

The Unabomber on culture

Ted Kaczynski

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Kaczynski weighs in his favorite movies — including the 1955 version of “The Lady Killers” — and his love of classical music.

1. Extract from Ted to an unknown person

To answer your question, yes, I did watch movies long, long ago, usually on TV. But only up to about 1970 or 1971. After that I swore off TV and movies. Favorites? Alec Guinness’s early (comedy) films, especially *The Lady Killers*, and, better still, the one about the chemist who invents a supposedly indestructible fiber for making cloth — I forget the title. Also, some of the early films of guys like Peter Lorre, Edward G. Robinson, Humphrey Bogart, etc. E.g., *The Maltese Falcon*, with Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorre, and Sydney Greenstreet.

And then there’s my all-time favorite: *Under the Bleachers*, with Seymour Butts...

2. Extract from Ted to an unknown person

... writing to you.

Let me turn back for a moment to my musical error — my failure to mark the first and the second ending for the repeated section in Duo No.9. I’m returning to you herewith the photocopies of Duo No. 9, on which I have properly marked the first and second ending. I hope you will hasten to mark the first and the second ending on your own copy of Duo No. 9, because if word ever gets out that I have made such a mistake, my reputation as a composer will be ruined forever. No longer will my name be mentioned in the same breath with those of Wolfgang Amadeus Bach, Ludwig Van Mozart, Johann Sebastian Beethoven, and Rudolf Friml! Where connoisseurs of music gather, it will be whispered in dark corners, sotto voce, that t a man who could forget to mark a first and a second ending for a repeated section — such a man would even be capable of writing parallel fifths!

Just in case some sinister shadow of doubt should cross your mind, I want to assure you that I would never *dream* of writing parallel fifths. The very thought of writing parallel fifths makes my blood run cold! There is, by the way, a curious (and surely apocryphal) anecdote about Beethoven and parallel fifths; but I’d better leave that out, or this letter will run on *forever*.

3. From Ted to [REDACTED] — April 21, 2003

Dear [REDACTED],

You may recall that during the 1970's I sent [REDACTED] copies of some musical compositions of mine. I kept my own copies, of course, but they were seized by the FBI along with all my other papers at the time of my arrest. I expected to get all my papers back eventually, or at least copies of them, but it now looks very doubtful that I will ever get the originals back, and the set of copies I've received from my lawyers is incomplete. In particular, it apparently does not include copies of the music.

So, if you still have the sheets of music I sent [REDACTED], I would appreciate it if you would send them, or photocopies of them, to JULIE HERRADA, CURATOR, LABADIE COLLECTION, 711 HATCHER LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, ANN ARBOR MI 48109-1205. I'm particularly interested in the compositions titled "March Number 1" through "March Number 5".

Thanks and regards,
Ted Kaczynski

4. From Ted to [REDACTED] — May 28, 2003

Dear [REDACTED],

Thanks for your letter of May 17, which I received today. Thanks also for granting my request in regard to the music. I do appreciate it.

Yes, I did know that [REDACTED] had Alzheimer's disease, and I greatly regretted it, because prior to that she was quite a gal. I liked her very much.

I'm glad to hear that you're still getting along well at the age of 86. You mention that [REDACTED] will be working in Denver. Hmm. It seems that all roads lead to Colorado. I've ended up here; a paralegal on my defense team with whom I became friend is now working as a supervisory investigator with the state public defender's office in Greeley, Colorado, a man with whom I may publish a book has recently moved from New York to Colorado; my best friend is planning to move to Colorado; and now [REDACTED].

You ask if there's anything you can do for me. I appreciate the offer, but at the moment the only thing you can do for me is fulfill my request regarding the music.

Please give [REDACTED] my greetings, and my thanks for taking care of the music. My greetings to [REDACTED], too.

Best regards,
Ted

[Note: I wrote this letter in large letters because letter to me was typed in large type, which suggests that his eyesight is poor and that he needs large lettering in order

to be able to read.
-TJK 5/28/03]

5. From Ted to [REDACTED] — July 5, 2003

Dear Mr. [REDACTED]

I don't have time to answer your letter of June 9, but for some reason I like you, so I'll answer it anyway.

