

The Unabomber's “lady love”

Ted Kaczynski

1999—2007

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While in prison, Kaczynski fell in love with a pen pal named Joy Richards, who later died of cancer. At her request, their letters aren't on file, but Kaczynski wrote about her to many others, calling her his "angel" and the greatest woman he had ever known.

A1. Extract of a letter from Ted to Unknown — 6th February, 2005

... But I want to make clear that I have no objection to women being the bosses; they always have been the bosses and probably they always will be. In fact, I **have** to make this clear, because my lady friend makes me send her copies of all my letters, so of course she'll get a copy of this one, too. The problem is not in the fact that [REDACTED] is the boss; the problem is in the means by which she exercises her authority. When a woman controls her man by being cruel to him rather than by being nice, it's proof that her technique is grossly deficient. Take ...

B. Letter from Ted's Mother Wanda Kaczynski

B1. From Wanda to Ted — Nov, 8, 1999

My Dear [REDACTED]

You may be going through a bad time now but please hold on to the knowledge that I and many other people love you.

Joy Richards wrote recently and said she had gone to interview you. She said you were wonderful and that meeting you was a highlight in her life. I love that girl! Keep in touch with her.

At present I stand at my window gazing toward the Southwest reliving the memories of you as a wonderful, creative great kid. Do you still write stories, draw cartoons and compose music? I hope you still use your many talents to inform and entertain the people who write to you. Above all, try to be kind to the people who reach out to you.

“Bertrand Russell said he had these passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong that governed his life. “The longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind.”

Love, [REDACTED]

P.S. I enclose some humor, which is something you always enjoyed.

B2. From Wanda to Ted — April 1, 2000

Dear Son,

Just a card to let you know I have been thinking a lot about you these days, and all the many good characteristics you have. I hope you keep corresponding with Joy. She thinks so well of you, and is very loyal to you.

Love,
Mother

C. Two Letters from Journalists

C1. From NBC News to Ted — March 14, 2000

30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York NY 10112
212 664-4444

A Division of
National Broadcasting
Company Inc
DATELINE NBC
NBC
NEWS

March 14, 2000

Mr. Theodore J. Kaczynski

04475-046

P.O. Box 8500

Florence, CO 81226-8500

Dear Mr. Kaczynski,

I had a long, very interesting talk with Joy Richards yesterday over the phone. She had gotten in touch with me many months ago after you had mentioned me in one of your letters to her. We talked at length about the mass media and the concerns she has about technology and its potential to harm individual freedom. She obviously shares many of the same feelings about these issues that you do.

Based on our conversation, I thought I would send along another letter to you (you may have just received my previous letter). In our talk I explained to Joy that we would like to do an interview with you for DATELINE NBC which would be as unfiltered as possible—a one-on-one interview with our anchor Stone Phillips. Stone is one of the most respected journalists in television news, praised by his colleagues for his fairness and insight as an interviewer. I think that if you were able to meet Stone and talk with him informally, you would recognize his journalistic integrity and willingness to hear your own perspective on your case

If at all possible, I would like to see if there would be a way for Stone Phillips and myself to travel to the Florence facility to meet with you. I understand that you remain busy working on your legal filings for your case. But if you could take just an hour or so of your day to meet with us, we would be better able to understand your concerns

about the media. Stone would be happy to discuss with you how he works, and what he would like to accomplish in an interview.

Logistically, if we were to visit you there, I understand you would need to give our names to the warden as authorized visitors. We would be happy to travel there to talk to you as soon as you feel comfortable and would deem it appropriate. Please feel free to contact myself or Stone Phillips at the above address by mail; we would be happy to answer any questions you might have about this.

Thank you very much for your attention, and best of luck with your legal efforts.
Sincerely, [REDACTED]

C2. From Penthouse to Ted — February 2, 2001

11 Penn Plaza
12th Floor
New York, New York 1 0001
February 2, 2001
Theodore John Kaczynski
04475-046
U.S. Penitentiary Max
P.O. Box 8500
Florence, CO 81226-8500

Dear Mr. Kaczynski:

I hope I can answer all of your questions regarding Ms. Kintz. To answer your first and second question: Peter does not remember Theresa offering to give us all of the tapes. What she was offering us was edited transcripts. Peter told her he'd have to see complete—or virtually complete transcripts so he could make an informed judgement as to the value. It was at that point that Kintz suggested doing a new interview. The price Kintz mentioned to you is correct, but it was for an interview with you, *not* simply an article written by her.

The last time I heard from Kintz was when I received your first letter. I told her that you had refused a new interview with her. I also told her we were not interested in buying her material unless she could get a new interview with you. We haven't heard from her since.

