

The Ultimate Ted Kaczynski Research Document, Volume 1

Ted's Life Outside Prison and Ideological Development

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Foreword

This work draws, for the most part on two books, *Truth versus Lies* by Ted Kaczynski and *Every Last Tie* by his brother David Kaczynski. The aim is to provide a clearer timeline of events from the beginning of Ted's life to the end, that readers may have been hoping to get from one of or both these books. I have also amassed and drawn on a vast resource library of other related sources, from the Kaczynski brothers and others involved or interested in this case.

I aim to provide a clearer answer to the question of what all the important steps were that lead up to Ted Kaczynski's terrorist attacks.

Towards the end of the book there is also a critique of his political philosophy. Plus, an argument for a pro-technological anarchist society worth striving for.

To begin, here's a quick summary on how I think the *Truth versus Lies* book came about and why it was never published:

The timeline of Truth versus Lies

April 3rd, 1996: Ted Kaczynski was arrested.

November 13rd, 1997: Ted Kaczynski's' multiple murder trial began.

He started writing to collect his thoughts about what he would like his defense team and the media to know during his court case, to counter both the prosecution's leaking of unflattering journal entries, as well as the general media atmosphere connected to the case:¹

Mr. Kaczynski was able to outline other conflicts he had with his attorneys, including the issue of publicity. He had been interested in writing letters to counter the image being presented by his family of him in the media. He discussed this with his attorneys and although he felt some pressure to conform, he had agreed with them not to write letters to the media and draw additional public attention to him at this point in the trial process. Nonetheless he spent approximately four months preparing a rebuttal to all he perceived as inaccurate in the public portrayal of him, and focused extensively on portraying his brother David in a negative light in these writings.

January 22nd, 1998: Ted Kaczynski plead guilty to three counts of murder and ten federal counts related to transporting and using bombs. His main motivation for pleading guilty was to avoid his lawyers presenting him as mentally ill. He wanted to avoid the possibility of being committed to a mental asylum for any period of time, and having his manifesto portrayed as the ravings of a mad man. Importantly, he also did so due to the assurance that he had a good chance of arguing for a retrial, in that he could argue he was coerced into giving a false guilty plea in a challenge to the courts, because he wasn't allowed to represent himself and was being represented in a way he didn't approve of. I believe he held out hope that he could get a retrial and be set free all the way up to around 2004. As a result, in all his writing before 2004 he never comments on any of the many crimes he committed.

Therefore, sadly, we don't get a comprehensive autobiographical account of what were the key events that foreshadowed his desire to wage his terror bombing campaign. The sole aim for Kaczynski then

¹ Sally Johnson. Psychiatric competency report of Dr. Sally C. Johnson [Court Document]. Court TV . Sept, 1998. Original link. Archived link.

in writing his book *Truth versus Lies*, was to disprove stories told by lawyers and the media which Kaczynski thought were false.

May 5th, 1998: Ted Kaczynski's sentencing trial ended and he was sent to a supermax prison with no possibility of parole.

June 24, 1998: The *New York Post* ran an item about how Ted Kaczynski was shopping around a book manuscript from the Federal Prison in Florence, Colorado. A representative from Simon and Schuster was quoted, "Do you think the world wants Theodore Kaczynski's point of view on Theodore Kaczynski?" The manuscript was rejected sight unseen.

March, 1999: Excerpts of the book are published by *The New York Times*.

May 10th, 1999: A proof copy is finished and sent to Kaczynski with annotations by Beau Friedlander on corrections he'd like to make in order to be able to publish.

1999: He discusses corrections for the 2nd draft of the book in his 71st & 72nd letters sent to Friedlander which are archived in the University of Michigan library.

November 5th, 1999: He gives a Deed of Gift agreement to Context Books, who almost print an edited version, but Ted bitterly resents the edits they've gone ahead with. I think the publisher was worried about libel e.g., Ted calling his brother, David, "a Judas Iscariot [who] ... doesn't even have enough courage to go hang himself." As well as copyright e.g., quoting some sources in their entirety:²

"Toward the end, it wasn't a pleasant exchange at all," said Context Books publisher Beau Friedlander, who spiked Kaczynski's 548-page "Truth Versus Lies."

A flurry of letters between the publisher and Kaczynski led to Thursday's announcement that the book deal - first revealed in February - was off. Kaczynski had tried to terminate the deal several days before Context reached the same conclusion, Friedlander said.

"Kaczynski was uncooperative and expressed himself in ways that made it impossible for the book to be published by Context, or by anyone else," Friedlander said in a statement Thursday.

The book already was at the printer when Context opted to yank it on Wednesday, Friedlander said.

"It would be irresponsible and unethical to force the author's hand by publishing the work against his will," said Friedlander, adding that he had specific legal concerns about the book that Kaczynski refused to address.

February 2nd, 2000: He asks the owner of Green Anarchy magazine to black out sections from the 1st draft copy that he has, out of privacy concerns for a family member. He knew photocopies of his book were being distributed on a small scale.

June 7th, 2002: He donates a 2nd & 3rd draft copy which are both edited versions, to the University of Michigan.

