

Witness to History: Investigating the Unabomber

September 20, 2014

Retired Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents Jim Freeman, Terry Turchie, and Donald Max Noel talked about their book, *Unabomber: How the FBI Broke Its Own Rules to Capture the Terrorist Ted Kaczynski*, in which they recount their involvement with the FBI's 18-year investigation of the Unabomber case and the eventual arrest of Theodore Kaczynski.

This discussion was hosted by the Newseum, it was the tenth event of the "Witness to History" series of the National Law Enforcement Museum.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2X10nj5BgbQ>

Craig Floyd: OK, Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Craig Floyd and I'm the chairman and CEO of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund and I want to welcome all of you here today to the museum's witness to history investigating the Unabomber. The 10th. Our series of witness to history events, generously sponsored by our friends from Target, who join us here in the front row. As well as in partnership today with the Newseum, our hosts and I'll turn things over to John Maynard in just a moment from the Newseum for the moderation of today's event. But I want to thank all of you for coming. Today's just a glorious day outside and the fact that you would want to spend an hour or two here with us. That that's extra special and I thank you for taking the time to join us. I think you're in for just a fascinating discussion here in just a moment. I also want to thank our friends from C-SPAN, who tend to cover many of these witness to history events. They're with us once again today, and they'll be sharing this on air over the coming weeks. For those of you who may not be familiar with the national law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, our organization, little background. We were formed in 1984. By Congressman Mario Biaggi, a former New York City police officer and police legend, he actually is the author of the legislation to establish the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial, which was our first major initiative. We dedicated that memorial in 1991. It sits just a couple of blocks from here and judiciary. Square the 400 block of E Street, Northwest Washington, and on the walls of that memorial are the names of 20,267 federal, state, local, tribal and territorial law enforcement professionals who have given. In their lives, in the line of duty, our latest initiative is to establish a national law enforcement museum, and we've been working on this now since 2000, when Congress authorized our organization to build the first ever national Law Enforcement Museum. We've been working on it ever since. And that museum will open in just a few years from now. In a place again called Judiciary Square, right across the street from the National Memorial. But in many ways, our museum already exists. We've collected more than 17,000 artifacts, fascinating artifacts of American law enforcement history that will help us tell that story. And we've also produced a number of educational and

public programming events of which witness to history is part of that. This afternoon is certainly a good example we bring together. Law enforcement professionals, experts who were involved in some of the most famous criminal cases in American history, and today we bring together a group of experts who work so diligently and for so long on the Unabomber investigation, one of the longest man hunts in American law enforcement. History and I want to just thank once again our friends from Target for sponsoring today's event and all of our witness to history events and I now would like to turn our program over to John Maynard who will moderate today's program. John, please join us.

John Maynard: Here. Well, thank you, Craig, and good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen and those of you watching. On C-SPAN. Welcome to the new Sam's Night TV studio, and welcome to the New Sam home of the Unabombers Cabin. Hope you've all had a chance to see that down on our concourse level, and again, we are so pleased to be partnering with the National Law Enforcement Museum for today's program. Well, for nearly two decades, beginning in 1978, an elusive criminal sent homemade bombs that targeted universities, airlines. And computer stores killing three people and injuring 23 others. The FBI branded him the Unabomber, and despite an investigation that spanned 8 States and. Involved about 5. 100 agents. The FBI was flummoxed, but a 35,000 word manifesto written by the Unabomber, whose real name was Ted Kaczynski and sent to various publications, proved a turning point and brought an end to the Unabomber's reign of Terror. But even before the manifesto, the investigation was hammered by complex layers of bureaucracy and institutional pride. Some professional jealousies and some individual egos. But today we talked to three FBI agents who were charged by then FBI Director Louis Free to bring finality to the case by cutting through the cumbersome procedures of the investigation and breaking free of bureaucratic restraint. Their new book, *The Unabomber*, how the FBI broke its own rules to capture the terrorist Ted Kaczynski, details the FBI's investigation into the Unabomber. And how these three men work together and within the agency to? Bring him down. Jim freeman. To my left was the special agent in charge of the multi agency UNABOMB investigation and oversaw strategic management at the executive level. He began his career as a special agent with the FBI in 1964 with assignments in Oklahoma City, Los Angeles and Miami. And in 1993 he was assigned. Special agent in charge of the San Francisco Division following the Unabomber investigation. Returned from the FBI in 1996, retired from the FBI in 1996 and. He joined Charles. Schwab and just recently retired as Senior VP of Global Security Max Knoll, sitting to Jim's left, served as investigator on the Bomb Task Force before becoming ultimately becoming Special Agent supervisor of an expanded task force. And ultimately. Concentrating on Montana, he served as an FBI agent for 30 years and worked on numerous high profile investigations, including the Weather Underground, the Patty Hearst kidnapping and the disappearance of Jimmy Hoffa. He retired from the FBI in 1999. Terry Churchy directed the Unabomb Federal task force between 1994 and 1998. On an operational level, following the Unabomber case, he became inspector and led the task force in

the hunt for Olympic bomber. Eric Rudolph in 1999, he was named Deputy Assistant in the new Counterterrorism division of the FBI and traveled extensively overseas to investigate international terrorism in the Middle East and in the former Soviet Union. I should also note in the book, Jim Jim writes that Terry is the only FBI agent that he knows. Who got into a fight with a Russian spy and when he wrestled the Cage GB agent to the ground on a Brooklyn subway platform in 1986. So please welcome our panel. You're tweeting. Today's conversation, please use the new Sam's handle, which is at Newsam and the National law enforcement handle, which is at NLEOMF. OK, Jim, let's start with you. All three of you are listed as co-authors, but the book is told from from your perspective. Tell us. How the book came together and what was your main objective for the?