I hope I answered your questions. I would also like you to know, that in our dealings with Ms. Kintz, Peter and I always sensed that she intended to honor any agreement she had made with you. She seemed determined to make sure you approved of what she was doing.

At this point, all we want is a fresh interview with you. If you would like Joy Richards to be the one to do the job that would be fine with us. I look forward to

hearing from you or Joy soon so we can move forward with this. I thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

[signed]

Linda Giustino
Deputy Managing Editor
Penthouse Magazine

D1. From Ted to [REDACTED] — April 22, 2002

Dear [REDACTED],

Thanks for your letter of April 6. I gather that you liked Joy's letter to you, and I'm glad of it. But she sent me a copy of it, and I have to tell you to disregard all that stuff that she wrote about me. It's just a lot of hot air.

Joy herself, though, is an angel. I mean a real one. I'm sure she could fly if she wanted to. You don't see her halo because she's too modest to wear it. She keeps it hung up in her closet. But she really is an honest-to-goodness angel. Absolutely perfect. Of course, by this time you might be starting to suspect that Joy and I do not see one another in completely objective terms...

I'm glad your Florida hike went well. If you would care to give me any further details of your experiences along the way, I would enjoy reading them.

I wish you success with your book. I imagine that a book like that might attract a lot of readers. Instead of making it just a straight trail-guide, you could, if you wanted to, use it also as an opportunity to say something about wilderness values and why the invention of civilization was the biggest mistake the human race ever made. In any case, I would enjoy receiving a copy of your book when it's done.

... Joy did receive your letter. She hasn't answered yet because, as you guessed, she's busy. Excessively busy — and it's partly my fault.

She teaches fourth grade, and that, in case you don't know it, is a demanding job in itself. What makes it much worse is the fact that a large proportion of her class consists of kids who have either learning disabilities or behaviour problems. How she manages to put up with those kids is more than I can understand. And on top of that, her school has a new, inexperienced principal who piles an unreasonable amount of bureaucratic paperwork on the teachers, which keeps Joy busy after school hours. In spite ...

... for me that I can't do for myself because I'm locked up in here. And it's all too easy for me to slip into the habit of asking her to do too much — which is why I said it's partly my fault that she's excessively busy.

That woman is a real gem. I hope you will get to know her well eventually, and if you do, I think you will have great respect for her. I certainly have great respect for her myself.

Best regards,
Ted

E. Letters to & from Dr. Barriot

E1. From Ted to Dr. Barriot — July 7, 2006

Dear Dr. Barriot:

Many thanks for your kind letter of June 15, which I received on June 26. I am especially grateful for your willingness to help my friend Joy Richards. I was able to speak with her by telephone on July 3. At that time she told me that she had made an unsuccessful attempt to call you. Probably she has not made a second attempt. But I think I had better tell you the whole story of her illness. She came to visit me at Christmas time, 2003. We had a very satisfying series of visits, but while she was here in Colorado she coughed up a tiny amount of blood, just a few specks. Of course she consulted her physician as soon as she arrived home in California, and it turned out that she had a cancerous tumor in her right lung. I believe her oncologist called it ‘adenocarcinoma’. On February 23, 2004, the upper lobe of her right lung was removed surgically. The tumor was small, the surgery seemed to be successful, and the oncologist told her that there was a sixty percent to eighty percent chance that cancer would not kill her within five years. Unfortunately, as a result of some disruption of the nerves during surgery, she was left with severe, chronic pain; so severe that she was not able to return to her employment as an elementary-school teacher. Fortunately she had disability insurance that paid her three fourths of her salary as a teacher, and since her first surgery she has been living on disability insurance. She also had participated in medical insurance plan offered by her employer, and that, for a certain period, covered her medical expenses. But at times she was depressed, largely I think as a result of the chronic pain, but probably also because of the uncertainty as to whether her cancer would return.

During this period the spiritual side of Joy’s nature began to assume greater importance. As a small child she had had some sort of spiritual experience that had left a deep impression on her. Her mother raised her as a Christian Scientist, but in adulthood Joy was not an adherent of any particular religion. At times, apparently, she was not even certain of the existence of God, but throughout her life she remained intensely interested in the idea of God. In fact, at one time she taught a college course devoted to Somerset Maugham’s novel *The Razor’s Edge*, a book that fascinated her. I don’t know whether you have ever read this book, but it is a very famous novel about a young man’s search for God. After her first surgery Joy began attending Quaker meetings, but she found them unsatisfying and eventually dropped them.

