

Terror and Technology: The Unabomber

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Twenty years ago the FBI ended their longest-running domestic terrorism investigation with the arrest of the Unabomber, a notorious serial killer obsessed with technology. This is the story of a devastating fraternal dilemma, a 17-year manhunt, and a controversial media decision to publish propaganda, faced with the threat of violence.

Between 1978 - 1995, Theodore Kaczynski lived in a remote cabin in rural Montana, from where he planned the downfall of industrial society. A brilliant academic, Kaczynski was motivated by a desire to punish anyone connected with technology – from a senior geneticist to a junior computer salesman. Kaczynski made 16 bombs that killed three people and injured 23, some to a life-altering degree.

Then, controversially, America’s two most prestigious newspapers, on the advice of the FBI, agreed to publish his 35,000-word manifesto – triggering a debate about media ethics that persists to this day. The gamble paid off in a most unexpected way.

Two decades on, as we continue to debate the relationship between technology and security, Benjamin Ramm revisits the extraordinary story of the Unabomber.

Benjamin meets some of the key figures in the hunt for one of America’s most wanted - those he hurt, those who knew him, and those who tried to capture him. He asks what role the media played in this story and what the FBI learnt about tracking this ‘lone wolf’ bomber. And, alongside media reports of his crimes, we hear some of the words of the Unabomber himself, through excerpts from his extensive notes and writings.

BEN: Just over 20 years ago, on the 3rd of April 1996, America’s Domestic Security Service, the FBI finally caught the subject of its longest running terrorism investigation.

NEWSREADER #1: The longest and most intense manhunt in U.S. history has zeroed in on a prime suspect and may be nearing an end.

NEWSREADER #2: Our other major story tonight of breaking the Unabomber case. FBI agents are searching the Montana cabin of former mathematics professor Ted Kaczynski. Just moments ago we received these pictures of the suspect. In custody, sitting in the back. Of a white truck.

NEWS INTERVIEWER #1: Sir, are you responsible for these bombings?

BEN: Between 1978 and 1995, a serial bomber had mailed or planted 16 homemade explosive devices at locations across the United States. He had killed 3 people and injured 23.

GARY: My initial thought was that someone had come around the corner of the building and shot me with a shotgun and I thought, ohh man, I might not make it.

BEN: The FBI gave the bomber a pseudonym.

TURCHI: Unabomber actually comes from the first few cases. The first few targets were universities and airlines, so the FBI has found that it’s a great tool to get public

attention by putting a name on this, so they called it unabomb university and airline bombings.

BEN: I'm Benjamin Graham, and for the next hour on the BBC World Service, I'll be exploring how a reclusive maths professor with a hatred of technology terrorized the United States of America. It took law enforcement agents 17 years to apprehend the Unabomber. Theodore Kaczynski was arrested only after an extraordinary break. In the case a tip off from his own brother. It came after America's two most prestigious newspapers had published under the threat of violence. A 35,000 word essay written by the.

NEWSREADER #3: This morning in Washington. The news dominating street corner conversation was what was on the front page of this morning. 's paper, The Washington Post had published a special section containing the 35,000 word manifesto of the serial mail bomber known as Unabomb.

BEN: His words are voiced by an actor.

TED: Even if these writings had had many readers, most of these readers would soon have forgotten what they had read as their minds were flooded by the mass of material to which the media exposed them. In order to get our message before the public with some chance of making a lasting impression, we've had to kill people.

BEN: The story of the Unabomber continues to be relevant 2 decades on because its key themes are prominent in today's world. His story raises questions about how the media reports the actions and the propaganda of those who commit violence for a political cause. His methods challenged us to consider the mindset of someone who believes he can free society by destroying it. Susan Moser, whose husband Thomas was killed by the Unabomber, gave a powerful statement in court here, voiced by an actor.

SUSAN: December 10th, 1994 was the day my husband felt unbearable pain. It was supposed to be the day my family picked out a Christmas tree. The day we celebrated Tom's latest promotion. Instead, it was the day my husband was murdered. The day I had to tell the children, Daddy's dead.

BEN: In the United States, I met some of the key figures in the hunt for America's Most Wanted, though he hurt those who knew him and those who tried to capture him. I began in Washington, DC with the Unabomber's only brother.

SPEECH INTRODUCER: Today, David Kaczynski, brother of Ted Kaczynski, whom the FBI branded the Unabomber, talks about his new book...

BEN: David Kaczynski was for many years his brother's only friend and would be instrumental in his capture.

