

# Project Unabom

A Podcast Show & Documentary Series

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June, 2022

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# 0. Introducing Project Unabom

When the Unabomber was arrested in 1996, the world got its first glimpse of the serial bomber who had terrorized the nation for 18 years and murdered three people. Bearded and disheveled, he was the perfect depiction of a mad bomber. But what actually happened during those 18 years? What drove Ted Kaczynski to his dystopian vision of people overrun by technology, and why does it feel so familiar? And why did it take nearly two decades to catch him? With new original reporting, host Eric Benson tells the story of a nation reckoning with an increasingly deadly bombing campaign and a family coming to grips with what was happening inside a tiny cabin in the Montana woods.

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# 1. The Manifesto

It was a normal day at the Washington Post—until an essay and a deadly threat arrived in the mailroom.

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Last fall I flew up to the University of Michigan to visit a library.

**Eric:** All right, we have an appointment at the Special Collections Research Center.

**Receptionist:** Here you go up. The second part you go pass out computers. You'll walk into an elevator lobby. And take that to 6.

**Eric:** OK, great.

The Special Collections Research Center is where the university houses some of its rarest and most unusual items. It's not much to look at. A single reading room, modern utilitarian. The morning we arrived there was a guy there very carefully turning the pages of a 400-year-old book of maps detailing the precise choreography of battles that had occurred in the Belgian region of Flanders.

**Librarian Visitor:** And this fellow, the Shelly Eigendom(?) was an important maker of maps.

I find these kind of archives oddly thrilling. Handling one-of-a-kind manuscripts, noticing the smudge marks of some historically significant person going through them is like a. Treasure hunt There's no Dewey decimal system, no detailed guide.

**Librarian:** Select the table where you want to be and we have brought down the collection for you. We'll bring out one box at a time. Do you just want to start at the beginning and go straight through?

**Eric:** Uhm, no, we don't...

I was there to look at the collected papers of Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber, one of the most notorious domestic terrorists in American history. Kaczynski killed three people, tried to kill many more, and has been likened on numerous occasions to the devil, but he's also been compared to the radical abolitionist John Brown and the Transcendentalist philosopher Henry David Thoreau, which has led to this strange archive. Where a major American research institution houses the collected. Written works of an unrepentant murderer and treats his papers just as carefully as if he were some Nobel Prize winning novelist.

Kaczynski has steadfastly refused interview requests from the media for the past two decades. He told one journalist that he would "only be talking to quote 100% committed, far out rabid anti tech radicals." I wrote him. I never heard back.

But as I sat in the reading room that didn't seem to matter much. There was so much already here. One of the librarians brought in the Kaczynski papers one box at a time. There were 79 of them. Kaczynski donated much of the stuff himself after his arrest. And the archive is annotated throughout with handwritten post it notes guiding the researcher through the thousands upon thousands of pages. It's like he's talking directly to you. This was probably with some of my other writings on technology problem in Attic One Note read. There's one folder with the scraps that Ted had tacked above his desk at the time of his arrest, including a postcard showing a buck in a snowbound forest above the words in wilderness is the preservation of the world inside another folder. There are drawings that come with a warning from Ted:

"Some of this material is obscene."

Like a sketch of a naked Dionysian bowhunter reclining with a female partner. It could have been drawn by the kid in your middle school.

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One of the most striking things about looking through Kaczynski papers is how much it complicates the story of him single mindedly pursuing a decades long master plan.

In the middle of his bombing campaign, he strikes up a long correspondence with a Mexican immigrant laborer. Seeks advice on building root Cellars. Contemplates re-enrolling in college.

There's even a welfare application that Ted filled out at the time he was the subject of a nationwide manhunt, and yet he included very specific directions should anyone in the government reviewing his application need to find him.

Approximately 3.7 miles from Lincoln, Mt on Stemple Pass Rd. Find mailbox with my name. Turn east on dirt Rd. Find sawmill, from sawmill can see barn, follow Rd that goes past barn. My cabin is the last cabin up the Gulch. Kaczynski also explained the unusual circumstances that led to that point in his life where he would consider seeking government assistance.

"I have advanced degrees in mathematics, but these degrees are useless to me in seeking employment for the following reason. 22 years ago I quit my job as an assistant professor of mathematics and went to live in the mountains where I supported myself hunting, gathering wild foods, gardening, and occasional temporary, unskilled jobs that provided the little money I needed."

He said that after two decades of that life, he was "now considering getting civilized again and becoming a responsible member of society."

That didn't happen, but reading those words gave me the same feeling I had at every turn while reporting this podcast; that this story was full of so many alternate paths, so many strange turns and characters whose stories are largely unknown. It came to involve not only the federal agents who chased him and the victims left in his wake, but everyone from the most powerful decision makers in Washington to a group

of dungeons and Dragons fanatics in Chicago to a man who lived for years in a hole in the ground in the high desert.

And it all came to a head in the summer of 1995, seventeen years after Ted's first bomb. In a piece of writing that you definitely don't need to travel to the special Collections Research Center to find.

This is *Project UNABOM*, an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. I'm Eric Benson. This is episode one, the manifesto.

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Thursday, June 29th 1995. It's a gray morning in Washington DC, a little cold for early summer. Don Graham leaves his house in Cleveland Park and arrives at the offices of the Washington Post before 9:00 AM. His family has owned the post for three generations now. It's his paper. He's the publisher and CEO.

**Don Graham:** I came to work. And had a call from the chief of staff to the director of the FBI, Free.

**Eric:** Free was FBI director at the time.

**Don Graham:** And his chief of staff was a man I had never heard of named Bob Bucknam. Bob called me and said if you go down to your mailroom. You will find a package addressed to someone at the Washington Post. We believe it is from the person called the Unabomber, and I said hold the phone. I called Len Downie, the editor of the paper.

Len Downie wasn't surprised by what Graham told him.

**Len Downie:** We had been warned by the FBI that the New York Times had gotten such a package, and so the building was on alert.

**Eric:** Downey had been at the post for over 3 decades, working his way up from summer intern to executive editor. Along the way he oversaw Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein as the Watergate scandal was unfolding. But this was new even for him down his office had a. Glass wall facing The Newsroom. It was basically the exposed nerve center of the paper. All the reporters and editors could see in. Did everyone in The Newsroom pretty quickly find out about this?

**Len Downie:** Yes, that's what happens in newsrooms. Yeah, pin drops in one corner of The Newsroom. Everybody goes to see what happened. I think we were just all talking about it, and of course I was immediately assigning somebody to cover the story.

**Eric:** That week, the Unabomber was already the biggest story in the world, and he hadn't even set off a bomb. A couple days earlier, the San Francisco Chronicle had received a short letter that read.

The terrorist group FC called Unabomber by the FBI is planning to blow up an airliner out of Los Angeles International Airport sometime during the next six days.

**Newsreader #1:** The government says there is a credible threat that a passenger jet may be involved.

**Newsreader #2:** The Unabomber targeted an airliner once before in 1979 a bomb exploded in the cargo hold of an American airline. Signs jet forcing an emergency landing at Washington Dulles International Airport. 12 people were injured.

**Eric:** The LAX threats sent the world spinning.

**Newsreader #3:** All airmail was grounded today in the state of California.

**Newsreader #4:** We're focusing on parcels. I don't think we have the manpower to look at every single piece of mail by any means.

**Eric:** LAX was a mess, bags got extra screening flights were delayed. Police asked passengers to show their ID's, which believe it or not. In 1995, was an extreme security measure.

**News Clip:** If you don't have picture ID, then we are requiring that your bags be physically searched.

**Eric:** But then that night, the Unabomber took the whole thing back. Another letter from the Unabomber arrived, this time to the New York Times. He said the start was a prank. Intended to quote remind them who we are.

**Newsreader #5:** Now he has seen he can toy with the entire nation. If indeed all he wants is attention, the terrorist killer known as the Unabomber must be happy tonight.

**Eric:** So on that gray Thursday morning when Graham and Downey realized there's a package from the Unabomber in their mail room. The only thing that's clear is the Unabomber is in charge and he's relishing that fact. Inside of that package, there isn't a bomb. Instead they find a 56 page single spaced essay entitled *Industrial Society and its Future*.

**Len Downie:** The FBI immediately came over and a whole bunch of FBI agents, everybody in The Newsroom was, you know, was sort of an alert to something going on in the building that might be dangerous. And they took the manifesto away.

**Eric:** A few hours later, the FBI brought back a copy for the post scene, Xeroxed manifestos were on the desks of the key decision makers in the building.

**Len Downie:** I think we had it immediately set into type somehow so that we would have other copies of it, and so we could print the whole thing. If we ever needed to.

**Don Graham:** I got a copy. I started to read it and I said to myself, Jesus.

**Eric:** Don Graham was in his office at the post. The manifesto spread out on his desk.

**Don Graham:** If you work in a senior role in a newspaper. You get one or two of these letters every month, which is a long essay by somebody who usually is fixated on his own criminal case or the evil his wife is doing to him or an unjust verdict from a judge. And it's usually written very clearly, but I read this and I said, well, I. It appeared to me to be the writings of somebody who had all the answers to everything in the.

**Len Downie:** World, it was clear that this was a very smart but very disturbed person...

**Eric:** Len Downey was pouring over his copy too.

**Len Downie:** There were historical analogies that I could see in there. To hold the whole. Manifesto obviously was it was anti technology and I recognized a lot of those arguments, but it also was very difficult to read. It was sort of stream of consciousness in his writing.

**Eric:** The New York Times had received the same package.

**Len Downie:** That was immediately pre Internet time and newspapers were at the height of their profitability. Their circulation and their influence in the news media. The newspapers with the national clout like the Washington Post and the New York Times really helped set the agenda for news coverage throughout the media and broadcast networks and the local television stations tend to follow the lead of the newspapers and as a result we realized that we had a great deal of influence.

**Eric:** The Unabomber offered these two major news outlets a Devil's Bargain. Publish the manifesto info in one or both of the papers and he'd stop killing people if the post and the Times declined to publish, then the bombings and the deaths would continue. He gave them three months to decide. Do you remember what your initial thought was about the question that you had to face, which was? Do we give in to this guys demands and publish this? Did you have an initial gut feeling one way or the other?

**Len Downie:** Erm... 'My God, what are we going to decide?'

**Don Graham:** There was clearly one argument for not printing any of it, which was would we be setting some kind of a precedent? We don't print things because somebody forces us to OK, we might save somebody's life, but would we set some kind of precedent? We would. Regret, but what was the precedent? We spent 18 years sending bombs through the mail, killing three people and injuring 21 and the FBI didn't have a clue where you were, and now you wanted to publish a 35,000 word political essay.

**Eric:** The bombings began in 1978, but for a long time almost no one paid attention. The first bomb was initially mistaken for a firecracker, and didn't even make the news. The third bomb, the one he placed on an American Airlines jet, got the FBI's attention but failed to cause much damage. But he continued, sent bombs to professors, placed them in university science buildings, targeted a Boeing assembly plant. His techniques improved, several victims were maimed, one was killed. And by June of 1995, when Don Graham was thinking about what precedent he'd be setting by printing this 35,000 word manifesto in the Washington Post, the Unabomber was a clear and present danger.

**Newsreader:** A New Jersey advertising executive opened a piece of mail in his home this weekend and it exploded, killing him.

**Eric:** In the past seven months, the Unabomber had killed two people. Thomas Moser, the advertising executive, was killed in his kitchen while his family was in the House, then a logging industry lobbyist named Gilbert Murray, opened a suspicious package in his offices reception area in Sacramento.



**Newsreader #1:** The latest victim, Gilbert Murray, president of the California Forestry Association, killed by a bomb that officials believe was sent by the Unabomber, the most elusive terrorist bomber in U.S. history.

**Newsreader #2:** Investigators now say many clues point to an obsession with would all the bombs have wooden parts and the names of trees have often appeared in addresses.

**Newsreader #3:** A previous victim had the last name wood.

**Eric:** Two months after Murray was murdered, the manifesto arrived in the mail rooms of the times. In the post, it begins “the Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. They have greatly increased the life expectancy of those 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 Unabomber said the cure wasn’t some kind of better seen or more sustainable economic and social system. No future advancement could cure our elements. Instead, he called for a revolution against technological progress and the social order that it had enabled. Our goal is only to destroy the existing form of society he wrote. Building a new society would be the work of another day, but he imagined its broad outlines. It would be a world where quote most people will live close to nature. Living is peasants or herdsmen or fishermen or hunters. What were the Washington Post and the New York? Times going to. Do with this. Thing Don Graham called up Arthur Sulzberger junior, the publisher of the Times, and together they came. To an agreement.

**Don Graham:** What I said to him and he said to me was ‘we’re normally rivals on news stories, we cannot be rivals on this. We cannot let this guy play us off one against the other, but we have to have a united response.

**Eric:** The Post and The Times started running news stories about the manifesto accompanied by excerpts of the Unabomber’s writing to give the world some insight into the mind behind the bombings. There were his diagnosis of where we. Had gone wrong. The system has to force people to behave in ways that are increasingly remote from the natural pattern of human behavior. There are his fears for how it could get worse. The technophiles are taking us all on an utterly reckless ride. Into the unknown. And there were straight out of Sci-fi predictions for what the future might look like? Due to improved techniques, the elites will have greater control over the masses and because human. Work will no. Longer be necessary. The masses will be superfluous. A useless burden on the system if the elite is ruthless, they may simply decide to exterminate the mass of humanity. But running these excerpts wasn’t the same as giving in to the Unabomber’s demands and publishing his manifesto in full, unedited unannotated that felt like something different. Graham asked Downey if there was any editorial reason to run the manifesto as a news story. Danny’s answer was quick, no way. But Graham knew he wasn’t going to get off the hook that easily, and so he did something way out of the ordinary for a news man. He called the FBI for advice.

**Don Graham:** It would be more normal that we would be in a meeting where the head of the FBI was saying for God sake, don't print that story, but in this case we wanted their advice because there was no reason we would comply with the Unabomber's request except public safety.

**Eric:** As the summer went on and the deadline crept closer, Graham and Downey were in constant communication with the FBI.

**Len Downie:** I can remember some officials saying what a difficult decision you have. We don't know how you're going to make this decision. Then themselves were divided over whether it's a good idea to publish the manifesto, whether or not you could believe the Unabomber, whether or not the FBI. Should be in a position of advising a newspaper to give in to a terrorist advance. Then they shared our dilemma.

**Eric:** The more Downie and Graham talked to the FBI, the more they learned about the case and how 17 years into the investigation the FBI was still stumped.

**Len Downie:** They thought it was a young person. They thought it could be somebody in Bay Area.

**Don Graham:** Nobody knew a damn thing about him one. Person had seen him in a parking lot and had a fuzzy idea of what he looked like. But what he looked like was a guy with a hood over his head and sunglasses on his face.

**Kathy Puckett:** I heard all kinds of scuttlebutt about what a dreary, unending, fruitless chase this was, that they were never going to catch this guy.

**Eric:** Kathy Puckett was a behavioral analyst in the FBI's San Francisco office, where the UNABOM task force was headquartered. A lot of agents working on the case. They're not by choice.

**Kathy Puckett:** Well, basically everybody wanted to stay away from it. Stay away from the case. It was like this... I remember one of the secretary, the SEC secretary said that she had a friend who was coming in transferring into the division and she was doing everything she could. This was a new agent coming in. She was doing everything she could to make sure that she didn't get assigned to UNABOM because it was just a black hole. Once you got in you were never out.

**Eric:** The FBI had. Worked up a hazy profile of the guy. Maybe late 30s to early 40s and a meticulous dresser. Maybe a guy who had first become enraptured with anti tech ideology in Chicago in the late 1970s. Likely someone residing somewhere in Northern California. There were so few physical. Clues left behind. No fingerprints, no DNA samples. Then in early 1995. The case was basically where it had been. Since the beginning. There was nothing to do except chase tiny slivers of leads. Look at old case files again and hope something new would. Come pouring out. Even knowing all this, Kathy wanted in. You wanted to go into the black hole.

**Kathy Puckett:** It isn't that I went to the black hole. I didn't think that it was unsolvable.

**Eric:** When the manifesto arrived, it justified Cathy choice, at least to her, because for Cathy, the manifesto wasn't a conundrum. It was a clue. Something real that could help her understand this.

**Kathy Puckett:** Guy, he sounded much older. He was making a lot of cultural references and things that. He seemed like. Somebody more educated, probably who had a university education.

**Eric:** But it was more than that. The document felt personal, not just scholarly and political.

**Kathy Puckett:** There's a lot of talk about technology and computers, and you know how these are leading to the death of the human race. The tragedy and disaster. But you know, he's talking about how kids are manipulated and. Controlled by their parents. I said this he's telling us about him and he doesn't even realize it. Now the interesting thing was that there were a lot of people who thought that the manifesto was total \*\*\*\*\* And that it was a red herring, didn't need anything. He was just manipulating law enforcement and the times and everybody else.

**Eric:** You didn't feel that way.

**Kathy Puckett:** Well, no. Why would you feel that way? I mean, a lot of people who made that decision had hadn't even given it a read. Why would she make it as a judgment? That something meant nothing. If you hadn't even looked at it.

**Max Noel:** A lot of people got excited, uhm, none of which was me.

**Eric:** Max Noel was one of the senior agents on the UNABOM task force. He and Kathy were two of the most important agents in the final chapter of the search for the Unabomber. Their personalities and backgrounds were utterly different. Kathy marched against the Vietnam War, spent the 70s in Bell Bottoms, joined the FBI's Counterintelligence division where she chased Soviet spies and thought from time to time about leaving the Bureau to become a therapist. Max had wanted to fight in Vietnam, but ended up joining the FBI instead. He became a firearms trainer and St agent. Infiltrated gangs, locked up, mobsters chased 70s radicals. Earned a tough. Guy nickname from his fellow agents Mad Max. And Mad Max and spy chasing touchy feely Kathy saw the manifesto in diametrically opposed ways to Kathy. It was a window into a man's mind and soul to Max. It was only useful for the physical evidence it provided.

**Max Noel:** The most interesting thing to me was it was typed on a Smith Corona 1925 to 30 typewriter with pica style type with 2.54 spacing. So that was what I got out. Love it.

**Eric:** So when it came down to weighing in on the question of whether to publish the manifesto, Max had a crystal clear opinion.

**Max Noel:** I was against publishing and I had the traditional view in mind.

**Eric:** Namely, you don't give. In to the demands of terrorists. And in this case, why? Would you? The only thing that mattered was the typeface Kathy. Saw it differently.

**Kathy Puckett:** I was very firm in saying look. We've looked at these words. In depth now for weeks. And I said not only. Is he very, very fixed in his ideas? He has said and written these things to other people before he had to have expressed this. He's a unique writer. He's a unique guy. He has some interesting ways of saying things,

somebody. Has to know by looking at these words who this guy is. And that's why I recommended the publication.

**Eric:** These two views came to a head in San Francisco, while the Washington Post was trying to figure out what it would do. FBI director. Louis Freeh asked the Uniform Task force for its own recommendation. Some of the agents on the task force Max Cathy. Several others held a meeting in late August to decide what to tell the FBI director. At first Maxview went out. Most of the other agents in the meeting agreed with him, but Kathy kept making her case and slowly other agents started to see what she was seeing. That the manifesto was the best lead the investigation had ever had. Even Max would come around. Kind of.

**Max Noel:** Once it was presented properly and thought through properly, I supported it, I was not real enthused about it, but. You know, I.

**Don Graham:** Listened to Kathy.

**Eric:** In mid-September with a Unabomber, 3 month deadline looming, there was one final meeting at FBI headquarters on one side of the table where the top decision makers at the Times in the post, including Len Downie.

**Len Downie:** In the middle of the, on the other side of the long table were free andrino surrounded by FBI people. Maybe Justice Department people.

**Eric:** Louis Freeh, the FBI director, and Janet Reno, the Attorney General of the United States. Everyone waited for Reno to weigh in. She had listened to the UNABOM task force and the FBI director that made her own decision. She looked at the. Five newspaper men sitting across from her.

**Don Graham:** And she said. We would recommend that you print this. We think there is a compelling public safety reason to print it, and if you don't print it, there is a likelihood that somebody is going to get killed and you know this. This guy has killed people and there's no reason to think he wouldn't kill others.

**Eric:** The owners and editors of the post and the Times left the meeting and headed to a coffee shop nearby to talk it through.

**Len Downie:** Yeah, we just we picked the first place. We saw.

**Eric:** It seems like a very sensitive national security conversation to be having in a public coffee shop.

**Len Downie:** It was empty, it was empty. It was that time of day. It wasn't it wasn't morning and it wasn't lunchtime.

**Eric:** They sit down and what lend down he remembers is the sense that the times wasn't all that sure about following Reno's advice.

**Len Downie:** They seem to be very reluctant to do so, and that's my distinct memories that they just did not want to do this. Because we all knew that there would be criticism of the newspapers for publishing it. For giving in to the Unabomber. And I think they wanted to avoid that.

**Eric:** Arthur Sulzberger junior by the way says the times wasn't ambivalent about going forward. That they knew it was the right thing to do, but everyone agreed only

one newspaper should publish the manifesto. Don Graham remembers it just made sense for that to be his paper, not the times.

**Don Graham:** Printing it in the Washington Post.

**Len Downie:** We had eight.

**Don Graham:** 100,000 daily circulation that times out of million in change so it would cost less money and would have 200,000 fewer copies of the \*\*\* \*\*\*\* thing.

**Eric:** So either Salzburg and Don Graham, the publishers of the two biggest newspapers in the country, agreed that they would Co publish a terrorist manifesto. It would appear as a special insert inside the Tuesday, September 19th, 1995 edition of the Washington Post. Both papers were. In front page stories explaining the circumstances. The Bureau suspected that the Unabomber was located in the Bay Area because several of the bombs had been mailed from there on the morning of the 19th, it would stake out news stands in case the Unabomber showed up to buy a copy himself, and even if that operation didn't pan out, there was always the chance that, as Kathy Puckett believed someone out there might recognize. The Unabomber's writing as the voice of someone. They knew I've heard people describe what the Unabomber did. To the post. And the times as blackmail did it feel like after that decision had made did it feel like you had given in to?

**Len Downie:** Blackmail no and he and I never thought of blackmail so much as coercion. I mean blackmail is minor compared to what the inner bomber was sick was saying. I was going to kill people.

**Eric:** Tuesday, September 19th. The Washington Post hits the news, stands Industrial Society and its future inside every copy. Nationwide, there's an outcry which the post and the times could see coming from a. Mile away. How dare you cave to a terrorist and give him this plateau? But also the publication of the manifesto does exactly what the Unabomber wants. It starts a conversation America is wrestling with his ideas. What exactly is the Unabomber saying? What does that say about us? It's in Time magazine, The New Yorker, even the pages of the Washington Post itself.

**James Gleick:** He reflected a sort of. Odd current that's in our culture just in the past few years, but also goes back for a century. A hatred of technology even before the manifesto, it was clear that he didn't like computers. He seemed to be targeting people who had something. To do with computers.

**Eric:** This is the science writer James Gleick talking to TV host Charlie Rose for. In fact, Glick is apparently the inspiration for the character. Jeff Goldblum plays in the movie Jurassic Park. The guy who warns about runaway technology by saying.

**Jeff Goldblum:** Your scientists were so preoccupied with whether or not. They could. They didn't stop to think if they should.

**James Gleick:** There are a lot of people who aren't making bombs who share some of those sentiments. You know, we all we've all noticed that there are ways in which computers maybe dehumanize us, or seem to make our lives dryer. So you're saying that his animosity technology is a view that's shared by. A lot of people in a way. Yeah, it's shared. By all of us we all look around and we see that you know. Automobiles

have ruined some parts of human life that that used to be much more pleasant and technology brought us the atomic bomb and gave us the power to destroy our planet.

**Eric:** And yeah, it's not just cars or nuclear bombs, or even genetically engineered dinosaurs. 1995 is right at the start of a conversation. We're still having the Washington Post didn't even have a full website when it published the manifesto, but it got one less than a year later, which wasn't surprising. Internet use was expanding rapidly. Cell phones are becoming part of. Many People's Daily lives. A lot of people saw. All of this as a cause for. Celebration our new tools would democratize society. Give anyone almost limitless access to human knowledge. Help us stay connected and find new communities. The James Gleick's of the world saw a slightly more complicated picture on Charlie Rose. He said he actually liked technology.

**James Gleick:** I mean, I'm a little embarrassed to admit it. Well, I write a column about technology and I try to write about good things that technology does. And I certainly believe that on balance, it's made our lives better.

**Eric:** But Gleick thought there were tradeoffs and tough decisions about how to integrate new technologies into our lives. The Unabomber, of course, was singularly uninterested in this discussion. He was an extremist. He wasn't interested in new answer compromise. His view is simplistic and fueled by Rage Against all aspects of the modern world. In the manifesto, he attacks political correctness. He mocks feminists. He says the American education system is transforming our happy, playful children into dour computer. He says leftists hate America. They hate Western civilization. They hate white males. They hate rationality while at the same time saying he thinks conservatives are fools.

And there was something about it. That particular combination of anti tech argument and wide-ranging disdain that struck a philosophy professor named Linda Patrick in the late summer of 1995.

She was vacationing in Paris. This was a month or so before the whole manifesto was published, but she was able to read the stories about the essay in the International Herald Tribune, which was owned by the New York Times in the Washington Post. The more quotes from the. Manifesto she read the more she thought. I know who this is.

Late that August, her husband David came to join her from their home in Schenectady, NY. When he arrived and saw her waiting at the terminal, he could tell that something was weighing on her.

**David Kaczynski:** We took a cab from the airport to the apartment she'd rented and you know she couldn't restrain herself completely, she said Dave, there's something I gotta talk to you about, it's something terrible.

**Eric:** David was jet lagged. And Linda told him it could wait. He took a nap and then when he got up the two. Of them went out for a walk.

**David Kaczynski:** We were kind of alone on that part of the street and Linda said that this sounded like my brother's ideology and she wondered if the Unabomber

might be my brother. And my first reaction was oh thank God it's so. It's nothing real, it's just, you know Ted can't possibly be the Unabomber.

**Eric:** Ted Kaczynski David's older brother. David and Linda spent the next two weeks trying to have a vacation together doing the things you do in Paris, eating, well, visiting Notre Dame and the Louvre at night. They'd go back to their apartment and talk.

**David Kaczynski:** And that gave me a really long time to talk a lot about Ted to air some feelings about Ted, but at that point I was pretty darn convinced that he couldn't be responsible for these things because I've never seen him violent. You know, usually people who are violently antisocial. Began at a much younger age. And maybe part of it was denial. I just didn't want to believe it.

**Eric:** Second, not long after they got home to Schenectady, the manifesto was published in its entirety. By the end of the. Day it was on the Internet.

**David Kaczynski:** Linda said Dave, I, I really think we should try to find that manifesto. Let's go to the library and see if we could find it. And finally we found the 1st 6 pages online.

**Eric:** They sit down. In front of a computer at the library at Union College, where Linda taught in.

**David Kaczynski:** And I'm all set. I'm going to look at that screen and read the first page. Maybe probably wouldn't take more than that. I'm going to turn to Linda and say see I could definitely tell you it's not him. Instead, Oh my gosh, my heart started to sink, you know?

**Eric:** David was going to have a choice.

**David Kaczynski:** I remember walking now by Tyler Or I think there. Might be one chance in 1000 that Ted had written it. And then she said, David one chance in 1000. I mean, that's significant. Maybe we need to look into this more deeply.

## 2. What's Wrong With Ted?

Growing up, David Kaczynski knew there was something different about his brother, Ted. But how did he go from brilliant math professor to serial bomber?

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### Introduction

**Eric:** A quick heads up before we get started. This episode contains a mention of suicide. Please take care while listening.

**Eric:** The first time I heard. From David Kaczynski was in September 2019. It was a short e-mail. Gracious and thoughtful but disappointing.

**David Kaczynski:** Thanks for reaching out, he wrote. I'm mostly seeking Peace of Mind now after a couple decades devoted to public advocacy, your project sounds like a worthy one, but I've promised myself to learn how to say no in order to claim the space I need for reflection and com. Best of luck to you.

