

A Timeline of Ted Kaczynski's Life, Family and Influences

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Family background

- **Grandparents' worlds:** Ted's paternal grandfather was born in Poland and was one of those training to fight for a free Poland. His maternal grandparents had drunken escapades that made the newspapers. David also recalled a darker story their father told about his own father; "well, we went to fight this battle and I don't know what happened, but we started killing everybody in the town and then men started raping women." David asks how normal families produce men who do this, noting that soldiers are trained to desensitize themselves to the enemy's humanity. He sees a nihilistic potential in everyone to some degree and thinks the highest teachings of every religious tradition try to be an antidote to it. (Trained for a Free Poland, David Kaczynski on Emotional Healing from a Buddhist Perspective, A Big Class in The Police Court on Monday Morning, Frequently Asked Questions About Ted Kaczynski)
- **Parenting advice his mother followed:** Ted's mother read Dr. Benjamin Spock for parenting advice. Years later she read *This Stranger, My Son* to try to understand her son's mental health struggles. (Stop Scaring Parents, Says Dr. Ben Spock, This Stranger, My Son)

Early childhood and school

- **Separated from his parents as a sick baby, at a key time for attunement and attachment:** His mother felt this was key to the man he became. Ted felt his parents used the event to avoid responsibility for the impact their inadequate parenting had on his character. (Declaration of Wanda Kaczynski, Ted Kaczynski's mother, Every Last Tie)
- **A father's rebuff (about age 6):** Ted recalled running up to his father in a joyful mood to kiss him and being told he was like a little girl. His father regretted it at once and said he could, but Ted drew back and had an aversion to kissing for some years. He wrote that his father had been warm until he was 5 or 6 and then gradually became more physically distant, though he stressed that his relationship with his parents didn't seriously deteriorate until about age 11. He also wrote that from his earliest memories his view of girls and women included contempt, which he linked to associating femininity with weakness. (Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography)
- **Castaways, outlaws and Native Americans in his early reading:** As a child Ted read Robinson Crusoe, Treasure Island, The Three Musketeers, Jack London and the histories of various Native American peoples. He hoped to live by a minimalist morality like that of castaways, outlaws and hunter-gatherer bands,

and imagined women would find those traits attractive, like being the provider who pays for dinner. (Unabomber: In His Own Words, Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography)

- **Moved forward a year at school without anyone ensuring he kept his friendships:** Skipping 6th grade was treated as a reward for his analytical ability. In hindsight perhaps Ted training himself to be advanced at Mathematics should have been looked at as an opportunity to stay in the same year, but have to do less formal lessons, and more poetry workshops and the like where he could develop his emotional intelligence. (In Illinois, a childhood of math and pressure, Egghead Kaczynski Was Loner in High School)
- **Dale Eickelman, his most meaningful childhood friendship:** Ted's defense investigators recorded Dale Eickelman, later an anthropology professor at Dartmouth, saying Ted had no other friends from fifth grade until Ted's sophomore year of college, and Ted visited his home the summer after his Harvard freshman year. The two played chess and built homemade explosives, once blowing up a metal garbage can, which Eickelman described to reporters as ordinary behavior for bright kids who read a lot of science books. In his 1979 autobiography Ted also described sexual experimentation in his early teens with Dale and other boys, and he mentioned Dale as a figure in his sexual fantasies. (Truth versus Lies (Original Draft), Who was the Unabomber? Colleagues, classmates say Kaczynski's intellect isolated him, Child's Play for the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography)
- **A childhood ethical system, abandoned at 13 after hating a girl, and the road to a "philosophical zombie" life:** Ted had a short period in childhood where he somewhat vainly tried to live by a complicated social contract ethical system he'd come up with in his head and shared with no one. It likely fit with US law while adding a stricter, self-imposed layer he probably prided himself on keeping, unlike others whose lack of such a system he may have thought led them to hurt his feelings unnecessarily. He studied hard too, perhaps hoping for the kind of freedom wealth and status bring in adulthood. After skipping 6th grade he "began feeling a great deal of hostility toward many of my schoolmates" and tried to justify his hatred within that system. At 13 he saw a girl whose appearance antagonized him, and went looking for something about her that would make hating her reasonable. Frustrated at finding no loophole, he said to himself, "This is getting ridiculous. I'll just chuck all this silly morality business and hate anybody I please." He wrote: "Since then I have never had any interest in or respect for morality, ethics, or anything of the sort." I think that was when he stopped asking what character traits he could build to live a meaningful life, handed his decisions to his emotions, unpicked what his parents and teachers had taught him, and only pretended to go along with what people wanted when

it cleared obstacles from his path. It was like sitting at the back of the cinema watching his life on the big screen, with his emotions having already written the script, as long as it made for a more interesting movie. It's what makes his story philosophically fascinating and horrifying: he seems to have wanted a kind of philosophical zombie life, shorn of the emotional entanglements most people have to live with. (Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography, Truth versus Lies (Original Draft), Ted Kaczynski's 1959 Autobiography, The Unabomber's Ethics, Ted Kaczynski as existential protagonist)