DAVID: We grew up in a suburb of Chicago. My father made sausages at his uncles deli. There were four of us in all mom and dad, Teddy and me. Ted was a good Big Brother. He saw me with sympathy and support and encouragement and now always loved him for. The way he treated me when I was a child.

BEN: You've said that your brother was special and that you knew that from an.

DAVID: Early age he was particularly special in the sense that he was so intelligent kids in our working class community called my brother a brain. When he was, I think

about 13 years old, they decided to find out how smart is this little kid, and they administered an IQ test and on that test my brother scored 165. Now you're thought to be average at 100. A genius at 140 Ted was off the charts.

BEN: David has written a memoir called *Every Last Tie* which contains reflections on his relationship with his brother. I think for me that photo evokes a lot of those. Book is full of family photos. Do you remember him leaving for Harvard? There's a remarkable photo in the book of him with the suitcase and the shiny bright jacket.

DAVID: Couple of things stand out at me. One is that Ted's eyes are bright. There's a kind of light in his eyes that you don't see in later photographs. The other thing that strikes me is that. I am dressed like Ted as closely as I can be. Clearly at that point I had Ted up on a pedestal. I wanted to be like Ted.

BEN: We're on the campus of Berkeley, one of America's leading liberal arts colleges, famous for its 1960s radicalism. The free speech movement. The summer of love. It was here that Ted Kaczynski became the youngest ever professor at the University of California, and he left abruptly in 1969. If you are.

BEN: David remembers his brother writing to the family about why he was giving up a promising career.

DAVID: His reasoning was that he had come to the conclusion after a lot of thought that technology was negative for humanity. He knew that a lot of technology was based on mathematics. He didn't want to support. Technology that he thought was damaging to the environment to human free. More than that, he said that he wanted to get as far away from technology as it possibly could, and it was at that point where he developed this idea that he would try to find a piece of property in the wilderness and try to live off the land. I do remember Mom pulling me aside and saying, Dave, I'm just afraid. That Ted is running away from something. It's not so much technology, it's the fact that he doesn't know how to accept people or be accepted by people. Perhaps he's running away from a world that he really doesn't know how to negotiate a world that he doesn't really know how to deal.

BEN: With Kaczynski was angered by what he saw as the intrusion of technology and he isolated himself. Living without society in almost complete self-sufficiency. But he was willing to use technology on his own. Terms for one purpose to make bombs. Some time after leaving Berkeley, Kaczynski bought a piece of land with his brother in Lincoln, Mt. One of the most rural areas of the United States. He built a plywood cabin that would become his home for 25 years.

DAVID: Beautiful little cabin, very serviceable for him. There was no running water. You know electricity. His heat came from a cast iron stove. He'd read Thoreau, and, had an idea that perhaps, if not, he couldn't live off the land. He could at least come pretty close to it. He taught himself how to find wild foods in the forest. He did some hunting. It was quite an accomplishment.

BEN: Kaczynski wrote prolifically, and many of his notes and Diaries are now held in the Special Collections Library at the University of Michigan. This from a journal

entry written in September 1984. While Kaczynski was living in Montana, his words are spoken by an actor.

TED: I went to the plateau. What I found there broke my heart. The plateau was crisscrossed with new roads, bright and well made roads of that kind. The plateau is ruined forever. The only thing that could save it now would be the collapse of the technological society.

BEN: In 1978 alone, in his cabin, Kaczynski constructed and mailed his first two bombs, both to professors at Northwestern University near his hometown in Illinois. A year later, Kaczynski got the attention of the FBI by planting his third bomb on a domestic airline flight. From Chicago to Washington DC, the bomb malfunctioned that caused the plane to make an emergency. Landing in Berkeley, I met FBI special agent Terry Turchi, who led the Unabomb task force between 1994 and 1998.

TURCHI: When we interviewed the pilots years later, they said had we been in the air just a few more minutes, this fire would have burned through the main hydraulic system and the airplane would have crashed. We'd have lost control of flying the airplane, so there would have been a major loss of life.

BEN: How did the Unabomber get the bomb into the cargo hold?

KATHLEEN: He mailed.

BEN: Special Agent Kathleen Puckett, a behavioural expert for the FBI, was also on the Unabomb task force.

KATHLEEN: He researched where the mail would be distributed from Chicago and he put it into the mail stream so that it was going to go airmail. He was very upset about it, that it didn't work. He wrote later the frustrating nature of it just burned instead of detonated it and all those people lived much to his chagrin.

TURCHI: So here in Cory Hall at UC Berkeley, this the scene of the 1985 bombing and Theodore Kaczynski entered through one of these sets of double doors. Went up the stairs and into this corridor and then down about halfway with where the graduate student room was, where he went in and placed the binder bomb. No one noticed anything unusual.