**Eric:** I wanted to ask you about the pronunciation of your last name. There are a couple of people who have insisted to me. That it's pronounced Kuchinski.

**David Kaczynski:** Yeah, my parents taught us that the original pronunciation was Kuchinski and \_\_\_\_\_ sometimes. Oddly enough, how people will ask me what my name is, and I'll say David. And they say. David, what? And I'll say Kuchinski just so that. Maybe to maintain a little privacy.

**Eric:** I still don't quite know why David said yes. Over the year and a half since we first spoke, David would tell me something still felt unfinished. For decades, he and Ted were something akin to best friends traveling together, exchanging hundreds of letters, debating ideas, making sense of their childhoods, even sharing elaborate analysis of their dreams. But David always felt there was part of Ted that he couldn't understand. And over the years. Family members, acquaintances, investigators and anyone else looking for answers would ask the same question David had asked his Mother as a kid.

This is Project UNABOM, an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple Studios. I'm Eric Benson. Episode 2 What's wrong with Tad?



## Episode Begins

David is 72 years old now. He lives most of the year in a small cabin. It's in the desert, not in the mountains like Ted's and David doesn't live alone, he's there with his wife Linda, a retired philosophy professor. David and I have talked about a lot of things over the year and a half since we first spoke and he did end up going into the Unabomber saga. Because it's inseparable from everything else in David's life.

He was born in 1949. And when he talks about his early years. It sounds a little like a sitcom about a 1950s working class family, their dad Theodore Kaczynski senior went by the nickname Turk. He was a friendly backslapping kind of guy who made sausages at their family owned deli. Their mom, Wanda was the sweetest homemaker doting over her two sons every Saturday night. They all gathered on the living room couch to watch Gunsmoke.

But David says it was clear early on that there was one exceptional part of their otherwise more or less average family. Ted the family prodigy. He could do anything.

**David Kaczynski:** Ted would compose, he loved Baroque music like Voldi and back and he would then begin to compose little duets for us to play together. He often composed those on the piano.

Later on, David would write that his question growing up was is Ted going to be the next Einstein or the next Bach? This wasn't just a kid idolizing his older brother. Ted skipped 2 grades, scored over 160 on an IQ test, graduated high school at the age of 16. Ted's bedroom was in the attic and he spent a lot of time up there alone. But every so often he'd invite David in.

**David Kaczynski:** And I loved those times. I mean my brother, in some ways was my role model, my hero. My parents had put education and intelligence up on a pedestal and Ted embodied bad ideal for me. I mean, gosh, going to Harvard at 16, being a national merit scholar. Being so gifted, the smartest kid in our school, etc., etc., I wanted to be like Ted. Although he didn't spend a lot of time with people, the notion that he wanted to spend time with me enjoyed spending time with me was wonderful.

**Eric:** By that point. Pretty much everyone figured Ted was off to do great things. There was Harvard, then Graduate School in mathematics at the University of Michigan, where he was given an award for the best PhD dissertation of the year. He got a teaching position at the University of California at Berkeley, published in major journals. In the summer of 1968, David was in school at Columbia. Ted had just finished his first year at Berkeley. The brothers drove up together to the remote and rugged Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Then Ted decided their time together needed to get even more rugged.

**David Kaczynski:** He said to me, let's just live off. The land for the next few days. Like just eat berries and so forth and I said yeah, let's try and see if we could do that well later in the day. I got really, really hungry and I went to the car and I opened up packs of cookies. I started eating the cookies and Ted confronted me and said, but you had agreed that we weren't going to eat commercial food where we're gonna live

off the land and I said, well, I got hungry and I'm sorry you know you don't have to eat it but I'm hungry and. He got mad at me and he drove off.

**Eric:** Ted came back the next day apologized, but it didn't sit well with.

**David Kaczynski:** David, there was some stents in which. You know, I felt a little bit like. My brother liked me to the extent. That I was like him.

**Eric:** In his second year at Berkeley, Ted got promoted to assistant Professor, a tenure track job. And then in June 1969, less than two years after he arrived there, Ted quit. He sent his parents a letter trying to explain.

**Ted:** I've decided to quit my job. I've decided to try to find a home in wild nature because. I feel technology is a real threat and I want to get as far away from it as possible.

**Eric:** He sent David a letter too.

**David Kaczynski:** He was looking for some land up really wild land up in Canada and I was still in college at the time and he wrote to me and said hey, would you like to join me this summer as I go looking for land? And so yeah we spent a long. Couple of months and at least six weeks together up in British Columbia. Got all the way up to the Yukon. Did lots of hiking, fishing together.

**Eric:** For the most part it was nice Ted teaching David outdoor skills talking to him about big ideas. David every so often chancing an opinion of his own. But David also saw that his brother seemed to be struggling wrestling with something he wouldn't talk about.

**David Kaczynski:** We were camped out. And come by ourselves and remember over the campfire in the morning I started talking and Ted was totally shut down like he didn't speak. It was like he was almost in a catatonic state. I didn't know what to think. I remember going off and taking a walk and coming back and maybe it was an hour later Ted had come out of it, I suppose and I said Ted, how come you didn't answer me before? How come you didn't talk to me this morning? And he said, while I was thinking I really needed to think.

**Eric:** On the trip, Ted talked a lot about technology, particularly a book he'd recently read called the Technological Society by a French philosopher named Jacques Ellul. It was scholarly, dense, but also a dire warning to humanity. A little said that technology was now becoming so powerful. So omnipresent that the relationship between humans and their tools had been flipped a little. Wrote that technology was no longer face to face with man. It progressively absorbs him.

It wasn't a crazy idea. Even in the late 60s. That was the summer of the moon landing. Television was creating a truly mass culture as never before. The ultimate the first mass network of computers was switched on that year and plenty of smart people thought overpopulation and all the technology fueled consumption that came with it was going to decimate humanity. In 1967, Esquire magazine ran a piece warning of the perils of runaway growth, titled, "The Human Race has maybe 35 years left".

Not long after he left Berkeley Ted wrote a 23 page essay outlining what he saw as the perils of technological progress. He was largely worried about behavior modification from genetic engineering, mass media and scientists inserting electrodes and chemetrodes into human brains to control human emotions, and he had a solution. Stopped funding scientific research.

He started sending his essay around, looking to Stoke a movement. He even outlined his concerns in a letter to one of his senators, Mike Mansfield. Then the Majority Leader of the US Senate. And Mansfield wrote Ted back, told him his views were "well developed and worthy of every consideration."

Then Mansfield forwarded Ted's letter to Doctor Bertram Brown, the director of the National Institute of Mental Health, to get his scientific opinion on Ted's ideas. Brown wrote back; "Behavior control in some form or another is the basis of which any organized society rests." In the copy of this letter in the Michigan. Archive Ted circled that. Sentence and wrote in the margins; "So fuck organized society."

Ted and David returned to the US at the end of the summer of 1969. David went back to Columbia for his senior year. Ted moved in with his parents, an unemployed math professor, looking for somewhere, anywhere to go. When David finished up at Columbia the next spring, he took a cross country road trip with some friends. He found a job in Great Falls, Mt. Working at a smelting plant.

**David Kaczynski:** I didn't have a telephone, I was a little averse to technology myself perhaps, or maybe wanting to isolate, but my landlord came to me and said, your father is on the line, he wants to talk to you. He says it's urgent. So, I went to my landlord's apartment and got on the phone with Dad and dad said have you seen Ted to his left?

**Eric:** Ted hadn't let anyone know where he was going. But he had left a note that was vague reflective.

**David Kaczynski:** And in this note, he said don't feel bad, you've been good parents. Don't ever think you're to blame but. I need to go. And my father and mother were concerned that it sounded like a suicide note. So they said, well, please let us know if you hear anything from Ted. Let us know right away 'cause we're really worried. He didn't tell us he was going. He's just gone and there's this note. And a couple days later, early in the morning, there's a knock on my door. I opened the door and lo and. Behold, there is my brother Ted.

**David Kaczynski:** And I said 'oh Ted, you're OK, that's great, mom and dad are really worried about you and. How come he? Left and he said I couldn't stay there anymore and then he says, look, I've got an idea for you. Do you want to go in on? A piece of land together.

**Eric:** It wasn't long before Ted found that land up a shady Gulch in the mountains in the tiny gold mining town of Lincoln, Montana, just West of the continental divide, David and Ted bought it together, going in 5050. There, under towering lodge, pole Pines Ted would live off the land. Be the individual who was free from technological society.

**David Kaczynski:** It's just 2.4 acres, but it was a beautiful piece of land up in the mountains with a stream on the border of the property.

**Eric:** Ted builds his cabin there. It was tiny, 10 feet by 12 feet. With no running water, no. Electricity the toilet was a bucket. He read books on survival skills. He dug a root cellar, planted a garden. It was what he was looking for. Going into the woods identifying wild edible plants, taking them back to eat, he called it one of the most fulfilling activities that I know. Sometimes he'd set off from the cabin to explore going deeper into the wilderness. His favorite place was a high plateau. He found a two day trek from Lincoln. To get there he would hike through forests, scale the steep walls of ravines, admire cascading waterfalls and then arrive. It felt like a secret, a place out of time, rolling grasslands, vast skies, remote isolated, free standing there he felt like part of prehistory, far, far away from the world. He had chosen to leave. Later, Ted would talk about one of the most freeing parts of living in the woods. He wasn't worried about the future. He didn't fear death. If he was happy. In the moment. That was all he needed to him, that life. It was. Everything civilization was not.

But he wasn't at peace a year after he moved to Lincoln on Christmas 1972, he wrote the following in his journal.

About a year and a half ago, I planned to murder a scientist as a means of revenge against organized society in general, and the technological establishment in particular. Unfortunately, I chickened out. I couldn't work the nerve to do it.

This is where the Ted Kaczynski we know begins to come into focus. The hermit who swears off society then masterminds a one man terrorism campaign from his cabin, but it took him a while to get there. So many things had. To add up, in just the right way. Other than David, maybe the person who spent the most time thinking about Ted is the FBI behavioral analyst. Cathy Puckett, the agent who argued that the Washington Post should publish the manifesto because someone might recognize the writing in the closing months of the investigation. Cathy was charged with trying to understand as much as she could about Ted. By conducting extensive interviews with David and once Ted was arrested, Cathy was assigned to read the 40,000 pages of Ted's writing that was found in the cabin. And what Kathy found is that the incidents and thoughts and traumas that define Ted's life. They started not long after he was born.

**Cathy:** They treated him as if he was a damaged person. And this all went back to when he was an infant.

**David Kaczynski:** Remember asking mom one time you know what's wrong with Ted? Why does he avoid people? Why does he not like people and that's when mom told me this story that my brother had been? Hospitalized for I think 10 days or so as a 9 month old infant.

**Wanda Kaczynski:** I used to pick him up out of the crib.

**Eric:** That's Wanda Kaczynski talking about this incident on 60 minutes with the show's longtime lead reporter Mike Wallace.

**Wanda Kaczynski:** He would be bouncing around and he would nuzzle his head in my neck and chortle and gurgle and pull my hair. And he was a bundle of joy.

**Eric:** But then, baby. Ted broke out in red splotches that spread. Across his body, Wanda took him to the hospital. At that time, parents weren't allowed to be at. Their children bedside day and night.

**Wanda Kaczynski:** But I finally came back to take him home, but they handed to me. Was not this bouncing joyous baby, but a little wild wow. That didn't look at me. That was slumped over was completely limp.

**Charlie Rose:** Wanda, back in those days, that happened to a lot of youngsters, I mean who whose parents couldn't see them in in a hospital. Just as with Ted, and they did not become sociopaths, if you will.

**Eric:** Right, but can you judge one child by another?

**David Kaczynski:** Man, I always felt Ted had a fear of. Had some trust issues because of that experience, and in addition a fear of abandonment.

**Eric:** The hospital story became a major topic of discussion among the Kaczynski family. As Ted grew more troubled and angry over the years and Ted hated it, the hospital experience that mother always likes to dredge up is very convenient for them because it's something that was beyond their control, he wrote in a letter to David in 1986.

In Ted's telling his problems began when he was. A preteen and skipped 6th grade. That turned him into quote practically a social cripple. He was awkward and alone, a sitting duck for middle school bullies, and so he turned his anger outward. He started brightly against what he called an anthill society when he was just 14. This sounds like a lot of angsty teenagers. But with Ted it went further, after reading a book about Caveman, he wrote, he suddenly realized that what I wanted was not just to read another book on Caveman. I wanted to really live like a caveman. But he didn't, he kept going to high school in suburban Chicago and things didn't get much better there. By the time he graduated at age 16 Ted felt that "In the eyes of the world, I was some kind of sick."

**Cathy:** Ted was very dismissive of the intelligence of his family and anybody else, and so they were used to him being very disparaging.

**Eric:** At home, David saw his parents as nurturing and supportive and to some extent Ted did too. At one point he described them as generous and unselfish toward me. But as he got older, he fought with them more and more and showed an instinct for cruelty.

**Cathy:** They were used to him being curt and not responding. And one night around the dinner table, Wanda came to the table with a casserole that she had just taken out. Of the oven and Ted jumped up and went over to her and smiled at her, which was unusual anyway, and pulled the chair out for her and. David remembered everybody watching this kind of amazed like Oh my God all of a sudden this, you know, Ted is being chivalrous. And his mother looked at him and started to sit down and he pulled the chair out from under her. And she fell down, and the casserole was blazing hot, and she was screaming, and her father was yelling and Ted just laughed and went upstairs.

**Eric:** Arguments would often follow. Ted would call Wanda a fat pig, and his parents, particularly Turk, would accuse him of being emotionally disturbed and a creep. Sometimes his father would say that Ted was going to end up just like a coworker of his who'd been institutionalized for mental illness. Ted felt that his parents were always pathologizing his anger at them. Blaming it on something fundamentally wrong with him. Those were the criticisms that continued to hurt him most deeply. He would later write that ever since he was a teen, he'd been acutely sensitive to any comment that seemed to reflect negatively on my personality, my psychology, or my social adjustment.

Ted's misery didn't let up a whole lot once he got. To Harvard he. Wrote that it was snobby and elitist. Hard to think he didn't have a point and that he was by his own account a sloppy dresser and a loner. He sensed, correctly, that at least some of his fellow students regarded him as. Some kind of weirdo?

As a Harvard sophomore. He wrote, "I do not like the present condition of the social world. It imposes too many restrictions on the individual. Also, most people seem to follow the group like sheep." So he spent a lot of time alone thinking about a way out. He studied maps looking for uninhabited islands, but concluded they were. Too small and too barren to live on. He considered going on a single-handed ocean voyage.

**Henry Murray(?):** This is Monday evening, March 14th, 1960. Diad #12 is about to begin in between Mr. Shea and Mr. Kaszynski. We are now testing for the level of the hum.

**Eric:** There was also something else that happened to Ted at Harvard that has taken on an outsized significance in the Unabomber origin story for three years he was a subject in a notorious psychological experiment.

**Researcher:** Please begin your discussion when you hear the buzzer sound.

**Ted:** Alright.

**Researcher:** Excuse me, a second, do you think we want to decide how we're. Going to go about it though.

**Ted:** I think it's supposed to be a spontaneous discussion.

**Eric:** That's Ted you're hearing there during the experiment. It was overseen. By a famous researcher named Henry Murray. Murray had worked for the Office of Strategic Services, the predecessor to the CIA developing psychological screening tests during World War Two and for years, there's been suspicion that Murray, Harvard study. Was part of the CIA's notorious project MK Ultra which used electroshock torture and high doses of LSD on largely unwitting subjects. Some people have looked at Kaczynski life and this experiment have seen it as the moment when an alienated young man transformed into a nascent killer that if not for the Murray experiment, Kaczynski would never have been angry and broken enough to send out bombs. I gotta say. I see the appeal thinking of the young Unabomber. As a CIA mind control victim that like Doctor Frankenstein, we created our own monster. But that version of the story relies on some big assumptions about how Ted became Ted and some myths about what was really going on at Harvard. As Ted describes it, he got a flyer in the

mail his sophomore year, inviting him to take a psychological test. The pay was \$5. Murray was studying. Personality development tracking groups of Harvard men who'd either tested high or low on scales of social alienation.

The commitment wasn't small three years, 2 hours a week. Much of it filling out questionnaires and responding to essay prompts. Does life have any inherent meaning or purpose? Is it more natural for man to be alone or in communication with other people? Can the individual change the society he lives in? It was far from MK Ultra style human experimentation.

There was at least one in person session though that seemed to cross an ethical line. It was a one-on-one interrogation. Called the dyad. Ted had entered a small room. Electrodes were placed on his arms and chest to monitor stress levels. A camera filmed the proceedings through a one way mirror.

**Researcher:** I ought to warn you before I start this that I was not... I did not have a very favorable impression of you as a result of reading your philosophy. But let me just tick off a few preliminaries then we'll get into what I really didn't like.

**Eric:** Ted thought he was there for a chat. Instead, one of Murray graduate student interrogators had been ordered to berate him. That's the interrogator pushing Ted around. He'd reviewed a statement Ted had written about his personal philosophy, then tore it to shreds. The interrogator called Ted's thoughts about the relationship between the individual and society insipid.

**Researcher:** You made one flat statement that the individual owes nothing to society. And this is an insipid remark because.

**Eric:** One thing I did get, the interrogator tells Ted was the fact that although you did a lot of breast beating Ala Tarzan about strength and individuality, I've sensed an overriding sense of I don't know really whether to call it weakness. Or fear. He even makes fun of the way Ted looks.

**Researcher:** I'm avoiding of society or. This society is a bad thing is that. When you're trying to grow that beard. No, I mean you conforming with the non conforming.

**Ted:** No, I'm not confirming with the non-conformists.

**Researcher:** Well, that's all.

**Ted:** If I were comparing with run controllers, I mean really, this isn't really a beard yet.

**Researcher:** You're darn right, it's not.

**Eric:** If this is the experiment that turned the young troubled Ted Kaczynski into a mad bomber, I definitely can't hear it in the. Tape, that's the thing that's remarkable about it. Ted doesn't seem shaken at all. This interrogator is berating him, basically calling him weak and stupid, and Ted really holds his own. When the interrogator reads his own philosophical statement, Ted goes on the counter attack. If you're going to apply labels, all apply labels. Ted says in the interrogation. I don't think your philosophy is anything but a lot of wishful thinking.

**Ted:** I think the reason one of the reasons you. Attack my flaws. So vigorously because you don't want to believe it and in your. I think the way you laugh and indication of that too.

**Eric:** Ted once called this incident severe psychological harassment, but this idea that it transformed his life made him who he became. He doesn't buy it as recently as 2017. He wrote. He thinks the traumatic effect of the Murray study on him has been wildly, wildly exaggerated. On this point, Cathy Puckett agrees with Ted.

**Cathy:** What made Ted Ted? We haven't really found it yet. But I don't think the Murray experiment had much to do with it.

**Ted:** You haven't really criticized my views accepting that you applied labels, you have not analyzed them in any way and attacking. Not very well.

**Researcher:** There isn't too much to analyze Mr. It's a lot of garbage. If that's another label and make the most of it, but that's just.

**Eric:** But David thinks the Murray experiment must have had some impact.

**David Kaczynski:** I remember he was back home from college and he said to me. They are most really smart people, you know. They have a sadistic streak about them. And it sort of seems strange to me like intelligence goes with cruelty.

**Eric:** When Ted left his job and moved to his cabin in the mountains, he kept finding he couldn't fully escape the horrors of modern society there in the woods in Montana, Ted was constantly hearing the mechanical buzz and hum and world of chainsaws and motorcycles and airplanes. Where the hell can I go where neither Forest Service or anybody else will come to pester me? He wrote in. His journal, a year after moving to Montana. This feeling of not having anywhere where one can get real seclusion is very depressing. Second, Ted's depression had turned to violence. In the summer of 1975, he began a campaign of sabotage, pouring sugar into the tank of a mining company vehicle. And then stringing a wire across a dirt biking trail at neck height. In the hopes of killing a motorcyclist. By the spring of 1977 he was breaking into a hunting cabin, slashing the mattresses and sofas. That summer he went onto a rancher's nearby grazing lands and shot a cow in the head. He specified he was not. Killing a wild animal, he was killing a quote. Rancher's cow He wrote in his journals. I think that perhaps I could now. Kill someone under circumstances where there was very little chance of getting caught.

**Cathy:** He was not. He was not, you know, for all of his compassion for living things in the animal Kingdom he had no regard for people who he thought. Were 'technocrats' or 'mindless destroyers of nature'.

**Eric:** Even more than nature, Ted thought these technocrats were destroying what it meant to be human, eliminating the possibility of being truly free. And he was sure. Some essential part of his own unhappiness was tied to that.

**Cathy:** He gloried in being independent, but it also. He also was enraged by the fact that he was doing it because he was denied the kind of life that he should have had.



**Eric:** So I mean the way you're describing it, it sounds like in your reading of this when he's talking about the human race and what's happened to the human race with technology, he's really talking about himself.

**Cathy:** Exactly because he was genuinely, uhm, racked up about it for his whole life about his failure in the social world. Uhm, he wasn't. It wasn't fair. His parents had pushed him, he it. It wasn't his fault, it was everybody else's fault. His parents pushed them into this. They wanted him to be their little emblem of superiority and achievement in the world, and they were very proud of him. But he took it as something that they were claiming. For themselves, not for him.

**Eric:** That was Ted's answer to the question what's? Wrong with Ted. He was unequivocal about it. If you were looking for a unified theory, it was simple. His parents, Wanda and Turk. Were to blame. In March 1974, Wanda sent a couple letters, checking in on Ted, making sure he was making it through the winter, OK. And Ted rollback unleashing his fury on them.

**David Kaczynski:** I remember he'd been up there in Montana in that little cabin and. Our parents shared with me a letter. They were so upset. It kind of. Started out with. You know, I've been miserable all my life and I've had a lot of time to think about it and why, and now I understand why I'm so miserable. It's because you mom and Dad never loved me.

**Eric:** The insults creep emotionally disturbed and metastasized in his mind. They pushed him too hard. He said they treated him like a trophy. They loved his achievements, but they didn't love him as an actual human. Being and son. He swore off contact with them in a letter, told them he never wanted to see them again.

**David Kaczynski:** Oh my gosh and mom and Dad were just like they were in tears they were like. Oh gosh, how could tip feel this way? Was it true were we bad parents? They were coming to me for some sort of, you know, advice or comfort and I tried to speak with Ted, I mean mostly through letters. At first, I thought well he just lost his temper, you know? Especially if you're it could happen to anybody. You live by yourself, you know. It's a human characteristic, you know. We're unhappy. Sometimes we look for. Somebody to blame? That's what's going on. But Ted's smarter than that, he knows our parents loved us and he developed a fixed belief system that our parents had never loved him, that they only valued his intellect and not his feelings. I mean I. Was really surprised when I heard that letter and it was the first of several, but he sent them over the years. It made me realize he had a very, very different experience of mom and dad than I did.

**Eric:** And though he swore. He'd never speak to them again. Ted was more than happy to accept the \$350.00 a year that Turk and Wanda sent him. Money that he used to buy staples like flour, rice and canned fish and pay for occasional visits to the doctor and dentist. Wanda sent him care packages, to which he also accepted and then used as an occasion to berate. His mother further. March 1975 you sent me a readers digest look stupid. How many times must I tell you not to send me magazines? November 1975. Please don't send smoked oysters. I don't like smoked oysters. November 1977

if you want to send me a package you had better keep it down to 4.5 inches. With permissible items for package dried fruit, nuts, cheese. Second, whatever the source is, however, you answer the question, what's wrong with Ted when you read his writings? The one thing that's clear is his rage is all-encompassing. He's not just mad at Wanda and Turk, he's mad at the whole world.

In his memoirs, he writes that as a teenager, he fantasized about becoming a dictator and either rebuilding society so as to guarantee maximum individual autonomy or wiping out the human race by means of an atomic war or some such thing.

At Michigan, he "often had fantasies of killing the kind of people whom I hated." He lists "government officials, computer scientists, and the rowdy type of college students who left their piles of beer cans in the Arboretum."

He didn't try to actually kill anyone then, but after years of escalating violence in Montana against property and one poor cow. He was ready. In the spring of 1978 After all, the letters he sent cutting off contact, Ted decides to move back in with his parents. But before he leaves Montana, he does one last thing. He builds a bomb in a box, designed to explode when the lid is opened. He brings it home with him to Chicago, the Unabomber's first bomb. It eventually ends up in the hands of a security guard at Northwestern University.

**Unknown Speaker:** Then when he started to open the word box. It triggered it and went off in its hands.

**Eric:** That's next time on Project UNABOM. Project UNABOM is an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. It's produced by our senior producer Jonathan Menjivar, and me, I'm Eric Benson. Our producers are Elliot Adler and Melissa Slaughter. Edited by Joe Lovell and Maddie sprung, Keyser. Our fact checker is Sarah. Every the episode was mixed by Davey Sumner, Jason Richards, Elia Toddlar and Jonathan Menjivar studio. Recording by Brian Standifer at the Texas monthly studio. Our artwork is by GM casuse. Music by Mark Horton and John Hancock. Additional music by Eric Phillips and Jeff Baxter. Legal services for Pineapple St by Bianca Grimshaw at Granderson. Desrocher, Jenna Weiss Berman and Max Linsky are the executive producers at Pineapple St. If you live in the US and are having suicidal thoughts, call the national Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. Eight hundred 273 talk for free and confidential support. Thanks for listening.

### 3. Roll of the Dice

Satanic Panic, some key coincidences, and one arrogant guy place a group of friends in law enforcement's crosshairs.

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**Disclaimer:** A quick heads up before we get started. This episode contains a mention of suicide. Please take care while listening.

**Eric:** It's the early summer 1978, a college kid named Greg has just come home to Evanston, IL, a suburb just north of Chicago. He's a student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, RPI in New York State studies, mechanical engineering. He's finished up his classes and come home a couple weeks early. To start his summer job working for the City, Forestry Department. Trimming trees, that kind of thing. One day in early June he rides his bike back home from work.

**Greg:** And I pulled up to my house and there's nobody around. I just started walking in and I was approached by two men in black suits and they said, are you great? I said yes and they said we found your bomb and. I said what, what bomb?

**Eric:** We bleeped Greg's name because he asked us not. To use his full name. So anyway, these guys in black suits introduce themselves. There's special agents with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. The ATF.

**Greg:** But first I thought I could try to help them. But then, as I invite them to the House to have more discussions than they started getting. Pretty confrontational with me and they ask things like you know why did you leave college early? Do you always take the? Easy way out and just. Clearly not trying to see whether or not I could have done or not, but trying to. Made me angry enough that I'd disclosed something. That they were. Looking for some. Kind of information. They kept asking the same questions over and over.

**Eric:** Again to they asked questions about an engineering professor at RPI named EJ Smith. Greg had just finished taking his class.

**Greg:** And I was his only student in Chicago, IL at the time, and I took an incomplete in the class, 'cause it was my one final. I want to get back and start earning some money at the job that I had set-up in in Chicago.

**Eric:** The ATF explains that a bomb had been placed in a mailing envelope that had been discovered on May 20. 5th between 2:00. Cars in a parking lot at the Chicago. Campus of the University of Illinois. A day later, a security guard opened it, got some minor injuries, but investigators figured the parking lot wasn't its intended destination.

The package had been stamped and addressed to Greg's RPI engineering professor E.J. Smith in upstate New York and as the ATF is questioning him. It's clear accusing Greg of trying to send it. To him. Again and again, they pressed him on what he thinks of Professor.

**Greg:** They did tell them that he was a very poor professor. Nobody class seemed to like the guy he was the sort of person that at that. Point they had. Transparencies and he would just flip on as fast as he could to get through the class and nobody could keep. Up with him. At all, when people asked him slow down and he just laughed at them.

**Eric:** But Professor Smith wasn't the only reason the ATF was focusing on Greg. It turned out that the return address on the package was for a professor at Northwestern University named Buckley. Crist and Greg had a specific connection to him too. Actually, his mother did.

**Greg:** She worked in the Material Science Department where Professor Chris was one of the three professors that she was essentially a secretary for.

