

"The world today seems to be going crazy."

The Unabomber's Manifesto

It was May 25th 1978, Terry Marker was on his usual patrol on campus at the University of Illinois. This earmark package, addressed to an engineering professor at Rensselaer from a material science professor at Northwestern, was found in a parking lot. What seemed like an insignificant misplaced parcel was about to start a reign of terror and the longest manhunt in U.S. history. Officer Marker retrieved the package and began to open it; the crude triggering mechanism set off the device. A flash of fire and smoke spewed towards Terry's face as the match heads ignited and the mystery package exploded. This event sparked the "most expensive manhunt in United States history, ultimately costing upward to \$50 million" (Douglas, 31). The reasoning behind this initial attack (and subsequent assaults) was not known for sure until 15 years later in 1993, when the Unabomber's anti-technology philosophy became public.

The Unabomber's 18 year tirade against technology killed three people and maimed 23 others in a series of 16 attacks dating back to 1978. The Unabomber's targets were universities and airlines (thus the "un" and the "a" in the FBI's code name); proponents of technology. The Unabomber believes that the present industrial-technological society is "narrowing the sphere of human freedom" (Unabomber, 93).

The crudeness of the Unabomber's inaugural mail bomb attack was not an indication of what was to come. The Unabomber's devices became more sophisticated and deadly as his targets became more specific and focused. "The pressure vessels in his bombs were the most sophisticated ever seen by federal authorities" (Ewell, 3). His later efforts were sometimes concealed in books and hand-carved boxes, had all handcrafted parts carved of wood and metal (he made his own pins, screws and switches), and sometimes had altimeter and barometric switches which would activate at precise altitudes in an airplane. Bombs, like the one planted outside of a computer store in Sacramento, were sometimes fitted with gravity triggers which would detonate the bomb at the slightest touch. Later bombs contained two independent systems of batteries and wires, a backup fail-safe mechanism, installed to ensure the bombs detonation. The crime scene analyses suggested that each bomb "took more than a hundred hours to construct" (Douglas, 56).

The bombs were getting deadlier as the Unabomber's skill level evolved. FBI agent James Fox says "This guy's done a wonderful job in self-education (Gleick, 26). On April 24, 1995, Gilbert Murray, president of the California Forestry Association, died instantly when a bomb exploded in his office in Sacramento. The force of the blast was so great that it pushed nails partly out of the walls in other offices in the building. The force of the explosion was so great that the pieces of Murray's body; when retrieved, filled eleven bags. Evidence was presented to the coroner in paint cans. Some bombs like the one that killed Hugh Sutton, a computer store owner, was filled with pieces of nails to maximize the devastation to the victim. He also became more devious by targeting either the person to whom the package was sent or the person who supposedly sent it. If the package didn't make it to its intended victim it would be sent back to an alternate one.

The Unabomber left very few clues at the crime scenes. He was a meticulous criminal, "these components bear markings of having been taken apart and put back together repeatedly" said Chris Ronay, the FBI's top bomb expert in the 1980's (Anez, 2 ). All addresses were typed on an arcane typewriter to confound handwriting analyses. He hand crafted most of the parts that made up his bombs because of the possibility of tracing store bought parts back to a hardware store or electronics store. He made his own

chemicals out of commonly available chemicals. He made his own switches that he could have bought at Radio Shack. He spent hours whittling, cutting, and filing metal and wood to remove any hints of their origin. He would repeatedly sand down all the wooden parts to his devices to remove any possible fingerprints and make the boxes that encased his bombs look store bought. The FBI Crime Lab originally nicknamed him the "Junkyard Bomber" because the internal parts were constructed of leftover materials such as furniture pieces, plumbing pipes, and sinktraps.

Across the continent, hundreds of FBI agents were pursuing the Unabomber. They have deployed some of the worlds most powerful computers. Task Force members crunched and recrunched scraps of data through a "massive parallel-processing computer borrowed from the Pentagon", sifting through school lists, drivers license registries, lists of people who checked certain books out of libraries in California and the Mid West (Gibbs, 31). The super-computers kept track of the enormous data base that the FBI had kept on possible suspects. The computers searched criminal records and personal histories of thousands of suspects. When the FBI got a new clue or hunch they would process it through the computers and see what came up and who matched the latest profiles. They have enlisted the sharpest crime-fighting minds. The Unabomb Task force was a multiagency team comprised of the top experts from the FBI, ATF, local police departments where the crimes took place, and from the Office of the Postal Inspector. And they have chased down 20,000 tips, gone door to door to machine shops and scrap yards, and interviewed thousands of suspects since the initial bombing at the University of Illinois.

