

Against Modernity

Domestic Terrorism in the United States and the Television
Series "Manhunt: Unabomber"

Rodolpho Hockmuller Menezes

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Front Matter

Title Page

University of São Paulo Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences Department of History Postgraduate Program in Social History

Rodolpho Hockmuller Menezes

Against Modernity: Domestic Terrorism in the United States and the Television Series “Manhunt: Unabomber” (2017)

Dissertation presented to the Postgraduate Program in Social History of the History Department of the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences, of the University of São Paulo, as part of the requirements for obtaining the Master’s degree.

Advisor: Prof. Dr Mary Anne Junqueira

Corrected version

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Dedication

*To B, your love and patience
made this work possible*

Thanks

I would like to thank the Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo, for granting the master’s scholarship and for the financial support to carry out this research, process number 2019/21042-0 Institution which provided me with the means, since graduation, to carry out research inside and outside Brazil The opinions, hypotheses and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of FAPESP

To the Department of History and the Faculty of Philosophy, Literature and Human Sciences, for the opportunity to take the course, together with the many workers and professors, who helped my research trajectory.

To Prof. Dr Mary Anne Junqueira, this research is the result of all the years of work together. I would like to thank you for your guidance since Scientific Initiation, which in these years of coexistence has taught me a lot, contributing to my training and scientific and intellectual growth

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To Oklahoma State University, especially the Department of English and the *Screen Studies* program, which provided me with all the necessary infrastructure to carry out this research while abroad. To the friends I made during my stay in the United States: Santiago Neira, Jonathan Howell, Ryan and Hugo.

To the producers and creators of *Manhunt: Unabomber* Greg Yaitanes, Andrew Sodroski, James Fitzgerald and Tony Gittleson, who made time and material available for this research. Without the testimony of these cultural industry workers, much of the analysis of this work would be incomplete.

I thank the workers at the Joseph A Labadie collection at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, especially Julie Herrada, curator responsible for Kaczynski's correspondence Giden Goodrich who welcomed me to the archive and made available all the materials I requested My thanks to Gabriel Mordoch, former -FFLCH student and Labadie worker, whom it was a great surprise to meet, thanks for bringing an air of familiarity to the Michigan winter

For my family, my dear grandfather, Pedro Moura de Almeida and my mother Irene Hockmuller, who are always a source of constant inspiration. I also express my thanks to the friends who motivated me during this journey: Mauricio Helfstein, Rodrigo Kuester, Lucas Tomasi, Yan Kalled and Leonardo Nogueira To my friend and colleague, US History researcher, Gustavo Sivi, thank you for the conversations about audiovisual and wilderness To Maria José, who during my most difficult moments, showed that life, like research, is a great learning experience

To Bruna B Fontes, historian, my companion, who carefully discussed the problems of my research. Thank you for the countless hours of reviewing my text, patience and attention you dedicated to me. Your support made it possible to write this dissertation and overcome all the obstacles that appeared.

Epigraph

“Now I have a question for you. You say you’re working on a project for Discovery Channel about me & “the FBI effort to capture me” 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, why?”

Theodore Kaczynski¹

Summary

HOCKMULLER MENEZES, Rodolpho Against modernity: domestic terrorism in the United States and the television series “Manhunt: Unabomber” (2017). 2023. 188 f Dissertation (Master’s) - Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, 2023.

The Master’s thesis analyzes the television series *Manhunt: Unabomber*, originally shown in 2017 in the United States on the *Discovery Channel* and on the *streaming* service Netflix The series represents the investigation of Theodore Kaczynski, an American domestic terrorist, from the point of view of James Fitzgerald, an FBI agent. Known as the Unabomber because his targets were initially airlines and universities, Kaczynski sent homemade bombs by mail, taking more than 17 years to be identified and arrested. The terrorist was identified based on the linguistic analysis of his manifesto, *The Industrial Society and its future*, which criticizes technological and modern society *Manhunt* tells the final phase of the case at the same time time in which it represents the reasons and events that led Kaczynski to carry out such acts of violence. Our objective was to think about traditions of dissent in the United States and the representations of wild nature in the narrative, as a counterpoint to life Modern. We address how representations of anti-intellectualism and institutions have roots in a reaction to American elitism. We proposed understanding *Manhunt* as a cultural product of its time, the result of negotiations by the series’ production team. Therefore, we set out to discuss the changes in the industry that led *Discovery* to invest in a scripted series, considered elaborate and “of quality” in 2017.

Keywords: History of the United States; Series (Genre); Television; Dissent; Wilderness; Anti-Intellectualism.

¹ Correspondence between David Presley, a member of the Manhunt production team, and Theodore Kaczynski. Ann Arbor. Joseph A. Labadie Collection - Ted Kaczynski Correspondences (manuscript) Box 98. Folder 1399.0

Abstract

HOCKMULLER MENEZES, Rodolpho Against-modernity: domestic terrorism in the United States and the TV series “Manhunt: Unabomber” (2017). 2023.188 f. Dissertation (Master’s) - Faculty of Philosophy, Literature and Human Sciences, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, 2023.

The master’s thesis analyzes the TV series *Manhunt: Unabomber*, originally aired in 2017 by *Disco very* Channel in the United States, and available in the streaming service *Netflix*. The series portrays the investigation of Theodore Kaczynski, an American domestic terrorist, from the point of view of James Fitzgerald, an FBI agent known as the Unabomber, as his targets were initially airlines and universities, Kaczynski sent homemade bombs by mail, taking more than 17 years to be identified and arrested. The terrorist was identified by the linguistic analysis of his manifesto, *The Industrial Society and its future*, which criticizes the technological and modern society. *Manhunt* dramatizes the final stages of the investigation while also portraying the reasons and events that led Kaczynski to carry out such acts of violence. Our objective was to discuss the tradition of dissent in the United States and the representations of wilderness in the narrative, as the antithesis to modern life. We address the representations of anti-intellectualism and institutions as an answer to American elitism. We proposed to understand *Manhunt* as a cultural product of its time, the result of negotiations by the series’ production team. Thus, we discuss the changes in the industry that led *Discovery* to invest in “Quality TV”, producing a scripted series in 2017.

Keywords: US History; Television; Series; Dissent; Wilderness; Anti-intellectualism.

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Introduction

Our Master's thesis aims to analyze the television series *Manhunt: Unabomber* (2017), originally shown by *Discovery Channel* and available in the *Netflix catalog*. The series premiered in the United States between August 1st and September 12th, 2017. Totaling eight episodes, each lasting around forty minutes, it was shown weekly. Although historians have already advanced in the studies of History and Cinema, research about television series are rare in Brazil and equally in the United States. Thus, it was a challenge to deal with a topic where the bibliography is summary. However, we consider that first with cable TV and then with *streaming* services there is an urgent need to address this type of cultural product. In other words, the series we studied tells us the speed at which the consumption of this type of cultural product has changed, showing how the act of watching television has been modified since the end of the 20th century. We thus explored this path given the popularity of television series in both the United States and Brazil. However, our purpose was not to study the reception of the product cultural in our country, but rather the series as a piece that deals with a specific North American cultural universe, although its inclusion in the *Netflix* catalog has expanded the target audience beyond the North American borders. American

The series chronicles the FBI investigation that captured and arrested Theodore Kaczynski (Paul Bettany), known as the Unabomber (acronym for *University and Airline Bomber*). So it's about case that actually happened adapted for television, using fiction for the presentation¹. The series seeks to reconstruct the events involving the investigation of the domestic terrorist case, starring James Fitzgerald (Sam Worthington). In this way, the series has as its central character Fitzgerald, who used an unconventional method to analyze the clues in the case. Even though Kaczynski is also the protagonist of the plot. After years of trying to capture the terrorist, the FBI agent, as opposed to other police officers who followed traditional forensic leads, insisted on the possibility of linguistic analysis of the letters and texts written by the Unabomber, especially his manifesto, as a viable way for the FBI to reach the criminal. In the narrative, based on a critical reading of Kaczynski's texts, Fitzgerald, without formal academic training, tried to extract clues that would help to create a *profile* (profile), analyzing linguistic marks that informed gender, race, age, region of origin and training of the terrorist. In the end, the capture of the Unabomber occurred not through the

¹ To see more about terrorism, television and series in the United States after September 11, 2001: TAKACS, Stacy. *Terrorism TV: Popular entertainment in post-9/11 America*. SI: University Press Of Kansas, 2012.

traditional forensic method, but through linguistic analysis of the text that the terrorist had written. Details of the series are found at the beginning of the first chapter of this dissertation

We understand *Manhunt* as a cultural product of its time, the result of negotiation and disputes in its production process. When narrating about the past, the program says more about its present than about the past period. We discuss why *Manhunt Unabomber* uses the representation of the investigation of the case, in the 1990s, to dialogue with the period of its exhibition, period of Donald Trump's presidency (2017-2021). The series aimed to reach a conservative audience and aired during a period of the rise of the far right in the United States

Our central objective was to discuss some North American traditions already mobilized in Hollywood, television and other media such as literature. This is how we identified at least three traditions from that country mobilized by the series: dissent, the idea of *wilderness* and the valorization of a certain anti-intellectualism in the country. All very well known to the North American public and little to Brazilian. In other words, it is possible to approach the series without taking these traditions into account, but the analysis would not gain density. Furthermore, as indicated, we defend thinking of our object as the result of negotiations and disputes. It is not possible to understand the television series outside the context of *Discovery Channel* and the emergence of *streaming* services such as *Netflix*.

On the one hand, the door to enter North American traditions was given to us by Mary Anne Junqueira, supervisor of this work, and specialist in the History of the United States in Brazil². Since North Americans are so immersed in these traditions, many

Sometimes they consider them as part of the world of economic liberalism, or the universe of the civilized world. However, they are an important reference and mark North American culture and politics. On the other hand, this work is a beneficiary of the important field of studies with which we had contact during the period we were in the United States. There, in addition to interviews with the team that created and directed the series, we had access to the field of *Media Industry Studies*, whose texts were important for the consolidation of this work³

In addition to the series itself, this work made use of documents found in the United States during a six-month stay, thanks to the support of FAPESP - Fundação de Am-

² JUNQUEIRA, Mary Anne. South of Rio Grande. Imagining Latin America in Selections: Wilderness, West and Border. Bragança: Sacred Heart University, 2000.

³ *Media Industry Studies* is part of the field of *Media Studies*, it can be understood as an interdisciplinary academic field focused on the study of various forms of communication media, such as television, film, radio and digital media. The discipline seeks to discuss the relationship between the media and society based on the analysis of production, distribution, reception and consumption. See more at: LOTZ, Amanda. Key Concepts in Media Industry Studies. In: HAVENS, Timothy; LOTZ, Amanda (ed). Understanding Media Industries. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012 p. 1-304. For a more panoramic understanding of how to investigate television series and culture, see: TAKACS, Stacy. Interrogating Popular Culture: key questions. SI: Routledge, 2015.

paro à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo Lá, in addition to access to important bibliography for the audiovisual, we were able to visit the archive where the documentation of Theodore Kaczynski, the Unabomber, is located. Through the letters exchanged by the domestic terrorist, we were able to evaluate part of the series' reception, including with the criminal seeking to have control over the narrative. The terrorist's Manifesto was another relevant document consulted by us. However, most important during our stay in the United States were the interviews that we were able to carry out with the series team. Without them, we are sure that the work would lose in density.

Kaczynski's documentation is on the main campus of the University of Michigan, in the city of Ann Arbor. This set of documents was named after a labor activist and anarchist from Detroit, Joseph Labadie (1850-1933). At the beginning of the 20th century, the activist donated books, newspapers, pamphlets, magazines, manuscripts and *memorabilia* that he collected over the years. Begun in the 1930s, the collection expanded from its initial focus, anarchism, to encompass broader dissident thought, especially in the United States, from the 19th century to the present⁴. In an article written by the curator, one of the reasons for preserving Kaczynski's texts is that he is part of a broader political tradition in the United States. Therefore, the material we researched in *The Ted Kaczynski Papers* is part of the main documentary collection on these social movements recognized in the country.

Most of the material available in the archive was acquired by donations from Kaczynski. He continues to send his manuscripts, correspondence and legal documents to the archive, as part of an agreement made between his lawyers and the University in the late 1990s⁵. The documents are divided into eight series: *Correspondence*, *Legal*, *Prison*, *Publications*, *Writings by Ted Kaczynski*, *Newspaper Clippings and Articles*, *Audiovisual* and *FBI Files*⁶. Added together, these series represent ninety-eight boxes

⁴ JOSEPH A. LABADIE COLLECTION OF SOCIAL PROTEST. Vice President for Communications Arts & **Culture** University of Michigan. Available at: <<https://arts.umich.edu/cultural-collections/joseph-a-labadie-collection-of-social-protest-documents/>>. Accessed on: 16 June. 2022.

⁵ HERRADA, Julie. *Op. cit.*, p.35-43.

⁶ In *Legai*, there are four subseries: *Copies of Documents* consists of material copied by the FBI for legal proceedings. Kaczynski's lawyers took these copies from the FBI files; *Legal Communication* consists of copies of notes, letters and documents that Kaczynski sent to his lawyers and his employees; *The legal documents* contain court documents, drafts, and correspondence from Kaczynski to lawyers related to his case; Finally, *Legal Notes and Research* is primarily research material collected by Kaczynski for his court case. *Prison* covers materials such as library request forms, appeals to prison regulations, research and notes on various subjects. In *Publications*, the archive preserves articles and books collected by Kaczynski after his arrest. This material has side notes and "corrections" made by him. The *Writings of Ted Kaczynski* are texts written by him after his incarceration. Contains two manuscripts: his article *Ship of Fools* and the unpublished book *Truth vs Lie*. The *Audiovisual series* contains VHS, CDS and DVD. There are audio recordings of his interview with journalist Therese Kint, dated 1999. Parts of this interview were published in *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* and in the UK edition of *Green Anarchist*. The interview was used as a primary source for the TV series *Unabomber. In His Own Words*. The audiovisual recordings contain portions of the *Murray Psychology* study in which Kaczynski

of documents, each organized into dozens of folders, dating from before his arrest in 1996 until the recent year 2018.

Therefore, given the enormous amount of material that makes up the collection, it was necessary to reduce the scope of the research before visiting the archive. Focusing on the theme, we concentrated on the *Correspondences*. Our goal was to study the letters for a broader understanding of the reception of *Manhunt*. As the majority of the correspondence series is composed of letters sent by individuals from 1996 to 2018, and the television program premiered in August 2017, we were able to collect letters in which the research object was discussed

Theoretical-methodological support

As we propose to analyze an audiovisual object, specific methodologies for this category of source become necessary for the historian, considering the support in which it is inserted, the particular challenges in interpretation and its own limits. Marcos Napolitano argues that when analyzing audiovisual sources, the historian must articulate the elements of the internal structure of language with the representation of reality. According to the author, a first decoding is of a technical-aesthetic nature, that is, the researcher must be attentive to the “specific mechanisms mobilized by audiovisual language. In this sense, according to Napolitano, for the specificity of television one must think about the “text/image/soundtrack” relationship. Thus, the framing of the scene, duration, editing, colors used, chosen vocabulary and reiteration strategies are elements central to making sense of the work⁷

Another layer of decoding the audiovisual source, according to Napolitano, is in the representation “of the historical or social reality contained therein”. Therefore, seeking to understand the socially constructed representations with the content of the narrative structure (theme, characters and constructions of events) For Napolitano, the audiovisual source carries a tension between evidence and representation. Therefore, the researcher must seek to understand representations by groups, institutions and actors at the same time as analyzing the source as “evidence of a process or event that occurred whose establishment of raw data is only the beginning of an interpretation process with many variables”⁸

Napolitano points out that some historians “tributary to the tradition initiated by Marc Ferro” seek to make a division between “*actuality films* (documentaries) and *featured films* (staged films).” These historians, according to the author, would be more identified with a “positivist conception of document”. In this way, documentaries

participated as a student at Harvard. Finally, the *FBI Files* consist of photocopies taken of documents that the FBI found in Kaczynski’s home. This series has photos of items found in your home.

⁷ NAPOLITANO, M. Audiovisual sources: the story after paper. In: Caria Bassanezi Pinsky. (Ong.). *Historical Sources*. led. São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 2005.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.237-240.

would be more preferable for analysis in comparison to staged films, because “according to this vision, each shot, sequence, or complete production is a primary record of the past and its edited set become a document in itself”⁹.

Eduardo Morettin criticizes Marc Ferro, especially regarding the search for “authenticity” in the audiovisual source. According to Morettin, Ferro’s analysis reveals an idea that it is possible to seek to rescue a “historical reality” in the film. The French historian sought to establish a methodology in which it would be possible to identify “deliberate manipulations” through the “angle adopted when taking the scene”, the legibility of the images, lighting, marks on the film, among others. In this way, it would be up to the historian to identify and separate possible “tampering” attempts from document analysis¹⁰

Morettin disagrees with Ferro about the analytical framework in the cinema-history relationship. In the author’s analysis, Ferro places the written sources in the foreground in relation to the filmic document. Consequently, for Ferro the film would appear in the light of a historical knowledge already established a *priori* to “deny, confirm or complement” the bibliography Morettin criticizes Ferro for this procedure biasing the analysis with a teleological vision “the return, with the knowledge of what has already happened”, within a teleological reading of history permeates Ferro’s criticism. It is in the light of knowledge originating from the written tradition that cinema will be interpreted and made prisoner”¹¹

Morettin then proposes that the filmic document should be treated for what it is: a document. In this way, questions, to avoid teleological conclusions, must arise from the analysis of these documents and not to give light to previous historical knowledge. Considering that the image has a polysemic character, the edits made should not be identified as “manipulations”, but as an integral part of the film that must be properly analyzed and questioned. Thus, the audiovisual document, as an object of study, must be understood in its singularity at the same time as it is investigated through the tensions it has with ideological projects that converge and/or conflict¹².

Manhunt: Unabomber has a specificity in that it is not a two-hour long film that shows first in theaters¹³ As a series, it was originally shown at a certain time and is now

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.242

¹⁰ MORETTIN, Eduardo Victorio. Cinema as a historical source in the work of Marc Ferro. *History: Questions & Debates*. 38, no. 1,200, p. 25-32.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.36.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 15-40.

¹³ In Brazil, there are important works that explore the TV series format. Monica Kornis’ work is a reference in the study of Brazilian series and miniseries. The researcher explores, for example, the miniseries *Golden Years* on Globo broadcaster. In this program from the 80s, the myth of the “good times” from the Juscelino Kubitschek era is reproduced. In other words, Kornis highlights how these cultural products construct historical and imaginary pasts. See more at: KORNIS, Mônica. *Uma Memória da História Recent National: the Rede Globo miniseries*. Collection, Rio de Janeiro, v. 16, n. 1, p. 125-142, June 2003. Edson Pedro articulates in his historical analysis the productions and narrative strategies of the American miniseries *Roots* and *Holocaust*. See more in: SILVA, Edson Pedro

available on the *streaming* from *Netflix* To discuss the television industry, we based ourselves on the studies of Amanda Lotz in *The television will be revolutionized*¹⁴ The author analyzes the formats of programs based on their financing, distribution and consumption models Lotz states that much of what is used to think about television today was written during its initial period. According to her, television as a medium, between the 1950s and 1980s, was a *broadcasting* The few broadcasters were able to reach thousands of people. In the United States, during that period, there were only three broadcasters NBC, CBS and ABC Watching television was a habit that took place at home and in groups, due to less accessibility to the device. In this way, television programs were types of *water coolers*, as they should appeal, in some way, to different age groups, races, genders and political options¹⁵

However, current television in the United States is a *narrowcasting medium*, and no longer *broadcasting* The audience is fragmented among hundreds of free-to-air and cable television channels, broadcast services, and streaming (*Netflix, Amazon Prime Video*), video-on-demand platforms (*iTunes, Hulu, Xfinity*) and video-sharing sites (*Youtube, Vimeo, DailyMotion*). Furthermore, these different forms of television have different economic and regulatory processes that contribute to their operating standards and that influence the possibility of programs they can create¹⁶.

As we have already indicated, television watching habits have changed, becoming increasingly individualized. The availability of reproduction platforms such as computers, notebooks, cell phones and video game consoles, in addition to the greater ease of purchasing a traditional television set, has contributed to the individualization of television. practice This new habit of watching television is also related to the fragmentation of the audience by particular interests. This initially happened on specific channels for sports, news and culture: “Initially, this niche programming was aimed at a more general audience, with channels like *CNN* looking for those interested in news, *ESPN* serving the sports audience and *MTV* targeting youth culture”¹⁷.

Fragmentation increased in the early 2000s, when, for example, women’s channels began to emerge (*Lifetime, Oxygen, and WE*) that distinguished themselves by providing programming for interests. divergent In other words, the audience began to be fragmented by age group, religion, gender and political spectrum¹⁸. In Lotz’s example,

da. History in prime time: memory and ethnicity in *Roots and Holocaust*. Meaning, São Paulo, v. 8, n. 56, p. 173-191, Jul. 2021.

¹⁴ LOTZ, Amanda D. *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*. New York: New York University Press, 2014.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.36.

¹⁷ “At first, this niche targeting aimed fairly general with channels such as *CNN* seeking out those interested in news, *ESPN* attending to the sports audience, and *MTV* aiming at youth culture’. *Ibid.*, p.32.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

it would be difficult for an American liberal to follow a *Fox News program*¹⁹. *Discovery Channel*, a TV channel available on basic subscription plans, seeks to please a specific group. Because it is dependent on advertising to finance itself, the entertainment company sells inserts to companies that wish to promote products to their audience. In this dissertation, we explored how this method of financing had an impact on the narrative and the choice of *Manhunt* itself as a series to be broadcast on the channel.

We organize this dissertation into three chapters. In the first of them, entitled “North American traditions of dissent in *Manhunt: Unabomber*”, we discuss how criticism of the modern world and dissent, central to the message that Kaczynski sought pass through in his manifesto, are part of the North American tradition and imagination²⁰ Based on the symbolism of Henry David Thoreau and his log house in his book *Walden*, we contextualize Kaczynski’s house in forest of Montana²¹ Thus, we argue that, in order to understand various elements and images present in the television series, we need to discuss the dissent, combined with the idea of *wilderness* wild nature, within the History of the States United

In the second chapter, ‘Intellectuals, anti-intellectualism and the man of action in *Manhunt: Unabomber*’, we analyze the anti-elitist roots of American anti-intellectualism. In this second chapter of the dissertation, we deal with the representations of intellectuality and institutions in *Manhunt*, as well as its opposition to the man of action We articulate how the narrative uses the resources of mirroring and voice *over* to construct the characters of James Fitzgerald and Theodore Kaczynski In the end, we defend the need to understand the historical moment — 2017, Trump’s election year in the United States — as well as the series’ target audience, white, working-class men, over 35 years old, generally not very intellectualized — a reference to the North American “common man”,

The third and final chapter, “The Cultural Product *Manhunt* creation, production and narrative disputes in a television series”, focuses on the creative and production processes of the series, by the *Discovery Channel*, and some of the readings of its viewers. We trace how, since the original script, the production of *Manhunt* was marked by the dispute over the narrative on the part of its creators. Therefore, we argue that it is necessary to study *Discovery* and its traditional programming to understand why the channel chose to produce a “quality” scripted series. in the different readings and interpretations of *Manhunt Unabomber* We explored some of them, such as reports from other agents who worked on the case, letters sent to Kaczynski in prison and the recovery of the terrorist’s ideas by far-right groups

¹⁹ Here we inform you that we use the term ‘liberal’ in the sense used in the United States: of people who defend progressive projects on the part of the State, whose propositions are directed in favor of social policies and reforms in the economic sphere.

²⁰ For more on culture-specific dissent in the wake of the September 11 attacks, see MELNICK, Jeffrey P. *9/11 Culture: America under Construction*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

²¹ THOREAU, Henry David. *Walden; or life in the woods*. New York: Dover Publications, 1995.

1. North American Traditions of Dissent In “Manhunt: Unabomber”

The television series *Manhunt: Unabomber* seeks to reconstruct the events involving the investigation — led by FBI agent James Fitzgerald — of a sequence of attacks in the United States between 1978 and 1995, attributed to the Unabomber (*University and Airline Bomber*)¹. The series chronicles the final months of the FBI investigation. Agent Fitzgerald, in opposition to the other characters who followed traditional forensic leads, sought to carry out a linguistic analysis of the letters and texts written by the Unabomber, especially the manifesto *The Industrial Society and its future*. It appears that the case was a pioneer in defining a new investigation instrument: Forensic Linguistics In the narrative, based on a critical reading of Kaczynski’s texts, the agent tried to extract clues that would help to create a *profile* (profile), analyzing linguistic markers that provided clues about the identity and training of the perpetrator of the attacks

Represented in the plot, domestic terrorist Theodore Kaczynski was born in Chicago in 1942, the eldest son of a Polish-American family, a housewife mother and a working-class father. He was raised in a working-class suburb Often remembered as a “brilliant student” , began studying Mathematics at Harvard University at the age of 16, graduating in 1962. He then decided to pursue an academic career and began his doctorate at the University of Michigan, under the guidance of mathematician Allen Shields. He completed his doctorate in 1967 to then teach at the University of California Berkeley, in the position of Assistant Professor, where he remained until 1969² In 1971, he abandoned academic life and moved to a small isolated log house that he built in Lincoln, Montana[25]

In 1978, Kaczynski sent a bomb by mail addressed to an engineering professor at *Northwestern University*, beginning a series of 16 attacks on representatives of technology and modernity, such as academics and airlines. His campaign of terror continued for 17 years, causing the deaths of three people and injuring 23 more.³ In

¹ Sam Worthington is best known for his performance as the protagonist in the film *Avatar* (2009). Paul Bettany is known for his supporting role, as Jarvis, in the Marvel Comics franchises: *Iron Man* (2008), *Iron Man 2* (2010), *The Avengers*. The Avengers (2012), *Iron Man 3* (2013), *Avengers. Age of Ultron* (2015) and *Captain America*.Civil War (2016).

² CHASE, Alston. *Harvard and the Unabomber. The Education of an American Terrorist*. New York, NY: Norton, 2003.

³ CHASE, Alston. *Op cit*.

1995, a year before he was identified and arrested, he was published by the newspapers *The Washington Post* and in *The New York Times* his philosophical treatise, called by the FBI a “manifesto”, entitled *Industrial Society and Its Future*⁴ Signing as “FC” (*Freedom Club*), the publication of the material was his demand to put an end to his campaign of attacks.

Arrested in 1996, he was tried and sentenced to serve four consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole. Kaczynski appealed the sentence in every instance, reaching the Supreme Court in 2002, where it was rejected. maximum security prison in Florence, Colorado During these years, he was imprisoned in a block called *Bombers Row*, serving time with the most notorious terrorists in recent United States history such as: Timothy McVeigh (*Oklahoma City Bombing*), Erick Rudolph (*Olympic Park Bombing*) and Ramzi Yousef (1993 attack on the *World Trade Center*)⁵ The friendship that Kaczynski was held in prison with McVeigh, a far-right anti-government terrorist executed in 2001⁶.

Kaczynski was transformed into a popular culture icon in the United States. There are numerous books, articles, exhibitions, photos, films, series, *podcasts*, documentaries and works of art about the terrorist and his famous log house⁷. After the premiere of *Manhunt*, several groups on *Twitter* and *Facebook* were created to discuss their ideas.

These communities created by far-right young people disseminate *memes* with their image and phrases from their manifesto⁸

Another central character in *Manhunt* is James Fitzgerald, a retired FBI agent (*criminal profiler*) represented as the person responsible for the arrest of the Unabomber. In real life, Fitzgerald wrote a trilogy of books about his police investigations, including *A Journey to the center of the mind: Book III*, which tells his experience with the Unabomber case⁹ In addition, he works as a university professor at *PennWest California*, in the Department of Criminal Justice and Psychology

Fitzgerald has a long history in the entertainment industry. His work began while he was still working for the FBI, participating as a “technical consultant” in the third and

⁴ KACZYNSKI, Theodore J. *Industrial Society and its Future*. In: KACZYNSKI, Theodore J.; SKRBINA, David. *Technological Slavery: The collected writings of Theodore J. Kaczynski, a ka. ”The Unabomber”*. Port Townsend: Feral House, 2010. p.38-125.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ MICHEL, Lou; HERBECK, Dan. *American Terrorist: Timothy McVeigh and the Oklahoma City bombing* SI: Harpercoilins, 2001.

⁷ CHASE, Alston. *Op cit.*

⁸ HANRAHAN, Jake. *Inside the Unabomber’s odd and furious online revival*. Wired UK, 2018. Available at: <<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/unabomber-netflix-tv-series-ted-kaczynski>>. Accessed on: 08 Feb. 2023.

⁹ FITZGERALD, James R. *A Journey to the Center of the Mind: Book III: the (First Ten) FBI Years, 1987- 1997*. West Conshohocken, P: Infinity Publishing, 2017. According to his website, James Fitzgerald He completed a Master’s degree in Linguistics at Georgetown University in 2005. Available at: <<https://www.jamesrfitzgerald.com/>>. Accessed on: Jun 28, 2019.

fourth seasons of *Criminal Minds (2005 - 2020)*¹⁰ After debut of *Manhunt*, he gained greater notoriety in the media Since then, he has been invited to present Forensic Linguistics in lectures, interviewed in *podcasts* and occasionally invited to comment on topics related to security public on *Fox News*¹¹.

The first episode of the series, titled *UNABOM: Task Force*, begins with an opening text informing the audience that the fiction is based on real events¹² Afterwards, a narrator introduces the viewer to the functioning of the postal service in the United States¹³ In this first sequence, which lasts around two minutes, the audience follows the journey of a post in the postal service. The camera focuses on a collection box, installed in a public place. In the foreground, we see an employee, whose face cannot be seen, collecting letters and packages contained inside the collection box and positioning them inside a vehicle. Once at the post office, the package reappears on a conveyor belt, in what appears to be a sort of sorting process, where it receives a stamp, by another anonymous employee. Efficiency and automation are seen as evidence of the modern world. The package is then transported to its destination, an office building. A secretary delivers the mail to one of the offices, where a man begins to open the box. Now, in a long shot, the camera is positioned outside the building where a large explosion ensues.

It is interesting to note that the narrator identifies himself by using the first person “I want you to think about the mail”, “I can send you cookies on the other side of the world”, “I write an address and they just... obey”¹⁴ (*Unabom*, Ep.01). In other words, enough information is given so that the viewer can identify that the narrator is

¹⁰ FITZGERALD, James R. Interviewed by Rodolpho Hockmuller Menezes on 03/14/2022. Personal archive.

¹¹ The retired agent also creates his own digital content. He has a website, where he publishes material related to his work. About *Manhunt*, he made available eight interviews he conducted with members of the production, fans of the program and people who inspired characters. In addition, at this online address, the script used in the filming of *Manhunt* is also available. Fitzgerald is a partner in an entertainment company specializing in *true-crime* together with Jim Clemente, another retired FBI agent and creator of *Manhunt*. Jim Clemente, who participated in writing the initial script, is a retiring FBI agent, having also served as a prosecutor in New York. He is currently dedicated to the entertainment industry, working as a consultant and writer on series such as: *Criminal Minds (2005 - 2020)*, *Quantico (2015 - 2017)* and *Blindspot (2015 - 2020)*. Clemente is the presenter of the *Real Crime Profile podcast*, where they analyze crime scenes, establishing a profile (*profile*) of criminals and *Best Case Worst Case*, about behind the scenes of criminal investigations, through the testimony of police officers and other authorities. Jim Clemente. XG PRODUCTIONS. Available at: <<https://www.xgproductions.com/jim-clemente>>. Accessed on: 23 Feb. 2023.

¹² *MANHUNT Unabomber*. Directed by Greg Yaitanes. Screenplay: Andrew Sodroski; Jim Clemente; Tony Gittelsohn. 2017. DVD, son., color.

¹³ There are several reproductions of *Manhunt*: the original from *Discovery* the one shown on Netflix streaming, from the Lionsgate studio and pirated copies circulating on the internet. Therefore, as this is a multiplatform series, with different editions, we chose not to provide the minutes of the analyzed sequences.

¹⁴ “I want you to think about the mail for a minute”. “I can send you cookies from the opposite side of the world”. “I write an address, and they just... obey” Episode 1, *Unabom*.

responsible for the act. In the first scenes, it is already possible to identify the intention of the series in establishing the terrorist's main criticism of the functioning of modern society: an employee passed the bomb without question, without knowing that he was releasing a deadly artifact to its recipient. In other words, he acted like an automaton, carrying out what he had to do, but alienated of the meaning of your work and its results.

Even in these first minutes of the series, attention is drawn to the moments in which the narrator speaks directly to the audience, comparing the viewer to a "sheep", "obedient", part of a society made up of "automatic" individuals.

Stop taking it for granted, like a complacent, sleepwalking sheep, and really think about it [...] And see, this only works because everyone along the chain acts like automatons [...] well, it's not your fault . Society made you this way. But you are a sheep and you live in a world of sheep. And because you are all sheep, because all you do is obey, I can reach and touch anyone anywhere. I can reach out and touch you... Now¹⁵

We understand that the series is dialoguing with a particular frame of reference recognized by North Americans, a tradition of dissent, criticism of modernity and the idea of *wilderness*

1.1 Henry David Thoreau

In Brazil, the United States is seen, in part, as powerful and almost ruthless in international terms, however, a strong tradition of dissent little known to Brazilians is part of the country's history. Dissent is a broad phenomenon, difficult to establish precise contours In In general, it is linked to questioning the government or an established order. Within this expanded scope are reformists, non-conformists, radicals, and those who operate from the perspective of civil disobedience

According to Saul Cornell, since its founding, the nation has undergone strong questioning with suspicion of centralized authority, the consequences of which have taken root in North American History. The author refers to the anti-federalists who, in debate with the federalists, were important in forging the country's Constitution. This is not about describing all the country's traditions of dissent, but it is important to highlight the role of the transcendentalists, commented on throughout this chapter and who were a reference for the series *Manhunt*

¹⁵ "Stop taking it for granted like some complacent, sleeping sheep and really thinking about it [...] And you see, it only works because every single person along the chain acts like a mindless automaton [...] Well , it's not your fault. Society made you this way. But you're a sheep, and you're living in a world of sheep. And because you're all sheep, because all you can do is obey, I can reach out and touch anyone anywhere. I can reach out and touch you... Right now" Episode 1, *Unabom*.

The transcendentalists were those who pointed out the contradictions of the modern world that was emerging. Although much of the dissent is linked to progressive radicals, it is not correct to establish the link exclusively to this field of politics, since there are radicals on the right who are also involved in dissenting actions[40] We believe that the TV series *Manhunt* dialogues with traditions of dissent from the past and present. Therefore, addressing how these elements are mobilized by the series means understanding the cultural product on its own terms.

1.2 Criticism of the modern world

In North American culture, among many other factors, there was a strong questioning about the modern world, which is opposed to an idea of wild nature, as we observed with the representation and images of *wilderness* in the series This is because an almost nostalgic look at nature is part of North American traditions. Wild, or even “untouched” nature is the counterpoint to the industrial and modern world, which was the choice of the United States to reach a certain social level, despite of the country’s inequality, and their place in the world Authors, painters, writers used nature as a dissent, a contrast, to the modern world. More than that, nature is seen as a *locus* privileged for the encounter with the divine In nature, man could access the divine within himself. To this end, in the series *Manhunt* we seek to understand the issue of nature by following the narrative and the elements mobilized from its characters and scenes. In a similar way, we sought to study this issue based on interviews with production members given to us or media outlets.

It is important to note that *Manhunt* mobilizes an iconic image of American culture. We refer to the small log cabin (*log cabin*) by Henry David Thoreau, in addition to the imagery about the nature of that country. We emphasize that the television program never refers directly to this author, but uses symbols that refer directly to him. Even though the series is on a *streaming* service and is seen by the North American public , whose reading can do without the traditions discussed here, it gains a lot in meaning when we understand these elements that guide the look and interpretation of the North American public. The components of these traditions were selected, chosen by those who wrote, produced and directed the plot.

Henry David Thoreau, considered a *dissenter* in the 19th century, and his work *Walden* are part of the North American frame of reference and have been important since the conception of the series. The iconic author is recovered to legitimize and justify certain attitudes taken by the protagonists. In this way, the program, by referring the domestic terrorist’s house to Thoreau’s small house, points to Theodore Kaczynski as someone who acts within this tradition of dissent. the figure of the American poet and philosopher, to show how *Manhunt* projects Thoreau’s legitimacy onto its protagonists

Given the importance of Henry David Thoreau, we seek to contextualize him in relation to a 19th century political-religious movement, known as transcendentalism,

which has Ralph Emerson as one of its main exponents. Based on these elements, we seek to show the multiple meanings of Thoreau's log house: as a temple and place of contemplation of *wilderness* wild nature, symbol of non-conformity and rejection of modernity and its problems

1.1.1 Henry D. Thoreau as dissent in the United States

Henry D Thoreau (1817-1862), philosopher and poet, born in Concord, Massachusetts, was one of the heirs of the "John Thoreau & Co" pencil factory. With the proceeds from the manufacture, his family made it possible for him to study at Harvard University. After his graduation, Thoreau taught at a public school in his hometown, where he remained only a few weeks, when, faced with his refusal to corporally punish his students, he resigned.¹⁶ Shortly afterwards he established a high school, where he worked until his death. of his brother and partner John Thoreau Jr. Between 1841 and 1843, Henry Thoreau lived on the property of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and his family Emerson, his intellectual mentor, was one of the founders of the religious-philosophical movement that became known as transcendentalism.