**Eric:** Do you remember this? I mean, that's a crazy coincidence. What did you think?

**Greg:** I thought it was an amazing coincidence, yes. All these coincidences seem to add up to. May be a suspect.

**Eric:** So the ATF has found Professor EJ Smith only student from Chicago and it so happens that student has just taken an incomplete tinmiths course and come home early in time to place the bomb and his mom works for the guy whose name is on the return address. That's either a smoking gun. Or it's some wild thought experiment in probability. The Unabomber investigation was one of the longest and most frustrating manhunts in the history of American law enforcement. 18 years multiple agencies task forces that would convene investigate for a few months, find nothing, and then disband. And when I first read about the long fruitless search for the Unabomber, I kept wondering. If no one at. The FBI had even heard the name Ted Kaczynski until February 1996, two months before his arrest. Who were they investigating prior to that? That's what this episode is about. This is a story that's never been. Reported before you. Won't find the people we're going to talk to mentioned in any book on the Unabomber.

The most that's ever been written about them is a passing mention to a group of suspects who spent a lot of time playing dungeons and Dragons. But what really happened to these guys is? Kind of incredible. Jobs were lost, friendships were destroyed. Lives were altered as the Uniform investigation veered off course from the very start.

This is Project UNABOM, an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. I'm Eric Benson episode 3 roll the dice.

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So in June 1978, as Greg is being interrogated by these two ATF agents at his parents house across town. Two other ATF agents were talking to one of his friends.

A guy Greg has known since high school named Jeff Ward. What did you do? Do you remember what you thought?

**Jeff Ward:** Well, the first thing I thought was how on God's green Earth can they think it was us? And second, yeah, I'll talk to these guys because they're going to soon find out it couldn't possibly be us, and I have nothing to worry about, so I was confident that they talked to us. This would be it, and they began to who might have really done it. And you know my father, he was the smart one. He said he wanted to send him away and I said. You know, no. I'll talk to him. I have nothing to hide, but I mean they were trying to get it. Essentially, who would send a bomb to Professor Smith addressed from Professor Chris?

**Eric:** After a couple hours, the agents left and Jeff picks up the phone to call Greg to tell him about this crazy thing that just happened.

**Jeff Ward:** I think I called and didn't get through and so I drove up to North Evanston and it was. Kind of like, whoa. Do you know what just happened? That's what I wanted to do, and then I walk into him being interviewed. And they're like, bonanza, let's. Talk to these two guys together.

**Eric:** So Jeff and Greg are both there. These 19 year olds, no lawyers and Jeff. He starts mouthing off.

**Greg:** Ah, he's a real character and he likes to challenge authority.

**Eric:** This is Greg again.

**Greg:** I think at that point he was given the agents a hard time. Of course he'd already been questioned, they may have been part of it.

**Jeff Ward:** Yeah, you know here I am a \*\*\*\*\* sitting in on this interview where they ask the most banal and stupid questions and that's when I probably did one of the more stupid things in my life. I got so fed up after what was turning out to be 4 hours. Of interview I. Finally said to the ATF agents look. If we wanted to kill people and we don't. There would be much. Better ways to. Do it than a matchstick bomb and of course that perked them up and they asked me to explain the better ways, which I proceeded to do. And that's probably the point at which I started to become the main target of the investigation.

**Eric:** At first, Jeff and Greg are on high alert, especially after the agents asked Greg to take a polygraph test and the Examiner finds he has quote unexplained emotional reactions. But that fall when Greg goes back to school. It seems like the whole thing is blown over. Every once in a while, he and Jeff get this weird feeling they're being watched, but nothing happens. They figure they're just being paranoid after a while. They don't even think about it anymore. So much so they don't even remember it being a big deal when another bomb goes off. In May 1979. This one is placed inside the technological Institute at Northwestern, where Professor Buckley Christine Gregg's mom work. The bomb is inside a cigar box wrapped in red polka dot wrapping paper. A graduate student opens it. The bomb causes cuts and burns and momentary blindness due to the bright flash. But that's it, barely makes the news. Then five months later, on November 15th, 1979.

**Newsreader:** The FBI says an American Airlines 727 with 80 persons aboard landed safely today at Washington Dulles International Airport. After a small bomb exploded in a mail pouch in the cargo hold.

**Eric:** The flight had taken off from O'Hare in Chicago. But like those. Other bombs it doesn't do much damage. Oxygen masks deploy and the plane makes an emergency landing, but other than some smoke inhalation, the passengers and the crew escape without injuries. But a bomb on a commercial airliner? That's a major crime that. Falls under the purview of the FBI. The Bureau's explosives unit examines the device and the way it was made seems unusual. Parts of it are hand carved out of wood. The rest looks like. It was assembled from a junkyard. The Examiner said he'd looked at thousands of bombs before and never seen anything like this. So they sent. A photo of the device to law enforcement in Chicago and say look familiar. Agents there say yes, it looks like the bomb that was placed at Northwestern and like the one found in the parking lot, there was addressed to Professor EJ Smith. 3 bombs, similar construction, a pattern, and it didn't stop.

June 10th, 1980, 7, months after the airline bomb. The President of. United Airlines, a guy named Percy Wood, opens a package in his home in the Chicago suburb of Lake Forest. There's a book inside, it's hollowed out and stuffed with explosives. He opens it. Percy Wood is rushed to the hospital where fragments of the bomber removed from his face and hands. He survives. They don't make it public, but the FBI is now certain. There's a serial bomber on the loose in Chicago. They dubbed the investigation Unabomber for university and airline bombings, and now that it's a significant case, law enforcement looks back at the original suspects for. The first bomb. Greg and Jeff, and it turns out there's something suspicious about them. Besides Greg's connection to EJ Smith and Buckley Crist. For years Jeff has been meeting up with a group of northwestern students, sometimes at the Technological Institute where the second bomb was placed. Greg is occasionally tagged along. Jeff had started hanging out with. This crew when he was.

**Jeff Ward:** Still, in high school it was really cool for, you know, as a high school kid even that I hung out with graduate students at Northwestern. You know, because they were smart, it was. It was fascinating to learn all the physics. All the chemistry, lasers, the whole.

**Eric:** All these guys spend a lot of their time playing elaborate role-playing games. There's dungeons and Dragons. The cliché thing dirty guys did in the 70s and 80s teenagers gathering around a kitchen table at night, basically creating a wild fantasy story together. It's like the Lord of the Rings, but with dice.

**Jeff Ward:** And so you could be a habit. You could be an elf, you could be a range. You could be whatever, and you roamed whatever world the dungeon master created in search of fame, treasure, and fortune. You kill orcs, you get killed, and you know it's basically one of the best escapes on the planet.

**Eric:** And it's not just D&D, they're really into these giant war games. There's one where they reenact Napoleon's invasion of Russia with little figurines. Another way

they have big naval battles with metal ships. Jeff and his friends even have. A name for the group.

**Jeff Ward:** We called ourselves the North Shore General staff.

**Eric:** North Shore for the well off lakeside suburbs of Chicago, where three of the first four bombs went off. It's a Tuesday night, January 20th, 1981. Earlier that day Ronald Reagan was sworn in as the 40th President of the United States. Three guys from the North Shore general staff are sitting in their third floor, Walkup apt, a few miles from the northwestern campus. One of them is named Dave White, he's an extremely. Limited wargamer, even by the standards of that group it's around 7:00 PM. He remembers, and he and his two roommates hear a knock at. The door and.

**Dave White:** I opened the door and there are six FBI agents. There and they said something to the effect of Mr. Can we come in and knowing what I know today, I probably would have said no. Please contact my attorney unless you have a search warrant, but I didn't I was young and I said sure, come on in and immediately they treated us like we were guilty. Of something they. Acted as if we were all in coordination in creating and sending bombs through the mail, which was frankly the first we had ever paid. Any attention to this? Yes, there had been news reports. And yes there had been an event or two connected with Northwestern, but. You know we didn't think it had anything to do with us and we weren't really paying attention to those.

**Eric:** These agents are asking very specific questions that seem random to the point of absurdity. One of them asked Dave, how often do you eat bugles, corn chips and other friend gets asked to write out the name Enoch W Fisher in cursive. Do any of them have a stamp collection? Who among them is meticulous? Do they act out? Their war games in real life. At least one agent floats, a theory. It all started out as a joke. The bombing EJ Smith, Buckley, Krist but now it's gone too far. This scene isn't just playing out in Dave's apartment. Other agents have fanned out across Evanston to question the other. North Shore General Staffers, 2 agents to each suspect. His Jack.

**Jeff Ward:** They were hanging their hats on the slimmest of evidence that they thought we played with carbide cannons. We never did. You know Greg made a mock up of a cannon. I want to say in a shop class. I mean all these tall tales were coming out.

**Eric:** This was true. Greg says it was a little aluminum cannon that he machined in class. Stood about 6 inches high.

**Greg:** They saw those experimenting with explosives, although a dead no, you know obviously had never been exploded, didn't have any kind of way to light a fuse to it, but they thought there was a.

**Dave White:** Suspicious the agents want to.

**Eric:** Know if Greg had intentionally controlled his breath on the polygraph test he took in 1978. They ask if he thought anyone might be trying to frame him. They want to know if he's willing to die for his friends. And then there's the wood connection, which seems like it might be a real problem for Greg.

**Greg:** They found a tree tweaker in one of the bombs and they felt that it might have been related to my job in the 4th St. Apartment and always had and how is that connected to you? Because I worked, I trim trees in the forestry department.

**Eric:** Got it. Jeff also hearing about wood that the bombs all have some kind of symbolic connection to wood.

**Jeff Ward:** You know there was a bomb to Percy Wood in Lake Forest and Greg worked for the Forestry Department in Evanston would for I mean some of the stuff is so far fetched, but when you have no one else when you have no other possibility, you focus on what you have. And I also think we made it far too interesting. For them we all should have really just shut up.

**Eric:** The theories simultaneously get more ridiculous and more damning. In addition to war games. The North Shore General staff plays in a Touch Football League. Some agents wonder, maybe they're using code and talking about their plans while they're on the field.

**Jeff Ward:** Oh God, yeah, you know, let's yes it got back to me that the FBI asked a friend and I don't know what friend don't. Please don't ask me well before games does Jeff Ward say let's blow him away? Or, you know, let's hit him with. The bomb. Long pass. Which was one of our specialties. Oh yeah, everything became proof that we. Had done it. At some point. Relatively quickly we got together and part of it was just, uh, Boreas. Laughter That anyone could suspect us of anything like this. I, I mean, none of us had the skill set. Well, OK, to be fair, none of us had the skill set to do the airline, but you know the. Earlier bombs anybody could have done.

**Eric:** Do you have any idea how the ATF the FBI just let's go, you know, law enforcement got from suspecting Greg might have had an axe to grind with EJ Smith and then. Could have sent the bomb to suspecting this wider group of people.

**Jeff Ward:** Because of the Dungeons and Dragons, that that's the easy answer right there. Back in 1980. You know the 1970s. These dungeons and Dragons to some people was seen as a cult.

**60 Minutes Clip:** Dungeons and Dragons has been called the most effective introduction to the occult. It is a fantasy role-playing game that...

**Eric:** The fear of dungeons and Dragons fit in with the larger Satanic panic movement happening in the US at the time. The idea that kids listening to Judas Priest and Black Sabbath and playing with Ouija boards would fall under the lore of. Satan and join cults. This wasn't just some fear mongering from right wing evangelicals. The idea went mainstream.

**60 Minutes Clip:** About two months ago, a green eyeball was seen up in the sky. His eyeball was so big, it blotted out the sun.

**60 Minutes Clip:** These young people were playing dungeons and Dragons...

**Eric:** This is from a 1985 60 Minutes story on D&D. Looked into allegations that kids had murdered people or died by suicide. After playing Dungeons and Dragons. One mother whose son took his own life describes finding out after his death that he played D&D.



**60 Minutes Clip:** We went into the kitchen and there on the table or. What we thought were just regular composition books with schoolwork in it, and much of the Dungeons and Dragons material along with this curse he had received in the game that day that he died.

**60 Minutes Clip:** The curse that was placed on Binks DND character began; “Your soul is mine, I chose the time.”

**Eric:** The 60 minutes acknowledges you can’t reduce murder or suicide to just one simple cause. A psychiatrist. They interview in the story blames 28 deaths on the influence of the game.

**60 Minutes Clip:** For instance, in one case the parents actually saw their child summon a dungeons and Dragons demons into his room before he killed himself. Another case the kid had thought he had the ability to astral travel coming from the Dungeons and Dragons game that he could leave his body and come back.

**Eric:** FBI agents had questioned both Greg and Jeff about DND specifically. Greg was pointedly asked if anyone had acted strangely while they were playing. It Jeff had gotten these kind of questions. Two questions, that kind of set him up to rat someone.

**Jeff Ward:** Out at first, I think they thought it was me. Or us, but then when you know clearly I had no clue. It kind of turned into a little bit more of well who from your group could possibly have done this, and I was like there is nobody I know. That has any kind of axe to grind of this nature, and if they did, they certainly. Haven’t told me.

**Eric:** 2nd So Greg and Jeff. Each of them knows they’re not the bomber, and they also don’t suspect the other one. There’s certain Grace connection to the first bomb is just a big coincidence. The other member of the. North Shore General staff you’ve heard from Dave. White, he felt the same way.

**Dave White:** I sat down and talked with the FBI and I tried to explain to him. I don’t think any of these people have anything to do with this, if they did. I’d have known about it.

**Eric:** Dave says in the first interview with the FBI, they ran through every member of the North Shore General Staff.

**Dave White:** And they kept trying to push me. It’s like Are you sure? Could it be this person? Could it be? That person I’m like, no, it’s not him. You know, I know him. I know him really well. No, they’re not those kind of people. And they came. Back to me. Well, what about Jeff? I said, well, I don’t really know. Jeff, that well. But I didn’t think he was capable. Of doing this? From what the FBI was telling me, the Unabomber was very meticulous, very focused in his work, and Jeff was just not focused that way.

**Eric:** If it sounds like Dave is talking \*\*\*\* about Jeff. It’s because he is. They were roommates for a couple years and they didn’t really get along. Jeff claims it was because he was the better athlete. Anyway, Dave tells the FBI, Jeff couldn’t be the Unabomber because of his lack of focus. It would come up during their war games,

while Dave would take hours to intricately paint the pewter figurines that made-up his army. Jeff would not.

**Dave White:** We actually had some problems where when Jeff would. Build an army. He'd buy the cheapest miniatures you could get, usually plastic, and you paint them one color, just like all red or all yellow. And we kind of had to say, Jeff, you know, come on, get with the program. You know if you're going to put miniatures out here, put a little effort into it.

**Eric:** So it couldn't be Jeff, or could it. Dave started to wonder, why would the FBI specifically mention Jeff? Why were they leaning so hard on him?

**Dave White:** Because that seed of doubt was in my head, I began to feel more and more like maybe it is Jeff.

**Eric:** Jeff's younger brothers are being questioned. By the FBI. That seemed suspicious.

**Dave White:** The other thing that really troubled me I realized was that Jeff's father had a basement workshop where he made everything for remote controlled planes and cars, and that that was troubling too, because there's the ability to make anything you need, including. A bomb other than the chemicals you know. You could make switches. You could make triggers. You could make wiring. You could make you know the box itself and the hinges if you wanted to. Nobody else in our group that I knew of had access to that. Kind of layout. You know none of these things ever seemed to make any sense until I decided I needed to do some snooping of my own. And as Jeff was my roommate at the time for a short while, I went through his desk. And I found in one of his drawers the handwritten lyrics to a song by John Prine called "Sweet Revenge" and that shook me up.

**John Prine:** I got kicked off o' Noah's ark.

**Eric:** Sweet Revenge is a song that John Prine released in 1973. The fact that the song was about someone getting revenge and that Jeff had taken the time to write out the lyrics. They thought there had to be something to it. So he started analyzing the lyrics.

**Dave White:** He mentions in one line. I caught an aisle seat on a plane. One of the bombs went off in a plane.

**John Prine:** I caught an aisle seat on a plane.

**Dave White:** He says he drove an English teacher half insane. One of the bombs was originally addressed to an English. Teacher and he mentions red balloons and one of the bombs had red balloon wrapping paper. That's not a coincidence.

**Eric:** It's not a coincidence, it's wrong. E.J. Smith, the intended recipient of the first bomb was an engineering professor, not an English professor, and the second bomb was wrapped in red polka dot wrapping paper, not red balloon wrapping paper, but never mind.

**Dave White:** And there's even a line in there that says the white meat. Is on the run the white meat, as in Dave White? So I think maybe he might have personally taken that to use against me.

**John Prine:** The white meat is only run and the dark meat is far too done.

**Eric:** That was enough. Dave thought the FBI needed to know about these lyrics.

**Dave White:** I made a copy. Of it, and I took it to the. FBI and said there's your guy. He's telling you how he's making his bombs. He's telling you how. He's picking them. They were like. Thanks Dave, appreciate it and then it went nowhere.

**John Prine:** Sweet grievance, sweet grievance will prevail without fail.

**Eric:** So obviously Jeff Ward was not the Unabomber, but I want to be fair to Dave, a lot of the sleuthing in the Unabomber case, not just by amateur sleuths like Dave White, but by the professionals involved chasing down hunches and tiny scraps of information, no matter how absurd. A few months after the FBI question, Greg, Jeff and Dave they all got subpoenas in the mail. A grand jury had been convened. They were being asked to testify. Greg and Jeff both had lawyers by that point, and their lawyers tell them plead the 5th. Dave, however, is eager to testify. He doesn't have a lawyer. He wants to tell the grand jury all about Jeff and sweet revenge and everything else. Greg says he heard about Dave's suspicions.

**Greg:** I did, I heard about you mentioned Dave White. I heard that he well he was saying that he thought that. We could have done it. But Jeff and I could have done it.

**Eric:** And how did had? How'd that make you feel?

**Greg:** We're surprised. Pretty angry, well at that point, I really wasn't talking to him. All that point we thought he was always pretty strange. But they did come up with that, and I think I thought actually it might. Be helping me because for somebody to really believe that we could done it, but to have no supporting evidence or anything to show that. We had done. It you know clearly this guy who they broke and they still can't say anything. That would help their case.

**Eric:** But when Dave actually went in front of the grand jury to testify, the prosecutor didn't want to hear anything about his theories. So Dave, feeling stymied and he decides to take it upon himself to stop the would be Unabomber. He goes to talk to Jeff's father to convince him of the truth. Jeff was there at his parents. When it.

**Jeff Ward:** Dave White rings the front doorbell and I think my father opened the front door and Dave says, you know, hey, Mr. Ward, I'm here. You know, I. Really think Jeff has done this and if. You let me talk to. You for 20 minutes I could convince. You and my father told him to get his \*\*\*\*\* off the front porch, 'cause first he'd kick it. And then he called the police. So that was the last time I ever saw Dave White.

**Eric:** For the record, Dave doesn't remember this happening. But he also said it's possible. That it did. But then an even stranger thing happens. The kind of thing that maybe only happens when for years you've got federal agents hounding you showing you pictures to intimidate you and prove they've been following you. Jeff starts to think maybe the bombs are somehow connected to the North Shore general staff. An FBI agent convinces Jeff to go into the Chicago office to take a polygraph test right before they administer it. They show him a picture of a typewritten letter the bomber sent. Jeff thinks it's probably the letter Percy would received. It freaks Jeff out.

**Jeff Ward:** I had a really old royal typewriter back in those days, Eric. And it had a very distinctive font that you don't see in many things, particularly the floor. So all of a sudden I look, and that looks like my typewriter.

**Eric:** That sounds like you thought that they were kind of onto something.

**Jeff Ward:** Before then, no, absolutely not. It was absurd, but when I saw my typewriter or the font for my typewriter, it made me believe there was some other possibility. It wasn't like I went. Whoa, maybe one of these. Guys tried to frame me. It was like no, it was like whoa maybe someone tangential to the group managed to pull this off maybe and part of it is, you know, if you hear this so often, you start to be convinced as a possibility that it was somebody attached to us.

**Eric:** So now Dave thinks Jeff did it. Jeff thinks maybe someone else tied to the group did it this boogeyman.

**Dave White:** Whoever he is.

**Eric:** Is turning out to be the biggest monster these D&D players have ever faced. Second, the grand jury marked a sort of end to one chapter of the story. No one was indicted, not Jeff or Greg or Dave, or any of their. Friends, but the FBI. Investigation had taken a toll on the group. By 1982, a year after the FBI first questioned all of them, the North Shore general staff had fizzled out. The pressure was too much, they stopped talking. It's hard. To want to fake. Kill each other in a game when you're worried that one of you might be an actual killer. And then Greg decides he needs a change. The investigation had been messing with his life too much. He'd gotten a job after college, working for a company that mostly did work maintaining nuclear power plants, but the whole time he worked there, he had this suspicion that something was off. He was never given a security clearance to work at a nuclear plant. Instead they gave him back. Water assignments in the coal industry. So after nine months around the time the FBI stepped up, the pressure he left the company.

**Greg:** And when I. Cleared my bosses boss. I went and talked to him and he told me that that was happening that they were informed that I wasn't cooperating with the investigation. I couldn't get security clearance and everything is everything that they found on these bombs. Was tied to me? I mean these addresses or these tree twigs and I felt OK if I get out of Chicago. All these bombs at that point were happening in. Chicago if I got over then they realized that it wasn't me.

**Eric:** So in the spring of 1983, Greg left Chicago and resettled in another city in the Midwest. He says he's still scarred by his interactions with law enforcement by being tarnished as a terrorism suspect. That's why we're only using his first name and why I didn't just tell you which city he settled in. That's why I won't tell you the name of the company where he's now a senior executive. Those were Greg's conditions for talking to us, he. Doesn't want this following him anymore. Unlike Greg. Jeff had stuck around in Chicago after the Percy would bomb. There were two more bombs sent 1982, then 4 bombs in 1985. None of them go off in Chicago. The last of those was placed in the parking lot of a computer store in Sacramento. It killed the owner Hugh Scruton, the Unabomber. s first fatality?

**Dave White:** After that.

**Eric:** The FBI finally reveals publicly that the 11 bombings are connected. Were you following the? Bombings did you? Have any way to follow the bombings?

**Jeff Ward:** Oh, you better believe it. And not only that, but we're feeling, you know we weren't jerks we were like God if we could uncover who this person is, let's help. But, we also were fighting this. How the \*\*\*\* can you believe it was us?

**Eric:** Jeff had antagonized federal law enforcement from the. Start he wrote a song. Set to Pink Floyd's another brick in the wall. It went; "we don't need no investigation. We would never bomb a soul. There's no need for interrogation." And then he calls the FBI agent working the case at the time "a fucking asshole."

By the mid 80s Jeff was actually saying that to the FBI.

**Jeff Ward:** And then I'd call up the FBI. They'd take my call and I dream the agents out. It's you weren't supposed to disrespect the FBI, and they lined up for me to disrespect them.

You know, given that we were reasonably intelligent people, we weren't going to take crap. You weren't going to walk all over us. You know, if you want to work together, we'll work together. If you don't fuck off. I don't know if you can imagine what it's like to face the full weight of the federal government with absolutely no possibility of proving yourself innocent and having it affect you on a day to day basis and you don't know when they're going to strike next. I mean, what? When I was first going out with my wife and I met her parents, I had to say oh, and by the way. If you get a subsequent call from the FBI, here's why. You know you had. To tell certain people certain things so that the FBI couldn't beat you to it.

**Eric:** This continued for years. One reason that Jeff was constantly being hounded by the FBI is because the UNABOM case was constantly changing hands whenever someone new started on the case, they'd go back to the beginning of the case file to see if there was some clue everyone else had missed. And there were Greg and Jeff.

As the bombings moved well beyond Chicago and as the devices got more complex it seemed less and less likely it was them, but no agent was willing to slam. The door shut. Greg pointed out to me that even after the uniform suspect was identified by an eyewitness as being 5 feet 10 inches tall, a full 6 inches shorter than Greg, he remained a suspect.

In 1991, a new agent in Chicago took over the case. A guy named John Larson. He opened up the case file and went back to the beginning. And there were all these D&D players. He figured he should probably question them. Larson was working. With another agent, Joe Doorley, who picked up the phone and called Jeff.

**Joe Doorley:** And he goes Jeff. I know you're going to tank though. Please don't hang up on me. I know you don't want to talk to me. I know what you've been through all. I want to. Do is clear you, that's all I want to do. We know it's not you will you talk to me? So I said, yeah, I'll talk to you. Can I bring John Larson? Yeah, you can. Bring John Larson.

**Eric:** So Joe and John sit down with Jeff Ward and John immediately sees for himself why Jeff has been in the crosshairs for so long. He can be difficult. Actually, he can be kind of dick.

**John Larson:** He has a kind of a warped aggressiveness.

**Eric:** This is John Larson.

**John Larson:** Jeff would probably describe himself as a manic, high intensity brain.

**Eric:** Pretty quickly though Jeff warms up to John. He didn't treat Jeff like all the other agents who'd questioned him. Over the years.

**Jeff Ward:** They approached us like we should have been approached from day one. They admitted that mistakes were made. They were open with me about what happened, showed me pictures of the bombs. You know, for the first time I got the entire picture of the Unabomber investigation. But you know to have these two agents come to treat me like a human being and to sit down and talk to me about this whole thing was incredibly different.

**Eric:** And the more John and Joe talk with him, the more he begins to feel like a. Partner not a suspect. So after years of straight animosity toward the FBI, Jeff now deputizes himself as a fixer for John Larson. It becomes kind of a focus of his life, revisiting the past to see if there's some clue that got overlooked, racking his. Brain to remember if some random suspicious guy passed through their group for a few war games way back when and he agrees to introduce John to the original suspect in the case. And so you reached out to Greg, and Greg did talk to them.

**Jeff Ward:** He did, he didn't want to and he was a little \*\*\*\*\* at me for doing. But I said look, these guys are different they want. To clear us. If we want to get out from under this Joe Doorley and John Larson are our best shot.

**Eric:** Or so Jeff thought. But when John Larson went to see Greg what he said to him was. We know you're not the Unabomber. We think Jeff Ward might be.

**Greg:** I think they thought he was trying to. Jeff was trying to frame me basically. And then they asked the I, I let him go through and. They asked me do. You think that Jeff could done it? I think my yeah I know my answer was. No, absolutely not. He couldn't have done it. I mean I, I see what you're saying. I see what you're getting. I see why you think that he could have done it, but yeah, knowing him as much as I did, I know that there's no way he could have done it. I mean, I've seen. I've seen Jeff try to, you know, fix the battery with an axe. You know he's not going to be building bombs and that kind of thing.

**Eric:** When I asked John Larson about this, he said look there was a lot of compelling evidence around Jeff. We had to check it out. But the more John looked into Jeff, the more he genuinely became interested in clearing him, not just for Jeff's sake. It would allow John to cross a name off the list for good. John started putting together a more precise timeline, trying to figure out where Greg and Jeff and Dave White and a few others were when the 12 bombs had been placed or sent in the mail, but it was 1992. Now the Unabomber hadn't struck in five years, John knew there was really only one way to figure this out for sure.

**John Larson:** I didn't want anybody to get hurt. Killed, but I needed another device to really clear these people out.

**Eric:** If a bomb went off and John could prove that none of the D&D guys were at the place it had been sent from, then. He could pretty much close the case on. On June 22nd, 1993, a genetic scientist named Charles Epstein opened a package at his home in Tiburon, CA. High up on a Ridge overlooking San Francisco Bay exploded in his hands, causing significant damage, but not killing him. Two days later, a Yale Computer science professor named David Gelernter opened a similar package at his office in New Haven. He too, was nearly killed, but survived. Both bombs had been. Mailed from Sacramento. John Larson began tracking down the former members of the North Shore General Staff.

**John Larson:** We found every one of these young guys. There's like eight of them, and when we talked to him, got where they were, and then we went out and talked to every individual they told us. And through verification, we eliminated the whole group.

**Eric:** Before Kaczynski, did you ever think you had the guy?

**John Larson:** No, no. I pulled the list out. I have it in my hand here and my last entry into it is in. Uhm, February 15th 1996. And Kaczynski was Chicago sub K case 653. So we up to that point. We had cleared 652 people.

