

The Monkey Wrench Architect

The Philosophical Paradox of Edward Abbey

The Poor Prole's Almanac

Feb. 2, 2026

In this episode of the Poor Proles Almanac, we take an extended deep dive into the life, legacy, and contradictions of **Edward Abbey**, the man who provided the ideological foundation and a literal script for the radical environmental movement.

Often viewed as the gritty counterweight to Lewis Mumford, Abbey's work shifted the focus from urban sustainability to the raw, uncompromising defense of the American Southwest.

We explore Abbey's fascinating evolution—from his **"hammer and sickle" socialist heritage** in rural Pennsylvania to his time on the GI Bill, culminating in a philosophy he famously described as **"agrarian barefoot wilderness ecofriend."** We'll unpack the explosive impact of his 1975 novel, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, which served as both a work of art and a functional instruction manual for "ecotage," detailing everything from disabling bulldozers to raising billboards.

The conversation doesn't shy away from the **political paradoxes** that defined Abbey.

We grapple with his "problematic" stances on race and gender while examining his core ethical code: the rejection of violence against humans in favor of sabotaging the "tools of the technocracy." From his presence at the symbolic "cracking" of the **Glen Canyon Dam** to the way his ideas were later interpreted by everyone from **Earth First!** to the **Unabomber**, we ask: what happens when environmental fiction becomes a blueprint for real-world resistance?

Join us as we navigate the messy, radical ecosystem Abbey helped create—a world where property destruction, wilderness preservation, and a deep disillusionment with the state collide.

Is he a hero for the biospheric crisis, or a relic of a complicated past? We're pulling back the curtain on the man who told us to "keep it wild."

For sources, transcripts, and to read more about this subject, visit: www.agroecologies.org

To support this podcast, join our patreon for early, commercial-free episode access at <https://www.patreon.com/poorprolesalmanac>

For PPA Restoration Content, visit: www.restorationagroecology.com

For PPA Merch, visit: <https://breadandrosespress.com/>

Key words:

Edward Abbey, The Monkey Wrench Gang, radical environmentalism, ecotage, monkeywrenching, Earth First!, Earth Liberation Front, ELF, wilderness preservation, American Southwest, Desert Solitaire, Hayduke Lives, eco-defense, sabotage, anti-industrialism, anti-technology, biospheric crisis, Lewis Mumford, Theodore Kaczynski, Unabomber, Glen Canyon Dam, eco-terrorism, property destruction, technocracy, deep ecology, eco-anarchism, Dave Foreman, agrarian barefoot wilderness ecofriend, environmental activism, industrial power, environmental ethics, Forest Service, Rare II, ecological vigilanteism, biospheric collapse, anti-establishment, political paradox, socialist heritage, technocrats, greenwashing, homesteading movement, property damage vs violence, Murray Bookchin, eco-fascism, industrial sabotage, Caterpillar D7 bulldozer.

Hosted by Simplecast, an AdsWizz company.

See pcm.adswizz.com for information about our collection and use of personal data for advertising.

Audio file

Andy: Welcome back to the Poor Pearl's Almanac, creeping towards content which places us on more and more watch lists.

Matt: Just for the record, we're reporting facts, feds, not opinions.

Well, some.

Andy: Facts, question mark, opinions, exclamation.

It's called research, sweetie.

Come on.

Matt: Opinions first.

Andy: Opinions? Maybe.

So today we're dedicating an extended episode to a man named Edward Abbey.

You might know that name for various reasons.

You might have strong opinions about him, but he's kind of important to talk about from a bunch of different perspectives.

So he wasn't just a writer who wrote books, but he provided this ideological foundation and in some cases a literal script for what the radical environmental movement should look like.

While Lewis Mumford, who we talked about last week, explored what sustainable urban spaces looks like and even the radical foundations necessary for those urban spaces to be viable, this week we're talking about his counterweight, Edward Abbey.

They were both familiar with one another, very much so.