Transcendentalism is inserted in a North American context of reaction to industrialization, the mechanization of the world and bourgeois capitalist society. Elements that can be seen in the series both in the construction of Kaczynski's character and in that of the federal police agent, a specialist in building suspect profiles, James Fitzgerald Emerson pointed out that there were two forms of knowledge. The first is understanding, the formal and academic knowledge imposed by externality, and the second is reason. would be an innate and intuitive knowledge, present in the *self* We would all be able to recognize what is beautiful, not needing the teaching of this capacity When we share these universal morals, we would be, in some way, connecting with the "creative force" Seeing nature in a positive way, we ended up placing it as a living entity, the same divine spark present in the human was present in the non-human¹⁷

We recognize truth and beauty the moment we are connecting with the creative force of the universe. Emerson called this creative force 'oversold*' and our individual souls would be part of the oversold. We are all part of divinity. We all have a spark of divinity within us. When we see this, we find self-realization, we recognize our connection with nature, with the universe, with all living creatures. In this sense we see that there is no difference between humans, there is no difference at the soul level between

¹⁶ HARDING, Walter. The days of Henry Thoreau: A biography. 2nd ed. [S. I]: Dover Publications, 2011, p.

¹⁷ YOUNG, *Operf*, p.135.

races or genders. Thus, self-realization leads us to a deeper engagement with the world¹⁸

Transcendentalists saw a correspondence between the lower plane of the physical world and the higher spiritual sphere¹⁹. In this sense, nature assumed central importance. If observed correctly, it could reveal universal spiritual truths: “nature is the symbol of the spirit... the world is emblematic”²⁰ In other words, it acquired a spiritual role as it was like a privileged portal of access to the superior laws that emanate from God.

For transcendentalists, man belonged to the material world, but had the potential to transcend this condition using imagination and intuition. In the same way, he could discover his correspondence with the divine and his capacity for moral improvement. All individuals would have the capacity to transcend ; however, this was a difficult and delicate path, which could only be found in individuality²¹.

This movement placed the *self* and the solitary search for this connection with the creative force as central. Society demands obedience from its individuals, the suppression of the *self*, said Emerson. In response, he defended non-conformity, the subject should think and live based on the *self*, that that everyone considers divine. Institutions and legislation should be questioned if they affirm how a man should live. Each individual should be self-sufficient, to think and govern their life, even if they do not correspond to the expectations of others or society:

Everywhere society is in conspiracy against the humanity of all its members. A Public Limited Company, in which the members agree, in order to better ensure their bread for the shareholder, to give up the freedom and culture of those who feed. The most requested virtue is conformity. Self-sufficiency is his aversion. She doesn't like reality and creators, but names and customs. He to be a man, must be a nonconformist²²

Authors consider the transcendentalist movement, and, therefore, Henry David Thoreau as a dissent. If Emerson was a highly relevant exponent, Thoreau is the one

¹⁸ /b/d., p. 137.

¹⁹ NASH, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014, p. 84-

²⁰ EMERSON, Ralph Waldo. *Nature*. In: EMERSON, Ralph Waldo. *Addresses and Lectures, The Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson: Nature*. Boston: [S], 1883. p. 31-38., apud, NASH, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²² “Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree, for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most requests is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs. Whose would be a man must be a nonconformist’. EMERSON, Ralph Waldo. *Essays*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1883, p.51-2 (Original edition, 1841).

who took the principles of transcendentalism further. In addition to criticisms of the industrial capitalist way of life, the author also defended, in the book *Resistance to Civil Government* (1849), the individual's "duty" to oppose laws considered "unjust"²³ Although the first edition received little attention, from its reprinted in 1866, the text gained fame and came to be considered one of the most influential works of North American literature²⁴

One of the reasons why the text became known was the way the author composed the topic of civil disobedience, which was consolidated as an active rejection of enlistment in the War with Mexico (1846-1848), laws and/or institutions considered unjust, even if this action was against the "status quo" Thoreau's book gained great popularity in the 1960s and flourished among those in the counterculture and protests against the Vietnam War. More than that, Thoreau's text became a reference for protests and non-violent demonstrations in the United States and beyond Proposing actions such as non-payment of taxes (carried out by Thoreau as a protest against the financing of the war against Mexico and slavery), his proposals served as the basis for interpretations about non-violent resistance. violence of leaders such as Martin Luther King²⁵ and Mahatma Gandhi²⁶.

The popularity of the author's works also leads us to realize their impact on the country's popular culture. Thoreau's figure is disputed by different groups, who often have conflicting interests. He is celebrated by libertarians, who see in his search for autonomy and objection to the State a man to be remembered. On the other hand, during the struggle for civil rights, individuals and groups saw in him peaceful methods to question unjust authorities in different institutions. In addition, in the counterculture, *hippies* saw transcendentalism and Thoreau as a form of spirituality alternative to the Judeo-Christian tradition²⁷ Buell points out that everyone finds something in the philosopher to appropriate, his image appears as a symbol in different places in

²³ THOREAU, Henry David. *Resistance to Civil Government*. In: PUTNAM, GP (ed.). *Aesthetic papers*. Boston: The Editor, 1849, p. 189-211.

²⁴ WALLS, Laura Dassow. *Henry David Thoreau: A life*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017, p. 248-254.

²⁵ Martin Luther King Jr (1929–1968) was a Baptist minister, activist, and one of the most prominent leaders of the civil rights movement in the United States. He used the political philosophy of non-violent civil disobedience to combat racial segregation in the South and other parts of the United States.

²⁶ Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) was an Indian writer, lawyer, politician and leader of the nationalist movement. He mobilized non-violent civil disobedience to combat British colonial rule in India. WALLS, Laura Dassow. *Henry David Thoreau: A life*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017, p. 207-215; JOHNSON, Linck. *The Life and Legacy of "Civil Disobedience"*. In: PETRULIONIS, Sandra Harbert; WALLS, Laura Dassow; MYERSON, Joel (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 629-641.

²⁷ The Thoreau Society is one of the largest and most diverse societies of authors. Annually, for two weeks, people from different strata of society participate in discussion tables about the author and his works. One of the first meetings was attended by not only academics, but "a navy lieutenant, a postman, two publicists, a rabbinic student, and a "wandering philosopher". *Ibid.*, p. 314.

North American culture²⁸ Therefore, it is not surprising that Thoreau is referenced in cinema and on television.

It is possible to find references to Thoreau in animations such as *South Park*, *The Simpsons* and in comics from the *New York Times*. Films such as *Amazing Grace and Chuck* (1987), *Dead Poets Society* (1989) and *Awakenings* (1990) represent the figure²⁹ More recently, it had a symbolic presence in critically acclaimed features such as *Into the Wild*(2007) The film, based on the true story of Christopher McCandles (Emile Hirsch), narrates the journey of a young man represented as successful in his studies and with a promising future. However, upon feeling that he was being "corrupted" by modern society, donates his savings to charity, burns his identity and credit cards In this adventure drama film, the character abandons his belongings and adopts a new name, crossing the United States with the aim of reaching an isolated region of Alaska, where he wanted a simpler life³⁰ Thoreau is symbolically present in this film, just like the philosopher, the film's character, McCandles, saw wild nature in *wilderness* , solution to your discontent with civilization and its problems

In television series, just to give one example, there is *The Society* (2019), available on *Netflix* aimed at a young audience. The narrative begins with the disappearance of the adult population of a city, in which children and teenagers find themselves surrounded by wild nature. After some time, when they decide to enter this unknown jungle, one of the characters quotes an iconic excerpt from the work *Walden* by Thoreau "I went to the forest because I wanted to live deliberately, to face only the essential facts of life, and see if I could learn what it had to teach, and not, when I die, discover that I never I lived"³¹

Both Emerson and Thoreau are treated as prominent thinkers, whether from the perspective of an expert in academia or popular culture. This is because a wide audience continues to explore his image and representations of *Walden* as a metaphor or ideal to be followed³² *Manhunt* follows this same path, by making constant references to the setting, aesthetics and values associated with Thoreau. Therefore, it is necessary

²⁸ BUELL, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, nature writing, and the formation of American culture*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995. p. 313-314.

²⁹ SEDERHOLM, C. Popular Culture. In: FINLEY, J (ed). *Henry David Thoreau in Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. p. 349-358.

³⁰ The place of his death, an abandoned bus, acquired notoriety after the film was shown, becoming a place of visit for several people seeking to retrace McCandles' trail. In subsequent years, several operations were carried out to rescue adventurers. Despite these efforts, some died on this dangerous trail. In 2020, authorities decided to remove the bus from the site, using a helicopter for transport. The bus is currently in a museum at the University of Alaska. To see more about the museum: OSBORNE, Ryan. Famous McCandless 'Bus 142' moved to UAF's Museum of the North. *Alaska News Source*, 2020. Available at: <<https://www.alaskasnewssource.com/2020/09/24/famous-mccandless-bus-142-moved-to-uafsmuseum-of-the-north/>>. Accessed on: 13 Oct. 2022.

³¹ "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not read what it had to teach, and not when I came to die, discover that I had not lived" THOREAU, Henry David. *Op cit*, 1995. p.59.

³² BUELL, *Op. cit.*. p.314.

to briefly look into the content of *Walden* to show how these issues appear in the series and in the speeches of the production members

1.1.2 Symbol for North Americans: Thoreau's log-cabin in *Walden*

Walden, Thoreau's most famous work, was written between 1845 and 1847, during the author's two-year retreat at Walden Lake, Emerson's estate, in the middle of the forest, near Concord, Massachusetts [58] The book is a report of personal experience, indicating that it is possible to live autonomously, beyond the barriers of materialism and social impositions, exploring spiritual progress through a connection with nature³³ The author's livelihood, for most of his time at the lake, he depended on a small garden that had beans, potatoes, corn, peas and turnips. Another part of his diet came from hunting small animals and collecting fruits in the forest³⁴

³⁵

We highlight in the image above Thoreau's small house already printed in the first version of *Walden*, in 1854; It is, therefore, an imaginary that spans almost 170 years. It is precisely in reference to this house that the series opens, showing Kaczynski's way of life in the midst of nature and mobilizing the entire framework of dissent against the world modern.

Thoreau built his own house plank by plank and reported how much material and money he needed to build his own house and reported step by step in *Walden* In the same way, as we will see below, Kaczynski built his own he marries mathematical rigor, as reported by his brother in the series. According to him, it was perfect. Thoreau's house, in the 19th century, measuring 3x4 5 m²³⁶. As furniture, it only had a bed, table, three chairs, mirror and lamp. As for household utensils, it had a kettle, frying pan, pan, molasses jug, dishwashing bucket, ladle, spoon, three plates and two forks and knives. Man only needed "food, shelter, clothing and fuel" to survive³⁷.

The thinker stated that, between civilized man and savage, the first lived better, in palaces, compared to the second, however, he was poorer, because the civilized man's home is much more expensive³⁸ The civilized world imprisoned man , even if there was the speech of freedom It means that Thoreau's little house is symbolic for North

³³ SCHNEIDER, Richard J. *Walden*. In: MYERSON, Joel (ed). *The Cambridge companion to Henry David Thoreau*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 97.

³⁴ THOREAU, Henry David. *Op. cit*,1995, p. 35.

³⁵ Henry David Thoreau: Walden Pond Cabin. Britannica. Available in: <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Walden#/media/1/634406/15828>>. Accessed on 26 Jan. 2021

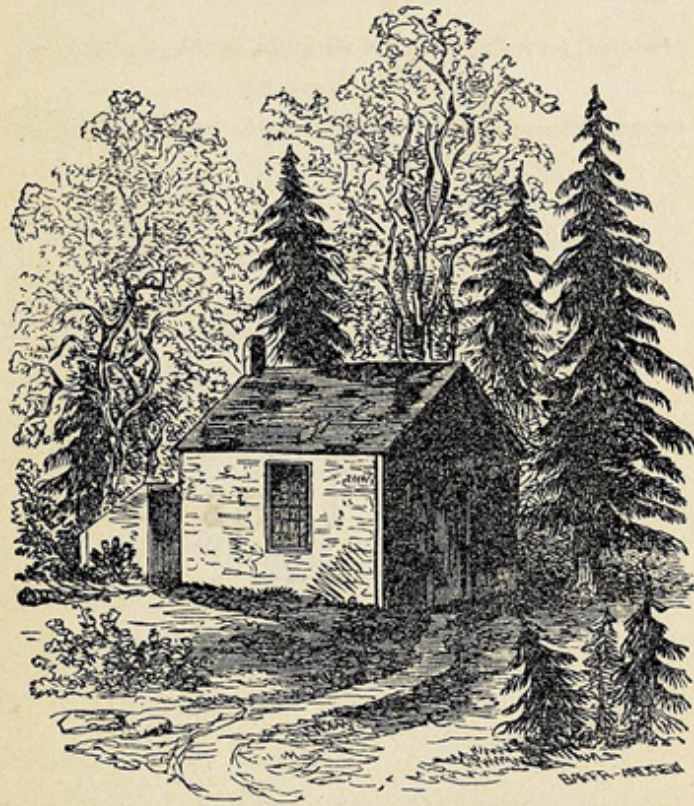
³⁶ "WALLS, Laura Dassow. *Henry David Thoreau: A life*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017.

³⁷ THOREAU, Henry David. *Op. cit*,1995, p. 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p 19.

WALDEN;
OR,
LIFE IN THE WOODS.

By HENRY D. THOREAU,
AUTHOR OF "A WEEK ON THE CONCORD AND MERRIMACK RIVERS."



I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors up. — Page 92.

Figure 1 - Title page of the first printed version of Walden

American culture So that, when a little wooden house is designed, it is immediately linked to Thoreau

The author defines the costs of the modern world as "what I call life that is required to be exchanged for something, immediately or in the long term."³⁹ In his context, the author pointed out that only a fraction of those who lived in the city could acquire a house, since the majority paid rent. Those who had the means and ventured into buying a house, exchanged around fifteen years of work, or even half of their life, to acquire a "luxury box", in this way, " would the savage be wise to exchange his hut for a palace on these terms?"⁴⁰ This house would be comparable to a box or a cave because it was an obstruction, which prevented the contemplation of nature "birds do not sing in caves, nor do pigeons show their innocence in a nest."⁴¹ As we see in the image above, the image of Thoreau's construction, represented on the title page of the first version of the book, appears inserted and in harmony with nature

Thoreau observed and questioned the first effects of industrialization, not only in the sense of the expansion of the number of factories, but how this accompanied a new way of perception, meaning and values on the part of society — or the emergence of a new culture. The clock occupied a central place in Thoreau's economic model. This is representative of the role the instrument played in the expansion of industrialism in 19th century New England. With the construction of factories and railroads, large-scale access to accurate time became essential. In the previous period, watches were relatively expensive and luxury items, made only by master craftsmen⁴²

Being manufactured on a large scale, Thoreau observed that the tool of the industrial apparatus began to govern the worker's way of life, who became a machine. The individual became an automaton, as his life began to be strictly guided by an apparently impersonal and autonomous technology⁴³ In this way, the philosopher warned that men had lost control of their own inventions, which began to dictate the his own way of life "man has become the tool of his tools"⁴⁴ We will see that part of this criticism can be found in the series *Manhunt* The series is inserted within a larger theme in the audiovisual When the audience see Kaczynski's log house, there is a series of images and narratives that can be mobilized.

1.2.3 Kaczynski's log house

In this section we will work on the different meanings of Theodore Kaczynski's small house in the series. The character is represented, in a large part of the narrative, as

³⁹ *Same*.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p 18.

⁴² MARX, Leo. *The machine in the garden: technology and the pastoral ideal in America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 247.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 249.

⁴⁴ THOREAU, Henry David, *Op. cit.*, 1995, p.24.

someone who built his own wooden house. We will show how this place has different layers of meanings: it can be a place where it is possible to dream a different reality; as a symbol of dissent to industrial society; as a representation of danger, as it is an isolated space for the manufacture of explosive materials; a place where life's traumas are relived in an isolated and solitary way.

The log house represented in the series is a symbol of the character's dissidence towards American society. Kaczynski lives isolated, in a primitive way, without electricity or running water, collects food in the forest, eats game and from his small garden. He does occasional and manual work, living on about four hundred dollars a year (*Apri*, Ep. 05). Lives alone in his 3 x 3 6 m² house, therefore, similar to the size of the house of Thoreau, far from any neighbors, but close to a village where there is access to newspapers. Like Thoreau, Kaczynski was not completely isolated. Still, we use the adjective isolated here to refer to Kaczynski's location because the village was small and just a center to provide for necessities. However, he and Thoreau were not hermits far from everything and everyone. In Lincoln, Montana, Kaczynski easily traveled by bicycle to this town where he bought what he needed, maintained some relationships and visited the library. He had feelings for the librarian and her son, to whom he taught math (*Ted*, Ep 06).

In the opening sequence of the series *Manhunt* there is the image of a mailbox with stamps and conventional marks, which folds like an origami. The upper ends retract and shape themselves, until forming the log house by Kaczynski. In the foreground, the title of the series appears, *Manhunt* written in red, *Unabomber*, imitating typewriter typography. Little by little, in the third plane, in the background, the silhouette of several trees surrounding the house is revealed, forming a contrast to the black background. We emphasize the importance of the opening sequence, present in all episodes of the series. In this first moment, there is no image of Kaczynski, the central character of the series; however, the viewer is introduced to the nature of the log house. Such a perspective indicates that the image of the small house and the sign is enough for the audience to understand the message.

The dark and shadowy background that surrounds it stands out. The house seems to float in the air, as it does not have a well-defined floor. The material with which it is made, a cardboard box, refers to the material used by Kaczynski to send his bombs, but it can also refer to the use itself, a place to reserve something or someone's refuge and hiding place, in this case, Kaczynski (FIGURE two).

Note in the figure above, the image similarity with the title page of the first printed version of *Walden* (FIGURE 2). Although in Thoreau's book the house is more delineated, the elements used for the representation, such as the theme of the simple house surrounded by nature, it remains in the series. Thus, Kaczynski's home is a clear reference to Henry David Thoreau in the terrorist's life and in the product we analyzed.

By mobilizing this symbol, the series communicates with North Americans in general. All it takes is an image of a small wooden house in the middle of nowhere to remind you



Figure 2 - Image of the opening sequence of the series *Manhunt: Unabomber*

of Thoreau's house. A symbol of nonconformity is recovered from the past, although it is difficult for those unfamiliar with these North American traditions to understand the layers of meaning mobilized. This symbol evokes the rejection of materialism, modern society and its hierarchies. Again, for a Brazilian viewer, this may go unnoticed, but the North American recognizes Thoreau within the frame of the country's political culture. This does not mean that every American agrees with the philosopher's ideas, but that they recognize the codes and identify the figure of the thinker within a historical context of dissent. In this sense, the legitimacy of this icon is projected onto the character of Theodore Kaczynski.

The series, by bringing the domestic terrorist closer to Thoreau, places him as a *dissenter*, despite the fact that the choices made by Kaczynski are not the same as those of the 19th century thinker. While Thoreau proposed civil disobedience in a peaceful way, the Unabomber when disagreeing with the modern world, he chose an extreme form of violence: sending bombs by mail to symbolic people of the world he questioned.

Soon after the opening commented here, the second reference to the log house appears, in more detail, in a dialogue between James Fitzgerald and David Kaczynski during the most advanced phase of the investigation, after the terrorist's brother and his wife recognized the ideas and the text from the Unabomber and contact the FBI (*Abrir*⁴⁵, Ep. 05). When the FBI agent goes to his house, Theodore Kaczynski's brother

⁴⁵ Term coming from the French for shelter.

shows a photo of the terrorist's log house. Soon after, the camera, in *travelling*, brings us closer and shows Theodore's address. The house is surrounded by trees, some are dry, others have vibrant yellow leaves, although a grayish tone predominates in the background. The narrative turns its attention to the dialogue, the brother says that he had some contact with Theodore, when he returned to do small jobs, but all that changed when he left after a disagreement. David continues and says that his brother went to nature because of his convictions, but also because the relationship between the two was broken.

David Kaczynski tells FBI agent James Fitzgerald about his brother's way of life in Montana: "It's perfect simplicity [...] he lives outside the system"⁴⁶. The house appears inserted in nature at the same time as, in a certain way, hidden from the viewer's view, as the scene only surrounds the house, not offering us any more details about the environment (*Abri*, Ep. 05). David dedicates himself to life in a different way to his brother. In the series he lives in a characteristic house in a North American suburb. Living with his wife in the state of New York, he is represented within a domestic environment common to North Americans, inhabiting a spacious house, with car in the garage. In this way, he is a typical middle-class North American (*Abri*, Ep. 05).

David is representative, in this way, of the lifestyle that his older brother rejects. The character serves as a strong contrast that highlights the life choices, material and emotional, that Theodore disapproved of. The scenes in which he and his wife are represented inside the residence are marked by the use of a gray color palette, with a predominance of close-up shots. Somehow, both the brother and the FBI agent are complex characters who completely reject Kaczynski's terrorist actions, but admire him due to his awareness of the modern life and having the courage to give another direction to life, it is possible to notice this perspective when the brother describes the log house as having "perfect simplicity" (*Abri*, Ep.05)⁴⁷.

The centrality of the log house in understanding the character's narrative is highlighted. It is also in that space that he relives his traumas, moving away from human relationships. In the village near his small house, when the boy, the son of the librarian to whom Theodore teaches mathematics and advises on problems at school, invites him to his birthday party, Kaczynski builds a simple musical instrument for the boy with his own hands. Upon arriving at the door of the house, he observes the exact moment in which the smiling birthday boy is presented with a modern electronic keyboard. The people around are impressed with the technological instrument. The gift had already dazzled the boy and Theodore, disappointed, did not enter the residence, returning in the middle of the dark night to the log house, where he locked the door and closed himself off for socializing. social (*Ted*, Ep.06)

⁴⁶ "It's perfect simplicity [...] but he lives about as far outside the system as anyone can", Episode 5, *Apri*.

⁴⁷ "It's perfect simplicity" Episode 5, *Apri*.

The log house, in reference to *log-cabin*, so prominent in the North American imagination is also the place where Kaczynski prepares and stores the explosives. It is there that he gathers the tools and chemical ingredients necessary to, With care and dexterity, build your destructive artifacts. During the narrative, it is revealed that he keeps a bomb under his bed, indicating the impulse to continue with his campaign and the risk he exposes himself to by sleeping on top of the explosive object. In this sense, the log house can also mean danger to your table, where he builds destruction, is also the privileged space of his typewriter, which he uses to write the manifesto against industrial society. The document was sent to newspapers across the country, being published in the hope that the Unabomber would stop the attacks

After Kaczynski is detained by the FBI, the house is removed from Montana. In one scene, an electric saw is shown cutting the supporting stumps of the house, the loud noise of the electrical equipment causes a feeling of discomfort, disturbing animals and the spectator himself (FIGURE 3) To add, the noise of the helicopter propeller, necessary for the removal of the log house in the midst of *wilderness* the disturbance increases Modernity and its machines disturb the natural order The scene is violent and quite symbolic: technological objects are brought to uproot the house, at the same time at the same time as it amplifies the sounds of machines, strange in that environment, but known in the urban scene (*USA vs Theodore Kaczynski*, Ep. 08).

Below, images of the moment when the helicopter transports the house over the forest and the river, in an unimaginable scene. It then passes over a city until it is transferred to a train We also notice an aesthetic that recalls the Hudson River school paintings of the 19th century, as we will see below The proportions throughout the sequence highlight the enormity of the natural landscape in relation to technologies human In many ways, the series shows the predatory relationship that man, in this case North Americans, has with nature in the past and present.

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We highlight the importance of discussing how the series presents and represents Kaczynski's home in Montana, the log house in the middle of the forest, and its similarity to that of Thoreau in *Walden* For the North American viewer, this is not a simple cabin The house belongs to the North American imagination, to a frame of references that have different meanings from that of the Brazilian spectator. This aesthetic of the log house in the middle of nature is then part of an American tradition that is linked to idea of *wilderness*, a concept that we will discuss below. In addition to the comparison between Kaczynski's houses in the series and the title page of *Walden*, we can think about housing in a more wide

Next, we insert a photograph of Kaczynski's real home in its original context in Montana (FIGURE 4). The house only makes sense in a natural context. It is the "minimum" that allows man to survive in the hostile environment of the forest. Whether with Thoreau or Kaczynski, the important thing was the experience in this environment.

⁴⁸ Source: Episode 8, *USA vs Theodore Kaczynski*.



FIGURE 3 - Log house in transport. The scene where the log house is removed and transported is especially long, nearly two minutes long. It is the beginning of the last episode of the series, titled USA vs Theodore Kaczynski

49

Let's go back to the series *Manhunt* and see another image of the house in a completely different setting. In this scene, the house is represented in a cold and sterile FBI warehouse, completely losing its meaning, size and condition (FIGURE 5)

50

In an article from the *New York Times* about the exhibition by Polish artist Robert Kusmirowski, we identified yet another representation of the log house (FIGURE 6) This time it is a reproduction of the house by the artist Na description, the reporter highlights that “the theme of the Unabomber’s cabin has been exhausted by American art, and perhaps in Europe.”⁵¹ In other words, both the Unabomber and his small house go beyond police and judicial means. They reach *streaming* services and art

⁴⁹ Source: <[[https://helenair.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/montana-historical-society-eyes-unabomber-cabin-after-dc-museum-displaying-%c3%ad-plans-to-close/article_62aa0ff7-2b67-S1bd-9611-][https://helenair.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/montana-historical-society-eyes-unabomber-cabin-after-dc-museum-displaying-it-plans-to-close/article_62aa0ff7-2b67-S1bd-9611-6f4c1197233c.html]. Accessed on 26 Jan. 2021.

⁵⁰ Source: Episode 8, *USA vs Theodore Kaczynski*.

⁵¹ “the Unabomber’s cabin has been exhausted as a motif in American art, if not in Europe”. The Art of Darkness. NY Times. Available at:

<http://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2008/07/19/arts/design/0719-NATURE_3.html>. Accessed on 26 Jan. 2021.



FIGURE 4 - Photograph of Kaczynski's house in Lincoln, Montana



FIGURE 5 - Scene in which Agent Fitzgerald shows the log house in the FBI warehouse to Kaczynski

galleries We highlight the similarities between the representations of the houses: the first in the series when in the FBI warehouse and the second in the exhibition, as art They are in "sterile" places ", alien to its original idea, thought to be somewhere else, in the context of nature.

⁵²

Let us now see a decontextualization and reconstitution of meaning in an exhibition at Kaczynski's house, at the interactive museum *Newseum* dedicated to journalism, in Washington, DC, an object for artists, a place of visitation, an interest for onlookers and a highlight in the series In the background of the photograph, captured at the exhibition, we can read on a plaque "a madman and his manifesto" (FIGURE 7)

With the closure of the museum in 2019, Kaczynski's log house returned to the FBI's premises. In a short video posted on the investigative agency's official website, the reconstruction of the log house is reproduced, now inside the institution's museum (*FBI Experience*) In other words, in these museum exhibitions the log house appears as an object of curiosity and entertainment (FIGURES 7 and 8)

⁵² Source: The Art of Darkness. The New York Times. Available at: <http://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2008/07/19/arts/design/0719-NATURE_3.html>. Accessed on 26 Jan. 2021.



FIGURE 6 - Reproduction of the log house by Polish artist Robert Kusmirowski



FIGURE 7 - Casa de Troncos in the exhibition about Kaczynski. Newseum, Washington, DC



FIGURE 8 - Reassembly of the wooden house on the FBI premises. On the sign: "Kaczynski carried out 16 bomb attacks that killed three people and injured 24 others"

1.2.4 The production of *Manhunt* and the log house

The construction of the log house for the filming of *Manhunt* was a process that took considerable time and effort. In our interview, Greg Yaitanes, director of the series, said that his intention was recreate Kaczynski's house down to the smallest detail⁵⁵ To do this, Yaitanes went on a work trip to visit the *Newseum* in Washington DC, where

⁵³ Source: #Unabomber Ted Kaczynski's booth on display at the #Newseum in Washington, DC 2021. Twitter: Counter-IED. Available at: <<https://twitter.com/countered1/status/816745982461349888>>. Accessed on: 26 Jan. 2021.

⁵⁴ Source: UNABOMBER'S Cabin Reconstruction at FBI Headquarters. Washington: Office Of Public Affairs, 202-. Son., color. Available at: <<https://www.fbi.gov/video-repository/unabombers-cabin-reconstruction-at-fbi-headquarters/view>>. Accessed on: 13 Aug. 2022>.

⁵⁵ Yaitanes, a Film and Television graduate from the University of Southern California, was the series director and has extensive television experience. Yaitanes directed 30 episodes of *House MD*, having won an *Emmy* in the *Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series* category for his work on that program. He recently directed episodes of the *spin-off* of *Game of Thrones*, *House of the Dragon* (2022). The director is famous for being one of the first investors in the social network *Twitter* and he was invited on several occasions to speak at the company. He became known for interacting, during recording, with fans on this social network, sharing information about filming and getting instant feedback. JACKMAN,

the terrorist's house was on display. On that occasion, he observed and took photos to reconstruct "every inch and texture". Furthermore, he revealed that the interior of the house was the only element filmed in the studio.

The only thing we had in the studio was the inside of his house. We took a work trip to the Newseum in Washington DC, I don't think the house is there anymore, just that back then it was and we studied every inch and texture. It was meticulously recreated, except for the height, because Paul [actor] is taller than Ted, so we added a few inches so he wouldn't be hunched over in there. Excluding that, everything was perfectly recreated. Erik Carlson who did our product design and his team were excellent. We have photos [that allowed us to recreate this and that], the evidence and where things were, we had a lot of documentation [to prove what the house was like] and it was absolutely incredible to recreate⁵⁶

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Erik Carlson, responsible for the scenography, commented on the commitment to reproducing the house. Three different versions were built: one that was in the forest, another that could be erected and transported, and the third in the studio for easy filming of the scenes (**FIGURES 9 and 10**). With each new scene, if a different version was used, it became necessary to rearrange and organize the objects.

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As an emblematic and recognized element, it was important to reproduce the details in detail: "that house was going to have a central character, being so iconic that it is one of those things that you can put on *Google* and see where the We made mistakes or we were lazy. We made it closer to reality based on the photos"⁵⁹ As the objects in the house were not in the museum, FBI photographs were used [to remake them], as

Ian. House MD: the official guide to the hit medical drama. [SI]: Harpercoillins, 2010; Greg Yaitanes. Internet Movie Database (IMDb).

Available at: <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0944981/?ref_=ttfc_fc_dr1> . Accessed on 23 Feb. 2023.

⁵⁶ "The only thing we had in studio was the interior of his cabin. We did a field trip to the Newseum, in Washington DC, I don't think it is around anymore, but the cabin was in there and so we studied the cabin, every inch, every texture. It was meticulously recreated except for the added height difference between Ted and Paul, because Paul is taller than Ted, so we added a few inches on the top just to make it so he wasn't hunched around inside. Otherwise, everything was so perfectly recreated. Erik Carlson made our product design, and his prop team was outstanding. We have photos, the evidence and the real thing and were it, it was so much documentation that it was absolutely incredible to recreate". YAITANES, Greg. Interview given to Rodolpho Hockmuller Menezes on 05/19/2022. Personal archive.

⁵⁷ Source: Personal archive - photography provided by Greg Yaitanes.

⁵⁸ Source: Personal archive - photography provided by Greg Yaitanes.

⁵⁹ "That cabin was going to play a major character, it is so iconic and it's one of those things that you can Google and know where we messed up or was lazy [. .] We were as close as we could get to the real thing based on the photos. We dressed and redressed that cabin dozens of times depending on which version we were working with. We built three different versions. One was in the woods, one could

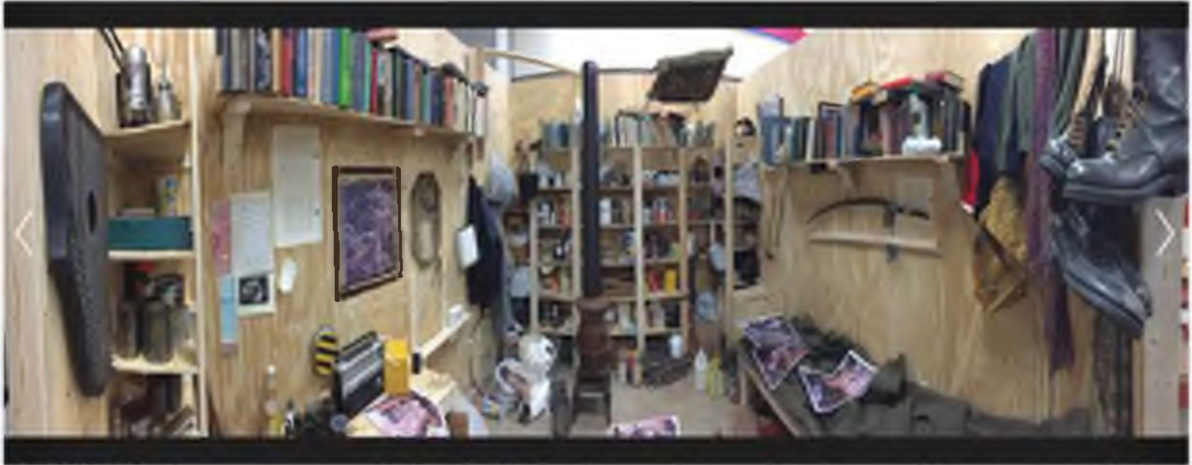


FIGURE 9 - Panoramic image of the interior of one of the versions of the log house. Located in the studio for easy filming and used when it was not necessary to film it outdoors



FIGURE 10 - In this image we have the log house located in the studio. It is possible to see the interior dimensions in more detail

well as the books present in the cabin⁶⁰, acquired for the filming, were printed before 1995, the year before Kaczynski's arrest

It was possible to note that the importance of faithfully recreating Kaczynski's log house was, for Yaitanes, another of the elements that legitimized the series as "extremely based on facts"⁶¹. According to him, this provided "credibility" and "authenticity" to the narrative. These characteristics were decisive for *Discovery* executives to support the production of *Manhunt*.

It is important to highlight that the creative and production workers had different interpretations of the meaning of the log house. The series, as already indicated, featured different versions of the script Tony Gittleston and Andrew Sodroski, at different times, were responsible for two scripts and versions distinct from the series⁶². But both were guided by Thoreau when dealing with Kaczynski's house

Sodroski, who wrote the script for the final product, never read Gittleston's original text. The result is that they were contrasting versions of the Unabomber case, yet both used the 19th century philosopher as a reference to think about the domestic terrorist

Gittleston, who kindly provided us with the original script purchased by *Discovery* (titled *Manifesto*) begins the first paragraph, or what would be the first scene, describing Kaczynski's house (FIGURE 12)⁶³. The screenwriter establishes a direct parallel with Thoreau in *Walden*. Despite this approach, Gittleston makes clear the

be lifted and transported, and one was on stage without walls and easy for us to film in'. Meet Erik Carlson, The Designer Behind Manhunt. Unabomber[1]. AWARDSDAILY, 2017. Available at:

<<https://www.awardsdaily.com/2017/10/17/rterview-eri-carisonZ>>. Accessed on: Jul 28, 2022.

⁶⁰ Many websites and newspapers have published about the books found at Ted Kaczynski's Montana home. In fact, on his personal website, retired agent James Fitzgerald published a bonus chapter listing the books present in the house. Among them, we find books on food, plants, mushrooms and native animals, psychology, chemistry, history, languages (French, Russian, Spanish, German, Latin, etc.) as well as literary classics such as Mark Twain, Shakespeare, Machiavelli and Dickens. See more at: Bonus Chapter 20A - The List. James Fitzgerald, 2017. Available at:

<<https://www.jamesfrtgerald.com/bonus-chapter-20a-the-list/>>. Accessed on February 9th, 2023; JOHNSTON, David. Cabins Inventory Provides Insight. The New York Times, 1996. Available at: <<https://www.nytimes.com/1996/04/16/us/cabin-s-inventory-provides-insight.html>>. Accessed on February 9th, 2023; The cabin manifest: bombs, 239 books. Tampa Bay Times, 1996. Available at: <<https://www.tampabay.com/archive/1996/04/16/the-cabin-manifest-bombs-239-books/>>. Accessed on 9 Feb. 2023.

⁶¹ YAITANES, Greg. *Op. cit.*

⁶² Sodroski graduated in Medieval History from Harvard University and currently lives in Poland. He is a young screenwriter who recently started in the television industry, with only two works to his credit: *Manhunt: Unabomber* and *Manhunt: Deadly Games*. Andrew Sodroski. Pacific View, [n.d.]. Available at: <<https://pacificviewla.com/andrew-sodroski/>>. Accessed on 25th Feb. 2023.

