

Suspect Arraigned on One Bomb Count

Search of Cabin Yields Lethal Ingredients

Timothy Egan



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Theodore J. Kaczynski, the onetime university professor taken into custody on Wednesday as a suspect in the Unabom case, was arraigned here today on a single felony charge of possessing bomb components and was held without bail.

The arraignment followed a search in which, Federal authorities said, they found evidence that Mr. Kaczynski had turned his one-room mountain cabin, 50 miles to the northwest near the town of Lincoln, into a virtual bomb laboratory.

When the 53-year-old suspect was brought into the Lewis and Clark County jail here on Wednesday evening, his hair was matted and his stained jeans were badly torn, as if from the scuffle that he had had with the Federal agents who had seized him at the cabin earlier in the day. By this morning, at his arraignment, he was dressed in orange jail-house overalls, and he seemed confident, a bit of a smirk on his face as he glanced around the courtroom.

Just beforehand, as Mr. Kaczynski was taken into the Federal courthouse here, he ignored shouts from reporters asking him whether he was the Unabomber, the mail-bomb terrorist who has killed 3 people and injured 23 others from coast to coast in the last 18 years.

The Government did not charge Mr. Kaczynski today with any crimes specifically relating to the Unabom case, and indeed Federal officials have not publicly said that they consider him to be the serial bomber.

But it is not unusual for a suspect regarded as dangerous to be held on a relatively modest charge while Federal prosecutors build a larger case against him, and investigators privately said they were certain that Mr. Kaczynski was the Unabomber, a conviction apparently bolstered by the results of the intensive search at his 10-by-12-foot cabin.

The F.B.I. affidavit that was the basis of the charge brought today against Mr. Kaczynski (pronounced kah-SIN-skee) listed an extensive array of bomb parts and bomb-making manuals that Federal agents said had been found at the cabin. And law-enforcement officials said in interviews tonight that the bomb materials matched fragments from the Unabomber's devices almost precisely in terms of chemicals and techniques.

Government officials also said tonight that the agents had discovered at the cabin the manual typewriter believed to have been used to type the Unabomber's 35,000-word manifesto, published last year, a rambling tract that called for the destruction of the nation's post-industrial system.

During his 15-minute court appearance today, the pale, thin Mr. Kaczynski was not required to enter a plea. But in a clear, matter-of-fact tone, he answered a series of questions from a Federal judge, saying that he was mentally competent and that he was indigent.

"Quite correct," Mr. Kaczynski said in response to the judge's assumption that he was without enough money to hire a lawyer. He was assigned as counsel Michael Donahoe, a Federal public defender from Helena.

Replying to another question from the judge, Charles C. Lovell, Mr. Kaczynski held out the possibility that he might ask for a preliminary hearing in which Federal prosecutors would have to prove that they had probable cause to charge him.

When the judge asked him about the count against him, Mr. Kaczynski said he would need a few minutes to read the complaint. He was arrested, Judge Lovell told him, on a felony charge that upon conviction carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Just before he arrived in court, Mr. Kaczynski was paraded through a courthouse parking lot, where reporters shouted questions at him.

"Are you the Unabomber?" he was asked.

"Are you guilty?"

"Why did you do it?"

He walked through the storm of questions, escorted by three Federal marshals, and said nothing.

This sort of initial public appearance by a suspect, known in law-enforcement circles as a "perp walk," usually finds the prisoner looking away or with head bowed.

But Mr. Kaczynski showed no such embarrassment. He looked straight ahead as he walked, for nearly a minute, past perhaps 60 reporters and members of camera crews.

Officials said that Mr. Kaczynski would probably be transferred soon to California – either to San Francisco, home base of the Federal task force that has searched for the Unabomber for years, or to Sacramento, where the latest Unabom attack occurred last April. The officials said it could be weeks before a grand jury charged him with the actual explosions.

In Washington, Attorney General Janet Reno said Mr. Kaczynski "was charged as a result of the search" at his cabin, and she would not be drawn into detailed comments on the case. "Nothing more can be said," she added, and she declined to say how long the investigation might last.

In the meantime, Federal agents around the country searched for more clues. One official said investigators now believed that Mr. Kaczynski had occasionally traveled by bus to California, where a number of the Unabomber's packages were postmarked, and to Utah. Some agents searched homeless shelters in Salt Lake City, where a man was injured by a bomb in 1987, hoping to determine whether the bomber had used the relative anonymity of the shelters to keep a low profile on such trips.

Still other agents mounted a further search tonight at Mr. Kaczynski's plywood cabin, his home for more than 20 years.

Lewis and Clark County records show that Mr. Kaczynski bought his mountain property with his brother, David, in 1971 and that David sold his half share to Theodore in 1982 for \$1,050.

Neighbors said Mr. Kaczynski was a polite hermit who had pedaled his dilapidated bicycle into the town of Lincoln for groceries and mail, and for books at the community library. He grew vegetables on his property.

But in their search, agents said, they discovered that the little home was full of the raw material of lethal bombs.

Inside the cabin, the agents found a partly completed pipe bomb as well as chemicals, wiring and aluminum that could be used to build such bombs, said the F.B.I. affidavit, submitted by Special Agent Donald J. Sachtleben.

There were also notes related to construction of pipe bombs, Mr. Sachtleben's affidavit said, and 10 three-ring binders that "contain page after page of meticulous writings and sketches which I recognize to be diagrams of explosive devices."

Books on bomb manufacturing, written in both English and Spanish, were also found, the affidavit said. (Agents said Mr. Kaczynski understood Spanish.) There were also solid cast ingots, C-cell batteries, electrical wiring and logs of experiments on how different bombs would perform in various weather conditions, the F.B.I. said.

The Ted K Archive

A critique of his ideas & actions



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New York Times, April 5, 1996, Section A, Page 1.
<<https://www.nytimes.com/1996/04/05/us/on-the-suspect-s-trail-the-overview-suspect-arraigned-on-one-bomb-count.html>>

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