Mumford's anti-tech views heavily influenced Abby and in fact, Abby considered dedicating probably his most famous book, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, in 1975 to Mumford, basically saying his novel was the counterweight to Mumford's, well, I don't even know if counterweight's the right word, but comparative or pairing supplement, complement to Mumford's critique of industrial power.

If you ever read Abby's journals, one of the things he writes in it, and this is a quote from him, should dedicate it to Lewis Mumford.

He'd disown it, not his type, which is just like, it's so funny.

You think of like successful writers as having like figured it out and feeling confident and like, he's like, no, this guy is going to think I'm a ***** idiot and he ended up dedicating the book to the mythical Ned Ludd, who he talked about like three or four weeks ago.

Matt: I love it when all these like history episodes that we do finally like come together, almost like we sort of planned it.

Andy: It's almost like we planned it, right? It's a beautiful thing.

Matt: Almost.

Andy: Now, Abby is recognized as an iconic figure for multiple generations of environmentalists.

He was known for advocating for wilderness preservation, the issues of the environment, especially in the American Southwest.

He's also pretty well known as having some pretty, let's say, problematic opinions about women and immigrants and minorities and we're gonna talk about all of this and why it's important in order to understand what we're looking at today in the messier areas of radical action and all of this ties to the radical actions his work inspired and critically what Abby's response was to the fire that he had helped light and I think this helps us better understand Abby beyond the problematic eco-anarchist label that is easily kind of just forced on him because social media.

Matt: Okay, so as far as I know, he's famous for the monkey wrench gang, which was a big inspiration for the activities of Earth First and while the idea of an older white writer having problematic opinions isn't surprising, I guess the question is really whether his work and the ideology he espoused is relevant in today's discussion and action on the biospheric crisis.

Like, does he still have a place there?

Andy: Yeah, it's messy because it's very easy to throw the baby out with the bathwater, right? And part of Abby's whole thing is that he kind of operates in a state of like political paradox.

He tries to blend multiple conflicting progressive foundations into like a singular anti-industrial vision that kind of, today we might say like some people on the left would be too oriented on class, right? And you kind of say, class can fix race, class can fix that and when you're a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

He kind of had that same vision, but from like an anti-industrial perspective.

What that does is it allows for a lot of interpretations of his work, and we're going to talk about that.

One of the things to keep in mind is that He didn't just influence activism.

He influenced mainstream culture around what activism looked like and conservation science itself.

So for Abby, he had this anti-establishment attitude, which was cemented by his activist and academic work.

So before we can kind of even get there, we need to start at his background, right?

Matt: 10,000 years ago.

Andy: As the Southwest warmed and the cacti returned to the landscape, yes.

So despite being well known as like this representation of Southwest landscapes in his writing, he actually grew up in the hills of Western Pennsylvania during the Great Depression.

His father, a guy named Paul Revere Abbey, was a self-taught intellectual and a staunch socialist who frequently quoted Marx and Tom Paine and Rousseau and Walt Whitman.

So Abbey had this very old school hammer and sickle style socialist heritage.

I mean, not that Tom Paine really falls into that, I guess, but for the others and he often identified with like the underdog or the working class and the oppressed.

Matt: So he started with traditional left-wing foundation and with a dad named Paul Revere.

Andy: Yeah, why not, right? And he was also pretty heavily influenced on his own by Thoreau.

Just because we like to overlap episodes, it'd be highly unlikely that he had not read Henry Salt's biography of Thoreau.

So just rope that into this, right? Now, Abby went west to study at the University of New Mexico on the GI Bill.

When he returned later, he completed his master's degree in philosophy in 1959 at the age of 32 with a thesis called Anarchism and the Morality of Violence.

So I think he kind of figured out his footing, right? And this kind of informed his entire career.

He defined his ideal politics as, and these are his words, in quote, agrarian barefoot wilderness eco-freak anarchist, which is like what most of us call ourselves.

Matt: Yeah, that's on my business card.

Andy: As it should be.

It's really important when getting sales.

In his thesis study, he analyzed the philosophical foundations and violent actions of 19th and 20th century anarchists, ultimately concluding that they failed to justify political violence against individuals.