**Eric:** Do you know what number Jeff was?

**John Larson:** Yeah, I can give you that. The Dungeons and Dragon people. They were sub K 12345, 6, 7 and 8.

**Eric:** On April 3rd, 1996, John Larson called Jeff Ward to say the FBI had done it. They'd captured the Unabomber. The nightmare was over.

**Jeff Ward:** Basically, he called me up and said yeah, we got him. I said describe him.

**Eric:** John described Ted Kaczynski.

**Jeff Ward:** Recluse, Montana, anti-technology. They got that wrong guy. Nope, this cannot possibly be the guy and I told both John and Joe that you got the wrong guy. We're going to go right back to square one. You know, after putting so much sweat and effort into trying to solve this case, perhaps it was that I could not at that point admit to myself that Ted never came through our group that, as I originally believed, the connection to Greg was totally coincidental and we went through all of this. For nothing. So I think I wanted to give it some meaning that it had to be somebody from the group, when clearly it wasn't. You know it. It took me. It certainly took me a while to process this. Not being a part of my life.

**Eric:** Second, Jeff wasn't the only one in the North Shore general staff who had a hard time accepting that Ted Kaczynski was the right guy?

**Dave White:** I didn't see how he had any connection with Evanston or Northwestern or Art group.

**Eric:** This is Dave White again. Remember, he was convinced that Jeff Ward was the bomber, what with his sloppy war game figurines and John Prine lyrics. Dave

White believes that to this day. Sometime after Ted Kaczynski was caught, Dave, got a phone call. It was Jeff on the line.

**Dave White:** And I was a little troubled, a little worried, and he specifically said, “do you still think I’m the Unabomber?” And I say “it doesn’t matter what I think, you know you are” I said, “you know you’re connected.” It bothered me that he was tracking me down. I had to tell my wife and my kids. You are no longer allowed to touch any packages or boxes that may come in the mail or get left outside the house. If you see them, you tell me you do not touch them.

**Eric:** For all their work in Chicago, neither John Larson or Jeff Ward could ultimately claim any responsibility for apprehending Ted Kaczynski the keys to the Unabomber case lay with only one person, a guy who had nothing to do with dungeons and Dragons. As the FBI’s fruitless search dragged on, he was living alone in the middle of the desert, far, far away.

**David Kaczynski:** I ended up kind of digging a hole in the ground, covering it with some pieces of tin that I had found and living underground for the first couple of years that I was here.

**Eric:** That’s next time on Project UNABOM.

Project UNABOM is an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. It’s produced by our senior producer Jonathan Menjivar, and me, I’m Eric Benson, our producers. Aurelia toddler and Melissa slaughter, editing by Joe Level and Maddie sprung, Keyser. Our fact checker is Sarah every the episode was mixed by Davey Sumner, Jason Richards, Elliot Adler and Jonathan Menjivar. Studio recording by Bryan Standifer at the Texas monthly studio. Our artwork is by GM casuse music by Mark Horton and John Hancock. Additional music by Eric Phillips and Jeff Baxter. Legal services for Pineapple St by Bianca Grimshaw at Granderson Desrocher. Jenna Weiss Berman and Max Linsky are the executive producers at Pineapple St. If you live in the US and are having suicidal thoughts called the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255, eight hundred 273 talk for free and confidential. Support thanks for listening.



## 4. Parallel Brothers

David and Ted were living strikingly similar lives, until David was pulled out of his hole. Literally.

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**Eric:** Ted Kaczynski has written 3 autobiographies. He wrote the 1st in 1959 when he was 17 as part of his participation in the Murray experiment at Harvard. It's not very long, but he talks openly about his difficult relationship with his parents, his shyness around women, and his discontent with what he terms the social world.

He wrote his second autobiography, 20 years later, at age 37 he was back home with his parents in Chicago. After nearly a decade living in his cabin in the woods and it's almost uncomfortably intimate. It feels more intimate than Ted's journals themselves. He describes a teenage sexual encounter with another boy, talks about girls he lusts after and professors he hates. His own lifelong feelings of social inadequacy are everywhere, and this document Ted says there's a particular reason he's writing it, he's going to start killing people, and if he's captured or killed by the police, he wants people to find the document. Read his life story as he sees it.

Ted's third autobiography is called Truth Versus Lies. It's 548 pages long, written during his first years as a prisoner. In it, Ted attempts to rebut nearly every claim made about him in the wake of his arrest, but he also spends nearly half the book over 200 pages writing about his relationship with his brother David. There's a chapter titled 'My Brother's Character, another called 'My Brother's ambivalent feelings toward me'. There's even a chapter entitled 'I hurt my brother's feelings cruelly'.

On page after page Ted comments on the hundreds of letters he and David exchanged over the years, and he chronicles his own increasing rage as their close sibling relationship slowly breaks apart. David says he thought the letters were mostly just them debating ideas, talking about their parents, occasionally questioning the wisdom of a choice, one or the other was making in his life, but he sees them differently now.

**David Kaczynski:** And so look back on it, I think, gosh, you know I shouldn't have been so worried about trying to change Ted's mind, I should have been listening to his suffering because he was suffering. More than he ever talked about. I should have been more attuned to the fact that he was really, deeply, deeply struggling. But I think about 25 years living in isolation without any close relationship. I think almost anybody could end up being damaged by such intense isolation for such a long time.

**Eric:** What's ironic about the way David talks about Ted's isolation is that while Ted was hauled away in his cabin, David was hauled away for many of those same years in a literal hole. Whatever you're imagining, when you hear that, trust me. It's not nearly as strange as the truth. We'll get there soon enough, because for all their debates for all of Ted's. Jury, David and Ted viewed society and retreated from it in similar ways. In this episode, the story of how two kindred souls became lost to the world and then to each other. This is Project UNABOM, an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. I'm Eric Benson episode 4 parallel brothers. Second, you might recall that at the end of episode 2, before our detour into the suspicious world of Dungeons and Dragons, Ted had just decided to leave his cabin in Montana and return home to Chicago. It was the late spring of 1978. That's where we are now. Ted moved back to his parents house in Lombard, IL. By then David was also living at home, working at a foam cutting factory alongside his dad. Ted joined them there like Ted's other. Gigs his job at. The factory wouldn't last long, but there was something that happened in his short time. There that shed some interesting light on Ted's troubled relationship with women and on the precarious position David often found himself in when it came to 10. David was a low level supervisor in the factory. Ted worked the day shift. They were both overseen by a woman named Ellen Tarr Michael. After a few weeks on the job, Ted became infatuated with Ellen. He wanted to ask her out. But he couldn't work up the nerve. One Sunday afternoon he ran into Ellen and she invited him over. Their involvement was brief, 3 dates, a couple goodnight kisses. Ellen said it was never a romance at all.

**David Kaczynski:** She ended up telling him that. She wanted to remain friends, but didn't feel like this was a relationship she wanted to pursue and had got very, very upset and took revenge by harassing her. He, he wrote some really ugly Limerick that he began posting around. The workplace. And of course nobody knew it was Ted except me when I wrote it, I knew well, only Ted could have written this and I confronted him, told him, look he. Quit this around and. Fire you. I was really angry that he was treating this girl this way. He didn't talk. To me, all night, the next day he came up to the machine I was working on slapped. This piece of paper. It was the Limerick and he says, OK. Are you going to fire me? I said yeah, Chad go home.

**Eric:** Second, technically, Ellen was the one with the actual authority to fire Ted. She did. She backed David up, but Ted wasn't done, he wrote Ellen a letter accusing her of being devious and insincere. He told her he'd been contemplating violence. Against her, but had now decided against it, he signed off by warning. I'm not the only man with a revengeful streak.

**Eric:** Ted soon got a job at another factory, but the whole incident had a kind of traumatizing effect on David too. He quit his job, hopped in his car and drove away from Chicago, South and West until he reached the vast high desert of West Texas. He stayed there for weeks, camping and hiking, and more than anything else, being alone. When he finally called his parents to let them know where he was, they put him on with Ted.

**David Kaczynski:** Ted, I think had been coached by our parents to say please come back David. So he did. There was some, not quite an apology on his part, but at least some forgiveness of my having fired him.

And I came back and I... one of the first things we did together was have a picnic out in the forest Preserve, and Ted and I went for a walk together and it felt like a time of reconnection. So, I think he understood why I was upset enough to fire him and I hoped he'd felt badly about the way he had behaved, but he didn't, he didn't really, we didn't talk about that.

**Eric:** That picnic was one of the last times Ted and David would. Interact in person. A couple weeks later, Ted left again for Montana. David thought it was just Ted being Ted, unable to feel at home anywhere. So back to his old secluded life with a little money in the bank.

What David couldn't know was that during his time in Chicago, Ted had placed three bombs. The two that ended up at the tech building at Northwestern that had led to the investigation of the Dungeons and Dragons group and the third in November 1979, which he'd rigged with an altimeter, then put in an airmail package. You remember this one. It detonated on a flight bound for Washington DC with 80 people aboard. It didn't take down the plane. In his journal Ted wrote. The papers said FBI was investigating the incident. FBI \*\*\*\* \*\* \*\*\*\* so I came back to Montana early December. Now work on other plans.

Back in Chicago, David definitely didn't have any plans. He'd always been more social than Ted as a kid. He'd had plenty of friends, liked sports, but his life was kind of aimless. Now he got a job driving a bus, punched around for a while, kept thinking to himself. There must be something more.

**David Kaczynski:** That was kind of. You know I didn't have much going for me there. I mean, driving a bus playing softball. In the summer, it was like my wife felt like it wasn't going anywhere and I wanted to reconnect with nature. So I wrote to Ted and said, "hey, you know, I'm thinking of coming back and living on our land. I'd be building a cabin for myself. Would that be OK with you?" And he wrote to tell me that he preferred to be alone. Of course, I had no idea of the secret he was harboring.

And that's when I started to think more about Texas. I love this desert in Texas and. I decided that I would try to move down here. I discovered land was pretty cheap and it ended up putting me in a life that was that I thought was parallel to my brothers. I am a desert here in the northern forest. I had had a real sense the first time I visited deserts that. Real sense that it was. A spiritual home for me.

**Eric:** David was 33 when he moved back to the desert. He later wrote what? Could easily be mistaken for a line in Ted's manifesto. That he "Saw the world. Technology culture as fatally contaminated by nihilism." David wanted to discover a more meaningful way of living. He started writing poetry, took long backpacking trips, read the philosopher Martin Heidegger, had hours, days, weeks to contemplate what it meant to just be in the world.

**David Kaczynski:** You know most of what we deal with in civilized world is comes with instructions. You know. Here's how you're supposed to interact. Here's the stimulus. There's your response. In nature. It's more. There's kind of openness in. How we come to terms with our own existence in a universe that's much bigger than ourselves?

**Eric:** But nature demanded a lot more from David than contemplation. The reality is that living in the desert alone was hard and uncomfortable and primitive, more primitive even than Ted's life in Montana.

**David Kaczynski:** The first couple of years believe it or not I tried to live in a tent and found out that the desert was too windy to accommodate that, so I ended up kind of digging a hole in the ground, covering it with some pieces of tin that I had found and living underground.

**Eric:** Do you dug it? It was like, uh, as big as a house or or what? I'm just I'm just trying to imagine kind of what this looked like.

**David Kaczynski:** I'd say it was a little bit larger than a grave. It was maybe 10 feet long, 4 feet wide, 5 feet deep, so I couldn't really stand up inside. And because you know, there are rattlesnakes in the desert. I kind of dug it big enough to set-up my little puppy. Tents, as you know, in the desert it can get pretty cold during the winter at night and pretty hot during the day. And living underground had the benefit of, you know, moderating the temperatures quite a bit.

**Eric:** I've seen photographs of this hole and it really is a hole. It's nearly impossible to imagine anyone living there voluntarily for more than a night or two. There's desert scrub all around so it blends into the landscape. The sheets of tin serve as a makeshift roof. He placed rocks on top so the wind wouldn't blow them away. It was in that hole a little bit larger than a grave that David began to experience the feeling he'd longed for.

**David Kaczynski:** There were times that just felt so incredibly peaceful, deeply, deeply, peaceful, and, you know, living underground helps you think maybe a little bit about mortality or. All the animals that also live underground here out in the desert. You know from kangaroo rats to coyotes to. All kinds of Badgers, all kinds of critters. So I felt I was on a kind of spiritual quest. Put it that way and there were moments. It felt like it wasn't completely futile.

**Eric:** What did Ted think of your move? To the desert.

**David Kaczynski:** My sense was that he. Approved of it very much yeah.

**Eric:** David and Ted corresponded almost constantly during those years, David would write his letters and mailed them from a post office in a tiny border town. Which was more than. 30 miles away, checking to see if there was a letter from Ted waiting. In his PO Box. The brothers would go on for months, debating art and science, intuition versus rationality. David was always the poet, the Seeker, the guy who was just fine living in a hole. Ted saw himself as logical, practical. He said David needed to buy a gun to protect himself from wild animals, give up being a vegetarian so he wouldn't. And also there was the issue of the hole.

**David Kaczynski:** He says, you know, you really should build the cabin. Come on, it's not that hard. He even knew that I had a lazy streak in me, so he just maybe thought I was living too close to the ground.

**Eric:** Ted could be warm even on rare occasions. Kind of sweet to David in his letters, he recounted a dream in one of them of starving children in a war ravaged country. If there was ever a war in America, he wrote, I would do everything I possibly could to protect you. Then Ted interpreted his dream further. This illustrated the semi maternal tenderness that I've often felt for you. David and Ted's parents were concerned about David to Turk. Their father didn't mind his sons living off the land. But he thought. There was a right way to do it.

**David Kaczynski:** You know my parents came to visit and I think my father had expectations. He was. He was very handy. Like Ted, he was very good with his hands and I told him about this. Underground dwelling that I had made and he even had a name for it a abri I think was what the French trappers had made for themselves. I kind of underground shelter and I my dad came to look at what I've done and he just I could just see this sense of. Disappointment and worry in his eyes like. Oh my God. Here's my son living basically in a ditch. It was fine for me. I think a little concerning for our parents.

**Eric:** But what concerned? Turk and Wanda even more was the social isolation of both of their sons. Live off the grid, living unconventional life. Fine, but neither brother had ever had a partner.

**David Kaczynski:** A couple times my mother had met some younger women at work and tried to fix me up with them and so forth, but. So I'm wondering why? Why are neither? About boys, you know hooked up with. With girlfriends or or partners or or whatever was did we do something wrong, you know?

**Eric:** Why were neither of their boys hooked up with girlfriends or partners at that point in their lives?

**David Kaczynski:** And I wasn't very attractive unfortunately.

**Eric:** Well, there are all sorts of people who who have girlfriends and partners. Yeah, there the.

**David Kaczynski:** Real answer is that you know again, this is the romantic side of me. I felt in love when I was 16 years old.

**Eric:** He fell in love with Linda Patrick. They were lab partners in high school, David idolized Linda, but she seemed to want to keep their friendship platonic. They went to different colleges, pursued different lives, but David made sure they stayed in touch all the time. He thought or hoped. We're going to end up together.

**David Kaczynski:** And looked for a while like Linda and I might be lifetime mates. And then she married a fellow graduate student and I just felt enough. That's it, you know. I love Linda. How could I love somebody else?

**Eric:** But what about Ted? At that point, was that something he ever discussed or or let on a sense of disappointment about if he had one?

**David Kaczynski:** Well, Ted Turner, you know we we didn't talk about feelings or personal things with each other that much. Neither of us talked about our need for or feelings about women.

**Cathy:** You know we evolved as human beings by communicating. With each other.

**Eric:** This is FBI behavioral analyst Kathy Bucket again, remember, she was the one who spent her days on the case trying to get inside the Unabomber's mind.

**Cathy:** You know we didn't have fangs and claws to exist on our own, and singletons out in the world. I mean, we're basically helpless without. Social groups and the technology that we've evolved were very different than any other species on the planet. You know, connecting to things is part of the way the human brain is wired.

**Eric:** Ted Kaczynski was isolated his entire life, growing up in Chicago, he sought seclusion in the attic of his family house. As a student at Harvard in Michigan, as a professor at Berkeley, he didn't make strong friendships, didn't share his thoughts or dreams or confidences so much of what we know about Ted comes from the journals and letters he wrote for much of his adult life, sitting very alone, mostly in his tiny cabin. Kathy says that that isolation is related to the grand proclamations about humanity Ted made in the manifesto.

**Cathy:** He's absolutely convinced that he knows that the human race, which he can't connect to emotionally, but he wishes he could. The human race needs to be made aware. Of how they're destroying the planet and it's destroying human society so he can care about them in the aggregate. But there's there's no individuals that he could make any real relationships with.

**Eric:** Ted longed for these relationships, particularly with women, and the failures stung. In his second autobiography, he writes about a crush he had on a girl in 7th grade. He starts to approach her in the hall and she whispers to her friends. He's blushing and giggles. It's the stuff middle school is made of, but Ted takes it hard. No doubt I was blushing but I didn't like being laughed at, he writes. At Harvard, he suffered from what he considered acute sexual starvation. He later wrote, I was in daily contact with smart, physically attractive Radcliffe women, and I didn't know how to make advances to them. Sometimes he said he would snub a pretty girl who tried to be friendly to him. He said it felt like getting revenge on. The enemy. But he kept trying to find a romantic partner. In his journal in 1975, during a brief stint looking for work in the San Francisco Bay area, he wrote. I thought not so much about physical sex as about love and all that kind of mushy stuff.

**Cathy:** You know, he advertised in the Berkeley newspapers in the 70s for a squaw to come and live with him in the woods. He got a lot of your responses to. And laughed about them and how stupid they were.

**Eric:** Kathy pored over Ted's journal entries in the months after his arrest and came to know his triumphs and despair with women very intimately.

**Cathy:** I don't know if you know that he went down to the Bay Area and joined Sierra singles for a period of time where he went on a couple of walks. Hikes with other

single people, including a woman that he walked with who he kind of became. In fact, he. It didn't take him long to get infatuated.

**Eric:** At one point, Ted applied for a job at McDonald's in Oakland. He spotted another applicant, a woman he found attractive. He didn't speak to her, only heard her say to the interviewer that she was into roller Derby or roller skating. Ted's not entirely sure later on, though, he runs into her on the street, introduces himself, gets her name and phone number. Perhaps I am. Not really so inhibited with attractive women as I thought Ted wrote, but when he called to ask her out she said she was busy training for roller Derby. He calls her back but no answer. He thinks to himself, maybe she's just tired from training. Then he admits the obvious. She's avoiding his call, Ted writes. I don't resent her much for it, but I am certainly puzzled.

Ted was also puzzling over himself. He wrote that from a young age he had sexual fantasies where he imagined he was a woman and at Michigan he said he considered seeking a sex change, but when he went to see an on campus psychiatrist, he couldn't talk about it, he improvised said he was depressed about the possibility of being drafted into the Vietnam War. Instead, he wrote that the whole thing made him deeply ashamed. As far as I can tell, Ted. Never explored his gender identity with anyone again. But decades later, in the late 1980s, he did go to see another therapist.

**Cathy:** He paid. \$50.00 of a very, very meager sum that he made every year to go see a psychologist in Montana and his purpose was. He wanted to find out how to move back into society and become a participating member and get married and have kids.

**Eric:** Ted was happy with the session, but then he decided it was too expensive. He never went for a follow up. This was right after he placed his 12th bomb in the parking lot of a computer store in Salt Lake City and as he did it, he was seen by an eyewitness. Soon forensic sketches of the Unabomber were being published around the country. This brush, with being identified, seemed to prompt a re-evaluate. And there was the therapy and then a few years later Ted applied to go back to college. He was accepted at the age of 50 with a math PhD in two years as a faculty member. He was going to be an undergraduate journalism major at the University of Montana. He said he was going back to school because in his words. "He was interested in turning respectable." But then a few weeks before classes began. He pulled out. A normal life and someone to share it with it's what Ted wanted, but he kept running from it.

**Cathy:** Too, and he really wrote wrenchingly about these things. I mean he he bought a. New pair of jeans and and he tried to talk to this woman and he describes. He said I. Came back very. Unabashedly, he says I came back and sat around my fire and just sobbed because I couldn't get up. I can't really even speak to her. She was like an alien to him.

**Eric:** For more than two decades, David's own love for his chemistry lab partner Linda Patrick was also unrequited. But David kept writing letters to her from the desert. Linda wrote back from Schenectady, NY, where she was a philosophy professor. Every day in the desert, David says he would speak Linda's name under his breath

like a secret mantra. David and Ted had always had different personalities, different strengths, different outlooks on their parents. But to anyone who saw their lives in the mid 80s and didn't know Ted violent secret, it looked like they'd made a similar vow of solitude. But by the late 80s, the brothers parallel isolation started to diverge. Linda marriage broke up. David invited her to come down to Texas. By that point, he'd upgraded his living situation. He built a small cabin of his own. David and Linda became a couple and together they renovated the cabin to be more comfortable adding a front room and electricity. Kathy Puckett remembers visiting for the first time, years later, when she was in the final stages of the UNABOM investigation. She says the location is so rural that when she arrived the truck she was in could barely crawl forward because of. All the rocks and ruts.

**Cathy:** And I'm thinking what is this you know, is this guy going to be? I don't know what we're going to look. At we drive. Up and it's this cheerful little building. With Eaves under the roof painted pink. He opens it all up and inside there's a rag rug in there that's all colored. It's all as neat as a pin and you know there was something you could use as a sink, but there was no running water or anything. There was no electricity had kerosene.

**Eric:** Primitive, but cozy homey.

**Cathy:** But it was just surrounded by nothing. And the isolation was profound. The stillness was was amazing. And I said, did Linda paint those seeds pink? And he grinned. And he said, yes. And I said so, was it this nice before you met Linda? And he said, Oh no. No, it wasn't. She's made a big difference in my life. And you know you have to understand that within like a month and a half later we were walking through Kaczynski's cabin, which was the polar opposite. I mean, it was like the sun and the darkness. You know we went into the darkness in Kaczynski's cabin.

**Eric:** In July 1990, David and Linda got married in a Buddhist ceremony. By then they were spending most of their time in upstate New York, where Linda was still teaching. Linda had taken David out of the desert out of isolation, and David was happy in a way he hadn't been, maybe ever. In pictures from their wedding, David is wearing a Hawaiian shirt and khakis, and he's beaming laugh wrinkles, curling around his eyes. It's so clear looking at those photographs he's found the thing he was looking for. Ted still had.

**David Kaczynski:** I actually asked him to congratulate me in a letter and then the letter I received in return was just absolutely devastating. You know basically saying he wanted nothing to do with me for the rest of my life. You know I'm doing the latter, I just I just don't want to look at it anymore. The dealbreaker was that I was. Uhm, leaving the wilderness, a life like his a life that he approved of apart from technology to live a you know a more conventional life. I didn't know quite how to take it. He'd never met Linda, so he didn't have any particular reason to dislike her. I'd never really talked about her to him. So I don't know I found out. Years later, that Ted had. And my apartment in Great Falls he had. It apparently opened a dresser drawer and found a stack of letters that Linda had sent me over the years and had read those letters and



whatever, for whatever reason, took a dislike to her. Later on I began to. Wonder if there was some element of jealousy.

**Cathy:** There he assumed that David was as he was, someone who had never had sex with anyone else.

**David Kaczynski:** It was around that time that he'd become obsessed with the idea of finding a mate.

**Cathy:** And when David got married to Linda, that was the last straw. It was a betrayal of the virtuous monk like lives that he thought David was going to attain in the same way he did by living in his cabin in Texas.

**Eric:** The letter Ted sent to David after David told him he was moving in with Linda was nearly 14 pages long. Ted reprints it in its entirety. In his last autobiography, Truth Versus Lies. And I'll be honest, it's brutal and very hard to read, he mocks. The short stories David has written and sent him as hopelessly amateurish. He tells him he finds him insufferably irritating in general. And although he admits he knows barely anything about Linda, he's figured out exactly what he thinks of the relationship, telling David he's going to be so subservient to Linda that he finds it quote disgusting. Let me know your next size Ted writes I'd. Like to get. You a dog collar next Christmas? In the years. That followed Ted and David exchanged letters only occasionally. David tried to get Ted to come to their father's funeral in 19. 90 but for all intents and purposes their relationship ended. As David's partnership with Linda began Emerald, David sensed that jealousy was part of the equation. He didn't quite get all of what was going on until years. Later, when he read Ted's journals.

**David Kaczynski:** At one point in these diaries, he mentioned that he had drawn. He was gifted a drawer. He drew a picture of the perfect woman. I guess some beautiful face and figure and then he said, if only this woman could become real and then he said but you know "it wouldn't last very long, I'd get mad, something would happen, the relationship would go down the tubes. Just cash what I sad kind of insight into himself. But it really did strike me that his interest in love and sex and marriage even in having children which he talked about. Was something that he had never mentioned or discussed so much so that it completely surprised me.

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**Eric:** Do you... have you heard the term incel?

**Cathy:** Oh yeah.

**Eric:** Incel, in case you're not familiar with it, is short for involuntary celibate. It's a term used for young men who become despondent and angry over what they see as their inability to find romance and sex with women. Their misogyny fuels a lot of rage and violence. Do you think Kaczynski was an incel?

**Cathy:** I think that he had an anger against women generally, but he was very, with the with the exception of the rage that he felt against the woman Ellen, that he met in Chicago and had the one kiss with, he didn't talk about women in general that way.

**Eric:** Yeah, I do... I get what you're saying... makes a lot of sense and I guess I think. Incels, at least in some of the cases we've had of like, mass shootings, doing violence against women.

**Cathy:** Right, right.

**Eric:** And I do think it's significant that Kaczynski never targeted a woman.

**Cathy:** Exactly, exactly.

**Eric:** There's a folder in the Ted Kaczynski archive at the University of Michigan titled *Musical Compositions*. Ted took up the trombone when he was in 7th grade, and he excelled at it. Music he wrote, came to take on deep emotional significance for him. Later, he would compose contrapuntal arrangements of folk songs and Christmas carols, playing on guitar and zither, as he sang. He described it as one of his favorite pastimes. Inside that musical composition folder there are two sets of sheet music. The first or a series of 6 marches composed between 1971 and 1978. In a note, Ted writes that these songs reflect the generally cheerful and optimistic tone of that period of my life. The period that lasted from his. Moved to the cabin in Lincoln until he placed his first bomb. Ted described sitting by his stove in the evening or the early morning. Gazing at the orange glow of the fire. I would whistle a \*\*\*\*\* Of melody over and over to myself, he writes until the next few notes that should be added on would come to me. The other set of sheet music in the folder is more recent trombone duos. Ted wrote in prison and dedicated to women, whom he identifies only by first name. There are compositions for Susan for Lydia for Julier and one for a woman named Joy. I'm pretty sure I know who all these women are just from reading about Ted. Leafing through his archives, their names come up a few times and his pen pal relationships with women from prison were different. He wasn't just pining after women gazing from afar, they were reaching out to him. Joy seems to be the most meaningful to Ted. Her full name was Joy Richards. I first read about her in a Yahoo News story that the reporter Holly Bailey wrote in 2016. Joy Richards didn't know Ted Kaczynski before he went to prison, but when she read about him and read his writing, she became fascinated by him. She wrote to him offering her help as a researcher.

**David Kaczynski:** And the relationship grew.

**Eric:** When Ted wrote to her, he used colored pencils. He called her lady love. He mentioned her in letters to many people. At one point Ted wrote she's an Angel. I mean a real one. I'm sure she could fly if she wanted to. You don't see her Halo because she's too modest to wear it. She keeps it hung up in her closet, but really, she is an honest to goodness Angel. Absolutely perfect. But Joy Richards was battling cancer, and in late 2006, her condition worsened. Doctors told her she was going to die. As a final. Way to express his feelings, Ted wrote that trombone duo for her. Then he sent it to another pen pal, a musician who visited Richards and played her recording. He'd made of the duo on a synthesizer. It was a kind of relationship. Ted had been seeking for decades, but by then, of course he couldn't end his isolation. Even if he wanted to. He'd killed three men, leaving widows and fatherless children behind, and had tried to murder many more, and for that he was in solitary confinement in the most secure

prison in the world. The story of how Ted got there, how he became the lead suspect in the UNABOM case, it really begins a few years after Ted had cut David out of his life. It begins when all of a sudden after a long period of silence and inactivity. He returned.

