

Unabomber Suspect In Custody

Relative's Tip Leads Fbi To Remote Montana Cabin

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Federal agents Wednesday raided a remote Montana cabin where they seized a man they believe is the Unabomber, the elusive terrorist who has left a 17-year trail of mail bombs across the United States that have killed three people and maimed 23 others.

Law-enforcement officials said Wednesday night that the agents had found explosive chemicals and other bomb-making material at the wilderness cabin belonging to the suspect, Theodore J. Kaczynski. They said they planned to charge Kaczynski on Thursday with the string of deadly bombings that had long baffled the authorities.

The suspect is a 53-year-old former assistant professor of mathematics at the University of California at Berkeley. His is just the sort of academic-oriented background that the authorities had attributed to the bomber, whose communications with the press had reflected an obsession with science and technology issues.

Since the early 1970s, Kaczynski has lived in a tiny, hand-built cabin 50 miles northwest of Helena near the Continental Divide on the edge of Lolo National Forest, an area so remote that one of the FBI agents who had kept him under surveillance there is said to have watched a cougar attack and kill a deer.

The authorities confronted Kaczynski at the cabin Wednesday and, after a brief scuffle, searched it for evidence of bomb-related material. Federal investigators, who had said before the search that they did not have sufficient evidence to charge Kaczynski with the bombings, said afterward that the searchers had found what they believe is enough evidence to charge him in a complaint to be filed today in a federal court in Helena.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation put Kaczynski under scrutiny about two months ago, when — after years of fruitless searching across the country, false leads and the publication of a 35,000-word manifesto from the bomber — the long-awaited breakthrough came from the suspect's own family.

According to law-enforcement officials, members of the Kaczynski family in the Chicago area, apparently while cleaning their house and preparing it for sale, discovered writings that seemed strikingly similar to the Unabomber's anarchist tracts.

The family members, who law-enforcement officials said included Kaczynski's brother, turned the papers over to the FBI, apparently relying on a Washington lawyer as an intermediary. They also permitted the FBI to search their house, and, officials said, further evidence against Kaczynski was found.

The filing of formal charges against Kaczynski will mean that investigators can begin taking fingerprint and blood samples to determine whether they match the evidence collected over the years like the fingerprints and the DNA, drawn from dried saliva, that the bomber left on stamps used to mail letters to his victims and to news organizations.

Kaczynski was reared in Evergreen Park, Ill., a working-class suburb of Chicago that offers a tableau of Middle American images, from the brick colonial house where the Kaczynski family once lived to the nearby park where children played soccer and touch football Wednesday. The family later moved to Lombard, Ill., another Chicago suburb, and it was at the house in that city that Kaczynski's papers were found.

The Unabomber, who came to be so called because some of his early targets were employees of universities or airlines, began his reign of mayhem in May 1978 and delivered his last package bomb in April 1995. In the interim period, his meticulously built devices had grown ever more powerful and lethal, and his communications to the authorities more menacing.

In an effort to showcase his anti-technological ideology, the Unabomber last year sent The New York Times a 35,000-word manuscript that railed against what he described as the corrupt and dehumanizing influences of post-industrial society. Academics said the writing conveyed passable but unoriginal thinking about subjects like the history of science.

After the Unabomber had pledged to cease his campaign of violence if The Times or The Washington Post published his manifesto, the two newspapers jointly financed the publication of the manuscript by The Post in September. Later it was distributed widely through computer networks.

The manifesto, and a false threat in California to blow up a plane, both of which seemed like uncharacteristically erratic acts, prompted some criminal profilers to alter their view of the bomber, seeing him not as a disciplined terrorist with a political aim but as a driven serial killer whose bombs fulfilled a psychological need.

The fear that the Unabomber was growing more unpredictable and dangerous put greater pressure on the government to find him. Vast lists were culled by computer, a telephone line received more than 20,000 tips, and new investigative technologies were perfected to sift huge databases of information.

But the years of effort proved fruitless until investigators received what they said was the vital clue, the tip from a family member about two months ago.

In the following weeks, Kaczynski's cabin was under continuous hidden surveillance by federal agents who stood watch through blizzards that periodically raked the rugged region.

Throughout the surveillance, Kaczynski remained at the cabin, a 10-by-12-foot dwelling that has no electricity or running water. He chopped his own wood for heat and kept a cache of food in a root cellar, officials said.

Although he had lived as a wilderness recluse far from the scenes of the bombings, Kaczynski did seem to fit the government's profile of the man who had been one of its top fugitives from justice and the subject of a vast inquiry involving several law-enforcement agencies and hundreds of federal agents headquartered in San Francisco.

He was a loner, had lived in the Chicago area, was well educated and once lived in Northern California.

For years, the Unabomber had remained a shadowy figure, known to the public only from the FBI's composite drawing of a gaunt man wearing aviator sun glasses staring out under the hood of a sweatshirt. But his personality became more boldly defined through his manifesto.

The authorities had set up a separate base of operations in Chicago, predicting that they might be able to catch the Unabomber by searching for his roots, hoping to pick

up the cold trail left behind by the bomber in his youth, when he would have been less skilled, less careful and more reckless. And in the end, it was the Chicago area that led to Kaczynski.

2 Maps:

1. Livingston, Montana, area.
2. Previous targets

The Unabomber Tract

The Unabomber is the apparent author of an anarchist document, published jointly by The Washington Post and The New York Times in The Post in September 1995. The killer had written to both papers claiming that he would “permanently desist from terrorism” if a major news organization printed the 35,000-word manuscript in full. The tract, a rambling quasi-academic manifesto in 232 numbered paragraphs and eight pages of notes, is an indictment of what he calls the “impersonal,” “anti-individualistic” and “destabilizing” nature of “industrial-technological society.” “The industrial revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race,” the author writes. “They have ... destabilized society, have made life unfulfilling, have subjected human beings to indignities, have led to widespread psychological suffering ... and have inflicted severe damage on the natural world.” — From wire reports

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