

# Ted Kaczynski's 1988 Autobiography

May, 1988

**Synopsis from the book Truth versus Lies:** In 1988 I consulted a psychotherapist in Helena, Montana, not with the intention of taking therapy, but in search of practical advice and encouragement in an effort to find a woman for myself. In preparation for the one interview I had with her, I sent her an autobiographical sketch that covered mainly my (always unsuccessful) relations with women. This autobiography is inaccurate to the extent that it omits certain facts that ought to have been included in order to give a balanced picture (e.g., my behavior on breaking off with Ellen Tarmichael), and it misrepresents the feelings I had during a certain period in my life. But statements of concrete facts in the 1988 autobiography are trustworthy except for one error that I am about to mention.

The document exists in two versions. The first is a carbon copy of what I sent the therapist; the second is a version that I prepared a few months later. The second version differs from the first only in that certain details of language have been improved, and an error of memory (concerning something I had once read) has been corrected. In this book, the version that we cite is always the second.

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Except for some minor corrections, the following is a duplicate of the material I gave Mrs. Gilbertson in late May.

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The problem, in brief, is that I am 46 years old and still a virgin - very much against my will. The story is as follows ...

... At the age of 10 I developed very strong feelings toward a pretty girl my own age - I don't think it's going too far to say I was in love with her...after I scored at the genius level on an I.Q. test, the guidance counselor decided that I should skip 6th grade. The result was disastrous. I was not accepted by the older kids with whom I was put. I skipped another grade in highschool; thus I was with kids who were two years older than I was. From the time I skipped a grade until I left highschool I was often the object of contemptuous remarks from the other boys. Speaking in anthropological terms, my dominance ranking was very low ...

... it was brought home to me that the other kids regarded me as a freak genius and not the kind of boy with whom any self-respecting girl would want to have a date ...

... Also during my adolescence my parents mistreated me severely...They developed a habit of screaming insults at me whenever they got annoyed -which they often did for trivial reasons. Some examples of the type of abuse I had to take from them: "You're immature", "sick", "emotionally disturbed", "a creep", "speak respectfully to your parents or we'll throw you out of the house." ...

... I had a tough inner core of self-esteem and self-confidence that came through undamaged. But my *social* self-confidence was pretty well destroyed

- I came to expect rejection from other people ...

... I had no opportunity in highschool to learn the customs governing the relations between the sexes – how to make dates, when one can kiss a girl, etc ...

... I often had (and still have) difficulty interpreting women's behavior ...

**[details past “relationships” with girls and women]**

... As a result of repeated failures and disappointments in trying to get a woman I eventually gave up and became apathetic; I didn't even want to think about women any more. It was less painful to put up with sexual deprivation than to undergo the stress of trying to get acquainted with a woman, worrying about how to ask her out, and so forth ...

... during my university years, I formed occasional acquaintanceships or slight friendships but never any close friendships, and I was never accepted by groups. As a matter of fact I had no strong desire for male friendships ...

... I found solitude congenial, or would have found it so if I hadn't been tormented by the constant, nagging desire for women ...

... During my last year at the University of Michigan I reached a decision and a psychological turning-point that changed the direction of my life. I had two major psychological needs that were unsatisfied: One of course was sex. The other was what I will call for the sake of simplicity the need for serious, purposeful work...(I won't treat this subject in detail here. For relevant discussion see the psychological study by Kenneth Keniston, **The Uncommitted.**) ...

... The decision that I reached during my last year at Michigan was to chuck everything and do something that I'd always wanted to do, namely, go off and live in the woods. Since I wanted some money to start out with, I accepted the offer from Berkeley and spent two years there as an assistant professor; then, having accumulated several thousand dollars in savings, I resigned my position and took off. To make a long story short, I established myself in a small cabin in western Montana and began reverting to a primitive mode of existence...One big advantage to living in the woods was that I didn't see any women and therefore didn't have to think about them. As a result I was no longer tormented by the constant craving for women and sex that had previously been such a hardship for me. This doesn't mean that I had no sexual feelings at all, but such feelings were much weaker than they'd been when I lived among people, and if I got horny from thinking about sex I would relieve myself by masturbation and that was that – no problems.

By the time I was about 32 years old I found that my shyness with women had greatly alleviated. Under suitable conditions I was able to make advances to them without difficulty. But I rarely had any opportunity to meet unattached women...I still didn't know anything about dating customs, but the main problems was that I never could tell whether or not a woman was interested and available; I've never been able to distinguish between ordinary friendliness and friendliness that indicates a potentially erotic interest. I've read that women have certain signals by which they indicate their intentions to men, but I have no idea what these signals are ...

... I never had the slightest interest in going to a prostitute ...

... Finally at the age of 36 I found an intelligent and attractive 30-year old woman (call her Miss T.) who had a good sense of humor and – it seemed – a pleasant personality. I'd heard vague rumors to the effect that there was something funny about her, but beggars can't be choosers, so I took my chances and made advances to her, which she accepted ...

... The third time I took her out I discovered why Miss T. had a funny reputation. She deliberately and calculatedly humiliated me in public by showing avoidance and aversion...I concluded that she was probably a sadist who got a sexual kick out of humiliating men. Needless to say, that was the end of my interest in her ...