He believed that anarchists failed to persuade their peers that a critical situation existed justifying the violence against people.

Matt: So even as an anarchist, like he intellectually rejected violence against humans.

Andy: Absolutely and I think from casual readers or people that kind of see hearsay, that gets missed and this provided the philosophical core for his code that underlined his fictional work.

Despite embracing the idea of moral action to challenge institutions, he was still very pragmatic.

He spent a lot of time engaging in public discourse, lobbying representative governments, sending letters to congressmen, arguing technical details on grazing regulations.

Matt: Then we all.

Andy: Calling for things like clean air and water.

He was involved in what was actually happening, not just theoretical.

Matt: And I guess we would kind of call him a liberal today.

Andy: I mean, some would at least, right? And I think that's, again, he's this person of contradictions, like he's this radical who has an interesting history as we'll see.

but also did very like town hall kind of **** what I mean? And the book that we mentioned already, the Monkey Wrench Gang, which was written in 1975 and probably

his most influential book, which he wrote in his late 40s, so it wasn't like he was still just young and angry, right? This became a foundation for radical action moving forward.

The idea of ecological sabotage or what he called ecotage actually predated the novel's publication and it's something that Abby was aware of and even participated in.

wasn't just a philosophical idea.

Matt: Okay, so back in the like, what, early 70s, what was this like ecotage looking like? I mean, I feel like it's something I associate with like a period of like 20 years later.

Andy: Sure.

So like I said, before the book even came out, there were independent environmentalists in the 70s taking what we might call radical steps.

some inspired by Abby's earlier work, *Desert Solitaire*.

Now, one example of this is a group called the Eco Raiders.

They're a group of high school students who were active in the 1970s.

They did things like sabotage billboards and construction equipment, drain pipes and smokestacks, things like that.

So for example, in 1972, they dumped hundreds of non-returnable cans and bottles at a bottling company entrance to be like, hey, this is your ***** problem, right? A 1973 report claimed the group had caused about \$2 million in damage, probably like 10, \$15 million today.

Matt: I mean, how many bottles is 2 million in deposits? It's got to be a lot of bottles they dropped off.

Andy: A couple.

It wasn't just a binge night, right?

Matt: Also, like, to be fair, having like, having recyclable bottles seems like a pretty bare minimum that we like think of today as like, It's like the poster child of earth conscious recycling is like bottles and cans.

Andy: Yeah, greenwashing, right?

Matt: Yeah.

Andy: And that's the thing is like, as much as it is frustrating today about like the fact we're not doing more for the climate or the environment, right? It's very easy because that Overton window has shifted to see how much worse it used to be and I think that's really important and like some of that change is because of Abby.

to say like, bottles are recyclable, like the bare minimum.

That's because of his writing, right? Not entirely, but you know what I mean.

The bar was pretty low is the point.

Now, Abby's own journals reveal that he anticipated and may or may not have performed the actions of his characters, resolving in his words to raise more billboards.

Matt: R-A-Z-E raise, that is.

He wasn't like It'd be funny if on the back end he was also trying to get into advertising.

But he like put up a billboard for the monkey wrench gang and it was like, burn this billboard.

Andy: Burn this billboard.

Speaking of which, it's time for advertisements from our local billboard companies.

Matt: Burn this ad.

Throw your phone in a fire.

Andy: And more exciting tales.

All right, so close friends of Abby testified in a post-humous film about his euphemistic field research for the book, suggesting he acted out the capers.

Not capers.

Why did I write that? Suggesting he.

Matt: How old are you, man?

Andy: I don't know.

Suggesting he acted out some of the things that he'd written about before committing them to a book and basically this is kind of, we've mentioned a long time ago the Turner Diaries for the right.

In many ways, the Monkey Wrench Gang was kind of the left's version of that.

He offered a script that would influence activists' aesthetic, as well as rhetorical and tactical choices.

The Monkey Ranch gang specifically modeled specific sabotage actions, providing extensive narration on things like, say, how to disable a Caterpillar D7 bulldozer, detailing the exact locations of levers in the, say, order of operations for would-be activists who may be curious about these things.

