. In the mind of this terrified nine-month-old, his usually loving parents had abandoned him. His mother left him at that terrible place, and although she came back once to see him, she did not rescue him. Teddy John was miserable during his stay, he was lonely, and his skin itched horribly. The explosive anger that he could not verbally express was imprinted on his psyche. What could that little nine-month-old do? His options were quite limited. The sense of powerlessness which the Unabomber has carried with him has its roots in this hospital stay, and in other traumata of childhood.

Rage is a central issue in the life of Ted Kaczynski — arrested on April 4, 1996, as the probable Unabomber who had been terrorizing and murdering for almost 18 years — and in the Unabomber's "Manifesto." There is the rage he felt as a nine-month-old strapped to the doctor's table and denied the comfort of his parents. There is the rage he experienced as a seven-year-old when his mother left him to go to the hospital to bring back his brother David and the sense of abandonment he felt when he was left alone in the hospital waiting room while his father and aunt went up to see the new baby. (Their aunt said Ted seemed crestfallen at having to share his parents' lavish attention with his new brother.) There is the rage he felt as a ten-year-old demanding that his father release a shrew (a type of mole, the size of a mouse) he had trapped. There is the rage he felt as a man at the very existence of a sister-in-law he had never met. There is the rage and hurt he felt at his father having once said Ted had "the brain of a 2-year-old." The rage in the Unabomber's "Manifesto" takes the form of the desire to overthrow "the economic and technological basis of the present society." On

at least one occasion, his frustration was not even cloaked by ideological verbiage when he declared that "it would be better to dump the whole stinking system and take the consequences."

When the Unabomber writes that "modern man is strapped down by a network of rules and regulations," our first thought is of the nine-month-old Teddy John strapped to the doctor's table. This thought is reinforced when he goes on to declare, "and his [modern man's] fate depends on the actions of persons remote from him whose decisions he cannot influence," since it rings true to his hospital experience as well. Is he blaming his parents for abandoning him in the hospital when he writes, "this [modern man's helplessness] is not accidental or a result of the arbitrariness of arrogant bureaucrats"? In these statements Ted is transferring his old horror of the hospital experience to the controlling social laws of the modern technological society he faces.

As an adult, Ted has a deeply ingrained fear of the sense of powerlessness which, he states, is the result of "the regulation of our lives by large organizations." Even as a precocious student he certainly felt straight-jacketed by modern society. Later on he came to feel that "the system HAS TO [sic] regulate human behavior closely in order to function" and "[this regulation is] necessary and inevitable in any technologically-advanced society." In his mind technological society had become the enemy. Why?

As psychohistorians, we wonder who in his life is associated with technology? When he was a child, his mother, Wanda Dombek Kaczynski (born 1917), read *Scientific American* to him and in many ways encouraged his inclination to become a child prodigy in the fields of math and science. She was a high school dropout who aspired to know, and eventually became a teacher. While the father, Theodore Richard Kaczynski, wanted his sons to do well in school and in life, he also took the boys camping for days at a stretch — they lived off the land. (We need to know more about the genesis and the impact on the family of the father Kaczynski's suicide in 1991, a suicide precipitated by the cancer within his body. We do not yet know if the elder Kaczynski killed himself to avoid pain, or mostly to avoid the invasion of his body by scientific, institutionalized medicine which Ted had begun war against in 1978.) When young Professor Ted Kaczynski left the Mathematics Department at Berkeley in 1969, eventually to go live in nature, was he rebelling against his mother's values and dreams for him in favor of nature which he associated with his father's values and dreams? We suspect so. In the "Manifesto," nature is set up as an ideal:

The positive ideal we propose is Nature. That is, WILD [sic] nature: those aspects of the functioning of the Earth and its living things that are independent of human management and free of human interference and control.... Nature makes a perfect counter-ideal to technology for several reasons. Nature (that which is outside the power of the system) is the opposite of technology (which seeks to expand indefinitely the power of the system).... Nature is beautiful.... Only with the Industrial Revolution did the effect of human society on nature become really devastating. To relieve the pressure on nature it is not necessary to create a special kind of social system, it is only necessary to get rid of industrial society (paragraphs 183-184).

