

“I’m not crazy”

Ted Kaczynski

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From the earliest days of his case, Kaczynski, who was diagnosed by court psychiatrists as schizophrenic, denied he was mentally ill and tried to block his attorneys from using that diagnosis in his defense, out of fear it would undermine his anti-technology message.

1. Note to Attorneys

Important Note:

After Dr. Froming left yesterday, I asked Gary if she could collaborate with Dr. Kriegler, and Gary thought it would be alright.

However, I've now reconsidered. Even though I like Dr. Froming personally, I don't want her to get involved in the case. Some time ago I explained to you (Gary and Scharlette) that I don't want to get shrinks' conclusions about me because I felt I would be obliged to face up to those conclusions publicly. When the causes of a person's behaviour have been scientifically analysed, his actions cease to be expressions of free will and become mere psychological and/or biological phenomena, perhaps pathological ones. This inevitably demeans his actions and detracts from respect for them. Furthermore, to allow shrinks to analyse my mind is inconsistent with my philosophy. That's why I wish I'd never consented to be examined by any shrinks in the first place, except maybe Dr. Kriegler, because I hope her study of my family will help me to refute my brother's and mother's lies. I had hoped that Dr. Froming's tests might prove Foster and the Gurs to be wrong, but, as we've seen, they proved *me* wrong!

However, things are now in a position that I do not find wholly unacceptable. I can truthfully say that while shrinks have found me to have a deficiency in the recognition of social cues, the cause of this deficiency is undetermined, and its exact relationship to my life and my actions is still largely a matter for speculation. This still leaves considerable room for "free will." I don't want to risk any further work — such as collaboration between Froming and Kriegler — that would make my actions into more of a mechanistic product of social and/or biological forces.

So please do not put Froming and Kriegler in contact with one another. I will write Dr. Froming a polite note in which I will explain that even though I like her very much personally, we will probably not require her services any further. I will leave it up to you to explain the reasons to her, to the extent that you consider it desirable to explain them.

Simply from the point of view of my own personal curiosity, I would find it fascinating to let Froming pursue the investigation further. Particularly intriguing is the question of how my own traits could be connected with those of other family members, especially my mother. Notice that my mother shares with me the following traits:

- High level of verbal skills.
- Social isolation during asolence. (In fact, my mother's social isolation during adolescence was far more extreme than mine.)
- Large fund of suppressed anger.
- Stubbornness and determination.
- Failure to form close personal relationships.

(As far as I know, my mother's only truly unselfish relationship was with my father. And she's had no close relationships at all apart from her husband, her two sons, and her two siblings. Apart from these people, I don't think she ever has any warm, affectionate, or generous feelings — her friendships are superficial.)

Are these similarities of genetic origin? Are they due to the common history of abuse? Or something else? It would be extremely interesting to know whether my mother also has a deficiency in the recognition of social cues.

However, as I've explained, I don't think these questions should be explored further.

2. Note to Attorneys #2 — June 12, 1997

Before our meeting yesterday, I had had the impression that there was a distinction between a "mental-state" defense and an "insanity" defense. I had thought that a "mental state" defense could be something like a "temporary insanity" defense, so that if you win they just let you out.

So don't get your hopes up about that type of mental-state defense that I suggested yesterday. I'm still thinking about it, but I probably won't agree to it.

Within a few days I will send you a note in which I will outline the various courses of action that I would consider acceptable. You lawyers can then chew it over, and then I'll be prepared (on a couple of days notice) to make a definite decision whenever you are.

3. Note to Attorneys #3 — June 17, 1997

Gary, Scharlette, and Judy
June 17, 1997

I want to apologize again for my outburst of anger at our June 17 meeting. I especially want to apologize to Gary since he was sitting across from me and bare the brunt of my attack.

Actually, the outburst was more or less planned, though, once I got started, I let myself get rather more aggressive than I had originally intended. Judy had told me on Monday that she and Gary were going to talk to me on Tuesday about “the Froming letter” that I proposed to send. Since my contacts with Dr. Froming would presumably relate to the case only in terms of some sort of mental-health defense, and since I’d sent you notes of a negative character concerning mental-state defenses, I thought it likely that you were going to talk to me about such defenses at Tuesday’s meeting.

That’s why the first thing I asked you when I came into J booth on Tuesday was whether you were going to argue with me about mental-state defenses. Meanwhile I’d been stewing all morning, getting frustrated over the fact that (as I saw it) you refused to accept some of my decisions, and, equally, over the fact that — simply because you’re all so nice to me — I find it difficult to put my foot down and take a firm stand against you in our meetings. I made up my mind that *this* time I was really going to get tough, and if you tried to sell me on a mental-state defense again I would cuss you out and show you that you were going to have to let me make my own decision on that issue.

So, by the time I got up to J-booth, I had (more or less intentionally) primed myself to explode.

I think Gary was hurt by my outburst more than I realized until afterward, so, once again, I apologize especially to him.

In my present position of powerlessness I am even more susceptible to frustration than I usually am, so I think our relations will be smoother if you will be careful not to make me feel pressured in our discussions. Rather than being forceful or persistent in your arguments (as some of you have been sometimes), take an easy-going approach — just make your points and invite me to think them over. I think you know that I’ll be cautious and deliberate in making decisions.