July 9th, 2002: He donates a 1st draft copy of the book which Context Books made, to the University of Michigan, along with a great many journals, letters and other material which the book references. His donation was on the condition that they don't publish it or give anyone else the right to publish it.

May 16th, 2007: Kaczynski includes a foreword expressing how he wishes he hadn't included so many quotes from investigators he views as untrustworthy, and that he wishes he had the time to re-edit it, but other projects are taking priority.

He was working on his book, *Technological Slavery* released in 2010 and went on to release his book *Anti-Tech Revolution: How & Why* in 2015.

March 8th, 2018: The University staff happily let people scan and take photographs of all the documents, so a version of *Truth versus Lies* appears online on *archive.org*.

² Larry McShane. Publisher Yanks Unabomber Book Deal [Essay]. AP News. November 5, 1999. Original link. Archived link.

November 9th, 2021: A call out for volunteers was made to re-type up the book, so that it could be more easily read and quoted without all Beau's annotations.

* * *

Secondly, here is a timeline of key life events that I believe contributed to Ted's violent tendencies, and events where I believe he could have been stopped:

Key Life Events

- Separated from parents as a sick baby at a key time for attunement and attachment with parents. His mother felt this was key to his behavior. Ted felt they used that event to avoid responsibility for the impact their inadequate parenting had on his character.
- Moved forward a year at school whilst failing to make sure he maintained friendships, rather than taking a year off to travel with family.
- Parents/teachers/counselors failing to talk through his desire for escape in primitive life as a desire to escape bullying, plus a lack of classes offered in politics.
- Attending Harvard a year early without taking the time to travel and explore the world.
- Unwittingly participating in psychological experiments at Harvard which were later used by the CIA to demonstrate the efficacy of torture. These experiments would be considered unethical today and could not take place.
- Angry with himself for being unable to move from social interaction with women, to romantic or sexual involvement, he projected his feelings of inadequacy on to them, blaming them for his frustration.
- Inability to discuss his sexual fantasies of becoming a woman in order to get to be intimate with a woman to a councilor. Coming away with stronger suicidal ideation, and his feelings of desire to kill through a murder suicide. His shame at not being able to find a relationship turned into hatred at society for regimenting his life and making him this way.
- Kaczynski showed a letter to his brother, parents and romantic interest that he planned 'violence of a serious nature' against the romantic interest who had broken off their romance, but no steps were taken to either get him help or report him. His journal entries later revealed that he brought a knife with him in a paper bag, to disfigure her face.
- Kaczynski proposed founding an organization dedicated to stopping federal aid to scientific research, thereby preventing the "ceaseless extension of society's powers. He sent this essay, similar to the manifesto he'd later write, to a few politicians. He would often write anti-technology essays to newspapers and favorite authors. If the FBI had put more focused callouts for information, then one of these people may have tipped off the FBI sooner.
- Felt guilty later about his sadism towards animals.
- Briefly felt bad about having crippled the arm of a man who was an airline pilot.
- Felt guilty later about the innocent people he would have killed on an airliner he attempted to blow up, as well as the secretary of a computer scientist.
- Regret about being careless in selecting targets at the beginning.

A call for collaborators

At some point I would like to condense this book down into one normal length book, cutting chapters and putting quoted sources into my own words. If you'd like to help as a co-author or would like my help with your own ideas for what to do with the material, just let me know.

I've also quoted a ton of people in this book, so the offer is open to anyone I've quoted to let me know if you might like your quote updated with a new statement.

My email is ishkah@protonmail.com.

Suggested Reading

For collaborator inspiration on ways the story of Ted's life can be used to discuss a complex array of issues, see these great books and essays:

The Unabomber and the origins of anti-tech radicalism³

"This article uncovers the origins of Kaczynski's ideas and examines his influence on contemporary anti-tech radicalism."

The Unabomber's Ethics⁴

This text neatly reveals and refutes the hidden premise within many of the Unabombers foundational arguments. That faulty premise being; the evaluative asymmetry whereby anything that happens in wild habitat is automatically less bad than anything that happens in an industrialized society.

Religion, Violence, and Radical Environmentalism: From Earth First! to the Unabomber to the Earth Liberation Front⁵

"Since the 1980 formation of Earth First!, radical environmental movements have proliferated widely. Their adversaries, law enforcement authorities and some scholars accuse them of violence and terrorism. Here, I scrutinize such charges by examining 18 years of radical environmentalism for evidence of violence and for indications of violent tendencies. I argue that despite the frequent use of revolutionary and martial rhetoric by participants in these movements, they have not, as yet, intended to inflict great bodily harm or death. Moreover, there are many worldview elements internal to these movements, as well as social dynamics external to them, that reduce the likelihood that movement activists will attempt to kill or maim as a political strategy. Labels such as 'violent' or 'terrorist' are not currently apt blanket descriptors for these movements. Thus, greater interpretive caution is needed when discussing the strategies, tactics, and impacts of radical environmentalism."