Jim Freeman: Well, thank you for your kind comments or introducing the three of us. And I want to point out that we represent dozens of FBI agents and ATF agents and officers of the US Postal Inspection Service who all made work together for that task force those last three years, you might imagine. How many? Individuals and how much work went into such a project and the book came about in very similar ways. How the investigation came about those last two years when I had volunteered to Louis Free, I would think I was the only volunteer ever for the Unabomb task force. After 16 years of. The ability to find him, but I volunteered because I was already in San Francisco and that's where the task force had been set up. And so I wanted to take a shot at at catching Ted Kaczynski. The. The investigation required that I I look for a team that would bring together a strategic plan. And Terry Turchi was where I I I went. He was already in the San Francisco office. He was a supervisor of national intelligence matters in the Palo Alto resident agency. And I I decided I wanted a different perspective. I wanted to shake it up. I mean, after 16 years, what could I do but shake it up to try to try to do something different? And in the FBI, there's definitely what at that time wall between the National Intelligence Service and the criminal. Division for various reasons, but I wanted to take advantage of the synergy of that in in preparing a a strategic plan and executing it. And the book came together kind of the same way. It was a matter of the three of us represent a unique perspective in the way the. The case was managed, and so we wrote it in that in that manner we didn't want to write a. Book that stood on its own as a as our own creation. We wanted to just do a definitive description of the investigation, which was very complex and had over the years had not been appropriately described in any of the many books that have been written about the Unabomb case, or about most of the centered on Ted Kaczynski. We wrote the book to center on the investigation.

John Maynard: Terry and Max, I'll ask you both. Tell us about your reaction when you were to asked to join this kind of newly formed task force.

Terry Turchie: Well, I was a bit stunned. I was very happy in Palo Alto and any of you familiar with California. Now, that's a pretty nice place to be. We had an office across the street from Stanford and I was pretty subtle for the rest. Of my career. At least I thought, until Jim had this bizarre idea that he was going to solve unabom.

And so I got a call one day and it was from our asac at Appel Asac, his assistant special agent in charge of our counterterrorism or counterintelligence program in San Francisco. And he said, I just have a couple of questions to ask you. How do you feel about coming up to the city and taking over the unabomb task force? Jim is putting together a different structure and. Is interested in you doing that and my response was to laugh and say, well, that's funny, but thanks for the offer, but no thanks. And so there was a pause and he said I'm actually not. Joking and and then I didn't know what to say. Everybody tried to stay away from the corridor in the San Francisco office, where they had signs that said Unabomb no one wanted to go near there. And so I just said, well, I I think I would need a lot of time to close up everything down here and. Then get up there and he said, well, how much time do you need? And I said, well, I probably need at least a month and I thought I'd get a couple of weeks. And he said, well, how about a couple of hours? And so nothing went right from there until I met Jim down in the office and realized that he was very, very serious. And maybe we really had a chance to do things differently.

John Maynard: Max tells about your enrollment.

Max Noel: Unlike the other two, I was already on the task force and I saw JIMS taking over the task force and reconfiguring it and bringing Terry in as an opportunity to leave the task force. And what I did best and I I submitted a memorandum to.

John Maynard: All right.

Max Noel: Jim, to that effect, saying please let me go back and do what I was doing before, which was organized crime and Asian organized crime work. And unfortunately, Terry and Jim had other ideas and Terry convinced me that I needed to stay. He went in and saw. Him and Jim said, oh, yeah, I know he wants off, but he's not going. So I stayed.

John Maynard: Right, right. Jim, for maybe some of our younger visitors or people not familiar with the with the case give us just a brief overview of of the Unabomber. What were some of his targets? And and some of his motives have later learned.

Jim Freeman: Well, that's what made it so difficult to to identify a suspect was because. The Unabomber became very clear early on, had to be a lone wolf. He he was not talking to anyone, or else something would have come to light and and less than 1617 years, his early targets were against university professors, graduate students. Bombs sent through the mail to specific professors, as well as bombs placed in the corridor outside of computer room. The University of Utah, and that was repeated in in other locations as well. The University of California at. And and then there was a early on, I think his third bombing was against the American Airlines flight. A mailed bomb was placed on there with a a rigged altimeter. That was a barometer was used and rigged to be an altimeter to explode it at a certain altitude and. It did detonate. It did ignite a fire, but it didn't explode. So it. Saved the lives of all the people on that plane, but Even so, the pilot recognized that smoke was coming into the cabins and he he did an emergency landing at Dulles Airport, saving people's lives. But so airlines and and and universities, where the early targets. And so the FBI has a, you know,

propensity for. For acronym, so we did UN for university A for aircraft and and bomb of course. So it became. Bomb. And then the Unabomber, just as a moniker that's stuck.

John Maynard: Right. And I'll ask you again, Jim, but again for both Max and Terry, when did you realize that you know this was a case that you would have to adjust the the normal protocol and you know the subtitle of the book is how the FBI broke its own rules, what were go through some of those, some of those rules?

Jim Freeman: Terry.

Terry Turchie: Yeah. Well, we actually had a meeting in Jim's office, one of the first things he wanted was a strategy, and he wasn't. Very. Clear on exactly what he wanted, but he knew that he wanted it to be out-of-the-box and and really something we hadn't tried before and really made the impression that we we want to solve this case. We're not just doing this for some process or to kind of babysit here until someone else comes along. We're all here in San Francisco. We're going to stay here until we try and do this. So. I went away. I talked to Max, Max and I had a number of meetings over the next week and met with just about everybody that was already on the Unabomb task force and and talked to them about what they thought our lacking some of our failings were as far as what we had overlooked before and how we might do this in a different way. And it became apparent that we needed a different organization and a different structure. And then we needed all the things that come with that. So at the end of the week, I gave Jim a paper and it essentially said, here's what I think we should do based upon everybody that I've talked to and their input number one, we had kind of a morale issue, a lot of people did want to get off the get about task force. They'd worked very hard. They'd been there a long time and they were just tired. And so to try to deal with that. It was kind of simple. I recommended to Jim that we have people choose a partner. Now I know when you watch TV, everybody works with a partner, but that's not necessarily the way it is. In real life. So we had a meeting, we told everybody whether it's an FBI and an ATF agent. Then or a postal inspector and an ATF agent, have people get together, choose a partner, and you're going to be with this person for a long, long time. And that way, when you have a down day, probably your partner will have an up day and you guys will be a lot more creative working together like this. So that was the biggest thing we did to make a difference in the internal mechanism. How things will operate, but then all the more complicated things and made several suggestions. First, we needed to have a media component built into our strategy, so we'd actively use the. Media to get to the public and eventually we would have things in a specific message to tell the public. Secondly, we needed a significant analytical capability that was integrated into the investigation that up until that time we just simply didn't have. And then third, we needed to really deal with the issue of profiling. Again, you probably watched. Shows like Criminal Minds and that. Type of thing, but it doesn't exactly happen in real life. The way it happens on TV or in a couple of hour movie. So we needed to look differently there and so we chose some different people to work with us on the profiling and we'll probably get into that