- **Explosives and a school reputation (early teens):** Ted wrote that in his early teens he sought power by secretly experimenting with homemade explosives, which led to a couple of incidents at school. In one, a chemistry-lab mixture of red phosphorus and potassium chlorate got a classmate removed from the class and Ted suspended from lab work for two weeks. He suspected it earned him a reputation as a kind of mad genius. (Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography)
- **Adults failed to read his desire to escape into primitive life as a desire to escape bullying:** Parents, teachers and counselors never talked it through with him, and there were no classes on politics and philosophy that might have given him a way to work through his ideas. (Neanderthal Man, Ted Kaczynski's 1958 Autobiography)
- **Killing a small bird:** Ted crushed a small bird in his hand because he felt embarrassed by the pity he felt for it, since that pity conflicted with his desire to live a primitive hunter-gatherer life. After killing it he instantly felt even sicker with pity. (Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography, Is it good that some people feel sad about the animals killed painfully by hunter-gatherers?)

Harvard (1958–1962)

- **Attended Harvard a year early:** He went without taking the time to travel and explore the world first. (Unabomber Ted Kaczynski, the lonely Harvard student whose room smelled of foot powder, Harvard and the Unabomber)
- **A romantic, fascist phase (ages 15–18):** Ted later described a romantic phase that began before Harvard, came on strongest in his freshman year, and had largely faded by the middle of his junior year. He was drawn to German Romanticism, read Alan Bullock's biography of Hitler and became interested in Nazism, and fantasized about being an agitator who roused mobs to revolutionary violence and, as dictator, sent his Gestapo to round up everyone he hated. In some versions of the fantasy he used that power to rebuild society around maximum individual autonomy; in others he wiped out the human race with an atomic

war. His account mentions no group or mentor behind any of this: it grew out of his own reading and fantasy life as an isolated teenager. (Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography, Ted Kaczynski's Various Ethical & Political Flirtations)

- **Unwittingly took part in psychological experiments:** Henry Murray's experiments at Harvard were later used by the CIA to demonstrate the efficacy of torture, according to some accounts. They would be considered unethical today and could not take place. Ted himself later argued they had little effect on his personality, and the CIA link is disputed. (Archive of Henry Murray's Harvard Dyad Experiment, Ted and the CIA, Debunking the Ted Kaczynski "MK Ultra" myth)
- **Harvard's anti-technology atmosphere:** Ted arrived at a Harvard where suspicion of science and technology was a strong current, especially in the humanities and General Education courses. After the Manhattan Project and Hiroshima, many faculty saw science as a threat to Western values and to human survival, while others still saw it as a liberator from superstition. One instructor who taught Ted's Gen Ed A composition class in fall 1958 later reread the course readers and noticed echoes of the manifesto: a section on "About Machines and Men" included Friedrich Georg Jünger on the machine's insatiable hunger, alongside Turing's optimistic essay on whether machines can think. She stresses that thousands of students used the same books and that the readings were not uniformly anti-technology. Some commentators go further and argue that late-1950s Harvard humanities were still a refuge for an aristocratic, classics-centered elite hostile to modernity, and that Ted's politics came from that milieu. Ted wrote that he respected his Harvard math, physics and German teachers but had no respect for the humanities and social science courses. He told Theresa Kintz that his last year at Harvard was when he decided he was firmly against technology. (Dangerous Reading, Harvard and the Unabomber)
- **"Philosophy is humbug" (Harvard years):** In a letter to his parents Ted taped in a Crimson clipping of Bertrand Russell saying nine tenths of what is called philosophy is humbug. He wrote that he noted it with triumph, having long maintained that philosophy is humbug and now finding that even a philosopher admits it. The through line in his writing about his teachers is boredom with everything except mathematics and ancient human history, which cuts against online rumors that Harvard teachers coaxed him into gender identity issues. (Frequently Asked Questions About Ted Kaczynski)

Michigan, Berkeley and the break with academia (1962–1969)