BEN: Kaczynski returned to the Berkeley planting his 7th and 8th Bomb in Corrie Hall. The electrical engineering and computer science building where he had once.

TURCHI: Worked so in here is the room on this side. Where Mr. Hauser came and ended up picking up this package, which turned out to be. A bomb.

BEN: In 1985, graduate student John Howser, a pilot who dreamed of becoming an astronaut, picked up one of the explosives. His dreams were ruined by the Unabomber.

JOHN: You know just blew up. Threw my arm off to the side. At the time I was wearing my Air Force Academy ring on this ring finger here and it bounced off of a plaster wall with such a force you could read the letters of the word Academy directly off of the wall. It had ripped a deep hole in my arm. It had sliced my hand open, had blown my fingers off and I could feel all this.

BEN: John Hauser speaking to ABC News, Kaczynski first committed murder on the 11th of December 1980. Five when Hugh Scrutton tried to remove what looked like a road hazard in the car park behind his computer rental shop.

TED: Experiment 97 December 11th, 1985. I planted bomb disguised to look like scrap of lumber behind Rin Tech computer store in Sacramento. According to San Francisco Examiner December 20th, the operator owner, manager of the store, was killed, blown to bits on December 12th. Humane way to eliminate somebody. He probably never felt a thing. \$25,000 reward offered. Rather flattering. How are you?

BEN: Gary hi great to meet.

GARY: Good see you. Yeah come on in. Let's go upstairs.

BEN: It's a nice day.

GARY: Yes, it's gonna be.

BEN: The survivor of the Unabomber's 11th Bomb is Gary Wright, nearly 30 years ago he was running a computer software company when he picked up what looked like a scrap piece of wood in the parking lot outside his office in Salt Lake City. I met him in California where he now works and asked him what happened on the 20th of February 1987.

GARY: I hesitated for a second and then walked up and put my fingers on the end and what sounded like a jet fighter coming overhead. So the screech of a fighter plane I was immediately kind of deafened. The next thing I knew, and it had to be just seconds. I was about 20 feet. Back from where this piece of wood was and I was jumping around as if I was. On a Pogo stick. And my initial thought was that someone had come around the corner of the building and shot me with a shotgun. At that point, things started to slow down. I was standing in the parking lot and I could see this kind of white debris coming down and a piece of red tape that was kind of spiraling in a circle. And I was watching it and thinking this very strange and I thought, oh man, I might not. Make it.

BEN: What injuries were inflicted?

GARY: The worst of the injuries was it severed the ulnar nerve in your arm, which controls your little finger and halfway down your ring finger took a nail through the chin up off the end of my nose. Had a lot of debris in my face. The device being made of wood, it turned it into, millions of slivers so they were impaled underneath my neck like kind of like a porcupine.

BEN: And what about the emotional and psychological impact?

GARY: The emotions of dealing with something where you don't know who it is for approaching. Nine years that really took a long time. I probably didn't start to deal with it until about year six when I started to realize I might have to like kind of get over this and never know who it is, why they did it. Was it a person I had known, or somebody I made angry in business or? Something like that. So living that daily it really wore you out.

BEN: So we've just left our meeting with Gary Wright. And it was pretty remarkable and quite humbling to hear him speak. He remembers, often quite viscerally, the

pain, how torturous it was. To go through thealing, for 9 years he didn't know who had tried to kill him. I really got a sense of the magnitude of Kaczynski's crimes and also the impact that a single act like that. And remember, Kosinski left 16 bombs, but a single act. Has such ripples. For six years, the Unabomber disappeared, some in the FBI believed he was dead, but in 1993 he reemerged, sending 2 bombs in quick succession that were more deadly than ever before, injuring both of the survivors. In December 1994, the Unabomber claimed his second fatality.

TED: We blew up Thomas Moser last December because he was a burst in Marsteller execute. Among other misdeeds, Burston Marsteller helped Exxon clean up its public image after the Exxon Valdez incident. But we attacked Burston Marsteller less.

BEN: Special Agent Kathleen Puckett.

KATHLEEN: Thomas Mosier was an executive with Bruce and Marsteller, which was an advertising agency and it was December 10th. It was the morning. A lot of mail spread out on his kitchen counter now. Susan Moser. She was holding there 18 month old daughter and Tom said what's this and she said I, Susan said I don't know. It came to the house and Kelly scored to get. John and Susan put her down and Kelly ran out of the room and Susan went after her and Tom opened the package and the resulting explosion. Devastated the kitchen, there was shrapnel everywhere there was. There were green paneling, small paneling, nails that had been used as shrapnel, anti personnel, weapon that just. Did a horrible horrible damage to him and when by the time I got there was still evidence of the explosion all over the kitchen. It was a savage device.