in in a while, but those are the the essence of what I passed along to Jim. That was really the sum total of what many of the agents and analysts we already had had told me during these interviews.

John Maynard: You mentioned the media. We're at the museum here, so it's a natural question for me to ask. But as we were discussing earlier, the FBI traditionally does play a close to the vest when it comes to the media. What was the advantage in this case for you to to shift the strategy to be more media friendly?

Jim Freeman: Very well for Max go.

Terry Turchie: Ahead. Well, we knew right away that we needed to have a a consistent message to take to the public and we also had to have a consistent spokesperson. And so we decided to recommend to Jim that he be our spokesperson and not FBI headquarters. Not all the other SAC's that had a hand in a bomb. But Jim, because Jim would always be sitting with us and would always have the latest information that we were going to be getting coming from the reinvestigations that Max was very involved in. And so we wanted to give a consistent message to the public overtime. What we ended up doing between 1994 and 1996, long before even we got the manifesto in the summer of 1995, was that we started going to the public with one message, and that message was when you think about the Unabomber, think about Chicago. Between 1978 and 1980. Then think about Salt Lake City because between 1980 and about 1982 or 83. That seemed to be the focus of where there was a connection for the Unabomber. And then after that time frame, from 1985 and on, think of the San Francisco Bay area. Put those three things together. Here and then eventually and and I'm going to defer to Max here to talk about the composite that became a significant part of that message, Chicago, Salt Lake and the San Francisco Bay area. And then the composite and then by 1995, we got the manifesto when all those pieces came together and went back out to the public through Jim with that message. We really I think got what we were looking for and and I'll go back to that composite because it's a fascinating story of the investigation as well.

Jim Freeman: Jump in. You you address that the composite is the iconic picture of the band in the hooded sweatshirt, the aviator sunglasses.

Max Noel: Well, early on in the investigation, you do a lot of monotonous tasks and and reviewing the file. We didn't have a lot of leads and reviewing the file and trying to determine if there were things that hadn't been done in the past and I was reviewing the file with regard to Utah related bombings. And there was a bombing in 1987 at CAMS Computer Company in Salt Lake City, and it was the only time the individual, known as the Unabomber, was ever seen. And he was seen by an employee very close. She was within 3 feet of him, looking at him out the window as he placed a bomb beside her left front tire of her car. And. And she was interviewed afterwards by a police artist, an artist that they brought in to do a composite. And she did the composite. When I reviewed the file, it was something unusual. There were like 5 different composites by that same artist in that same witness on five different days. And it was just. Unusual for me to see that. Why? So I've found this particular witness.

Tammy flew by and went and interviewed her and asked her why. And Tammy said, well, he wasn't capturing what I was trying to tell him. It was. He kept getting the shape of the face wrong and some other things. And she was very adamant. And I said, well, Tammy, how can you be so adamant about that? And she said, well, I just reviewed my notes and I said what notes? There's no notes in the file from you. She said, well, I always wondered why they never came back and got my notes from me. They instructed me the day that I saw him to write down everything I saw. And the police were going to come back and nobody ever came back and get it. So. She brought me her notes, and sure enough, she was very consistent with. What? She said so. Jim had just finished a case supervising as the SAC a kidnapping case in in San Francisco, the kidnapping of a young woman named Polly class. She was snatched out of her bedroom at a a slumber party, taken, raped, and killed, and they used a forensic artist named Jeannie Boylan to. Do the artist concept of the person who killed. Kidnapped and killed her, and it eventually led to the identification of a of a guy named Richard Allen Davis and Richard Allen Davis. If you took his mug shot and you put Jeannie Boylans drawing side by side, they were exact and, you know, and I'm not being negative, but most police artist concepts in the past have been. You talked to a witness. And you give them a book full of noses and a book full of certain types of faces and ears, and they plug all these things together. And I always referred to those as kind of Mr. Potato head drawings. They they captured the the features of a person, but not really the person. Well, Jeannie Boylan was a artist first. She was a trend. This artist and she could interview a person and draw a real. Lifelike picture of who the person was describing, so Jim said. Find her, go get Jeannie and to see if we can do this. So we did. We got Jeannie. We took her to Utah. Tammy flew, I interviewed with Jeannie for something like 4 hours to get a composite. And, you know, everyone thinks the life of an FBI agent sometimes is very. Interesting. And they do the exciting things. And during that 4 hour period of time, I got the privilege of playing with the Tammy Floyds, 3 year old on the on the living room floor and watching Lion King on TV.

The artist concept that resulted was a great artist concept, and if you have the opportunity to look at the two different concepts, it's just remarkable. After seven years, what Tammy could describe and what Jeannie could draw, and if you take Ted Kaczynski's University of California official photograph. And put it beside it, you see exactly the jawline that she and the jutting chin that she described. So that was a very unique thing. And we also did it in black and white, and we didn't want. People focusing on yellow hair because we were afraid that he might be wearing a wig and so forth. And what we found out later was he was he was wearing a a yellow wig and he was supporting that yellow wig by planting yellow hairs and bombs to throw us off track when he didn't have blonde hair. So there were all kinds of interesting things throughout the case.