- **Projecting frustration onto all women:** Angry with himself for being unable to move from social interaction with women to romantic or sexual involvement, he projected his feelings of inadequacy onto all women and blamed them for his frustration. (Unabomber: In His Own Words, An attack of desire for women, Apology to Women)
- **Breaks with reality at Michigan (1960s):** David said that from parts of Ted's non-public journals he learned that Ted had apparent breaks with reality in his early twenties. He stopped going to class, did brilliant mathematical work, and had delusions that people had visited him who had not. He approached the health service for help but couldn't talk about his needs, and began to believe, apparently for the first time, that the problems were outside him rather than inside him. (WAMC's In Conversation With David Kaczynski)
- **A Cold War anti-communist who backed the Vietnam War (1960s):** Ted wrote that he had always hated communism and socialism. While at Michigan he supported the Vietnam War, which he thought was necessary to stop the spread of communism, then believed to be even more dangerous to freedom, and even more committed to technology, than the American system. Facing the draft, he wrote that he didn't want to be crippled and couldn't stand military discipline, but was somewhat attracted by the idea of "shooting it out with the Commies." Decades later he said he had changed his mind: he had vastly overestimated the danger of communism, partly through naivety and partly because he had trusted media propaganda. (Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography, Ted Kaczynski on 911 politics and policy)
- **The therapist's office and a first wish to kill (1967, aged 24):** Ted couldn't tell a university counselor about his sexual fantasies of becoming a woman in order to get to be intimate with a woman, and instead claimed to be depressed about the draft. He had made the appointment hoping to talk a psychiatrist into helping him get a sex-change operation, not because he saw himself as transgender but because the fantasy was erotic, after a period of intense sexual frustration that included being distracted by a couple making love next door. He walked out feeling rage, shame and humiliation, with stronger suicidal ideation and feelings of wanting to kill through a murder-suicide. He later described it as a major turning point: he thought "why not really kill that psychiatrist and anyone else whom I hate," and sketched a plan to go off to the woods and, if that failed, return and kill someone he hated. His shame at not being able to find a relationship turned into hatred of a society he felt was regimenting his life and making him this way.

(Psychiatric Competency Report, Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography, From the Unabomber to the Incels: Angry Young Men on Campus)

- **PhD at Michigan, then Berkeley, then abrupt resignation in 1969:** Ending his career as a mathematics professor after only two years was a surprise to many, however according to Ted he always knew he was going to quit, and only took the job to save up enough money to buy land in the wild and live as a hunter-gatherer. The moment in Michigan in which he decided to live a riskier life and potentially murder others still playing on his mind. (The Mathematical Work of Ted Kaczynski, Ted Kaczynski's Letter of Resignation from his Professorship at Berkeley, Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography)
- **The era's extinction scares (1967):** In September 1967, as Ted arrived at Berkeley, *Esquire's* college issue ran David Lyle's "The Human Race Has, Maybe, Thirty-five Years Left," one example of the overpopulation and food-supply alarm that ran through the mass media of the time. The *Project Unabom* podcast uses it to show how mainstream apocalyptic worries about growth and technology were in the late 1960s. False reporting like this fed Ted's fears and was part of what drove him to believe an extreme reaction was needed and may even have been the straw that broke the camel's back. (The Human Race Has, Maybe, Thirty-five Years Left, Project Unabom)
- **Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (read by Berkeley at the latest):** Ted read the novel no later than his Berkeley years and kept returning to it, professing to have read it at least a dozen times. Per Donald Foster, he cultivated a likeness to its bomb-making "Professor," down to hunting for the perfect detonator and taking pride in an unkempt look. He urged his mother and a would-be revolutionary to read it, calling the revolutionaries mere caricatures. Gisela Argyle reads Conrad as staring into the void and the will-to-power, then flinching: his narrator treats the Professor as a caricature and favors the plodding Chief Inspector Heat. D.H. Lawrence saw that retreat as cowardice. There's a tragic irony here: Ted saw something beautiful in Conrad writing about existential nihilism, but because Conrad made the existentialist a terrorist, Ted was "forced" to identify with a terrorist in order to enjoy the insights. I think Ted took a perverse pride in identifying with the villains and maybe skipped the part where they realise they were on the wrong track. (The Fictions of Ted Kaczynski, Germany as Model and Monster, The Letters Between Ted Kaczynski and his Mother Wanda, Ted Kaczynski, math tutor)
- **A new Chevelle in California (1967 onward):** Ted bought a 1967 Chevelle on his Berkeley salary so he could visit wild areas of the state, kept it about seven years and developed a real affection for it. He wrote that whenever he really wanted something and could rationally afford it, he bought it, and that

he didn't hesitate to spend \$32 on a gourmet meal for two when he went out with Ellen Tarmichael. In his words, he was no miser. (Ted Kaczynski's 1979 Autobiography)