BEN: On the 24th of April 1995, the day after the Oklahoma City bombing, the Unabomber struck again. Gilbert Murray, who lobbied the government on behalf of the timber industry, was killed when a parcel addressed to his predecessor exploded in his office in Sacramento. On the same day, the New York Times received a letter signed by FC the initials for Freedom Club. After 17 years of bombing FC and alias of the Unabomber was offering the media deal.

TED: The people who are pushing all this growth and progress garbage deserve to be severely. But our goal is less to punish them than to propagate ideas. Anyhow, we are getting tired of making bombs. So we offer a bargain. We have a long article between 29,000 and 37,000 words that we want. To have published. If you can get it published according to our requirements, we will permanently desist from terrorist activities.

BEN: It's a bright sunny Monday morning and we're in the heart of Washington, DC on Pennsylvaniave. We're outside the museum, which, as the name suggests, is the news museum. We're here to hear the voice of Don Graham, who is the publisher of the Washington Post at that. Crucial moments when Ted Kaczynski sent his 35,000 word manifesto demanding that the Washington Post and New York Times publisher.

DON: So he had written simultaneously to us in the New York Times, a so-called manifesto. And a letter demanding. That we print the manifesto within a 90 day period.

If we did, he said he would cease sending bombs, but if we didn't print it then he would send at least one more bomb aimed to kill. So that posed a rather hard.

BEN: Question what was your first reaction to his demands?

DON: My first reaction was oh ****. We did not want to be in any form of communication with this anonymous man as it turned. You know who with total success kept himself secret for 20 years while inflicting a lot of harm on a lot of people, and we immediately called Arthur Sulzberger who was my counterpart, the publisher of the New York Times. So Arthur and I then conferred and said there's something else unusual at stake here, which is the guys threatening to kill people. We're journalists. We're not public safety experts and we are going to make the ultimate decisions ourselves, but we ought to get the opinions of the people who have been chasing this guy for 20 years and see whether they think this indeed him. Whether if we print it, he indeed would not kill people anymore, and whether if we don't print it, he will kill people anymore.

BEN: Terry Turchi of the FBI's Unabomb task force.

TURCHI: We came to a conclusive decision that were not going to recommend publication of the Unibot manifesto because it was just too far out there. We would be kind of turning our back at history at Presidents at the country negotiating with terrorists. And we just were going to do it. The boss said OK, so go back to your office. Everybody trying write up our pland write up our recommend. We got back in there. We closed the door. We sit down and it's like silence. And finally I said we made the wrong decision, didn't we? And this was not the right decision, so we put our plan together and we recommended to the FBI Director, the Attorney General. We ought to tell the post and the times that we believe they should publish and. And our reasoning is not because we thought if we published, he wouldn't bomb again. We know so much about him now. That if the publication takes place, we think we can go out with a companion kind of public media focus, and we can find somebody who's seen these words before. Because these words are so passionate that this person has talked about this before.

DON: The initial anxiety was obvious if you succumb to this demand agreed to print this document, might it trigger other demands to print other such document? But both we and the times got by that pretty quickly because to imagine someone conducting a 20 year campaign of mailing anonymous bombs and then wanting so badly to have a 35,000 word essay published somewhere. You know that was a theoretical risk that seemed to us pretty far fetched. Well, we made it clear were not going to do the government's bidding because they bid us, but were going to listen to them. Because they were a source of information we wouldn't otherwise had. And were running the risk of printing or not printing and thereby killing someone, so weren't going to run that risk without being fully informed.

NEWSREADER #4: When Americans opened their Washington Post today, they found an 8 page document from a self confessed bomber. After three months of

agonising leading newspaper editors decided to give in to the Unabomber and publish his manuscript, hoping to stop him launching another attack.

BEN: On the 19th of September 1995, the Washington Post contained a 35,000 word manifesto written by a serial bomber dedicated to the destruction of technology.

NEWSREADER #5: For 18 years the Unabomber appeared to have a grudge against high technology, sending parcel bombs to universities and airlines, killing three people and injuring two dozen.

BEN: The decision to publish the manifesto of one of America's Most Wanted was controversial. This ABC News's Nightline program on the day of publication.