**John Conway:** I called in and they advised me that a bomb had gone off in Tiburon, which is right down the road here and Sheridan hell it was UNABOM alive and well.

**Eric:** That's next time on Project UNABOM. Project UNABOM is an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. It's produced by our senior producer Jonathan Menjivar, and me, I'm Eric Benson, our producers, Aurelia Toddler, and Melissa Slaughter. Editing by Joel Level and Maddie sprung Kaiser our fact checker. Is Sarah if? The episode was mixed by Davey Sumner, Jason Richards, Elliot Adler and Jonathan Menjivar studio. Recording by Brian Standifer at the Texas monthly studio. Our artwork is by GM casuse music by Mark Horton and John Hancock. Additional music by Erik Phillips and Jeff Baxter. Legal services. For pineapple St by Bianca Grimshaw. At Granderson, desrocher. Jenna Weiss Berman and Max Linsky are the executive producers at Pineapple St. Thanks for listening.

## 5. The Manhunt

UNABOM was the longest manhunt in FBI history. Why did it take several decades, a revolving door of agents, and hundreds of suspects to find Ted?

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**Eric:** Gary Wright got. Into the computer business in the early 1980s, computers were different. Back then, they weren't sleek and fast and seamlessly integrated into every aspect of our lives. They were industrial, physical, constantly breaking like some old car. Or the outboard. Motor on a boat you needed to get under the. Hood so.

**Gary Wright:** Clients would pay 3/5 six, \$700.00 a month for you to come out and clean the computer.

**Eric:** Specifically, Gary would repair the hard drives which had two main parts, a ceramic head and the disc below it where the data was recorded.

**Gary Wright:** If dust got caught between the head and the media, it would crash that ceramic head into this disc and start tearing off the oxide that was on top of these aluminum. Plates that were spinning at like 3600 RPMS and you'd lose all your data.

**Eric:** Gary got good at doing this, kind of work, he was a capable technician and he's a really personable guy, a born salesman, talk with Gary a little bit and you want to buy something from him.

So it wasn't long before Gary decided to start his own company and pretty soon they had big contracts with the military with the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, which is where Gary lived, they got into retail and expanded to four locations selling brand new Apple PC's. If you were in Salt Lake City back then and you wanted a Macintosh plus or an Apple 2C, there was a good chance you were going to buy it from Gary. Gary remembers feeling like it was all too good to be true, the way his life was lining up. One morning in February 1987, he's on his way to work on a beautiful blue sky day.

**Gary Wright:** Sunroofs open music blared. You can imagine I'm a 20 something year old just enjoying life and drive back towards the office and pull into the parking lot. And as I was pulling in, I looked to the right and I saw this piece of debris sitting there like a piece of wood, and I'm like that's kind of weird.

**Eric:** It was sitting near the front tire of a car. Gary Parks and walks over to pick it up as he gets close. He sees there are a few nails sticking out of it. Like maybe someone was looking to. Puncture the tire of that car.

**Gary Wright:** I'm walking towards it and I actually hesitated for a second because the nails are like Chrome and I'm I'm thinking that's that's odd. I've never seen chrome nails before, but I still walked towards it and as I bent down to pick it up, there was like a slight click and a whole bunch of pressure and then this sound that sounded like a fighter jet going over, so just a massive screech and the next thing I knew was like 22 feet back.

**Eric:** 22 feet back and somehow he was still standing.

**Gary Wright:** I don't remember flying through the air, but I somehow came out of that and landed on my feet and so I don't. I don't know how that happened, whether you know you see movies and maybe it was that exact thing. Just going back through the air few feet off the ground or something and then landing on my feet. And the best way I can describe that feeling was the matrix, where he's avoiding bullets and things like that. It was the weirdest feeling ever. I'm looking at the telephone and electrical wires going into the building in a sine wave, and that sine wave is just moving slow just up and down and I look around and I'm noticing there's little like Snowflake looking things coming down and a piece of red, almost like confetti. Some tape of some sort was spinning down in a circle and kind of just concentric coming down slow and I'm watching it going man, you might die.

**Eric:** Gary can see that his arms are full of shrapnel. There's blood all over his white shirt. But he's having trouble figuring out what's happened to the rest of his body because he can't bend his neck.

**Gary Wright:** The reason I couldn't bend my neck down was when the bomb exploded, being inside of wood there would turn into like millions of slivers, but they had impaled themselves under my neck. So I was like a porcupine and I was basically crunching down on those. Pieces of wood, those slivers that were impaled in my neck, so it was a little weird feeling. I mean, I didn't feel any pain, but at the same time I was just having trouble looking down and around.

**Eric:** Molten metal had burned holes deep into his body, severed a nerve in his forearm, cut an artery, but also cauterized that wound, which Gary thinks probably saved his life. There was metal all over his face. His sunglasses were pitted with tiny craters from the blast. He looked like he was wearing welders goggles. A chunk of wood from the bomb hit his mouth with so much force he'd need years of dental work to repair the damage to his teeth. Splinters from the device were everywhere.

**Gary Wright:** The wood was particularly tough because it's an organic and you can't see that on an X-ray very well. So, like years later, I'd be shaving and I'd hit what I thought was a hard whisker and there'd be 1/2 inch piece of wood I'd pull out.

**Eric:** The injuries Gary Wright sustained that day took a major toll. Multiple surgeries. Years of physical therapy, a few things he's living with to this day, but once the violent shock began to wear off, Gary asked himself. Who did this to me and why?

**Gary Wright:** I literally went back and recreated everything I possibly remember and I'm a kind of person I remember. Every school teacher I'm in for every phone number whatever, but to go back and recreate every relationship I could possibly

think of and every person I could have made angry from kindergarten forward. I mean I had people. That I had met on jobs in California years prior that I just felt like, well, that was just slightly off. I mean, could it have been them?

**Eric:** A few minutes before Gary Bent down to pick up that piece of wood in the parking lot, one of his employees, a woman named Tammy Flui, looked out the back window of the office and saw a stranger walking through the parking lot carrying something. She watched him. Placed the thing near the tire of her car, then walk off. The whole thing was odd. But she was busy and figured she'd take care of it later. And then the bomb went off in the midst of the chaos, she realized that was the guy. And she'd gotten a good look at him. Aviator sunglasses, a hoodie, facial hair, and soon there was that famous forensic sketch. The investigation into the Unabomber was almost a decade old. This was the 12th bomb and the sketch made from Tammy's eyewitness account would be seen by millions of people. It was easily. The biggest break the case had ever had.

The FBI, the ATF, the US Postal Service, the local police in Salt Lake City, they weren't going to let this moment pass. Dozens of agents swooped into the area and set-up a multi agency UNABOM task force. There was a makeshift command center in a gymnasium where they chase down all kinds of leads. But nothing lead anywhere agents looked into it, but any potential suspects got ruled out quickly. The task force kept at it for a few months, but by the late spring activity was dropping off. Agents got reassigned, that big bustling command center got shut down.

**Gary Wright:** When they came to the conclusion that they were kind of disbanding the Unabomber task force, it was kind of a bummer in a way, because it's like, Oh well, we're never going to know.

**Eric:** This is Project UNABOM, an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. I'm Eric Benson. Episode 5: The manhunt.

When the Unabomber began his bombings in the late 1970s, he didn't seem to be a big problem. He hadn't killed anyone. His early bombs weren't particularly powerful. And bombings were common back then, but they were almost always directed at property. Not people often perpetrated by radical left wing groups like the Weather Underground. Kaczynski had put a bomb on an Airliner of course. But no one was calling for a massive federal manhunt, and by treating the Unabomber is something less than a national security priority. He had the space and time to grow into an undeniable threat. In the early years, the. Person we now call the Unabomber didn't have a nickname. He was a mystery bomber, a ragtag 1970s terrorist with unclear motives who happened not to get caught. By the end he would be something else entirely. This episode is about that transformation and how after years of inattention, the FBI finally got serious about taking care of a problem that kept getting worse. It starts eight months after Gary Wright was nearly blown to shreds when the case ended up in a pile of other cases on the desk of an agent named John Conway. Conway was working out of a small FBI office in San Raphael, California perched on hills above the North End of San Francisco Bay, and he gets word come down to San Francisco,

the regional FBI headquarters. Because you're taking on a new case, the Unabomber investigation. A week later, Conway meets with the guy who'd been saddled with the case before him.

**John Conway:** He handed me a number of files and showed me in San Francisco where the voluminous files were and said best. Of luck to you. And that was my introduction to unabom.

**Eric:** And when you were given that. What what do you think were you? Were you excited to take that on, were you...?

**John Conway:** Yes, although I was told by a number of agents that I knew that it was I was being stuck with a an old case. I always thought rather highly of my abilities as an investigator. I didn't realize that the size the breath of this investigation involved, but I liked my chances that I was going to solve it.

**Eric:** John, he's kind of a ham. He does voices tell stories with great gusto. One of the first things. I heard about him was that while he was an active duty FBI agent, he was also an amateur actor in local theater productions. You can understand why he'd want to spend his nights doing the fantasticks dial M for murder, both of which he did, by the way, because being the UNABOM case agent was soul sapping. Conway didn't have a task force at his disposal. In fact, there wasn't going to be a single other FBI agent working with him. The case was his.

**John Conway:** Alone, I also had 25 other cases that were assigned to me that I couldn't just let them sit, so it was not the how would I put it. I never felt as though I was properly supported by the administration in San Francisco.

**Eric:** So when Conway isn't tracking, seek hitmen or going undercover to intercept IRA operatives, he's doing whatever he can think of to breathe life back into the UNABOM case. He's poring over the old case files, looking up old parking tickets and moving violations to see if the same name pops up multiple times near any of the bombings.

**John Conway:** The next thought I had was getting it into something that people throughout the country would get to see and read. And from my recollection the best book to do that was readers digest. So I wound up getting in in the I want to say it was November of 89 I think.

**Eric:** The story was on the cover with the headline. Do you know this mad bomber in red letters next to the forensic sketch of the Unabomber, created from Tamiflu ES eyewitness account.

**John Conway:** And we wound up getting so many thousands of leads. Pretty much every divorced woman turned her former husband in as the Unabomber, and I mean there was some that were absolutely ridiculous, but we had to. We had to wash every one of them.

**Eric:** Conway doesn't run all the leads himself. He farms them out to dozens of different regional offices around the country. Sometimes the local agents get back to him quickly. We ran it down. No way this guy could be the Unabomber, but a lot of times Conrad just waits and waits and wonders. Is steps just falling through the

cracks. This is how. Things go for years every fall, Conway would get summoned to FBI headquarters in Washington for a big briefing. He'd walk into the same conference room, 60 or 70 people gathered to hear the latest UNABOM updates. Conway would look out from his seat long table in the middle of the room, supervisors. From all the agencies with a stake in his case, the FBI, the ATF, the US Postal Service.

**John Conway:** Big mucky mucks people with titles and because this being such a big case they all didn't want something to happen then they weren't part of it.

**Eric:** Conway supervisor would kick things off. Tell everyone:

**John Conway:** Now I'm sure everybody would like to know what is going on in unabom, so we're going to have to rely. On the only person that's working. It's John Conway in the room someplace, and I'd say I'm right here so I'd get up and I would fill him in on whatever has been going on for the last year or the last month.

**Eric:** Then Conway would make his big pitch. I need more manpower.

**John Conway:** And everybody absolutely absolute you name it. Yeah you, whatever listen when I go back we'll take in RF with smoke basically smoke and once the meeting was over now everybody went to lunch and forget about. Conway is taking care of it.

**Eric:** I mean my image is like the movie where you're alone at the desk there's like the one light bulb on. You got some.

**John Conway:** That's it. That's I mean, I can somewhat understand if an arrest is imminent. The Bureau would put all the manpower they could gather on that case, trying to bring it to fruition quickly, safely, et cetera, and the feeling in the Bureau was that if they, if they weren't able to solve this matter, John Conway, not by himself, is not going to be able to solve it. So I mean, why are we going to waste manpower giving to him? That was the way it was. Explain to me.

**Eric:** The years after Gary Wright picked up that bomb would prove to be the quietest, most mysterious era in the two decade Long Unabomber case. The Unabomber simply disappeared. There have been lulls before no bombs in 1983 and 84. No bombings in 1986. But this was different. After the forensic sketch is published, he just stops. More bombs in. 1988 or 89 or 90 or 91. At FBI headquarters they start saying. Maybe he's done, maybe he got arrested for something else and he's in prison. Maybe he blew himself up accidentally. Maybe he just decided to stop bombing. There was no way for them to know what Ted Kaczynski was actually doing in those years. This was when he applied to go back to college and when he. Sought help from. Therapists, this was when he contemplated, as he put it, getting civilized again. But all the FBI knew was there were no more bombs, and so the investigation no longer felt urgent. In 1992, Conway gets word from the higher ups in DC. It's over. Time to shut down unabom.

**John Conway:** I said no. It's a major case man has killed people. He's still out there and I'm not going to close it.

**Eric:** But Conway could only single handedly keep the case open for so long. The longer the Unabomber stayed away, the more likely it was the case was. Going to get. Mothballed and then June 22nd 1993.



**John Conway:** I was had a day off. I was with my son over at Hamilton Air Force Base which is closed. We were at one of the baseball guys playing.

**Eric:** It was a Tuesday afternoon.

**John Conway:** And the pager went off and don't ask me why I was dumb enough to wear my pager on the day off, but I was and I called in and they advised me that a bomb had gone off in Tiburon, which is right down the road here in Marin County. And from what the first reports from the policeman there, it sounded like it could be unabom.

**Eric:** The attack had some telltale markings. The bomb arrived in the mail, it was contained inside a wooden box.

**John Conway:** And without going home to change or whatever, here I am in my tank top and shorts and I raced down to Tiburon and Scherдин hell it was UNABOM alive and well.

**Eric:** The victim was a prominent scientist, doctor Charles Epstein, who had pioneered the field of medical genetics and done groundbreaking research on Down syndrome. Epstein survived, but the Unabomber wasn't done. Two days later, a computer scientist at Yale University named David Gelernter, received his own mysterious package. When he opened it, the bomb ripped through his body nearly severing his right hand and partially blinding him. Gelernter hobbled down five flights of stairs. On his own to get help. That same day a letter arrived at the New York Times, the Unabomber was taking credit. He called himself FC the same initials that had been stamped on a metal plate inside many of the bombs.

Suddenly the investigation was a national priority and Conway was about to get what he'd been fighting for for all those years.

**John Conway:** Janet Reno decided that. To the this called for a serious task force that little Johnny Conway was not able to handle this by himself. Thank God.

**Eric:** 1993 was not the FBI's finest year. By the time of the Charles Epstein bombing, there had already been the disastrous siege of David Koresh and his Branch Davidian followers in Waco, TX. And the continued. Fallout from an FBI sniper killing a young mother in a standoff. In Ruby Ridge, Idaho, a year earlier. And a new terrorist threat was making itself known.

**Newsreader:** This is a CBS News Special report. Fires are burning in both towers of the World Trade Center. The whole building shook. And then the lights went out.

**Newsreader:** The explosion blasted a gaping hole through the ceiling of the second sub basement in tower number one this.

**Eric:** On February 26th, 1993, four months before the return of the Unabomber, a massive bomb exploded in the parking lot of tower. One of the World Trade Center. The plan was masterminded by a Pakistani terrorist named Ramzi Yousef. This is a little bit of a side Rd, but there's a detail from the Unabomber saga that I've never stopped being amazed by for 20 years or so. Yousef and Ted Kaczynski shared a cell block in ADX Florence, a Super Max security prison in Colorado. Their block is referred to as bombers row. Timothy McVeigh the Oklahoma City bomber. He spent a couple years

there to the three of them. Kaczynski, Yousef and McVeigh reportedly used to meet up. During rec time to talk politics. Back in 19. 93 Ramzi Yousef aims were clear he and his conspirators had been hoping to do what later happened on 9. 11 toppled both buildings and kill thousands of civilians. The 1990 Three bomb didn't do that, but it was powerful and lethal. 6 people died.

**Newsreader:** Thousands poured out of the building gasping for air. There's smoke and then the lights. Went out the walls. Just blew in everything, went blanket. It out just a tremendous amount of structural damage.

**Terry Turchie:** None of us. Knew it at that point in time. America didn't know it. The FBI didn't actually fully realize it, but. Before we heard from Unabomber again, we were already involved in what would become the War on Terror with international terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda.

**Eric:** This is Terry Turchy, a longtime FBI agent who rose up the ranks to become deputy assistant director overseeing the counterterrorism division.

**Terry Turchie:** We didn't know if UNABOM was. It's part of a operation involving Al Qaeda as well. We didn't know for sure if there was one person or many people from the right or from the left working to to bomb targets in America. There there were. There were theories of both, we didn't. Know if we. Had a lone terrorist bomber alone serial bomber. And so they wanted UNABOM fall UNABOM had to be explored and had to be finished up, and we had to. Know what was behind it.

**Eric:** The new UNABOM task force took over a big chunk of the FBI San Francisco office. John Conway was still part of the team, but now there was a high-ranking agent running the show in a team of 45 federal agents working full time on the case. One of them was a long time veteran named Max Knoll. You might remember him from earlier in the series. Max was laser focused on the fact that most of the unabomber's communications Including the manifesto were written on a Smith Corona typewriter with Pica font and 2.54 centimeters spacing. Max was in his 50s doing. What FBI agents called posting and coasting mentoring younger agents getting home in time for dinner, not putting his neck on the line every day and Max was a hard evidence guy. He liked solid facts concrete leads you could run down and. He knew UNABOM was a. Morass, there was nothing solid. About it so in Mad Max gets the call from the new task force boss he tells. Him keep me out of this UNABOM thing.

**Max Noel:** I'm ready for retirement. You know, I don't have the desire to become involved in a in a huge multi agency task force, please Recon. And he said, Nope.

**Eric:** So whether he likes it or not, Max gets to work trying to chase down whatever semblance of evidence the task force had, or thought it had.

**Max Noel:** I could go on for hours listing all the projects we had, the mechanics and the aviation, the explosives. Residue and aluminum.

**Eric:** Forensic experts assumed the Unabomber must be melting the aluminum he was using in his bombs in a home kiln.

**Max Noel:** So we had a project going on identifying everyone in the United States in the last 10 years that we had been purchasing home kilns for a labor intensive project.

**Eric:** They knew all the calls. From the toll free tip line.

**Max Noel:** All of those 53,000 calls had to be investigated. That's another labor intensive thing.

**Eric:** They were chasing leads from the Unabomber's letter to the times leads from the old eyewitness citing leads related to the bombing locations and the victims.

The amount of information you guys were going through just to me feels staggering. And it...

**Max Noel:** Well, I said...

**Eric:** feels so easy to lose track of all of it.

**Max Noel:** Exactly, I said before this is an information management case. As much as it is an investigation, we had pretty much all the information we needed and we knew that as soon as we got. The correct suspect. We would recognize it immediately.

**Eric:** For the first time in the investigation, they begin consolidating all their files into a computer database. Up until this point, those files existed mostly as hard copies stashed away in whatever regional FBI office had investigated a bombing or lead.

**Max Noel:** Then they and I'm talking out of 'cause I'm not a computer guy, but they had to upload, download or whatever load they do. The investigative documents. Into a complete text retrieval program called Zyindex. Now that all sounds good, but the problem is is that guys like me that were assigned to this didn't have the slightest idea how to use a computer so we all had to be trained, I didn't. I know how to turn the computer on.

**Eric:** This is when Terry Turci enters the scene he's working in Palo Alto, not San Francisco, and he doesn't work in criminal investigations. He's a counterintelligence agent in Silicon Valley, trying to smoke out foreign spies and keep America's technological secrets from falling into the wrong hands.

**Terry Turchie:** Palo Alto for the FBI was a key place. To be working counterintelligence. Because just about every enemy of the United States and even all of our friends were interested in all of that technology, and in those technology companies, and. The hope was that we could. Make them aware of all of the kinds of indicators that they might see if their employees were being targeted by hostile intelligence services.

**Eric:** In April of 19. 94 Terry gets installed as the new head of. The UNABOM task force. And he brings on a new leadership team. It's some criminal guys Max is sticking around but also a bunch of new people from counterintelligence and they're all about trying to get inside the head of the enemy.

**Terry Turchie:** Well, we need a behavioral opinion that is more up to date and current. We can't keep getting along with being told that yes, this is a serial bomber and so that means they're probably a white male and they live in the basement probably. With their mother. I mean, you know well what is that, but how is that going to help us solve it?

**Kathy Puckett:** Well, the profile is the profile. It doesn't change, the Unabomber is the same guy he was when he started bombing in 1978. So the profile is not going to change.

**Eric:** Kathy Puckett had worked with Terry in counterintelligence.

**Kathy Puckett:** I said, well, how does that make any sense? If you uncover new information or invest, you know you get other facts and other information that you're. Going to put together. And they were just very rigid about that.

**Eric:** Kathy insisting on a new approach. It didn't make her super popular with the old guard when she joined the task for.

**Kathy Puckett:** US criminal guys aren't really crazy about the idea of counterintelligence agents getting involved with criminal cases because. We tend to go over and over and over. They don't know what we do. And we're used to long fruitless chases under difficult circumstances with very, very formidable opponents. And we're used to not having quick answers. We work through things repeatedly. Re analyze, go over and over things. I was not viewed by the rest of the agents in the office as as a very good agent, probably a shooting agent. Frankly, because they didn't know what I was doing and I didn't feel that it was my job to tell them or to try to make them like me. As a result, I knew it would be futile anyway.

**Eric:** So Terry and Kathy decide. Basically, screw those guys. We're just going to go ahead and do things our way, which meant we're going to go back over everything.

**Terry Turchie:** One of the things that we noted is that that there was a language academic aspect of UNABOM that we had never touched.

**Eric:** This was before Ted Kaczynski had sent his manifesto. In fact this was back when the FBI still had very little writing to go on it. Still, some investigators had seized upon some odd details that seemed to suggest the Unabomber was laying out bread crumbs or maybe false leads. For instance, many of the devices were mailed using \$1.00 stamps, depicting the playwright Eugene O'Neill. There was the sense that he might be playing word games with the concept of wood. The bombs were made of. Would one was sent to United Airlines President Percy Wood. All the stuff that had caused trouble for those D&D guys in Chicago an episode. Three, there were pseudonyms, 2 names that sounded like outlandish characters from a Thomas Pynchon novel. One bomb arrived. With a letter signed by one Enoch W. Fisher, another, was signed by Ralph C. In that letter, Kloppenburg refers to the niche academic discipline known as the history of science.

**Terry Turchie:** Why the pseudonyms? Why the letters and what in the hell is the history of? Science and we then find that the history of science is like this very restricted academic arena. That only a number of universities and colleges had. Programs in at that time. What were some of the main ones, UC Berkeley University of Michigan, Harvard?

**Eric:** Through the summer and fall of 1994, Terry and his team kept combing over the evidence, squinting at the data and wondering if the Unabomber was in there

somewhere. It had been a year and a half since the Unabomber last struck. But then on December 10th in the upscale suburb of North Caldwell, NJ. His next bomb arrived.

**Newsreader #1:** A New Jersey advertising executive opened a piece of mail in his home this weekend and it exploded, killing him.

**Newsreader #2:** The FBI now believes that advertising executive Thomas Mosser was killed by a terrorist bomber who has planted a series of bombs nationwide.

**Newsreader #3:** Why would this bomber target Thomas Mosser to kill in such a dramatic way? A person who both colleagues and neighbors describe as a wonderful family man?

**Kathy Puckett:** December 10th is when Moser got his device at home. And open it just savage.

**Eric:** The Moser device was particularly devastating. It was detonated on a Saturday afternoon when Moser's wife and two young daughters were at home. If one of the girls hadn't darted into another room to stage a pretend tea party a few seconds before Moser. Opened the package. The bomb might. Very well have killed her and her mother Susan. Susan Moser was the first person to respond to the scene. She found her husband bleeding profusely, his stomach slashed open his face, blackened and disfigured. Cathy Puckett, specialized in sensitive interviews so she got the call to go visit the Moser family a few weeks after the attack.

**Kathy Puckett:** I mean when when I got there to interview the, you know, Susan Moser, his widow, there were still it was still crime scene. The kitchen was still a crime scene and there were green paneling. Nails still embedded in the cast iron pots that were hanging up. Over the sink so she'd been living in that crime scene since we were there in. I think we were there early January.

**Eric:** The Thomas Mosher bomb turned a long running investigation into an episode of 24. It was more powerful than the ones received by Charles Epstein and David Gelenter. It was the kind of bomb that really could bring down an airplane. The task force had limitless resources. The backing of the highest levels. Of the federal government and their. Efforts had come to nothing. They hadn't spooked the Unabomber, they had no clue who he was or where he was. Max Knoll remembers the feeling of desperation.

**Max Noel:** Thomas Moser had just been killed, were working virtually 16 and more hours a day with our noses to the grindstone and were working nights and weekends and so forth.

**Eric:** Four months later, on April 24th, 1995, the Unabomber strikes again. And kills again. This time it's Gilbert Murray, the President of California, logging industry Trade Organization. Murray was a well liked, soft spoken guy with a wife and two teenage sons and he hadn't even been the intended recipient of the. Bomb the Unabomber had addressed the package to the guy. Who had the job? Before him, so it was a screw up. But the Unabomber said he didn't care. The day of the Murrey bombing, another letter from the Unabomber arrives at the offices of the New York Times, taunting the FBI and spelling out the rough outlines of his anti technology ambitions. On June 27th,

another letter arrives, this time at the offices of the San Francisco Chronicle, saying a bomb will be placed on an airplane flying out of LAX. It sends the country into a frenzy panic that night. He says it's a hoax and his 35,000 word manifesto arrives at the offices of the New York Times. The next morning, Don Graham, the publisher of the Washington Post, gets a call from FBI headquarters. The same manifesto is sitting in your mailroom and with it, a letter explaining if one of you doesn't publish this. Say in its entirety, I'm going to stop joking around and kill more people. The post published it in September 1995, and magazines and newspapers were in think pieces and tips flooded into the FBI and Max ran down leads and Cathy kept thinking about what all those words meant. And Terry tried to keep the whole thing running while assuring his bosses in Washington that the investigation was on track and September turned to October. In October to November and November to December.

**Kathy Puckett:** You can only keep that pace up. For a while, until you start losing people to fatigue to, you know lack of conviction that this is ever going to work to defeatism to. I mean, this is when people start dropping. You know, we've done everything we can. We've done everything we can. We've run every single lead out.

**Eric:** The manifesto was by far the best clue in the history of the. Case it was. Probably one of the best clues in the history of criminal cases. 35,000 words written by the killer. That was then made available to millions of people. How could someone not recognize that? Thousands of people came forward, the Unabomber sounded like an old student, an ex-husband, a brother. But none of those tips panned out. Four months went by and still nothing. That was where things stood on a Thursday night nearly February 1996, when Kathy Puckett got a call from another agent on the case. A guy who also came from counterintelligence. Joel Moss.

**Kathy Puckett:** Joel called me one day and it was about 7 at night, he said. What are you doing and I said. What else am I doing? And he said I need you to look at something. We went down the street to the coffee shop that we. Went to a lot and. He pushed this Manila envelope across the table to me. I said what's this? And he said just take a look at it and I took it out of the. Typewritten copies of typewritten pages. Started reading the first page and by the 3rd paragraph the hair in the back of my neck stood up. I said, where'd you get this and he said never mind just tell me what you think and I said this is the. Guy, he said I know what? Are we going to do now?