- **Anti-technology essays sent to politicians, newspapers and favorite authors:** Ted proposed founding an organization dedicated to stopping federal aid to scientific research, to prevent the "ceaseless extension of society's powers." He sent this essay, similar to the manifesto he'd later write, to a few politicians, and often wrote anti-technology essays to newspapers and favorite authors. If the FBI had put out more focused calls for information, one of these recipients might have tipped them off sooner. (The Government Should Stop Supporting Research, Ted Kaczynski's Correspondence with the Majority Leader of the US Senate, Unabom Task Force appeal to Net users)
- **A senator's reply and the line Ted circled (early 1970s):** Ted's 23-page essay worried about behavior modification through genetic engineering, mass media and electrodes in the brain, and proposed stopping research funding. Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield called his views "well developed and worthy of every consideration" but forwarded the letter to NIMH director Bertram Brown, who replied that behavior control in some form underlies any organized society. Ted circled that sentence and wrote "So fuck organized society" beside it. He later said he would have used nonviolent means if he'd had the social skills to start an anti-tech group. (Ted Kaczynski's Correspondence with the Majority Leader of the US Senate, The Government Should Stop Supporting Research)
- **Finding Jacques Ellul (about 1971–72):** Ted read Ellul's *The Technological Society* at some point before November 1972 and thought it a masterpiece, because he'd never heard anyone come right out against the technological system as a whole. In a letter written before he drove through Montana and found his cabin site, he briefly told his father he could point him to the book to explain his desperation to get away from civilization, though he added that his father wouldn't understand it anyway. Sean Fleming, who studied Ted's annotated photocopy, says the clearest debts are technology as one self-perpetuating system, people being ill suited to life inside it, and activism as pseudo-rebellion. Ted broke with Ellul on violence, on vanguards, and on using past revolutions as a model, and he kept Ellul's bleak thesis while dropping the theological antithesis of freedom in Christ. (Unabomber: In His Own Words, The Unabomber and the origins of anti-tech radicalism, The Letters Between Ted Kaczynski and his Mother Wanda, Kaczynski, Ellul, and the Future of Anti-Tech Radicalism)
- **A millenarian vision of "unblocked" history (letter to Jacques Ellul, undated):** Ted wrote to Ellul that "if the technological society were once destroyed, then anything might become possible, such as recovery of human values,

individual autonomy, or anything else. In your terminology, history would become unblocked.” This is the vision that unleashing a kind of negative-liberty autonomy would reopen history. (Ted Kaczynski’s Letter to Ellul, Human Will Versus the “Objective” Forces of History)

Setting out for Montana (1971–1977)

- **Setting out to murder a scientist before moving to Montana (1971, aged 28):** In April 1971 Ted planned to kill a scientist in person, writing that his motive was “simply personal revenge.” He left his parents a note that read to them like a suicide note (“It’s easier this way”), and they phoned his brother in alarm. A year and a half later he recorded that he had “chickened out,” overwhelmed by an irrational fear of committing the act. He planned to kill in person a few more times but, as far as we know, never went through with it. (Unabomber: The Secret Life of Ted Kaczynski, The Profile of a Loner, Project Unabom)
- **Life in the Lincoln cabin from 1971:** Jamie Gehring grew up in the house nearest Ted’s cabin. After his arrest, with the world’s media descending on Lincoln, she had to reconcile her memories of the scruffy hermit next door with the bomber, and after losing her father and sister she wrote *Madman in the Woods* about growing up there and about Ted. David Kaczynski called it perhaps the best attempt yet to understand his brother. (Ted Kaczynski’s Life in the Wild, Madman in the Woods)
- **A 1950s back-to-the-lander (around 1971):** Alston Chase argued that two back-to-the-land movements were under way when Ted moved to Montana. One was baby boomers seeking Ecotopia and communal living, and the other was people who, like Ted, entered college in the 1950s. Educated in a literary, philosophical and moral tradition, they weren’t ready for the 1960s, when the world they had prepared for disappeared. Some retreated to remote cabins, others into private specialties that let them avoid public life. (Liberal media no longer cover the Unabomber because they think, wrongly, that he represents the ‘60s)
- **Grandfather Rabbit and the Wisp (1970s–80s):** Ted told an interviewer he had invented gods for himself in the woods: Grandfather Rabbit, the spirit of the snowshoe hares he lived on, and the Wisp, the force that drew him out wandering at dawn. He thanked Grandfather Rabbit after each kill, and once spared a rabbit and told it to give his regards to the grandfather. (Theresa Kintz’s Interview with Ted Kaczynski, Joy Richards Interview with Ted Kaczynski)

The first bombings (1977–1979)