NEWSREADER #6: You can bet that neither the New York Times nor the Washington Post would have published his essay absent his track record as a murderer, and his therefore totally credible threat that he would kill again. Let us describe what has happened. Plainly it is blackmail, pure and simple, to which the times and the post have exceeded.

NEWS INTERVIEWEE #1: You do not allow a terrorist or bomber to have the kind of theater or audience that he has demanded. At this point. He has already won the first round.

BEN: The decision to print the words of the Unabomber in the national press raised questions about the relationship between the media and those who use violence and the threat of violence to further their political aims. Before the publication of the manifesto, Kaczynski was a serial bomber whose motives were known only to himself. Now he was referred to as a terrorist. Brigitta Nakos, a former journalist, teaches at Columbia University.

BRIGITTA: I call him terrorist. When you look at his manifesto he had. Made-up his own little. Technology, I think it's mostly anarchist and it is very interesting that in the late 1990s when you had these mass demonstration, often violent against the World Trade Organization and so on, that some of these protesters, they kind of identified with the Unabomber. They were very familiar with his. Manifesto, of course terrorists need publicity without publicity. You know you would have some eyewitnesses of what happens, but you need really a larger public.

BEN: The words written by the Unabomber are read by an actor.

TED: One the Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race. They have greatly increased the life expectancy of those of us who live in advanced countries, but they have destabilized. Society have made life unfulfilling, have subjected human beings to indignities, have led to widespread.

BEN: In his private correspondence, Kaczynski writes passionately about his love of nature, but his manifesto relies on slogans and cliches to criticise industrial society. The Unabomber was angry at how technology was impacting on the environment and changing the world around him. He believed that technology didn't liberate us, but actually took away our freedom by giving power to those who control our information. His concern about the relationship between technology and security. Seems particularly relevant in 2016 as Apple and the FBI argue about the right to access data on an iPhone.

Kaczynski's manifesto, however, lacks a vision of a better world. It is dedicated to destruction rather than.

TED: 180 the technophiles are taking us all on an utterly reckless ride into the unknown. Many people understand something of what technological progress is doing to us, yet take a passive attitude toward it because they think it is inevitable. But we FC don't think it is inevitable. We think it can be stopped.

BEN: Shortly after the arrest of the Unabomber, in the early days of the Internet, Time Warner's website asked, is there a little of the Unabomber, in all of us? Among certain sections of society, the Unabomber has attained cult status, and his ideas have been reappraised, even by some highly respected names in digital technology. Whilst in California I headed to Bucks Diner in Silicon Valley where digital startup companies signed deals over breakfast. There I met software entrepreneur, turned writer Martin Ford, author of Rise of The Robots Technology and The Threat of a Jobless Future. Have you read the manifesto?

MARTIN: I felt that it was really quite an articulate rendering of some of the issues that we're going to confront, even though it came from a very disturbed mind, it was something that really struck me as being quite clear and, and we're thinking about.

BEN: For Kaczynski, technology inevitably leads to tyranny. Are we not becoming too bound up to? Modes of technology that corporations and governments can use against us.

MARTIN: It's entirely possible. One of the things that's been disappointing is that in the early age of the Internet, it was seen primarily as a platform that would increase freedom that the people would have the ability to communicate. It was all about. You know something like happened with the Arab Spring and so forth that was the promise of it, but lately it's more like authoritarian governments in China and in other areas utilizing this technology. So again, this a choice that we have to make as a society, and it's a real challenge because most people don't pay attention to it. You know, ultimately, I do think it's a. It's something that we're going to have to confront. Perhaps the most disturbing perspective that you can put on Kaczynski that perhaps he was a preview of what's to come. I mean, I think that as this unfolds, it's very possible that. More people may react in a violent way.

BEN: Since his incarceration 20. Years ago, Kaczynski has developed a network of pen pals with whom he corresponds regularly.

SKRBINA: It's been about 12 years. We've exchanged about 100 letters back and forth strictly on the question of technology.

BEN: David Sabina, professor of technology at Michigan Dearborn, started writing to the Unabomber in 2003 when he was putting together a university course on the philosophy of technology.

SKRBINA: I mean, we're seeing as information technology grows in power and scope that you can't produce these powerful information systems and. They're not used against people against society in detrimental ways.

BEN: Have you ever discussed his crimes?

SKRBINA: No, I'd have to say never. We only talk about technology, the problem of technology, what it is and what to do about it. It's strictly a philosophical discussion.

BEN: But of course, you're only corresponding with him because of his crimes. His manifesto was only published because by the time he had sent it to the Washington Post, he had. Murdered three people and it was on the back of that threat that the post circulated the manifesto. Do you not think it's quite important to engage him on the issue? Of avoidance.