For more than a year and a half Joy had no recurrence of cancer, and I began to be very hopeful that she was permanently cured. However, she was still oppressed by chronic pain, and she was worried about her financial future, because the insurance program that her employer had provided would eventually expire and alter that she would have to pay the insurance premiums herself, which she would not be able to do given that she had to live on her disability insurance alone. She hoped to be able to qualify for “Medicare”, a program of the United States Government that would pay her medical expenses, but this was very uncertain at the time. Then in the autumn of 2005 a new tumor was discovered in Joy’s right lung.

From approximately this point my knowledge of ...

[missing page]

... Joy might live for some years longer.

Meanwhile, Joy’s involvement with spiritual matters was growing stronger, and she no longer had any doubt whatever of the existence of God. She began attending a Lutheran church, and she even had herself baptized, though she apparently does not believe all the doctrines of Lutheranism and probably does not regard herself as a Lutheran. Still, it is clear that her belief in God is more important to her than ever before.

But Joy’s financial situation seemed desperate and she told me that she was depressed over it. The terms of her disability insurance were such that the payments she was receiving would soon drop to one half of what her teacher’s salary had been; she did some calculations and concluded that there was no way she would be able to live on that amount of money. I was feeling rather desperate myself over Joy’s situation, for I love this woman truly, even though I know that her love for me has cooled.

That was how matters stood when I wrote you my letter on June 4. But on July 3 I spoke with Joy on the telephone, and she gave me some news that – if I understand her situation correctly – may solve her financial problems in a tragic way. Cancer has been discovered simultaneously at several new sites in Joy’s body, and her oncologist has told her that she has only from three to six months to live. This time I don’t think there can be much doubt; almost certainly, Joy will be dead within six months. She doesn’t seem worried about her financial situation any longer. She is four thousand dollars in debt, but I think that while she is alive she will be able to live on her credit cards, and she has insurance that will cover her debts after she dies.

I certainly shed many tears after learning on July 3 that Joy would be dead within six months, yet in a way I was relieved by that conversation, because, for the first time, Joy seemed resigned to death. Until now she has had an intense desire to live, but during our conversation of July 3 she seemed ready to accept the end of her life, and I can reasonably hope that she will die with peace of mind.

I’m sorry that she made only one attempt to return your phone calls, but I’m not surprised. She has very little energy nowadays, and she probably will not try to call you again. If you are still willing to help, I suggest that you call Joy once in order to establish contact and gain her trust. As I’ve already indicated, she is no longer

concerned about her financial situation, given that she has at most six more months to live. But still I'm worried that she might be overconfident about her finances, and may reach the limit of what she can borrow through her credit cards before she dies. If that happens she probably will not call you to ask for help. But if you would call her perhaps once a month to ask her if she is in need, and if you could offer her some degree of financial help if that prove necessary, then I will be forever grateful to you. I do not want this woman to suffer any more than she has to during her last months.

The reason why you were unable to reach Joy by telephone on June 15 was that on June 14 she had left for the state of Montana. She had to spend several days there before she became too weak to travel, because she needed to take care of some property, including important papers that she had in a safe-deposit box at the town of Lincoln, Montana. She will probably be living at home from now on, unless she is taken to a hospital when she is near death. During the day she may be out to visit a doctor's office or a hospital, but if you will call her at about 7:00am Pacific Daylight Time, she will almost certainly be at home. That is 8:00 AM Mountain Daylight Time, 9:00 AM Central Daylight Time, and 10:00 AM Eastern Daylight Time. This last being the time for the East Coast of the United States. I do not know how that translates into French time.

* * *

I will end this letter here because I want to be able to send it to you promptly. I will soon write you another letter about the problems connected with the publication of my writings in Europe. For the moment I will mention only the following. Dr. Skrbina has been traveling since June 15, and that is why he has not answered your letter to him dated June 16. I will not be surprised if your letter to Don Goede has remained unanswered. I have not found Mr. Goede to be a very reliable person; sometimes he has taken two or three months to answer a letter from me, even though the only answer required was a short note. I would further suggest that you should not put unreserved trust in Mr. Goede or Dr. Skrbina. I work with them because they are useful, but it cannot safely be assumed that their motives are unselfish.

With sincere thanks,
Ted Kaczynski

E2. From Ted to Dr. Barriot — July 10, 2006

Dear Dr. Barriot,

Today I again spoke by telephone with my friend Joy Richards. She told me that she is now planning to sell a piece of land in Montana (the same piece of land where

I lived for 25 years). She had formerly told me she could not sell this land, because it was a place where she could go to live without paying rent if her financial situation made it impossible for her to live any other way.