⁶³ Gittleston was the writer of the original script purchased by *Discovery*. This text was not the final script used for the filming of *Manhunt*. Gittleston wrote the biographical feature *A Life In A Day* tells the story of Brian Epstein, the music manager who launched the Beatles. His experience, however, is as an assistant director on films such as: *Awakenings* (1990), *Searching for Bobby Fischer* (1993), *Heroes* (2006) and *Veronica Mars* (2006 - 2007). Like Sodroski, Gittleston studied at Harvard and lived in Massachusetts. GITTLESON, Tony. Interview given to Rodolpho Hockmuller Menezes on

difference between the two environments and characters: far from the North American philosopher's paradise of contemplation, that is the pernicious house of the villain⁶⁴.

Like Thoreau's house... only in that house everything is evil. Less [close] to the lake in Walden and closer to the fox hole in Little Red Riding Hood. A light snow falls. Slowly we are PULLED...⁶⁵

Gittleston, Sodroski and Kaczynski shared the same references, but with different interpretations⁶⁶ They all studied at Harvard (25 km from Walden) and lived in Massachusetts. However, Sodroski, compared to Gittleston, establishes a different relationship with the log house.

In our interview, the screenwriter and *showrunner* said that the Unabomber's house invokes an aesthetic beauty like Thoreau's. It would be what attracted many people to think about Kaczynski and consequently watch the series. Sodroski recalled, positively, that in his childhood he visited, on multiple occasions, the iconic space where the philosopher's house was located.

The screenwriter demonstrated a certain empathy, but also fascination, when revealing that, during the production of the series, he entered the log house built in the forest, sitting on several occasions "in the same chair as Ted". One of the reasons that motivated him to do this work was to imagine living in the same conditions as Thoreau and Theodore Kaczynski

For me, this is what captivates me. When I think about the Unabomber, I think part of what might draw a lot of people to this story is getting a glimpse of that house. And it looks really pretty, like Thoreau, you know? Thoreau's house. I grew up in Massachusetts and we used to go to Walden Lake all the time, it's a big tourist attraction because people want to imagine that life. So being part of this series for me, [is related] to my own fantasy of putting myself in that world, and could I live in that house? Could you live like that? The house [in the series] was built in the woods and I remember going there and sitting in the same chair as Ted for a long, long time and it's very fascinating.⁶⁷

05/18/2022. Personal archive; Tony Gittleston. Internet Movie Database (IMDb). Available at: <<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0321254/>>. Accessed on February 25th. 2023.

⁶⁴ GITTLESTON Tony *Op cit*.

⁶⁵ "EXT. TED'S CABIN IN THE WOODS - LATER AFTERNOON. Like Thoreau's cabin... only everything about this cabin is evil. Less Walden Pond, closer to the fox's lair in the *Little Red Riding Hood*. A Light snow falls. We slowly PUSH IN..." Personal Archive. Original script for *Manifesto* provided by Tony Gittleston.

⁶⁶ Sodroski graduated with a bachelor's degree in Medieval History.

⁶⁷ "For me that stuff is really compelling. When I think about the Unabomber, part of what I think is attractive to many people about this story is just like the vision of that cabin. And there it seems really beautiful; is it like Thoreau s you know? Thoreau's cabin... I grew up in Massachusetts

Thus, in different cycles of the series, whether in creation or production, the central screenwriters started from the reference of *Walden*. While for Gittleson we had a well-defined opposition between the houses of Thoreau and Kaczynski, with Sodroski there was a convergence. There was, in Gittleson's text, something evil in that Kaczynski environment. For Sodroski, there was something beautiful to be glimpsed, imagined and fantasized

British actor Paul Bettany, when promoting the premiere of *Manhunt*, commented that he had immersed himself to play Theodore Kaczynski. Bettany revealed that, for a few days, he sought to live in an isolated house. However, he highlighted that the place it was different from the log house, as it had comforts, such as running water and electricity. The actor sought the experience of isolation, distancing himself from the excesses of contemporary society

Yes, but I had running water and electricity and it was very beautiful, thank you very much, but [...] it was days and weekends, and I think the longest period I was [isolated] was three days. I'm a father, I have to be in contact [with family], but I wanted to experience a kind of solitude for three days. Because we don't have that with all this exchanging of messages, emails, being online all the time and watching the news, and being able to really switch off, not have any of that for three days and not have contact with people [during isolation]. It's funny that when I went back to work in the morning my voice broke because [during those three days] I didn't need to speak⁶⁸

It is interesting to note that the actor, when he reported his experience, was at a *Build series* studio in Manhattan. The place, which is on the ground floor of a building, has external walls made of glass. Thus, while the interviewer and interviewee were talking, the audience saw in the background the intense movement of vehicles and pedestrians on the streets of the metropolis, indicating their awareness of Kaczynski's environment and the modern world he criticized

and we would go out to the Walden Pond all the time and it is a huge tourist attraction because people want to envision that life. So, part of making this show for me actually was my own fantasy of putting myself in that world, and could I live in that cabin? Could I live like that? The cabin was built on the woods, and I remembered just going in there sitting at Ted's desk for a long, long time and it is compelling". SODROSKI, Andrew. Interview given to Rodolpho Hockmuller Menezes on 06/06/2022. Personal archive .

⁶⁸ "Yeah, but I had running water and electricity and it was very lovely, thank you very much but [...] I separated, I had days you know and weekends and I think the longest I did it for was three days, I'm a father, you know, I gotta be in contact but I wanted to sort of experience a loneliness for three days because we don't get that with texting and email and you know, it's being online and checking the news and to really switch off and have any of that for three days no contact with people. It's funny when I came to work in the morning and my voice cracked because I hadn't needed to use it [...]". Paul Bettany Speaks On "Manhunt: UNABOMBER". BUILD Series. YouTube, Jul 24 2017. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6A2kU3BhXU>>. Accessed on July 29th. 2022.

In a similar way, Australian actor Sam Worthington, who played James Fitzgerald, promoting the premiere of *Manhunt in* a radio program, established a parallel between his individual experience and the series. The actor says that, when turned thirty, sold most of his objects to live in his car Not because of economic necessity, as he was already a recognized actor in Australia On the contrary, in his justification, he reports that excessive consumption was transforming him as an individual, modifying his your behavior and personality. Thus, he saw the solution as a way out of getting rid of his material possessions and living with the bare minimum⁶⁹

Worthington does not quote Thoreau Obviously, as an Australian, North American references were not as striking to him However, he demonstrated awareness of the costs of modern life. The log house is also not literally referenced by the actor, but for him, living in a car passed symbolizing autonomy and rebellion against contemporary society. At the same time, it represented a sign of austerity, living with the minimum, as a counterpoint to the excesses that permeate everyday life.

In a sequence not added to the series, in which we only have photographic evidence (which was given to us by the director), the replica of Kaczynski's log house was set up inside a shopping center. A person represents Kaczynski wearing clothes similar to the character of the series, from the outside he observes the people around him The contradiction of this exhibition is great: the contrast of Kaczynski's ideas and way of life inside a shopping mall — one of the most symbolic constructions of consumer culture and modern society This scene makes clear the antagonism and criticism they intend to establish (FIGURE 11).

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1.3 North American wilderness tradition: the aesthetic choice in *Manhunt*

Kaczynski's small cabin cannot be understood without the idea of *wilderness*, which was represented in the series and is part of the aesthetics of *Manhunt* The scenes of wild nature are located mainly in the latest episodes. However, the values related to it permeate the series. *wilderness* can be understood as opposed to "civilization" and its problems. Thus, nature appears as a possible way out to recover autonomy in the face of the constraints of the modern world.

Thus, we begin with a context of how this concept is transformed throughout the History of the United States. Next, we point out how *wilderness* was fundamental in

⁶⁹ Sam Worthington - 'Manhunt: Unabomber', Minimalism, 'Avatar' - Jim Norton & Sam Roberts Show. YouTube, July 21, 2017. Available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqyZuVt8A2A>>. Accessed on July 29, 2022.

⁷⁰ Source: Personal archive - photography provided by Greg Yaitanes.

⁷¹ Personal archive. Original script for *Manifesto* provided by Tony Gittleson, p 1



FIGURE 11 - We see a scene that was not used in any episode in the final product of Manhunt.



FIGURE 12 - First page of the script purchased by *Discovery* written by Tony Gittleson. During the filming of the series the title was maintained, it was called *Manifesto*, however for exhibition on *Discovery* it was renamed *Manhunt*.

the process of forming an American identity during the 19th and 20th centuries. At the end, we discuss two sequences from the series in which *wilderness* is represented as the antithesis of “civilization”. These sequences mark the beginning of the first episode and the end of the last one (*UNABOMB*, Ep01), (*USA vs Theodore Kaczynski*, Ep 08).

1.3.1 The idea of wilderness in United States History

To examine the idea of *wilderness* it is necessary to discuss its meaning and etymology within a context of identity and territorial expansion: “The word is a noun, but it is constantly used as an adjective (...) it indicates quality - characteristic of the English suffix *ness* - the production of moods and feelings in the individual”⁷² For Mary Junqueira, *wilderness* was related to a place which, through observation, would bring feelings and sensations to man, a specific mental state: “It is man’s gaze that gives meaning to *wilderness*”⁷³ In this way, we understand that the term can only exist with the direct relationship between the man and nature

The Teutonic origin of the word, according to Junqueira, would come from *wild-eor* (wild beast) which generated the Old English verb *to wilder* (disturb, bewilder, mislead) The author also points out its use in biblical translations into English to designate arid places, such as the territory between Egypt and Canaan (in Exodus), difficult for men to survive “In the New Testament, Jesus Christ was for forty days isolated in the *wilderness*, where he was tempted by the devil”⁷⁴ The specific sensations and emotions of the relationship between the individual and nature, characteristic of *wilderness*, would then be bewilderment and estrangement

The understanding of *wilderness* is generally related to a place where human perception is shaken, expanded or even disturbed. The relationship is about man’s permanence in a strange environment, where civilization, which normally orders and controls life, is absent. This is where man loses the references that govern life⁷⁵

According to Nash, the Puritans harbored fear and rejection of *wilderness*. These feelings originated from an interpretation of the Christian Bible and a utilitarian vision. They believed that upon entering *wilderness* man would be subject to irresistible temptations, being able to degrade morally and return to a primitive state. It was understood as a pagan continent, where savages, beasts and supernatural beings lived⁷⁶

⁷² JUNQUEIRA, Mary Anne. *Op cit*, 2000, p.57.

⁷³ JUNQUEIRA. Mary Anne. *United States: National state and narrative of the nation (1776-1900)*. São Paulo: EDUSP, 2018. p. 60.

⁷⁴ *Same*.

⁷⁵ tó/d., 2016, p. 61.

⁷⁶ NASH, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014, p. 8- 43

The author observes that those “pilgrim fathers” of New England employed in their language the play of light and dark, where, for example, missionary agents and the Bible represented the irradiation of light over the ungodly darkness of *wilderness*. This group saw itself as belonging to a long lineage of dissent, who faced the danger of *wilderness* to advance the cause of God. A parallel was established with the experience of *Exodus* in the Bible. They understood that, like the Israelites, they were fleeing persecution and a sinful society in England⁷⁷

It would be the duty of the Puritans, as agents of God, to transform the *wilderness* and, as pointed out by John Winthrop’s famous phrase, to build a city upon the hill (*City upon the >Hill*). The domination and subjugation of *wilderness* found support in the Old Testament, especially in Genesis 1:28, which legitimizes man to dominate the planet and all living creatures on earth, heaven and mar⁷⁸. In other words: the idea of *wilderness* configures one of the elements — brought from the colonial period — of the founding of the United States. Still in the first half of the 19th century, the transcendentalists already mentioned, developed reflections and a consistent body of thought that considered *wilderness* as the place of encounter with the *self*, consequently, with the divine in opposition to the industrial world and all the consequences of modern life

1.3.2 Nature as a component of North American identity

It was soon after independence that *wilderness* began to acquire positive connotations. According to Nash, it was in the search for a particular element, to establish a distinction with Europe, that North Americans see in their wild nature the source for the construction of a national identity. In this game of contrast, they did not deny that Europe had mountains and forests, but nothing was equivalent to what the United States had, a large continent of untouched nature. It was in the wild nature that the birds sang with more energy, where the fruits were sweeter, and the flowers more fragrant⁷⁹

And if, as many argued, in the second half of the 19th century, *wilderness* was a privileged means of accessing divine laws, the USA had a moral advantage over Europe where centuries of transformations placed artificial layers over the creations of God. In the same sense, they believed that, despite an incipient literature and art, *wilderness* would, with its aesthetics and inspirational quality, lead to works of excellence⁸⁰. The

⁷⁷ Even more, Mount Sinai, in the heart of the wilderness, was the place where God revealed the Ten Testaments. According to Nash, paradoxically, within the Christian tradition, *wilderness* appears as a place of refuge and close contact with the divine. NASH, Roderick. *Op cit.*

⁷⁸ NASH, Roderick. *Wilderness and the American Mind* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014, p. 8- 43

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

truth is that negative and positive interpretations of the environment coexist simultaneously among different groups.

In the 1890s, there was a widespread reaction against the negative meanings of *wilderness*. Cities began to carry derogatory connotations, marking a change. The problem was no longer *wilderness* but the excess of civilization. New machines appeared that made certain rural jobs obsolete. Thousands of immigrants disembarked at ports daily. Added to high population and industrial growth, attention shifted to the problems of urban life⁸¹

The optimism regarding progress, dominant in the period before the American Civil War, had been diluted into doubts and uncertainties. Pessimism prevailed, they believed that cities and business values were undermining taste, character and morality. Civilization seemed to have brought an excess of conspicuities, confusion and corruption⁸²

This disenchantment with civilization made him associate *wilderness* with the pioneering past and the idea of "frontier", which in turn, were related to designated national characteristics. Evidently, accelerated industrialization and diverse land uses (mining, agriculture, etc.) were decimating nature, exactly that which was attributed as the source of North American identity. Therefore, this disenchantment also occurred at a time when, after the conquest of the West, the country's wild nature was condemned to disappear completely.⁸³ At the same time, the number of Americans who contemplated wild places and saw them as a privileged space for aesthetic inspiration increased. In this way, *wilderness* came to be treated as a source of virility, toughness, and wildness, traits that "defined adaptation in Darwinian terms"⁸⁴.

The bibliography points out that the preservationist movement emerged in the United States in the 19th century, based on the idea of *wilderness*. From political debates that took place in the second half of the century, with *Sierra as exponents Club* and its founder John Muir, the first national parks were created. The organization and political articulation of *wilderness* "enthusiasts" in associations and organizations continued in the 20th century, such as Aldo Leopold's *Wilderness Society*, giving fruit to *Wilderness Act* of 1964, which determined a national preservation system. In other words, these groups establish, based on a reading of wild nature, political action within institutions in Washington.

The definition placed in the 1964 law stated: "The wilderness, in contrast to those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is here recognized, as an area where the land and its living community is free from man, is a place where man is a visitor who does not stay there"⁸⁵. The legislation was created with the preservation of

⁸¹ /fc/d., p 143.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ JUNQUEIRA, Mary Anne. *Op cit*, 2018.

⁸⁴ NASH, Roderick. *Op. cit*, 2016, p.14fi.

⁸⁵ 'A wilderness, in contrast to those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where

the forest in mind against the interests of logging companies, mining companies, real estate and road projects. It is based on this protection of the wild, based on the idea of *wilderness*, that the traditional environmental movement in the United States was consolidated

For the research, it was interesting to note that in *Manhunt: Unabomber the wilderness* it is not one in which the man is absent, or is just a visitor Kaczynski, as well as FBI agent James Fitzgerald, are shown as in communion with the physical space around them. The scenes place the characters as residents of that space, harvesting fruits, hunting, using rivers and waterfalls. *wilderness* is a place of residence

More important, too, is the idealized place of escape from social hierarchies, from out-of-control technology, from consumerism. In other words, refuge from what is understood as civilization. Thus, it appears that as a response to these problems, man must return to *wilderness* to a past in which people lived closer to nature and with a simpler life, but with more satisfaction.

1.3.3 The choice of nature aesthetics in *Manhunt*: scenes and images

We discuss two sequences below, one at the beginning of the first episode (*UN-ABOMB*, Ep.01) and the other at the end of the final episode (*USA vs Theodore Kaczynski*, Ep.08 / We analyze how there is a contrast between the themes of nature and civilization in the series. To better understand this issue, we present an aesthetic tradition of painting that emerged in the United States during the 19th century and took shape in the Hudson River School. We seek to discuss the form through which *wilderness* is represented and the interaction of the characters in *Manhunt* with their environment

In the first half of the 19th century, art took on nationalist contours in the United States with the aforementioned School, being designated with that name because its painters represented landscapes of valleys and mountains around the Hudson River, in the northeast of the United States. In contrast to the European aesthetics of the period, which represented pastoral settings, always well ordered and controlled, North American paintings represented a wild, untouched nature⁸⁶.

Maria Ligia Coelho highlighted the school's aesthetics, which placed as its central theme the nature "men were small in comparison to undomesticated nature The landscapes were grandiose, unattainable, untouched, full of mystery, of great beauty and originality Nature presented itself as a refuge, both spiritual and physical." In contrast

man is a visitor who does not remain '. Wilderness areas (c). 16 US Code § 1131. National Wilderness Preservation System. Available at: <<https://www.law.comell.edu/uscode/text/16/1131>>. Accessed on February 10, 2021; See also: The Wilderness Act of 1964. The United States Department of Justice. Available at: <<https://www.justice.gov/enrd/wildemess-act-1964>>. Accessed on 10 Feb. 2021

⁸⁶ PRADO, Maria Ligia Coelho. Latin America in the 19th century: plots, screens and texts. 2nd ed. São Paulo: Editora da Universidade de São Paulo, 2004.

to Europe, a North American art was founded, which claimed for itself a superior nature. For these painters, it was common to think of nature as a work of God, like “the dawn in the midst of *wilderness* it is compared to Creation, to a new world, while the morning mist was equivalent to the chaos from which God had forged the world”⁸⁷.

These paintings of wild and untouchable nature became a reference in North American art, in the eyes of a large public and present in fairs, state institutions and galleries. Although the wealthiest and collectors turned to European paintings, this aesthetic satisfied the tastes of the American middle class of that period.⁸⁸

⁸⁹

The image (Figure 13) is taken as representative of the aesthetic style of the Hudson River school. The man with a briefcase in his hand is Thomas Cole, one of the founders of the school, the other individual is one of his “disciples”, the nature poet William Bryant *wilderness* dominates the landscape, in comparison, as already indicated, human bodies appear in a small dimension. The men on the edge of the gorge calmly observe the wild nature (FIGURE 13)

We seek to understand how the series dialogues with this aesthetic tradition of representing nature. In a sequence at the beginning of the first episode, a sign appears, indicating the place and year, North Carolina, 1997 (*UNABOMB*, Ep 01) In this scene we see a man not yet introduced in the series; this is the character James Fitzgerald, on the edge of a cliff. The viewer does not yet know his name, we do so here to make it easier for the reader to understand. The man takes a deep breath, contemplating the nature around him He is relaxed, wearing casual clothes, without showing concern that with just a few more steps he would reach the abyss Filmed in a wide shot, the scene highlights the landscape, the man occupies a small space in the left corner

The smaller proportion of the human body, its positioning on the precipice, the depth of the valley, the grandeur of the mountains that surround it, generate a feeling of tension. The green color of the trees predominates, the lighting is low, almost mixing man and landscape (FIGURE 14)

In this scene, the aesthetic similarity with the painting of the Hudson River school can be noted (FIGURES 13 AND 14) In both, landscapes predominate. Human bodies appear smaller, when compared to wild nature. In the center of the image, a deep valley, on the left the human figure, appearing comfortable and calm, despite the risk (*UNABOMB*, Ep 01).

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After a cut, we see Fitzgerald walking on a trail, carrying two small animals: the result of hunting. The character looks up, highlighting the size of the trees, we hear

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p 197

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p 192.

⁸⁹ Source: *Kindred Spirits* by Asher B. Durand (1849). Oil on canvas. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Available at: <<https://collection.crystalbridges.Org/objects/148/kindred-spirits#>>. Accessed on January 26, 2021.

⁹⁰ Source: Episode 1, *UNABOMB*.



FIGURE 13 - Kindred Spirits (1849) by Asher Durand



FIGURE 14 - The protagonist, Fitzgerald, contemplates the wilderness. Note the aesthetic tradition of the Hudson River school

the sound of the wind in the leaves and birds singing. He stops, examines an edible fungus, and picks it. He crosses the valley that he had previously observed, jumping from rock to rock, we hear the water current. Despite the differences, James Fitzgerald, the specialist in building profiles of FBI investigators, whose work led to the arrest of the Unabomber, was living like Kaczynski. The viewer still does not know this, as Kaczynski will be introduced next. Upon arriving at his house, Fitzgerald's face changes, four cars are parked in front. Following with quick steps, the man picks up a small axe, irritated by the strange presence that disturbs his solitude in that environment. The apprehension is twofold: the men are from the FBI, more precisely former bosses of the agent.

After the arrest of the Unabomber, Fitzgerald becomes unhappy with the powerful investigation agency, and with the end of his marriage due to the case, he isolates himself in nature. A suit comes out of the house, calling him by the name Fitzgerald. Two men are inside the residence, his former FBI superiors. One of them, Cole, asks: "Look at you. You're living like an animal, huh? Jesus, did you kill [these animals] yourself?" (*UNABOMB*, Ep.01).

The next sequence is a *flashback* to the year 1995, at the FBI academy in Quantico, Virginia. This resource is an important aspect in the construction of the series' characters and is frequently used. We see Fitzgerald, in 1995, at his graduation as agent (*criminal profiler*)⁹¹ (*FIGURE 17*). The character's posture is different, he is uncomfortable, his shoulders are hunched forward, his legs are closed. He's just another guy in a suit, almost indistinguishable from the other faces surrounding him. His name is called to receive the diploma, his family is introduced, wife and three children, excited about the event. The character is almost unrecognizable from that man who comfortably contemplated, on the edge of the abyss and in solitude, the wilderness.

⁹²

The sequences play a game of contrasts, the series shows in a positive way, in the year 1997, Fitzgerald alone, contemplating the immensity of *wilderness* (*FIGURE 14*). Then, we return to the year 1995, where in the opposite way, due to the clothing and crowding there is an absence of individuality and space (*FIGURE 15*). The path of the FBI agent is established, representing him as a suit, with family, with well-combed hair, to a man with a long beard, sloppy hair, casual clothes, solitary and nature. In other words, in the initial sequences of the series, *wilderness* is constituted in opposition to civilization (*UNABOMB*, Ep.01).

Similarly, this contrast between nature and civilization marks the last scenes of the last episode of the series (*USA vs Theodore Kaczynski*). *Manhunt* begins and ends contrasting these two spaces. *wilderness* appears as the antithesis of life in society in the last sequence of the series, where Kaczynski is transported to prison.

⁹¹ Agent trained in creating the psychological profiles of criminals.

⁹² Source: Episode 1, *UNABOMB*.



FIGURE 15 - Graduation as an FBI Profiler. The scene engages the viewer to imagine how Fitzgerald, third character from right, went from being a man of social clothes and occasions, to being a loner, living in the wilderness

The Unabomber sees a mountain through the window, behind the bars of the transport vehicle. Upon arriving at his destination, the landscape is interrupted by high concrete walls. Escorted by four prison officers, he enters an elevator that reaches a floor in the basement of the prison. Handcuffed on his legs and arms, he has difficulty moving. The procedure for searching his body begins and an officer gives the order: he must look left and right, open his mouth, raise his legs, while being held by the arm by two officers. In addition to them, three men follow the procedure, Kaczynski is forced to undress in front of everyone. Once again in the elevator, he continues to descend further underground

When he arrives, he walks down a long corridor with concrete walls. The cell is open between the large metal door and his bed, there are more bars, which prevents him from looking into the corridor. His cell, in the basement of a security prison maximum, it is surrounded by concrete: the ceiling is low, without a single window and with artificial lighting, nor human presence (FIGURE 18). The soundtrack is melancholic, indicating the character's punishment and fate.

As he enters the cell, images are contrasted by the use of the *flashback* Kaczynski in front of his log house in the *wilderness* (FIGURES 16 AND 17), enjoying the environment in dance. The use of the resource, in addition to placing the event in the past, also indicates the character's memory of what it was: life in nature, and what it is: the four walls of the prison.

The scene in nature highlights her dancing, with long steps, the spontaneous movement of her body, wearing loose clothing, with bare feet, legs and arms free. It is also highlighted, in *contra-plongée*, with the Camera from bottom to top, the height and grandeur of the trees. The character remembers the ecstasy of being in that environment. There is a reference to the sublime, the sacred, when Kaczynski opens his arms surrounded by *wilderness* In the final scene, the series ends with a provocation, the terrorist will spend the rest of his life behind bars, it will be that to be trapped you really need metal bars and concrete walls?



FIGURE 16 - Kaczynski, in one of the most striking scenes of the series, appears in a state of ecstasy, dancing freely in the wilderness

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Next, the camera shows Fitzgerald inside a car which runs unimpeded, there is no traffic. Natalie Rogers, a university linguist who helps with the intellectual underpinning of the Manifesto's analysis, is the director. She asks, "So, what now?" Fitzgerald

⁹³ Source: Episodes 6 and 8, *Ted* and *USA vs Theodore Kaczynski*.

⁹⁴ Source: Personal archive. Photography courtesy of Greg Yaitanes.

⁹⁵ Source: Episode 8, *USA vs Theodore Kaczynski*.



FIGURE 17 - Here we see director Greg Yaitanes during filming, analyzing the camera's framing of the Kaczynski character. When kept by the director, it reveals the importance of the sequence



FIGURE 18 - Kaczynski, in the final sequence of the series, in a maximum security prison

responds: "I don't know, whatever we want, right?"⁹⁶ She stops the car at a red light. The FBI agent changes his face, the camera, in a medium shot, shows the empty street without any traffic. He carefully watches the lighthouse, waiting for it to open, despite the deserted street. The red light is a reference to the other episodes of the series, representing, within the narrative, a symbol of automatism in obeying rules and conventions, even when stopping at the signal is not necessary as the streets were empty and there was no one waiting to cross them

In a sequence in the second episode, Fitzgerald speaks in person and tries to convince Kaczynski that he understands him and shares his criticism of the modern world (*Pure Wudder*, Ep 02). The objective was to get closer to the terrorist to obtain information. To this end, he explains that he actually understood the content of the manifesto while driving his car. He reveals that he stopped at a red light, in the middle of the night, with no pedestrian or vehicle in sight. While narrating and remembering this fact: the camera shows an image of the car stopped in the middle of the dark street, in the middle of three red traffic lights, Fitzgerald, not knowing where to go, unable to take any path, suggests an idea of being trapped or deprived of choice. In this way, the signal becomes symbolic of a set of rules that demand automatic, unchallenged obedience. In other words, the traffic light is an object that internalizes the system and erases the autonomy of the unconscious individual. Fitzgerald said this to Kaczynski:

For me it was driving. Every time I got in the car, I thought. The more I drove, the more it made sense. One night I was driving home from work and there was no one on the street - - I say no one. I was sitting in the car, at the red light, just waiting, waiting. And he didn't have a car. Still, I stayed there. I obeyed. It was there when I realized that this isn't about technology, it's not about machines. It's about what they're doing to us. It's about what they are doing to us, what they are doing to our hearts, because our hearts are no longer free⁹⁸

In the last scene of the series, as Kaczynski heads to prison, Fitzgerald questions the society around him. He carefully examines the traffic light, the focus alternates between the signage and the character's face. In the background, we hear an electrical noise, the sound is loud, sharp and aggressive. As the scene continues, the camera

⁹⁶ Natalie Rogers is a fictional character. PhD student, assisted James Fitzgerald during the investigation of the Unabomber case

⁹⁷ "Natalie: So, now what? Fitzgerald: Don't know. Anything we want, right?'. Source: Episode 8, USA vs Theodore Kaczynski.

⁹⁸ "For me, it was the part about driving. Every time I got in the car, I thought about it. The more I drove, the more it made sense. Like, there was this one night, I was driving home from work, and there was nobody on the street - -1 means nobody. And I'm sitting there at a red light, just waiting, waiting. And there's no cars anywhere. But, still, I sat there. I obeyed. That's when I realized it's not about technology, it's not about machines. It's about what they're doing to us. It's about what they do to us, what they do to our hearts, 'cause our hearts are no longer free' Episode 2, *Pure Wudder*.

approaches the red light, contrasts with the character's face, as if the object came to life, looking back at Fitzgerald (*USA vs Theodore Kaczynski*, Ep. 08) In this way, civilization makes the individual internalize impersonal rules. Unlike the freedom and autonomy that can be found in *wilderness*

It is important to note that similarities appear between Fitzgerald's character arc in the series and the personal story of screenwriter and *showrunner* Andrew Sodroski. In the interview for our research, he recalled his own experience with drug trafficking in Los Angeles. In the first minutes of his speech, he explained how and why he participated in the production of the series. The screenwriter pointed out that, from the beginning, he did not intend to be involved in the series because he didn't like to work with television and didn't think that a story about the Unabomber, a terrorist from the nineties, would attract public interest. However, while he was waiting for an executive from the series, for a meeting in which his final position would be revealed, he had a moment of catharsis. He recalled moments from his childhood and having read Kaczynski's manifesto when it was published. This moment made him hesitate and take more time to reflect on his participation in the project.

A few days later, after getting a copy of the manifesto, he found in those pages the roots of discontent about living in a megalopolis. At that time, living in Los Angeles, he recalled, right after reading "Ah, yes! It's because of that," he continued to say, "I was really feeling trapped by the Hollywood system and being in this city." Sodroski reiterated, "Wow, that's why I get so angry when I'm waiting at a red light, the city is built for the system and not for me as a person." That was the moment he had a personal memory, and upon rereading the manifesto, Sodroski decided to participate in *Manhunt: Unabomber*.

I remember the publication of the Manifesto, I remember reading the manifesto when I was in sixth grade or something and at that time thinking *ok, that's really cool, this guy might have a point*. At the same time, I remembered when I was a kid, my grandmother used to send packages to our house in the mail, she would send cookies or other things, but she would wrap them just like the Unabomber package. She, I don't know why, [wrapped the package] with brown paper and all this crazy fruit and string. My father was a scientist and when the package arrived I always had this feeling [u]wow, wait a minute, I know it's from grandma, but it could be... it could be... his' and then. Anyway, I'm sitting in this waiting room and remembering all these things. And I think, well, maybe there's something, maybe there's a series. So, a few days later, I received a copy of the manifesto and I thought, I'm not going to do the series, I'm just going to read the manifesto and remember it. So I read the manifesto and *ooh, yes!!! That's why!! [...]"⁹⁹

⁹⁹ "I remember reading the manifesto when I was, I guess six-grade or something and even at the time thinking like "okay, this is something really cool, this guy is on to something" At the same time, I

This event demonstrates how the director and *showrunner* reinterpreted the Unabomber's manifesto. In other words, Kaczynski's message reached not only the screenwriter, but spoke to the North American public, who interpreted from his references the contradictions of the modern world Likewise, in *Manhunt*, the FBI agent, James Fitzgerald, was in line with what diagnosed the Unabomber, but in opposition to the terrorist's actions

The final sequence of the series shows Kaczynski's imprisonment in a kind of "concrete tomb". The man was punished, deprived of control over his own body. As we stated, the *flashback* feature indicated that he experienced being free, through his ecstasy in *wilderness* Although imprisoned, Kaczynski showed awareness of other types of prisons. On the other hand, the narrative points to the fact that Fitzgerald, responsible for the terrorist's arrest, questions himself, whether he was, in fact, a free man and aware of the contradictions of the modern world. In other words, the Unabomber would be right in the diagnosis, but not in the remedy.

remembered when I was a kid my grandma used to send packages to our house in the mail and she sent cookies or whatever in these packages, but she would wrap them exactly like the Unabomber package. She would I don't know why but she would have the brown paper and all this crazy tape and the string. My dad was a scientist, kind of like the package would arrive and there was always this sense of "wow, wait a second, I know is from grandma, but it could... it could be... from him*" and so Anyway I'm sitting in this waiting room and remembering all these things and I'm like okay, well maybe there is something, maybe there is a show there. Then a couple of days later I got a copy of the manifesto and I thought , I'm not gonna do the show, and then I'm just gonna read the manifesto and then just refresh myself, and then I read the manifesto and "ooh, Yes!!! this is why!!!". SODROSKI, Andrew. Interview given to Rodolpho Hockmuller Menezes on 06/06/2022. Personal archive.

2. Intellectuals, Anti-intellectualism AND The Man of Action In “Manhunt: Unabomber”

2.1 Against elitism: anti-intellectualism in the United States

Anti-intellectualism, like the tradition of dissent, is an element of North American culture. The valorization of types considered *self made man*, with a strong appeal to the common man, has caused there to be and still is distrust in relation to the intellectual world. The recognition of the pragmatic, of practical actions and of the utilitarian ended up casting shadows on those who dedicate themselves to analytical production. Thus, the country that praises thinkers like Emerson and Henry David Thoreau, which has recognized universities, is one that also is suspicious of the world of humanities, since intellectuals are not always seen as someone who produces something useful and applicable. It is not uncommon for a humanities researcher to hear the question from an American outside academia: “what is your research for? work?” Well, it is possible to identify aspects of anti-intellectualism in the series we analyzed.

In *Manhunt*, anti-intellectualism is situated through conflicts between protagonists and institutions (universities and FBI). Fitzgerald’s superiors at the security agency did not understand critical reading of texts as a useful and legitimate tool for investigating the case. The terrorist’s manifesto was what led the FBI to identify the man due to the critical reading of the text. However, Fitzgerald had to spend a lot of his time trying to convince his superiors that Linguistics could help in building the terrorist’s profile. We highlight that, in this case, it would be knowledge applied to forensic practice, but, even so, the proposal was rejected.

The series reinforces distrust towards the method proposed by agent Fitzgerald. Similarly, the series represents the torture of Kaczynski in the basements of Harvard by a professor at the institution. As a student, Kaczynski was manipulated by a professor to participate, without his consent, in experiments psychological. He was traumatized by the event, understood as a catalyst for his campaign of terror. However, before delving deeper into the topic, it is necessary to define anti-intellectualism in the North American context.

Anti-intellectualism in the United States can be defined as “the resentment and suspicion of the intelligentsia, and by those who are considered to be its representatives; and the constant willingness to minimize the value of intellectual life”¹ This tradition permeates social classes, political currents and the history of the country itself. Richard Hofstadter, classic author on the subject, argues that anti-intellectualism emerged as a specific form of anti-elitism²

According to him, with the ratification of the Constitution in 1787, the country’s states became responsible for deciding the parameters of the electoral process. This choice meant that the right to vote was reserved for property-owning white men. A literate elite concentrated economic, political and social power. access to education. In this way, intellectuals were inserted within this dominant class: “the leaders *were* the intellectuals”[128] Intellectuality was a symbol of privilege and the maintenance of power. We make the reservation here that, for historians, currently, we do not consider them intellectuals, but literate The idea of the intellectual that we know today takes us back to the last years of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century

For Hofstadter, supporters of anti-intellectualism were suspicious of different disciplines of knowledge. When studying the agricultural industry in the United States in the 19th century, we noticed a hostility among small farmers against improvement techniques in the field. The main defenders of the new techniques were the large farmers, that is, part of the gentlemen. These consisted, in addition to the large landowners, in authors of works, university professors and scientists who proposed a profound change in agriculture

These men “with a distinguished name” financed societies and movements that disseminated agricultural education. Farmers from more modest segments of society were unable to compete with the costly improvements and machinery, many losing their land. In this way, a class resentment emerged that associated universities, their representatives and knowledge in a broad sense with power³

John Quincy Adams (1767 - 1848), son of President John Adams, was one of those who personified this enlightened elite. Adams held diplomatic posts in Europe, at-

¹ “The common strain that binds together the attitudes and ideas which I call anti-intellectual is a resentment and suspicion of the life of the mind and those who are considered to represent it; and a disposition constantly to minimize the value of the life’ HOFSTADTER, Richard. *Anti-intellectualism in American Life*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966. p.7.

² Hofstadter’s work was published in the United States in 1963. The work was deeply influenced by the context in which the author was inserted, as an academic critical of the McCarthyite repression of the 1950s. According to Weiland, this political movement stimulated the historian writing this book, Hofstadter, in a reflection on that period, said ‘[it was] a highly malicious atmosphere of dull imbecility’. This work, to this day, remains central in the United States for the study of anti-intellectualism. In our research, we noticed a resurgence in interest in the topic, with recent articles being published. However, invariably, the authors mobilize Hofstadter to criticize or expand interpretations on the topic. See more at: WEILAND, Steven. *The Academic Attitude: Richard Hofstadter and the anti-intellectuals*. *The Antioch Review*, [SL], v. 46, n. 4, p. 462, 1988. JSTOR. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/4611948>.