John Maynard: I like that. Terry, you mentioned the the manifesto and I do want. I want to get to that. But give us a sense in those final years of of the press. Or you

felt to catch this guy. And yet we, I I was reminded reading the book 1993 was the Oklahoma City bombing and 1st question perhaps to the White House or at the high levels there was was at the Unabomber. So talk a little bit about just the the the pressures that that you felt.

Terry Turchie: One of the saddest things that happens is when you're all assembled and you really think you have a great plan and then someone else gets killed and that happened to us in 1995 and it happened to us in 1994. While all of this was coming together. And while we thought we were making. Difference and you can see the morale of people just kind of start to dip and you go home every night. Max and I commuted. We actually commuted from where we live in the East Bay over to San Francisco. And while everybody else chose their partner, we kind of became partners. And we kept each other's morale up because on those moments and. On those days, of course, people back here because it's their job. They're they're the phones are ringing off the hook. The media has its own spin. The families and the victims of the families are on the phone or they want to talk to you and you do. I mean, we went and sat down with people. And what do you say? I remember the Epsteins doctor Charles Epstein lived in Tiburon and he was a unabomb victim in 1993. And I I remember that. John Conway, who was the first case agent for Unabomb, took me out to meet the Epsteins and we sat in their living room and and the apprehension of justice going in there they were one of the first families I'd ever met. When I started doing this and we sat down and it was not at all what I expected and I think. From that point on, this is what really got us through the days they sat there and they were more worried about me and whether or not I was getting enough sleep than they were about what had happened to him. And as Max and I and Jim dealt with these families and the victims over the years, they were all that. That way, and in the darkest days, when you would expect that they're going to be pretty upset, they would be sitting down with you and saying you got to make sure you you stay focused and stay rested and and know that we have confidence in you. So it's hard to convey how you feel. But I'll tell you I know how I think. Everybody feels today that's looking at the world and is responsible for being on the front lines of counter. I think you worry a lot. I think you you work long hours and it's very, very difficult to put it down because we used to say and I know they still say that you know like if you're a baseball player and you bat 500, you're just about the greatest in the world, the FBI and the CIA. We cannot afford to bat 500. And we can't afford to bat 900 because one person out of 100 getting through can be not just the tragedy, but perhaps going forward could literally affect the sovereignty of our country. That's how serious the problem of terrorism became, and that's how we took this when we when we spent the days together.

John Maynard: So it was in June of 1995, the Unabomber sent out his manifesto. And I should note that it did not just go out to the the New York Times and the Washington Post, but also Scientific American and Penthouse. I did. I did not. Know. That so tell us your reactions when they when you learned about the manifesto, did

you realize this was going to be a major break or was this going to lead to more complications?

Jim Freeman: Well, for me, it was a major break, but back up a little bit. Yeah, the thing I was concerned about the Unabomber. The difficulty to catch any criminal that's not communicating. It makes it very difficult. But once they start communicating, you have opportunity for lead material to develop and.

John Maynard: Yeah.

Jim Freeman: The Unabomber had been quiet for seven almost seven years up. He started bombing again in 1993 and then in 94 he continued and and he started writing letters. So I I felt well, that's good. He wrote a letter to New York Times, an editor at the New York Times, to begin with. And then leading up to suddenly he comes forward to gushing 35,000 word manifesto. I thought Hallelujah this. This this is the right to right direction but he also attached to that and extortion demand is a threat to the to the newspapers and he preceded or followed that actually very closely with. I'm going to blow up where my my he was claiming to have a terrorist group behind him which we didn't believe at all but he said we're going to blow up an airliner out of LA.

John Maynard: Of course, and right.

Jim Freeman: If you don't publish the manifesto, so that kind of sweetened the pot and then a few days later he came with another letter and said I was just kidding about that. So which we didn't think was very funny at all, nor did anybody flying out of California or anywhere for for a while. But when that manifesto came, of course we read it. Intensely and and and looking for any any clues that and we had experts that we would send copies to people that were linguistics experts everything and Terry would. I would like you to address actually how we brought that to a conclusion to where we made use of the manifesto to bring the public's attention to.

Terry Turchie: It sure when we got the manifesto in all 35,000 words, there were a number of people on the task force who thought it would be a great project to go back to and. Try to source what time did this person, what time frame was this person educated in? Who wrote this? What could we tell about phrases? What could be we tell about the four books who that were referenced in the manifesto? All of these things. And so that took us on this journey to a number of college campuses. And I'll take you back to 1985. One of the things that happened in 1985 in November was that a professor in Michigan, University of Michigan got a bomb in the mail. His name was McConnell, Professor McConnell, and it it was a bomb that was actually built into a three ring binder. And there was a letter with it. And the letter said, hey, this is my thesis statement on the history of science. And I'd like you to take a look at this and then maybe tell me what you think. And kind of sponsor my thesis and of course, when Professor McConnell and his assistant opened up this binder, it was actually a bomb that that went off. So we were really fascinated in 1994, a couple of postal inspectors, Tony Moyat and Robin Shipman, were fascinated by and proposed a project to focus it on this history of science. What does it mean? So we've done a lot of work on that

and gone to a lot of university campuses and talked to a lot of professors. And by the time the manifesto. Game a lot of the information that came from knowing all those professors and able us to go back to them and start drilling down and try to bring more details together about the books that were referenced in the manifesto, the language and how it might relate to the history of science, which was our first clue from this guy. When he when he wrote that letter and. We spent months really trying to get to know and understanding and reading the manifesto and by the time we had someone step forward that could help us bring it together, we'd already kind of been on those trails and we were able to then go back and pull a lot of pieces together.

John Maynard: And there was some debate about whether or not to publish the manifesto. The Washington Post also. Did but tell us about how you about. I believe there was a meeting that you can maybe describe where at first. You you said. Well, no, don't, don't, don't publish it. But then changed your mind pretty quickly. Tell us about. How about that meeting? Yeah. Yeah.