SKRBINA: No, I don't think so. I, I think his situation was unique. He was in a unique circumstance. He was trying to push this manifesto into the public. In a dramatic way, I think he saw no other means except the options that he chose. He has never suggested that other people do the same. I mean he was he was captured, he was punished. He's he's serving his punishment. Now he's in prison for. Life now what remains to be discussed is the problem of technology because that's the looming problem. It's not so much his past crimes which are.

BEN: Isn't there an issue about the rewards for violent behaviour? If Ted Kaczynski had gone down the route of publishing academic journals or newspapers, you could be discussing his ideas. Without the what he would term to be collateral damage.

SKRBINA: Well, that's true, and I talk about many other professors and thinkers who have done precisely that. I don't know that we do ourselves any favors by ignoring him. I think he felt to have an impact. It had to have widespread coverage and widespread attention brought. To it. He succeeded in the sense that it was published in the Washington Post and something like 1.2 million copies. Of the paper were sold that day.

BEN: The Unabomber's brother David Kaczynski shared some of his anxieties about technology.

DAVID: I think the truth is that Ted posed some very important questions because of the violence. People don't hear the questions very well. It's like the. The question is lost in the sound of the explosion. Unfortunately, clearly sending bombs to a few people you don't know is not going to change the course of human history. I mean that's delusional.

BEN: When the FBI and the Attorney general recommended that the manifesto be published, they could hardly have guessed that their long sought after lead would come from an American citizen on vacation in Paris.

LINDA: The FBI was. Posting some information about the Unabomber and that was in the Herald Tribune, just about every other day. I'd look at these articles and kind of scratch my head and say, wow, this kind of sounds like Dave's brother. Because one little article was about his carpentry skills, one little article was about his rejection of technology. Another little article, it was about the cities where bombs went off, and I knew that Dave's brother had either lived in those cities or had worked in those cities. And so it kind of built up.

BEN: It's difficult to overestimate the role played in this story by Linda Patrick, the wife of David Kusinski. Despite knowing David since high school, she has never met his brother, who reacted angrily to their marriage.

LINDA: And so I thought about the victims and. It was overwhelming me, so I decided that I would broach this possibility that perhaps the Unabomber was his brother. I took him out to the Bastille areand we heard St musicians and things like that and on the way back I raised the question I said is it? Possible that your brother could be the Unabomber and Dave was shocked he was totally didn't believe it. But anyway, I kept on it and he promised that he would read the manifesto. I told Dave, let's go to the library of the college where I taught they've sat there looking at the computer screen and. I could see him reading the first page and his expression changed radically.

DAVID: I think the turning point came one morning, I'd I'd awakened early one morning. I almost felt like I was awakening from some horrible nightmare, but as the cobwebs melted, I realized, well, I was in a nightmare. I was literally considering the possibility that my brother was a serial killer. The most wanted person in America. Perhaps in the whole word. If you look at the dilemma we faced, we found ourselves in this situation where any choice we made could lead to somebody's death if we decided to do nothing, we might wake up someday and realize that some other person had been killed and if it turned out that Ted was the person responsible in effect, we'd have to go through the rest of our lives. With the blood of an innocent person our hands, but the other side of this dilemma was the realization, well that if we did go forward, if we turned Ted in, if it turned out that he was the Unabomber, he would be a prime candidate. For the death penalty. What would it be like to go through the rest of my life with my brother's blood on my hands?

LINDA: It was tricky, . I was the accelerator and he was the break to tell you the truth. He was willing to go to the FBI. I convinced him to do that, but he never really believed his brother was the Unabomber until his brother was arrested and they opened up the cabin and found. The evidence right there.

NEWSREADER #7: Federal agents have taken into custody a man they suspect as the Unabomber. This drama is unfolding outside the tiny town of Lincoln, Montana, and Tom Foreman is there.

TOM: After 17 years of looking today, FBI agents think they may have finally had a look at the Unabomber. Late this afternoon, Ted Kaczynski was taken from his backwoods cabin, leaving folks in the nearby town of Lincoln stunned.

LOCAL RESIDENT: He was just a. Real quiet guy. You know he came town. He never bothered anybody. He never gave anybody a hard time. He was never in trouble.

BEN: ABC's Nightline program. On the 4th of April 1996, the day of Kaczynski's arrest, FBI special agent Terry Terzi was one of the first to look inside the cabin.