³ *Ibid.*, p 274

tended educational institutions in Paris and the Netherlands and studied at Leiden University. On his return to the United States, he held the chair of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard. He was also a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Elected president in 1824, John Quincy Adams argued that the government should be responsible for scientific and educational development In his first speech In congress, he defended the creation of a national university in Washington, DC, and the financing of scientific research through the creation of a government body.⁴ According to Hofstadter, Adams was the last gentleman president and the “first victim of anti-intellectualism.”⁵

This literate elite, of which Adams was just one representative, came to be challenged during westward expansion. A significant portion of the new states that joined the Union adopted the popular vote. In these places, white men who paid taxes were considered eligible voters⁶ This new demographic played a fundamental role in the election of 1828, which elected Andrew Jackson (1767 - 1845) and thwarted a second Adams term.

Jackson won, because he positioned himself as the opposite of the cosmopolitan literate elite. He owned a rural property in Tennessee and linked himself, during his political career, to the characteristics of the “common man” of the West⁷ In contrast to the refined education of Adams and His experience in European courts, Jackson was a “primitivist hero” who insisted on his experience of border conflicts and the exploration of *wilderness*. His military past in the fight against the Indians stood out *creek* and in the Anglo-American War (1812) Thus, his popular electoral base considered it a virtue that he did not have an academic background

The president won over this electorate by presenting himself as a “man of action”. The characteristics related to this man are those of a simple guy, with a common and practical sense, better and more American than the theoretical and artificial views of the Jackson academy positioned himself as an American who rose socially due to his own effort, without the need for a privileged education. With his victory, the election was representative^{8,9}. In other words, the intelligentsia was related to the literate elite, against the “intuition and power of action” over the “common man”, and democracy.¹⁰ The common man was initially linked to the work of the land and the domain of nature

Jackson, it was said, was fortunate to escape the formal training that marred the “vigor and originality of understanding.” Here was a man of action, “educated in the school of Nature,” who was “in no way artificial”;

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁶ JUNQUEIRA, Mary Anne *Op cit*, 2018. p. 64.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ HOFSTADTER, Richard. *Op cit.*, p.159.

⁹ *Same.*

¹⁰ HOFSTADTER. Richard. *Op cit.*, p.160.

who fortunately “escaped the training and dialectics of college”; who had “a judgment unclouded by the speculations of the scholar” who had, “in an extraordinary degree, that native strength of mind, that practical common sense, that power and discernment of judgment which, for all useful purposes, are more valuable than all the learning acquired by a man of letters”¹¹

In this way, during the 19th century, part of society celebrated pragmatism and common sense. With the decline of the Eastern mercantile elite, this vision of the common man gained new characteristics, when a new bourgeoisie emerged around manufactures. This conflict pitted the literate gentleman against a capitalist class that sought to accumulate wealth. This last social stratum adopted the characteristics of men like Jackson

The cult of “character” and “practical experience” became an ideal in the business sector. Thus, the *self-made man* was valued in the North American imagination. To reiterate, this man would be of simple origin and devoid of specialized education. However, with the strength of their work, it was possible to build a large business and become rich. The “captains of industry” of the last quarter of the 19th century, such as Cornelius Vanderbilt (railroads) and John Rockefeller (oil), were treated as symbols of this ideology

The narratives that surrounded Vanderbilt, one of the richest men in the country’s history, demonstrated the values of anti-intellectualism. Among his contemporaries, it was said that the tycoon had read only one book. What’s more, on a trip to Europe, an English lord reportedly mentioned that it was unfortunate that a man of his ability did not have a formal Vanderbilt education, then dismissed the benefits of study: “You tell Lord Palmerston that if I had had time for education, I wouldn’t have had time to learn anything.”¹²

During this period, practicality and utilitarianism, values associated with the *self made man*, permeated society. The great barons of industry sought to encourage the creation of institutions for “practical, non-theoretical teaching”¹³ Dedicated universities commerce and business were strengthened to the detriment of the arts and humanities. For the magnates, the classical curriculum focused too much on futile subjects (such as languages, politics, history, arts and rhetoric). All learning should be technical and aimed at generating wealth accumulation. In other words, critical learning came to be understood as superfluous and unnecessary for the functioning of industrial society¹⁴.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.159.

¹² HOFSTADTER, Richard. *Op cit.*, p. 258

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

¹⁴ According to Hofstadter, throughout the history of the United States, universities have largely depended on private donations for their infrastructure and research. Thus, although intellectuals in that country frequently benefit from these resources, there are conflicts and dissatisfactions with the excessive power that this class exercises over university education and intellectual practice. HOFSTADTER, Richard. *Op cit.*

The priority of classical and liberal studies throughout a university education was often considered even more harmful than academic schooling at the high school level, because it prolonged a young person's exposure to futile studies and increased his appetite for elegant leisure.¹⁵

Furthermore, masculinity was not found in the literate environment, but in the forging of the life of the common man. Intellectuals were seen as potentially dangerous, as they occupied places of power in institutions where the man of action was questioned. distrust of universities.

Intellectuals, one might say, are pretentious, presumptuous, effeminate and snobbish, and most likely immoral, dangerous and subversive. The common sense of the common man, especially if tested by success in some exacting line of practical work, is an entirely adequate, if not far superior, substitute for the formal knowledge and experience acquired in schools. Not surprisingly, the institutions in which intellectuals tend to be influential, such as universities and colleges, are rotten to the core [...] anti-intellectuals exhibit distaste for the smugness and superiority they believe accompany intellectual life.¹⁶

The characters in the series related to intellectuals are often represented with an arrogant stance, believing they have superiority over those around them. Furthermore, educational institutions and their intellectuals appear as potentially dangerous. However, *Manhunt* points out how anti-intellectualism was central to understanding why it took so long to resolve the Unabomber case at the FBI. The resistance to adopting Linguistics as a method hampered the progress of the investigation

2.1.1 Anti-intellectualism in Manhunt

It is only in the sixth episode that Kaczynski's character is represented with more depth and details of his personal life. While the series develops around the investigation, this sequence is unique, as it develops the Unabomber's life from his childhood to the

¹⁵ "The extension of classical and liberal studies through the college years was often considered even worse than academic schooling at the high-school level, because it prolonged the youth's exposure to futile studies and heightened their appetite for elegant leisure." *Ibid.*, p.258.

¹⁶ "Intellectuals, it may be held, are pretentious, conceptualized, effeminate, and snobbish, and very likely immoral, dangerous and subversive. The plain sense of the common man, especially if tested by success in some demanding line of practical work, is an altogether adequate substitute for, if not actually much superior to, formal knowledge and expertise acquired in the schools. Not surprisingly, institutions in which intellectuals tend to be influential, like universities and colleges, are rotten to the core [...] anti-intellectuals exhibit distaste for the smugness and superiority they believe accompanies intellectual life. For anti-intellectuals, the intellectual generates suspicion and cynicism. Intelligence maybe valuable and useful, but intellect dangerous." *Ibid.*, pp. 19-21.

events of *Manhunt* In this sense, different timelines were used to illustrate events from his past and compare them with his present. Thus, the series narrates his life through the reading of a letter to Kaczynski's brother, David (Mark Duplass). In this section, we explore how the series mobilizes elements of anti-intellectualism when representing the critical moments that made the Unabomber a man unstructured We noticed how these traumas occurred in educational institutions and in relationships with academics.

In episode number six, the Unabomber tells, in the first person, that he was predestined to be exceptional: "I was doomed to be a freak from the beginning"¹⁷. Kaczynski blames his parents and school for enrolling him two grades in ahead of his age However, he stands out, showing himself to be more intelligent than his older classmates. In mathematics classes, he can solve more complex equations than other students and is convinced of his own superiority: "I wasn't That's it. But the worst part was that I was smarter than everyone" (*TED*, Ep06)¹⁸

The school environment is represented through his friendship with a boy named Doug (Cade Smith). He recalls the relationship as his "first experiment". The episode shows the boys' friendship, sitting next to each other in Science classes, playing together in the forest and reading about prehistoric man The education level is *middle school*, fundamental in Brazil, with students in pre-adolescence.

As the narrative of school days continues, his friend begins dating a girl. Young Kaczynski (Grady Port) is surprised by the boy's sudden change in behavior. This is illustrated when he plays alone waiting for Doug, only to find the young couple kissing, in the forest. He watches the interaction for some time while hiding behind a tree The girl notices that she is being watched and screams in fright Doug throws a rock, causing his friend to bleed Kaczynski runs to destroy the symbol of their friendship, an abandoned car in the forest used as a space to play

Back at school, during Science class, the couple mocks him. In response, Kaczynski quickly prepares a chemical mixture and spreads the substance on a piece of paper. He folds the sheet like a letter, passing on the correspondence addressed to Doug. Upon receipt the note, an explosion hits his face, causing small bruises. The camera changes focus to Kaczynski's face, when we can see him giving a half smile. After the incident, he tries to approach his friend as if nothing had happened, but he turns his back and walks away. Although the series places more emphasis on Kaczynski's experience at Harvard University, discussed below, the sequence that focuses on the period of *middle school* indicates that traces of the terrorist's mental disorder were already present in his pre-adolescence

In the school narrative, we can observe that Kaczynski appears as an extremely intelligent individual, but with social disabilities. Even though he was two years younger, he surpassed the performance of other students. On the other hand, his academic success appears related to his social failure. While his only friend matures, he becomes

¹⁷ "I was doomed to be a freak from the start" Episode 6, *TED*.

¹⁸ "I wasn't ready. But the worst part was I was still smarter than everyone else" Episode 6, *TED*.

trapped in the childish space. The young man cannot understand a romantic relationship. friend rejects him after the episode of violence, he remains isolated until he graduates. When narrating this episode, we notice the deep loneliness in which the Unabomber finds himself: “Forty years later, I think I can say that Doug was the only friend I had. I really had it” (*TED*, Ep. 06)¹⁹

However, his time at Harvard occupies most of the episode. Starting his bachelor’s degree at just sixteen years old, he describes to the audience how lonely his daily life at the university was. As he walks around campus, he reads a pamphlet: “We want to talk to you, to study long term”, by professor and psychologist Henry Murray (Brian d’Arcy James) In the narration, Kaczynski makes clear the feeling of admiration he had for the academic: “Professor Henry Murray, he was everything I ever wanted to be: a Greek god radiant, symbol of Harvard.”²⁰ The Unabomber recalls that all applicants for study were “desperate” for “him to select us” as members of “an exclusive group”²¹.

For young Kaczynski, Murray was a manifestation of the divine: “He was the hand of God, separating the sheep from the goats.”²² The Psychology Department, where the student talks to Murray, seems like “Heaven” on the earthly plane. He has an adoration for the Harvard professor, retelling the story with religious vocabulary. Murray takes notes, listens and asks questions about a wide range of topics. In the student’s words: “Christ himself came down and asked about my life”²³

The professor makes himself available to listen to his deepest thoughts. Kaczynski sees him as someone to trust, sharing his political and scientific opinions. As they approach, the young man tells the academic “everything, every secret of my life, my dreams, my fears”²⁴. The episode places the young man as a naive student, enchanted by the figure of the teacher

Without their knowledge or consent, Kaczynski was part of the MKUitra project. This experiment is represented in the television series as confidential scientific research funded by the US government. During the 1950s, at Harvard, academics from the institution conducted interrogations of students. These students who participated in the study did not know that they would be used as guinea pigs by their teachers. The objective of the study was to discover effective ways of interrogating Soviet spies²⁵.

Murray then leads Kaczynski to a dark room at Harvard. The scholar places him on a wooden chair. Electrodes are placed on the student’s head. This is tied by the

¹⁹ “Even 40 years later, I guess you can say that Doug was the only real friend I ever had” Episode 6, *TED*.

²⁰ “Professor Henry Murray, he was everything I wanted to be, a beaming Greek god of Harvardness” Episode 6, *TED*.

²¹ “For him to select us, to bring us into the inner circle of the fold” Episode 6, *TED*.

²² “His was a hand of God, separating sheep from goats” Episode 6, *TED*.

²³ “It was as if Christ Himself came down and asked me about my life” Episode 6, *TED*.

²⁴ “We talked about everything, every crevice of my life, my dreams, my fears” Episode 6, *TED*.

²⁵ Here, I refer to how the MKUitra project is represented in the narrative. To see more about the experiments conducted on Kaczynski during his time at Harvard, see: CHASE, Alston. *Harvard and the Unabomber: the education of an American terrorist*. New York: WW Norton & Company Inc., 2003.

teacher to the seat. The chair resembles those used for executing prisoners. Men in dark suits enter the room. Murray describes them as "fellow scientists" and, even more, as "some of Harvard's most distinguished thinkers."²⁶ Without Kaczynski's permission, footage of him is shown.

In this video, he talks about his political opinions to the academic. The teachers then start laughing and attacking his person and ideas.

Murray states that the scientists concluded that Kaczynski's ideas were "common-place, cliché, juvenile [...] and absurd"²⁷. They dismiss the student's arguments as being based on a work by Jaques Ellul, the philosopher Frenchman who had written a work for a large audience, considered as evidence of low quality, written for "the masses, of the third category"²⁸ The researcher goes further, with personal attacks, calling him a mediocre, inadequate mathematician and a "man beta"²⁹ In the background, we can hear the scholars participating in the abuse laughing louder. The professor reads a letter supposedly sent by Kaczynski's mother The viewer knows that the document was fabricated by Murray The correspondence says that Kaczynski "needs intervention psychological" and that people call him "scary and weird"³⁰³¹ Thus, the scene shows the student helpless, tied to a chair and vulnerable to the scientists.

In the following figures, we see behind the scenes of the filming, the camera positioned on the character's eye. His vision, in the scene, moves incessantly - he doesn't blink. Kaczynski appears helpless, writhing and crying during the torture session (Figure 19) Furthermore, we can see how there was an effort to relate young Kaczynski's suffering with the Unabomber's adult trauma. young and adult character The camera, from bottom to top, captures the same angle, as if he were still trapped in this trauma (Figure 20).

³²

³³

The series works with elements of the anti-intellectual tradition in the United States. In the narrative, institutions responsible for education, research and science appear as dangerous, especially Harvard University. An innocent desire to be part of the intellectual elite leads Kaczynski to be betrayed and tortured by Murray and other "illustrious thinkers". This higher education professor humiliates him for his "youthful" beliefs and ideas about politics.

However, the narrative builds a point of convergence between the two characters (the scientist and Kaczynski). They share certain characteristics, are pretentious and

²⁶ "Some of Harvard's most distinguished thinkers' Episode 6, *TED*.

²⁷ "They found the majority of your ideas to be derivative, cliched and juvenile' Episode 6, *TED*.

²⁸ "From a third-rate thinker's mass-market paperback' Episode 6, *TED*.

²⁹ "A creepy, beta-male" Episode 6, *TED*.

³⁰ "I'm afraid Theodore is in desperate need of psychological intervention" Episode 6, *TED*.

³¹ "Many people regularly call him a creep' Episode 6, *TED*.

³² Source: Personal Archive. Photography courtesy of Greg Yaitanes.

³³ Source: Personal Archive. Photography courtesy of Greg Yaitanes.



Figura 19 - Jovem Kaczynski amarrado em cadeira¹⁵⁸

Figure 19 - Young Kaczynski tied to a chair



Figure 20 - Kaczynski recalls torture session at Harvard

convinced of the primacy of their intellect. Thus, aspects of the American anti-elitist legacy permeate the plot. The narrative indicates that it was one of the most well-known and renowned universities that made Kaczynski a murderer: “David, I was an innocent child and I became this How did this happen? I think it was Harvard that did it”³⁴.

At the end of the episode, the character fantasizes about a different life, closer to human relationships. In the end, she resents her loneliness: “Sometimes, I think I’m just trying to punish these people because they have what I really want: a home, a family, the ability to be normal I’m 53 years old and I’m still a virgin”³⁵ He imagines what his life would be like if he had a family As if we entered the character’s own consciousness, we see images of a dream The scenes differ from the series, They are well lit and have more vibrant colors. The actor looks directly into the camera, establishing contact between the character’s introspections and the audience Kaczynski holds a newborn, presumably a son, inside the log house He dreams that his wife is the town librarian, he idealizes her in a chair and with the child on his lap, smiling at him

We reiterate that Kaczynski’s academic success is directly related to his social inadequacy. During his life, he tries to be normal, imagines building a family and having friendships. However, his own being and traumas do not allow him to build affectionate relationships. In this way, he resents his incapacity, resorting to violence and death to fulfill his ideas Kaczynski had developed a mental disorder

In television narratives, intellectuals and scientists are often represented as geniuses. In these fictional programs, the characters perform superhuman mental feats. These geniuses have photographic memory, ease in dealing with new technologies and in carrying out complex logic and deduction exercises³⁶

However, the price of exceptionality is being unskilled in social skills and having mental health problems³⁷ Often used as writing strategies to humanize these characters, the plots seek to nuance their personalities. However, we noticed this stereotype being mobilized as a narrative tactic. . We then have an identifier for the spectator, who, upon identifying the genius, starts to expect his socialization difficulties and all types of inadequacies.

In many representations, however, the notion of genius is mediated by anti-intellectualism that recovers characteristics of genius to pathologize these characters, until the fine line between genius and madness disappears completely [emphasis added]. Thus, while the current resurgence of intellec-

³⁴ “David, I keep asking how’d I go from this innocent little kid to this? I thought it was Harvard that did it’ Episode 6, *TED*.

³⁵ “Sometimes, I think I’m just trying to punish those people because they have what I really want - a home, a family, the ability to be normal. I am 53 years old, and I’m a virgin’ Episode 6, *TED*.

³⁶ CARLSON, Ashley Lynn. Introduction. In: CARLSON, Ashley Lynn (ed.). *Op cit.*, 2015. p. 1-9.

³⁷ VON CZARNOWSKY, Laura-Marie; SCHIMMELPFENNING, Annette. True Detective or Smooth Criminal: the (dys)functional genius in contemporary detective shows. In: CARLSON, Ashley Lynn. *Op cit.*, 2015. p. 185-197.

tuals on television can certainly stimulate our own thinking, it also influences our perceptions of genius by representing genius as tragically flawed [...] [allowing] the viewer to celebrate characteristics of intellectuality while maintaining an anti-intellectual position. intellectual (anti-enlightenment) [emphasis added]³⁸

Kaczynski is, without a doubt, a man of privileged intelligence, well-versed in Mathematics and intellectualized to the point of examining critical thinking about modernity. In our interview with the director, Yaitanes suggests that subjects who advance in technological and scientific knowledge can use their intellect to the violence. An “us” (normal) versus “them” (academic geniuses, but potentially destructive) is created

I think people are surprised when they see how much humanity we gave Ted [Kaczynski], because he deserved to be represented as accurately as possible: he was human, but disturbed. We also wanted to show that there is a fine line between inventing the iPhone and becoming the Unabomber [emphasis added]³⁹

In this sense, characters related to genius are often represented with anxiety disorders, chemical dependency, sociopathy and a wide variety of behaviors that suggest psychological disorders.⁴⁰ Genius becomes synonymous with atypical behaviors, from mannerisms, through effeminate behaviors, to personality mismatches. In this way, they are represented as the “other”. As a consequence of this representation, the “privilege” of their exceptionality exacts a price: that of being excluded from human interactions. But, above all, it is the anti-social genius that feeds anti-intellectualism. Next, we show how Fitzgerald’s character, by insisting on using academy tools, ends up being discredited by his superiors

2.1.2 Images of the intellectual versus the man of action

Fitzgerald’s wife (Elizabeth Reaser) introduces her husband at a family get-together (*Unabomb*, Ep.01). He is seen as someone who, through his own efforts,

³⁸ In many representations, however, the notion of genius is mediated by a long-running myth of Anti-intellectualism which recovers the characteristics of genius by pathologizing such characters until the already fine line between genius and madness disappears altogether. Thus, while the current resurgence of intellectuals on television can certainly stimulate our own thinking, it also influences our perceptions of genius through repeated portrayals of the genius as tragically flawed [...] [allowing] the viewer to celebrate specific characterizations of intellectuality while maintaining an anti-intellectual stance of detached (anti)-enlightenment”. LONG, Judge. Mediated Genius, Anti-Intellectualism and Detachment(s) of Everyday Life. In: CARLSON, Ashley Lynn. *Op cit.*, 2015. p. 32-48.

³⁹ “I think people are surprised when they see how much humanity Ted was given because he deserved to be represented as accurately as possible, which he was human but disturbed. We also wanted to show that there is a fine line with genius, it is a fine line between inventing the iPhone and becoming the Unabomber”. Yaitanes, Greg. *Op. cit.*

⁴⁰ CARLSON, Ashley Lynn. Introduction. In: CARLSON, *Op cit.*, 2015. p. 1-9.

achieved success in his professional life. His persistence and personal character were responsible for taking him from the Philadelphia municipal police to a position at the FBI. The indication that he had attended higher education at night shows the type of education you had access to. Often offered by *community colleges* (local colleges), the courses are, for the most part, aimed at the job market and attended by a population with lower purchasing power[167] *community colleges* are, in general, responsible for two-year technical courses, therefore, they are not equivalent to a bachelor's degree.

The agent's house is modest In contrast to the spacious homes of a North American middle class, it has a small living room and kitchen In this property, he lives with his wife and three children The character is represented as being part of a working class in the United States. However, when getting involved with the Unabomber case, the character ends up distancing herself from family relationships. Thus, her family is not represented in detail. For example, in the plot, the wife and her three children are only represented in interaction with the police officer, occupying a secondary role. Sodroski justified the choice to represent this separation because he was based on Fitzgerald's statements in real life

I think it's true in a sense, and it actually happened to Fitz, not exactly in the way we've shown. I think his family life fell apart, and he kind of, the case took over, he ended up leaving his family, and the case kind of got in the way and destroyed his marriage, and he ended up in a beach house for a while. It wasn't in the forest, but you know... That's why it's not a documentary, right?⁴¹

From the first scene, when we have the police officer in the *wilderness*, the agent before and after the case is demarcated in the series, also mirroring the family tension we have with Kaczynski. Clues about the terrorist's family are found nearby throughout the episodes A central element is the difficulties encountered by young Kaczynski and the lack of support from his parents. As already mentioned, they agree and encourage their son to be enrolled two grades ahead of his age and, at just 16 years old, to enter Harvard. Another important link in the Unabomber's family relationships was his brother and sister-in-law, responsible for warning the FBI when they recognized his ideas in the manifesto that had been published in newspapers as Kaczynski's demand to stop the ongoing series of explosions

Manhunt differs from the traditional television channel productions that dominated from the 1950s to the end of the 1990s. During this period, the model was that of the conservative family, in harmony, idealized as the structure of social relations .

⁴¹ "I think is kind of true in a sense, and this really did happen to Fitz, not exactly the way that we showed it. I think his family life did feel a part and, he sort of like... the case took over, he ended up leaving his family and the case kind of came between and destroyed his marriage and he ended up at a beach house for a while, it wasn't in the woods but you know... This is why it's not a documentary, right?" SODROSKI, Andrew. Op. cit.

The representation of conflicts within the family nucleus, which end up disrupting this model, is characteristic of more recent productions⁴² However, we also need to differentiate the institution of the family as the target audience of *Manhunt*, on the which we discuss in more detail at the end of the chapter. *Discovery Channel* as a cable channel, produces much of its content for this audience

During the interviews, we noticed Fitzgerald's concern with the series' representation of the end of his marriage and, in particular, his relationship with the character Natalie Rogers. In the 1990s, the agent divorced his wife and began a relationship with a Linguistics professor. When this character was "created", Fitzgerald would have insisted on making it clear that his involvement with the academic began only after the end of his marriage With her consent, who is now his wife, already in the creative process, this character was inserted to assist the agent in analyzing the manifesto

At the time, his marriage was in trouble, you know, young kids. That's a lot of creative license... After he cracked the Unabomber case, his marriage ended, I think he told you. He met a very attractive and very intelligent linguist. So I said, "Let's say you met her working on the case, let's bring her in as a love interest of yours and let's ask her for advice. They both loved it, they said it could be done, which was great.

We took what happened later and just changed [the beginning of the story]. He wanted to make it clear that he wasn't unfaithful to his wife during their marriage, but okay, we might have romantic tension, you know. He wanted to seem like a good guy, which he really is, he's a really good guy. I really liked the romantic tension and the unfulfilled romantic relationship as his marriage was in trouble...

I really liked the idea of this tension! He became truly obsessed with the Unabomber case. He was away, I think in San Francisco, and his marriage was already in trouble or the problems were getting worse. So this was all great for the character: him being immersed in this case, him being obsessed with discovering [the terrorist] using only the language, him receiving a lot

⁴² In the so-called "golden age" of television, with its commercial character, representations of the family unified a majority bourgeois American identity. They were idealized representations of the *American Dream*. Generic images of white, middle-class families have characterized much of prime-time cable television since the 1950s. More recent television productions have offered a "specific construction" The worldview of the 'new' television contrasts with the 'golden age', representing dysfunctionalities in family life. See more at: PRESS, Andrea. Gender and Family in Televisions Golden Age and Beyond. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 625, 2009, pp. 139-50; COGHLAN, J. Conceptualizing (re)worked narratives of the American family: From the American Dream to American decay in new* television. *Australasian Journal of Popular Culture*, 5(1), 2016, pp.33-48; JENKINS, C. Home Movies: The American Family in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema. I B. Tauris, 2019; LEVY, Emanuel. The American Dream of Family in Film: From Decline to a Comeback.' *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2,1991, pp. 187-204; COONTZ, Stephanie. The way we never were. American family and the nostalgia trap. New York, Basic Books, 2000.

of criticism... and that's generally not how the FBI solves cases. So [there are] a lot of great dramatic elements. That was the great creative license we had⁴³

In the series, Fitzgerald is convinced that reading the manifesto is essential to identifying the Unabomber. To assist in this investigation, the agent brings together renowned academics in the FBI building. Most of them are representatives of the humanities (Etymology, Literature and Sociology). It is interesting to note that these characters, with the exception of Natalie Rogers, do not have names assigned. In an FBI room, we see men sitting at a large table filled with notebooks. Formally dressed, they leaf through the material. In the background, the pages of the manifesto are arranged on a cork board. > Ep.03).

The agent asks the academics if they recognize the ideas or writing style used in the text. At that moment, a fight of egos is triggered. One of the intellectuals says that, in his field, the content of the manifesto would never be validated after a peer review. Another subject comments: "Your department hasn't published anything in twenty years."⁴⁴ Then, in unison, the academics discuss among themselves. It is not possible for us to relate voice to character or understand the subject they are dealing with.

The only woman in the room, Natalie Rogers, introduced as a Stanford Linguistics PhD candidate, tries to intervene: "Excuse me, can you tell me if there is a corrections page attached? [...] Is it in Greek or Latin?"⁴⁵ Quickly, a professor interrupts her speech. In a presumptuous tone, he attacks the student's lack of academic credentials and the field of study itself: "Then let's leave it to the postgraduate -graduate student in Comparative Linguistics guide what is relevant"⁴⁶ While gesturing with a pen in his hand, he continues: "Read paragraph eighty-eight: Some scientific works have no

⁴³ 'At the time his marriage was having issues, you know young kids. This is a big creative license... after he broke the Unabomber case his marriage broke up, I guess he told you, and he ended up with a very attractive and very smart linguist. So, I said let's just assume you meet her working at the case, well bring her as a love interest and we'll change that and go to her for advice, and they both loved that, they said we can do that, that's great " SODROSKI, Andrew. *Op cit*; 'I took that later incident, and we just moved it up, and he wanted it to be clear, that he wasn't unfaithful to his wife during his marriage, but ok, I can have a romantic tension, you know, he did want to come across as a good guy, which he is, he's a very good guy. trouble... I really liked the idea of that tension, he did become legitimately obsessed with the Unabomb case, he was away, I thought in San Francisco, and his marriage was already on the rocks or having troubles and it did become.. So, this is all great for a character, he's immersed in this case, he's obsessed with figuring it out using only the language, he's getting a lot of pushbacks, and that's not usually how the FBI solves cases. So, a lot of good dramatic elements. So that's the one big creative license we took" GITTLESON, Tony. *Op cit*

⁴⁴ "The work coming out of your department. Hasn't been published in 20 years" Episode 3, *Fruit of the poisonous tree*.

⁴⁵ "Was there a corrections page attached to the front? Or "Errata"? Was it in English or Latin?" Episode 3, *Fruit of the poisonous tree*.

⁴⁶ "Leave it to the comparative Linguistics graduate student. To focus on what's relevant" Episode 3, *Fruit of the poisonous tree*.

relationship with the advancement of good- being part of the human race' Comparative Linguistics, for example"⁴⁷ In the background, we hear some laughter

While the academics return to discussing among themselves, Fitzgerald is at the end of the table, crestfallen and isolated from the debate. In the next image, the camera focuses on empty food trays and fruit remains on the table. The FBI agent observes the situation with discomfort, being interrupted by a researcher: 'Who should we talk to about our daily lives?'"⁴⁸ In other words, the characters are represented as arrogant who, above all, only think about remuneration without actually producing anything useful that corresponds to this value. .

This sequence contains strong elements of anti-intellectualism. Academics are represented as arrogant and conceited. These dehumanized characters have no name, being more concerned with preserving hierarchies than with assisting in the investigation They appear almost as profiteers, while they contribute nothing On the other hand, Fitzgerald is placed aside from the discussion Unlike the help he expected from intellectuals, only gets frustrated with the pretentious discussion.

In the episode, Fitzgerald is preparing to leave the office when he is approached by the doctoral student who questions him about the manifesto. She points out how the text is structured in a similar way to a doctoral dissertation. In other words, we arrive at a valuable clue: the terrorist had a university education and attended postgraduate studies. Despite the agent having been helped by the academic, we note that she is still a student at the university, unlike the others, who are represented as teachers and researchers within the institutional hierarchy.

Hofstadter pointed out that the anti-intellectual tradition is nuanced. There are those who question the legitimacy of scientific knowledge itself. On the other hand, starting from an anti-elitism, others simply harbor distrust of universities and those who represent the institution. In this sense, critical thinking would not be the great enemy of the anti-intellectual⁴⁹ We believe that *Manhunt's* narrative follows this path.

In the plot, the postgraduate student (Natalie Rogers) gains Fitzgerald's trust. He reveals details of the way he is conducting the investigation. While explaining his hypothesis, the researcher looks with amazement at the results obtained. The agent says he is looking for spelling errors and grammar, which form the peculiar writing habits of each individual, his "fingerprint" Rogers interrupts him and completes the sentence, explaining to him the academic concept "idiolect". It is what we call "language patterns" in (*Fruit of the poisonous tree*, Ep.03).

They continue the conversation in a bar Rogers tells an anecdote about Slavic immigration to Eastern Europe The native population was unaware of the region of origin of this community However, they noticed that these people did not have words in their mother tongue for the different species of trees . Thus, they later discovered

⁴⁷ "Did you all read Paragraph 88? Some scientific work Has no conceivable relation to the welfare of the human race, Comparative linguistics, for example" Episode 3, *Fruit of the poisonous tree*.

⁴⁸ "So who do we see about our per diem?" Episode 3, *Fruit of the poisonous tree*.

⁴⁹ HOFSTADTER, Richard. *Op cit*.

that these migrants were from a swampy region of Ukraine, where there is no such vegetation.

Fitzgerald notes that, to understand the Unabomber's letters, it is important to understand which concepts are missing from his vocabulary. He then analyzes the manifesto again, noting that the author uses offensive words to refer to minorities. Therefore, he believes that the terrorist is a man white person who has little contact with black people and women.

This sequence is important to understand Fitzgerald, as a common man, and the anti-intellectualism in *Manhunt* Fitzgerald has no academic credentials or experience in Linguistics. However, when faced with a practical demand for his work, he quickly becomes familiarizes himself with the discipline To achieve this, he did not need to dedicate years or study complex scientific methodologies. The common man acts, works with his hands, invents; the intellectual is seen within this order of ideas almost as a parasite. Only his intuition and common sense were necessary. Despite the help given by Rogers, only two casual conversations were needed for Fitzgerald to develop his method. The characteristics of the "common man", such as intuition and experience, are endorsed instead of an "intellectual life". On the other hand, by considering language as a legitimate element, he distances himself from other agents.

Anti-intellectualism is also present in the characters of the FBI The agents demand that Fitzgerald abandon the linguistic analysis of the manifesto and Kaczynski's letters to his brother They believe that the practice of critical reading is unproductive and want to focus the task force's efforts on what consider it as "concrete evidence" (*Unabomb*, Ep.01). These words are often used to discredit the path pursued by Fitzgerald

In this way, they see Linguistics as a useless activity, which does not bring results or benefits. It is not enough to emphasize that Fitzgerald appropriates Linguistics tools, operationalizing them, like someone outside academia, for certain aspects of the area of knowledge, the which allows him to apply them to forensic practice He is, without a doubt, a representative of what is conventionally called the *self made man* He stops being the police officer who issued traffic tickets on the streets of Philadelphia to become a FBI criminal profiler and creator of a forensic method. We note that, here, Linguistics is more accepted, as it is an applied science, designed for practical use

As we discussed, this is the characteristic of the man of action, symbolized in President Jackson, who had a utilitarian view of knowledge. In other words, the relationship with anti-intellectualism is conflictual - the narrative makes clear this conflict within the security agency. This contestation of hierarchies and institutions is entangled with the anti-intellectualism present in these powerful figures from the FBI. Although they criticized intellectual thought, it was exactly elements of Linguistics that helped compose the terrorist's profile. We realize that these internal contradictions to the plot come from the multiple and collective process of creation and production of television series and the American anti-elitist tradition itself

In the first episode, the FBI was certain that the Unabomber was an unemployed aircraft mechanic. In this sense, it was assumed that he would probably have lost his

job during a mass layoff. Seeking revenge against airlines, he launched his bombing campaign. Fitzgerald, however, insists that the targets would be symbols and representative of a type of thinking: "These people are representative targets. Gil Murray [victim] was a symbol to him. All his targets symbolize something"⁵⁰. Cole, one of his superiors on the task force, presents a folder with "concrete evidence" He places on the table photographs of the devices used to manufacture the bombs. The homemade manufacture of these parts would be indicative of the Unabomber's experience as a mechanic.

We have concrete forensic evidence that he is a trained air mechanic. Look at how in an airplane we have batteries welded in series inside a wire cage. He is an expert in casting and shaping aluminum. And look, look at this: he developed a new switch similar to the one on the tail of a 747 plane⁵¹[emphasis added]

Fitzgerald contradicts his superior He insists that it is necessary to analyze the author's "code" language: "There is a powerful intelligence at work, a personal philosophy on which FC [Unabomber] is based. You discover philosophy, you discover the man's identity and break the code" [emphasis added], He is once again reprimanded for his argument and is ordered to follow the course of the investigation. The character, disappointed with the disregard of his proposals, insinuates leaving the case However, then the manifesto is introduced into the series, reinforcing the agent's thesis

As a hook for the next episode, it is suggested that his approach would be relevant. However, the task force's first action, upon coming into contact with the Unabomber's manifesto, is to once again prioritize traditional tracks. They search the leaves for traces such as DNA, fingerprints and strands of hair. For a considerable part of the second episode, Fitzgerald does not have access to the text

The agent questions why, upon receiving a fifty-six-page document, the agency's first action is not to prioritize reading it. Cole belittles this statement, defending what he sees as useful: "A fingerprint of one of those pages [...] A single strand of hair would be much more valuable than anything you'll get from reading this guy's rant."⁵²

Here, we have a possible criticism of anti-intellectualism, since his superiors ignore the possibility of analyzing language. They disregard the content of the Unabomber's letters to the detriment of what they consider to be material evidence. In the image below, we see two close-up cameras positioned above the head of the task force. The

⁵⁰ "They are representational targets. Gil Murray was a symbol of something for him. All of his targets symbolize something for FC' Episode 1, *Unabomb*.

⁵¹ "We've got hard forensic evidence that he's a trained airline mechanic. Look - batteries soldered in series, encased in a wire cage just like airplane power bricks, he's an expert at casting and shaping aluminum, and look - look at this new switch he's developed. It looks exactly like an airplane tail stand on a 747' Episode 1, *Unabomb*.

⁵² 'A fingerprint off One of those pages [...] A single strand of hair Would be far more valuable Than You are gonna get from reading the guy's rant' Episode 1, *Unabomb*.

scene is constructed as if the audience were analyzing photographs of the crime, unable to look outside this limited plane (Figure 21) The narrative indicates that the Ignorance in recognizing the legitimacy of linguistic analysis makes it impossible to investigate crucial evidence to capture the Unabomber

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Anti-intellectualism is thus questioned: Cole and Ackerman, who are men of action, seek to conduct research in a traditional and practical way, based on experience and what is understood as concrete. When faced with the use of “philosophies and codes” as clues, fail Fitzgerald is able to arrive at the identity of the Unabomber, because he infers this language. However, when communicating with the intellectual, he begins to have difficulty in dialoguing with the man of action. As we demonstrate in the next section, Fitzgerald begins to be misunderstood by the institutions that surround him, due to his insistence on using unconventional means to build the terrorist’s profile. Although without any contact, Kaczynski becomes the only one to share Fitzgerald’s afflictions with the world around him.