Matt: So it served as like an actual instruction manual for illegal activity while also like A note being like an example of hard fiction.

Andy: Yeah, here's how to do it.

Also, these guys look ***** and also, this is just a book of some people doing stuff that I would never say you should do.

Matt: They're just doing things.

It's just characters.

It's just my little guys.

Andy: It's just TV, man.

Yeah.

my little guys.

It was so successful that the title monkey wrenching became a verb basically and kind of developed this subculture, right? This example of very exciting and effective resistance was crucial because many activists of the time, and I think this has not changed very much, felt very disillusioned by the failures of the state to like resolve these issues, right? One example is the Forest Service's rare reviews, which opened these huge tracts of wild land to development, despite the fact that everyone was like, we shouldn't do this.

The government's like, hey, what if we did though? Hey, hear me out.

What if? What if we did it? The other thing to keep in mind within this context, you know, we're talking about the 70s and 80s, is this is also the same time a lot of right-wing radicalism was taking hold in rural parts, especially of the western side of the United States, the rise of homesteading movements after the Korean War.

Matt: And we talked about some of the like white supremacist origins in the homesteading movement pretty in detail last season and it's one of my favorite episodes.

So go back and listen to the old stuff.

But in short, despite his focus being specifically about defending the land in specific actions, it was inevitably about the nature of how we relate to the broader landscape as humans.

Andy: Yeah, his whole point was to remind people of our place as people on the earth.

Even though he wasn't necessarily like a humans belonging nature, he was definitely had that clear like, we do not deserve to be in wilderness except for like occasionally.

But he took his work, he wrote it, he provided this handbook, and then whether or not he was actively involved, it's kind of hard to say he couldn't have been to have that intimate knowledge he did.

He also then directly supported the first major radical group to emerge from his work, which is the organization Earth First, or EF, which was founded in 1980.

While EF was short-lived, shorter-lived we'll say, the Earth Liberation Front, or ELF, sprung, or ELF, sprung from EF and is still active today.

EF's founding moment was a symbolic repetition of the novel's climax and this was the destruction of the Glen Canyon Dam.

In 1981, EF members unrolled a 300 foot wedge of black vinyl down the dam face to create the illusion of an ominous looking black fracture.

Abby was present at the protest and gave a speech.

The FBI, being the FBI, took the threat seriously.

Matt: Being wieners.

Andy: Being wieners and interpreted, and that's objective, that is reporting on the news.

Matt: That's fact.

Andy: That is fact.

They were actually wieners.

There's evidence of it everywhere.

Matt: We have photographs.

Andy: Check the photos and they quoted, treated this as what they called a harbinger of domestic terrorism and even dusted the plastic for fingerprints.

Matt: I mean, just, a little different than the interpretive dancing outside like ice facilities in Portland.

Andy: Yeah, And that's the point, right? To put Abby's work in a context, the Monkey Wrench Gang, which like I said, came out in 1975, which predated the right-

wing fantasy novel, *The Turner Diaries* by only three years, was about real change, not just like mocking the system or performatively criticizing the system.

It was about we're going to do this thing and this is how we do it, which is really inspiring and also dangerous as the *Turner Diaries* proved with so many right-wing terrorists.

Now, what this did was it created a real ecosystem of radical ideas, not just in the United States, but internationally and it was an outright rejection from both the left and the right regarding what was happening in global politics.

Matt: And I think that's something that like doesn't get brought up very often is interest in this was like not just isolated to people that would like identify as environmentalists before all this.

was like a pretty wide interests just like generally and especially in like the home-steading movement.

Andy: Yeah and you know we haven't talked too much about it.

We're not going to talk about it much now, but this is also the first realization of climate change at the same time.

It's like existential reality.

part of the reason why, and we didn't talk about it even when you did the home-steading episode because it was so long, I couldn't add more to it.

was that there was this rebirth of like Malthusian ideas because of the existential reality of the limits of the planet and the fact that it felt like capitalism itself was reaching a limit.