TURCHI: The thing that struck me was the Quaker Rd oatmeal can. But also you had all kinds of different cans and they had labels like chemical labels and Pat who had been with this case. The forensics part for so many. And he's a bombs person and

knows what kind of chemicals go together to make a bomb. He starts getting tears in his eyes literally. And he looks at me and he goes. This him. We found the Unabomber and I remember even even now when I tell. You that I. Get a little chilled and it was such an emotional high moment.

NEWS READER #8: Lights have been going on and off throughout the evening here, but they're off now. I would speculate that Dave Kaczynski, his wife, and his mother. If his mother is still in there. Have gone to bed and.

DAVID: We saw pictures of him being arrested and. Looking like worse than any homeless person I've ever seen. I'm thinking Oh my gosh, how? How is this for Ted? How is he being treated? What's going on through his mind? You know, I sometimes made the comparison to. It felt like there was this group of zombies outside like the night of the living dead and they all want to get a piece of us. And heck, we don't even. Have words for. What we're feeling at this moment we're in shock.

BEN: The press didn't just want to speak with Kaczynski's family, they frequently tried to contact the Unabomber himself. Media and terrorism analyst Brigitta Nakos.

BRIGITTA: There was a race between the television and other news organization print as well. To get an interview with Kaczynski. It's so shocking. It's sensational. Giving the competition in the commercial media. You know, they all wanted it. There is a limit to give. Being people who commit violence, this kind of public space, we have the same problem today. Nowadays most media organization over cover this sort of violence. Right now we are of course mostly concerned with ISIS and ISIS related groups. Look the Free Press has an obligation has responsibility. To inform the public, of course it has to be reported. The question is how extensively and how do you report it?

BEN: In the 17 year hunt for the Unabomber, Theodore Kaczynski was unabomber suspect #2416. The newspapers and the FBI got lucky if Linda Kaczynski had not picked up a copy of the International Herald Tribune in Paris. This story and the consequences of the publishers decision to give in to blackmail could have been very different.

TURCHI: The only other alternative to finding the lone wolf? That you'll hear from any government. Well, we need to have more wiretapping, or we need to have more. You know drones in the air. None of those things. All the drones and all the NSA wiretapping in the world would not have helped us find Theodore. Linski, but yet we might have taken the chance of who knows the kinds of legal problems we would have gotten ourselves into or the trust interference with the public. But yet the step of simply going to the public and saying, here's his words, here's. What we know about. Him help us solicited 55,000 phone calls.

BEN: In 2011, Norwegian terrorist Anders Breivik quoted large chunks of the Unabomber's manifesto in his own rambling essay, which he published online just hours before his attacks that killed 77 people and injured 390. Teen Breivik admired the way Kaczynski had coerced the media to gain a prominent platform for his thoughts. Following the Unabomber case, FBI Special Agent Kathleen Puckett put together a

report called the Lone Terrorist, comparing the Unabomber to other high profile cases, including the Oklahoma City bomber, Timothy McVeigh, who killed 168 people and injured at least 680.

KATHLEEN: All of them. Had an intense desire to be a part of a. They were always extremist groups. That's a social group. They're in there for social reasons. If you're not in a group, how do you matter in the world? How do you make a mark you have to damage society at the highest level, so you'll be noticed by the most people as the champion of the ideology and it's become very relevant now. Because we said years. What were really worried about was the lone terrorist ideology and phenomenon being adopted by international terrorism. And of course that has happened. It's not that these people are being recruited, but they're self recruiting because they are alienated to the extent where they're not participating the Boston bombers. For example, Tsarnaev wrote in his social media. I don't have a single American friend.

BEN: Kaczynski was set for trial in Sacramento, CA in January 1998. Much to the distress of his family which had cooperated with the FBI. The prosecution was seeking the death penalty. His legal team worked methodically on a mental health defence.

KATHLEEN: Ted Kaczynski was very offended by this. He would rather die, he said than be labeled crazy. The court appointed psychiatrist came up with a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia for him, which was the crowning indignity that he was mentally ill, was anathema to him.

BEN: While building their case, Kaczynski's defence team learned about a psychological research project he was involved in as a young student at Harvard. It was conducted by the eminent psychologist Henry Murray, who described the experiments as vehement sweeping and personally abusive attacks. David Kaczynski.

DAVID: Once a week for three years, Ted showed up at this lab. Sometimes they hooked him up with wires to study his vital signs. They were studying the effects of emotional trauma on unwitting human subjects. They had selected for this study. The students who were both bright but also highly alienated, so they found the most alienated students, and derided their views, their values, their personal characteristics. I know Ted described this to his defense attorneys as the worst. Experience of his life, at which point they asked Ted, Well, Ted, why did you remain the study? I mean, why didn't you walk away if it was so awful? And he said, it seems to me so characteristically, Ted, I wanted to prove that I could take it, that I couldn't be broken.