Jim Freeman: Meeting at the task force in in. San Francisco and and the knee jerk reaction was, you know, their national policy against doing business with the terrorists, you know, ceding to a terrorist demands. And we have an extortion of demand against the newspaper. And and we really should keep that in mind and and we'll we'll recommend to Louis free the director of the FBI that they should not publish and took about an hour to turn that decision around. And the task force members to, you know say, you know, we really should look at this from from a law enforcement operational perspective and let Washington deal with the. National policy issues and if it? Well, if it will move the the investigation forward and give us the opportunity to make an arrest in this case, doesn't that outweigh a national policy, broad national policy? So we changed the the task force members made the change. The recommendation to me and Terry and I went back to. Came back here to Washington, met with Louis Free, and ultimately he agreed with us and we went across street to Janet Reno Attorney General. The time and she agreed. And then the next day, when I was amazed. But when the attorney general calls and after day director calls, busy people made themselves available. And and we had the publishers of the New York Times and the Washington Post at a meeting, along with their editorial staff, which was very interesting. Terry, you want to comment on the.

Terry Turchie: It was kind of funny. We're all sitting on opposite sides of the table and the we thought the tension would have to do with talking about unabomb and publication, but it really came down to the times in the poster sitting there and I happened to mention. That we have this scenario where we think if you published it, one of the things we would do is we would be surveilling news stands in in San Francisco and other cities because our profilers tell us that perhaps the Unabomber will try to show up at one of these new stands and get a kind of a trophy copy of the paper. So I'm telling this story. And they're listening. And finally, so I said, we really think that if the post or the Times published this, then we would set up on your news stands and we found that in San Francisco, there's only a couple of places where the

same day, Washington Post is actually published. And I mean sold. So we think that would be the perfect way because the New York Times is everywhere the perfect way to publish it in the post. And we can kind of stand up on those two places. And there was some quiet and then someone and I don't remember actually if it was from the post of the times. But I have my thoughts said by the way. Who? Who sells more papers in San Francisco? The post of the times. And I had no answer. I didn't know what I should do, and I. And so Louie kind of looks up and he says go ahead and tell him. And I said, well, actually, we all kind of laughed cause the Washington Post sells nothing in San Francisco and. And he then said, well, I wouldn't have been surprised at that, who leads the Washington Post. So we had a a good moment there, but ultimately they shared the cost of publication and on September 19th, the Washington Post published in a special. Insert the Unibond manifesto and we then implemented our plan and and again Max and I were going home one night, had it all ready. We had all kinds of people coming in early the next morning to set up on these new stands and we figured that we needed so many agents to watch about four or five locations because we really didn't figure we would have over about 100 or. Maybe 150 people show up. At 3:00 in the morning, we got a call before we ever started the commute and they told us we've already got lines around the blocks at these places. We have hundreds of people waiting to to buy the the post and you know, we needed more agents. So that's what we had. To do.

Jim Freeman: As far as the information that was there and we got the the help of the media in. By publishing it and then and then I did numerous press conferences talking about, well, remember what we know about the Unabomber? We know the area, geographical areas that he's worked in, and so urging the public to come forward. And there was \$1,000,000 reward that it existed for for a few years in a 1800 telephone. Line that people were calling in. In their potential suspects, people's ex wives are reporting their their husbands. I think 52 or 54 brothers reported their brothers were the were the Unabomber. And of course, that we were just looking for that one tip that would be the one that that made good and that that is what happened.

John Maynard: And that's exactly what I was going to lead to tell us about that, that tip.

Jim Freeman: Max, would you like to talk about how that...

John Maynard: Yeah, and then Max, I want to talk about the steering in on him too, but...

Max Noel: No, the we got a call from an attorney who was brokering trying to broker a deal with us about a client that he had and he was a Washington, DC attorney. And it just things don't happen like they appear. To have happened. This attorney had a good working relationship with an FBI agent here in Washington, DC He was no longer here. He was in South Carolina, so he contacted him in South Carolina. He in turn said, well, I'm not there. I'll give you an agent in DC to contact. So he did. And this young lady agent named Molly Flynn met with him and got a. 20 page or 21 page document. To read and it was typed on an antique typewriter. We had one

forensic piece of evidence that we were always searching for, and it was an antique Smith Corona 192530 typewriter with pika style type and 2.54 spacing. That's the one thing that connected all of these cases together over the years. So Molly got it, took it to the laboratory. Our laboratory. They examined it and said no. It's not that typewriter. So they sent it back to Molly. And Molly was a good agent. She knew how massive this case was. This case was not the normal case you asked about the unbound file. The UNABOMB file was 59. 1000 volumes of information that translates to over 11,800,000 pages of documents. And she knew that. And so she called out to another supervisor on the Umom case, Joel Moss, and she told him she had this document. She was sending it, but she didn't want it to get lost in all of that stuff that was coming in, she said, pay attention to it because even though the typewriter isn't the same one, the ideas here. Are they exact to the ideas in the manifesto? So Joel got it and read it and got excited and he took it to Terry and to our psychologist. That was on the task force and agent and they got excited and Terry and Jim were going to lunch and. They took it to Terry and Terry said, Oh my God, we we we need to talk about this. So he cancelled his meeting with Jim, gave him some lame excuse that he couldn't go with him, and we went to lunch together with that document. And as we're having lunch and reading the document who walks in. But Jim. He kind of looked at Terry and said, I know you know. So anyway, everyone got real excited about it and our task force, you have to understand it relates to a question you asked before. We had just come off of a very compelling suspect that Jim had determined could not possibly be the unabomb. The task force members a lot of them, believed sincerely that it was. They had worked hard, long, exhausting hours, and we said, man, we need to give them a break before we start on this again. And so we do a little reconnaissance Jerry does and talks to Jim Secretary and she says well, Jim's gone for the afternoon. He won't be back. Terry said perfect. I can't withhold it from him. So I'll take it in and lay it on his desk with a little yellow Flynn on it and say we need to talk about this Monday morning and then Terry and I go downstairs in the cafeteria in the federal building. A cup of coffee and relax. And we hadn't been there, what, 15 minutes? And this is the day of the pager and the his pager is going off like crazy with the the signal number in there that the boss wants to see you. Well, guess what? He didn't go home. He came back and the minute he read it, he got excited and we went back up and Terry talked to him and Jim said, this is the man. This is the Unabomber. We're turning the ship, and we're going. We had 24117 actual suspects. Not just people of interest, but actual suspects, so. Well, he was very perceptive in that.