You have all these different facets kind of feeding into, okay, this way we're living doesn't seem like it can continue.

So we need to be open to new ideas and that window for being open to new ideas is really short and we experienced it during COVID, right? You had that window, the beginning of COVID where people were like, oh my God, we don't have to live this way, right? You have that window and you either run with it or you don't.

But once it's there, it's short and it's this moment of holy **** it doesn't have to be like this and that's what people were experiencing at this time is you have all this confluence of events happening that fed into this moment of a decade or so of hey, what else is out there? This isn't permanent.

This doesn't have to be permanent and part of this was also that Abby wasn't afraid to stand behind his beliefs.

He, again, backed the people doing the actual work.

He endorsed the movement by writing the foreword to Dave Foreman's 1985 book, what's treated as a manual called *Eco Defense, A Field Guide to Monkey Wrenching*.

The manual was dedicated to Abby and it went under this press called Abzug Imprint, which honored the novel's Jewish character named Bonnie Abzug.

So when critics did end up questioning his fictional advocacy for illegal action, Abby publicly defended sabotage while maintaining A distinction between his art and

a political program and what he said was in quote, the Monkey Wrench Gang is a novel and I like to think a work of art.

It would be naive to read it as a tract, a program for action or a manifesto.

It has never meant and has never implied the use of violence against living creatures.

Matt: So his like core response was like damage machines, but protect life and that's like a very like clear, clear line sort of.

Andy: It is and it's really important to understand because again, we're going to see in the next couple episodes how people translated what he meant by this and obviously it complicates things because He's very much a romantic at heart, but then he's got these really problematic positions despite having this like really strong ethic of peace against people regardless of race, sex, so on, right? And this is a really stark contrast to what came out of the Turner Diaries, which I mean, if we're not on a watch list now, that one would put us on a watch list to review.

He was concerned with the moral imbalances created when society is managed by technical specialists and this is a really important point to make, and this is kind of a big part of why he supported monkey wrenching is because you have technical specialists who he felt couldn't see the big picture, right? Now, to compare this to someone else we've covered, the Odom brothers, who were the scientific backing for the permaculture movement, were completely in opposition to his understanding of what nature was and should be and the importance of things like protecting wildlands from industry.

Again, we talked about the Odoms and their idea was that we can make nature more efficient, right? And then we can also make it bend to our will.

Instead, Abby would argue that we should be attacking the tools of the technocracy Technocracy.

I'm assuming technocracy.

Matt, thoughts on that?

Matt: Yeah, I think it's technocracy.

Andy: Okay, it just sounds wrong.

Matt: I don't know, it feels like one of those words that you read all the time.

Andy: Yeah, I know the point of that word, but I've never heard anyone say it.

Matt: If anyone's ever talking at you and mentions technocracy, you're kind of like, **** that guy.

Oh, brother.

Andy: So you can all say that to me right now.

That's fine.

I will not take judgment.

But his idea of like attacking these tools provided what he would consider like a middle ground between surrendering to like industrial development and what might be like a violent anarchy, right? And this kind of became the ethical principle of Earth First, which insisted that monkey wrenching is nonviolent and it's explicitly only aimed

at inanimate machines and tools, always taking care to minimize possible threat to people.

Matt: And this is like in pretty wide opposition to some of the other like radical left-wing movements of the time, like the Weather Underground, for example.

Andy: Exactly.

Abby didn't really easily fit into any category, and that makes sense given the turbulence of this period, right? There's this interesting cross-pollination happening that's really hard to like tease into like clean lines.

We saw that with the homesteading, right? Where you've got right-wingers and left-wing people with similar ethics, but obviously very specific, very different components, while also agreeing like we need to be more in line with nature and all this other stuff, right? And Abby very much fit into that weird space.

Now his final novel, which was called *Hey Duke Lives*, who is a character from Monkey Wrench Gang, complicated his core ethic when during the climax, a security guard named Jasper Bundy is shot and killed.