- **From vandalism to a plan to kill (fall 1977):** Ted smashed the windows and lamps of a trailer and cabin along Dalton Mountain Road, then wrote that he had overcome a childhood-instilled inhibition and thought he could now kill someone under circumstances with little chance of getting caught. He stated his motivation as personal revenge, with a scientist, big businessman or government official as his ambition. (Ted Kaczynski's Journal of Early Crimes, Project Unabom)
- **The first bomb (May 1978, aged 35):** Ted built a box bomb in Montana, addressed it to an electrical engineering professor whose name he found in a Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute catalogue, and travelled to Chicago to mail it. Unable to post it without risking being remembered, he left it between two parked cars near the science buildings at the University of Illinois Chicago Circle campus, hoping a student would open it. He wrote that he felt no guilt and wished he had assurance of having killed or maimed someone. (Ted Kaczynski's Journal of Early Crimes, Author Unknown)
- **A threatening letter nobody acted on (1978):** Ted showed a letter to his brother, parents and a romantic interest saying he planned "violence of a serious nature" against the romantic interest who had broken off their romance. No steps were taken to get him help or report him. His journal entries later revealed he brought a knife in a paper bag to disfigure her face. The woman was Ellen Tarmichael, his shop supervisor at Foam Cutting Engineers, where his father and brother worked and where he had started only weeks earlier. His journal began on July 17, 1978; on August 23 he wrote that he would mutilate her face, and the next day he got into her car in the parking lot with the knife. Her explanation that she had felt there was no future between them cooled his anger and he did nothing. Press coverage afterwards quoted her saying only that he was intelligent, quiet and an acceptable employee until his last day. (Woman linked to Kaczynski speaks up, I intended physical violence of a serious nature, Ted Kaczynski's journal that included his plan to disfigure the face of a romantic interest, Did Failed Romance Ignite Kaczynski's Rage In 1978?)
- **Desmond Morris and the human zoo (1978–79):** Fleming argues the biggest source behind Ted's additions to Ellul was Morris's *The Human Zoo* (1969), which says city dwellers suffer like caged zoo animals because they no longer live as their species evolved to. Ted's 1978–79 essay "Reflections on Purposeful Work" already blames modern frustration on a life very different from a hunter-gatherer's. The power process, surrogate activities and biological maladaptation all look Morris-derived. A handwritten draft found in the cabin used "substitute activity," with a note to switch to "surrogate," maybe to avoid giving the FBI leads. In a 1996 letter after his arrest Ted recommended the book

as support for the power process. (The Unabomber and the origins of anti-tech radicalism)

- **Writing a murder-suicide explanation, and journaling as self-harm (1979):** While drafting his autobiography, Ted wrote that he intended to start killing people, expected to be caught “not alive, I fervently hope,” and wanted an accurate account of his psychology left behind. He also wrote, “The truth is, I don’t want to die!” I think writing it was like trying to talk himself into a murder-suicide, and that self-obsessing through journaling had always been a form of self-harm for him, which makes it tragic to read at length. It reminds me of how people sympathized with Skyking, the man who took a plane in Seattle in 2018, partly because the circumstances were so tragic: he likely stole it to raise the stakes on wanting to die, since changing his mind afterwards would have meant years in prison. (Ted Kaczynski’s 1979 Autobiography, Unabomber: The Secret Life of Ted Kaczynski)

The bombing campaign (1978–1995)

- **Overview of the campaign:** Over seventeen years Ted mailed or planted bombs that killed three people and injured many others. The archive’s overview page lists each attack with its date and victim. (The Bombings & Communications of Ted K as part of his Terror Campaign)
- **Trying to bomb an airliner (1979):** A bomb on a plane partly detonated and passengers suffered smoke inhalation. We don’t know what year he began regretting trying to bomb an airliner full of people out of the sky, but doubts about the reasonableness of such actions could have been a turning point. (Bomb Jolts Jet, Ted Kaczynski’s Journal of Early Crimes)
- **The first victim to feel remorse over:** Ted initially felt remorse about having crippled the arm of a man who was a pilot. (Ted Kaczynski’s Journal of Early Crimes, In Unabomber’s Own Words, A Chilling Account of Murder)
- **A vulgar “hell is other people” existentialism (undated letters to his brother):** Ted prided himself on being raised an atheist, in contrast to many people he grew up around, and wrote that “the company of other people always restricts your freedom, because people have to accommodate each other to a certain extent, unless they just want to fight.” In a letter to David about hunter-gatherers in Africa he spoke warmly of the few rules such tribespeople learn to keep the group together, so his complaint was the sheer number of rules drilled into people in modern society. I think writing off the culture he grew up around cost him people who could have questioned his assumptions. (Ted Kaczynski

as existential protagonist, *The Letters Between Ted Kaczynski and his Brother David*)