The Unabomber had kept investigators busy with a seemingly endless list of obvious and subtle clues to his identity. The first written clue being a message found from a bomb planted at Berkeley stating "Wu- It works! I told you it would-R.V." Wu and R.V. are most likely professors at Berkeley but "whether these clues really mean anything, or whether they are just the bombers way of toying with the law wont be known till he is caught" (Marx, 2). The following are clues to the identity of the Unabomber:

WOOD

Wood is the most common theme in the clues to finding the Unabomber, from its use as a material in the bombs to its appearance in the names and addresses of victims. Small twigs were glued to a couple of the devices found. Some of the bombs were encased in boxes hand crafted out of hardwood. He polished and sometimes varnished his wood pieces, but it was clear, from amateurish joints, that he is not a trained woodworker. Bombs were fashioned with 2 x 4's to look like a pile of debris. A bomb was mailed to United Airlines president Percy Wood, who lived in Lake forest. One bomb was packaged inside the novel "Ice Brothers" by Arbor House, whose symbol is a tree leaf. False return addresses have included such places as Ravenswood and Forest Glen Road and from such people as Benjamin Isaac Wood.

THE 9-DIGIT CODE

To authenticate his written communication the Unabomber included a nine-digit code (550-25-4394) on all of his letters and manuscripts. Task Force members discovered that the number was a real Social Security number for a small-time career criminal from Northern California but determined he had been in jail at the time of some of the bombings. He has since violated parole and vanished. Ironically, he had a tattoo that read "PURE WOOD". Possibly, the Unabomber knew him or had met him before.

STAMPS

The Unabomber avoids taking his packages to the post office and uses a lot of stamps instead. He didn't seem to lick the stamps (that would leave saliva traces), at least in his more recent bombings, it is possible that he licked the stamps in earlier bombings. He usually used stamps featuring the American Flag or playwright Eugene O'Neil, author of the "The Ice Man

Cometh".

Nathan R

On a 1993 letter from the Unabomber, authorities found the almost imperceivable impression of the words that may have been written on a piece of paper written on the letter. It said "Call Nathan R Wed 7pm" and prompted a nationwide search for Nathan R. Investigators used drivers license records and phone listings to find more than 10,000 Nathan R's. They interviewed them all, but found no answers. This was more likely than not a red-herring placed by the Unabomber to tease and confuse the Task force.

F.C.

These initials have been included in some way in most of the bombs. The initials were scratched into most of his bombs. The initials, also, were spray-painted in the vicinity of several of the bomb sites. Authorities have suggested that it might stand for an obscene phrase directed towards computers; like "F@%K Computers". The Unabomber in a few of his letters to newspapers says its stands for "Freedom Club", the group he claims to be responsible for the bombs. At one point, a university worker whose initials were F.C. was scrutinized because of his open contempt for computers and technology, but he was later cleared of suspicion (Taylor, A17).

EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION

"It was a face that taunted a nation", a mysterious killer hidden by a hood, disguised in dark aviator glasses (Goldston, 1). On February 20, 1987, a woman notices a shady looking character carrying a bag of wood and left it outside a computer store in Salt Lake City. The bag of wood turned out to be a bomb that injured a store employee. Finally, a face of sorts is put to a name. The eyewitness account, might have done more harm than good though. Ted Kaczynski, the Unabomber suspect, is actually ten years older than the man described outside of the computer store. Kaczynski was a suspect who was in the Task Force's database; but, he was ignored because of his age.

LETTERS

The letters written to several newspapers, leaders in the field of technology, and college professors give some important clues to the Unabomber's identity. The Unabomber always refers to himself as "we" but FBI investigators always believed that the bombings were a sole effort. Through them we find a man bitter towards academia and technology, possibly an ex-employee of one of the two fields. He makes references to certain books like The Ancient Engineers.