Now, however, as I've said, she has decided to sell the land, probably because she has only a few more months to live. She expects to receive enough money for the land so that she will have no further financial worries during the short time that remains before her death.

So it will not be necessary for you to call her as I suggested in my last letter (July 7)—unless you *want* to call her. You might want to call her simply in order to talk to her, since it's possible that you might find her an interesting person.

I apologize for my changes of position in regard to Ms. Richards. My excuse is that the limitation of my opportunities to communicate with her makes it impossible for me to keep fully informed of her situation.

I hope to be able to write to you again soon regarding the publication of my work in Europe. I may have found an American publisher, but at the moment that remains uncertain.

Sincerely yours,
Ted Kaczynski

E3. From Dr. Barriot to Joy Richards

... Maybe I made a bad impression on you, maybe you think that I am annoying ...

E4. From Dr. Barriot to Ted — August 10, 2000

Dear Dr. Ted Kaczynski,

I have just received your letter of August 5 involving the power of attorney. I am going to send a copy of this power of attorney to my friend lawyer this very day.

As agreed, I'll call Mrs Richards once or twice a month to make sure that she isn't in need. I have sent to her two international money orders ...

E5. From Ted to Dr. Barriot — August 15, 2006

... empirical and scientific, and I couldn't change it even if I wanted to. I can believe only what is supported by solid, rational evidence. Since I have never seen any firm evidence for or against the existence of God, I can neither affirm nor deny the existence

of God. Therefore I will have to leave it to you to reinforce Ms. Richard's faith in God. I don't think you will find that a difficult task.

But when I spoke with her on August 11, Ms. Richards was suffering a great deal of physical pain. The doctors were working to bring that under control, and I hope they will succeed. I want her to die with a tranquil mind and without severe pain.

In any case, I can't thank you enough for your very great kindness to Ms. Richards.

I will close this letter here and continue in a separate letter. It is actually cheaper to send you two letters ...

E6. From Ted to Dr. Barriot — August 15, 2006

Now I would like to say something about Joy Richards. Joy seems to have no more energy than the minimum necessary to deal with the demands of her difficult existence. For that reason she almost never writes to me any more, and she even postpones erasing the letters that I send to her. And for more than a month our communication by telephone has been very difficult. Because of some defect in the telephone provided to the prisoners here, Joy receives my voice in seriously distorted form, so that she can't understand what I am saying. I have to speak very slowly and very loud, and even then Joy often must ask me to repeat several times before she can understand what I've said. So it is impossible to carry on a normal conversation. For these reasons I am able to communicate with Joy only to a very limited extent.

But I *think* she has told me that you are sending her a thousand dollars a month. This makes me uncomfortable, because the piece of land in Montana that Joy owns is worth about forty thousand dollars, which should be more than enough to satisfy her needs for the few months that she still has to live. She has taken steps toward selling the land, but apparently that process is going very slowly. ...

E7. From Ted to Dr. Barriot — December 9, 2006

Dear Dr. Barriot,

I'm sending you herewith a copy of my letter to Mr. Despot dated December 7, 2006. TO my remarks therein about Dr. Skrbina I will add that my dislike for him is not entirely the product of recent irritations. Well over a year ago I mentioned in a letter to Joy that he did not seem very bright for a man who teaches at a respected university...

E8. From Ted to Dr. Barriot — January 8, 2007

Dear Dr. Barriot,

This morning I was told that Joy Richards had died some time this past weekend, January 6–7. She was 53 years old.

As you know, I'm not religious myself, but Joy was, and she would have wanted me to ask you to pray for her.

In sorrow,
Ted

E9. From Ted to Dr. Barriot — January 14, 2007

Dear [REDACTED]

Thanks for your letter of January 2. I very much appreciate the fact that you told Joy about my letter to you, so that she knew I was trying to get in touch with her. I had been afraid she would die thinking I had let her down, since I was unable to get a letter through to her. I don't think any of my letters ever did reach her. Through [REDACTED] and the prison chaplain I was given a P.O. Box number which I was supposed to write to her, [REDACTED]. But my letters to that address have been coming back marked "NO SUCH NUMBER." Clearly, someone screwed up.

Our very good friend [REDACTED] good as gold – visited Joy about 12 hours before she died, and he told her that I loved her and was "with her". She was only very slightly responsive, but she was responsive enough so that it appeared she understood what [REDACTED] told her.

Knowing what you and [REDACTED] told Joy relieves my mind, because I wouldn't have wanted her to die thinking I had let her down.