- **“Lord Daddy Lombrosis” (around 1990, date uncertain):** Borrowing Lombroso, the phrenologist from *The Secret Agent*, Ted wrote up a dream of fighting a “cult” of Lord Daddy Lombrosis, killing three henchmen who came to tighten their hold on David. He couldn’t kill Lombrosis himself, thought “This is God!”, and defied him anyway, but begged him not to leave David without hope. Foster notes he wrote it around when their father died of lung cancer, though Ted said Lombrosis stood for Technological Society, not his dad. Foster reads the Conrad notes as casting his mother as Winnie and David as Stevie. (*The Fictions of Ted Kaczynski*)
- **The letter to his mother about his cousin Nora (undated):** Ted comes across as incredibly callous, but it reads like an example of him using his ideology to self-soothe, telling himself that in primitive times he wouldn’t have had to face emotionally challenging situations. He wrote: “As for Nora, there’s another crime attributable to modern medicine. Someone who is that badly mangled should be dead — they are better off that way ... don’t send me a string of letters keeping me informed about Nora’s condition. The thing is sordid, and I would prefer not to be reminded of it.” (*The Letters Between Ted Kaczynski and his Mother Wanda*)
- **The Trout Creek “prayer” and a tidied-up origin story (1983):** In later years Ted explained that finding the Trout Creek plateau criss-crossed with new roads moved him to swear revenge at a spring. But by then he had already sent seven bombs, and had planned a killing years before moving to Montana, which suggests the “wilderness destroyed, so he struck back” account is a mythologized version of events. I think it mirrors the “noble savage” story in reverse: instead of a wild man who teaches the white man his wisdom, an academic star who walks away to fight a justified war. (Letter to a Turkish Anarchist, Theresa Kintz’s Interview with Ted Kaczynski)
- **Edward Abbey and the Earth First! orbit (mid-1980s):** Ted told Theresa Kintz that reading Abbey’s *The Monkey Wrench Gang* gave him the idea that other people out there shared his attitudes. He described himself as a sort of Earth First! “satellite,” more than a sympathizer. He didn’t want to subscribe to the Earth First! Journal in case something happened to logging equipment and they came looking for him, but he did pick up a copy and saw a lot he liked. (Theresa Kintz’s Interview with Ted Kaczynski)
- **The story of Merejildo Grijalva (1986):** Ted sent David the story of Merejildo Grijalva, an Opata boy kidnapped by Apaches who went on to help the U.S.

army in retaliatory raids meant to “exterminate to a man” the Apache. You’d expect most readers to take from it the limited value of anger and revenge, so it is an odd choice. Like his love of Conrad, it fits a pattern of Ted dwelling on figures who embrace violence as personal retribution rather than redemption. (The Letters Between Ted Kaczynski and his Brother David)

- **Martin Seligman and learned helplessness (late 1980s):** Ted said he first read Seligman’s *Helplessness* in the late 1980s, and he asked library staff to order Seligman’s books through interlibrary loan, including a new one on depression. Fleming says learned helplessness supplied the autonomy and attainment parts of the power process, though a 1969 journal entry already says the individual is helpless against large organizations. The manifesto never cites Seligman, but a private footnote on Ted’s copy does, and he later wrote that Seligman was too much of a conformist to draw the obvious conclusions about modern society. (Letters to Library Staff, The Unabomber and the origins of anti-tech radicalism)
- **Therapy abandoned partly over cost (1993):** Ted went to see a therapist and planned to go back, but one reason he didn’t was the cost of each session. (Ted Kaczynski’s Letters To Therapists)
- **Loans from his brother before two killings (1994–95):** Ted asked David for a \$1,000 loan in November 1994 and \$2,000 more in January 1995, saying the money was for medical bills. The bombs that killed Thomas Mosser and Gilbert Murray followed, and the FBI counted over \$16,000 received from his family since 1985. David and Linda realised the loans had preceded two bombings, and Linda felt a sense of responsibility. (Hunting the Unabomber, 60 Minutes: Ted Kaczynski’s Family)
- **Offering to stop if his manuscript was published (1995):** Ted promised to end the bombings if a national publication printed his manuscript. The Times and the Washington Post published it that September. Fleming links this strategy to Ellul’s doubt that a truly revolutionary book could get through normal publishing channels, and the manifesto’s one explicit justification for violence says that without killing, publishers probably would have rejected it. (Times and The Washington Post Grant Mail Bomber’s Demand, Industrial Society and Its Future, The Unabomber and the origins of anti-tech radicalism)
- **Remorse expressed just before his arrest (1995–96):** In a communiqué to the press before his capture, Ted said he regretted that a bomb injured computer scientist Patrick Fischer’s secretary, and was glad his attempt to blow up an airliner had failed. In February 1996, weeks before his arrest, he also wrote that he felt very sorry about having tortured small wild animals. (The Bombings & Communications of Ted K as part of his Terror Campaign, Ted’s Notes on his Journals (Feb. 1996))

- **Ted's sister-in-law suspects he's the Unabomber (1995):** Linda Patrik, David's wife, was the first to take seriously that Ted might be the Unabomber. In 1991 she had persuaded David to show some of Ted's letters to a psychiatrist, who judged Ted very ill. In summer 1995 she was in Paris, where the Unabomber was in the papers daily, and became consumed by the suspicion. When David joined her he at first thought she was "nuts," but later agreed he would read the manifesto once home. David later described the family as being in denial about the extent of Ted's illness. When he read it he found he couldn't tell her it wasn't his brother, and after comparing it with Ted's letters he put the odds at about 50–50. According to FBI notes, on October 3, 1995, outside a Chicago restaurant, David asked their mother, Wanda, whether she had ever thought Ted might be the Unabomber. She said it had crossed her mind, guessed he might have joined a Montana militia because he was so angry, and hoped David wouldn't tell anyone because it would be unfair to Ted. (Unmasking the Unabomber, David Kaczynski's Lecture on Ethics & Responsibility, David Kaczynski's input in the UNABOM case, Brother Recounts How He Came To Suspect Kaczynski Was Bomber)