For years, criminologists and the FBI's top profilers had been conjuring up an image of the Unabomber. "As investigators and profilers, we came to know him through his bombs and his written communications" (Douglas, 177). The initial bombings target suggested that he grew up in Chicago, moved to Salt Lake City, and was residing in Northern California. The bomber was comfortable around universities, they believed, though he seemed to harbor a grudge against them because he possibly did not graduate or excel. The bomber was thought to be a loner, who shunned society. Possibly, suffering from a mental illness; chronic depression, and probably was abused as a child. He was thought to work blue collar work most likely dealing with power tools. And he was thought to be in his late thirties early forties. Gregg McCrary a former FBI profiler says that they tend "to be 80 percent accurate in the profiles" (Ewell, 2). That is far from an exact science but it serves well in screening potential suspects.

We find the suspect Ted Kaczynski remarkably similar, except that he is ten years older than originally thought, did not work with power tools (due to the fact that there was no plumbing let alone electricity in his shack), was raised by a loving and supportive family, and he not only excelled in college academically; he went or get his doctorate and taught mathematics at Berkeley. Other than the virtual bomb laboratory found in Kaczynski's

shack, bottles of anti-depressant medication were supposedly found. But other than that Kaczynski fits the profile of a loner, an underachiever and extremely intelligent perfectly. Dr. Michael Rustigan, a criminologist at San Francisco State University calls the Unabomber "the most intellectual serial killer that this nation has ever known" (Kendall, 6).

The Unabomber's 18 year loathing of technology and industrial society had an enormous affect on many lives in the United States. The Unabomber created chaos with airlines, postal service, campus security, and put fear into the hearts of proponents of technology. During 1995, security was doubled at all major airports, because of the Unabomber's threat to blow up an airliner flying of Los Angeles International Airport. Passengers were required to show photo identification that matched their tickets, if not their baggage was manually searched. Priority mail using stamps instead of postage meters, and priority parcels dropped into mail boxes instead of handed over the counter, have been separated from other items out of concern for safety. Suspect items are flown in all-cargo airplanes rather than the commercial airliners that carry most mail. "And even though a suspect has been arrested in the string of Unabomber attacks, no changes are planned in the handling of parcels" (Schmid, 1). Campus security was stepped up. Many universities like Stanford, bought its own X-ray machine and sent its police force for schooling in the Army bomb-detection center. At Berkeley, professors were told not to leave bags of refuse laying around, because it could provide cover for an explosive device (Gomes, 1). Computer and technology businesses in Silicon Valley tried to keep the names of its employees out of newspapers/press reports and tried to maintain the confidentiality of workers' addresses.

The almost two decade search for the Unabomber yielded very little clues. The US government posted a \$1 million reward for leads that resulted in the apprehension of the Unabomber and maintained a task force hot line (1-800-701-BOMB). More than 20,000 were phoned in but the Unabomb task force was still left very little evidence.

In June of 1995, the Unabomber's manifesto entitled "Industrial Society and its Future" was received by the New York Times and the Washington Post. The letter, that accompanied the 35,000 word document, demanded that national newspapers publish his diatribe against technology. He threatened to send another bomb "with intent to kill" if his document was not published in its entirety. (New York Times Letter, April 24, 1995). The Unabomber pledged to end his campaign of terrorism once his thoughts were published. FBI officials, who urged the newspapers to publish the manifesto, hoped that someone reading it would recognize the author through his words. The FBI spent much of the next year publicizing the Unabomber's writings (USA Today 11/13/96, 6). They hand delivered hundreds of copies of his writings to university professor and leaders in the field of technology in the hope that someone would recognize his work.

The FBI also used the Internet to aid in their efforts to capture the Unabomber. The FBI's Unabomber web page included links to the manifesto, warnings of what to look for in suspicious packages, and an email address (unabomb@fbi.gov) to contact with information. The following is taken from a letter by Dr. William L. Tafoya, of the Unabomb Task Force, explaining the appeal to the Internet community:

The purpose for submitting the information on the Internet is two-fold. First, the Internet is another medium that enables us to reach as wide an audience as possible; to "spread the word". Second, Internet users are precisely the type of individuals that to date have been recipients of explosive devices attributed to Unabomb; scholars and researchers.