Again, thank you
Ted

E10. From Ted to Dr. Barriot — January 16, 2007

Dear Dr. Barriot,

I received your card of Dec. 15, 2006, your letter of Dec. 24, 2006, and your card of Jan. 2, 2007, on Jan. 8, Jan. 10, and Jan. 16, respectively. I hope you have received my letters of Dec. 3, 1006, Jan. 7, 2007, and Jan. 8, 2007.

First I have to correct an error: When the chaplain assistant informed me on Jan. 8 of Joy's death, I believed he was referring to the weekend immediately preceding Jan. 8. Actually he was referring to the weekend before that: Joy died early in the morning on December 31, 2006.

I am enclosing herewith 3 sheets related to Joy that you may find interesting: (1) an account of the spiritual experience that was so important to Joy; (2) a transcription of part of a letter from Joy's brother; and (3) a transcription of a letter from our very good friend Facundo Bermudez, who has been remarkably kind to Joy.

The letters from Facundo and from Joy's brother greatly relieved my mind, because I had been afraid that Joy would feel I had failed her—due to the fact that I was unable to get a letter through to her. But Facundo and Joy's brother made clear to her that I loved her and was trying to contact her.

You too have been remarkably kind to Joy. For that I thank you, and I know that Joy too was grateful to you.

In regard to your letter of Dec. 24: You are ...

E11. From Dr. Barriot to Ted — February 5, 2007

Dear Dr. Kaczynski,

I have well received your letters dated December 23, January 7, ...

... It was clear to Joy that you loved her ...

The account of Joy's spiritual experience is gripping (maybe the same kind of spiritual experience mentioned by Larry in Somerset Maugham's novel *The Razor's Edge*). The *fact* that things exist (when they don't have to exist) is the pillar of the faith in God. Hard science, as well as soft science, are incapable of explaining why the things exist. They are capable of explaining the sequence of biological events (reproduction, procreation..) and sometimes capable of imitating it. But regarding the original event, the very first event, the creation, nobody is able to give a logical, sensible, scientific explanation. The creation process is beyond reach of human intelligence. ...

E12. From Ted to Dr. Barriot — February 5, 2007

... come. You I thank for burning a candle for Joy in the church. Even though I am not a believer, I warmly appreciate the kindness of your gesture. And I am certain that Joy too would deeply appreciate your burning of a candle for her.

As regards the letter from Joy's executor, Chris Bass, Joy knew very well that the money you sent her was a gift and not a loan. But since the amount was large, she wanted you to be repaid at least in part if there were enough money in her estate ...

E13. From Ted to Dr. Barriot — March 10, 2007

Dear Dr. Barriot,

First let me answer your letter of February 5, ... I shed tears when I read of Mrs. Barriot's cancer. You can imagine how I felt on learning that the wife of my friend and benefactor has had a disease related to the one that so recently killed my own beloved...

F1. From Ted to Facundo Bermudez — July 15, 2007

Dear Facundo,

Thanks for your letter of 7/7/07, which I received on 7/13/07. To answer your questions:

First, from the box you received from [REDACTED], you can send everything to [REDACTED] *except*:

- (a) the bound copy of the Manifesto
- (b) the bound copy *Truth versus Lies*

(c) anything that Sherrill Redmon says she doesn't want (she probably won't have any commercially published books unless they have a lot of Joy's handwriting in them).

Second, [REDACTED] is Director of the Sophia Smith Collection, at Smith College, which is Joy's alma mater. I'm enclosing herewith a brochure that Sherrill Redmon sent me some time ago; the brochure explains pretty well what [REDACTED] is collecting.

Third, yes, all of the correspondence⁽¹⁾ between Joy and me has gone to the Sophia Smith Collection — except anything you may have in that box and any letters that Chris Bass may still be holding. Joy still felt a strong attachment to Smith College, and that must be why she wanted our correspondence to go there.

Fourth, I probably do not have — I mean, I probably never had — a copy of the letter No. 208, of 7/1/06, that you mention, but you can just send it straight to [REDACTED]. If you sent it to me it would only stir up my grief.

I should mention that about a year ago I asked [REDACTED] to pay the shipping costs for the materials I had sent her, and she said she would do so but that it might take some time! I have not yet received reimbursement, so I very recently sent Ms. Redmon a reminder...

⁽¹⁾ Except some photos, cards, and so forth that I'm saving as ...

The Ted K Archive

Ted Kaczynski
The Unabomber's "lady love"
1999—2007

<documentcloud.org/documents/2696539-The-Unabombers-Lady-Love.html>

www.thetedkarchive.com