2.2 Elements of the construction of James Fitzgerald and Theodore Kaczynski’s characters

James Fitzgerald and Theodore Kaczynski are similar and, simultaneously, opposing characters. The indication is that they are introspective and critical people of modernity, but that they adopt different methods of action. In this way, the police officer understood certain motivations for the terrorist’s violent actions, however, he absolutely disagreed with the attacks committed

Fitzgerald is Kaczynski’s mirror in the series As they never met in reality, the producers used narrative strategies to bring the characters closer together. One of the main resources that allowed both characters to be present in the same scene was the use of the voice *over*, in which Kaczynski comments on events in the agent’s life. Thus, in a large part of the plot, we have the police officer in the image and the terrorist in the audio, even though their paths only cross after the arrest. We seek to discuss how this mirroring was constructed, and how the *over* voice played a leading role in the construction of the *Manhunt* scenes.

The character is part of the fictional world, and its construction relies on a central instrument: the role of the narrator According to Beth Brait, “Just as there is no cinema without a camera, there is no narrative without a narrator”⁵⁴ For the author, the camera is a narrator In the case of the series *Manhunt*, we have a voice-over narrator⁵⁵. This is Theodore Kaczynski himself, a first-person narrator, therefore, a

⁵³ Source: Personal Archive. Photography courtesy of Greg Yaitanes.

⁵⁴ BRAIT, Beth. *The character*. São Paulo: Ática 1985 pp 53-54,

⁵⁵ Ismail Xavier explores in detail the role of the narrator, and the voice over, in audiovisual: To see more: XAVIER, I. *The look and the voice: the multifocal narration of cinema and the cipher of*



Figure 21 - Ackerman analyzes photos of the crime scene

narrator who is inside the story. But an initial element in the construction of the series' characters is the projection of the mirror image between Theodore Kaczynski and James Fitzgerald, transforming one and the other into a double in which they approach and distance themselves.

In the opening minutes of the series, we realize that mirroring is its fundamental element. In this first scene, already examined in detail in the first chapter, we see actor Sam Worthington, who plays James Fitzgerald, in the *wilderness* {*Unabomb*, Ep01). Thus, the series suggests to the viewer that this could be the Unabomber, since the North American public has memory of the case. This ambiguity is resolved only when FBI agents are introduced to his Fitzgerald property, after his disenchantment with the FBI, who did not give him due credit for providing the means to capture Kaczynski, and after the end of his marriage and estrangement from his family, he was living like the Unabomber, appreciating the immensity of nature, providing his own food and being practically isolated

From the photographs provided for our research, we noticed that the *wilderness* scenes with Kaczynski (Paul Bettany) and Fitzgerald (Sam Worthington) were recorded on the same date (Figure 22) We see, in the image, as the men share similar clothing and physical traits Thus, a problem is posed to foster the audience's interest in what happened to the agent to be living as the Unabomber?

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In the plot, after Fitzgerald is established as the protagonist security agent, his actions begin to be narrated in voice *over* by Kaczynski. We want to say that the voice *over* is not only an important instrument in characterization of Kaczynski and Fitzgerald, but also for the construction of the series It is important to highlight that, in the first episode, the narrator is incognito The series does not offer enough elements to establish the voice of actor Paul Bettany, who plays Kaczynski, as the Unabomber In this In this sense, the identities of the two characters form a kind of amalgam. However, to delve deeper into this aspect of the series, we need to understand what *voice over is and how* this technique is used in *Manhunt*

Marcei Vieira Silva and Melissa Fontenele point out that, in cinema studies, the resource is understood as an explanatory and/or interpretive tool for what is shown. In this sense, the narrator's voice occupies a space of power in guiding the viewer's gaze when reading the narrative: "the preposition *over* in English informs that the voice is above' the image. Therefore, the speech represents a discourse of authority, which gave it the title of voice of God"[184] In documentaries, however, the voice has a more informative character, ordering events, defending arguments and presenting a point of view. In fiction, it appears as [£,]a way of convincing the audience to accept

History in São Bernardo. Literature and Society, [S. I], v. 2, no. 2, p. 126-138, 1997. DOI: 10.11606/issn.2237-1184.v0i2p126-138. Available at: <https://www.revistas.usp.br/ls/article/view/13886>. Accessed on: 3 June. 2023.

⁵⁶ Source: Personal Archive. Photography by David Atterton, courtesy of Greg Yaitanes.



Figure 22 - In a behind-the-scenes image, actors Paul Bettany and Sam Worthington

the narrative⁵⁷ Therefore, the indications are that Kaczynski, with his inflexible and maladjusted personality, intends to dominate the narrative The choice of voice *over* tells us about the resources mobilized for the series, but also about the resources used to build the terrorist's character

Voice *over* is a fundamental feature of the documentary genre, and can be placed at the beginning of the 20th century, "when live comments in the form of lectures added value to silent images and had an educational nature"⁵⁸ The resource, after the establishment of sound as part of cinema, began to be adopted in cinejornais. It is worth remembering that these programs informed the public about world news, usually before the showing of a fiction film. The voice *over*, when used by the journalistic environment, shows how comments have a "record" characteristic, building a "reality effect"⁵⁹

Analyzing the voice *over* in the television series *Narcos* (Netflix - 2015), the authors argue that its use, characteristic of documentaries, invokes a "historical credibility" when using events and characters from the public's memory[188] In the case of the series, one of the notorious characters evoked is the Colombian narco-terrorist from the 1980s, Pablo Escobar. The narrator is the character DEA agent (*Drug Enforcement Administration*) Murphy, one of those responsible for the manhunt for Pablo Escobar Silva and Fontenele argue that the narrator plays a central role in understanding the narrative by "shaping the viewer's gaze through their opinions and value judgments, and making them believe that the truth is there for anyone who wants to see - literally - through the videos, photos, newspapers or dates from the historical world"⁶⁰.

It is interesting to note similarities in the narrative structure and style between *Narcos* and *Manhunt*. Both series were part of the Netflix streaming catalog and seek to recover historical events, "events based on real facts", using the resource of voice *over* In both, the use of this tool evokes a sense of the real, blurring the boundaries between reality and fiction Even more, this resource transforms the protagonist characters into a mirror . Thus, we have Kaczynski as narrator commenting on Fitzgerald's actions on the scene

We return to *Manhunt* and his participation in the task force, as previously pointed out, Fitzgerald's superiors seek to impose parameters for his investigation At an FBI get-together, Fitzgerald talks to his agency partner, Tabby. He complains about the investigative line adopted by superiors She responds by saying: "You're a cog in the machine, Fitz, understand this, man"⁶¹. At that moment, Fitzgerald takes his car and goes alone to the last scene of the crime, where a man was murdered by the Unabomber's explosive device. The sequences are dark, whether in the bar where Fitzgerald was with the other agents of the

⁵⁷ NICHOLS, B. 2012. Introduction to documentary. Campinas, Papirus, 270, apud, SILVA, Marcei Vieira Barreto; FONTENELE, Melissa M. *Op. cit.*

⁵⁸ SILVA, Marcei Vieira Barreto; FONTENELE, Melissa M. *Op cit.*. 2016, p. 67

⁵⁹ *Same.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.71.

⁶¹ "You're a cog in the machine, Fitz, embrace it, bruh" Episode 1, *Unabomb*.

FBI, whether on the drive at night, or at the crime scene, where the agent uses a flashlight. While directing the flashlight at certain objects, in a monologue, he reflects on what the evidence at that scene suggests. In this sequence, after the dialogue with Tabby until the monologue begins, a narrator in voice *over* appears (*Unabomb*, Ep.01).

They want you to obey. They want you to be a sheep like them - an obedient machine. Sit when told to sit, stand when told to stay. They want you to give up your humanity, your autonomy for a paycheck, a bigger TV, or recognition. The only way to be human, the only way to be free, is to rebel. They will try to crush you, use every tactic they have to make you obedient, docile, subservient, but you cannot allow it. You have to be your own master, whatever the cost. Better to die as a human being than to live as another cog in the machine. (*UNABOMB*, Ep.01)⁶²

It is as if the narrative were leaving clues, with his superiors demanding submission and Tabby advising Fitzgerald to resign, preparing the ground for Kaczynski's criticism. The words are repeated in the dialogue and in the narrator's voice: "obedience" and "gear in the machine" In the speech, "they" want to make you obedient, another cog in the machine, removing your individuality "They want you to give up your humanity, your autonomy" in exchange for material and superfluous goods. The problem is highlighted: the Contemporary man submits, is docile; the individual is just another piece of a system. The prescribed remedy is disobedience: "The only way to be free is to rebel" (*UNABOMB*. Ep.01) This is what Fitzgerald does: he disobeys his superiors at the FBI and, therefore, ends up finding, using an unusual method, the terrorist.

In this sense, the voice *over*, which has Kaczynski as narrator, appears as an endorsement of Fitzgerald's actions. He disobeyed the orders of his superiors by not complying with the imposed parameters. In doing so, he advanced the investigation, which had not had new leads for over seventeen years, by realizing that the Unabomber's targets were symbolic.

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In a confrontation with his supervisor, Cole demands obedience, stating that if he has it, Fitzgerald will be rewarded. The agent responds by saying that the Unabomber stated the same in his manifesto. Despite the different context, Kaczynski's character, in the voice *over*, critically points out that "in modern society, all that is required of you is obedience." Cole sarcastically returns: "Put this in your summary, leadership

⁶² "They want you to obey. They want you to be a sheep like they are sheep - obedient, unquestioning piece of machinery. Sit when told to sit, stand when told to stand. They want you to give up your humanity, your autonomy for a paycheck, gold star, bigger TV. The only way to be human, the only way to be free, is to rebel. They'll try to crush you. they'll use every tactic they have to make you obedient, docile, subservient, but you can't let them. You have to be your own master, whatever that takes. Better to die a human being than to live as a purposeless cog in their machine" Episode 1, *Unabomb*.

⁶³ Source: Episode 2, *Pure Wudder*



Figure 23 - FBI Agent Cole, in the upper position, and Fitzgerald below, on the stairs

tips from the Unabomber⁶⁴ It is interesting to note the positions of the two in this scene: Cole at a higher level, and Fitzgerald, lower, reinforcing the hierarchy present in the office and the role required of his subordinate (*Pure Wudder*, Ep. 02) Again, we have the mirroring, with Kaczynski's comment superimposed on Fitzgerald's daily life.

The agent, in his investigation, disobeys and, individually, searches for clues and information about the identity of the Unabomber. This action is seen as corresponding to autonomy. In the series, the tension between the individual, Fitzgerald, and the bureaucracy, represented by the FBI, is clear. , in the characters of Ackerman and Cole Fitzgerald refuses to be just another obedient bureaucrat, like the other police officers at the institution

Fitzgerald briefly describes his conduct as a police officer before participating in the task force. In this way, in a sequence, his history in institutions and with figures of power is presented. Two federal police officers visit his home, probing the agent to serve on the task force. The subject that seek to clarify is his contradictory professional path One of the agents points out that Fitzgerald is recognized as the best student on the *Profiler* course (represented as an elite group in the FBI) However, in Philadelphia, he worked for a decade in the lowest levels of the local police As we have already

⁶⁴ "[Fitzgerald 'In modern society, all that's required of you is obedience' Isn't that exactly what Cole said?"; "[Cole]: You can put that in your three-page summary. Leadership tips from the Unabomber" . Episode 2, *Pure Wudder*.

said, the agent is the representation of the common American man. Fitzgerald argues that he suffered retaliation for not compromising his values in the name of recognition or career: "I issued a traffic ticket. The chief [of the police] asked me to cancel the infraction, because it was for an acquaintance, and I didn't do it"⁶⁵ (*Unabomb*, Ep.01).

The terrorist's narration in voice *over*, accompanied by Fitzgerald's daily life on stage, appears as an explanation for the criticisms of institutions. The series also creates a meeting between the two protagonists. In a conversation in which he tries to manipulate the terrorist into pleading guilty, Fitzgerald admits to Kaczynski that reading the manifesto radically changed his life (*Pure Wudder*, Ep.02) He approached the intellectual universe by study linguistic techniques, showing, here, his ambiguous relationship with the intellectual world. More importantly, the message of the text itself made him question his role in the FBI and his superiors

[Kaczynski] What I really appreciate about you is that most people take language for granted, but not you. You saw it differently. This is the first step to becoming free. A change of perspective. Manifesto, for example I never liked that name, it makes it sound like a rant, and you and I understand the power and specificity of words. Manifesto versus article, insanity versus enlightenment, mental breakdown versus extended leave. You've had a change of life circumstances since your work on the Unabomber case, am I right?

[Fitz] Yes, I did.

[Kaczynski] Because of what I supposedly wrote? [Fitz] Yes.

[Kaczynski] What happened? Just between us⁶⁶

Despite the intended approach with the terrorist with a deliberate aim, the strategy does not work, as Kaczynski turns the tables, leaving Fitzgerald insecure. There was a dispute between the two, and Kaczynski gives a checkmate, communicating, with excessive superiority, that he was smarter than a police officer with no academic training. Again, they are similar and opposite.

The use of the voice *over* tool and the mirroring of the two characters were deliberate Yaitanes believes that Kaczynski was a kind of prophet; the radical's message has merit

⁶⁵ "I wrote a parking ticket. The Chief asked me to make it go away 'cause it was for a friend of a friend, and I didn't" Episode 1, *Unabomb*.

⁶⁶ "[Kaczynski] What I really appreciate about you is that most people take language for granted, but not you. You saw it differently, and that is the first step toward becoming free.. A shift in perspective, manifesto, for instance.. I never liked that moniker. It makes it sound like an unconsidered rant, and you and I both appreciate the power and specificity of words. Manifesto versus article, insanity versus enlightenment, mental breakdown versus extended leave from active duty. You have had a change of life circumstance, since your work on the Unabomb case, am I wrong? [Fitz] Yeah, I have. [Kaczynski] Because of what I apparently wrote? [Fitz] Yes [Kaczynski] What was it? Just between us" Episode 1, *UNABOMB*.

and should be represented on television. Thus, mirroring was used as a way of bringing the Unabomber's voice to the series He said:

One of the things we realized from our interview with Fitz was that after spending so much time analyzing every line of Ted's manifesto and writings, you realize that Fitz had a connection to the message. It wasn't that Ted was right, again, he was wrong. But I mean, in some ways, he was like a prophet, because look where we find ourselves today. Therefore, the mirroring was deliberate, as it was a way to represent Ted's messages, even though we didn't know who he was or what was happening to him. It was a way to get into [Kaczynski's] head and show that he was getting into [Fitzgerald's] head. And that maybe there was something to living *off-grid* (disconnected) [...]⁶⁷

For Sodroski, the characters Fitzgerald and Kaczynski mirror each other, because both are men outside the system (outsiders), Fitzgerald obviously less so than Kaczynski. The narrative, for the screenwriter, represents how an ordinary man, when coming into contact with the manifesto, becomes confused with part of what Kaczynski thought. In *Manhunt*, there is a fine line between hero and villain. It becomes more blurred with the narrative insertions of the voice *over*, amalgamating the personalities of the terrorist and the police officer According to Sodroski:

I was trying to tell a story about this character [Fitzgerald] who throughout the investigation becomes somewhat obsessed with the manifesto. He slowly goes from being a family man, a police officer, with some extraordinary skills, and an *outsider* to becoming the Unabomber. And then at the same time, telling the story of his comeback, stopping being the Unabomber, confronting Ted Kaczynski and making peace with the fact that this case isn't black and white and there's no villain, it's just tragedy for everyone. the sides⁶⁸

⁶⁷ 'One of the things that was you know that came out of our interviews and Fitz was just like after spending so much time analyzing every line of the manifesto and analyzing test writings you know fits definitely had a connection to the messaging. It wasn't that Ted, again it was wrong. I mean where he is in a way a bit of a prophet to what where we find ourselves today. So, mirroring them was deliberate because it was a way to represent how ted messaging not knowing who he was at least you know really what was going on was a way to get inside the head and to show that he was getting inside the head. And, that there was maybe something to be off the grid [...]' YAITANES, Greg. *Op. cit.*

⁶⁸ "I was trying to tell a story about this character who over the course of this investigation becomes kind of obsessed with the manifesto and slowly goes from being a family man and a cop with some extraordinary abilities and a bit of an outsider to being the Unabomber. And then, at the same time tell his story from his return, coming back from being the Unabomber, confronting Ted Kaczynski and making some kind of peace with the fact that this case isn't black and white and there isn't a bad guy here really, and that's kind of a tragedy all around " SODROSKI, Andrew. *Op. cit.*

As we have indicated, during the course of the investigation in the 1990s, Fitzgerald never met with Kaczynski. Sodroski told us in an interview that, to resolve this problem, the production set a date for Fitzgerald to visit the terrorist, who is serving a life sentence. Although he accepted the invitation, when the retired agent arrived at the maximum security prison, the convict stated that he was unwell. to welcome you. Thus, the producers used “creative license” to imagine the confrontation between them after the investigation concluded. However, this continued to be a problem for the script, as the convention is that, in investigative series, the police officer and the criminal meet. to establish tension The use of *over* voice allowed the characters to intersect

In addition to a first-person narrator, the producers hoped that the use of these mechanisms would please the audience. First, by placing the Unabomber as narrator, the story becomes more complex, as the viewer has privileged access to the killer’s message. and themes with which North Americans are familiar Secondly, when producing a story based on a notorious event, in which the outcome is known or easily searchable on the internet, there was a concern with maintaining the audience’s interest during the episodes[198] In this sense, the mirroring between Kaczynski and Fitzgerald is particular to *Manhunt*, keeping the viewer curious Still according to Sodroski

Another part was making it feel immediate, making there be an immediate, visceral connection, which is what Ted is doing, which is really very intellectual and impersonal: it’s through the mail and these packages and the messages and the writing. Fitz’s world has all this drama and intensity, and so Ted was communicating through letters and packages and bombs, so the voice *over* is our way of making that voice visceral, you know. ? This authorial voice of Ted is close to us, and I think causing a feeling that you are in the presence of someone who is very insightful and very intelligent. What’s scary about the narration is that the killer’s voice is telling you very, very insightful things about his world that actually, if you stop and think about the miracle of the post office, you’ll see things in a different way. You really start to see life in a different way, and that’s just in the first minute, you know what I mean? But it’s also being narrated by a man who’s sending me a bombshell. So you have these direct engagements with these ideas, which, again, I think is about looking for ways to make it very visceral, a personal connection to it.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ “But the other part was making it feel immediate, making it feel like there is an immediate and visceral connection between what Ted is doing which is actually very intellectual and detached: it is through the mail and these packages and through the messages and through writing and Fitz’s world which it has all this drama and intensity to it and so, Ted was communicating through letters and through the packages and through his bombs, so the voice-over is our way of making it visceral that voice, you know ? That sort of authorial voice of Ted’s and bringing into our world, and I think trying to get the feeling that you’re in the presence of someone who’s really insightful and really smart as well. What’s scary about the voice-over is that the voice of the killer telling you really, really, insightful things

In short, the plot constructs Kaczynski and Fitzgerald's characters in such a way that they mirror each other both in aesthetics and in actions. For this, the resources of *voice over* and mirroring were crucial to construct and include these characters in the same scene. While we hear the terrorist's narration, we see the police officer and his investigation of the case on screen. In some scenes, this ends up confusing the characters' identities, establishing similarities between them. In the next section, we seek to understand how the themes explored in this chapter were designed to please a specific target audience of *Discovery*.

2.3 The target audience for *Manhunt*

Sodroski pointed out that the channel aimed to reach an audience: the working class, politically more conservative and residing in the geographical center of the country. Furthermore, it targeted two specific age groups: *baby boomers* (generation born after the Second World War) and men over thirty. The ideal consumption scenario would then be the father and his adult son watching *Manhunt* on the TV in the living room. Therefore, the production expected that the audience would be, for the most part, white men, without university education and who had any memory of the case from the 1990s. The screenwriter described this audience as being *blue-collar*, a North American term that designates workers who perform manual activities. In Sodroski's words:

The target audience for *Discovery* would be those types of older parents, such as *baby-boom* parents and their *bluecollar* children, but sons who live at their parents' house, and everyone is looking for something to watch together. The idea is that they have a big television in the living room, the sixty-something parents and their thirty-something kids are all living together and they're all looking for something they can agree on. So that's what you're aiming for, and I think generally more conservative and more in the central part of the country is the kind of demographic of the target audience. I don't know if that's still true now, but back then that was the kind of audience we wanted. So we're trying to show, you know, emphasizing ingenuity, emphasizing this kind of blue-collar experience versus book knowledge. These were themes that were very natural for the series and that spoke to the audience⁷⁰

about your world. That actually if you stop and think about the miracle of the postal service, you'll see things in a different way. You actually start to see life in a different way and that's just in a first minute, do you know what I mean? But it is also being told by a guy who's sending me a bomb. So you've these direct engagements with those ideas, that again I think is about always searching for ways to make it very visceral, vicarious connection with that. *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Discovery's* target audience is kind of like older parents, sort of baby-boom parents and their blue-collar, more male children who were living at home, and they are all looking for something to watch

As we have demonstrated, the narrative uses elements of anti-intellectualism and criticism of institutions. Individualism, represented in Fitzgerald's character arc, is understood as superior to bureaucracies and the "system". The agent, without training in Linguistics, discovers a new method of analysis, capable of identifying the Unabomber and completing the longest and most costly investigation in the history of the FBI. However, to do his job, it is necessary to confront authorities and rebel against imposed parameters. The well-intentioned individual is represented as misunderstood by their superiors, co-workers and family. In addition, at best, intellectuals are represented as vain, arrogant and pretentious. In a more dangerous view, as represented in Kaczynski, the university and its academics can become taking advantage of naivety to corrupt and disrupt a subject. In short, these elements were deliberately mobilized to please the target audience of *Discovery*

What *Discovery* was interested in was a *blue-collar* protagonist going up against the system, sort of in a maverick way, and 'discovering' something. And so, part of what they were looking for was a *blue-collar protagonist who* discovered a whole new way of doing something and then kind of figured it out, *Discovery*, right? The nature thing was just the cherry of the cake for them, they have all those back to nature series⁷¹

For our analysis, it is important to highlight the historical context in which the series was shown (2017)⁷². In 2016, the Republican Party primary elections took place, with the main candidates being Texas senator Ted Cruz (1970-) and Donald Trump (1946-), businessman and *reality show star*. The protagonist of fourteen seasons of the show *The Apprentice* was not the choice of the upper echelons of the Republican Party⁷³. The leadership was dominated by neoconservatives, fierce in foreign policy,

together. The idea is that they have a big television in the living room, the sixty-something parents and their thirtysomething children are all living together and all looking for something they can agree on. So that's like what you're targeting, and I think generally more conservative and more in the middle part of the country, is their kind of target demographic. I don't know if that is still true actually now, but back then that was the kind of audience that we were shooting for versus book knowledge. These were kind of like themes that were very natural for the show and that were speaking to the audience" *Ibid.*

⁷¹ "What *Discovery* was interested in was a blue-collar protagonist going up against the system, kind of in a Maverick kind of way, and "discovering" something. And so like, part of what they were looking for was a blue-collar protagonist who discovers a whole new way of doing something and then sort of discovers, "*Discovery?*, right. The nature stuff was just ice on the cake for them, they have all those back-to-nature shows" SODROSKI, Andrew. *Op. Cit.*

⁷² Valim approached audiovisual, politics and reception from Social History. See in: VALIM, Alexandre Busko. Between texts, mediations and contexts: notes for a possible social history of cinema. *Social History* (Campinas), Campinas - SP, v. 11, n.1, p. 17-40, 2006.

⁷³ JACKSON, David. Cruz beats Trump in Wisconsin, increasing chances of open convention. *USAToday*. 2016. Available at: <<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/elections/2016/04/05/ted-cruz-donald-trump-wisconsin-primary-john-kasich-never-trump-organizations/82657580/>>. Accessed on: 08 Jan. 2023.

supporters of globalization and neoliberalism from the period of the presidency of Bush⁷⁴ However, Trump gained support from an extreme right that was taking shape. This radical political group was suspicious of the *neocons*, pointing out that many of their ideologues were “former leftists” and representative of a “left-wing conservatism” For the extremist right, the Republican *establishment* was too “urban, intellectual, Jewish and ideological”⁷⁵

With the support of the extreme right, Trump was able to win the internal elections and compete against Democrat Hillary Clinton (1947-) for the presidency. The expectation at the time, represented in the media, was that the first woman would be elected to the presidency. head the Executive Branch of that country. However, despite Clinton winning the popular vote, Trump won the largest number of electoral colleges and was elected president⁷⁶

During his campaign, the candidate positioned himself as a man outside the system, outside the field of intellectual elites while devaluing institutions. He sought to appeal to the “common man” Despite having attended a prestigious university focused on business administration, Trump used If, during his presidential campaign, he used simple language and proudly said that he doesn’t like reading books⁷⁷ In addition, despite being the son of a New York real estate magnate, Trump also linked himself to the image of the common man, which he definitely was not, and that of the *self made man*. According to this version, he would have multiplied the family’s wealth through his practical business skills.

Like others in the Republican Party, the president, in a demagogic way, positioned himself against an elite that was represented in the Democratic Party. This group would be linked to an intelligentsia, like former president Barack Obama himself (1961-), who studied at Harvard and He was a law professor at the University of Chicago⁷⁸ In 2016, Trump was critical of large technology companies. The largest companies

⁷⁴ To see more about Bush and neo-conservatism in the USA: MOLL NETO, Roberto. Reaganation: the nation and (neo) conservative nationalism in the United States (1981-1988). 2010. 265 f. Dissertation (Master’s) – History Course, Fluminense Federal University, Niterói, 2010; JUNQUEIRA, Mary Anne. George W. Bush’s speeches and American exceptionalism. Margem (PUCSP), São Paulo, v. no. 17, p. 163-171, 2004.

⁷⁵ ”They confront the same empire of nothing’ produced by neoliberalism but reject the war, centralized state power, and Judeo-Christian values which characterized neoconservatism, and ideology further tainted by the fact there are many neocons are both Jews and former leftists . They are not alone on the right in viewing neoconservatism as a suspiciously leftist species off conservatism: overly urban, intellectual, Jewish and ideological” TAYLOR, Blair. Aft-right Ecology: Ecofascism and far-right environmentalism in the United States. In: FORCHTNER, Bernhard (ed.). The Far Right and the Environment: politics, discourse and communication. New York: Routledge, 2020. p. 231.

⁷⁶ NEIWERT, David. Alt-America: the rise of the radical right in the age of Trump. New York: Verso, 2017.

⁷⁷ CUNNANE, Megan; RAPHAEL, TJ Donald Trump and the Pitfalls of Anti-Intellectualism. WYNC, 2016. Available at: <<https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/takeaway/segments/how-history-anti-intellectualism-explains-trump>>. Accessed on: 08 Jan. 2023.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

in the sector made large donations to the Democratic Party campaign. In a long speech at the Republican Party's national convention, the businessman did not mention words like "technology" or "science"⁷⁹. Therefore, it is important to note that criticism of technology is also a common theme in the series, reverberating with the target audience.

In the first half of his term, Trump and his supporters extensively criticized the FBI. The security agency made public an investigation into alleged links between members of the Russian government and the former president's campaign. There were indications that members of the Republican team had contributed to the foreign government, disseminating false information and interfering in the 2016 presidential campaign. Republicans openly attacked the federal agency, pointing out an alleged political bias in the investigation⁸⁰. Thus, the image of the man against the system, bureaucracies and the intellectual elite were extensively used in these years.

White men, without university education and from the working class were the businessman's electoral base in the presidential dispute⁸¹. Therefore, it is essential to emphasize that Trump and *Manhunt* had the same target audience. Many of the values represented in the series are associated with the image of the former president.

Manhunt is a series designed by intellectualized men for white, non-college-educated, working-class men. It demonstrates contradictions when addressing elements of anti-intellectualism, for example, when pointing out the FBI's negative reception of analysis methods linguistics proposed by Fitzgerald, while reiterating intellectual and academic stereotypes. Many of these conflicts arise from the dynamics of production, distribution and reception, characteristics of a cultural product⁸². The *Discovery Channel*, like a TV channel cable present in subscription plans

basic, its main source of financing is advertising. The company, therefore, sells inserts to companies that want to advertise their products to this specific audience. In the next chapter, we insert the series into a broader industry context, approaching the television program in *Discovery's programming*. Even more, we work on the tensions and disputes between creators, producers and company executives

⁷⁹ ALBA, Davey; WOHLSEN, Marcus. Trump Is Meeting With Tech CEOs, and It's Gonna Be Awkward. *Wired*. Available at: <<https://www.wired.com/2016/12/trump-meeting-tech-ceos-gonna-awkward/>>. Accessed on: 17 Jan. 2023.

⁸⁰ LUCAS, Ryan. DOJ Watchdog On Russia Probe: No Evidence Of Bias, But Problems With Surveillance. *National Public Radio*. 2019. Available at: <<https://www.npr.org/2019/12/09/785525132/justice-department-watchdog-report-on-russia-investigation>> [<https://www.npr.org/2019/12/09/785525132/justice-department-watchdog-report-on-russia-investigation>]. Accessed on: 08 Jan. 2023>.

⁸¹ An examination of the 2016 electorate, based on validated voters. PEW RESEARCH CENTER, 2018. Available at: <<https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2018/08/09/an-examination-of-the-2016-electorate-based-on-validated-voters/>>. Accessed on: 08 Jan. 2023

⁸² LOTZ, Amanda D. *Op. cit.*, 2014.

3. The Cultural Product

“manhunt”: Creation, Production and Narrative Disputes in a Television Series

In this chapter, we explore the creative, production context and some of the different interpretations of *Manhunt*. We argue that the parties who participated in this process had particular interests and distinct priorities. Therefore, we investigated in detail why *Discovery*, specializing in documentaries and *reality shows*, produce a scripted program like *Manhunt*. It is important to highlight that *Manhunt* was the first and last high-cost series, so far, whose script the company was directly involved in the production.

We demonstrated how, for *Discovery's* executives, Sodroski (writer and *showrunner*) and Yaitanes (director) had constructed a narrative with the potential to please the demands of the channel's audience with a series "complex, authentic and reliable". However, based on our interviews, we realized that the director's project was not the same as the scriptwriter's. In this way, the series is the result of the conflict of different visions, transformed into a final product that did not follow the project initial.

In addition to the production context, we explore how the series was appropriated, firstly, due to the repercussion of *Manhunt* among retired FBI agents and James Fitzgerald. The plot was questioned in its critical representations of the FBI, even more so because it placed, in a single character, the credit for the capture of the Unabomber and the closure of the agency's longest and most costly investigation. There is, among these subjects, a dispute over the narrative.

Theodore Kaczynski, in a similar way, based on his written correspondence from prison, sought to exercise control over the narrative and make his discontent known. The terrorist seemed to have understood that *Manhunt* delegitimized his message against modernity by representing the experiments conducted at Harvard and their potential impact on his personality and mental health. Kaczynski demonstrated that he preferred the series' focus on its message against modernity. modernity than in the possible suggestions of why he chose violence to convey his ideas. However, we discussed how *Manhunt* and Kaczynski were recovered as symbols for a group of young people on the extreme right. Based on the character of the terrorist in the plot, young people articulate anti-immigration and racist policies with a concern about the climate crisis.

In other words, *Manhunt* has mobilized different interests, interpretations and actors since its conception.

3.1 The creative process and the original script

Jim Fitzgerald, Tony Gittleston and Jim Clemente were the creators of the TV series *Manhunt: Unabomber*. Although Gittleston and Clemente are also credited as writers for the show, they did not participate in the production process. pilot episode, when comparing its original text with the final product, stated that both could not be more different. During our interview, he narrated the hard work he put into researching, analyzing, writing and looking for possible producers for the project.

Clemente was a prosecutor and FBI agent. He and Fitzgerald are partners and founders of an entertainment company (*XG Productions*), which focuses on productions based on *true crime* (“real crimes”). series *Criminal Minds* (2005 - 2020). Currently, Clemente presents the *Best Case Worst Case* and *Real Crime Profile* podcasts focused on the genre (real crime)¹.

The former prosecutor discovered Gittleston’s work through the film *A Life In A Day*, a biographical film that tells the story of Brian Epstein, the music manager who launched the *Beatles*: “He read [the script] and really liked it, and we were acquaintances. Then he contacted me and said, you should meet my friend James Fitzgerald, he’s the criminal profiler who solved the Unabomber case. *Manifesto*. The retired FBI agents had written a script for an action and adventure film. However, when they contacted Gittleston to participate in the work, the screenwriter argued that the text be rewritten. For him, the story should stick to aspects reliable, which gave authenticity to the narrative.

This was not a consensus among creators. Clemente believed in room for creative license. In the end, Fitzgerald became more interested in Gittleston’s proposal, and the script sought to remain faithful to his testimony. Despite this decision, the screenwriter reported several conflicts with Clemente during the writing of the work. After completing the script, Gittleston looked for possible interested parties for the production of the series. The company *Trigger Street Productions* saw potential in the project. At the time, the company was run by Kevin Spacey and was producing *House of Cards*. This was the chance that the creators they had waited for almost a year²

According to Gittleston, it was after this first contact that a manager from the production company called the creators, reporting that the president of *Discovery* “had read the script and loved it.” So, the executives at *Trigger Street’s* creators and *Discovery Communications* president Rich Ross met to discuss the project. However, to Gittleston’s surprise, the head of the media conglomerate had some reservations about

¹ ABOUT US. XG PRODUCTIONS. Available at: <<https://www.xgproductions.com/about>>. Accessed on: 13 Jan. 2023.

² GITTLESTON, Tony. *Op.cit*

the project. pilot episode The character Frtzgerald, for example, was not introduced in the first thirty minutes of the series The beginning of the program was set in the 1970s and 1980s, in the early stages of the investigation into the Unabomber case Furthermore, the script represented Fitzgerald's career as a police officer in Philadelphia. In this sense, the delay in addressing the main narrative of the series was criticized This movement around the creation of *Manhunt* shows the difficulty in establishing authorship in cultural products such as TV series Producers, screenwriters, broadcaster and director divide the work, and, in the end, the weight of the channel, in this case, *Discovery Channel*, is undeniable

To meet the demands of *Discovery*, Clemente and Gittleson planned changes to streamline the text. Despite these efforts, the rewritten material was rejected by company executives Gittleson reported that he was surprised by the company's final decision. *Discovery* ultimately purchased the script and exclusive rights to the story of Fitzgerald about the Unabomber case, however, in the agreement, Clemente and Gittleson were excluded from the production of the program

Comparing the original script, the final product and the interviews, it is possible to reflect on the elements that probably displeased the *Discovery executives*. An issue that differs in the scripts is the reason for Kaczynski's radicalization In the text original, he would have decided to start his campaign of terror after a consultation with a psychiatrist At that time, as a Mathematics teacher, the character went to the doctor and considered having sex change surgery. However, when questioned about his motives, he abruptly interrupted the session, berating himself for having come up with the idea. In the script, the young mathematician, after that, decided to isolate himself in the *wilderness* and seek revenge against society

Campus Psychiatrist: Can you tell me why you are here?

Kaczynski: I haven't been... happy. (...)

Kaczynski: I have - difficulty - relating to people. Mainly women. (...)

Campus Psychiatrist: Why did you decide to seek counseling now?

(a painful silence, and then) Kaczynski: I need medical permission to have a sex change operation. [...]

Campus Psychiatrist: Mr. Kaczynski... changing sex is a long and complicated process. It could take years. I think we need to understand the reasons...

The psychiatrist continues to speak, only his VOICE is replaced by Ted's VOICE OVER.

Kaczynski (voice over): I felt disgusted by my uncontrolled sexual desires that almost led me to do - literally emasculate myself... Then, like a Phoenix, I rise from the ashes of despair into a new and glorious hope... I realized , why not kill the psychiatrist - and everyone else I hate? Everyone

who has humiliated and tormented me. What mattered was not the words that went through my head, but how I felt..³

Therefore, Kaczynski's disorder had its origins in his non-identification with his biological sex. In an interview, Gittleston emphasized that he told the "real story", based on Kaczynski's unpublished autobiography. This document is in the archives of the University of Michigan. The terrorist's ideas set out in the manifesto would only be a facade to justify his acts of violence. When making a comparison with the present time, the screenwriter said that, in the end, the character was represented as an *incel* (an acronym in English for "involuntary celibate")⁴.

I think [Kaczynski] was much more psychosexual than that [ideas]. I think it was a much deeper anger, he is what we call today an *Incel*. I think he was that. He's an *incel*, that's today's terminology, so [the conflict] was between our good guy hero, Fitzgerald, and our very unbalanced villain [Kaczynski]⁵

We believe that this was a central element that displeased *Discovery's executives*. When interviewing Yaitanes, it was possible to ask if the company had established any requirements for the narrative. The director explained that "they didn't want to get into the sexuality of Ted," particularly on the topic of sex change. He agreed with the demand, pointing out that representing this issue would be very complex and would require responsibility. There was a fear that viewers would relate the issue of gender to terrorist acts, causing real negative repercussions on the transgender community.