The main characters then throw the body over the canyon rim and neither the characters nor the narrative expresses any regret or tragedy about the incident.

Matt: I mean, that sounds like a pretty clear violation of his like own, you know, no one gets hurt rule.

How did the author like rationalize this shift?

Andy: This is where critics were able to say, hey, look, you're full of ****.

We knew you were full of **** right? and said you're either inconsistent or near the end of his life, he was becoming more radical about by what means the wilderness needs to be defended.

However, Abby's friends, close friends and folks that knew him well, disagreed.

One of his good friends, a guy named Jack Loeffler, argued that the killing did not represent a change in Abby's worldview, but rather a change in fictional circumstance.

Loeffler pointed out that the character who pulls the trigger, a guy named Jack Burns, was protecting Hey Duke and even one of the handwritten revisions in the manuscript indicated that Burns was Hey Duke's father, suggesting Burns was defending his family, which would be a little bit of a moral understanding to that decision.

Matt: And I mean, like, ultimately, it's like, Hey Duke lives as like a work of fiction and not like a philosophical treatise or anything.

Like, good writers also know that like, If you write every character as the embodiment of your highest ideals, you end up with a really boring book.

Andy: Yeah, and other friends, like another guy named Dave Foreman, said that basically the stakes had changed, that technological development and destruction of the environment had reached proportions Abby had never expected to see, and that it became something of an existential threat.

He felt that Abby was trying to show that activists might face a situation where it becomes shoot or be shot regardless of principles.

Matt: Yeah, and at least some kind of like moral relativity.

Andy: Yeah, the majority of Abby's followers, including the Earth Liberation Front, maintained his ethical barrier, focusing only on property destruction.

The ELF conducted far-reaching campaigns of destructive acts of ecological sabotage, like arson against corporations and government agencies.

Despite being labeled eco-terrorists, they consistently targeted property such as the Vail Ski Report, which had \$12 million in damages, and University Biotechnology Labs, again adhering to the principles of non-violence towards life.

However, Abby's influence also contributed to the rise of groups that completely abandoned this non-violence role.

Matt: Cue ominous music.

Andy: So a fella named Theodore Kaczynski.

the Unabomber, old Uncle Ted.

He also read the Monkey Wrench Gang in the mid-80s and admitted that Abby's work confirmed that, in his words, there are other people out there that have the same attitudes as I do.

So, you know, good things, all good things.

Now, Kaczynski, who had committed acts of monkey wrenching in the 70s, later became basically a new form of anti-tech radicalism.

Matt: So Kaczynski used Abby's anti-technology critique, but justified violence against people ultimately.

Andy: Yeah, and we're going to talk about Kaczynski in a lot more detail, not today, but in the future.

Ted and groups that he influenced, like individualists tending towards the wild or ITS in Mexico, consciously rejected the conservationist belief that life is sacred and instead of merely destroying machinery, Kaczynski targeted human beings, specifically scientists.

Again, thinking about Edward Abbey, technical experts and technocrats, seeing them as agents of the technological system.

ITS explicitly radicalized this, moving away from sabotage to embrace indiscriminate attack and terrorism.

ITS views their violence not as a means to revolution, which they believe is unrealistic, but as a way to affirm their own wild nature and they basically state that they won't stop for anyone in attacking their targets and believe that anyone contributing to civilization contributes to its devastation.

Matt: I mean, I feel we hear pretty constantly like a justification.

in environmentalist circles that the work of radical individuals can simply be viewed as like nature defending itself but in my opinion that's like a pretty like weak justification for like just indiscriminate harm to any individual like fitting that like the broad description I think what you can get in these spaces And I'll acknowledge that this isn't very new or profound.

But as soon as you can justify violence towards other humans in the name of the non-human, that really isn't like an off-ramp.

Like Kaczynski and ITS are not like trying to influence broad public opinion with these actions.

Ultimately, well, in my opinion, pretty selfish.

I'm not like a psychologist at all, but there's like a certain tipping points that like humans get to like in killing for something higher than themselves in every human society.