Jim Freeman: But this document was was it 1973 that it dated that was written by 1971? That was a a treatise that Ted Kaczynski had written and had given to his brother and his brother David had kept that. And when you read those pages from that many years before and compared it to a reading of the manifesto.

Terry Turchie: 1971.

Jim Freeman: I came to a conclusion the same person wrote it and others did as well. You can't take that to the bank. I mean, that does not get you a federal search

warrant or a federal warrant. It has a lot more work to be done than that. But the gut feeling was there and. We started a linguistics study and started developing common phrases and and as well as thoughts in in common to both documents and as well as the letters that were being written by the Unabomber. So the known writings of the Unabomber versus the suspect writings of Ted Kaczynski, and comparing them. As we did with all potential suspects with the timeline we had prepared on, we knew this. The Unabomber had been in Sacramento on a certain date. When? Placed dropped a package in the mailbox and and or mailed a letter from here and it's postmarked from there. Fortunately, David Kaczynski saved all of his letters from David over the years, and then he saved the outside envelopes would have postmarks, which gave us other dates where the Unabomber had to be in these cities at that time. So we have this, this unabomb timeline. And then we had a Ted Kaczynski. Timeline and they started to jive very well. In fact, we never found a conflict between the two.

Max Noel: Once we got that document from the the attorney, he didn't tell us who his client was, but Jim instituted an investigation all over the country and agents were sent back to interface with him and to meet with his client and to broker the deal. And then in turn, David Kaczynski and his and his wife agreed to meet with the agents and and talk. And they in turn. Agreed to take the agents to Chicago and talk with the mother and get all these other letters and documents over the years and other investigation was going on and. That I was fortunate or unfortunate enough to be sent a short time later by these guys to Montana in February to head the investigation there while they were in the warmth and the comfort of Northern California. But anyway, so there was a lot of things going on that these integral parts that were going on all over the country and being pulled together.

John Maynard: I want to make sure that we get the audience into the conversation. We have an exam staffer there, Chris Goer, with a microphone. So if you do have a question, just raise your hand and she'll. Come to you. We're going to go over there. In the 1st row but before while I'm like getting to him, I do want to maybe jump forward a little bit because there once you had identified beginski and knew where he was, you there was another race against the clock against the the media, which was CBS tell us about their you know what? What they what they had and your negotiations with them. Not releasing it.

Jim Freeman: Wow. That was a an interesting time because we were under under very serious time constraints. Once, once we had the focused in or Terry and I had come to a conclusion that, yes, Ted Kaczynski has the suspect, as is our man, there's a lot of work to be done. I mean, an investigation of two stages. 1 You identify the perpetrator, 2 you put together all the evidence that can stand up in court and prove it and. When we looked at Ted Kaczynski and Max looked at him and at first saw him first in in Montana. Here's his hermit, living in 10 by 12 cabin. That's right here in the museum right now. That had no running water, no electricity, no means of heating other than a pot bellied stove. But yet our. Laboratories had told us that he puts components in his bombs where he's melting aluminum, so he has to have a kiln

of some sort, which would be electric power to to run that. Instead. We found out later he was doing it on the pot belly stove or inside it in some way. There was just many aspects about looking at Ted Kaczynski as a suspect that didn't fit. How did this? And travel in all these places and carry bombs and place them when all they had for transportation was a little bicycle. And in the in the winter months he snowed in and then to see him with his clothes literally falling off of him. It's an absolute hermit that how did this man target university professors and and? Heads of corporations. I mean, it just didn't fit. And not every one of our staff really believed that Ted was a viable suspect. Max was a hold out until about a week before we arrested or before we had. But now if you want. To take that question.

Audience questioner #1: I wondered. I wondered. I wondered if you felt that the manifesto was released as sort of a feeling from Ted Kaczynski that he was in competition with the terrorists who bombed the Trade Center and timing thing. McVeigh would blow up the Oklahoma City federal building.

Jim Freeman: We certainly thought that might be the case and we pursued that, Terry. You in particular looked into that.

Terry Turchie: One of the first calls we made was to our profiler after the McVeigh bombing of the Oklahoma City Federal building, and she pointed out very quickly to us that. This was something done by somebody who wants to be a mass killer as opposed to the Unabomber, who is somebody who kills individually from afar. And so those distinctions, while at that time, didn't seem to be something we can make a final conclusion on, were enough to convince most people that these are separate bombings. And in fact, Theodore Kaczynski. And put his plan in motion. Even as McVeigh was putting his plan in motion, it was totally coincidental. That's an important question, though, because if you think back to after 911 and the terrible tragedy of the Twin towers, it was only a week later that up and down the East Coast you had the anthrax attacks, there was a huge outcry and a lot of people then that wanted certain. Specific actions to take place and which would have unleashed a lot of pretty significant. Weapons and issues because they thought the anthrax was connected to 911 was all connected to Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Now, as it turns out, we found other reasons to go on Iraq, but these are the kinds of things that go on. And if you look at the history of terrorism, you you could see a lot of coincidences when something's happening, something else is happening on another track. And I give you one more example. Ramsey Youssef was thinking of putting bombs on 11 airplanes coming across the Pacific about the same time that Theodore Kaczynski was threatening to put a bomb on an airplane out of LAX so the world is a very significant complicated. And yet a place you have to really tread and caution when you're dealing.

