

Tales from the Unabomber's mother

Audio: Wanda Kaczynski talks about her son Ted Kaczynski,
the Unabomber

May 17, 2008

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'We were both proud and worried'

Wanda Kaczynski tells stories of son Ted Kaczynski's school days.

Audio File

Well, I knew he was bright because. Well, it was so obvious in the things that he did and things that he said and but. When we went to Evergreen Park, there was a a miss. Fry, who was a psychologist. And apparently one of the teachers there. That he was. Very bright, you know. So she gave him a Stanford Binet, I guess. He scored there 170 and she was so she talked, you know, great. And so. He he skipped the next grade. They felt that. He shouldn't be held back, you know? So he skipped. The grade there and and then. When he went to high school, he just. Well, he he did so well that he did. High school in three years and that's so. And it was. It was a time where we were both proud and worried. We were proud of his accomplishments. On the other hand, there was always the feeling. Something's not right. You know, we try to encourage him to have friends. We would. We would if if friends, if kids who wanted to be his friends came over, we always treated them very well, you know, invited them for snacks and things of that sort, but he. Well, I guess because. He talked early. He read early. I think when he was on 18 months. Old, he began. You know, using complete sentences. Well and at first it was children's books like Winnie the Pooh and the Charlotte's web, with all of those children's books. And then he became, and I didn't realize how much he was reading in math because. What? What was kind of startling? To skill him, for instance, in high school, her guidance color is that. In fact, in fact, some of the teachers were used by there was a a new new teacher who was teaching algebra. And it turned out that the child was conducting most of the classes, so the. I've forgotten his name. The principal came up one time and and said our nieces, nieces. Ted is up there teaching the teacher correcting all her mistakes in algebra well.

'A painful episode in our lives'

Wanda Kaczynski recounts giving up her son Ted Kaczynski extended hospital stay during his childhood.

Audio File

When he was a baby, he was about nine months old. He popped out with a massive outbreak of hives and woke up one night. He was crying and

I picked him up and I walked him, you know. And I see these. Big red bumps coming out all over his body and the poor thing was scratching and crying and I was trying to soothe him and put different, you know, the baby powder and things like that on his hives and the next morning, as soon as I thought the. You know, hospital will be open. I called his doctor and we used to take him to the Children's Pediatric clinic at the University of Chicago. And I called his doctor and told him, he says we'll bring the light down. So we brought him to the hospital, you know. In those days. The way they treated children was barbaric. They didn't let the parents stay with the child like they do now. And, for instance, the nurse came in and she took the baby from me and he was reaching out and crying. Mommy. Mommy, you know. And I started crying the tears. They're pouring down my face and the doctor says why? Are you crying? Why am I crying? Ohh God, I could have kicked him. But anyway, the nurse took him away. I didn't get to see him that night and then the nurse told me that I could come on. There were two days a week where I could spend an hour come to see him. In this child, Can you imagine the nine month old? Whose main support, whose main profit right was taken away from him. He was abandoned as far as he knew. I was abandoned and he was. Abandoned by me. And then. So he oh, I I did. It just broke my heart when I would visit, you know, because he was life was. Like you know. I think he was in the hospital for oh 7 or 8, maybe 10 days. I came to pick him up. And he was like a little rag doll, he didn't look at me. He was limp. He didn't respond in any way. It frightened the hell out of me, and I took him and we cuddled him and hugged him and rocked him and. It was. It was really very, very painful episode in our lives.

'Somebody has to show that they care about him'

Wanda Kaczynski talks about writing her incarcerated son, Ted Kaczynski.
Audio File

I can tell you the last letter I wrote to him, it used to be longer letters, but now they're short letters because he doesn't answer. I don't know whether he welcomes them or not. I don't know. I said that. I want you to know, Ted, that when a child is born. The parents most parents give them the gift of unconditional love. For a lifetime. And I said this is this was true of you. And I said, no matter what happens, you can't divest yourself of concern and affection. It's going to be there for a lifetime. And then I signed it. Love mother. I I write them because I I feel that it it's he can't be completely

alone. Somebody has to show that they care about. And also it eases me.
Of any guilt I might have.

The Ted K Archive

A critique of his ideas & actions



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