**Eric:** That's next time on Project UNABOM. Project UNABOM is an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. It's produced by our senior producer Jonathan Menjivar, and me, I'm Eric Benson. Our producers are Elliot Adler and Melissa Slaughter. Editing by Joel Level and Maddie sprung Kaiser. Our fact checker is Sarah every. The episode was mixed by Davey Sumner, Jason Richards, Elia Toddlar and Jonathan Menjivar studio. Recording by Brian Standifer at the Texas monthly studio. Our artwork is by GM casuse music by Mark Horton and John Hancock. Additional music by Eric Phillips and Jeff Baxter. Legal services for Pineapple St by Bianca Grimshaw at Granderson Desrocher. Jenna Weiss Berman and Max Linsky are the executive producers at Pineapple St. Thanks for listening.

## 6. The Devil's Dilemma

David Kaczynski starts to accept the truth and finally reaches out to the FBI. But can agents convince their bosses that this is the guy?

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**Eric:** Late January 1996, a young FBI agent in the DC Field office named Molly Flynn gets an assignment from her higher ups. There's a lawyer in town named Tony Begley who claims to have a client who might know something about the Unabomber. Go talk to him.

**Molly:** Him when I first met Tony, he provided. Some material and told me that he did not even know the identity of the client, but he considered himself to have a retainer of sorts, although he was representing them free of charge.

**Eric:** Molly isn't on the UNABOM task force, but she's in DC, helps out the investigation when she can. What she gets from Tony, the lawyer, is a bunch of letters between Tony's client and a person whose writing sounds like it might be the Unabomber.

**Molly:** I recall reading the letters and just my first impression was that the writer was an angry person, but you know they kind of referenced mom and dad and so the context would make you understand that the author and the recipient's brother.

**Eric:** The letters were just the start. There are other things this potential suspect had written.

**Molly:** Including something that was written in the early 70s that may have been something of a precursor to the Unabomber manifesto.

**Eric:** This was the essay that would eventually make its way to Kathy Pocket, the one she got at the end of our last episode that made the hairs on the back of her neck stand up. It's a 23 page typewritten essay from 1972, six years before the first, you know bomb attack.

**Eric:** Molly only has time to skim it, her job is just to deliver the essay to the FBI lab, but the FBI lab is only interested in one thing. Whether the guy who wrote this essay used the same typewriter as the Unabomber?

**Molly:** I think they eliminate it within probably 5 minutes. They obviously were looking for specific characters and they I think they told me right there like no, this doesn't match. And I recall saying, OK, well who's going to going to look at the content? Because that's what it was really for and they said, oh we'll send that to the task force.

**Eric:** This is the protocol. Analyze the typewriter sample at the lab. Send the essay to the task force and let them handle the. Rest, but Molly is curious. So she gets her own copy of the essay and starts. Reading more carefully.

**Molly:** But I was looking at the essay I was like wow, you know, I'm surprised. I haven't heard from the task force about this material.

**Eric:** She calls up the. Task force in San Francisco and asks to speak to one of the senior agents, Joel Moss.

**Molly:** And I asked him, I said, hey Joel, do you have a copy of this essay that we got from the attorney here in DC? And I remember him saying that, well, I have a note here saying that the typewriting doesn't match. And I said, well, no, I. I realize that, but I did you get a copy of it. And he said, well, I don't know. I haven't seen it and I said, well, I, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I think the lab told me they would send it to you and he said well, sometimes our fax machine doesn't work, so I said, well, you know your case better than I do, but I think you're really going to want to read this.

**Eric:** This is Project UNABOM, an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. I'm Eric Benson episode 6 The Devil's dilemma. If you know just a few things about the Unabomber, you probably know his brother turned him in and that's true. Sort of, but it makes the process sound straightforward. Like David Kaczynski made a phone call 1 morning, an FBI agent nodded solemnly on the other end of the line, and that night the Unabomber was behind bars. The truth is much messier, full of doubt and confusion and disagreement stretched out over a period of eight months. And that process didn't even start with David Kaczynski. The first person to actually make the connection to think that Ted Kaczynski might be the Unabomber was Linda Patrick. David's wife, you might remember from the first episode, Linda was on vacation in Paris in August of 1995, and she happened to read a few stories about the Unabomber and his manifesto in the International Herald Tribune. When David joined. Her a few weeks later, Linda let him in on a fear she couldn't shake. That the manifesto sounded like it could have been written by Ted. David hadn't paid much attention to the case, but his immediate reaction was what my brother, the Unabomber. Ted could be angry and cruel, but he'd never been violent so far as David knew. The whole thing seemed impossibly far fetched. So when they returned to the US at the end of the summer, David wasn't even thinking about it.

**David Kaczynski:** My mother visited for a while. My cousin visited. The World Series was playing on TV. My favorite team was playing and and so. As my mother's visit was winding down and we took her to the airport and Linda said Dave, I, I really think we should try to find that manifesto.

**Eric:** It had been more than a month since the manifesto was published, so he couldn't run out to a newsstand to pick up a copy, and they didn't have the Internet at home, not even the dial up AOL era Internet. So they went to the library at Union College where Linda taught. David logged onto a computer and found the manifesto. He sat there reading with Linda by his side, and as he read those opening paragraphs on the evils of the industrial technological system, it seemed possible. Really unlikely,



but possible. That his brother. Was the Unabomber. There's one chance in 1000, David told Linda. To which Linda replied, David, that's significant. So he and Linda started doing their own analysis comparing the manifesto with the hundreds of letters David had kept from Ted.

**David Kaczynski:** Never found the smoking gun or anything that would say yeah, my brother definitely wrote this but I remember at some point he had said something like these modern philosophers. They are not cool headed logicians. Which is what he thought an objective truth seeker should be, and. There was that same phrase cool headed logicians. Philosophers are not cool headed logicians, and I thought I'd seen that. Now I frantically searched through all the letters I had. I couldn't find that phrase. Now there were a few of his letters I'd lost over the years, so I presume it was one of the ones that was lost. But I was pretty sure. I mean that was the. Hardest evidence I could find.

**Eric:** But how hard was that evidence, really? It was just one phrase and he couldn't even find it in the piles of letters he'd kept.

**David Kaczynski:** But I have to say for me it was like a roller coaster in some sense I. I'd be reading. Some passage in the manifesto and think I was reading my brother's letter and then oh wait, a second. No, this isn't my brother's letter. This is the manifest. Oh my gosh, I can't even tell the difference between the two so. You know, I'm thinking it must be him, and then the next day I'm thinking, you know, this is projection I've been worried about my brother for years and ultimately the realization that it could be Ted was increasing steadily, incrementally. But I remember at some point. Telling Linda that I thought. There might be a 50% chance that he. Had written it. That he was responsible for these bombings.

**Eric:** David had gone from one chance in 1000 to one and two. Still, for every phrase. That seemed like it must have been written. By Ted there. Were other things that seemed to prove it couldn't be him? Like the sketch, the one that had been made after a woman saw the Unabomber place a bomb outside the computer store in Salt Lake City.

**David Kaczynski:** She described him as being much younger than Ted. At least 10 years younger than Ted 3 inches taller than I knew Ted to be, with a different hair color. Any choice we made could lead to somebody death if we don't do anything and somebody else gets killed and my brother is responsible for it, well, we'll have to go through the rest of our lives with blood on our hands. But the other horn of the dilemma is the realization that if we turn to it in. He ends up being executed. What would it be like for me to go through the rest of my life with my brother's blood on my hands. If you think of all the considerations involved tears every time I actually thought. Gosh, what kind of a devil would design A dilemma like this?

**Eric:** In in late November, David decides, instead of contacting the FBI, he's going to write to Ted. He's not sure exactly what he's hoping for, but he asks if he can come visit and help Ted resupply before the heavy winter snows. If Ted says, sure, great, come on up, David can wipe the sweat off his brow. That's not what Ted says. I get

just choked with frustration at my inability to get our stinking family off my back once and for all. Ted rights and stinking family emphatically includes you. I don't ever want to see or hear from you or any other member of our family again. So David moves onto Plan B. Linda has a friend named Susan Swanson, who's a private investigator and Susan connects David and Linda with a retired FBI profiler. Someone who can do a forensic comparison between Ted's letters and the Unabomber's manifesto.

**David Kaczynski:** He came back and said. That he got a couple of other experts involved. They believed that there was a 60% chance that the author of My Brothers Letters was also the author of the Manifesto. Well, that's a whole lot more than one in 1000. It's even. More than 5050 and at. That point, we realized we needed to make. The decision we needed to do something to stop the violence.

**Eric:** We can address a one 800 hotline that a lot of people called in, including a lot of people. As I understand it, who were saying that family members might be the Unabomber, but you and Linda went about it a different way? Why, why didn't you just call the UNABOM hotline?

**David Kaczynski:** Yeah, I felt very very strongly. That we needed to be involved to the extent that we could be involved. In other words, I wanted them to know more about my brother about his vulnerabilities. I wanted to make sure that if there were to be arrests and arrest, it would be a safe arrest.

**Eric:** David was right to be concerned he didn't want Ted to end up like the Branch Davidians at Waco or the young mother killed at Ruby Ridge. He didn't know what Ted might do if he was cornered and what the FBI might do in return.

**Eric:** At the UNABOM Task Force headquarters in San Francisco, there was a document that agents were constantly updating labeled known UNABOM facts, fictions and theories. The head of the task force, Terry Turci, had commissioned it. Facts were mostly the physical evidence in the case the typewriter samples from the letters, the hand carved parts inside the devices stuff. That fictions were the key suspects that had already been washed out, and the once promising leads that had fizzled. Theories were the most tantalizing item. They were the connections, deductions, even pure gut feelings that no one had ever been able to disprove. Terry told the agents on the task force not to lose sight of the theories.

**Terry Turchie:** At some point in time, a couple of these theories are going to ram right into these facts, and we're going to know we're on the right track, and then all. Of the other. Things we can bring into this we'll. Start bringing into it.

**Eric:** In January of 1996, that moment happens. The task force has a new suspect. This guy checks a bunch of the right boxes. He has strong ties to the Bay Area. He is a history of building small bombs and he happens to live really close to the tiny post office near the airport where the Unabomber mailed the device that killed Thomas Moser.

**Terry Turchie:** We decide we need to know what he's throwing out his trash. So the first trash cover the first time. They bring a bag of crap out of this guy's trash. They find Hickory wood in the trash. Hickory wood fragments, now keep in mind that

one of the things we had on our facts was that the Unabomber hand carved his bomb switches from Hickory.

**Eric:** Hickory wood apparently has its own biological fingerprints so they could see if these particular fragments were made from the same kind of Hickory they found in some of the bombs.

**Terry Turchie:** So the hickory fragments are taken and sent to the lab. The lab calls us and says, this Hickory is almost identical totally to the Hickory switches and the wood that the Unabomber is used in carving his Hickory switches. For his bombs. Well, now that but raises all the alarm bells you need to get a search warrant. You need to do this. You need to do. That we we. Need to stop this person before they bomb again. But during all of this what's your next step with this guy? What is he doing today? What is he doing this minute, you know? Are you watching him?

**Eric:** After all these years, they think we've got him. We just have to put the final pieces together, but then it all unravels when they dig into this guy's past. The timeline just doesn't match. He wasn't where the bombs were sent from at the right time.

That's where things stood. Another dead lead in early February when that young FBI agent in DC, Molly Flynn calls up Joel Moss on the UNABOM task force to tell him about the 23 page essay she's just read. Joel got UNABOM scar tissue at this point. Another suspect, the most promising. They've had in years has just washed out. He's not going to get excited about a call from a junior. Agent in DC. But here's her out and at the. End of the day, he picks up the essay Molly faxed over and. Starts reading. And it dawns on him right then. This is it. He calls the task forces, behavioral analyst Kathy Bucket and. Asks her if she wants to get a. Bite to eat when they sit down, he casually hands her. The essay careful not. To influence her in any way. Hey Kathy reads it and says where did you get this? The next day they share it with Terry churchy, their boss, who reacts the same way.

**Terry Turchie:** That is not your traditional fingerprint in that is not a strand of DNA and that is not an eyewitness, but I think it's just as good. When we saw the 23 page essay and we read it and that didn't take that long to read, you can read it a lot of times, and then compared it with the Unabomber's manifesto, there was simply no doubt it could not, you could not put that down if you believe that no two people write alike.

**Eric:** Like the manifesto, the 23 page essay asserts that science and technology are destroying human society, depriving individuals of their freedom and. Liberty both essays are fixated on the same range of topics, genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, the electrical stimulation. Of the brain. The sexual repression of the Victorian era, propaganda mass, media surveillance, and there are similar distinctive phrases scattered throughout. Both of them. The task force wants to know more. So three agents, Joel, Kathy and their colleague Mad Max Knoll get on a conference call with Molly Flynn.

**Molly:** Max was grilling me. He was grilling me about this suspect and he was. It was almost like he was cross examining me and interrogating me about wow. He doesn't match this. And he doesn't match that.

**Max Noel:** I didn't believe it. I said, you know, just because somebody. Expresses these ideas, and just because there's some spellings, or that doesn't mean it's a person.

**Molly:** And I said, listen, I. I understand that we don't have a timeline for him that puts him in all of the places that the crimes occurred. What we have is a biography that suggests he had a significant connection to all of the places where the crimes occurred.

**Max Noel:** The laboratory said it wasn't typed on the antique Smith corona. Pica style type 2.54 spacing machine. It was typed on a different antique typewriter.

**Molly:** So he was being very kind of skeptical. And then Kathy was saying how the hair was standing up on the back of her neck.

**Eric:** Max remained skeptical even when Tony Begley, the lawyer, revealed his client brother was Theodore John Kaczynski. A former math Professor living off the grid in the Montana Woods suspect #2416 in the UNABOM case.

And once you knew was suspect 2416. Theodore Kaczynski, were you still so so?

**Max Noel:** Oh yeah, hey listen, you know we have all of the so the experts telling us that he's got a. Be within a 500 mile radius of San Francisco and we thoroughly believe that. And here's a guy that. Is 750 miles from San Francisco, who lives in a cabin with no electricity, no running water, no means of transportation or their old beat up bicycle. And how can he get from that location to the Bay Area would be exceedingly.

**Eric:** Plenty of other agents agreed with Max. They couldn't believe Terry was putting any stock in this theory.

**Terry Turchie:** Oh yeah, people were very mad. In fact, one agent said I'm going to call FBI Headquarters, I've got some friends there and I'm going to tell them you're incompetent. I said, well, they haven't figured that out by now (laughs)...

**Eric:** Terry felt certain they'd found the Unabomber, but he understood how flimsy the lead could look to seasoned criminal guys like one big fiction up on the board.

**Terry Turchie:** So for two years you're. Preaching to us fact we gotta. We gotta work with facts. And the lab says fat, right? He needed a foundry to do all this heavy duty work. There's no foundry up there. He doesn't even know the bathroom even now hardly a sufficient heating system. He's got a potbelly stove in a cabin. How can we now turn around and say to the courts, to judges to the DOJ, to America, we're going to go charging at this guy 'cause. He's new, but how can you do that?

**Eric:** This was the key. The UNABOM task force needed to convince a judge to issue a warrant before they swept in on Ted Kaczynski's cabin. They needed more facts and to get them they needed to talk to his brother.

The biggest news story in the United States in early 1996 was the weather for two solid months, the eastern seaboard was barraged by storm. After storm, the Blizzard of 96 in early January, then smaller follow-up storms 6 inches on January 15th, another eight, the first weekend in February. The New York Times ran 271 stories in the first two months of 1996 that included the word snowstorm. They ran three that included the word unabom When Kathy Pickett lands in Washington in mid February. 12th

major snowstorm of that winter is hitting the region. She's there to meet with David and Linda. Tony basically had communicated to the FBI that David was prepared to cooperate with the investigation, but he doesn't want to be used as a pawn in some sting operation. He has other requests too. David wants his identity to be kept secret until he says otherwise, because if Ted is ultimately arrested, David wants to. Be the one to tell him. I turned you in. Wanda Kaczynski, David and Ted's mother is off limits to interview until David says so. And under no. Can the FBI contact Ted due to his quote fragile psychological state? Maybe most importantly. David wanted some assurance that the government wouldn't pursue the death penalty against his brother. All of that is on Kathy Bucket mind as she prepares to meet David for the first time in her DC hotel. We have to. Make him comfortable. She thinks he can't feel like this is an interrogation.

**Kathy:** So I called the desk. The reservation desk at the hotel and said I need to move to a sweet, you know, Terry wasn't surprised that I was moving to a sweet. I usually try to squeeze as much money out of the budget as. Possible so I. Moved the whole thing to the interview site too. Sweet and had some pastries and coffee and tea and everything and just made it as warm as I could.

Once he started talking about his brother. First of all, he told me that he hadn't personally seen his brother for 10 years. And I said, well, then it was remarkable that you were able to recognize his writing, his style, and some of the words he used. And he said, well, it's not really that remarkable because my brother has been very, very important in my life. I've always admired him, always looked up to him.

The week after that, they're in Chicago, where David is helping his mother Wanda clean out their old family house. Wanda is about to move to upstate New York to be near David and Linda. While Kathy in Chicago, the task force higher ups ask her to brief the local office about this new suspect, Ted Kaczynski. She meets with the. Big boss there. The SSE special agent in charge and one of his assistants, the asac.

**Kathy:** And when I told them that we believed that the Unabomber was living in a cabin with no running water and no power in Montana, and had been for 25 years, they went unglued. I was in the SEC office and they actually shouted I remember the asac was standing over me wagging his finger in my face saying you're out of your fucking mind. You know this this is unbelievable, this is ridiculous. I'm going to talk to your boss.

**Eric:** Who did they think the Unabomber was?

**Kathy:** Oh, they had they. They thought it was a guy who had been one of the dungeons and Dragons participants.

**Eric:** The D&D guys Jeff Ward. This is almost two decades after you first became a suspect. 1 quick question. Just as I'm kind of visualizing this meeting at the FBI around how many agents were there screaming at you, and how many of them were women?

**Kathy:** Oh, maybe one or two out of about 20.

**Eric:** Yeah, I was just imagining a room with screaming men.

**Kathy:** Yeah, but that's not the first time. I mean, I was four years in the in the Air Force first. You know, screaming guys, you know? I mean, it's it's not that I would back down, but it's like you know, you can't really compete with that. You just wait for them to run down. I'm not going to yell back at them. That would be a waste of breath.

**Eric:** I heard a quote. From a couple FBI agents while I was reporting this story, they all attributed it to David Kaczynski's lawyer, Tony Begley. Women solved the UNABOM case without David. Wife, Linda, the FBI might still be searching for the Unabomber without Linda Private Eye friend Susan David might never have had the confidence to approach the government with his fears. Without Molly in the FBI's DC field office, who knows when the task force would have read that 23 page essay and without the task forces behavioral analyst, Kathy, they might never have gotten their reluctant key informant David Kaczynski to work so closely with them. When I asked Kathy. About this, she said it wasn't a coincidence. Being a woman in the FBI. Gave you a different way of looking at things.

**Kathy:** You've got to keep in mind that that I came in very early. I came in in 78. They really didn't think they needed women in the Bureau. A lot of people still didn't. This is the experience of a woman in a man's world. You see, because you know, I always told Joel who was my partner for a lot of years. And I said, you know? The problem with you is that you don't know what it's like to be in minority you. Really, don't you've. Always been, you know at the top. Of the heap because. Uh, if you don't grow up thinking or or treated when you're growing. Up thinking that you are. And you have a lot more empathy. For everybody else you know around you and everybody else in in, not the top position. If you're at the pinnacle, it's very hard to relate to people who are not.

**Eric:** Kathy's ability to empathize with David was vital to the Unabomber case, but some agents start wondering if she's over empathizing. Following David around the country getting dribs and drabs of information from this guy who might be the Unabomber brother, when a bomb could go off at any moment. The doubts get back to someone, Kathy. Does not want to hear from.

**Kathy:** I don't know if I told you about. When Jim Freeman almost had my scalp.

**Eric:** You didn't, but it's on my list of questions, so let's go there.

**Kathy:** OK.

**Eric:** Jim Freeman ran the FBI San Francisco office. He was one of the first agents I met reporting this story. Jim comes across is in control. It's not hard to imagine him being tough on his agents. Terry Turkey may have run the task force, but Terry worked for Jim. So when Kathy. Heard from Jim. It wasn't like getting scolded by your teacher. It was like getting called over the intercom to the principals office.

**Kathy:** So everyone gets on the phone and he says, listen, how's it going over there? And I said, do you know? Yeah, we're we're getting some good stuff, and David's this and David's that and he's continuing to help us and. He says here's what I want you to do. We'll get David to write his brother. A letter. And say something in there that

that gets a response. You know, maybe something about their mother I. Don't know you. He he said, whatever it is, whatever the letter is, you know, have him write a letter and I said, boss, we can't do that.

**Eric:** Remember, one of Tony Busciglio conditions was that his client, David wouldn't be used in a sting operation.

**Kathy:** I said boss David is not going to do anything operationally for the FBI. They said what? Here's where you're talking about, and they said we promised we wouldn't use them operationally. Listen, I told you to do that and that's what you're going to do. You're going to get him to write this letter. We've got to get some momentum on this. You know you're talking to him, you're not getting anywhere. I said no, we are getting. Somewhere well I want. A letter written. We need to get some sort of outreach to the suspect there, and I said. We promised we wouldn't. We agreed that. We wouldn't, and he just screamed at me.

**Eric:** Jim Freeman says he doesn't remember pressing for a letter, but he acknowledges pushing Kathy to get things moving with David. A clock is ticking loudly in Jim said agents are already on the ground in Montana. Stalking Ted Kaczynski from a distance. They know their suspect is still a threat, although they didn't know it at the time. Ted had in fact just built another bomb. He does know is the whole Unabomber, operation is a massively expensive bureaucratic nightmare that needs to be wrapped up soon. So Jim sends his number 2. Terry Turchi the head of the task force to babysit Kathy at her next stop on the David Kaczynski tour.

**Kathy:** When we ended up in Schenectady a week or two later, Freeman hadn't hardly talked to me since, and he said I am not sending her up there by herself. You were going to go along with. That team you were going to be there. In charge, I don't want her in charge on this. She's not. She doesn't listen to orders.

**Eric:** Schenectady was the most important stop yet. That's where Kathy was finally going to be able to talk to Wanda Kaczynski, whom she'd been wanting to speak with for weeks. So Kathy and Terry and a couple. Other agents land. In Albany and head to Wanda's new home. When they arrived, David's inside with his mother preparing her for what's about to happen.

**David Kaczynski:** I was much too anxious, much too overwrought to sit down. I was kind of pacing the floor back and forth.

**Eric:** David asks Wanda, have you heard about the Unabomber in his manifesto? Yes, she says. Well, you know how Ted feels about technology, right?

**David Kaczynski:** You know I finally got to the point where I said I'm I'm I'm so concerned about the possibility that Ted may be involved in these crimes. And at that point she just said very quickly. Oh don't tell anyone. That's the last thing I wanted to hear really. And I said, Mom, I already have told someone I've gone to the FBI I've shared with them my suspicions and they're currently investigating the possibility that Ted might be involved in these series of bombings. She looked at me for a few moments and then. You know, got up out of her chair. She walked up to me and reached her arms up around my neck, put a kiss on my cheek and then she said,

David, I can't imagine what you've been struggling with. It was at that point then she said, OK, what do you want me to do? And I said, well, the FBI would like to talk with you. And so she said, well, when did they want to speak with me? And I said, mom, they're actually waiting outside.

**Eric:** Kathy and a. Couple other agents are with Terry waiting for David to give them the go ahead to come in. And when the moment arrives, Terry decides he doesn't need to lean on Kathy, like Jim Friedman thought he might. He just lets her take the lead.

**Kathy:** Terry said, I tell. You what I'm going to do. You guys know the drill. You know that what we're going to try to do is get as much information from her if she will speak to us as possible and if she will let us search that chest and whatever other possession she has of Teds and he said, yeah, I understand that, so he said so I'm not going to come in. It'll be too many people so I'll stay out. Here so he stayed out. In that freezing car, I remember at one point looking out the window and seeing the car rocking and he was he had really loud rock music on and he was rocking out trying to. Keep himself warm, turning on the engine and letting it run. Letting the heater run 'cause it. Was bitter cold. So when we walked in, she was. Very hospitable modesty. I said, you know, my son Ted is very sensitive and many things bother him, but he would never. I would never believe that he could do anything like this, but I know that you have a job to do. And I'm not going to stand in your way. OK. Anything that you want to talk to me about. OK I will.

**Eric:** Kathy asks Wanda about Ted's childhood about the anger he's long directed at her. The temper tantrums over care packages, the cruel names he's called her.

**Kathy:** He had written her savage letters and she kept every one of them. She kept every single one of them in the same envelopes the same way her son did, and I said, do you think that we can look at these things and she said yes and she gave us free rein?

**Eric:** Wanda and David were still holding out hope that something in the chest were Wanda kept. Those letters would absolve Ted that dates wouldn't match up, but there'd be some explanation for the similarities in the writing. But for Kathy. It was a bonanza. The UNABOM task force was busy putting together an affidavit that hinged on comparisons of the Unabomber's writings to Ted Kaczynski. Kathy believed she'd found enough to make the case.

**Kathy:** We come back with the treasure trove. We walked out with boxes full of things and Terry was hugely proud frozen as he was. He was hugely proud that it worked and she cooperated and we got a lot of documents and. I'm sure that David was just glad to see the back of us when we left there.

**Eric:** In a major operation like this one, you need to get sign off from the highest levels of government and despite Kathy certainty, word comes down that the documents they've found are not enough. The Bureau can't risk another screw up. So they wait for something else, a new witness, some new piece of physical evidence. Another bomb to go off. And while they wait, word comes back that someone familiar with the



investigation has leaked it to a reporter. The reporter knows the FBI is surrounding a suspect in Montana, and he knows the suspects name.

**Jim Stewart:** It's not a common name, so I knew that I had it nailed enough that I could go on the air.

**Eric:** That's next time on Project UNABOM. Project UNABOM is an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. This episode was produced by Melissa Slaughter and me I'm Eric Benson, our senior producer, is Jonathan Menjivar. Our producer is Elliot Adler, editing by Joe Level, and Maddie sprung Kaiser our fact checker. Is Sarah every. The episode was mixed by Davey Sumner, Jason Richards, Elliot Adler and Jonathan Menjivar studio. Recording by Brian Standifer at the Texas monthly studio. Our artwork is by GM casuse music by Mark Horton and John Hancock. Additional music by Erik Phillips and Jeff Baxter. Legal services. For pineapple St by Bianca Grimshaw. At Granderson, desrocher. Jenna Weiss Berman and Max Linsky are the executive producers at Pineapple St. Thanks for listening.

## 7. The Arrest

The FBI descends on a small town in Montana, and the clock is ticking to catch Ted.

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**Eric:** In mid-February 1996, four FBI agents arrived in Lincoln, Montana, an old gold mining town on the Blackfoot River.

**Max Noel:** We were covert. We didn't advertise who we were to the general public. We didn't dress like normal FBI agents, wooden suits and white shirts and ties.

**Eric:** Max Noel was leading the team and he and the three other agents did their best to blend. In they wore Wrangler jeans and western shirts with snapback buttons. Drove around in a rented pickup truck. They drop in and drop out of town trying to stay undetected. They spent their nights about an hour away in the nearest city Helena. Before anyone in the FBI was going to arrest Ted Kaczynski, Max's team had to figure out exactly where he lived, which wasn't as simple as you might think.

**Max Noel:** Because Kaczynski lived in a rural area, his address was a rural route number. There were no addresses like you have in towns and cities. It was just rural route, #4 or whatever it was.

**Eric:** It had been two weeks since David Kaczynski first reached out to the FBI through his lawyer saying he had letters from his brother that sounded an awful lot like the Unabomber and in those two weeks the leaders of the task force had become convinced Ted was their guy, but they couldn't just swoop in and grab him. That's not how it works. They had to get a search warrant. From a federal judge 1st and to get a search warrant, they needed to convince a judge of two things, one that they had probable cause and two that they knew exactly what they would be searching.

**Max Noel:** And so we were tasked with. Determining the precise location of the cabin and getting a physical description of the cabin.

**Eric:** On his first day in Lincoln, Max had a Montana based FBI agent drive him a few miles down Stemple Pass Rd, which disappears into the forest South of town.

**Max Noel:** And he showed me a series of mailboxes located on the West side of the road, one of which said Ted Kaczynski or TJ Kaczynski. I believe so. We knew that we were in the right neighborhood.