... The kisses I had from Miss T. whetted my appetite to such an extent that I began to suffer from frustrated sexual desire even more than during my teens and early twenties. But the direction of the desire was a little different ...

... the older I got, the more interested I became in psychological contact between them. I thought of sexual love and not only of sexual intercourse. At the age of 36 I recall having a fantasy of a woman holding a baby – hers and mine – and myself putting my arms protectively and lovingly around both of them together. I wouldn't have had such a fantasy during my teens ...

... in the Chicago area...During the rest of that year I was desperate for a woman but couldn't find one...I tried an introduction service with very unsatisfactory \_results. Finally I decided that I might as well go back to the woods...while I was still in the Chicago area I advertised in the Mother Earth News for a woman interested in sharing a "very primitive life." got quite a few replies, but most of them were from women who either didn't read the ad or had a strange conception of what the words "very primitive" meant. For example, one woman seemed to think that a "very primitive life" included raising quarter-horses and pure-bred showdogs. I was so disgusted with her stupidity that I sent her an answer to the following effect:

"I live in a cave, eat raw meat, and hunt bears with a club. I been combin' the burrs out of my whiskers every mornin' ever since I got your letter, so I should be lookin' pretty good by the time you get here. Hurry up and come, cause I ain't had a woman for several years now and I can't hardly wait no longer."

(I have a somewhat undisciplined sense of humor.) ...

... After a couple of weeks alone at my cabin I found that I was no longer troubled with craving for women. Due to the pain of powerful, unsatisfied desire that I'd suffered and the stress of unsuccessful attempts to get a woman, revulsion set in. I got disgusted with women and didn't even want to think about them. Several months after my ad had appeared, one last reply straggled in. It was the most promising of all the answers I'd received; the woman seemed intelligent, was reasonably nice-looking (she sent a photo), understood what I mean by a primitive life, and wanted exactly that. But by that time I was so sick of the whole business that I just threw her letter in the stove

...

... During the following 8 1/2 years I suffered very little from desire for women ...

... my style of life has been somewhat modified. For one thing, the character of the country where I live has been changed by road-building, logging, and influx of people to such an extent as to partly spoil my former way of life. For another thing, my parents, who are in a comfortable position financially, have been sending me \$1200 a year for the last few years. I feel a little embarrassed about this, but not very much so. The money relieves me of having to look for work at intervals and allows me leisure to pursue certain intellectual interests. I've taught myself the Spanish language, have done a considerable amount of serious studying, especially in history, and have solved a difficult mathematical problem that for many years I was unable to solve. The years when I lived at the most primitive level were the best and happiest years of my life. Since modifying my way of life I've considered myself to be neither happy nor unhappy; but I've been at peace. Life has been flowing along with no particular problems and no particular joys or hopes ...

... But a few weeks ago I had a dream in which a young woman appeared. After I woke up I recalled her face and thought she was interesting, so I began making up a story about her. I soon found that I was developing a portrait of a perfect woman: extremely high intelligence, great self-discipline and strength of character, no interest in trashy stuff like fine clothes, money, and social status<sup>3</sup> – in short, she had all the traits that I most respected. As a result of these imaginings my desire for women and sexual love returned so strongly that at times it has been almost unendurable. It often keeps me awake at night, and it sometimes prevents me from concentrating because my mind persists in wandering to thoughts of women and sex. This isn't just the raw horniness that I experienced as an adolescent. It's rather a sense of terrible deprivation, of having missed something essential in life, something that would have been extremely beautiful and that I will probably never find now because I'm getting too old ...

... I feel like a starving man looking on at a rich man's banquet: All he wants is one good solid piece of bread, but he has to watch the rich people gorging themselves on extravagant delicacies while he has nothing ...

... I felt a need to tell these things to someone. I had no one else to tell them to, so I came here. Apart from the opportunity to unload all this there's just one other thing that I want from you, namely, the answer to the following question. I've read in more than one place that women give out certain signals by which men can tell whether they are available and interested and so forth. What are these signals? It's doubtful whether I'll ever have the opportunity to put this information to practical use, but the question has puzzled me for a long time and I'd like to know the answer just for my own satisfaction ...

... The foregoing was written several weeks ago. Since then I've arrived at a tentative decision: I'll get civilized and look for steady employment in western Montana. If I can't find employment here, then I'll go back to the Chicago area, where I came from originally. I hate to go back to that hell-hole, but it's one place where employment is usually available. Once I get a job I'll start looking for a woman. I'd get married if I could find a woman with whom I had enough in common. I don't have very much

hope of finding such a woman; but at least I'd like to have some kind of love-affair for once, anyway, before I get too damn old.

Since my past success has been so poor, it's obvious that I can use some advice about women: how to meet them, how to deal with them when I do meet them, and how to understand them. Any information or suggestions you can give me will be appreciated ...

When making this appointment I asked to talk to a woman counsellor if possible. My motives for this were as follows: For one thing, I thought I would feel less embarrassed revealing these things to a woman than to a man. For another, I thought a woman might be better able to answer my questions and give me advice about women. Finally, and most important, women to me have been mysterious, untouchable, and inaccessible, as if they were separated from me by some invisible barrier: I've never had an opportunity to communicate with any woman on anything other than a superficial level. So, for once, I wanted to get on the other side of that barrier and speak openly with a woman

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A Review and Compilation of the Writings of Ted Kaczynski & Truth versus Lies

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