One of the topics they wanted us to stay away from, and I think rightly so, since we didn't have the space to really get into it (...) they didn't want to get into Ted's sexuality. Something we didn't really cover in depth

³ 'CAMPUS PSYCHIATRIST: Perhaps you can tell me why you're here. TED: I haven't been, happy. (...)TED: I have- I have a difficult time—relating to people. Women especially.(...) CAMPUS PSYCHIATRIST: Why have you decided to seek counseling now? TED: (a painful silence, then) I need medical permission to have a sex change operation [...] CAMPUS PSYCHIATRIST Mr. Kaczynski...changing your gender is a long, complicated process. It can take years. I think we ll need to understand your underlying. . The Psychiatrist continues to talk, only his VOICE is replaced by Ted's VOICE OVER: TED (VO): I felt disgusted by what my uncontrolled sexual cravings almost led me to do- literally to emasculate myself... Then, like a Phoenix, I burst from the ashes of despair to glorious new hope... I realized, why not really kill the psychiatrist-and everyone else I hate? Everyone who ever humiliated and tormented me. What was important wasn't the words that ran through my mind, but the way I felt about them.." Personal Archive. Original script for "Manifesto" provided by Tony Gittleston.

⁴ GITTLESON, Tony. *Op.cit*

⁵ "I thought it was more psycho-sexual than it was. I think that was a much deeper rage, he's what's now called an *Incel*. I think that was a lot of what he was. He is an Incel, that's today's terminology, so between the good guy, Fitzgerald, our Hero, and very, very mixed-up bad guy and these two guys". GITTLESON, Tony. *Ibid*.

was his relationship with Doug in episode six. [The relationship] had an exploratory sexual nature. So we didn't include that Ted wanted to have a sex change, and that's when he decided to kill people, even the doctor who had denied him (the possible sex change). We couldn't do it enough justice and we didn't want to identify that as the reason why he was doing things. We were very conscious about what *The Silence of the Lambs* did to the trans community and we felt like, you know, we didn't see a breakthrough in that part. of history without really delving deeper⁶

In the original script, there is another fundamental divergence: Kaczynski and the FBI agent did not meet or speak in any episode⁷ Only in the court trial did Unabomber and the agent exchange glances Gittleston defended his choice, arguing that he valued the reality of the events.

In his understanding, the strong point of his text was the authenticity and legitimacy of a real story. However, the company's executives saw this as its biggest flaw. In the end, *Discovery Channel* would have preferred creative license to the detriment of an "authentic narrative", with the aim of making the series more attractive to its viewer Gittleston states that *Manhunt* It's not Fitzgerald's story For him, the FBI agent made assumptions in exchange for having his narrative told. When commenting on the choice of mirroring Fitzgerald and Kaczynski, the writer made clear his dissatisfaction with the final product. In his interpretation, these men share no similarities.

It's a total fabrication, and Fitzgerald knows it's a fabrication. If I had proposed [mirroring], he would have kicked me out the door. I'm reaffirming that I have great regard for Fitzgerald, he's a nice, caring guy. I understand he was kind of chewed up by *Hollywood* too. He made concessions, but I think he hated all this nonsense that he took himself to be like Kaczynski or as deeply as (...) I remember in the opening scene we were supposed to think 'Oh my God, that bearded guy in the cabin Is it Kaczynski?'. It's absolute bullshit, it's absurd, you know? It's unnecessary creative license, it's what the head of *Discovery* wanted, they wanted to spice up [the narrative], they needed the audience. I'm sure they decided my approach was too close to reality, which I considered a virtue, and they didn't. They wanted

⁶ "One of the topics they want us to stay away from specifically and I think rightly so given we didn't really have enough real state to really go into it, they didn't want to get into Ted's sexuality. Something we didn't really put it was that you know his relationship with Doug in episode six. Was one more, had more an exploratory sexual nature to it. So, we didn't include that Ted wanted to get a sex change and that was when he decided to kill people, like the doctor that had denied him. We couldn't do enough justice and also, we didn't want to peg that as the reason why he was doing things. We were very sensitive about what *Silence of Lambs* did to the trans community and felt that you know, we didn't see an away forward with that part of the story without really deep diving". YAITANES, Greg. *Op.cit* .

⁷ GITTLESON, Tony. *Op.cit*

to embellish, so they merged Kaczynski's mind [with Fitzgerald's], which didn't happen. Did he [Fitzgerald] emerge in language? Yes. Did he turn into Ted? No. I mean, it's ridiculous. I laughed when they finally sent the scripts out for arbitration, and I was reading it and I was horrified; it was so stupid that it became funny (...) it was entirely an invention of the screenwriter, then again, if I had asked Fitzgerald for this, I'm sure he wouldn't have allowed it⁸

Gittleson was very dissatisfied and even resentful. According to the screenwriter, *Manhunt* was an example of how *Hollywood* works. Just like in the series, the workers involved in the creative process had no power over the realization of the product. Regarding its suddenness removal from the project, he stated "I was dismayed. I basically took the money and corn. I was happy when it was over. It's regrettable. It's a true *Hollywood tale*. You write it, sell it, edit it, go to production and in the end you reject [what you created]"⁹ Despite repudiating the *Discovery Channel series*, arguing that there were few similarities left with the initial proposal, Gittleson and Clemente sought credit for the work's script.

Before the *Writers Guild of America* (WGA), they entered into arbitration with the entertainment company to be named as creators. After winning the case, they were rewarded monetarily for their work. It is interesting to note that, after the series premiered, Gittleson and Clemente were nominated, along with the production, for the "best TV script" category in 2017 by the WGA.

In short, there were conflicts and tensions, already at the beginning of the creative process, about how *Manhunt's* narrative should be told. The limits between reliability to events and creative license were in dispute. However, we need to understand why, among countless program options, *Discovery* chose this television series to be produced. Furthermore, *Manhunt* is a scripted program, unlike programming traditional company.

⁸ 'It's a total invention and Fitzgerald knows it is an invention. If I had proposed it, he would've kicked me out of the door. Again, I have high regard for Fitzgerald, he's a nice guy he's a thoughtful guy. I understand he got kind of chewed up by Hollywood too (...) so you made compromises that I think he hated but all this nonsense that he became like Kaczynski or so deeply (...) I remember the opening scene; we're supposed to think 'Oh my gosh this bearded guy in a cabin is Kaczynski' It's just absolute bullshit it's nonsense you know, and it is unnecessary creative license. It's what the head of *Discovery* wanted, they wanted to sex it up you know, and they need eyeballs. I think I'm sure they decided my approach was too close to the actual story which I thought was a virtue they didn't. They wanted to sex it up, to tart it up so he had his mind meld with Kaczynski which didn't happen. They get immersed in the language deeply, embedded? Yes. Did he turn into Ted? No. (...) I mean it's laughable on the face of it and I laughed when they finally sent the scripts for the arbitration, I was reading them I was aghast it was like it was it was so goofiest to be funny. It was just completely total writers' invention and again if I proposed to Fitzgerald I'm sure he would've said I'm not allowing that". GITTLESON, Tony. *Op.c.H.*

⁹ "I was so dismayed. Basically, I took the money and ran. I was so glad it was over. It's unfortunate, it's a real cautionary tale of Hollywood. You write something, you sell it, you set it up, it goes into production and at the end, you feel you want to disown it" *Ibid.*

In the next section, we briefly discuss the company's history and its option for the *Manhunt* model, seeking to understand the series in a larger context of the television industry

3.2 A scripted series on the Shark Week television channel

Manhunt is inserted in the context of recent productions designated as *Quality TV*, which seek to differentiate themselves from a mass of programming considered to be of low quality present on pay TV. be widely used by scholars in the 1990s to establish a distinction between an emerging format of series and more traditional television programming that aimed at quality. The precursor of a "new golden age" was HBO, which sought to distance itself from the medium as was understood until then: a form of "inferior art". As a reflection of this moment, the company adopted the slogan "It's not TV, it's HBO", seeking to distance itself from channels with low quality programs and attract new subscribers¹⁰ Television has always been considered a "minor" medium, for example, in relation to cinema. We can cite some examples of precursor programs of this format, such as *The Sopranos* (1999 - 2007), *Six Feet Under* (2001 - 2005) and *The Wire* (2002 - 2008)¹¹ We can add the HBO series, celebrated for its quality, *True Detective* (2014- 2019) , since it was on the trail of the success of this series that the producers, screenwriters and director of *Manhunt* were inspired, as we will see later

The bibliography characterizes these series based on their high production value and their innovation in aesthetic and narrative elements. They feature a script seen as "intelligent and sophisticated", dedicating time to building complex and "morally ambiguous" characters¹² These programs dialogue with relevant themes of the present, criticizing dominant policies, norms and social and cultural conventions. These series are designed and sold as "works of art", enabling the audience to elaborate multiple interpretations and perspectives on the events represented¹³

Secondly, these programs have artistic projects and seek to use immersive techniques, that is, attention to detail to involve the viewer in the narrative. This concern is reflected, for example, with the hiring of renowned and talented actors to play the

¹⁰ 'It's Not TV, It's HBO'. LOTZ, Amanda. If It's Not TV, What Is It? The case of US subscription television. In: BANET-WEISER, Sarah; CHRIS, Cynthia; FREITAS, Anthony (ed.).Cable Visions: Television Beyond Broadcasting. New York: NYU Press, 2007. p. 1-384.

¹¹ MITTEL, Jason. Narrative Complexity in Contemporary American Television. The Velvet Light Trap. Austin, p. 29-40. Fall. 2006.

¹² CARDWELL, Sarah. Is Quality TV any good? generic distinctions, evaluations and the troubling matter of critical judgment. In: MCCABE, Janet; AKASS, Kim (ed.). Quality TV: contemporary American television and beyond. New York: IB Tauris, 2007. p.24-31

¹³ *Ibid.*

multi-faceted characters. In this sense, the use of equipment and qualified labor for *quality* cinematography require substantial resources to create these products¹⁴

However, *Discovery Communications* has been known for unscripted programming since its founding. The television network has built its identity on low-cost documentaries and *reality shows* aimed at an audience eager for this type of content. Even so, in 2017, *Discovery Channel* debuted *Manhunt: Unabomber*, with a budget of 5 million dollars per episode¹⁵. The channel invested a considerable amount to explore *storytelling* opportunities beyond its traditional programming, which had been making steady profits for decades.

At the time of writing this text, this was the first and last high-budget fictional series in which the company directly participated in the production. However, before exploring this issue, we investigated the company's traditional programming, focusing on *Shark Week*, with its three decades of existence. It is a weekly event produced by *Discovery*, once a year, focusing on the action and life of sharks. These programs, which were initially intended as documentaries, were transformed, in search of an audience, and received criticism from all sides for not corresponding to reality, for exploiting the action of the species in a sensationalist way. In short, sharks have become "killers of the sea"

3.2.1 Discovery's programming in the years before Manhunt (2012 - 2014)

Shark Week is one of the oldest programming blocks on cable television. On the air since 1988, it has been in existence for over thirty years. The selected sequence of programs is considered, by many, an "institution" within of *Discovery*¹⁶. A former company president noted that *Shark Week* has a sense of familiarity with viewers and "a timelessness that is quite rare in the world of entertainment." He added that the block is a symbol of the channel itself, "a great commemorative manifestation of what the network stood for, stands for, what it produces that is most loved."¹⁷

Discovery was founded in the 1980s as an educational and scientific television network¹⁸. Its first program aired, a documentary called *Iceberg Alley*, denounced the risks

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.24.

¹⁵ YAITANES, Greg. *Op quote*.

¹⁶ DEHNART, Andy. Will Shark Week Get Back to Reality This Year? *Vulture*, 2015. Available at: <<https://www.vulture.com/2015/07/shark-week-D/scovery-back-to-reality.html>>. Accessed on: November 23rd. 2022

¹⁷ "of timelessness that is pretty rare in the world of entertainment"; "a great celebratory manifestation of what the network stood for, stands for, what is most loved about it." *Ibid.*

¹⁸ HARWELL, Drew. Life after Honey Boo Boo': Inside *Discovers* fight to grow up. *The Washington Post*, 2016. Available at: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/life-after-honey-boo-boo-inside-D/scoverys-fight-to-grow-up/2016/01/01/df53888c-99cd-11e5-94f0-9eeaff906ef3_story.html>. Accessed on: November 23rd. 2022

of oil exploration on the east coast of Canada¹⁹ Furthermore, in 1991, *Discovery* purchased the *TLC(The Learning Channel)*, at the time a free public channel dedicated to educational programming²⁰ Six years later, in 1997, in partnership with the *BBC*, the channel *Animal Planet*, part of the group *Discovery Communications*²¹ Thus, the group owes its success to its content related to science and nature. This initial phase of the network, still, reflects on its mission to be “a leading provider of educational products and services for schools”²², advertising itself over the years as “the world’s number one nonfiction media company”²³

Shark Week followed this purpose During the first years, its content was intended to contribute to conservation initiatives and remedy misinterpretations about sharks. At the time, the program was boosted by the success of the *blockbuster Jaws* in > (1974), by Steven Spielberg. The plot of the fictional film revolves around the hunt for a great white shark. The animal is represented as a relentless killer, attacking and devouring bathers at the height of summer. Although it took advantage of the interest in sharks, the *Discovery program* went in the opposite direction Initial episodes of the block helped mitigate some of the damage and disarm ”the cultural stigma around sharks” spread by *Jaws*²⁴

In the 1990s, the company invested considerable effort into *Shark Week*, assigning its best documentary filmmakers, photographers and videographers to work on these celebrated programs. In 2001, it also became clear that using modern, expensive equip-

¹⁹ Celebrating 27 Years of *Discovery*. *DISCOVERY* INC, 2012. Available at: <<https://corporate.Dfscove/y.com/blog/2012/06/17/celebrating-27-years-of-Discove/y>>. Accessed on: November 23rd. 2022

²⁰ GIORDANO, Morgan. Remember when TLC used to be called 'The Learning Channel'? America Online “Aoi”, 2015. Available at: <<https://www.aol.com/article/2015/05/25/remember-when-tlc-used-to-be-called-the-leaming-channel/21186889/>>. Accessed on: November 23rd. 2022.

²¹ BECKER, Nathan. *Discovery* Buys BBC Stake In Animal Planet, Liv For \$156M. The Wall Street Journal, 2010. Available at: <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052748703326204575616523472157804>>. Accessed on: November 23rd. 2022

²² *Discovery* Communications CEO David Zaslav to Present at UBS Global Media and Communications Conference. *VERY DISCO* INC. *Warner Bros. Discovery*. 2014. Available at: <<https://ir.corporate.Dfscovey.com/news-and-events/financial-news/financial-newsdetails/2014/Dfscove/y-Communications-CEO-David-Zaslav-to-Present-at-UBS-Global-Media-and-Communications-Conference/default.aspx>>. Accessed on: November 23rd. 2022.

²³ “a leading provider of educational products and services to schools’; number one non-fiction media company in the world’ *Discovery* Channel Celebrates 25 Years of Innovation, Excellence and Groundbreaking Nonfiction Programming. *DISCOVERY* INC. 2010. Available at: <https://corporate.Dfscove/y.com/Dfscovey-newsroom/D/scovey-CHANNEKcelebrates-25-years-of-innovation-excellence-and-groundbreaking-nonfiction-programming/>. Accessed on November 23rd. 2022.

²⁴ “The cultural stigma around sharks’ COHEN, Matt. The history of Shark Week: How the *Discovery* Channel both elevated and degraded sharks. The Week. 2015. Available at: <<https://theweek.com/articles/444542/history-shark-week-how-Drscovery-channel-both-elevated-degraded-sharks>>. Accessed on: November 23rd. 2022.

ment was not a problem. With a *Phantom* camera that captures images at 1,000 frames per second, the network showed great white sharks breaching the surface, an action never before seen. previously captured on film The program has been recognized and respected for educating audiences through quality entertainment content, featuring “some of the best footage of sharks in their natural habitat ever captured on video, offering incredibly details of how sharks behave”²⁵ For these filmings, there was a high cost involved, which materialized in legitimacy for the company. Even more, they are cultural products that explore the relationship between human beings and the environment, creating, for your audience, programs that combine learning scientific content with entertainment

However, in 2013, the renowned programming was criticized after questionable decisions²⁶ In an episode called *The Megalodon: The Monster Shark Lives*, the program stated that a 30-meter prehistoric shark, considered extinct , would be inhabiting the ocean Furthermore, he would have attacked and killed four people off the coast of South Africa To support this claim, *Shark Week* presented a marine biologist and scientist who would have carried out research that supported the statement How “proof” of this event, the program reproduced footage “found” as evidence of the existence of the *Megalodon*²⁷. The episode surpassed the programming block’s audience record, then 26 years old, reaching the mark of the 4.8 million viewers

However, *Discovery* did not alert its viewers to the fact that the narrative was fictional. On the contrary, it was presented as documentary, displaying only a three-second warning that the events were “dramatized”²⁸ *Megalodon* became extinct more than 2 million years ago Furthermore , it was revealed that the network had used actors to play scientists, and that the ”found” footage was a fabrication. In the words of one scientist, the program “was presented in such a way that you could easily watch it and not know it was fiction.”²⁹ This is shown most clearly by a poll, in which 79% of viewers, after watching the documentary, pointed out that they believed that *Megalodon* had not become extinct³⁰

²⁵ ‘Some of the best footage of sharks in their natural habitat ever caught on video, offering breath-takingly detailed looks at how sharks feed, swim, and act’. *Ibid.*

²⁶ DEHNART, Andy. *Op. cit.*

²⁷ IS MEGALODON real? Shark Week, debunked. VoxMedia. Produced by Joss Fong. Written by: Joseph Stromberg. 2014. B&W; WINSOR, Ben. *Discovery* Is Becoming More And More Ridiculous With Its Fake Documentaries. Yahoo! Finances. 2014. Available at: <<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/Discovery-becoming-more-more-ridiculous-144736745.html>>. Accessed: November 23, 2022

²⁸ DEHNART, Andy. *Op. cit.*

²⁹ “It was presented in such a way that you could very easily watch it and not know it was fictional” ULABY, Neda. After Sketchy Science, Shark Week Promises To Turn Over A New Fin. National Public Radio (NPR). 2015. Available at: <<https://www.npr.org/2015/07/06/420326546/after-sketchy-science-shark-week-promises-to-tum-over-a-n>> [<https://www.npr.org/2015/07/06/420326546/after-sketchy-science-shark-week-promises-to-tum-over-a-n>] Accessed on: 23 Nov 2022.

³⁰ DAVIDSON, Jacob. *Discovery* Channel Provokes Outrage with Fake Shark Week Documentary.

After the episode, *Shark Week* had a negative impact among the audience and, particularly, among scientists and the press due to its misleading content. Journalists reported that fans expressed on *Twitter* their disappointment with the tactics employed³¹ According to one social media monitoring company, 40% of *Shark Week* mentions were negative, and only 11% were positive.³²

Additionally, researchers and conservation organizations denounced the fictional content and expressed their discontent with the program. They pointed out that the episode induced people to fear the animal, reinforcing the idea of sharks as “serial killers”, thus making it difficult to promote conservation efforts.³³ The media also reported extensively on the episode, calling it from “false”, “questionable” and “ridiculous”³⁴

Initially, *Discovery* did not see the negative repercussions as a problem, as it had broken audience records³⁵ A year later, in 2014, in a similar episode, another story about a “killer shark”, *Shark of Darkness*, aired A company representative justified the decision to air misleading content, stating: “The stories have been out there for years and with 95% of the ocean unexplored, who knows?”³⁶

This choice can be better understood in the words of producer Craig Pillan to *Forbes* about the “noise” caused by the program:

We put out a three-second warning and for two hours we brought everyone together. It was a fun project. As producers, we had to think. 'How can

The Week. 2013. Available at: <<https://theweek.com/articles/444542/history-shark-week-how-D/scovey-channel-both-elevated-degraded-sharks>>. Accessed on November 23, 2022.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² WILCOX, Christie. Shark Week loses nine million viewers, but *Discovery* says, “everyone is absolutely thrilled”. *Discover Magazine*, 2014. Available at: <<https://www.discovermagazine.com/the-sciences/shark-week-loses-nine-million-viewers-but-D/scovey-says-everyone-is-absolutely-thrilled>>. Accessed: Nov 23, 2022.

³³ ANNEAR, Steve. Shark Researchers Take a Bite Out of *Discovery* Channel’s Fake Shark Week Documentary. *Boston Magazine*, 2013. Available at: <<https://www.bostonmaga2ine.com/news/2013/08/05/shark-week-megalodon-fake-D/scove/y-channel/>>. Accessed on: Nov 23. 2022.

³⁴ To learn more about the journalistic coverage of *Shark Week*: LITTLETON, Cynthia. Rich Ross Aims to Diversify *Discovery* Viewership, Restore Docu Credibility. *Variety*, 2015. Available at: <https://variety.com/2015/tv/news/rich-ross-aims-to-diversify-D/scovey-viewership-restore-docu-credibility-1201395918/>. Accessed on: November 23, 2022; HIBBERD, James. *Discovery* boss vows change: No more anaconda stunts, fake sharks. *Entertainment Weekly*, 2015. Available at: <<https://ew.com/article/2016/01/08/D/scovey-anaconda-sharks/>>. Accessed on Nov 23. from 2022; WINSOR, Ben *Op cit.*

³⁵ HARE, Breeanna. *Discovery* Channel defends dramatized shark special 'Megalodon'. *CNN*, 2013. Available at: <<http://edition.cnn.com/2013/08/07/showbiz/tv/D/scovey-shark-week-megalodon/>>. Accessed on Nov 24th. 2022.

³⁶ 'The stories have been out there for years and with 95% of the ocean unexplored, who really knows?' ARNOWITZ, Leora. *Discovery* Channel defends its decision to air 'dramatized' 'Megalodon'. *FoxNews*. 2016. Available at: <<https://www.foxnews.com/entertainment/Discovery-channel-defends-its-decision-to-air-dramatized-megalodon>>. Accessed on: Nov 24th. 2022.

we do this with a quick turnaround and make a lot of noise?*. Regardless of what people say and think, we made a lot of noise. This created *buzz* (a lot of discussion on the subject). It reached CNN, Jon Stewart and all the late night *talk shows*. The show achieved its goal. It was Shark Week with the highest audience in 26 years of history³⁷

Between 2012 and 2014, the media conglomerate also gained prominence through the unfavorable repercussions of two other programs. Not only did the *Discovery* channel appeal to sensationalist programs, *Animal Planet* was initially launched as a channel focusing on environmental conservation³⁸. In 2013, however, a documentary was aired, based on “scientific” knowledge, entitled *Mermaid: The body found*. At the time, the channel broke records and reached the largest audience in its history by reaching 3.6 million viewers. The show suggested that mermaids were real, presenting actors as scientists, computer-generated images as evidence, and even using the name of government institutions to legitimize the claims.³⁹ Additionally, they chose to air just one brief warning in program credits. The impact was so significant, particularly on children, that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) made an official announcement about the incident: “No evidence of aquatic humanoids has ever been found”⁴⁰.

However, in 2014, *Discovery Channel* insisted on producing another sensational episode and aired a Sunday special called *Eaten Alive*. In that program, the host “swore” that he would be eaten by a giant anaconda snake in the Peruvian rainforest. The production team built a “snake-proof suit” that would allow the man to record the action without risk⁴¹. However, after two hours of attempts, the activity was interrupted due to the increase in pain that the man said he felt⁴².

³⁷ “yyG puf up a three second disclaimer and for two hours we had everybody. It was a fun project. As producers we had to think, ‘How do we do it this way with a quick turnaround and make a lot of noise?’ Regardless of what people say and think, we made a lot of noise. It created buzz. It made CNN, Jon Stewart, and every late-night talk show. It did its job. It was the highest rated Shark Week show in the 26- year history of the show”. GACHMAN, Dina. How I Love Lucy’ Inspired ‘American Chopper’ Forbes. 2013. Available at: <<https://www.forbes.com/sites/dinagachman/2013/11/15/how-i-love-lucy-inspired-american-chopper/?sh=315853197120>>. Accessed on: Nov 24th. 2022.

³⁸ HARWELL, Drew *Op cit*.

³⁹ WINSOR, Ben *Op cit*.

⁴⁰ ‘No evidence of aquatic humanoids has ever been found’. Are mermaids real? No evidence of aquatic humanoids has ever been found. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Available at: <<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/mermaids.html>>. Accessed on: Nov 24, 2022.

⁴¹ WENEY, Marcos. *Discovery* US boss: we’re in ‘hand to hand combat’ with Netflix. TheGuardian. 2015. Available at: <<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/aug23/Drsccovery-netflix-online-tv-binge-viewing>>. Accessed on: Nov 24th. 2022

⁴² HIBBERD, James. *Op. cit*.

Once again, the program reached audience records for the channel, with 4.1 million viewers. It was the “highest-rated broadcast of 2014”⁴³ for the network among men ages 18 to 34. Additionally, *Eaten Alive* ranked as the company’s “highest-rated nature show” since 2010⁴⁴. The special was also intensely criticized by the media, who pointed out that the program “was a spectacular backfire on the public relations front”, with the subsequent disappointment of viewers and conservation organizations regarding the program⁴⁵.

In summary, in the years prior to the premiere of *Manhunt*, the company moved away from programming perceived as *quality* and reliable. The *Discovery* brand was harmed with the repercussions of these practices. Even more so, this critical moment was accompanied by the popularization of the streaming service *Netflix*, intensifying competition for viewers.

3.2.2 The dispute with Netflix: Discovery’s attempt to adapt to the market

An executive from *Discovery* was asked whether the negative reaction to the sensationalist strategy worried the cable TV group. She did not recognize this problem, defending the programming choices due to their audience records: “the public voted with their remote controls”⁴⁶. However, in 2014, it became clear that this strategy was short-lived in its success. That year, the *Discovery* conglomerate reported a drop in audience across all its channels, including during the summer, when *Shark Week* aired⁴⁷. This weaker performance caused *Discovery* to reduce its earnings forecast from advertising revenue. Additionally, the company’s shares fell 24% in 2014 and continued with a poor performance in 2015, reaching a drop of 40%⁴⁸.

Fan reaction only partially explains these results. During this period, the television industry underwent profound changes in economics, technology, distribution and cre-

⁴³ “Best-rated telecast of 2014”. MORAES, Lisa de. *Eaten Alive’ Ratings: 4.1 Million Viewers Watch Paul Rosolie Get Not Eaten By Big Snake*. Deadline. 2014. Available at: <<https://deadline.com/2014/12/eaten-alive-ratings-paul-rosolie-D/scovey-channel-1201315328/>>. Accessed on 24 Nov. 2022

⁴⁴ MORAES, Lisa de. *Op. cit.*

⁴⁵ “back-fired on the PR front spectacularly”. To find out more about the impact of the spectator MORAES, Lisa de. *Eaten Alive’: PETA Protests “Torment” Of Snake, Twitter Protests Torment Of Viewers: Update*. Deadline. 2014. Available at: <<https://deadline.com/2014/12/eaten-alive-peta-protest-broadcast-D/scovey-channel-snake-torture-anaconda-paul-rosolie-1201315247/>>. Accessed on Nov 24, 2022.

⁴⁶ ‘The audience voted with their remote’. MORAES, Lisa de. *TV critics suspicious about Animal Planet’s Finding Bigfoot’*. The Washington Post, 2012. Available at: <washingtonpost.com/blogs/tv-columns/post/tv-critics-suspicious-about-animal-planets-finding-bigfoot/2012/08/02/gJQAo-hBCTX_blog.html>. Accessed on: Nov 26, 2022.

⁴⁷ HAGEY, Keach. *Discovery Channel’s New Chief Is Rich Ross*. The Wall Street Journal, 2014. Available at: <<https://www.wsj.com/articles/Discovery-channels-new-chief-is-rich-ross-1414534019>>. Accessed on Nov 26th. 2022.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

ation⁴⁹. In 2015, for example, 17% of households in the United States abandoned or never subscribed to cable TV plans⁵⁰ During that year, the cost of a *Netflix* subscription was \$8.99 per month⁵¹ In contrast, the basic channel package, the model from which *Discovery* has traditionally benefited, cost an average of US\$92. Additionally, between 2007 and 2015, the number of households without television set more than doubled - from 2 million to 5 million, mainly in the demographic group under 35 years old⁵² There is no need to insist that this was due to the internet and the use of computers. These negative perspectives triggered a speculative movement in traditional media shares, leading partners to sell US\$50 billion in stake⁵³ This phenomenon, known as *cord-cutting* (cutting the cables), brought uncertainty about the future of the sector and changes in financing parameters.

On the other hand, many thought that the future looked brighter for *Netflix* Its disruptive model was associated with high growth potential Between 2010 and 2015, unlike the telecommunications industry, *Netflix*'s shares soared, being among those with the highest appreciation on the stock market In 2018, the market capitalization of the *streaming* service reached 150 billion dollars, surpassing *Disney* and becoming the most valuable media company in the world⁵⁴. Today, the company is responsible for a third of internet traffic in the United States

Furthermore, the *streaming* service has become recognized for high *quality* content through *Netflix Originals*⁵⁵. This is illustrated in *House of Cards*, in which *binge-watching* (in Brazil, we call a series "marathonar") was used for the first time, providing the public with a new way of interacting with programming and series. Along with this immersive technique, the series complexified television narratives by commenting on and guiding viewers' experiences⁵⁶⁵⁷ For the first and second seasons of the program,

⁴⁹ LOTZ, Amanda D. *Op cit*, 2014.

⁵⁰ HARWELL, Drew. *Op. cit*.

⁵¹ SHARMA, Sudeep. Netflix and the Documentary Boom. In: MCDONALD, Kevin; Smith-Rowsey, Daniel (Ed). The Netflix Effect: technology and entertainment in the 21st century. *Bloomsbury Academic*, 2016.

⁵² LOTZ, Amanda D. *Op cit.*, 2014, p. 158.

⁵³ HARWELL, Drew. *Op cit*

⁵⁴ MCDONALD, Kevin; Smith-Rowsey, Daniel (Ed). The Netflix Effect: technology and entertainment in the 21st century. *Bloomsbury Academic*, 2016. p. 1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ In Brazil, we already have work on this television series. See more at: GOZZI, Giancarlo Caselato. The Perks of Amoral: Melodrama, political commentary, and interaction with the audience in *House of Cards*. 2018. Dissertation (Master's Degree in Audiovisual Media and Processes) - School of Communications and Arts, University of São Paulo, São Paulo, 2018. doi:10.11606/D.27.2018.tde-27122018-103101. Accessed on: 2023-02-15.

⁵⁷ McCormick J, Casey. "Forward Is the Battle Cry": Binge-viewing Netflix's *House of Cards*, Netflix. In: MCDONALD, Kevin; Smith-Rowsey, Daniel (Ed). The Netflix Effect: technology and entertainment in the 21st century. *Bloomsbury Academic*, 2016.

the company spent 100 million dollars to produce las The series can be understood as a watershed, making clear *Netflix's* ambition to be more than a “digital warehouse”⁵⁸.

With the success of *House of Cards*, *Netflix's* appetite for growth increased, threatening *Discovery's* main markets Aiming to expand its catalog of documentaries, acquired *The Square* (2013), about the Egyptian Revolution, and *Mitt* (2014), about Republican Mitt Romney's failed presidential campaign⁵⁹ By demonstrating its growing interest Due to the format, the *streaming service* premiered the original and controversial *Making a Murderer* (2015-2018) due to the blunt criticism of the North American judicial system. According to Sudeep Sharma, *Netflix* has made feature-length documentaries central to its growth strategy, with the intention of demonstrating value and distinguishing itself from the competition, “getting closer to mainstream cinema *quality* and distinguishing its catalog from more mundane forms of television programming”⁶⁰

In late 2014 and early 2015, with increased competition and changes in industry practices, *Discovery* reviewed its strategies. The group sought to adapt, focusing on “smarter” and “distinctive” programming. Thus, it distanced itself from *reality shows* and sensational documentaries, promising to return to its roots of “defending the environment” and “quality documentaries” In this plan to recover the company's prestige and old brand, *Discovery* expected to disburse a large sum of capital⁶¹

CEO, David Zaslav, was asked whether *Discovery's* traditional audience would watch this new content and recognize the value of the programming. He responded by stating: “Smart is the new sexy” And added: “Let's forget about audience at this moment and we will pursue what the brand has to offer”⁶². In his response, Zaslav suggested recognizing the industry's paradigm shift. The cable company relies heavily on advertising, however, profound changes in production, distribution, technology and financing have forced the group to devise new strategies

In the industry's hopes of surviving, *Discovery* sought to develop *quality* and *intelligent programming*. They believed viewers would recognize value and be more inclined to maintain their cable TV subscriptions, potentially shelling out more money for this type of content In this context, Zaslav announced the hiring of Rich Ross, former executive of *Disney Channels Worldwide*, to be president of *Discovery*⁶³ This admission was followed by the hiring of John Goldwyn (*Dexter*, 2006 - 2013) as executive producer of scripted programming, overseeing the media conglomerate's efforts to expand in this

⁵⁸ ADALIAN, Josef. Inside the Binge Factory. Vulture, 2018. Available at: <<https://www.vulture.com/2018/06/how-netflix-swallowed-tv-industry.html>>. Accessed on: 27 Nov. 2022.

⁵⁹ SHARMA, Sudeep *Op. cit.*

⁶⁰ “As a way to highlight its connection to quality cinema and to distinguish its catalog from more mundane forms of television programming”. *Ibid.*

⁶¹ “Environmental advocacy campaigns’ and “glossy documentaries”. HARWELL, Drew. *Op cit.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ HAGEY, Keach *Op cit.*

direction⁶⁴ He was another key member who worked on the production of *Manhunt*, mediating the demands of the controlling shareholders, mainly on the budget issue, together with Sodroski and Yaitanes⁶⁵.

John Ross's first public speech, as president of *Discovery*, made clear the company's adaptation strategy and gave indications of the production of *Manhunt* In this sense, in his speech at in the *Television Critics Association*, he explained his vision for the future of the group. The priority was to enter the scripted programming market. Ross revealed that he was in negotiations to develop a "miniseries with a historical theme, lasting between four and ten hours" Furthermore, he said that the keyword that would define the next program would be "authenticity"⁶⁶

By stating that *Discovery* was involved in an intense dispute, or "hand to hand" fight with *Netflix*, he acknowledged the threat to the future of the media conglomerate Ross believed that , to fight this battle, it was necessary to recover the "shine" and "prestige" of the company's main channel, *Discovery Channel* with no more shows featuring fictional snakes or sharks, but rather with programming of *quality TV*⁶⁷.

Netflix was, therefore, a hard blow to open TV and pay TV. With the emergence of other *streaming* services, the trend was for growth in the sector, causing traditional TV to run to try to stay in the market. In fact, this phenomenon is present today. Despite all the effort, the *Manhunt* series, like others, ended up on the *streaming* service with which the *Discovery* competed so much

3.3 The production of *Manhunt*: Unabomber

In our interview with the series director, we asked if *Discovery* had any requirements regarding the narrative that was constructed. According to Greg Yaitanes, the company wanted its viewers to feel smarter after watching an episode "The Only The directive we received was to make everyone feel smart"⁶⁸. The atypical investigation method was compatible with this objective

For Yaitanes, the series addressed language concepts that are complex and dense. Therefore, there was a concern about how to convey this content to an audience that was mostly white working-class men unfamiliar with Linguistics. In order to make the content more accessible, the director watched hours of what he classified as *genius porn*, films in which "very intelligent people explain [something] to not so intelligent people".

⁶⁴ *Discovery* Channel Enlists John Goldwyn As Exec Producer For Scripted Programming. THE DEADLINE TEAM. 2015. Available at: <<https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/news/DiscoveryChannelEnlistsJohnGoldwyn-203600119.html>>. Accessed on Nov 27th. 2022

⁶⁵ YAITANES, Greg. *Op cit*.

⁶⁶ 'Historical-themed limited series that would run between four and 10 hours' LITTLETON, Cynthia. *Op. cit*.

⁶⁷ HIBBERD, James. *Op. cit*.

⁶⁸ YAITANES, Greg. *Op cit*

Another element that made the narrative more complex was the use of different timelines: the events of the terrorist's childhood and adolescence, those that occurred in 1995, the last year of the case investigation, and those that took place in 1997, during the trial. by Kaczynski By opting for a non-linear narrative, alternating between periods through the extensive use of flashbacks, it was possible to elaborate and detail the plot⁶⁹ For example, we better understand how the Unabomber's manifesto, gradually, impacted the personal life of the FBI agent

In this sense, the mirroring of Fitzgerald and Kaczynski and the *over* voice used were also strategies that provided nuances in the narrative. In order to engage the viewer, the boundaries between terrorist and police, hero and villain, were blurred According to Sodroski, this was a central element of his script that pleased *Discovery's executives*. "This was for One of the key elements to me when I first presented the program [to *Discovery*] One of the things I said was how, to capture the Unabomber, you must become the Unabomber."⁷⁰ Mittell points out how these narrative devices, voice *over* and alteration of chronology through different timelines (analepsis), can be used to differentiate series with complex and quality narratives⁷¹.