Arrest (1996)

- **A media leak forces the FBI's hand (April 1996):** Reporters learned the suspect's name and the location of his cabin, and CBS agreed to hold the story only if the FBI gave it the scoop. With no search warrant yet in hand, agents flew in from San Francisco and waited at a Lincoln steakhouse command post until a judge signed on the morning of April 3. That afternoon Ted was lured out of his cabin by agents posing as mining surveyors and arrested; a live bomb was later found under his bed. (Project Unabom, Washington Friday Journal)

Trial, prison and death (1998–2023)

- **Guilty plea and sentencing (1998):** (Kaczynski Pleads Guilty, Kaczynski Sentenced to Four Life Terms)
- **Victim stories:** (Statements made during Ted Kaczynski's Sentencing, Drawing Life, Surviving the Unabomber)
- **Hardening in custody:** After his arrest Ted felt that he had hardened and experienced even less regret as a result of the situation he had ended up in. He wrote that while the system had him in jail he had "no doubts or regrets" about the means he'd used to fight it, whereas he felt sorry for his adversaries when he thought he was winning. (Kaczynski and his lawyers)

- **“Am I a Schizoid?” (undated questionnaire, after 1996):** Ted sent out a questionnaire asking people to say whether eight statements about him were true, false or unknown, and to note their source, such as whether he desires close relationships, chooses solitary activities, takes pleasure in few things, has any close friends beyond family, or seems indifferent to praise or criticism. It closely follows the DSM-IV criteria for schizoid personality disorder, so he was essentially asking others whether he fit the diagnosis. That label matters because his defense team argued in the main case that he was schizophrenic, partly to keep him off the death penalty, whereas the prosecutors argued for the “less severe” schizoid personality disorder. (Ted Kaczynski’s ‘Am I a Schizoid?’ Questionnaire)
- **Writing Truth versus Lies (1998–99):** After his plea, Ted wrote a book of some 548 pages whose sole aim was to refute stories told by lawyers and the media that he thought were false, above all the claim that he was a paranoid schizophrenic. It draws on his letters, journals and family correspondence. It says little about the Unabom crimes themselves because, as the publisher’s preface explained, he was seeking a retrial. (Truth versus Lies (Context Books Copy), Truth versus Lies (Original Draft))
- **Truth versus Lies almost gets published (1999):** Context Books announced that it would publish Ted’s memoir, with royalties to go to the families of his victims, and an early release was planned for 1999. But when Ted received a bound proof in October 1999 he objected and demanded that the presses be stopped. His lawyers had toned down some of the language over libel fears and deleted other parts. On November 4 the publisher cancelled, calling Ted uncooperative, though Ted had tried to end the deal a few days earlier. Printing was halted mid-run and the publisher later folded. The book surfaced years later when the manuscript was scanned online in 2018 and a limited run of 300 copies was announced in 2020. (Publisher Yanks Unabomber Book Deal, Unabomber Book Blows Up, Context Books letter yielding to Ted K’s demand to hit stop the press)
- **Almost getting a retrial, and the risk of the death penalty (1999–2001):** Ted tried to withdraw his guilty plea, arguing that it was involuntary because his lawyers had insisted on presenting evidence of his mental condition against his wishes and the judge had refused to let him represent himself. He said he wanted a trial even if it meant the death penalty he had avoided by pleading, and explained that his real aim was to be convicted so that he could appeal to the Ninth Circuit over the validity of the search warrant. Judge Burrell denied the motion. In February 2001 a Ninth Circuit panel ruled 2–1 against him, and a petition for rehearing en banc was also denied. Had the bid succeeded, a retrial could have exposed him to a death sentence; the defense lawyer Tony Serra said he would take the case on a “political defense”. (Ted Kaczynski’s Explanation

of the Judicial Opinions, The final judgement preventing Ted Kaczynski from challenging his imprisonment, Kaczynski and his lawyers)