**Eric:** But the mailbox was all Max could see and what he needed to see and get photos of was the cabin itself. Somewhere up a narrow Canyon surrounded by. Trees well off the road.

**Max Noel:** We needed to do that surreptitiously and not bring attention to who we were and what we were doing. Because we were concerned that would Ted Kaczynski find out that we were there as law enforcement. He might possibly flee into the surrounding mountains.

**Eric:** So Max's teams start trying to sneak in undetected. Their first plan is to take snowmobiles up a trail that runs on a hill above the cabin, then have a couple agents silently snowshoe down toward it, get photos and get out.

**Max Noel:** They were probably I don't know 7500 yards away from it. They heard a door open and close while sound travels very well at a high altitude in the mouth. And they knew the only occupied cabin or building around there was Kaczynski cabin.

**Eric:** They know the sound is probably Ted and they immediately run off. Never see the cabin, much less take a photo of it. They report the failed attempt to UNABOM headquarters and word comes back "Don't do anything risky like that again, we'll use a spy satellite instead."

**Max Noel:** And they were very adamant about that, that you could take a photo from the satellite of a dime on a street corner in San Francisco and read the date and the inscription on the coin.

**Eric:** Max and his team send the coordinates, not that hard. You've played with Google Earth, right? Super high-tech cameras are going to snap some pictures from space and reveal the cabin in spectacular detail.

**Max Noel:** And several days later we got beautiful black and white large photographs of trees and lots of snow. Essentially useless in identifying the cabin for the affidavit, so now we were kind of at a conundrum as to what to do.

**Eric:** They try a spy plane. It circles the 10,000 feet for half an hour, snapping photos and again.

**Max Noel:** There were beautiful pictures of lots of trees and lots of snow.

**Eric:** That's when Max gets a tip from a local informant, the Montana Fish and Wildlife Department sometimes flies a plane low over the area to monitor a herd of elk. Near Ted's cabin.

**Max Noel:** So, a small airplane flying over that cabin would not really give much concern to Kaczynski because it's a regular thing on the part of the state Fish and Game people.

**Eric:** So, they rent a prop plane and they go for it. They're not going to be way up in the sky with. Cutting edge surveillance. Technology they're basically going to buzz Ted. It's a local pilot and one of the agents on Max's team the guy named Dave Webb.

**Max Noel:** We gave him a 35 millimeter Nikon camera with a 200 millimeter lens and off they went into the wild blue Yonder and flew up the Canyon and Dave hung out the side of the window over the plane and snapped some very good pictures which truly depicted the cabin.

**Eric:** This is project. Unabom, an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. I'm Eric Benson episode 7 the arrest.

The informant, who told Max about the plane that monitored the elk herds, was a guy named Butch Gehring. He was a well known gregarious character in Lincoln. He'd been a green beret, a bull rider, and now he ran a lumber mill just down the road. From Ted cabin. Ted and David bought the land Ted lived on from Butch's dad back in the 70s. Butch was Ted's closest neighbor.

**Max Noel:** The only way to get to his cabin was going to be up the mouth of that Canyon or up a private road owned by Butch Goring.

**Jamie:** People coming to live off grid in Lincoln Montana was very normal.

**Eric:** That's Jamie Gehring, one of Bush's daughters which died in 2012. Jamie grew up in a small cabin. Her parents built on a 200 acre property that also included the lumber mill. The area around them was full of dense woods and vast, hard to traverse expanses. The perfect place to live if you wanted to drop out of society.

**Jamie:** There were some Vietnam vets that had moved to the area that lived on the outskirts of Lincoln and they wanted privacy. We would see them in town at the gas station or at the grocery store, and you know. They looked rugged. They looked like they lived in the woods, but they were still known in the community. We didn't need to know, you know, their their back story, but we're very aware of.

**Eric:** Ted was one of those guys in the woods, though he wasn't that rugged. He came to town every now and then, had a friendly relationship with the local librarian, Jamie and her family would see him pretty.

**Jamie:** Often my parents in the early years would just refer to Ted as the hermit, our neighbor, the hermit, and. And and there was never anything. Negative they had had. To say about him I. Mean he was. On the surface, a good neighbor he kept to himself. And you know, if we met him in the driveway, we might chat for a couple minutes in those very early years.

**Eric:** They had Ted over for. Dinner a few times in the late 70s and early 80s, Jamie says. But as time wore on, the relationship grew more strained.

**Jamie:** The sawmill was definitely a difficult thing for Ted. He would hear the noise of the mill from his cabin and anytime he would leave his cabin he would pass by it and it was just, I think, a constant. Reminder that he wasn't truly able to escape the way he wanted to.

**Eric:** Ted wrote in his journals that he'd come to Lincoln looking for peace and quiet, but instead even in the woods he was tormented by grading mechanical noise, airplanes, snowmobiles, chainsaws. Like the Cosmos playing a joke on him. Go ahead, live in your tiny cabin in the middle of nowhere. You still can't escape technology when you discover that one of his favorite places, an isolated plateau, had been defiled with a road he took to his journal in grief. It's as if I had had a taste of paradise and then lost it, so Ted lashed out. He wrote in detail about some of the things. We've mentioned before. Setting booby traps for dirt bikers vandalizing backwoods cabins even shooting a ranchers cow.

**Jamie:** My my father's sawmill. Was sanded.

**Eric:** And what what is sanding a sawmill? If you put.

**Jamie:** Sand or sugar into the engine of the sawmill, and it gets like into the gas lines it. Shuts it down. And so that's exactly what somebody did too. My father's sawmill.

**Eric:** There's no proof that Ted did this, but it's not a stretch to imagine that he did, but the time the FBI came to town, Ted didn't like Butch and Butch didn't like Ted, and the fact that Butch controlled access to Ted Cabin, it made him the perfect candidate to be the FBI key informant on the ground. So Max went over to the lumber mill to meet him.

**Max Noel:** This in a big fancy northwestern lumber mill is a one man operation. Which has a log deck that has the great big saw on it that the logs come down to. I mean it's right out of, you know, the comic books type of thing and we met which at the log deck now we were standing outside and it was extremely cold and there was a light snow. Coming down. And I told Butch because I didn't want to lay all my cards on the table right out front, and I told him I was with the FBI. We were there conducting an investigation because we believed that Ted Kaczynski had been sending threatening letters through the mail which was. True, but it wasn't the complete truth.

**Eric:** Bunch of Macs quickly sized each other up. They were both stout, no \*\*\*\*\* flag on their sleeve westerners. They could work together. So Max told Butch what was really going on, but they thought Ted was the Unabomber. Eventually they got friendly enough that Butch would give Max shit about the job the FBI was.

**Max Noel:** Doing which Gihring asked me one day if we got a good picture of him. And I said, what do you mean, Butch and Butch said? Well, I was standing out on my lumber deck day before yesterday and I heard the drone of an airplane flying around about 10,000 feet and he said, hey, I figured that was you guys trying to get pictures. So I waved at you. And which gearing became my eyes and my ears I could go and talk to Butch. I could call him on the telephone and every morning Butch would get up early as he always did and he would walk up his skid road and he would look at the cabin and determine if Kaczynski. Was still there because one of our principal concerns was that he was going to get out of that cabin and either escape into the mountains or come out of that cabin and leave the area with a bomb.

**Eric:** But Ted never appeared, so Butch offered to take Max to him, or at least the property.

**Max Noel:** He said, well, come on, let's go, I'll walk you up there.

**Eric:** All this time they've been trying to spy on Ted in. Secret but pushard Max there's no reason to worry.

**Max Noel:** Even if he sees us, he won't be excited about seeing me, so I'm always sticking people up the skid Rd. And so which walked up the skid road. And as we got to a point right across from Kaczynski's cabin, which was about 40 yards away, which is 2 Chesapeake Bay dogs flushed a deer out of the thicket and started chasing it. And they chased it right across in front of Kaczynski's cabin, barking and growling as they chased and all of a sudden the board to the cabin opened and this wild looking individual. Stuck his head and shoulders out of the cabin and looked directly at us, at which

time Butch gearing just waved and says Hi, Teddy. It's just me and he kind of nodded and went back into the cabin and I remember thinking to myself at the time. Oh my God, that's what we've been looking for all these years because the person that I saw was not the image that I had conjured up of a former mathematics professor Harvard graduate. Who's our suspect? I'm looking at a guy who fits the perfect description of the eccentric hermit living in a 10 by 12 foot cabin with no electricity, no running water and no visible means of transportation other than a rickety old bicycle that he rode to town. And it isn't convincing me that he's the person who's built what has become pretty sophisticated bombs and been mailing them from San Francisco in Oakland in Sacramento. How in the world did he do that? So I didn't say he. Didn't or couldn't, but I was very skeptical of whether or not it was possible.

**Eric:** Ted was the most wanted man in America, but there on the ground in Montana. In real life. He wasn't a seemingly all powerful terrorist. He was destitute. He'd recently sold back half his property to David after saying he wanted nothing to do with him ever again because he needed the cash. That winter in early 1996 he was subsisting on snowshoe hares. He'd shot with his rifle, carefully tracking the rations until the snow melted. Weeks went by and had never even left the cabin, which in a way was good Max and the other agents knew he must be running low on supplies. He'd have to go to town soon.

**Max Noel:** He would do that the way he'd always had. He would put on his heavy coat. It was still cold up there. He would jump on his rickety bicycle and he would ride to town down Stemple Pass Rd. And when that occurred, we would swoop in and stop him and detain him if he had a bomb with him or a weapon with him, it wouldn't be easily available to him and quickly take him into custody so we could serve the warrant.

**Eric:** The FBI kept its presence in Lincoln Small. But an hour away in the city of Helena. The Bureau was ramping up as the early spring arrived. Terry Turci, the head of the UNABOM task force, then his boss. Jim Freeman were flying in and out of Helena. Bringing more and more agents from San Francisco. Which had a downside.

**Max Noel:** There was a leak somewhere.

**Eric:** Among the hundreds of people who were now in the loop about Ted Kaczynski, someone had talked to a reporter.

**Max Noel:** By the 1st of April it became very apparent that they knew that we were investigating a prime suspect. They believed his name was krusinski somewhere around Lincoln, Mt.

**Jim Stewart:** Any time that a major case such as this one is assigned at the Washington Field Office or is run out of headquarters, so it becomes one of your priority targets because your competitors are going. To see it that way.

**Eric:** Jim Stewart was covering the Justice Department for CBS News at the time. And he'd already done several stories about the Unabomber throughout 1995, in early 96, whenever Jim talked with his sources and federal law enforcement, he'd float the question, this Unabomber thing. What are you hearing?

**Jim Stewart:** And one day I received information that. Was very specific. So specific that it the first thing I you know I felt I had to do was run it by the FBI. This information gave me the phonetic spelling of Ted Kaczynski's name. It gave me his location and a remote cabin near Lincoln, Montana, and the fact that it was under surveillance by the FBI.

**Eric:** So Jim calls the FBI field office in Washington.

**Jim Stewart:** And I repeated virtually verbatim what I've been told and waited for a reaction. And after some pause. The person said hold on a minute, went and talked to somebody else. The two of them got back on the phone. And the response was, well, you're on the right highway and you've taken the right exit ramp.

**Eric:** But the FBI. Wasn't just going to confirm Jim Stewart's info and leave it at that. If CBS ran a story, that could easily jeopardize the operation and tip off Ted Kaczynski. The FBI still didn't even have. A search warrant. So, the FBI gets on the phone with the President of CBS News to try and work out a deal.

**Jim Stewart:** I don't think anybody thought that the right thing to do was to put me on the air immediately. Do his discussion about. Well, here's their argument and. And here's our consideration. And from our point of view, CBS, his point of view. We don't want to do anything that's going to result in bodily harm or disruption of a prosecution. It's the same time though. We have proprietary information. That we, you know, have gotten thoroughly legitimately. And that we believe to be accurate. And we're not in the business of withholding information from the public.

**Eric:** But they agreed to hold the story, if the FBI guaranteed them the scoop before those calls with CBS. The operation in Montana was a waiting game, but now the FBI has no choice. They feel like they have to move suddenly. It seems like the entire task force is hopping on a plane from San Francisco to Helena, but a handful of agents. Left behind, including weirdly, Kathy Puck.

**Kathy:** And this guy was crowing about something finally happening in the case. He said, you wait, if you wait in Montana, you ain't nobody in this case. And I was standing right next to him when. He said that if you ain't Montana. You ain't \*\*\*\* I thought to myself. How do you think? We got there, you know, we wouldn't even be there if it wasn't for the work that we did. That you have no idea about.

**Eric:** Second, Kathy says she kept going to work, waiting to be called to Montana. Eventually, she gets on the phone with Joel Moss, the agent who had shown Kathy the 23 page essay a couple months earlier.

**Kathy:** And I remember saying God, I feel like you know I'm just. I'm just not a part of this and I'm I'm sick about it and he said. You'll be here soon.

**Eric:** Kathy also talks to her boss, Terry Turci. He has one explicit instruction for her.

**Kathy:** Do not call David when they were executing a search warrant, because they were. I was paranoid that he would had some way of of letting Ted know that we were on the way and he could be over the continental divide and gone back into. Up into Canada or something. And they forbade me to contact him and warn him about

the press that were going to be descending on him once this thing went public, and it was imminent.

**Eric:** Before dawn on Wednesday, April 3rd, Maxwell drives out to a steakhouse called the Seven Up Ranch and Resort on the outskirts of Lincoln. The FBI has rented it out. As their command post.

**Max Noel:** The owners of the seven Up Ranch had a nice continental breakfast for us and lots of coffee and all of the people that we brought in the day before arrived and assembled there, and Jim Freeman conducted the briefing. Of what everybody responsibilities were and where they would be and how it would go down. Yeah, we had a short special weapons and tactics briefing so that we knew for sure that they knew what their part was in this, and I think I briefed him a little bit on the topography and the geography and so forth.

**Eric:** As of that morning. The FBI still didn't have a search warrant the photos they'd collected Max his personal sighting of Ted. Everything Kathy pocket. Had gotten from David Kaczynski since he. Agreed to help them. It was all. Compelling, but the Justice Department wasn't convinced this was a huge case, even if they. Could get a federal judge. To sign off and they arrested Ted, he was going to be represented by the best federal public defenders in the country, and they would certainly challenge the legitimacy of the search warrant in court. Did the FBI really have enough?

**Jamie Gorelick:** I think that the Criminal division was worried about whether there was sufficient evidence for a search warrant.

**Eric:** Jamie Gorelick was the deputy Attorney general at the time. The number two in the DOJ behind Attorney General Janet Reno.

**Jamie Gorelick:** And that the review of the search warrant was elevated to Merrick.

**Eric:** Merrick is in Merrick Garland. The current US Attorney general. At the time he was Gorelick's top deputy. A big sticking point for the DOJ was that the search warrant depended largely on linguistic analysis. A comparison of Ted's old writings and the Unabomber's manifesto, and communicates to the press. This was groundbreaking. Normally search warrants are based on physical evidence, eyewitness accounts, nuts and bolts, police stuff, and it made all the lawyers. Very uneasy. So Jamie and Mark talked it out.

**Jamie Gorelick:** He and I discussed that and agreed that the matched wording was sufficient for for the search warrant.

**Eric:** But the government still needed. A judge to sign off on the morning of April 3rd. Terry was in federal court trying to clear that last hurdle. So Max and everyone else had. Nothing to do but wait and wait and wait.

**Max Noel:** Was mid morning, I think around 10:00 o'clock or something that Jim got the telephone call at. The seven up grants from Terry telling him that. the judge had signed the OR.

**Eric:** So they immediately deploy a few agents take up positions in elk hunting cabins near Ted property, two SWAT teams dressed in ghillie suits. Those camouflage



jumpsuits covered in foliage that make people look like swamp monsters form a perimeter around Ted. Cabin Max drives to Butches Lumbermill the plan. This for Max to approach Ted Cabin with two other people Montana based. FBI agent named Tom McDaniel and a Forest Service officer named Jerry Burns. Ted Kaczynski knows Jerry Burns. They've interacted before, so he's not going in disguise, but Max and the local FBI agent Tom are posing as surveyors from a mining company that Butch hired that winter to explore his property. Ted knows about the mining company, so the FBI figures he won't be suspicious when Jerry. The Forest Service officer asks. Him to come out and show them where his property line is.

**Max Noel:** Freeman finally said, OK, you know on the radio, let's go put it into motion and that was shortly before noon on April 3rd.

**Eric:** Max, Tom and Jerry Walk from Bush's lumber mill to Ted property line.

**Max Noel:** The 40 yards to the cabin you're exposed and out in the middle of nowhere. And also when we had rifles in the cabin, I knew he had a 30 out six and then we added 22 as well as maybe other weapons. And then as we approached the cabin as Jerry was hailing him, we didn't hear anything in the cabin. And we got right up to the cabin. And Jerry and Tom were directly in front of the cabin door. I was standing on the corner of the cabin and we were exposed. There's no doubt about that.

**Eric:** Because they're posing as mining reps, they're not wearing bulletproof vests, no body armor. Everything depends on Ted buying their disguise.

**Max Noel:** Uh, no sound coming from the cabin. No response from within the cabin.

**Eric:** For a split second Max doubts the whole plan, he wonders, is this really going to work?

**Max Noel:** At which time the door opened. And Ted Kaczynski kind of stood in the door with it ajar, directly in front of Jerry Burns. I still. Shake my head because he was covered in grease. His jeans were essentially rotting off them big holes and they were dragging off. Huge had a hair wild sticking out all over and he smelled terrible. He had a body odor that I could smell him for days afterwards. There's no way to describe it.

**Eric:** It's time for Jerry to convince Ted to come out.

**Max Noel:** And Jerry said hi, Mr Kaczynski, Jerry Burns with the US Forest Service and I have these two gentlemen here from the mining company. That's going to be doing exploration here in the spring, and I'm trying to show them where your corner posts are so they don't their employees. Don't encroach upon your property when they come up here to do their exploration. And his response was. As my corner posts are clearly marked and Jerry said, well, I understand that Mr. Kosinski, but there's still several feet of snow in this Canyon, and they're covered, and it would sure save us a lot of time if you came out and showed them to us as opposed to us cropping around on your property. And that got his attention. And he said, well, OK, and he started to come out of the cabin 'cause he was still standing in the doorway and he stopped and he said well, let me get my coat and Jerry reached out, grabbed him,

Tom wrapped him up in a bear hug and they're struggling around. Then I got to walk around in front of him with my weapon directly. To his face, identified myself as an FBI agent and that we were there to serve a search warrant on his property.

**Eric:** As he says, those words Ted stopped struggling. His muscles relax. He knows he's not going to get away. They cuff him, lead him down to one of the elk hunting cabins.

**Max Noel:** There was an old wood burning stove there and the only source of heat for the cabin and the agents that were there from ATF was trying to start a fire. And the cabin was filling up with smoke and Kaczynski was sitting at this straight back chair at this old Formica table and the smoke was filling up the cabin and he said. Does he know how to build a fire? He said, well, tell him and so Kaczynski said. I need to open the flu once he opened the flu and stoked the fire or it started to draw. But Kaczynski was I know at that time just shaking his head saying Oh my God or these are guys that caught me. They can't even build a fire in the cabin.

**Eric:** Inside the cabin, the task force had created a display for Ted Timeline, showing the 16 bombings photographs from the incidents. The forensic sketch based on the eyewitness sighting in Salt Lake City. The idea was it. Might get Ted to talk Max as Ted didn't even look. Got it.

**Max Noel:** He kept asking me if he was under arrest and I kept telling him no. He was under investigative detention and he kept saying well, can I get up and walk around and I'd say no and he said, well, can you take the handcuffs off? And I'd say no. He said well in my free to leave and I said no, and he looked me in the eyes as kind of sounds to me like. I'm under arrest.

**Eric:** Actually arresting Ted for a crime depended on what the FBI found in the cabin. The hope was that there would be some trace of Ted crimes. Maybe bomb making materials, but if there was nothing, if it was just a cabin in the woods, the whole thing might unravel quickly. Max his job was to stay with Ted while the other agents conducted their search.

**Max Noel:** I said we're going to be here for a while, while this search is going on. I don't know how long it's going to take. I'd like to talk with you and he looked me straight in the eye and he said I'll be happy to talk with you as long as we don't talk about the case. So for the next 5 hours we talked about living in the mountains and foraging in the mountains and hiking in the mountains and. How the global sky said all was at you fellers up on humbug contour trail back in February and then again later he would say. Is that you to spend down at the Miller cabin for the last week or so?

**Eric:** Ted hadn't realized the FBI was coming, but he knew something unusual was up. He just hadn't quite put it together in time.

**Max Noel:** It was very apparent that he was very intelligent and articulate, but at one point in the afternoon I said I know from what I read that you were a mathematics professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and what kind of math did you teach at Berkeley? And he kind. Of sat up straight in the chair and pulled back and looked

at me and said. How much mathematics did you have in school? And I said, well, I had algebra and advanced algebra, geometry and solid geometry, and little trigonometry with a smattering and calculus. And they said her and it wouldn't do any good for me to try to explain to you what I taught because you wouldn't understand it.

**Eric:** As the day wore on, a debate was raging inside the federal government. Can we charge this guy? Do we have enough evidence? It was evening on the East Coast when the debate made its way to the top law enforcement officials in the country. Louis Freeh, the director of the FBI. And Janet Reno, the US Attorney general.

**Jamie Gorelick:** It was Passover and American invited Janet to his Seder.

**Eric:** This is deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick again.

**Jamie Gorelick:** And when we called and said we're we're in the cabin, everyone is OK. We have found bomb making equipment. Can we charge Kaczynski as the Unabomber?

**Eric:** Jamie wasn't at Merrick Garland's Passover seder that night. But she was in the loop.

**Jamie Gorelick:** And Merrick view, discussing it with the attorney general, was that that bomb making equipment would be sufficient to charge Kaczynski with possession of. Bomb making material. And not to charge that he was the Unabomber.

**Eric:** Over the next two weeks, the evidence team because they're worried about booby traps, moves painstakingly slowly through the cabin. They found a live bomb under Ted's bed, A Smith Corona typewriter with pica font and 2.54 centimeters. Basing tucked in his loft and what appeared to be a master copy of the Manifesto Industrial Society and its future.

**Jamie Gorelick:** At which point Merrick, after discussing this with Janet, said you can charge Ted Kaczynski with being near bar.

**Eric:** On April 3rd, around the time Max Knoll was walking up to Ted's cabin to apprehend him, Molly Flynn, the agent who had first recognized the significance of Ted's 23 page essay, got a call, ABC, CNN, the times and the post were all on the story now too. Jim Stewart got his scoop.

He went on the air at 3:15 PM Eastern Time to break the news that the FBI had detained the suspected Unabomber. Shortly after that, the world learned how the Unabomber had been found. Nearly every outfit reported that he'd been turned in by his brother David. Here's Molly.

**Molly:** I was kind of flabbergasted and I was told. By I think our headquarters hey you need. To need to. Get up to. Schenectady to help out David and Linda 'cause they're about to be bombarded by the media. And I jumped on a plane in a matter of a couple hours, and by the time I landed the whole thing it was. All over the news.

**Newsreader:** A possible break this evening in the search for the killer known as the Unabomber, the FBI has arrested a suspect in Montana after he was fingered by relatives, the.

**Molly:** Media lists camped in the mountains of Montana and they were camped in the driveway of. David Linda in Schenectady.

**Newsreader:** Federal officials tell NBC News they put the man under surveillance after family members found some of his old writings they considered suspicious.

**Jim Stewart:** Lights have been going on and off throughout the evening here, but they're off now.

**Newsreader:** I would speculate that Dave Kaczynski, his wife, and his mother. If his mother is still in there, have gone to. Bed for the evening.

**Eric:** The FBI had assured David they would do everything they could to keep his involvement. Chris Kathy Pocket had been working with him to collect Ted's writings and use them as evidence, knew how important it was to David that he remained anonymous and now his name was all over the national news.

**Kathy:** Finally, when I was given the OK to call him, it was way too late to warn him, but I called him and I heard in the background somebody at the microphone saying I'm standing in the front yard of the brother of the Unabomber. Guy turned his own brother in. I said I am so sorry you're going through this because we had talked about keeping everything quiet and how we would do the best we. Could to do that and he said. You promised, but you fucked it up and he hung up.

**Eric:** After that call. No one could get through to David and Linda, not even their lawyer, Tony Begley. Linda changed their phone number as soon as the news had broken. TV news crews were now camped out in their front yard when Linda spotted a cameraman climbing a ladder. To try to film into their house, she blocked the window with towels and sheets. Molly, who'd been assigned to go see David and Linda, decided she couldn't wait any longer to get. Through to them. She waited for night, then scrambled through the backyards of several of David and Linda's neighbors, eventually making her way to their back door.

**Molly:** Then maybe a dog barked or something as we went through somebody's yards to get to their back door and I had been in their house because I had taken their prints. So I knew that the backside was where their kitchen was, I understood. They were in there with Wanda Kaczynski so I was trying to tap the back door lot enough for them to hear 'cause I thought they were in the kitchen but not so loud that the media could hear and eventually Linda came to the window, made a gesture with their hands like go. Away and then I was like David, Linda, it's Molly. It's Molly, so she actually opened the door and I just said I have a message from Tony and got the message through it. And I just tried written something essentially please call him so he could help them and. So they they actually wouldn't have said, you know, we don't trust you, we don't trust. Any of you?

**Eric:** Tony arrived the next day and David and Linda allowed him to address the dozens of reporters camped out in their front yard. He told them there would be a press conference two days later in Washington and any media organizations that remained outside David and Linda's house would be barred from attending. That cleared the cameras out with. The media gone. Molly went back. To David and Linda's house, she wasn't sure what kind of reception she'd get.

**Molly:** They let me end and then I was I was. You know, sort of face to face with what their situation had been and. Told them how sorry I was about what happened. And every time I think about it, it makes me cry. But because they were so kind. End up. I just told him that it was really unfair the way they had been portrayed.

**Eric:** David had trusted the FBI to keep his identity hidden. Now he was international news, the butt of late-night jokes.

**Letterman:** As you know earlier this week the FBI apprehended arrested, the Unabomber. He was turned in by his brother, the Unisc Wheeler. Thank you so much.

**Molly:** That would have come out eventually in a judicial process, certainly, but the way it happened there just kind of got hit by a sledgehammer and. I just expressed how they should know that none of the people that they dealt with in. Person would have done that and that. We had their backs. We we knew that they. Were doing the right thing for the right reasons. And Wanda was like, oh, Polly, don't cry. So it was. It was kind of a. An amusing turn of situation I guess, but. That's just the kind of people they were. And our team and our.

**Eric:** 1/4 century later, David says he can still feel the trauma of those first days. The awareness that he had become something new. The thing that will eventually be the first line of his obituary. He was now and forever the Unabomber's brother.

**David Kaczynski:** The part that did feel like a bit of a betrayal, the part that really hurt was to realize that something that we'd wanted wanted to keep secret, which was our role in this whole thing, was suddenly national news. Worse than that, I think it was that I would have liked to have. You know if Ted were ever to know how or why he was arrested, I would have wanted to be the one to tell him. So it kind of added to the trauma of the whole situation, I'm not sure my brother ever would have understood, but I would have appreciated the possibility of trying to explain myself to him in person.

**Eric:** David would never get that chance. But other people were talking to Ted. Plotting the next move.

**John Zerzan:** I tried to take advantage to push. The ideas out there. You know, for Christ sake, what else would you do gives you one chance to to say something when people are listening and you're just \*\*\*\*\* your pants instead of saying something.

**Eric:** That's next time on the final episode. Of Project UNABOM Project UNABOM is an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. This episode was produced by Elliot Adler and me I'm Eric Benson. Our senior producer is Jonathan Menjivar. Our producer is Melissa Slaughter, editing by Joel Level and Maddie sprung, Keyser. Our fact? Checker is Sarah. Every the episode was mixed by Davey Summer, Jason Richards, Elia Toddler, and Jonathan Menjivar studio. Recording by Brian Standifer. At the Texas monthly studio, our artwork is bigm casuse music by Mark Horton and John Hancock. Additional music by Eric Phillips and Jeff Baxter. Legal services for Pineapple St by Bianca Grimshaw at Granderson Desrocher. Jenna Weiss Berman and Max Linsky are the executive producers at Pineapple St. Thanks for listening.