When using these techniques, the production incurred risks. Unlike *streaming* services, because it is originally shown on a cable TV channel, the audience has fewer resources to control the video playback. In other words, a small distraction or misunderstanding about the plot can be enough to miss fundamental elements to understand the narrative⁷² Furthermore, each episode was released weekly. As a result, missing a week or forgetting details from the previous episode can discourage viewing. viewer to continue watching the program.

For Sodroski, one of the biggest challenges in producing *Manhunt* was writing each episode in six acts. In other words, *Discovery* required six interruptions for commercial breaks. The plot needed to be constructed in such a way that, in each segment, there was a peak of suspense at the end of the acts. Thus, the challenge was to keep the viewer's eyes on the screen, watching long commercials, without changing the channel or turning off the device. It was this task that the screenwriter and his team dedicated more time to in the script writing process⁷³

It is interesting to note how *Manhunt* was, in a way, adapted to the more commercial format of *Discovery*. Usually, these scripted series are produced for *streaming* services. > or *premium* cable TV channels that do not directly depend on commercial breaks and advertisements, as their main source is the subscription paid by their viewers⁷⁴

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ "This was for me one of the foundational elements [...] When I first pitched the show, one of the things that I said was this is sort of about how in order to [..] catch the Unabomber, you must become the Unabomber ". SODROSKI, Andrew. *Op. cit.*

⁷¹ "Narratively complex programs". MITTELL, Jason. *Op. cit.*

⁷² LOTZ, Amanda D. *Op. cit.*, 2014.

⁷³ SODROSKI, Andrew *Op. cit.*

⁷⁴ LOTZ, Amanda D. *Op. cit.*, 2014.

Another priority of the production was the intention to create content considered authentic. For Yaitanes, unlike what screenwriter Tony Gittleston considers, *Manhunt* is “absolutely reliable” in its retelling of the events of the Unabomber case⁷⁵ His team conducted hours of interviews with Fitzgerald, who kept six thousand pages of the investigation into the case. Featuring a retired FBI agent legitimized the series as *real*. Furthermore, they went out of their way to make research on the case, sticking to the periods that the narrative covered through interviews with journalists who followed the case and searches for documents, images and objects from the time As a member of the production, an archive researcher was hired responsible for finding these archival materials. era

At the museum in Washington, Yaitanes took note of all the measurements and textures of Kaczynski’s log house to be recreated identically in the studio. This effort included the reproduction of the objects found inside, which were cataloged and photographed by Fitzgerald in 1996 (FIGURES 24, 25 and 26). Thus, we can see the importance and dimension that this project took.



FIGURES 24 AND 25 In these photographs, it is clear that the production made an effort to replicate these materials. Next to the objects are FBI photos taken of Theodore Kaczynski’s cabin

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⁷⁵ “Dead on accurate”. YAITANES, Greg. *Op. cit.*

⁷⁶ Source: Personal archive - photography provided by Greg Yaitanes.



FIGURE 26 Above the objects are photos of the original materials, below are those used in the scene

Yaitanes believes that, before *Manhunt*, the real story of the Unabomber had not been told reliably. He recalled that, in the 1990s, the manifesto was described by the press as the product of the ramblings of an insane man. However, he believes that, if the text had been published in another circumstance, it would have had a different reception. For the director, the events of the time deserved to be told authentically. Thus, he justified his choice to privilege what he considered to be fact.

However, in our interview, we noted that Sodroski had a different goal. The screenwriter sought to humanize the plot with an interesting and convincing story that “is not so much about the facts, but rather about the world and the people behind the facts”⁷⁸.

His objective was to produce a narrative about how a character, within a larger organization, becomes the Unabomber. So, with this structure defined, the screenwriter thought about facts that could enrich the narrative:

That was the story I was trying to tell emotionally in the series. I had the advantage of having all these real events to draw on and structure, to give fuel for the drama and that real-life texture that I could use to draw. So I guess it’s to say that the drama came first and the documentary part came second. (...) I don’t know if you know this distinction between *histoire* and *discours*. I think it’s Levi Strauss, but it’s part of academic thinking about how to tell stories. There is this idea *histoire*, which is basically the infinite number of events with which our reality is composed, and there is *discours*, which is when we tell a story; Even a true story, we are pulling individual elements from the infinite flow of time to tell the story. And actually, the same time stream can tell an infinite number of stories, because you can just pull depending on what you pull, right?⁷⁹

In this way, we can see how complex the production process of *Manhunt* is. In addition to the director’s project being different from the screenwriter’s conception,

⁷⁷ Source: Personal archive - photography provided by Greg Yaitanes.

⁷⁸ “At least for me it is important that we are telling the stories (...) is not really about the facts so much as like the world behind the facts and the people behind the facts.” SODROSKI, Andrew. *Op. cit.*

⁷⁹ ‘Okay, so that’s was kind of the story that I was trying to tell emotionally with the show and I had the advantage of having all these real events to play with it and to structure, to get fuel to the drama and that texture of real life, that I could draw, so I guess is to say that the drama came first, and the docu part of was second. It’s just one of these things, I don’t know if you know this distinction between *histoire* and *discours*, I think it’s Levi Strauss but it is in academic thinking about history telling there is this idea *histoire*, basic the infinite number of events that our reality is composed of one after the other and there is the *discours* which when we tell a story, we are pulling even a true story, we’re pulling individual elements out of the infinite flow of time to tell the story. And actually, the same flow of time can tell an infinite number of stories because you can just pull, depending on what you pull, right?’ SODROSKI, Andrew. *Op. cit.*

the series is the result of the contradiction between the care to reproduce and inform “reality”. of the facts and, at the same time, to entertain your audience with a provocative story. On the other hand, we have *Discovery* executives interested in recovering the company’s prestige and competing with new sophisticated series. The company sought to recover its audience with content that could be understood as reliable and legitimate. The attention to detail in the cinematography, the participation of retired FBI agents and a complex script that permeates the nuances of American traditions were understood as demands from its audience.

3.4 Interpretations and disputes over the narrative of the Unabomber case

3.4.1 Contesting the narrative: retired FBI agents

James Fitzgerald was, without a doubt, the most active personality in the media after the production of *Manhunt*. He reported his participation in the Unabomber case in a *TED Talks*, being presented as a pioneer of an investigative method. The retired agent also gave several interviews about the series for *podcasts*, from the most professional, such as *Best Case Worst Case*, to amateur channels on *Youtubé*[293]

In addition to these platforms, Fitzgerald has his personal *website*, where he posts his own content related to the series, for example, the eight-part audiobook titled *The Fitz Files - Manhunt: Unabomber*, in which he interviewed producers and fans of the television program. In each segment, he started with a table called “The five facts of Fitz *versus* Fiction”, comparing elements of the series with what really happened⁸⁰. In the second part, he interviewed workers on the series and other people responsible for its success.⁸¹ In other words, Fitzgerald knew how to promote himself after he became involved in reporting his participation in the case.

However, Fitzgerald was not the only police officer who called for credit for Kaczynski’s arrest. Retired agent Greg Stejskal, who also participated in the investigation, wrote three long blog articles questioning the narrative of *Manhunt* and its protagonist. He claims that the series diminished the participation of the security agency and its agents who, for years, worked on the case. For him, Fitzgerald’s role in the Unabomber’s arrest was irrelevant, having contributed little to the task force and in decision-making bodies. Even more so, in this version of Stejskal, no textual analysis technique was required to establish Kaczynski as the author of the manifesto. All po-

⁸⁰ “Fitz’s five facts *v* Fiction”. *The Fitz Files - Manhunt: Unabomber*. James Fitzgerald. Available at: <https://www.jamesfitzgerald.com/the-fitz-files-manhunt-unabomber/>>. Accessed on: Jan. 23, 2023.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

lice officers, after reading the texts, would have agreed that the mathematician was the terrorist⁸²

Fitzgerald then wrote a fifteen-page response text on his blog and attached it as a bonus chapter to his book: “Bonus Chapter 20B - The Construction of

Manhunt: Unabomber and the Deconstruction’ of some retired FBI agents”⁸³ Fitzgerald, in the series, is, in his view, a “composite” character. In other words, he would represent an amalgamation of several FBI agents who participated in the investigation. He also argued the importance of linguistic analysis to the case and the relevance of his participation in the task force⁸⁴

In our interview, Fitzgerald pointed out that he sold his life story, relating to the Unabomber case, to *Discovery*. He highlighted that, during production, he acted only as a consultant, having limited power over how the narrative was outlined. In this way, he related the repercussion of the series to the criticisms made by retired agents, adding that the producers had room for “dramatic license”. However, he feels proud of the program and believes that its objective was achieved: to show the FBI in a positive in one of the most complex cases of the 20th century⁸⁵.

The media reception was complicated, I didn’t plan it. I mean, my contract with them... of course I was paid for my time and consultancy on the show, basically telling them my part in the case. Just the Unabomber case, nothing more. I can still sell other parts of my life story if I choose [...] Of course there were parts in the series that didn’t happen in real life. There was a retired FBI agent, I didn’t even know this man, actually, a few agents, who were upset about this. The guy wrote an article on a blog that no one reads, but I shot it down and kind of made him look foolish in the long run. Because my book says it all, my book shows that it was a team effort, that’s how we did it, I was part of that team, I was very happy to be there, I was responsible for the language part. Some people didn’t believe me, that language could really help solve a case [...] so, yes, I was praised by some, criticized by one or two. Of course I know the reality is somewhere in between. [The series] didn’t hit my ego. Relatively, it is where it has

⁸² STEJSKAL, Greg. Stejskal: *Discovery* Channel TV Series on Unabomber Disrespects The Investigation’s Achievements. 2017. Tickle the Wire, Available at: <<https://www.ticklethewire.com/2017/08/10/stejskal-D/scove/y-channel-tv-series-unabomber-disrespects-investigations-achievements-probe/#more-128062>>. Accessed on: 23 Jan. 2023.

⁸³ “Bonus Chapter 20B - The Making of Manhunt. Unabomber, and the “Unmaking” of a Few Retired FBI Agents’. Bonus Chapter 20A - The List. James Fitzgerald. Available at: <<https://www.jamesfitzgerald.com/bonus-chapter-20a-the-list/>>. Accessed on: 23 Jan. 2023.

⁸⁴ FITZGERALD, James. Retired FBI Agent: The Ongoing Attempt to Denigrate the Unabomber TV Series and My Role in the Investigation. Tickle the Wire, 2018. Available at: <<https://www.ticklethewire.com/2018/01/25/retired-fbi-agent-ongoing-attempt-denigrate-unabomber-tv-series-role-investigation/>>. Accessed on: 23 Jan. 2023.

⁸⁵ FITZGERALD, James. *Op cit*.

always been, in a flat line. But I was honored by some of the things people said and some of the things people wrote and some of the interviews I did. But I was just part of a team, my goal was to make the FBI look good. Around 2015, 2016 and 2017, the FBI, especially the senior management, was under some attacks, more in a political way, without going into the details. I was happy to come and say, "Here's how the FBI worked in one of the biggest cases of the 20th century," in which you know several people were killed, dozens were seriously injured, and we stood as a team⁸⁶

In 2020, Stejskal participated in the documentary miniseries *Unabomber In His Own Words*. With four episodes, it was originally shown on *Discovery Channel Canada* and distributed on *streaming* on Netflix⁸⁷ He appears as a central figure for the investigation, being an FBI agent from Ann Arbor, the city of the largest campus of the University of Michigan, where Kaczynski did his doctorate⁸⁸ The program features testimonies from authorities, police, prosecutors and people close to Kaczynski, such as family, colleagues and neighbors. In addition, the background contains excerpts from an audio recording, the result of an interview with the terrorist in a maximum security prison⁸⁹.

⁸⁶ "The media spotlight was pretty trick, I didn't plan on that. I mean my contract with them... I mean of course I was paid for my time and my advice for the show, basically giving them my life story of the Unabomb case nothing else, I can still sell other parts of my life story if I chose [...] Of course, there were parts in the series that didn't happen in real life and there was like one retired FBI agent that I know, I didn't even meet this guy, actually, a couple of them , who were just all out of shape because of this, one guy wrote some article at one some unread blog site, whatever, but I counter that and kind of made him look foolish in the long run. Because my book says it all, my book shows that it was a team effort, here is how we did it, I was part of this team, I was very glad to be there, I was in charge of the language part, some people didn't believe me that language can actually help solve a case [...] So, yeah, I was praised unabashedly by some, criticized by one or two and of course I know the reality is somewhere in the middle and it did nothing to my ego. It is where it was always relativity, flatlined, but I was honored by some of the things people said and some of the things people wrote and some of the interviews that I did. But I was just part of a team, my goal was to make the FBI look good. Back around fifteen, sixteen, and seventeen the FBI, especially its upper management here was under some attacks, more about a political way, without getting into that whole thing. I was glad to come and say "here is how the FBI function for one of the biggest cases of the 20th century[]"*, in which you know multiple people were killed or seriously dozens were injured and we came together". FITZGERALD, James .op cit.

⁸⁷ Yeo, Debra. David Kaczynski turned in his brother the Unabomber. He hopes a new docuseries helps people see Ted Kaczynski as a human being. *Toronto Star*, February 28, 2020. Available at: <<https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/television/2020/02/28/david-kaczynski-turned-in-his-brother-unabomber-he-hopes-a-new-docuseries-helps-people-see-ted-kaczynski-as-a-human-being.html>>. Accessed on: 26 Jan. 2023.

⁸⁸ It was also to this university that, in 1985, he sent a bomb to a Psychology professor. Retired FBI agent recalls crucial Ann Arbor connection that helped nab the Unabomber. *MICHIGAN RADIO*, Available at: <<https://www.interlochenpublicradio.org/michigan-arts-culture/2017-09-12/retired-fbi-agent-recalls-crucial-ann-arbor-connection-that-helped-nab-the-unabomber>>. Accessed on: 26 Jan. 2023.

⁸⁹ Yeo, Debra. *Op. cit.*

In this sense, we believe that the discussion about the “trustworthiness” of the Unabomber investigation can be understood as a dispute for authority. Because they project legitimacy and a sense of reality, retired FBI agents are invited to participate in the creation of cultural products. At first glance, it is the number of interests and conflicts involved

There is a dispute for memory, for credit and for resolving the longest and most costly case in the history of the FBI. In addition, there is also considerable financial relevance, with participation in television programs, books and courses. For example, in recent years, Fitzgerald was frequently on *Fox News* programs, being presented as the agent who “played a crucial role in the investigation and arrest of the Unabomber”⁹⁰ Based on this authority, the agent is interviewed as an expert on current issues (FIGURE 27)



FIGURE 27 - James Fitzgerald on the FoxNews program (2018). In the background, the poster for *Manhunt: Unabomber*

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⁹⁰ FORMER FBI profiler on the psychology of a serial bomber 2018. B&W. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4WwQDtAEs0>>. Accessed on: 26 Jan. 2023.

⁹¹ *Same.*

3.4.2 Letters to Kaczynski

In our research, we had the opportunity to examine Kaczynski's correspondence in the archive of the *Joseph Labadie Collection* (University of Michigan)⁹². The institution's objective is to protect the history of social movements and politically marginalized communities. According to curator Julie Herrada, "this is a collection that documents history seen from below"⁹³ In this way, Herrada argues that one of the reasons for preserving the The Unabomber's objects are their importance within political dissent in the United States, as "Kaczynski stands within the tradition of those Americans who have been vocal in their rejection of technology and modernity in their lives, from Thoreau to Scott Nearing"⁹⁴

The institution, with Kaczynski's contribution, preserves its documents, such as manuscripts, legal records, research materials, notes, letters, films and publications. We note that he uses the archive to mediate his message, indicating to his senders the reading of his manuscripts that are available locally.

In this section, we only explore correspondence dated after the series aired, between 2017 and 2018, received by the Unabomber at the maximum security prison in Florence, Colorado. We work, more specifically, with those that dealt with *Manhunt*, sent by spectators, production members and journalists Kaczynski did not respond to all of his senders. However, he left small notes in the letters in pen, in which he expressed his opinions. Furthermore, in order to protect the privacy of its authors, the file provided the identity of only public figures who came into contact with the terrorist.

As discussed in the second chapter, *Manhunt* suggests that the character Kaczynski becomes radicalized after being tortured and used as a guinea pig at Harvard as part of the MKUitra project in the 1950s. Thus, in November 2017, three months after the series debut, the Unabomber received, in prison, correspondence that made reference to this event

The sender only identified herself with the name Jennifer In the text, she expressed her sadness about "all the terrible things" that had happened in the terrorist's youth The author believes that he was the victim of an "injustice" and revealed regret about

⁹² Mariana Villaça, in *Overlapping identities: the case of the Soy Cuba Film*, articulates correspondences with audiovisual production. See in: VILLAÇA, MM Overlapping identities: the case of the film Soy Cuba (Mikhail Kalatosov, 1964)? Dossier: Cuban-Soviet history and cinema. ArtCultura (UFU), v. 13, p. 41-59, 2011.

⁹³ 'History of social protest movements and marginalized political communities [...] this is a collection that documents history from below" JULIE HERRADA. The Ted Kaczynski Papers: FBI files and photographs. M. Library Blogs. Available at: <[https:// apps.lib.umich.edu/blogs/beyond-reading-room/ted-kaczynski-papers-fbi-files-and-photographs](https://apps.lib.umich.edu/blogs/beyond-reading-room/ted-kaczynski-papers-fbi-files-and-photographs):*. Accessed on: Jul 16, 2022.

⁹⁴ Kaczynski is in the tradition of those Americans who have been outspoken in their rejection of technology and modernity in their lives, from Thoreau to Scott Nearing." To see more about how the archive was structured and Kaczynski's relationship with the institution , see in: HERRADA, Julie. *Op cit.*, 2003.

the alleged violence suffered during his life: “I wish life could have been different for you and the people you hurt”⁹⁵

Kaczynski did not send a response to Jennifer. However, he underlined part of the text and wrote a small note on the side: “Bullshit from the *Discovery series*.” It is interesting to note the attempt to exert control over the narrative, even in something apparently harmless. However, he was aware that, by sending his letter to the University of Michigan, he would have possible readers of this document. This way, he ensured that his rejection of the series was recorded in the file (FIGURE 28)

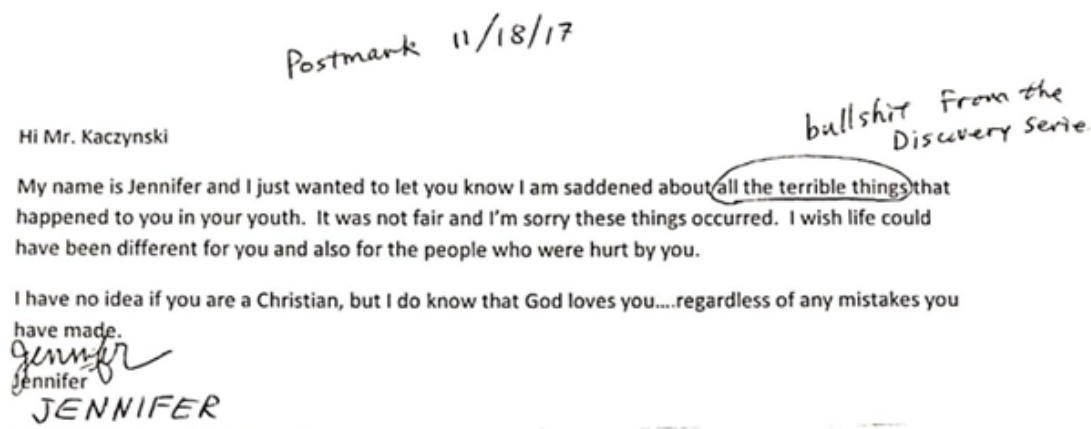


FIGURE 28 - Letter sent to Theodore Kaczynski, authored by 'Jennifer'. Ann Arbor. Joseph A. Labadie Collection - Ted Kaczynski Correspondences (*manuscript*) Box 97. folder 128-1294

Andrew Kaczynski, a CNN journalist, no relation to the terrorist, sent a letter to the Unabomber in December 2017. In this correspondence, he asked if he was aware of the series on *Discovery* and his opinion on the narrative . The sender described episode six in detail (*Ted*) and asked about your participation in the scientific research: “The episode that focuses entirely on you seems to place your time at Harvard as an important moment in your life and identifies Henry Murray’s experiments as the root of his ideology.”⁹⁶ Finally, he highlighted the main elements of the plot, highlighting that “the main arc focuses on the failure of traditional methods and the new and

⁹⁵ Ann Arbor. Joseph A. Labadie Collection - Ted Kaczynski Correspondences (manuscript). Box 97 folder 128-1294.

⁹⁶ “The episode that focuses entirely on you seems to place your time at Harvard as an important time in your life and identifies the Henry Murray experience you took part in as the roots of your ideology” Ann Arbor. Joseph A. Labadie Collection - Ted Kaczynski Correspondences (*manuscript*) Box 97. folder 1350.

experimental field of forensic linguistics, which proved to be the crucial element in his capture”⁹⁷.

The Unabomber responded to the journalist’s letter In the opening paragraph, he suggested reading his book, indicating that it might be of interest to him. He then said that he did not watch the series He states, however, based on the testimony of other journalists, that *Manhunt* is not reliable with the facts He complains about having received several letters expressing regret about the traumatic events represented in the series “People write to me to tell me how sorry they feel for me because I was tortured’ repeatedly by Murray’s group as part of an MK Ultra experiment allegedly carried out by the CIA”⁹⁸. He admitted to being part of the experiments. However, he denied the long-term effect on his mental health, stating that ”there was only one unpleasant experience in Murray’s study that lasted about half an hour and could not reasonably be described as traumatic.”⁹⁹ Ultimately, Kaczynski recommended that the journalist consulted the article critical of the series, written by retired agent Greg Stejskal, critic of Fitzgerald, and the archive in Ann Arbor, where other correspondence about the MKUltra project is located (FIGURE 29).

It is important to note that, between his arrest and trial, in 1996 and 1997, Kaczynski was one of the central subjects of the North American media. According to Sheptoski, major newspapers sought to “psychologize the terrorist to understand the reasons for his radicalization. Most commonly used to refer to him were: “paranoid”, “schizophrenic”, “sociopath”, “mentally ill” and “disturbed”. He was understood from the idea of abnormality, excluding the fact that he was also a politically motivated man. In this interpretation, the use of medical terms to mention the Unabomber resulted in the neutralization of “his criticisms of industrial society”¹⁰⁰

We understand that Kaczynski criticized the series *Manhunt* to distance himself from the experiments conducted at Harvard during his academic training. For part of the series’ audience, as represented by the letters, this event linked the terrorist attacks to supposed mental disorders. Kaczynski, in prison, sought to minimize his participation in Murray’s study. Thus, the public would understand his action as political, placing his ideas expressed in the manifesto at the forefront.

In February 2017, when the script still maintained its original title, “Manifesto”, video engineer David Presley sent a letter to Kaczynski. He identified himself as a member of the production, summarizing, in a few words, the narrative of the series. :

⁹⁷ ”The overarching of the series focuses on traditional law enforcement methods failing to capture you and the experimental and new field of forensic linguistics proving the key element’ *Ibid*.

⁹⁸ *ibid*.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁰ SHEPTOSKI, Matthew P. Ideology or Insanity? Media Presentation of Ted Kaczynski and Tim McVeigh 2002 111 f. Thesis (Doctorate) - Sociology Course, Western Michigan University, Michigan, 2002.

TED KACZYNSKI
 to
 ANDREW KACZYNSKI
 CNN KEFILE
 925 UNION STREET
 APT 3B
 BROOKLYN NY 11215

[Corrected first draft SAVE,
 Carbon copy will be sent to Alex
 Uziel.]

February 2, 2018
 Groundhog Day

Dear Mr. Kaczynski,

Thank you for your undated letter postmarked 12/5/17, which I received on 12/21/17. I'm sorry I've taken so long to answer it, but I have too much work to do, and at the age of 75 I can't keep up with it all.

I'm writing mainly to call your attention to my book Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How, which may be of interest to you. You can order a copy from www.fitchmadison.com or amazon.com.

But I'll also answer your question concerning the Discover Channel series about my case. I haven't seen the series myself, but to judge from what people have written to me about it, it's mostly fiction. This does not surprise me in the least; media reports about me have generally been loaded with bull manure. In particular, reports about the Murray study have been wildly, wildly exaggerated. People write to tell me how sorry for me they feel because I was "tortured" again and again by the Murray group as part of an "MK Ultra" experiment allegedly carried out by the CIA. Actually there was only one unpleasant experience in the Murray study; it lasted about half an hour and could not reasonably have been described as "traumatic". Mostly the study consisted of interviews and filling out pencil-and-paper personality tests. ^{It was not involved.} About 15 or 20 years ago a TV journalist named Chris Vlasto (if I remember the name correctly) looked up some of the other participants in the study and found that nothing had happened that was worth reporting in the media. My brief correspondence with Vlasto should be available in the University of Michigan's Special Collections library at Ann Arbor. On the inaccuracy of the Discovery series, see "Discovery Channel TV Series on Unabomber Disrespects the Investigation's Achievements," by ex-FBI agent Greg Stejskal, <http://ticklethewire.com/about-us/greg-stejskal/>

yours,
 Ted Kaczynski

FIGURE 29 - Theodore Kaczynski's response to Journalist Andrew Kaczynski's correspondence. Ann Arbor Joseph A. Labadie Collection - Ted Kaczynski Correspondences (mant/smt0) Box 97. folder 1350

"I'm working on the *Manifesto* project for the *Discovery Channel*, which is about you and the FBI's efforts to capture you."¹⁰¹

The reason that led Presley to establish correspondence with Kaczynski was expressed in the first lines "Working on recreating scenes of death and destruction caused by you led me to read your manifesto"¹⁰² He also formulated a series of questions to understand the ideas of the terrorist as well as the rationality behind the choice of their targets.

At what point was primitive man in harmony with nature? [...] 1a. What do you imagine the world would be like after the collapse of industrial society? [...] 2. Why did you choose soft targets? If your goal was to start a revolution, triggering the downfall of the industrial system, why bomb the computer store owner or university professors? An electrical transmission network, a dam, highway bridges, rail systems, these all seem like targets that would put pressure on the system without the need to kill or maim.¹⁰³

Kaczynski wrote an unsent response to the production member. In his text, after recommending the reading of his books and the manuscript *Truth vs Lies*, he adopted a hostile position by disqualifying its sender: "you seem to me extremely innocent [...] Man, use your head!" Thus, he concluded the letter by questioning what the objective of *Discovery* would be in producing a series about his life, decades after his arrest and the trial of his case. Again, Kaczynski recorded his criticisms in the archive and disputed the narrative of the case with the *Manhunt* series (FIGURE 30).

Now, I have a question for you. You said you're working on a project for the *Discovery Channel* about me and "the FBI's effort to capture me." My bombings ended 22 years ago, my trial concluded 19 years ago. However, all this time, over and over again, *ad nauseam*, the media keeps running these programs about me, why?¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ "currently working on the project *Manifesto* for the *Discovery Channel* about you and the FBI effort to capture you". Ann Arbor. Joseph A. Labadie Collection - Ted Kaczynski Correspondences (*manuscript*) Box 97. Folder 1314.0.

¹⁰² "working to recreate the scenes of death and destruction wrought on people by you have pushed me to read your manifesto". *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ "1. At what point was primitive man in balance with nature? [...] 1a. What do you envision the world would look like after the collapse of the industrial society? [...] 2. Why did you select such inconsequential targets? If your goal was to start a revolution, to spark the downfall of the industrial system why bomb a computer store owner or a college professor? A power grid, a dam, highway bridges, rail systems all seem like targets that would have actually put stress on to the system and with out killing or harming individual people" *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ "Now I have a question for you. You say you're working on a project for *Discovery Channel* about me & "the FBI effort to capture me". 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, why?" *Ibid.*

According to the curator of the archive, since his arrest, Kaczynski has adopted, in his correspondence, a disdain towards anyone “connected to the media [], ignoring or responding with sarcasm and even in a hostile manner”. his posture in other letters, in which he would be “friendly, sympathetic, funny and sometimes even charming”¹⁰⁵

Their distrust of the media is notorious among a wider public, as noted in a letter dated 2018, sent by a group of young people. On the title page of this document, they wished Kaczynski “happy holidays” for the end of the year. Accompanied by this greeting, they wrote short statements and attached images of nature. Some, young white people, identified themselves through photographs.

On the back of the correspondence, one of these individuals provided further details and introduced himself as a “representative”. He referred to Kaczynski as “Ted” and used more personal language. He stated that the group was politically diverse, all were young and had established contact, among themselves, over the internet, as they shared an admiration for the Unabomber’s ideas. More importantly, the sender points out that some of these members met Kaczynski after watching a television program that represented him favorably¹⁰⁶

Hi, Ted [...] I volunteered in the group to be the postcard sender [...] this letter came about as an idea from my friend to ask people on the internet if they would like to send a greeting [to you]. This could be done anonymously or directly, but all greetings are from young people. It’s a mix of right-wing Trump supporters, primitivists, people who saw a television show about you (which is very positive about you and surprisingly represents you in a good light), occultists, post-left anarchists (a new kind of anarchist who values freedom more than leftism)¹⁰⁷

It is important to reiterate that Kaczynski, even with the limitations of a maximum security prison, sought to establish control over the narrative. He tried to convince his reader, with his correspondence in the archive, that *Manhunt* was not faithful to the facts. Furthermore, despite the member of the series’ production team not responding, he sought to attack the sender’s intelligence. Thus, the main point he tried to deconstruct about the narrative was his representation as a guinea pig in the MKUitra experiment.

¹⁰⁵ HERRADA, Julie Op c it. 2003. p 42

¹⁰⁶ Ann Arbor. Joseph A. Labadie Collection - Ted Kaczynski Correspondences (manuscript} Box 98.

Folder 1399.0.

¹⁰⁷ ”Hello (...) I’ve volunteered from the group to be the sender of the post card [...] This letter came as an idea of my friend to ask people on the Internet if they wanted to send you a Holliday greeting. This could be done anonymously or directly but all greetings are from young people. It is a mix of right-wing trump supporters, primitivisms. people who saw a show about you on television (who it is pretty positive of you surprising enough and displays you in a good way) occultists, post-left anarchists (new kind of anarchist who value liberty more than leftism)’. Ibid.

However, as we can see in these young people's letters, *Manhunt* is a complex cultural product, and can be interpreted in different ways. This group has a positive perception about how Kaczynski and his ideas were represented in the program, which, in fact, encouraged them to look for more information about the Unabomber. Although they did not literally mention the title of the series, our argument gains strength based on the coverage by journalists. As we see in the next item, many critics pointed out how the television program introduced the figure of the terrorist to a younger generation on social media.

The Unabomber case mobilized many people before and after the investigation, before and after the trial. The reception of the case can be seen in the young people (probably from the extreme right) above. They interpreted and understood what interested them. More than that, there was, and is, a dispute over the nature of the case that mobilized FBI agents and former agents, producers of the series and Theodore Kaczynski himself, probably the most interested in having the story under his control.

3.4.3 Manhunt and the recovery of Theodore Kaczynski on social media

The debut of *Manhunt* catalyzed the creation of an online subculture. The members of this group, present on social media, are part of the *Pine Tree Community*. They use an image (or *emoji*) of a pine tree next to their names. One of the group's founders, who identified himself as "Rin", reported that he knew the Unabomber's writings prior to the series. He organized an online collection of his manuscripts and prison correspondence¹⁰⁸

However, in 2018, noticing the growing interest in Kaczynski's figure on the networks, Rin organized these people into a community. He formed a radical reading club, suggesting works of political literature. It is important to note that these people are very young and have no memory of the 1990s case. In an interview, this leader reported how the series was central to introducing the Unabomber's ideas to this audience:

'Manhunt: Unabomber provided the perfect breeding ground for introducing the ideology to the right people," Rin said [to the reporter], "People attracted to the ideas began to interact with each other and formed a social base. They were able to form a community and slowly develop a culture. This is what eventually became *Prim Twitter* [*Primitivist Twitter* being another name for the community *Pine Tree*]"¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ HANRAHAN, Jake. Inside the Unabomber's odd and furious online revival. Wired UK. 2018. Available at: <<https://www.wired.co.uk/article/unabomber-netflix-tv-series-ted-kaczynski>>. Accessed on: 08 Feb. 2023.

¹⁰⁹ "Manhunt: Unabomber was the perfect breeding ground to introduce the ideology to suitable people", Rin says. "The people attracted to the ideas began interacting with each other and formed themselves [into] a social base. They were able to form a community and slowly develop a culture. This

TED KACZYNSKI
to
DAVID PRESLEY
P.O. BOX 682
HANAIE HI 96714

NOT SENT

March 2, 2017

Dear Mr. Presley:

Thanks for your undated letter postmarked 2/23/17, which I received today. You'll find the answers to some of your questions in my books Technological Slavery, available from www.feralhouse.com, and Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How, available from www.fitchmadison.com.

Alternatively, you should be able to get either of these two books from amazon.com. You might also be interested in my manuscript Truth versus Lies, which you can get in electronic form from jherrada@umich.edu.

For the rest, I'll only add that you seem extremely naive. You ask why I didn't blow up "a power grid, a dam, highway bridges, rail systems." Blowing up a major highway bridge would have required hundreds of pounds of explosives, an important dam thousands of pounds. Given that my financial resources were minimal, where do you suppose I could have gotten such quantities of explosives? How could I have transported them and put them in place without risk of people noticing clues such as description of the vehicle, perhaps the license number? And 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? To the people on a train that got derailed? To the people living downstream of a dam (think of Oroville)? Use your head, man!

Now I have a question for you. You say you're working on a project for Discovery Channel about me & "the FBI effort to capture" me. My bombing campaign ended 22 years ago, my trial was completed

17

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. Why?

Ted Kaczynski

FIGURE 30 - Correspondence between David Presley, member of the Manhunt production, with Theodore Kaczynski. Ann Arbor. Joseph A. Labadie Collection — Ted Kaczynski Correspondences (manuscript) Box 98. Folder 1399.0

Journalist Hanrahan, who investigated the resurgence of Kaczynski's figure on the networks, criticized the series for being 'factually inaccurate', establishing a parallel between the character Fitzgerald and members of the community: everyone would have been attracted by the Unabomber's message of dissent despite initially being part of distinct political groups, they would be united in embracing the collapse of civilization and the love of nature¹¹⁰ Like Agent Fitz in *Manhunt*, Kaczynski's new followers are attracted by his theories. hundreds of young men seeking to reconnect with nature, as an act of rebellion against the state of Western civilization¹¹¹

As the group took on greater proportions, the community transformed, moving away from what its founder had idealized. Initially seeking to direct the group towards eco-anarchism, Rin quickly noticed that members were mobilizing far-right ideologies and "flirting with fascism". In this sense, they spent hours creating provocative *memes* that use the image of Kaczynski, who they refer to as *Uncle Ted*¹¹².

Similarly, as part of a series titled *The Decade of Hate*, the media group *Vice* produced the episode *White Supremacy Meets Eco-Warriors*¹¹³ (FIGURE 31). In this 2022 program, it is argued that, in the United States, an extreme right is emerging with the environment as its central theme. This movement, however, did not have a central figure or organization with which they could identify.