If you think I’ve failed to absorb some of the information you’ve given me relating to a given discussion, you can repeat yourself without making me feel pressured if you do it in a sufficiently low-keyed way. There is a way of expressing an argument that conveys to your interlocutor that you are very anxious to have him accept your point of view (that’s what makes me feel pressured), and there’s a way of expressing an argument that conveys to your interlocutor that you will readily accept whatever decision he makes (and that’s what I feel comfortable with). I think you’ll find that in the long run it’s more productive to reason with me in the latter, low-keyed, way.

It’s true that I do sometimes fail to absorb, or else forget, some of the information that you give me. For example, on Tuesday, June 17, Gary explained to me that there are two ways of formulating a mental-state defense, and that one way would not involve commitment to an institution. I think now that he explained that to me once before, but I forget. And I think Scharlette explained to me once before that written reports could be given, but only *after* a trial, and this too I had forgotten.

So you can repeat information that you think I've forgotten or failed to absorb, as long as you do it in a neutral way that doesn't make me feel that you are pushing me to make the decision that you want.

I hope that my feeling pressured hasn't been the result of misreading social cues.

I very much appreciate your forbearance and your willingness to forgive me when frustrations gets the better of me. Thank you all.

June 18 — today I'm feeling very bad about the fact that I spoke to you so harshly — not to say viciously — yesterday; and you're always so kind to me! I'll have to try to keep my frustration under better control, but unfortunately I can't promise that I will succeed.

4. Note to Attorneys #4

Note #26

VERY SENSITIVE

Copies to

Quin, Judy, Gary, Ted

Concerning possible defences

After thorough reconsideration I have decided that no form of mental-state defense will be acceptable to me.

You have argued that such a defense would be a means by which I could put my side of the story before the public. But the public will know nothing about the trial except what the media tell, and media reports have consistently been biased against me, and have contained gross distortions and outright falsehoods. So this method of making public my side of the story may well backfire. It will be better for me to write my side of the story myself.

Furthermore, even if we won on a mental-state defense, it could only lead to my being confined in a mental institution for many years, if not for life. Gary argued that I would be able to get out fairly soon because my history shows that I am a man of my word, so that if I promise to be law-abiding the shrinks will believe that I am not dangerous, and will let me out.

Come on, get real! Consider the situations

The Gurs and Foster both concluded that I had a brain lesion and they believed it was related to my supposed crimes. Froming concluded that I had a deficiency in recognition of social cues, and sources of brain injury figured prominently among the possible causes that she mentioned. ...

So look at the case from the point of view of a shrink who has to decide whether I am non-dangerous and can be released. Let's assume that he or she is a person of

integrity and is absolutely immune to political pressure. Remember that a person of integrity not only will be immune to political pressure, but will be careful not to release a patient if there is a risk that he may kill someone.

Against releasing the patient.

1. The patient is believed to have killed three people and maimed several others in the course of a determined campaign spanning 17 years.
2. For at least the last four attacks, the patient has no remorse.
3. The patient has held long and tenaciously to a system of values that rejects the morality of the existing society.
4. Either the patient has refused to cooperate with testing, or else testing has revealed neurological damage that is believed to be at least partly responsible for his supposed crimes.
5. The patient has refused all treatment.
6. Neither the patient's neurological condition nor his psychological condition have changed substantially since his commitment to the institution.
7. The patient has been in the institution no more than 5 years.
8. There are several documented instances of the patient's lying to representatives of the system. (I lied to the Murray researchers, I lied on application forms in order to get employment, I lied to the cops who came to question me after the vandalization of that house near my cabin.)

For releasing the patient.

1. The patient's history shows that in *personal* relationships (as opposed to relationships with representatives of the system) he is a man of his word; and he promises the shrink (who are representatives of the system) that he will henceforth obey the law.

Under the circumstances, a shrink would have to be an utter fool to conclude that there was no substantial risk in releasing the patient.

Thus the notion that I could be released within (say) five years, after being committed to a mental institution on a mental-state defense, is extremely far-fetched.

I categorically refuse to use a mental-state defense. I've heard all the arguments, and this is my firm decision, so I'd appreciate it if you would refrain from arguing with me further on this subject, unless you have something new to tell me. And by "something new" I mean something radically new, not just a variation on the same old themes.

5. Note to Attorneys #5 — Nov 27, 1996

I don't like the tack that Dr. Foster suggested toward the end of our Nov 26 meeting. His idea, as you may remember, was to show that because of my social disabilities — specifically, insensitivity to nonverbal cues — left me with no choice but to carry out actions that would otherwise seem either bad or crazy. But this seems to imply acceptance of the view that the actions were either bad or crazy. I do *not* want to concede, even by implication, that the actions were bad or crazy. I want to portray those actions as reasonable ones to take given the condition of our society.

Your objections to this will be: (a) It won't go over with the jury, and (b) the general public will continue to reject those actions in any case.