Max Noel: With terrorism, Ted Kaczynski was on a bus in route to Sacramento when Oklahoma City occurred. That was a very popular theory at the time, but it isn't what you know. He he had no knowledge of Oklahoma City.

Audience questioner #1: Misunderstood my. Question what I said is, did you feel that Kaczynski was in competition in that he felt that he wasn't being noticed like the others who were receiving all the media coverage?

Terry Turchie: We did feel that way at a certain point in time, even going back to 1993 and going back to the first World Trade Center bombing, we did feel that.

Max Noel: But he didn't even know about Oklahoma City, so that wasn't a competition thing for him. He was just already setting his own plan in motion.

John Maynard: Great. We'll take a second question right there, Sir.

Audience questioner #2: In a case like this, with all the bombings, how many bombings did it take before they connected that they were all from the same bomber? And then how often is... is 100% of your work when you're in the taskforce that work? Or do you do anything else?

Max Noel: Once the task force was formed, we were 100% and we had anywhere from 40 FBI agents and similar amounts of ATF agents and postal inspectors all working together full time 24 hours a day, seven days a week, very few nights, very few vacations, long days and so forth. But and the other part of your question was?

Audience questioner #2: How many bombings before you realize they were connected?

Max Noel: Law enforcement back in the early 70s or late 70s didn't even know about the existence of a serial bomber until actually the 4th bombing. They they concluded about the third bombing, and if you follow this case at all, you know that in these, some of these early bombs, the Unabomber. Started putting little metal tags that were stamped with the letters FC in. And the reason it appears that he did that was because law enforcement wasn't connecting the bombs that he had left, and he wanted credit for him. And so rather than depending upon law enforcement to connect them, he started putting his little calling card in there. So we would know. So again, so he would get his credit for what he was doing.

Carl Sullivan: Hi, Carl Sullivan. I'm a retired customs agent. Worked with the FBI on many occasions, especially in South Florida. You have an amazing organization and investigative capability. I'd like to ask a question that's related to well mentions of sovereignty and also our national policy sometimes. Takes precedent over law enforcement investigative priorities. You know, we have a recurring theme in American history of the lone bomber, the lone assassin. In this case, you all did an amazing job, and it was a lone bomber. But Lee Harvey Oswald, lone assassin, Osama bin Laden, the sole person who guided 9/11. Yeah. We've learned that on 9/11. World Trade Center #7. Which hasn't been discussed in the media. A 47 story building collapsed in seven seconds at 5:20 in the afternoon in New York City. The third tower that collapsed that day. How did Osama bin? Mode and. Do that and I would ask you, are you confident that there weren't explosive devices used in World Trade Center 7 as well as the other towers? And also as we approach the 50th anniversary of the Warren Commission, E Howard Hunt, former CIA Watergate convict, confessed to being part of the plot and identified other CIA personnel. As involved in the Kennedy assassination before he

died in 2007, mainstream media won't report that final question. I guess then would you believe Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin in that matter? Should that investigation be reopened?

John Maynard: We're going to stop it there. If you want to take that?

Terry Turchie: Well, you asked a lot, I think. I think you kind of put your fingers on a lot of cases where many people have many questions. And I would not even pretend to try and answer or give some sort of comfort to any particular position. I think that... I read the Warren Commission report. I felt pretty good about it. It looked to me like they'd covered a lot. But there are a lot of people that don't think that. I think everybody who is interested in this and interested in terror. They should go back and look at some of the things that you mentioned and look at some of the cases you mentioned and they can make up their mind. I think that bottom line for us as far as things like the World Trade Center, we have an indictment on a number of people because of the World Trade Center. We have indictments going back to the US coal bombing and the embassy bombings. And the reason I bring those up and the reason they're important. You can read all of those and see a lot of interconnections between the cast of characters that led. From year to year into what eventually became 911 so we could go all day. But I think that's what I would suggest and and certainly appreciate your assessment of things.

John Maynard: As the MIC gets to a question up there, I'm gonna get back to the Unabomber. Max, tell us about that first moment. You were the first of the three of you to actually see him, and once you were surrounding the cabin, what was the the the alert to get him to get him out?

Max Noel: Well, first of all, I saw him a month before we actually took him into custody. I developed a good source of information who owned the property around him. And we were trying to get a physical, physical description of the cabin for the search warrant affidavit or arrest warrant affidavit and we had to have the specificity of what the cabin looked like, exactly where it was located. Just don't go to a court and say, hey, I want a search warrant or arrest warrant at this cabin somewhere in Montana. So that was one of the jobs that Jim asked me to do. And I walked up along with his neighbor, one of his neighbors, up a skid Rd. that. Brought lumber trees out of the forest above him for milling at a lumber mill, and as we were about 40 yards away from his cabin out in the clearing, he opened the door of his cabin and stuck his head out. And my first response was my God, is that what we've been looking for all these years? He was a wild looking. Person he had on a orange. Knit cap and he you know, you conjure up in a an image of who you think you're looking for over the years and and we're listening as Jim said to all these people telling us about power tools and you know all of this stuff and here's a guy living in this little dinky cabin which downstairs here that. Just amaze me. So with that perspective in mind, when Jim made the decision that we had to take him out of the cabin, another job that he had given me was to develop an arrest plan for safely getting Ted Kaczynski out of that cabin with one thing that we had promised his family was that we would arrest

