

Unabomber claims he told motives in '85 note

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Contents

Search targets lone male bomber	5
Contradictory letters?	7

The so-called Unabomber says the mysterious "FC" signature used in his communications stands for a terrorist group called the Freedom Club whose goal is the "destruction of modern industrial society in every part of the world."

In a letter to Penthouse magazine last week, the bomber claimed that in December 1985 he had sent The Examiner a letter detailing his anarchist objectives, taking responsibility for at least five bombings and disclosing the name Freedom Club.

"It's the first communication from the Unabomber where he has identified what the letters stand for," said Jim Freeman, special agent in charge of the San Francisco FBI office.

The monogram has baffled law enforcement officials since June 1980. They first noticed it inscribed on a piece of a bomb hidden inside a novel mailed to Percy Wood, then president of United Airlines, in suburban Chicago. The inscription was found on seven of the next eight bombs.

And in a series of letters, FC has claimed to be a terrorist group and has taken responsibility for 16 bombings that have killed three and injured 22 since 1978.

In letters to various newspapers last week, the Unabomber first threatened to blow up an airplane flying out of the Los Angeles airport by the Fourth of July, then claimed the threat was a prank. He also sent demands to the New York Times and the Washington Post offering to halt the killing if they published his lengthy manifesto renouncing industrial society.

In another development, FBI spokesman George Grotz said a UC-Berkeley professor received a package from the Unabomber on Friday that contained documents similar to the ones received by the Times and Post.

Grotz, of the FBI's San Francisco office, would not identify the professor but said he has turned the package over to the FBI. Grotz also declined to disclose other details.

Present and past Examiner editors and staff members could find no evidence that the 1985 letter was received.

Lee J. Guittar, editor and publisher of The Examiner, said:

"We have no record of ever receiving such a letter. No one at the newspaper recalls such a letter."

He added: "Our policy, then and now, is that if we receive such a letter, we would share it immediately with appropriate law enforcement agencies and consider it as a possible news story."

The FBI gave The Examiner excerpts of the Penthouse letter only to enable the paper to determine whether it had received the 1985 letter and to attempt to locate it, said Freeman. The Examiner independently identified Penthouse as the source of the excerpts. The FBI declined to confirm that. Penthouse representative Nick Guccione declined to comment.

Will Hearst, publisher of The Examiner in December 1985, said: "I have no knowledge of a letter of that kind."

Frank McCulloch, managing editor at the time, also said he knew of no such letter.

"It'd be hard for me to believe that we would get such a letter and I wouldn't know about it," he said. "It boggles me."

Search targets lone male bomber

The FBI has said it believes FC is really a single male operating alone and based in Northern California. The FBI dubbed the suspect the "Unabomber" because his early targets were universities and airlines.

In the Penthouse letter, FC said a letter had been sent to The Examiner after a Dec. 11, 1985, bombing that killed Hugh Scrutton, owner of a computer store near Cal State Sacramento.

In the Penthouse letter, "FC" wondered why The Examiner had never published the communicate, according to the FBI.

FC said it was conceivable the Examiner letter had gotten lost in the mail, but added that that seemed unlikely because in late December 1985 The Examiner had published the first article to suggest that several bombings were related.

FC further speculated that the FBI for some reason had asked The Examiner to suppress the letter.

At that point in the Penthouse letter, FC listed excerpts from the purported letter to The Examiner, among them:

"The bomb that crippled the right arm of a graduate student in electrical engineering and damaged a computer lab of U. of Cal. Berkeley last May was planted by a terrorist group called the Freedom Club.

"We are also responsible for some earlier bombing attempts; among others, the bomb that injured a professor in the computer science building at U. of Cal., the mail bomb that injured the secretary of computer expert Patrick Fischer at Vanderbilt University 3 1 / 2 years ago, and the fire bomb planted in the Business School at U. of Utah, which never went off"

The letter was apparently referring to the Oct. 8, 1981, bomb that was dismantled at the University of Utah; the May 5, 1982, mail bomb sent to Fischer at Vanderbilt University in Nashville that injured his secretary, Janet Smith; the July 2, 1982, bomb placed at UC-Berkeley that injured computer science Professor Diogenes Angelakos; and the May 15, 1985, bomb placed at UC-Berkeley's Cory Hall that injured engineering student John Hauser.

The excerpts from the purported letter to The Examiner continued:

"We have waited until now to announce ourselves because our earlier bombs were embarrassingly ineffectual. The injuries they inflicted were relatively minor. In order to influence people, a terrorist group must show a certain amount of success.

"When we finally realized that the amount of smokeless powder needed to blow up anyone or anything was too large to be practical, we decided to take a couple of years off to learn something about explosives and develop an effective bomb."

Contradictory letters?

The claim of having sent such a letter in 1985 appears to contradict a letter FC sent the New York Times on April 24, 1995, claiming to be announcing the bomber's goals for the first time.

The April 24 letter read in part: "Why do we announce our goals only now, though we made our first bomb some 17 years ago?"

It is possible that FC's claim of sending a 1985 letter to The Examiner is a hoax, because FC has admitted to previous pranks. In a letter to the Times last week, FC said that a threat mailed to the San Francisco Chronicle - to bomb a Los Angeles airliner in the next six days - was "one last prank."

The letters to Penthouse, the Times and the Chronicle were simultaneously mailed on Saturday, June 24, and were postmarked San Francisco, as were letters to the Washington Post and Scientific American magazine, the FBI said.

The letters to the Times and Post contained copies of a lengthy manifesto that the Unabomber wants published in exchange for his agreement to stop bombing humans.

FC said in the letter to Penthouse that the terrorist group was withholding parts of the purported Examiner letter for fear they would provide clues for the FBI.

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