But if this case goes to trial, I assume that my chances of getting released within an acceptable span of time are slight, so I may as well forget about the personal goal of getting released and concentrate on the public goal. And as for the public goal, persuasion of the general public has to take second place to winning and keeping the respect of a small minority of potential revolutionaries, because now and for some time in the future, the general public will not be persuaded to approve more than inadequate reforms anyway. See manifesto, paragraphs 111, 186, 187, 189.

There are many potential revolutionaries who *do* regard my actions as reasonable.⁽¹⁾ If I publicly concede (even by implication) that they were *not* reasonable, I risk losing at least part of the respect that these potential revolutionaries have for me and my message.

Also in order to retain the respect of these potential revolutionaries, it is important to portray my actions as undertaken through the exercise of *free will* and not as *determined by psychological forces. I am enough of a materialist to suppose that human behaviour can ultimately be explained on the basis of the laws of physics and chemistry, but all the same my actions will appear to be demeaned if some shrink can plausibly trace biological or psychological forces that seem to have determined those actions.

One anarchist pointed out in a letter to me that the system tries to portray problems as *personal* rather than *societal*. In other words, when an individual comes into conflict with the system, the cause is ascribed to defects in the individual rather than to defects in the system. I don't want to fall into the trap of portraying my conflict with the system in terms of defects in me rather than in the system.

It would be acceptable, however to take some such line as this: Given the condition of our society, violence can plausibly be seen as a reasonable alternative. And my decision to attack the system was my own free choice — the shrinks (fortunately) do not yet know enough about the human mind to fully explain why people would make such choices. Nevertheless, I would have used nonviolent means if I had had the social

⁽¹⁾ See "Green Anarchist" and various communications in my file, especially those from John Zerzan.

skills to start some group or organization in opposition to technology. (Which, by the way, is true — see the end of my 1972 essay.)

6. Extract From Ted to Zerzan — 1/27/98

... Unlike you, I am not relieved that the death penalty is out of the picture. In order to get that deal I had to sign away my right to an appeal that might possibly have led to my release. I signed *only* because I had no other way of preventing my attorneys from putting on a defense that would have portrayed me essentially as insane. My attorneys are very able lawyers and they have been very kind to me on a personal level, but my relationship with them has been a tragic and disastrous mis-match.

Have you heard anything lately from our acquaintance at Stanford, Professor A? I have not. He's probably lost interest in the case...

Let me tell you about Dr. Sally Johnson, the shrink who evaluated me for mental competency.

She is a government hack, associate warden of some federal institution back east. She is also a very strange person...

... At our very last meeting she said, "If you find any errors in my report, I hope you won't think there is any intent behind it."

When I read her report I was incredulous. She had obviously started out with the assumption that I was crazy and then slanted her data to support that conclusion — slanted it so heavily that I could hardly believe it. For example, she reworded statements of mine to make them sound paranoid or otherwise indicative of mental illness, and in some cases she reported I had said things that were flatly contrary to what I did say. For instance, both in my written autobiography and orally to Dr. Johnson I stated that while I began to get along poorly with the kids on my block at the age of 8 or 9, at the same time I continued to get along well with the kids in school; Johnson said in her report that I began to get along badly *both* with the kids on my block *and* with the kids in school. She also indicated that my opinions about the technological society were "non-bizarre delusions" symptomatic of paranoid schizophrenia.

As I read her evaluation I started to ask myself, "Can it be that I actually am crazy? — because this can't really be happening; a licensed psychiatrist occupying a responsible position with the government can't be submitting a report that is this irrational."

Luckily, the next day I received a batch of your letters that expressed your support and that of other people you told me about, and this gave me reassurance that there are a lot of people out there who know I'm not crazy. A great relief to me, because without that kind of support it's possible that the shrinks might be able to convince a man in my position that he actually is insane.

But to tell the truth, now that I look back on it, Johnson's report eases my mind. Some defense shrinks had concluded that I was a paranoid schizophrenic, but, in the reports that I saw, they gave only a sketchy indication of how they arrived at that conclusion. Since they appeared to rely heavily on the neuropsychological testing and claimed to be using objective criteria, they had me wondering quite seriously whether I might not have some mild form of paranoid schizophrenia. But Johnson's report is so inaccurate as to factual details, so irrational general, and uses such highly subjective criteria, that it takes away all my respect for the shrinks' methods. Also, when one considers the discrepancies between the interpretations of the prosecution shrinks on the one hand, those of Johnson on the other hand, and those of the defense shrinks on the third hand (it's convenient to imagine for a moment that we have three hands) it becomes clear that this stuff has no scientific basis.

I hasten to add that I recognize I am different from the average person, I don't know whether my difference has a neurological basis, and I am not in a position to assert that it has no relation to paranoid schizophrenia. But I am confident that I do not have delusions and am capable of rational thought.

Whew! I'm glad I got all that off my chest. On that subject I will only add that all this fulfils a prediction made by the lawyer who represented me in Montana, Michael Donahoe. He said the government would try to portray me as sick, but not sick enough to escape the death penalty...

The Ted K Archive

Ted Kaczynski
“I’m not crazy”

Yahoo Letter Compilation.
documentcloud.org/documents/2696156-Im-Not-Crazy.html

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