Some cases we can like as that society we can like justify it and sometimes like we can but combine that with the like broad ecological cause and these actions targeting like such specific individuals are as tragic as they are like inevitable.

I guess you could ecological like vigilantism and not to be like a liberal about it, but I don't know.

I appreciate just like a little bit of due process.

Andy: Yeah, it's hard when I think there's no, there's no plan to make it meaningful, right? Like I can understand the concept of ends justifying the means, but if there's no ends and it's just kind of like insurrectionary without purpose, that's a little messy.

Now many of Abby's followers maintained the ideals of Abby, which is that there's a very clear line between property destruction and harm to living things.

Folks like Ted argue that significant amounts of violence are just a natural part of human life and justify targeting people who what they considered betrayed their wild nature, right, by serving this technological system.

So despite Abby saying this is a core part of my ethical compass that is inspiring you, people said, well, I'm just going to cut that part out.

Whether or not Abby is responsible for that's kind of up to the reader, right? But he tried to make this case of like, yes, there are morals to this type of battle, this war.

This is our Geneva Convention, so to speak and this did create a pretty strong rift in green left spaces where folks like Murray Bookchin defined deep ecologists who were anti-tech and essentially anti-civilization as eco-fascists and this was a direct response to that growing comfort with violence against humans that began with the expansion of the Earth First movement, even though they, again, followed Abbey's philosophy.

While EF did eventually splinter into several groups based on variations of different left politics, some of them did continue to focus on the environment first, while others engaged with eco-defense from a multidisciplinary lens of race and class, others that went more towards the anti-civ lens.

There are a bunch of different groups, including some that became more popular, like the Wilders and the Hollies and then again, on the less violent end of the left was the ELF.

Matt: I mean, ideological purity is a hell of a drug and the left splinters like it's made of pine.

Andy: Wow.

Matt: Do you like that one?

Andy: That's a good one.

So yeah, unsurprisingly, the left had a bunch of different opinions on it, created a bunch of reading groups and accomplished very little and then the right had a very different relationship with eco defense, right? And the example of the ITS is more about the need to return humans to nature by killing those who were too civilized, right? And this pairs really well with like how we saw the homesteader movement grow in the 70s and 80s and even into the 90s and also feeds into some of those alpha male concepts we see today about what men should really look and act like, right? But we're going to get more into the weeds about that in a few weeks.

Matt: Real men listeners go eat a deer liver and like several **** next to your drinking water.

We'll see you on the flip.

Andy: See you on the flip.

Yeah.

So if you guys enjoyed this, please go check out the sub stack.

We've got the links and all that fun stuff, resources, citations, yada, yada, yada.

Next week's episode, hopefully is up on Patreon by the time this comes out, but that doesn't always happen as smoothly as would like.

Otherwise, I think that's about it.

So that's kind of the rundown on Edward Abbey and his role on the left and kind of how he got absorbed and we actually didn't get to talk as much about kind of the race and gender stuff as much as I wanted to.

But the real takeaway though on that side of things is that he said ***** things because he was from a ***** time and he found himself instead, and I kind of hinted at this, Instead of focused it on class for the left, his ideals were about the environment from the left and everything boiled down to the environment and if we didn't take care of that, nothing else mattered.

Also, he felt that because the only other people he was seeing doing that wilderness preservation were white, he tended to lean towards white men being the people that were the guardians of those landscapes, which allowed him again to be appropriated more easily by left wing figures, which again is why it's so important to understand him as an influence for both the left and the right.

Matt: Word.

Andy: Word.

But no, for real, now we're really done this time.

So yeah, see you guys next week.

Who knows? Maybe this is our last episode ever.

Matt: We're around.

Andy: You don't know that.

Matt: Come hang out.

Andy: I don't know that. Matt doesn't know that.

Matt: I know that.

Andy: He shows up. He knows. He knows.

The Ted K Archive

The Poor Prole's Almanac
The Monkey Wrench Architect
The Philosophical Paradox of Edward Abbey
Feb. 2, 2026

<www.listennotes.com>

www.thetedkarchive.com