him. Mainly if they cooperated with us and we wouldn't have a Ruby Ridge or a Waco standoff in which he would be killed. And so we had to develop a plan. Well, in my estimation, the plan was pretty simple. He had to come out of that cabin sometime and all the time I was up there, he wasn't coming out of the cabin. He was staying in close proximity to that cabin physically. So the plan had been to wait for him to come out and go to town to get provision supplies or what have you. And as he pedaled his bicycle into town on a on a little gravel Rd. we zoom in and pounce on him and safely take him into custody. Well, we couldn't do that because of the demands of some people in the media who threatened. To take it to a program that in the near future, we didn't know if he had capability of monitoring that program or not. We knew he didn't have electricity. We found out later he did. He had a radio in there, a battery operated radio which he was monitoring news programs with. So it was to develop a plan to get him out of the cabin safely and in developing. This source we discussed that possibility and I was quite confident that we could trick him into coming out of the cabin without him knowing who we were and why we were there. And if he got close enough to one of the three of us that approached the cabin, we grab him and we use. Bruce and we went up three of us, A4 service police officer in full police uniform who patrolled that area, who Kaczynski knew and who knew Kaczynski. My partner, who was our senior resident agent in Helena, Mt Tom McDaniel, who looks like a big old cowboy and myself and we let Jerry Burns the Forest Service police officer do all the talking. And when you go on someones private property in the mountains and particular you just you're trespassing you you just don't walk on their property. Without permission. So Jerry started hailing him as we left the trail and went on to his property. And there was no response from inside. Cabin and the plan had been for Jerry to do the talking because they knew one another and he would introduce us as people who were from a mining company who the surrounding property owner had leased the mining exploratory rights for the coming summer to that company. And he had told Ted Kaczynski. That he had done that in in December and Ted was not happy, but he had ensured Ted that he would see to it that this mining company stayed off of Ted's property when they came up. Of course, he didn't know that the reason Ted Kaczynski didn't want people around was he was experimenting with bombs and explosives and so forth. So as we got up to the cabin, finally, he opened the door and Jerry Burns for service police officer said HI, am I Mr. Kaczynski? Jerry burns. You have 4 service. I'm here with these two gentlemen from the mining company. And we need to see where your corner posts off are, so they will ensure their employee. Just don't trespass on your land this summer when they come up here and he said, well, my corner posts are adequately marked and Jerry said no, they're under 4 foot of snow. We'd really, you know, we could go out there and dig around, but we thought it'd be a lot easier if you helped us. And he said OK and he opened the door and he took one step toward Jerry. And Jerry is a sizable. Guy and that was his big mistake, and Jerry grabbed him. And so it was not very dramatic. And he started wrestling the fight and and Big Tom McDaniel, who's a big man, wrapped them all up. And. They struggled

and I got to walk around and have the privilege that every FBI agent enjoys, which was taking my credentials out and saying Mr. Gadzinski FBI, and he looked at my weapons during him in the nose from six inches and he completely complied with. So it. Was. Very not dramatic. It was. It was very easy. It was simple and it went like we planned it, thank God.

John Maynard: We have time for one more question and we'll take it from up there.

Audience questioner #4: You could comment a little bit more on the manifesto itself. I haven't read the full document, but my understanding of it is that it focuses a lot on the socialization and political theories and psychology behind it, etcetera. So I was just wondering what was? I guess the importance of the manifesto to Ted, Ted Kaczynski and how it relates to the bombing itself.

Jim Freeman: Well, he was a Luddite philosophy of, you know, against technology. And it wasn't the the philosophy itself was not unique to Ted Kaczynski by any means. But the way he expressed it was what was unique and that's what helped us out in the investigation and made it recognizable.

Max Noel: It was called Industrial Society in his future and it was like a return. To living the Luddite type of life with very little technology and and that's Ted Kaczynski. A lot of people asked Ted Kaczynski was anger, revenge motivated. We did huge studies on trying to connect victims in this why? What was the commonality? There was no commonality. Ted Kaczynski selected. His victims, who were representational of things he did. Like he didn't like university professors he didn't like graduate students. He didn't like airlines. He didn't like computers in the technology. He didn't like psychologists, he went on. I always called him the equal opportunity hater. He hated anything and everything. That wasn't him, and he would act on it. And we took 22,000 pages of. Journals out of his cabin, we know exactly why he did what he did. There's no question about it. He wrote it down and he says very specifically. I have a lot of hatred in me and I'm doing this for no particular purpose other than revenge and anger.

Jim Freeman: And we actually inserted in the in our book. In the, each chapter has a quotation, so Ted's own words describing his motivations and his reaction to people that he had killed, or people that he didn't kill over the bomb malfunction. He expressed regret that he didn't kill them and. It's, I think adds an interesting flavor to our description of the investigate.

Terry Turchie: This was actually the. Definitely his lifelong passion these words. Because when we had him as a suspect and had him arrested, we went back and were able to find that he'd written editorials to the Chicago Tribune and other papers back in 686970. Had we been able to go back or thought about going back and checking papers and been lucky enough to find some of these, it looked just like the manifesto. And so he'd been having these thoughts, and he had this kind of grand vision of the way life should be. For many, many years and.

Max Noel: You need to understand Ted Kaczynski had an IQ of about 170. He graduated from high school and went to Harvard when he was 16 years old, he went to the University of Michigan and got his PhD in mathematics in two years, and from his writings we know that when when he was at Michigan, he wrote that he had. He was dedicating his life to going to the wilderness after he graduated and accumulated enough money to do this. Going to the wilderness and beginning his campaign of terrorism and killing people he didn't like. So this wasn't something that just occurred spontaneously. He had been fomenting this idea for many, many years.

John Maynard: Well, unfortunately we have around of time, but we have a special treat for you all. We invite you all to our second floor private dining room, where you can ask further questions to our panel here. And there's also going to be some light refreshments there. So you're all welcome. And most importantly, we'll be selling copies of the book Unabomber. How the FBI broke its own rules to capture the terrorist Ted Kaczynski. And the gentleman will be happy to sign copies and I'm sure take other questions. Jim Freeman, Max Noel, Terry Turchie, thank you. Thank you so much for joining us here today.

The Ted K Archive

Witness to History: Investigating the Unabomber
September 20, 2014

C-SPAN, American History TV. <c-span.org>, <youtube.com> &
<listenotes.com>.

www.thetedkarchive.com