- **“A Fantasy” (August 1999):** On August 23, 1999, after waking from a three-hour sleep and lay drowsily contemplating for a while, Ted wrote down the thoughts that came, starting with the peace and beauty of the Western Montana forests and drifting to concepts of God. He called the God of the Christians and Jews a cruel devil, and the real God an unknown life-force we can only meet in Nature, whose gift is freedom, including freedom from the fear of death. He read the Tree of Knowledge as the devil-god’s tool for robbing us of that freedom through shame and sin, borrowed Nietzsche’s Jesus from *The Antichrist* as a liberator, and urged people to “be as little children.” But he added that the time hadn’t come, because defeating the forces that enslave us takes ruthless discipline, and only afterwards could we let down our guard. He later added notes saying it was only drowsy ideas that needn’t be consistent with anything else he wrote. The idea about being like little children is echoed in anti-civilization writers like Feral Faun who wanted to experience a return to a kind of immediatism he experienced in childhood. (A Fantasy, Feral Revolution)
- **“Ship of Fools” and Horacio Quiroga (1999):** In September 1999 Ted had his first and only success with original fiction when the alternative press magazine *Off!* ran his fable “Ship of Fools,” about passengers demanding fair play for every cause while their captain steers the liner into icebergs. A professor refuses to revolt because he doesn’t believe in violence. Foster says Ted lifted the plot from “El Conductor del Rapido” by Quiroga, his favorite Spanish author, and that Ted also translated Quiroga’s “Juan Darien,” about a tiger in boy’s form who takes revenge on his tormentors. (The Fictions of Ted Kaczynski)
- **Wondering about an alliance with Muslim militants (1999) and sizing up bin Laden (2001):** In his 1999 interview with Theresa Kintz, a clip of which appears in the Netflix documentary *Unabomber: In His Own Words*, Ted suggested that discontented groups might be recruited for a future anti-tech movement. He noted that Muslim militants reject modernity and wondered whether discussions with them might find enough common ground for an alliance. He did not name bin Laden in that clip. After 9/11 he wrote to correspondents asking about bin Laden and al-Qaeda, and said he might be inclined to support bin Laden if his motive were simply opposition to modernity, but suspected the real aim was an Islamic great power, which would make him just another power-hungry politician. (Theresa Kintz’s Interview with Ted Kaczynski, *Unabomber: In His Own Words*, Letters from a serial killer: Inside the Unabomber archive)
- **Backing an invasion of Iraq, for a while (2002–2003):** In a December 2002 letter to a pen pal, Ted said he guessed President Bush was serious about

war with Saddam Hussein and that it was probably warranted, since petty dictators shouldn't be allowed to develop nuclear weapons. He added that he didn't read much of the news and didn't know much about the situation. In 2003 he wrote that if Saddam really was developing nuclear or biological weapons there was a good argument for invading, while noting that the U.S. had not turned up solid evidence, and he said elsewhere that he had no respect for Bush. It echoes his Vietnam-era support for a war: he had by then blamed his earlier anti-communism partly on trusting media propaganda, yet his first instinct on Iraq was again to back the war while admitting he hadn't followed the news closely. (Ted Kaczynski on 911 politics and policy)

- **Technological Slavery and David Skrbina (2003–2010):** The philosopher David Skrbina began corresponding with Ted in 2003, and in 2005 suggested turning Ted's essays and prison letters into a book. After a small first run in 2008 under the title *The Road to Revolution*, Skrbina helped get it a U.S. publisher: Feral House issued it in 2010 as *Technological Slavery*, with an introduction by Skrbina. (Technological Slavery, Notes on his book Technological Slavery, Ted Kaczynski's Letter Correspondence With David Skrbina)
- **Último Reducto and the small corrections (2000s–2010s):** In the foreword to *Technological Slavery* (dated December 8, 2009) Ted thanked a Spanish correspondent who writes under the pseudonym Último Reducto, and a female friend of his, for stimulating argument; Último Reducto also translated many of Ted's writings into Spanish. His pushback led Ted to correct some of the small points in what he had written. (Ted Kaczynski's Updated Notes on His Manifesto, Notes on his book Technological Slavery)
- **Anti-Tech Revolution: Why and How (2016):** Ted's second book, published by Fitch & Madison in August 2016 (with an expanded second edition in 2020), is less an analysis of technology than a strategy manual. It argues that the development of society can never be subject to rational human control, that the technological system will destroy itself, and it gives guidelines for anti-tech revolutionaries, recommending they study Trotsky, Alinsky, Selznick and Smelser. (Anti-Tech Revolution, Strategic Guidelines for an Anti-Tech Movement)
- **Disavowing the anarchist label (2016):** Ted had called FC "anarchist" in 1995 because he thought it would be advantageous to have a recognised political identity. In a paragraph added to a footnote in 2016 (published in the 2019 revised edition of *Technological Slavery*), he wrote that he had since learned that anarchists were "hopelessly ineffectual bunglers and dreamers" and that he now disavowed any identification as an anarchist. (Does the Unabomber have any relevance to anarchism?, Industrial Society and Its Future, Is the Unabomber an Anarchist?)

- **Illness and death in 2023:** (The Letter That Broke the News on Ted's Terminal Cancer, Ted Kaczynski 'Unabomber' Who Attacked Modern Life, Dies at 81)

The Ted K Archive

Theo Slade

A Timeline of Ted Kaczynski's Life, Family and Influences
2026

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