The program points out that, with the premiere of *Manhunt*, Kaczynski's figure began to be used as a symbol to mobilize and attract a generation concerned about the climate crisis. Again, they cited the *Pine Tree Community*, warning that its members had become part of supremacist groups. According to Mareia Allison, they articulate racism with two other elements: the defense of wild nature and anti-immigration policies Therefore, for the communicator, these young people identified with the character in the series, as they are white men who feel extremely intelligent, but misunderstood by society¹¹⁴

I believe he is idealized because he was represented as a misunderstood white man who is too smart for his own good and doesn't fit into society because he knew more than other people. This is how many ecofascists see

is what eventually became Prim Twitter [Primrtivist Twitter being another name for the pine tree community' *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ "They were all united by Rin under a popular front that "embraced collapse' and "loved nature' *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ "Like agent Fitz in *Manhunt*, the new Kaczynski followers are drawn to his theories. In this sense, there is somewhat of a Freedom Club revival happening - hundreds of young men seeking to reconnect with nature, as in the act of rebelling against the state of Western civilization, all couched in Ted Kaczynski's antitech ideas" *Ibid.*

¹¹² "Some in the community began flirting with fascism," Rin says." *ibid.*

¹¹³ WHITE Supremacy Meets Eco-Warriors | Decade of Hate. Sl: Vice World News, 2022. Son., color. Available at: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aGXo-s15Nk&t>>. Accessed on: 9 Feb. 2023.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

themselves, because they are trying to marry far-right ideology with far-left ideology, so there really is no place for them in society¹¹⁵

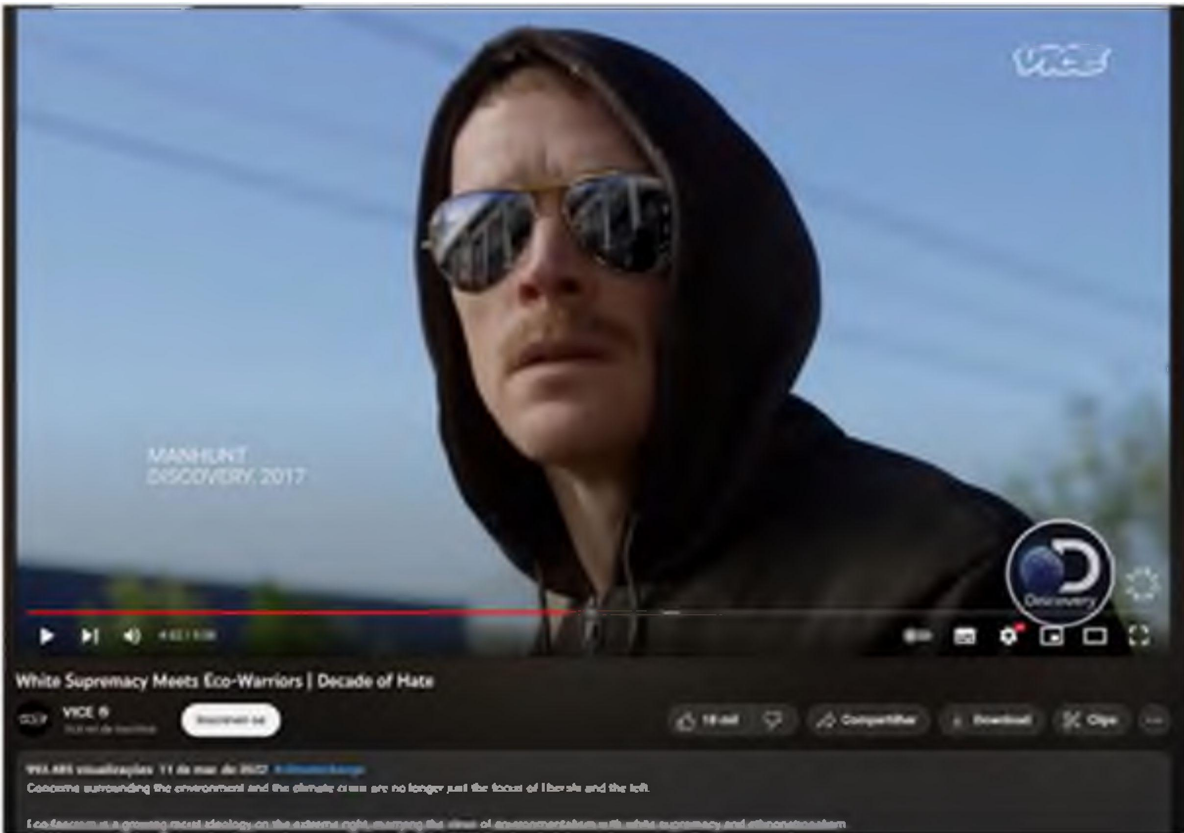


FIGURE 31 - *Vice* in an investigative article about the far right reproduces the trailer for *Manhunt: Unabomber*

However, it is important to note that, as early as the late 1980s, some dissident figures and organizations were flirting with the far right.¹¹⁶ According to Blair Taylor, the notorious radical environmental group *Earth First!*, linked to anarchism, defended anti-immigration policies Dave Foreman, one of its founders, identified himself as a "wilderness hillbilly" and criticized a supposed growing influence of feminism and

¹¹⁵ "I guess he's idealized because he's portrayed as this misunderstood white man who's too smart for his own good and couldn't fit in with society because he knew better than other people and that's how a lot of eco-fascists would see themselves because they're marrying far-right ideology with far-left so there's already not really a place for them in society and you therefore see these violent responses like mass shooting*. *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ For more on the extreme right and its relationship with Nature see: FORCHTNER, Bernhard (ed). *The Far Right and the Environment: politics, discourse and communication*. New York: Routledge, 2020.

anarchism to the detriment of protecting nature. He was a spokesman for the anti-immigration group *Apply the Brakes*¹¹⁷ Edward Abbey, a writer for the group and defender of *wilderness*, also spoke in opposition to immigration: “ a mass influx (...) of culturally-morally-genetically impoverished peoples”¹¹⁸ Thus, the political positions adopted by Abbey and Foreman motivated the fragmentation of *Earth First!*.

The researcher argues that portions of the extreme right mobilized *wilderness* to denounce a conspiracy theory that links a “white genocide” to the extermination of nature. In this sense, instead of analyzing capitalism and consumer culture as causes of climate change, they argue that overpopulation and the spread of non-Western cultures threaten the last “untouched” forests and the depletion of natural resources¹¹⁹ The two subjects Journalism about the series *Manhunt* points out that young people enchanted by the character Kaczynski defend these ideas.

In our interviews, we asked the producers about the repercussion in the media and the reintroduction of the Unabomber from the series Sodroski highlighted that the “philosopher Kaczynski’s” criticisms about modernity deserve to be remembered and discussed¹²⁰ Therefore, he believes it is positive that in *Manhunt* was able to recover the image of the radical for a young audience. However, for him, the program managed to find a balance in representing the terrorist, also representing the violence perpetrated by explosive devices. According to the screenwriter, by using the camera in *POV* (an acronym in English for “point of view”), they allowed the viewer to experience, from their own perspective, all the destruction. Ideally, the audience would be shocked by the act, imagining it happening in their own living room. Finally, Sodroski adds that the idea was to demonstrate empathy for Kaczynski as a traumatized and lonely subject.

I think it’s great that the series is reintroducing Ted Kaczynski to a younger audience. I think he deserves to be; his ideas deserve to live We really must deal with the ideas he put forward and the insights he has about modernity. At the same time, I think there’s no way to watch the show and not be truly horrified by the violence of those bombs and what they did to the victims. For us it was a fine line to cross, I think for us it’s really important to respect Ted Kaczynski, the philosopher, the thinker, at the same time, totally condemn Theodore Kaczynski as the man with the explosive devices. You’ll notice [in the series] that in most attacks, the point of view is not an objective point of view, we are in the middle of it. I think it’s a very visceral experience, having a bomb go off in your house. I find it very disturbing, and so in some ways it speaks to this moral perspective that we bring. At

¹¹⁷ Redneck for wilderness”. TAYLOR, Blair. *Alt-right Ecology: ecofascism and far-right environmentalism in the united states*. In: FORCHTNER, Bernhard (ed). *Op cit.*, New York : Routledge, 2020. pp. 1-268.

¹¹⁸ ‘mass influx of (...) culturally-morally-genetically impoverish people”. ABBEY, Edward. *One Life at Time Please*. New York: Henry Holt and Co, 1980. p. 31-38., *apud*, TAYLOR, Blair. *Op cit.*

¹¹⁹ TAYLOR, Blair. *Op cit.*

¹²⁰ SODROSKI, Andrew *Op cit.*

the same time, this doesn't mean that we can't empathize with the person who was so isolated, unloving, desperate for human connection, and that his only way to reach people is through violence¹²¹

Yaitanes addressed this dynamic in a similar way, saying that the idea of creating episode six (*Ted*), in which Kaczynski's life story is told, came from him. The director stated that the series is a "work of art" and, in this way, allows each subject to have their own interpretation of the object "If we have gone too far it is for each individual's personal taste; I think we have found a healthy balance"¹²²

He pointed out that Kaczynski conveyed a message in the 1990s that deserves to be discussed today Yaitanes, unlike the *Pine Tree* community, does not identify with acts of terror Finally, the director reported his interaction with the screenwriter in creating the character Kaczynski, which he characterized as a search for balance, since "Andrew [Sodroski] and I got along well, we were like ying and yang to each other. Andrew had a lot of compassion for Ted, and we had to balance that."¹²³ Thus, we can say that *Manhunt* is a complex product, the result of negotiations between the producers' different visions.

To this day I don't identify with Ted. If any of them [victims] were my friend, I would want whoever did that arrested. That was always on my mind while working, however, I wanted to show the life he [Kaczynski] led. He was focused and selective, but all to alert the world to what was coming with technology, and that was really interesting. Because it is fascinating to look at the present, in which technology has invaded my life and that of my children; you know, the lack of [playful] games, the time in front of the screen, the addiction, the mood swings and everything that it does, it all brings a lot of sadness¹²⁴

¹²¹ 'I think it's great that it is reintroducing Ted Kaczynski to a younger audience. I think he deserves to be; his ideas deserve to live on. We really ought to ourselves to grapple with the ideas he laid out and the insights that he has about modernity. I think at the same time, I don't think there is any way you can watch the show and not be really horrified by the violence of those bombs and what those did to the victims. For us it was really a tricky line to walk, I think for us is really important to respect Ted Kaczynski the philosopher, the thinker, and at the same time to totally condemn Theodore Kaczynski the bomber You will notice like for most of the bombings the POV is not an objective POV, we are there in the middle of it. I think it is a very visceral experience, what it is to have a bomb go off in your home, I find it very upsetting and like, in a way that speaks to that moral perspective we bring to it. At the same time, it doesn't mean that we can't empathize with the person who was so isolated, unloved, cut off, and desperate for human connection that his only way to reach out to people is through violence". SODROSKI, Andrew. *Op eft*.

¹²² "Whether if we went too far is for someone's personal taste. I think we found a healthy balance". YAITANES, Greg. *Opcit*

¹²³ "Andrew and I were good, sort of ying and yang to each other. Andrew had a lot of compassion for Ted and we had to balance it out." *Ibid*.

¹²⁴ "Still to this day I don't identify with Ted. If any of those were my friends like I want that guy down. That was always in my mind while I was working but I wanted to show the life he led. He was

Despite having pleased a right-wing audience in the United States, the series was not renewed for a second season. As stated by Sodroski, *Manhunt Deadly Games* was written during the filming of *Unabomber*. This new season was created with *Discovery's* target audience in mind.

The series tells the story of Richard Jewel in the 1990s, a white, southern man who was wrongly singled out by the media as responsible for the attacks at the Atlanta Olympics. At first, he was treated as a hero for having prevented a greater tragedy by spotting the explosive device and evacuate people. However, he was then summarily condemned for being the one who had planted the bomb and accused of having "hero syndrome" and simulating the action. He is represented as suffering prejudice for living with his mother, having a strong accent and being overweight. Thus, in the next section, we explore the reasons why *Discovery* didn't move forward with the project. What's more, since the premiere of *Manhunt: Unabomber* this was the company's last scripted project, as we have already stated.

3.5 Manhunt: Unabomber as a risky business

Within the audiovisual industry, *Discovery* is known for its frugality¹²⁵. Its typical hour-long program costs the TV group around US\$400.000¹²⁶. In contrast, *Manhunt* cost \$5 million per episode¹²⁷. Although company executives were motivated to produce a scripted show, there were internal tensions over the budget from controlling shareholders.

As it is a high-cost project for the company, *Discovery* chose to invest in a miniseries. As pointed out by Lotz, this has been a tactic used by broadcasters and cable channels to test new programming that challenges conventional limits¹²⁸. In this sense, *Manhunt* tries to enter the niche of *quality series* and, mainly, in the wake of *True Detective* (HBO, 2014 - present). Fitzgerald mentioned how the cable group was interested in following a similar route: "All of a sudden, *True Detective* did really well, and *Discovery Channel* said, We want something like this"¹²⁹. Likewise, Sodroski cited the

selective and targeted and yet all to a means to warn the world about what was coming with technology and that was really interesting. Because it was really fascinating in the present day where technology completed overrun my life and my kid's life and you know, the lack of play that happens, the screen time and addiction and mood swings and everything that it does, just really in a lot of ways bring sadness'. YAITANES, Greg. *Op cit.*

¹²⁵ LOW, Elaine. Warner Bros. *Discovery* touts its huge reality TV portfolio but insiders predict staff cuts and 'intense pressure' to trim unscripted budgets at HBO and HBO Max. Business Insider. May 18, 2022 Available at: <<https://www.businessinsider.com/wamer-bros-Dzsccovery-hbo-max-reality-tv-future-unscripted-2022-5>>. Accessed: November 27, 2022

¹²⁶ HARWELL, Drew. *Op cit.*

¹²⁷ YAITANES, Greg *Op cit.*

¹²⁸ LOTZ, Amanda D., *Op. cit.* 2014.

¹²⁹ "All of a sudden *True Detective* did very well, and *Discovery Channel* said: we want something like that" FITZGERALD, James. *Op cit.*

groundbreaking series as inspiration for *Manhunt*, stating that, in his opinion, “it was a very important series, like a precursor, that allowed us to take risks”¹³⁰.

Seeking to produce *quality content*, *Manhunt* had renowned actors in its cast: Sam Worthington (*Avatar*), Paul Bettany (*Avengers*), Jane Lynch (*Glee*, *Best in Show*, *A Mighty Wind*), Christopher Noth (*Law & Order*, *Sex and the City*) and others. In addition to this costly talent, the production cost was considerable, because, as suggested by Yaitanes, there was a concern with representing the objects, scenarios and historical moments of the 1990s accurately, closer to Fitzgerald’s real story¹³¹.

However, Yaitanes and Sodroski highlighted the challenges of producing a scripted series for a company that does little innovate in the narrative structure of its programs. The director pointed out that although there were workers with previous experience in scripted projects, he faced some obstacles with people without experience with that format “it was like having to teach them narrative film, and there was some experience from people who had been involved in other jobs, but it was culturally difficult to do so”¹³². More importantly, there was tension over costs, considering that one episode of *Manhunt* could pay for most of a season of the company’s well-known *reality shows*

I remember the shock of how much an episode would cost. Their budget for the programs was not very expensive. We had 5 million an episode, you know, that’s a lot of money, and we had expensive talent, we had a great story, we had a lot to do, and it was familiar and unfamiliar [...] I think we got there with money to spare. At the same time, the president was so excited about what we were doing that it would be a real paradigm shift for the company. So sometimes we had more support, because we were the only project with a script, we had their full attention. While we had their full attention, we were constantly scrutinized. But John Goldwyn was a great producer and resolved these interferences, because they [controllers] really trusted him. He was exactly how a great producer should be, protecting us and sheltering us in the project¹³³

¹³⁰ ‘I think that was a pretty important show, setting the table for what we were able to do in this show and the risks we were able to take’. SODROSKI, André. *Op. cit.*

¹³¹ YAITANES, Greg. *Op. cd.*

¹³² “But it was sort of like having to teach them narrative film and there was some experience of the people who have been involved from other jobs, but it was difficult culturally to do that”. *Ibid.*

¹³³ ‘I remember ongoing sticker shock of what an episode would cost. It was like their budget for their shows isn’t very expensive. We were 5 million an episode, you know it’s a lot of money, and we had expensive talent, we had a big story, we had a lot to do and so that was both familiar and unfamiliar. [...] We got there, I think with money to spare but it was sort of like having to teach them narrative film and there was some experience of the people who have been involved from other jobs, but it was difficult culturally to do that, at the same time the president was so gun-ho in what we were doing that was gonna be a real paradigm shift for the network and so we had in a way sometimes more support, because we were the only scripted project, we had all their attention. At the same time, we had all their attention, we were heavily scrutinized, but John Goldwyn was such a great producer and ran a lot of

When we asked why the second season, *Manhunt: Deadly Games*, is on *Spectrum* (*Charter Communications*) and not *Discovery*, Sodroski and Yaitanes responded emphasizing different motivations. Initially, executives thought that the show's narrative would please the channel's audience. However, the first season did not reach its target audience. Instead, it attracted those to the channel who, traditionally, were not part of its audience¹³⁴ In the end, the cable company has chosen not to alienate its existing viewers as it relies on them to serve its advertisers.

There was resistance from *Discovery's* controlling shareholders, who were more critical of a risky project¹³⁵ They preferred to continue producing the channel's low-cost conventional formats, which had proven extremely profitable throughout the company's history of cable TV. An early indication of this hesitancy can be seen in the strategy of spreading production risks. In the first stages of filming, *Discovery* looked for a partner to mitigate the cost involved in this endeavor¹³⁶ The response was *Netflix*, selling the series for *streaming* in a secondary window¹³⁷ *Manhunt* was clearly developed to be watched in the traditional television format, although outside the United States the series is part of the service's catalog and is presented as an "Original from *Netflix*". Furthermore, we can assume that some of the production costs were already being covered by the studio (*Lionsgate*)¹³⁸

interference with that because they really trusted in him, he was exactly like a great producer should be, protecting us and housing us in the project." *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ YAITAN ES, Greg. *Op. cit.*

¹³⁵ SODROSKI, Andrew *Op. cit.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ The main financing method for television programs is deficit financing, in which channels pay only a portion of what is necessary to produce the program. This amount spent by networks is called license fee. Thus, the studios end up absorbing the difference between the amount disbursed and the total spent on production. The model makes it possible to dilute the risks for the channels by reducing the value of the investment, granting the right to show premieres and more reruns. On the other hand, the studios maintain ownership of the programs, enabling sales in a secondary window to other networks or streaming services. By covering part of the costs, deficit financing allows greater autonomy for producers and studios in relation to these companies. While considering channel requirements and parameters, changes can be negotiated during narrative construction and production. This financing model would also explain *Netflix's* involvement in *Manhunt*. Even before the filming stage, the three entities involved with the series: *Lionsgate* (studio), *Discovery* and *Netflix* have reached an agreement to finance production. It was decided that the cable TV network would have the rights to broadcast it in the United States, including the premiere of the program and its reruns. The *streaming* service would retain the rights to a secondary window, playing the series on its global platform as a "*Netflix Original*," while in the United States it displays the warning at the opening: "original production by *Discovery*. Currently, the series is no longer airing on *Netflix* Brazil, indicating the end of the contract with *Lionsgate*, which can resell the series for a tertiary window. LOTZ, Amanda. *Op. cit.*, 2014, p.97

¹³⁸ "So, *Discovery* was concerned about spending as much money as they were on the show, and one of the ways that they offset that risk was by selling the show, I think before we even shot it, they've sold to *Netflix* for its second window and then kind of *Lionsgate* would take over the further windowing for the show. So it would be on *Netflix* America, then on *Netflix* Worldwide and I think they might place were was on local carriers and stuff too." SODROSKI. *Op. cit.*

I think Rich Ross and John Goldwyn were trying to push *Discovery* into new territory with fictional shows, miniseries and docudramas that were assets, and the owners of *Discovery* didn't want to rush this risk. For them, this was very risky territory, and I think it wasn't sitting well with the core demographic. They [the owners] wanted to continue making low-cost *reality shows* that were saturating their core market, so it was a big risk by the *Discovery* creative team, and I'm happy because they accepted. I wish it had lasted longer. The second season was on *Charter*. It would have been nice to be back on *Discovery* and do [the second season] there, but what happens with a cable show? *premium*, smart on the *Shark Week*? network It's not one of the easiest feats, as you can see¹³⁹

Sodroski and Yaitanes acknowledged the support provided by *Discovery*'s president and the head of scripted programming during the show's production. As discussed, Rich Ross and John Goldwyn were hired to create quality programming. However, after *Manhunt* failed to meet expectations, *Discovery* halted its expansion into scripted television series.

In 2018, less than a year after the premiere of *Manhunt* in a conference with *Wall Street analysts*, Zaslav reestablished *Discovery*'s commitment to traditional programming of *reality shows* and documentaries New York's highest-paid CEO justified the decision, stating that it was more viable and profitable than scripted programming For him, the growing number of new series and the high cost take a "high risk game that not everyone can win", adding the following "We do not participate in red carpets or extravagant openings"¹⁴⁰ Along with this announcement of *Discovery*'s return to its model previous, Ross left the company

Following the impacts of COVID in 2019, *Discovery Communications* saved an average of \$300,000 for every hour of content filmed in the homes of *Discovery contractors*. During the pandemic, the company sent its hosts and staff cameras, iPhones, GoPro cameras, tripods and other equipment to record shows for *TLC*, *HGTV* and *Food Network* from its houses The financial director boasted of the result achieved, claiming that he did not compromise the *quality* of the programming; instead, the

¹³⁹ "I think Rich Ross and John Goldwyn were trying to move *Discovery* into new territory with fictional shows and miniseries and docudramas that were good, and the *Discovery* ownership didn't want to take that risk. For them, those were very, it is risky territory, and I think not playing to their core demographic. They want to keep making cheap reality television that was just saturating their core market and so, it was a big risk on the part of their creative team at *Discovery* and I'm glad that they took it. I wish we'd lasted more then. The second season was on Charter. It would've been nice to be back on *Discovery* and do it there but what happens to a smart premium cable show on the Shark Week network? It is not one of the easiest feats as it turns out." SODROSKI. *Op. cit.*

¹⁴⁰ "High-stakes game that not everyone can win"; "We don't do red carpets or fancy openings". HAYES, Dade. *Discovery* Chief David Zaslav On Why He Is Doubling Down On Unscripted: "We Don't Do Red Carpets Or Fancy Openings". Deadline. 27 Feb. 2018. Available at:

<<https://deadline.com/2018/02/Discovery-chief-david-zaslav-on-why-he-is-doubling-down-on-unscripted-we-dont-do-red-tapetes-1202304345/>>. Accessed on: November 27th. 2022.

public identified with the more amateur aesthetic: “We have created very successful content with low-cost equipment [...] [the content] felt more real and authentic; it was what worked best with the audience”¹⁴¹ The executive stated that these “COVID-productions” gave them tools to rethink budgets¹⁴²

The long road to adapting to industry changes may have found a solution with the merger of *Discovery and Warner Bros*. The media giant has Zaslav as its first CEO With After the merger, those under new leadership fear budget cuts, given their reputation for cost containment. It is in the unscripted programming of *HBO* and *HBO Max* that producers are most apprehensive about the changes. When compared to *Discovery’s* main reality shows, *this Warner programming has a budget three times larger*¹⁴³

Manhunt: Unabomber was an ambitious project that symbolized the company’s foray into *quality series*. The script was chosen because executives saw it as a distinct, authentic and intelligent program However, the multimillion-dollar budget required for this change caused a division in the company. The reluctance of controlling shareholders to change was noticed by interviewees during the production phase. Tension was also present in *Discovery’s* partnership with its supposed competitor, *Netflix*, in an attempt to dilute production costs

The cable company quickly abandoned scripted series after failing with its target audience. *Discovery* has resumed its traditional provocative programming, tightening cost controls to adapt to lower margins and niche audiences. *Reality shows* and documentaries, rather than scripted series, are the content presented on its *streaming service (Discovery+)* *The merger between Discovery and Warner Bros, was the solution to become more competitive Even so, it is still unclear to what extent this union will affect the networks under its control*

¹⁴¹ RENTMANN, Nina. *Discovery Reviews Production Costs After Saving on Low-Budget Quarantine Shows*. 2020. The Wall Street Journal. Jun 4 2020. Available at: <wsj.com/articles/DfS-cove/y-reviews-production-costs-after-saving-on-low-budget-quarantine-shows-11591311803>. Accessed on: November 27th. 2022

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ LOW, Elaine. *Op. cit.*

Final considerations

We set out to analyze the television series, from *Discovery Channel*, which was simultaneously negotiated to make up the catalog of the *streaming service, Netflix*. Due to the fact that there are practically no studies on this type of cultural product in the area of History, in our journey, we make use of the resources, methodology and theory that we have on audiovisual analysis, particularly in the field of Cinema and History and *Media Industry Studies*.

It would not have been possible to move forward with our research without the interviews we were able to do with the team that created and produced the series. Without them, we would not have been able to delve deeper into the negotiations and contradictions that involve a cultural product of this size. To understand television series, it is important to verify the audience that the company wants to reach. The narrative in general will be designed with the intention of reaching a certain audience and, most importantly, keep them loyal to the channel

To understand the series *Manhunt: Unabomber* we noticed that it would be essential to highlight which elements of North American culture were being mobilized and which spoke directly to the audience they wanted to reach. We demonstrated how the series mobilized different traditions in its narrative . We emphasize some of the most expressive themes present in the plot: dissent, the view of nature or the idea of *wilderness* and anti-intellectualism. Therefore, we believe that the researcher who wants to analyze series from the United States, especially the more elaborate ones, must stick to the cultural traditions of that country, as they are always mobilized not only in audiovisual, but also in literature, theater, etc. In other words, When analyzing the television series *Manhunt: Unabomber* initially produced by and for North Americans, it was necessary to study the specific frame of reference of that country

Thus, the scenes in the series do not represent a simple small house in the forest, where Kaczynski isolated himself from society, but an entire cultural universe related to dissent and the ideas of North American *wilderness* Criticism of institutions (FBI and Universities) also not only represent dissatisfaction with authorities and intellectuals, but with an entire field that sees in the common man, in useful and practical activities, something commendable in the construction of the country. We argue that it is necessary to insert the television series, as a product of the present, but within a context of the History of the United States in which these traditions were thought about and mobilized. They were not selected randomly, but because they speak directly to the viewer that companies want to achieve

Firstly, we highlight the complexity of the tradition of dissent in the United States, in which the *status quo* is questioned, generally in distrust of the established order. The mentions of this tradition mobilized by *Manhunt* in> it was the ideas of Henry David Thoreau, a 19th century thinker, and his small house that are even imagery references. That is, the domestic terrorist *Theodore Kaczynski*, although acting violently, spoke from within an expressive North American cultural tradition. FBI agent James Fitzgerald also found himself drawn into the same tradition when he became involved in the case.

Secondly, we verified the aesthetics of wild nature in *Manhunt*, seen since the end of the 18th century as one of the components of North American identity. We saw how images of nature were explored in the series in their grandeur, in contrast to the noisy and aggressive urban world and surroundings

Thirdly, with the various scenes and dialogues critical of the FBI, the University and academics, we examine the tradition of American anti-intellectualism, which articulates anti-elitism to the “common man”, often the Western man, and to democracy itself. Educational institutions were not spared and were represented by the series as a place where Kaczynski was traumatized and radicalized. At the same time, we have criticism of the rigid structure of the security agency for its resistance to the methods, proposed by Fitzgerald, of linguistic analysis. The favoring of the “common man” — the average individual — was related to gaining and maintaining an audience that saw itself contemplated by this order of ideas. However, as we have seen, those who created the series were a deeply intellectualized team. Contradictions continually emerge from the series.

We therefore find that without this frame of reference and cultural context, these different layers of understanding and reading of the plot can be lost or underestimated. Although viewers’ horizons have been considerably expanded with its availability in the *Netflix catalogue*, we cannot ignore or minimize *Manhunt* as a product of *Discovery Channel* prepared by and for North Americans and its implications. *Netflix*, in turn, by including the series in the catalog, broke the boundaries of the United States audience.

When analyzing only the images of *Manhunt Unabomber*, it is impossible to visualize the various conflicts and negotiations that occurred in the production process, from the creation of the initial script to filming. For this, as we announced, the interviews we did were central. The series was designed and developed by two retired FBI agents, James Clemente and James Fitzgerald, and a Hollywood screenwriter, Tony Gittleson. During the writing of the original text, there was little consensus on the format of the narrative Clemente and Fitzgerald had written, in version preliminary, an action-adventure film. However, for Gittleson, eighteen years of investigation could not be satisfactorily told in a feature film.

We looked at other differences that occurred in the series: whether they would focus on a story considered “reliable” or whether they would open up to a “creative license”. Along the way, Clemente, who defended a version more faithful to reality, was marginalized in the process and did not hide his resentment. Gittleson was also not

happy with the way the series was going, as he did not recognize the final product as his. In the end, they agreed to have an “ordinary man” as the protagonist, James Fitzgerald.

During the filming process, conflicts and negotiations continued. The *showrunner* and screenwriter, Sodroski, prioritized the construction of an interesting and convincing story, which would please the audience. For director Greg Yaitanes, in contrast, the series was “extremely accurate” in faithfully reproducing the facts¹ This would be evident in the aesthetics adopted: in the details of the log house, events, period objects, settings and even in the appearance and behavior of the characters

Due to the above, we argue that it is not possible to analyze *Manhunt: Unabomber* from an authorial brand. The director and *showrunner* *Yaitanes*, Yaitanes and Sodroski, worked as a team, but had priorities differences for the project With multiple actors and institutions participating in its construction, the series was the result of these disputes. The final product reflects the contradictions of the parties involved and their different priorities, mainly in the tension between entertaining the audience and narrating the events of the past

Now *Discovery* had its own objective with the premiere of the series: to recover the name of its brand. In the years leading up to the premiere of *Manhunt*, the company used a sensationalist strategy to attract an audience. In 2014, fans, scientists, journalists and environmental organizations criticized misleading content that was shown as documentaries. This negative repercussion was simultaneous with the popularization of the streaming service *Netflix* and its original series, directly affecting the company’s revenue. *Discovery*, just like other traditional television conglomerates, lost audience, having their actions penalized with speculation on the stock exchange. During this time, the television industry was undergoing profound changes in its economy, technology, distribution and creation²

Manhunt: Unabomber was a project by *Discovery* to compete with scripted programs from *streaming* services. The series was understood by executives as bringing together the ingredients for please your audience and compete in this new golden age of television. However, the budget of 5 million dollars per hour/episode, compared to traditional programming that cost around 400 thousand dollars, was a reason for conflict within the company. On the one hand, the executives, who were hired after the drop in results in 2014 , they bet that the company’s future lay in its inclusion in scripted series. On the other hand, shareholders who controlled the company were increasingly unhappy with the risks and costs involved in these productions

Manhunt showcased these contradictions in its debut on *Discovery* in 2017, as the only scripted series amid a lineup of documentaries and *reality shows* from low cost. We can understand that the series failed to reach the target audience due to the way in which cable television channels organize themselves. These networks seek to

¹ “In reality, everything is dead on accuracy”. YAITANES, Greg. *Op cit.*

² LOTZ, Amanda. *Op cit.*, 2014.

establish an identity and meet tastes in types of niche audiences³ For example, a white man and conservative expects to have access, when tuning in to *Fox News*, to a specific news format. Similarly, he expects that the *Discovery Channel* will offer him documentaries such as *Shark Week* and *reality shows* of nature such as *Naked and Afraid* (2013 -), *Man vs Wild* (2006 - 2011), *Alaskan Bush People* (2014) and *Deadliest Catch* (2005 -). According to Tietge, this format of *reality* places man and nature in opposition. *wilderness* is represented as hostile and dangerous to participants, who seek to survive by dominating the primitive forces of nature. wild nature In contrast, *Manhunt* constructed a positive narrative of *wilderness* posing as a response to the problems of modernity⁴.

Although it is difficult to assign a genre to *Manhunt*, if we try to understand the series in this way, we notice other differences in relation to the channel's traditional programming. Even our interviewees did not reach a consensus on how to treat *Manhunt* within the known audiovisual genres. Director Yaitanes classified the series as a *docu-drama*, arguing that to produce the narrative In just eight episodes, it was necessary to omit parts of the real story. However, these choices would not have compromised the reliability of the events as it was strongly based on facts. That was something important to us.⁵

For *showrunner* and screenwriter Sodroski, *Manhunt* mobilizes two genres: *crime drama* and *true-crime* first, more present in the program, would be in the interaction between Fitzgerald and Kaczynski, in the police officer's obsession with capturing the terrorist and in his search, after arrest, for the Unabomber's confession. The second genre, the *true-crime*, in> in which the narrative addresses details of a real crime, satisfying the curiosity of an audience interested in this content.

The main genre is this intense crime drama. It's about this cat and mouse game, between a brilliant *serial bomber* and the police, but also using some elements of *true crime*, this kind of *true crime* in> stranger than fiction, where we use incidents to entertain the audience. So there are two genres that we keep coming back to, one was cops versus criminals, there are always new revelations, events and twists. They are playing a game of chess. The other part is like, and this is unique to the *true-crime* genre [...] do you think you remember the sketch of the Unabomber? Here's the whole story of this sketch that you've never heard before, it's not even the

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ TIETGE, David J. Experiencing Nature through Cable Television. In: RUTTEN, Kris; BLANCHE, Stefan; SOETAERT, Ronald (ed). Perspectives on Science and Culture. SI: Purdue University Press, 2018.

⁵ "It is a docudrama. It is heavily based on fact, I think that was something very important to us". YAITANES, Greg. *Op cit.*

real drawing, it doesn't look like it because there's this whole story behind it⁶

None of them dealt with the very common genre of films and series that focus on courts of law. Which is also present in *Manhunt* In any case, they are established genres capable of attracting an audience

Thus, once again it is pay TV channels seeking to satisfy, and maintain, a certain audience. However, *Discovery's* target audience is not the same one that is entertained by programming niche scripted series *true-crime* This genre, linked to the series format, demands viewer engagement⁷ The public must maintain concentration, dedicate greater attention to the long dialogues, clues, details and narrative devices to watch this type of programming. This requires a commitment, as looking away from the screen can compromise the understanding of the story , discouraging the viewer from watching the next episode.

We can imagine the challenge of audiences accustomed to *reality* about nature and sensational documentaries about sharks, watching *Manhunt* on *Discovery* with its six acts, as well designed to include commercial breaks. In comparison, the audience is less penalized for missing a scene from *Shark Week* or *Naked and Afraid*⁸ We understand this as another reason for *Manhunt* in> not having pleased *Discovery's* traditional target audience. The result was that *Discovery* lost a captive audience, but gained an audience that did not regularly watch the channel. That's what it wanted, *Discovery* intended to recover its lost audience — after the controversies surrounding the credibility of its documentaries, particularly those about sharks. In addition to shooting at one target and hitting another that it didn't intend to, *Discovery* no longer wanted to invest in such expensive products.

During the course of our Master's Thesis, we analyzed the role of *Discovery* more than the streaming service, *Netflix*, where the series appeared as its original production. reason for the lack of openness that Netflix gives to analyzing the platform. Furthermore, due to its short existence, there is no bibliography on *streaming*. Well, even so, *Manhunt: Unabomber* , was a joint result of *Discovery*, the studios *Lionsgate* and *Netflix* This was the solution found by *Discovery* to take the series forward

⁶“The rock ship of the show is this intense crime drama... about that kind of cat and mouse between a brilliant serial bomber and the police and also using some elements of that true crime, these sort of stranger than fiction true -crime kind of incidents to hook the audience as well. So, there are two genres pieces that we kept going back to, one was like, one is just a cop versus robbery, there is always like new revelations, new twists, new turns and a there is chess game between them. The other part of it is like, and this is unique for the true crime genre is like [...] do you think you remember the sketch of the Unabomber? here's the whole story of the sketch that you never knew, it's not even the real sketch, it doesn't look like him because it's not the right sketch because there is this whole back story'. SODROSKI, Andrew. *Op cit.*

⁷ MITT EL, Jason. *Op cit.*

⁸ On the different practices in consuming television, see: LOTZ, Amanda. *Op cit.*, 2014.

By labeling *Manhunt* as an original series, including for the Brazilian audience, the *streaming* service sought to demonstrate a return on the amount paid for subscription by its customers⁹ Is it possible that the expansion to Brazil with “original” content is representative of fiercer competition with the numerous *streaming* platforms that have emerged in recent years.

The producers of *Manhunt* consider that the product was more successful on Netflix than on *Discovery* However, a large part of the *streaming* audience is not North Americans, is not, therefore, immersed in the cultural universe of already established North American traditions. This indicates that the series can be seen without taking this universe into consideration. We can, however, argue that *Manhunt* was more successful on *Netflix* because the *streaming service* offers multiple niche audience series.

Compared to *Discovery Channel*, *Netflix* has the possibility of reproducing more diverse programming, pleasing different groups. The channel can only present one program during its prime time, while *Netflix* does not have the constraints of a schedule. In this sense, cable television networks are usually more cautious about which programs they finance and show. Another fundamental difference is made in the relationship, again, with the audience. On *Netflix*, subscribers are separated by “*taste clusters*” and not by nationality, race, gender and age¹⁰ Thus, it is possible that the The audience for *Manhunt* on this *streaming* service is the same as that of other original *true-crime* programs such as *Making a Murderer* (2015) and *Mind Hunter* (2019) etc.

In short, the study of subscription TV series must, therefore, involve paths that address the cultural universe covered. Authorship is diluted amidst the resources mobilized to reach a certain audience at all costs. The survival of pay TV in the era of *streaming*. Despite the effort to compete with other cable channels and *services*, *in>streaming*, *Discovery* itself couldn’t resist and the series ended up on *Netflix* None of this, however, diminishes the richness of a cultural product like the one analyzed Via *Manhunt: Unabomber* we were able, as a historian, to dive into the present time; we were able to study not only the North American cultural universe, but also a small part of the cultural industry in the United States. We hope, therefore, that our work can contribute to studies on TV series — still so rare — and, why not, with studies on *streaming services*

⁹ To see more about *Manhunt*’s distribution in Europe as a *Netflix Original*: BASTHOLM, Saren Rardam. A Tale of Two Shows about Profiling and Criminal Psychology: *Mindhunter* and *Manhunt: Unabomber*. 16:9 *filmtidsskrift*, [Ps], 13 Jan. 2021. Available at: <<https://www.16-9.dk/2021/01/mindhunter-manhunt/>>. Accessed on: 23 Feb. 2023.

¹⁰ For more on the logic of *Netflix* executives see. ADALI AN, Josef. *Op cit*.

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