BEN: On the night of the trial, after Kaczynski attempted to fire his lawyers, he tried to commit suicide. Eventually, Kaczynski opted for a plea bargain, accepting the prosecution's offer of life in jail to avoid trial at which his sanity would be scrutinised. Before his sentencing, some of the Unabomber's victims gave statements in court. One of them was Gary Wright.

GARY: Your Honour members of the court and fellow victims. Good morning. I've waited over 11 years for this moment, and in all that time I've wondered what I would say, and I've tried to prepare myself for the barrage of emotions that would overcome me when I was finally able to look in the eyes of the man who tried to kill me. Probably

one of the most powerful moments of this for me was when I came to a point where I just said, Ted, I don't hate you. I forgive you. I forgave you a long time ago because I wasn't about to become kindling to your cause and all during those statements he would be riding on a yellow. And when I said that the pencil dropped and he looked up and we just locked our gaze and it was the perfect transference of everything, it's yours. Now you're going to get to deal with this.

BEN: Susan Moser witnessed the murder of her husband, a father of four shortly before Christmas in 1994. Her statement to the court is spoken by an actor.

SUSAN: Nails, razor blades. Wire pipe batteries everyday household items. Pack them together, explode them with the force of a bullet from a rifle, and you have a bow. Hold it in your hands while it's exploding. As my husband Tom did and you have unbearable pain. Please your honor. Make this sentence bulletproof. Bombproof if you will. Don't let Kaczynski murder justice the way he. Has murdered others. Please keep this creature out of society forever in every way possible. Make this sentence as permanent for him as he has made ours Toms and the others. His so-called causes are a smokescreen for his only objective. To kill anything that is alive.

BEN: Theodore Kaczynski received four life sentences plus 30 years for killing three men and wounding two others. From his supermax federal prison in Colorado, Kaczynski gave one of his only media interviews in 1999 to the journalist Stephen Dubner for an article published in Time magazine. It was subsequently featured in an episode of the American podcast Freakonomics Radio.

TED: When I was living in the woods, there was sort of an undertone and underlying feeling that things were basically right with my life that was able to fall back on the fact that. Here I was a free man in the mountains, surrounded by forests and wild animals, and so forth. And this made this made my life right. Even if things were for the time being going badly here, it's the other way around the knowledge. That I'm locked up. Here, here and like that remains so. For the rest of my life is. It runs, It's the undertone in this case is a is a is an extremely bad one and. I don't want. I would. Rather get the death penalty than spend the. Rest of my life in prison.

BEN: During the making of this program, we decided to write to Theodore Kaczynski at the federal prison that houses some of the most dangerous inmates in the United States. We asked some specific questions about the crimes he committed and the manifesto he wrote. We didn't expect to reply. But at the very last minute we got one. I've got to admit was strange to receive a letter from the Unabomber. I have it here, it's 3 pages long, written on lined paper in Biro Pan. The first thing that struck me was the childlike nature of the handwriting. Every single one of the letters is written separately. None of them have joined up. Instead of answering our questions, Kaczynski referred us to his writings including an essay about morality and revolution. Kaczynski made no mention of the people he killed or maimed or their relatives and he makes no reference at all to the way in which his crimes were perpetrated. Theodore Kaczynski lived in isolation, removed from the consequences of his actions. He could express his venom with the luxury of anonymity. But by publishing his manifesto, the mainstream

media gave him notoriety, propelling his personality into the public arena. Today you can visit the Unabomber's cabin. It's on display at the museum, in the heart of Washington DC. But Linda Kaczynski, who did so much to solve this case. Is uncomfortable with the ongoing fascination. She feels that what we ought to remember is not the sensational headlines, but the Unabomber's legacy of violence.

LINDA: Ted still refuses to talk with David, still refuses to have any communication with him, so there's no way really of us reaching. Him, we're just hoping that he's undergoing. More sympathy for his victims and remorse for what he did, because a killer like that has, he had the habit, the habitual tendency of killing people. If he has young people interested in what he writes, they've got to step back and think about what he did. And whether his mind is balanced, is he still angry person, full of hate? That is not. The way to go it will never help anyone become happy.

BEN: Terror and technology. The Unabomber is a wise Buddha production for the BBC World Service. It was presented by me Benjamin Graham and produced by Rebecca Maxstadt.

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The Ted K Archive

Benjamin Ramm
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