The FBI plan was to make the Unabomber's writings accessible in the hopes that some professor, some family member, someone who knew the killer would hear the "echoes of a friend or student or relative" (Gibbs, 16). The FBI may have been right. Kaczynski's brother, David, recognized the

similarity between his brother's writings and the Unabomber's anti-technology tract published in the Washington Post. In his anti-technology manifesto, the Unabomber dismisses the Internet as a futile way to communicate. But, it was on the Internet that David Kaczynski read selections of the manifesto that convinced him that his brother might be the Unabomber (Kovaleski, A03).

With the tip from David, all of the pieces seemed to fall into place. That is when the FBI's high-tech two week stakeout began. The FBI's elite Hostage rescue team was immediately called in. They are experienced in survival training and can live for long periods in the wild; agents were prepared to live outdoors in subzero temperatures. They employed infrared and satellite surveillance of Kaczynski's meager home (Douglas, 108). Finally after getting a warrant to search Kaczynski's cabin, agents posing as Forest Service employees arrested the Unabomber suspect.

Federal investigators arrived at Kaczynski's dark, tiny cabin with some of the most sophisticated technology ever developed to detect and defuse bombs. Looking for evidence that Kaczynski was the anti-technology Unabomber, the FBI and the ATF brought in such devices as a remote-controlled robot and portable X-ray equipment to help search for bombs and booby traps. They came with new scientific techniques specifically designed during the Unabomber investigation to detect, analyze and defuse bombs made in the unique hand-crafted style of the elusive serial bomber. "Technology was developed just for this case because of the way he made his bombs" (Paddock, 23). With the detailed preparation, new detection methods and painstaking search, agents were able to discover and preserve one of the most crucial pieces of evidence in the case: a completed bomb that was ready for mailing. Given that the hunt for the Unabomber is one of the FBI's highest priorities, the agency would be sure to use every technique at its command to carry out the search.

Before entering the cabin, FBI agents bombarded the small structure with electro-magnetic energy to create a picture of its entire contents, much like an X-ray. This gave the FBI a three-dimensional view of the landscape of the room (Paddock, 24). Also before entering, agents inserted highly sensitive acoustic devices to sort out all of the sounds in the cabin and determine whether there were any electronically operated booby traps, because these devices make their own noise. One of the most important techniques used in the search was the use of highly sophisticated chemical sensors that can detect possible bomb components. Such "sniffers" can test for small amounts of a chemical in the air. Much of the high-tech equipment used by law enforcement in such searches was developed during the drug war for entering booby trapped lairs of suspected drug dealers. When suspicious material was located in Kaczynski's cabin, for example, the FBI used a robot to enter the structure and retrieve it. Agents feared it could have been set off if it was picked up. Once items were removed from the cabin, they were moved to a work area outside the house where they were X-rayed on a portable machine much like the ones used at airports. After the cabin was deemed safe, the of the physical evidence was collected, bagged, and tagged. This slow and meticulous process lasted almost a month.

The Unabomber case is set for November 12, 1997. Kaczynski's defense lawyer needs the year to review the tons of damning physical evidence that was collected. The bulk of the prosecution's case can rest on the physical evidence itself, and it appears that in this case there will be a mountain of it, including the documents found on the subject's premises, the equipment he had, the notebooks, the partially completed bombs, and the writings that describe bomb making. The prosecution will bring in explosives experts to match up the bomb-making signature with the remnants of devices recovered from the crime scenes (Douglas, 149). A typewriter analysis will also be implemented to see if the typewriters found at the cabin match the printed documents like the letters and the manifesto. DNA tests

will be done to try to match the saliva remnants on stamps to Kaczynski's own DNA. Tools like wire cutters, wood files, and drill bits; that leave trademark almost fingerprint like markings, will be analyzed and compared to similar marks on bomb remnants. The prosecution will also try to trace Kaczynski's past to correlate it with Unabomber attacks. The outcome of the trial will be based on how much of the physical evidence found at Kaczynski's home matches up with the Unabomber's physical evidence. The pending trial will prove to be very interesting to say the least.