Referring to Michael Mello's book you say, "I didn't really like the writing." I don't blame you. Mello's book is not a good one, and I wish that someone more able had written a book about my case. I actually suspect that Mello has a screw loose. If you saw some of his letters to me you would probably agree.

Your musical talents appear to be varies: You play keyboard *and* guitar *and* you sing. What kind of music do you play? Gregorian chant? Bach's B Minor Mass? The Ring Cycle? Chinese Classical Opera? I used to play the trombone when I was in my teens, but I haven't touched a trombone now for 40 years. My tastes run to classical music, especially the baroque period. But as I write this I'm listening to Mexican music. ?Sabe usted espanol?

I read Desmond Morris's *The Naked Ape* and did not have a high opinion of it.

You ask whether there's any fiction I'm fond of. For a long time I've had very little interest in fiction. I used to be very fond of the novels of Joseph Conrad, but I've long since read all of them and that interest is now dead.

Best regards, Ted Kaczynski

6. Extract of a letter from Ted to an unknown person

... scientists — is too long for your taste. If so, what parts of it would you cut out?

I'm sending you herewith an addition to the letter, which I wrote after reading a 46-page autobiography by Albert Einstein that I recently found in a book from the prison library. It is the strangest autobiography you can imagine. There is virtually nothing in it about human relationships, nothing about the places where Einstein lived, nothing about anything that he did outside of science. The first couple of pages explain very briefly why Einstein turned to science, and the rest of the autobiography is limited almost exclusively to an account of his scientific thinking. Apparently he never thought about anything but physics and mathematics — which accounts for the shallowness of his opinions on all other subjects.

My letter to [REDACTED] was sent to you at my request by [REDACTED], who put my return address on it. Thanks for trying to find [REDACTED] address for me.

[REDACTED] searched for his address too, and it's easy enough to find addresses of guys named [REDACTED]; the problem is to figure out which [REDACTED] is the one I want. [REDACTED] thought my Peter Bell was a guy who died in his eighties a few years ago, but I'm convinced that [REDACTED] was right about that. It doesn't matter a heck of a lot anyway; my letter to [REDACTED] stands on its own as an essay on the motivations of scientists.

Yes I've been in contact with [REDACTED] about the American rights to *The Road to Revolution*. However, there is a problem. My contract with [REDACTED] specifies that the book is to be copyrighted in my name. But I very recently noticed that one of the pages near the beginning of the book says Copyright (c) 2008 by Editions Xenia. Despot it seems is trying to steal the copyright. I'm embarrassed that I didn't notice this sooner. But this will complicate my dealing with Parfrey in regard to the American rights. I don't know what will come [REDACTED], I hope you will soon be feeling better. (You might try listening to Franc Schubert's "Trout Quintet". I'm listening to it at this very moment, on the radio, and I ...

7. From Ted to Radio Station KCME — September 8, 2003

Dear Sirs:

I have a request for your "As You Like It" request program. I'm sending this request by mail, rather than using the telephone, because as a prison inmate I am allowed only three telephone calls per month, and I prefer to save my calls for other purposes.

What I would like to hear is "Atendite Popule Meus" ("Listen, My People"), by Heinrich Schutz (also spelled "Schuetz"). I request this for Wednesday, September 17.

Sincerely yours,
Ted Kaczynski

*They did not play my request.
TJK 10/8/03*

8. From Ted to an unknown person — 3/8/09

So little [REDACTED] is 4 years old now. Good Lord! It seems only yesterday that Alfie decided to get pregnant. But I have to say that I do *not* approve of [REDACTED] taking [REDACTED] to Disneyland. If I had a kid I would carefully indoctrinate her against Disneyland and everything of that sort, just as I would indoctrinate her against

tobacco and alcohol. But it's not my place to tell [REDACTED] how to raise her child, certainly looks good in the photos.

To come back to the [REDACTED], one of the lawyers who represented me, [REDACTED], knew [REDACTED]. This was one of a number of surprising coincidences connected with my case. Did you know [REDACTED]? For a ...

The Ted K Archive

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