Given his exultation of "Nature," it became easy for Ted Kaczynski to "advocate a revolution against the industrial system." His mother said that he abruptly quit Berkeley because of environmental concerns and his father said that Ted could not accept teaching the nuclear bomb builders of the future. He returned home, became a gardener, worked in a foam factory, and then went to the backwoods to live in the wild. "Nature" was the great healer which would bring the family, or at least the men of the family, together. Yet, in the end, "nature therapy," much like "travel therapy," does not work since we carry our conflicts within us — wherever we go. There was no escape for Ted in the wilds of Canada and Montana from the turmoil of the his days in the 1960s as an undergraduate student at Harvard, a graduate student at the University of Michigan, and a disliked professor at the University of California at Berkeley. The explosive rage that he experienced in the Chicago hospital and at home traveled with him — wherever he went. In the backwoods, living on $200 a year, technology became all the more clearly "the Enemy." In fighting technology, Ted felt he was fighting for his very humanity: if only he could destroy the technological monster, he could somehow restore himself to the oneness with his "good mother" — the mother of the first nine months of his life.

Ted lived in the world, but was emotionally isolated from it. Though he is an intellectual genius with an IQ level of 170, he is emotionally-stunted with a very low "emotional IQ." As an adult he blamed his parents for valuing "his brain" more than his happiness. Throughout his life Ted seemed only able to relate to animals, younger children, drunks, and the vulnerable — not to his contemporaries. He needed his younger brother David and his mother Wanda to link him with the outside world because of his withdrawal as a young man. Without them present, he was separated from the world by his eccentricities, fears, and rage.

The title of his award-winning math-ematical dissertation, "Boundary Functions," reflected his own inability to establish proper boundaries with the people and the world around him. Ted Kaczynski voluntarily lived in a 10 by 12-foot cabin, built with his own hands in Montana, and now lives in a prison cell because he does not know how to relate to others. He is separated from the world by his own uneasy boundaries and the murderous rage within him. Beneath this rage is the frightened child within, yearning to be reunited with the loving, adoring, and ever-present mother of the first nine months of his life.

*Authors' Note: Our main sources were various articles which appeared in the* Washington Post *and the* New York Times *from April to June, 1996. We took our copy of the Unabomber's "Manifesto" from the Internet. This essay reflects preliminary explorations, not completed research. Also, it is up to a court of law to determine if Ted Kaczynski is in fact the Unabomber.*

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Dr. Paul H. Elovitz, PhD, began organizing scholarly meetings when he started as a faculty member at Ramapo College and then as convener of the Institute for Psychohistory Saturday Workshops (1975-1982). In 1982 he founded the Psychohistory Forum to nurture psychohistorical research and continues to lead its Executive Council. In 1994 he created *Clio's Psyche* (cliospsyche.org) to publish its scholarship, of which he is Editor-in-Chief. Prof. Elovitz is a historian, psychoanalytic researcher, and author of about 400 publications, covering presidential psychobiography, teaching, documenting the field of psychohistory, and much more. After taking his doctoral degree in history, he trained and practiced as a psychoanalyst, and in 2019 was made the first Research Psychoanalyst by the New Jersey Institute for Psychoanalysis. Elovitz is the author of *The Making of Psychohistory*, editor of *The Many Roads of the Builders of Psychohistory, and* edited or wrote eight other books. He is a founding member and past president of the International Psychohistorical Association (1978-) who serves on its leadership council and presents at all meetings. Prof. Elovitz is a founding faculty member at Ramapo College who previously taught at Temple, Rutgers, and Fairleigh Dickinson universities. He may be contacted at cliospsycheeditor@gmail.com.

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