## 8. Echo Chamber

Decades after Ted Kaczynski was caught, we wrestle with a question that still hangs in the air: Was Ted a prophet or simply a murderer who terrorized a nation and killed three people?

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**Kathy:** A quick heads up before we get started. This episode contains a mention of suicide. Please take care while listening.

**Eric:** Three days after Ted Kaczynski was taken into custody, Kathy Puckett arrived at the 10 by 12 cabin up in the hills off Stemple Pass Rd. Agents from the evidence team were there moving in and out. Kathy stepped inside.

**Kathy:** He had a bunk to the right that had an army Green Army blanket on it.

**Eric:** There was a wood burning stove in one corner next to a chair that looked homemade.

**Kathy:** And the wall. the plywood wall. That it was butted up to. There were images of his body in his body grease and things from, you know, I mean, he rarely washed, and so there were outlines of where he had sat for years against that wall in different outlines of his body.

**Eric:** When FBI agents first stepped into the cabin, they found shelves filled with dry goods and bomb making materials. There were guides to edible wild plants and literary books like Joseph Conrad's novel *The Secret Agent*, which is about a professor who quits academia, then launches an anti science bombing campaign. One of Ted's rifles, a 30, ought 6. Hung on the. Wall above his bed with a detailed note he'd written about how to properly calibrate the siding. An old tiny string instrument called the zither hung nearby on a nail. There were a couple of jackets too, including a faded and tattered blue hoodie.

**Kathy:** The first thing I thought. Was he never saw us coming or he would have gotten rid of this stuff? There was a big box of wood of firewood at the foot of his bed, but actually turned out to be steps that went up to a loft was full of evidence. I don't know if you've ever helped a relative move after they've been living somewhere for 30 years, and they're. Kind of a. Hoarder there are layers and layers and layers of life that have just accumulated there. But I thought. 25 years he's been in here, you know, I was just I. I couldn't see enough.

**Eric:** Kathy main job was to comb through 25 years of Ted's riding, around 40,000 pages worth of stuff. The evidence team removed it all from Ted's cabin made copies, then delivered them to Kathy.

**Kathy:** I always called. Him the Porcupine papers because a lot of them you know there might be pages of a recipe for porcupine Stew.

**Eric:** Kathy says she barely slept for the next couple of weeks. She'd spend all day immersed in the journals, then go back to her motel room at night with words from Ted's Diaries floating through her head as she went to sleep.

**Kathy:** It really was. Like walking through his mind. He led you completely into his head. And it was the most intimate portrait. I think that he painted because he was so alone and he was the only one he was talking to. This was a a diary to himself in a lot of ways. It was magnificent.

**Eric:** As Kathy spent day after day digging into the complete works of Theodore John Kaczynski. David Kaczynski was doing the same. In part this was at the request of Ted's defense lawyers in preparation for his upcoming trial, but it was also more personal and agonizing.

**David Kaczynski:** I remember once they... the defense team parked me in a hotel for a week with about 40,000 pages of my brother's Diaries. Never read before and so I'm reading these Diaries and trying to process how did Ted get like this. This is a Ted I don't know. You know just a constant sort of wondering and then a 'was I the best brother I could have been?' You know, he had to be turned in, but maybe I could have helped him earlier. I was probably his closest relationship throughout his adulthood, and we lived, except for a couple of years, we lived thousands of miles apart, only communicated through letter. He was sort of in a... his cabin became an echo chamber for this spiraling into negativity.

**Eric:** Ted had gone into the woods seeking solitude and peace. Instead, he found isolation and torment his ideas about the evils of civilization growing louder inside his head.

But once the manifesto was published, and he was unmasked as the Unabomber, he wasn't alone with his thoughts anymore. There was a public out there engaging with him trying to figure out what do we make? Of this man's. Ideas, what do we make of him?

This is Project UNABOM, an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. I'm Kathy Benson. This is our final episode. Episode 8 Echo chamber

In April 1995, five months before the publication of the Manifesto, Ted sent a letter to the New York Times it arrived on the same day that his 16th and final bomb killed the California logging lobbyist, Gilbert Murray. He wrote that his goal was the destruction of the worldwide industrial system. His bombing campaign. Was meant to quote promote social instability in industrial society, propagate anti industrial ideas and give encouragement to those who hate the industrial system. A lot of people read those words and thought. This guy is nuts. The destruction of the worldwide industrial system. It sounds like something a James Bond villain would cackle. And also he was

going to bring modern civilization to its knees by sending one bomb a year to some unlucky professor or businessman.

Ted may not have decimated the global order, but he was right about his ability to spread the word and reach fellow travelers.

**John Zerzan:** Oh, I wrote to him almost immediately after his arrest.

**Eric:** This is John Zerzan. He's a former 1960s campus radical and he still looks like one. Shaggy white hair, a full beard wire, rimmed glasses, but over the years he went from leftist radical to leftist skeptic, evolving into a self-described anarchist and technophobe that might be why his tapes sound so bad he had trouble hooking up his computer to record this interview. By the spring of 1996 when Zerzan reached out to Ted, he was a well established writer himself, attracted to following preaching, a gospel that wasn't all that different from the unabomber's. But Zerzan got published. In underground journals, Ted had managed to get published in the Washington Post.

**John Zerzan:** I wanted to pursue what he was thinking when he was writing, but you know, again. The idea is also the tactical stuff. Where have you? How how do you how? Do we? Get these ideas out there, make them accessible. Have that be part of the conversation in society.

**Eric:** Ted wrote back and a friendship started.

**Eric:** By that point, Ted case was moving through federal court. He'd been indicted in June for transporting and mailing explosive devices with intent to kill and pled not guilty then, Attorney General Janet Reno decided to go all in, the government would be pushing for the death penalty. For David, it was devastating.

**David Kaczynski:** I was feeling very upset. Uhm, you know? We had done what we had done to prevent loss of life. You know, we've been collaborating, working very closely with the government, and now the government was on. The other side. They said well. Listen, there has to be one more death. David and I'm sorry, but it's going to. Be your brother.

**Eric:** But Ted was going to get some of the best federal public defenders in the country. One of his attorneys was Judy Clark. Who was on her way to becoming a legendary anti-death penalty attorney. Clark famously doesn't speak to the media, but John's ears and got to. Know her back. Then he started visiting Ted in jail. In the spring of 1997, about a year after his. Zerzan says that every time he showed up, Ted's lawyers were there. They told him that as long. As they were. In the room the meeting was protected under attorney-client privilege. So if Ted said something incriminating while he was talking with John, it was OK. It would be protected.

**John Zerzan:** And that made sense to me, but that wasn't the reason. The reason was they wanted to spy? On me to make sure I'm not trying to get him to. Do a political trial. That was absolutely the last thing that they wanted, 'cause they were, I would say death penalty liberals all the way, that's exactly what they were.

**Eric:** What he means is Judy Clark and her team. Their only goal was to keep Ted alive and letting Ted turn the courtroom into. A lecture hall. Talking about Jacques Ellul and prehistoric hunter gatherer societies. That wasn't going to sway a jury. Clark



and her team were in a bind from the start. Ted's cabin had basically been a full confession. In physical form he'd written down everything accounts of the bombings notes on his experiments as he constructed each new device, there was a master copy of the manifesto in the attic, next to the famous Smith Corona typewriter. What could Ted's lawyers do? They settled on what is known as a mental defect defense. They'd argue that Ted had delusions and paranoia that rendered him incapable of actually intending murder.

This wasn't some cynical ploy like pretending a wily Mafia boss is mentally unfit because he's shuffling around the neighborhood in his bathrobe and slippers. Concerns about Ted's mental health were decades old. His parents had talked about it when he was a teenager. David had grown increasingly worried, as Ted's letters to him became more vindictive and cruel.

In the early 90s, David and Linda even talked with the psychiatrist about the possibility of having Ted hospitalized. But did Ted have a mental defect? The experts hired by the defense who examined Ted in person diagnosed him as having schizophrenia paranoid type. They basically diagnosis at least in part on his extreme anti technology views. Ted refused to meet with the government experts so they had to make their assessments solely on Ted's writings and they didn't see mental illness. One said Ted's mind screamed geek, not schizophrenic. Kathy Parker was working closely with the government team.

Based on this case and your reading what do you think? Was he mentally ill?

**Kathy:** He was certainly emotionally disturbed and had had a personality. I think he had a severe personality disorder. I tended to side with the psychiatrist doctor Deadson Resnick.

**Eric:** Park Dietz and Phillip Resnick. They were the forensic psychiatrists hired by the government.

**Kathy:** They essentially took my 300 pages of excerpts from all of the writings. I put them all in chronological order for them. Uhm, they didn't see any evidence of psychosis.

**Eric:** And specifically, they didn't think Ted met the criteria for paranoid schizophrenia.

**Kathy:** It's a cognitive disorder where there's an impairment in the ability to know what's real and what isn't real, and I didn't ever see any evidence of that. I saw a very, very reasoned and an ability to see the world as it was, and he didn't like it.

**Eric:** As the trial approached John's ears and continued to visit Ted in jail. According to Zerzan, Ted didn't know what his defense team was up to. Ted told John he was mostly agnostic about what strategy his lawyers used, with one exception.

**John Zerzan:** Well, the only thing I insist on is it not an insanity defense. Anything else you can think of. Any other stuff go for it, but not that. And that's precisely what they were doing.

**Eric:** So as jury selection began, Zerzan says he intervened.

**John Zerzan:** He called me one day, and I said Ted, there's something you gotta know. Ah, this is a insanity defense straight up. And he said, I'll never forget, he said, "why the lying bastards." You know he was shocked that they were fucking him over.

**Eric:** Ted's anger was easy to understand for Zerzan.

**John Zerzan:** He said this would make a mockery of he said yes if I'm a psychotic killer. Only reason these deaths happen is that I'm I'm psychotic. Well so much for the arguments. They don't exist. It just proves the dominant story that he was just a killer and a mad man and out of his cord and that's all.

**Eric:** In late November 1997, during jury selection, Ted was sitting at the defense table as he heard one of his attorneys discussing a plan to use his psych evaluations as evidence in the trial. He appeared to be furious. He threw a pen at his legal team. It only got stranger from there. Six weeks later, on the first day of the trial, he torpedoed the proceedings as soon as the judge stepped up to the bench. I want to address the issue of my attorneys Ted announced from his seat. Ted was upset with his attorneys, but by the end of the day he'd agreed to continue being represented by them. Two days later. He changed his mind.

He wanted to argue in court he had to send bombs through the mail because he thought it would bring down the industrial system and ultimately save untold lives from the escalating horrors of technology. To pursue that new strategy, Ted told the judge he would need to fire his legal team and replace them with another lawyer.

**Kathy:** And the judge had denied that. And in his desperation that night he tried to hang himself. In the holding cell with his underwear he twisted into a knot and tried to hang himself and they found him in time, but it became a huge news story.

**News Clip:** The information that we received from the US Marshall was that when he arrived at the courthouse, this. Morning he had a red mark on the right side of his neck and had no underwear when questioned. He said he lost his underwear in the shower...

**Eric:** The morning after the suicide attempt, Judy Clark told the judge that Ted wanted to represent himself that he couldn't endure hearing his legal team describe him as mentally deficient. The judge said he'd consider Ted's request. Then he ordered his own psychiatric evaluation.

That psychiatrist found that Ted was quite possibly schizophrenic, but was also competent to represent himself. He had a quote, excellent factual understanding of the legal proceedings. But when the trial reconvened, the judge decided essentially that the psychiatric evaluation he ordered didn't matter. He had had enough. Ted's request to represent himself had come too late. He accused her of trying to manipulate the legal system and said a defense strategy based around the evils of technology was almost certain to result in Ted being executed.

One of Ted's lawyers spoke up, Ted would plead guilty without conditions, meaning Ted had surrendered his right to appeal the verdict. The government withdrew their pursuit of the death penalty. The trial was over. Before it started. At sentencing 3 months later, Ted refused to apologize for his 18 year bombing campaign. He said, I

ask only that people reserve judgment on me and the Unabomber case. The victims and their families did not.

Ted Sat, Stone faced as Lois Epstein, Charles Epstein's wife told him from the stand that hatred had mangled and distorted his mind. Susan Moser, Thomas Moser's widow, pleaded to the judge that he please keep this creature out of society forever. Bury him so far down he'll be closer. To hell, because that's where the devil belongs. John Suzanne wasn't in the packed courtroom that day. But he saw Ted. Afterwards in jail and asked what happened.

**John Zerzan:** He said basically "well it was the damndest thing, they just brought in all these relatives and stuff, people that were injured or killed, and all this emotional stuff. They were moaning about this. They were crying, and weeping, and wailing and saying all this stuff. And what was the point of that? The agreement had already been made."

Like he couldn't grasp that. And I'm thinking myself; 'Ted, you offed so and so's husband or whoever, and you know, you don't think they have some emotional reaction?'

It just it just struck me as very cold. I didn't know what to say. I didn't want to go "Ted, come on, are you kidding?"

**Eric:** By that point, even. Many hardcore anarchists were leery of Ted. This guy couldn't just appoint himself to be a one-man execution squad on behalf of the enemies of technology, but Suzanne didn't see it that way. To him, all the attention. Being paid to Ted was an opportunity and the anti tech activists who wanted to distance themselves from the Unabomber just didn't have the courage of their convictions.

**John Zerzan:** I tried to take advantage, to push the ideas out there. For Christ's sake, what else would you do? They just wouldn't, when journalists would ask them about it; "well, you people, or anti-technology, you know, what do you think about this Unabomber deal? And oh, they just freaked the fuck out. They just ran for cover. Yeah, I thought that was pathetic. Here's your one chance to say something when people are listening and you're just pissing your pants instead of saying something?"

**Eric:** Kathy Pocket was in the courtroom when Ted was sentenced, but she'd found a different kind of closure during the trial for two years. Ever since David angrily hung up on her on the day of the raid, feeling betrayed that his name had been leaked to the press, she hadn't spoken to him. But in the courtroom, they couldn't avoid each other.

**Kathy:** He looked over at me and he had the most concerned look on his face. And then he started moving toward the center aisle and I got up and started moving toward the center aisle and most of the press was out on recess and most of the attendees were out on recess. The jury wasn't there and he walked up to me and shook his head with this sad smile and we just hugged each other. Big hug. I said I'm so sorry that you know this has been so tough on you guys and you know that that's not. What I wanted for. You and he said, I know he said I'm I'm sorry for what I said to you. And I said.

You know, thank you once again for everything you. Did for us. And he said, well, thank you too.

**Eric:** When the trial was over, Ted was taken to ADX Florence. The federal supermax prison in Colorado, where he spent the next 23 years. You might think his legacy would be cemented a mass. Murderer living out the rest of his life in solitary confinement, one of the most infamous pariahs of AmKathyan history. But he has his fans.

In the archive at the University of Michigan. There are boxes and boxes. Full of letters written to Ted while he's been sitting in federal custody. A whole lot of them, probably most of them are from everyday, presumably nonviolent people who see Ted Kaczynski as a kind of persecuted martyr and all-purpose guru.

There's one from an activist who says they are currently living 20 feet off the ground in a tree named Happy, in order to save an old growth forest.

"I support the cause you are fighting for and totally agree with it." The letter writer tells Ted.

There's one from a college student who asked his opinion on the political rise of Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump, then writes. "I feel oddly, more comfortable bringing. Up questions of intellectually sensitive material to you rather than the meek audience prevalent in the oppressively coddling environment of modern centers of higher education."

Another kid tells Ted. I am thinking of dropping out of school. My friend Eddie said I should write to you and see what you think of my plan. ...

Ted's ideas have also been turned into innocuous Internet memes. There are teens on TikTok using images of Ted in the cabin to advocate that we should "#return-to-monkey"

The late fashion designer Virgil Abloh was photographed wearing a T-shirt with the forensic sketch of the Unabomber.

Someone even used vocal modification technology to make it sound like Tucker Carlson and Ronald Reagan are reading industrial society and its future.

**Video Clip:** The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. 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.

**Eric:** Of course, the idea that technology is having an ever more destructive effect on our species isn't very surprising. I hear people saying stuff like this all the time. Technology is destroying us. Our modern lives are fundamentally sick. YouTube and Facebook, and subreddits and Fox News have destroyed any shared sense of truth. And we are all with our consumption, our waste, our relentless burning of fossil fuels pushing the planet to the point of no return.

**Newsreader:** Scientists say the planet is warming faster than at any time in at least 2000 years.

**Video Clip:** Multiple feet of sea level rise, huge food supply disruptions, mass die offs in the ocean.

**Greter Thunberg:** There is no planet B. There is no planet blah blah blah blah blah blah.

**Eric:** And it's all screwed with our heads and the overlords of Silicon Valley seem to want to make it worse.

**Newsreader:** 32% of teen girls said that when they felt bad about their bodies, Instagram made them feel worse.

**Elon Musk:** In other ways, it's kind of like a fit better skull with tiny wires, so as you can see we have a healthy and happy big.

**Mark Zuckerberg:** And that's how we're going to represent ourselves in the meta-verse.

**Eric:** Last fall I went to visit one of my best friends. He'd recently moved off the grid onto an overgrown property in the woods. It was far less isolated than Ted's land in Montana, or David's in Texas, and my friend wasn't alone. He lived there with his longtime partner, but forsaking technological society. He's done some of that. And he thought even more about it. He knew I was making a podcast about the Unabomber, and as I was leaving he handed me a book to read. It was short, slender, a book of letters from the mid 1920s written by an Italian born German theologian named Romano Guardini, I started flipping the pages when I got home and I kept finding passages like this:

"Thus, a technique of controlling living people is developing. It is constructed rationally and embodied in a monstrous system. For most of us, the possibility of a free development and central shaping of the person has disappeared."

It could have been lifted straight from the manifesto, except it was written 70 years earlier. It may be tempting to look at every screwed up development in our times and think the Unabomber was right, that Ted was prophetic, that his dystopian predictions for our world have come true. But that's giving him too much credit. Ted's ideas aren't original, they're old. The manifesto is filled with the same kinds of things people have been saying about technology for as long as machines have been around.

The thing that made Ted unique, the reason we're still talking about him today is that he claimed those ideas as justification for murder. But for all of Ted's efforts to present the manifesto as a revolutionary document and himself as the inspiration for a movement, so many of the actions he took in his life, nonviolent ones like moving into a tiny cabin in the woods and violent ones like trying to blow up an airliner with 80 people aboard because he hated hearing jets flying overhead. They came down to a powerful, very personal desire. Leave me alone.

There's an unsent letter in the Michigan archive from 2017. It was a response to. Someone who had written to him, they said they were working on the Discovery Channel, miniseries, Manhunt, Unabomber and they were wondering:

‘Why didn’t he engage in sabotage instead of murder? Blow up bridges and science labs, that kind of thing? Wouldn’t doing that instead of randomly murdering people in their homes have drawn more followers to his cause?’

Ted’s reply:

“Your suggestion that this could have been done without killing or maiming people is downright silly. What do you suppose would have happened to the people driving across a highway bridge when it was blown up? So too the people on a train that got derailed. To the people living downstream of the dam. Use your head man.”

Then Ted asked;

“Why is anyone even bothering to make a series about the notorious Unabomber? My bombing campaign ended 22 years ago. My trial was completed 19 years ago, yet all through the intervening years, over and over, and over again, ad nauseam, the media keep putting on these programs about me.”

Being the Unabomber’s brother had taken a toll on David Kaczynski, the strain of the manhunt, the pain of Ted’s learning David was the one who turned him in, all the unwanted notoriety once the news became public.

**David Kaczynski:** I just felt kind of a bit like a victim myself. And you know, I would of course vent to Linda about this and Linda, I remember one time says David, don’t you understand there are people who’ve lost their dearest loved ones. People whose lives will be changed forever. This isn’t all about you. You’re not the only victim here.

**Eric:** So in the months before Ted’s trial, David tried to do something about all the suffering.

**David Kaczynski:** You know Linda and I talked about it again and we decided. That we we. Would like to write some letters of apology at least. And so we did. Our best you know, apologizing, you know we, we didn’t want to ask for anything in return just to say how much regret we had about the pain they had suffered in their losses. And I think we sent out about 12 or 13 letters and there were a couple of gracious responses, but most mostly there were silence and. And so I felt this almost a double sense of loss. The loss of my brother, but also the loss of connection too. You know humanity, which my brother had attacked.

**Eric:** There was one victims address that David wasn’t able to find. Gary Wright, the owner of the computer store in Salt Lake City. The guy who picked up a device next to a parked car and was blown across his parking lot and spent years having shards of wood removed from his body. Eventually David managed to track down Gary’s phone number.

**David Kaczynski:** I remember picking up the phone. I think my finger was kind of shaking as I’m dialing. The number. I’m dialing Gary’s number and kind of planned what I planned to say and have it all ready and. And then, uh. You know phone stops ringing at the other end, and I hear a voice that said you’ve reached the right house at the wrong time. So it was a. A phone message and I didn’t. Know you know I hadn’t prepared. How to leave a message? I just says, you know I my name is David Kaczynski.

I think you know. Who I am. I wonder if we might talk and I will try calling you back. In a few days.

**Eric:** Voice mails may be the most awkward technology that our technological society ever created. Later David called back and got Gary on the phone.

**Gary Wright:** He basically was just saying that he wanted to apologize on behalf of his family for what had happened.

**Eric:** This is Gary.

**Gary Wright:** And I can remember telling him after I listened to it. I just said Dave, you know? You can't own this and you know you're going to have to let it go 'cause you know one person doesn't represent a family. I just told him, you know, I've been going through this a long time, a lot longer than you and had to come to some conclusions. Basically, is what I was trying to impart on him. I mean, I know I've been going through this for over 9 years at. That point and had had to come to some very interesting conclusions from myself. I mean, what if I never knew who this was and at about year six had to kind of decide that I would forgive a ghost? Those sorts of things, so a lot of introspection if you will. But I could tell from his demeanor. How vulnerable that felt?

**Eric:** David and Gary have become close since that first phone call. For years they traveled together, did events fighting against the death penalty, talking about, recovering from violence and tragedy, and more than that, they've just been friends. In public, there's something almost a little hokey about the idea of their bond. Like some studio execs tacked it onto the end to leave viewers with a sense of hope. But this is real life and their friendship is profound. David has said on many occasions, including to me that Gary has become a new brother for him.

David's relationship with his own brother, of course more or less ended in 1989, when David told Ted he was moving in with Linda. But even after Ted was sentenced to life in prison, David kept writing, sending him holiday greetings, birthday cards, and the occasional book. Ted has never written back. Their mother, Wanda, kept trying to. I found several of her letters to Ted in the archive. They're short, cheerful. Almost like postcards you'd send your kid at camp.

Thanksgiving 1999, Wanda sends Ted a care package.

"Dear Ted, something to help in keeping you occupied over the holidays."

Ted annotates it for the researcher.

"With this note, the stupid sent me crossword puzzle books and the like, which of course I threw out."

A few years later, Wanda sends Teddy note, saying:

"She admires how he's always come to the defense of the powerless children, minorities, migratory workers."

Ted's take:

"My mother must be getting senile. I have never taken any interest in causes of this kind."

There's more, most just a few sentences conveying her love and support. Ted never responded to any of them. The last came in 2011, Wanda was 94. It was sent a few months. Before her death. It's the shortest of all:

"Dear son, as always I love you mother. Ted did not add an annotation."

**Eric:** OK, could you tell us where we are what we're looking at?

A few months ago I met up with David.

**David Kaczynski:** Oh, we're in the Texas Hill Country. We're on a veranda overlooking. And kind of a ridgeline of hills covered with junipers and some lovely rolling fields. Used to be working ranches at one time now, mostly divided into somewhat smaller guest ranches. It's a very quiet, peaceful. Lovely place with a today. Has a just the bluest sky you could imagine. Kind of undeveloped, the kind of place that I like to wander in.

**Eric:** The place where we were wandering was the spiritual center slash Dude Ranch that David and Linda were helping to build. While I was. There Linda was painting the walls of a utilitarian wood cabin to transform it into a bright, colorful yoga studio, and David toured me around the property, showing off the herd of free roaming horses. Pointing to plans for new buildings, he was wearing a baseball cap with the words "go kind".

When we were walking around. One thought that I I've often had through this project is what would Ted say about this?

**David Kaczynski:** .Way too overdeveloped... But, yeah, I mean, I think we both had. A kind of real affinity for places real wilderness. This is not real wilderness by any stretch. Human beings have lived here for a long, long time. You know, I've seen changes out in the desert. That have kind of. Challenged me because. You know development? It seems like such a unique place. Why build more houses? Why put in more roads?

**Eric:** A few weeks before I visited David, news had broken that Ted had been moved from the Supermax prison in Colorado to a federal medical facility in North Carolina. A place for inmates suffering from serious illness, David called the Bureau of Prisons to find out more.

**David Kaczynski:** Needed treat. But the Bureau of Prisons couldn't tell me anything about his condition, so I still do not know. So I'm left with a lot. A lot unresolved. And now to realize, gosh, he, you know he's sick.

**Eric:** The day after I met up with. David, someone on. Reddit posted a letter Ted had written from the North Carolina medical facility. In it he said he had terminal cancer. He'd been given no more than two years to live. If I was actually the one to tell David about the letter, he was upset but not surprised he'd heard rumors. Ted had cancer and was already reckoning with the fact that he'd be the last member of their family.

**David Kaczynski:** Alive he had always lived such a, you know. Sort of pure. Life and took. Care of his health, never smoked, never drank. I always was physically fit. I thought, well, he probably outlived me. I don't really don't know. So I have written



to him at the medical facility in Butner, North Carolina, and tried to be as loving as honest as I knew how. I don't know how many more chances I'll get and.

**John Zerzan:** Whether he reads the letters Or not, I honestly don't even know.

**Eric:** We were sitting in the new community. He was helping to build, listening to the wind, rustling through the Live Oak trees, and one thing that was really striking was that David wasn't the Unabomber's brother there, he was just David, another aging Buddhist Westerner lending a hand were needed. This place was another fresh start in a life that was full of them and David got that. He just published a book of poetry which. He gave me. It's his first. It's called beginnings. But he couldn't totally let go of what he called the Unabomber saga, much as he might want to.

It seems like you on the. One hand you don't. Want it in your life you? Want to you want to move on? Don't want to deal with this? But then you find yourself. Going back invited back actually wanting to pursue some of these things, so I'm curious if you've thought about that.

**David Kaczynski:** No, I don't think I have a choice about. Removing it from my life, it's certainly a part of my life and a very important part of my life. I think I'm at a different stage in life now, which is more internal meditative. You know the last words have never been spoken, and. I guess. I'd like to own those words if there are words for the end of it.

**Eric:** You've been listening to Project UNABOM. Project UNABOM is an Apple Original podcast produced by Pineapple St Studios. It's produced by our senior producer Jonathan Menjivar, and me, I'm Kathy Benson, our producers, Aurelia Toddler, and Melissa Slaughter. Editing by Joel Level and Maddie sprung Kaiser. Our fact checker is Sarah every. The episode was mixed by Davey Sumner, Jason Richards, Elliot Adler and Jonathan Menjivar studio. Recording by Brian Standifer at the Texas monthly studio. Our artwork is by GM casuse music by Mark Horton and John Hancock. Additional music by Erik Phillips and Jeff Baxter. Thank you to Joel Batterman for research help at the Joseph, A Labadie Special Collections Library at the University of Michigan. Legal services for Pineapple St by Bianca Grimshaw at Granderson. Desrocher Jenna Weiss Berman and Max Linsky are the executive producers at Pineapple St. If you live in the US and are having suicidal thoughts, call the national Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. Eight hundred 273 talk. Thanks for listening.

# The Ted K Archive

Eric Benson, Max Linsky, Jenna Weiss-Berman, & Jonathan Menjivar  
Project Unabom  
A Podcast Show & Documentary Series  
June, 2022

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