Ecology Contested; Environmental Politics between Left and Right⁶

"In an age of climate crisis and political confusion, ecology seems to offer clear answers to urgent questions about the current global predicament. Yet ecology has always been politically ambivalent. Environmental ideals appeal to radicals and reactionaries alike; ecological concerns can align with both the left and the right, including the extreme right.

In *Ecology Contested*, Peter Staudenmaier examines the complex and conflicting politics of environmentalism with a critical eye, offering challenging perspectives on the historical, philosophical, and political dimensions of ecological engagement in a troubled world."

The Politics of Attack⁷

³ Sean Fleming. *The Unabomber and the origins of anti-tech radicalism* [Essay]. Taylor & Francis. May 7, 2021. Original link. Archived link.

⁴ Ole Martin Moen. *The Unabomber's Ethics* [Essay]. The Ted K Archive. 2018. Original link. Archived link.

⁵ Bron Taylor. *Religion, Violence and Radical Environmentalism* [Essay]. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 10, no.4: 1-42. 1998. Original link. Archived link.

⁶ Peter Staudenmaier. *Ecology Contested; Environmental Politics between Left and Right* [Book]. AK Press. Original link. Archived link.

⁷ Michael Loadenthal. *The Politics of Attack: Communiqués and Insurrectionary Violence* [Book]. Manchester University Press. 2017. Original link. Archived link.

“Since the early 2000s, global, underground networks of insurrectionary anarchists have carried out thousands of acts of political violence. This book is an exploration of the ideas, strategies, and history of these political actors that engage in a confrontation with the oppressive powers of the state and capital.”

*Dostoyevsky’s Stalker and Other Essays*⁸

“In Dostoyevsky’s *Stalker*, we discover how the arts may illuminate psychiatry and psychoanalysis, as well as how these disciplines may elucidate works of literature, art, and cinema. Examining a diversity of authors, artists, historical figures, and psychopaths over the course of modern history, this groundbreaking collection of essays proposes a paradigm shift in psychiatry, based on the idea that some symptoms of mental illness may have constructive uses and may be used by the sufferer for mental and spiritual growth instead of going untreated or else being ‘analyzed away.’”

*Madman in the Woods: Life Next Door to the Unabomber*⁹

The author explores her grief over the loss of her sister to cancer so young in her life through trying to fit together two images of Ted Kaczynski. One image is of the friendly hermit who rocked her in his arms as a baby and painted her rocks to play with. The second image is the one painted in his secret diaries, such as the time he trained a gun on her kid sister and wrote that he wanted to kill her but stopped himself as he couldn’t be sure he’d get away with it.

*The Professor of Immortality*¹⁰

“Inspired by the true story of the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski, and his time at the University of Michigan, *The Professor of Immortality* is a gripping, heartfelt look at the way we might or might not choose to respond to recent advances in science and technology, which, despite their benefits to humankind, threaten to destroy our environment, our privacy, our ability to connect with nature, and our sense of life’s authentic meaning and purpose.

Throughout my 38-year career as a writing instructor, I encountered essays and stories that forced me to decide whether the authors might be a threat to themselves or others. But a professor can’t always tell who is dangerous and who is merely trying to be provocative. Some undergraduates write violent, misogynistic prose because that is what they have grown up seeing on TV, in movies, in video games and online porn. Others have been sexually abused or beaten. Still others are showing the first signs of schizophrenia or bipolar disease. To make matters more complex, two of the students who scared me the most were female.

Calling for a revolution doesn’t always indicate the ideologue will start building bombs. Ted Kaczynski’s brother shared his hatred of technology, yet David ended up a happily married social worker. Nor do all the scary students spout rightwing ideology. If I had taught at Michigan in the 1960s and a student had written an essay urging his classmates to join the Black Panthers in offing the pigs, would I have notified the FBI? For that matter, how would I feel if the FBI showed up at my door to ask why I have visited so many extremist websites, why I have taken so many books about domestic terrorism out of the library, or why I own a copy of the nauseatingly racist and anti-Semitic *Turner Diaries*?

Trying to prevent lonely young men from turning into incels requires an act of radical compassion, which can never be compelled. But if we are willing to allow such a huge segment of our population to grow up feeling lonely and unloved, with no larger meaning to their lives than defending their whiteness and maleness from what they perceive to be a threat, we shouldn’t be surprised if at least a few turn out to be Ted Kaczynskis.”

⁸ Michael Sperber. *Dostoyevsky’s Stalker and Other Essays on Psychopathology and the Arts* [Book]. University Press of America. 2010. Original link. Archived link.

⁹ Jamie Gehring. *Madman in the Woods: Life Next Door to the Unabomber* [Book]. Diversion Books. April 19, 2022. Original link. Archived link.

¹⁰ Eileen Pollack. *The Professor of Immortality* [Book]. Delphinium Books. October 2019. Original link. Archived link.

Introduction

Many primitivist & anti-technology revolutionaries like Kaczynski hold to the principle that ignorance of anything ‘unnatural’ is a character virtue. This includes, for example, the necessary skill sets to organize technological society.

Considering this, it was always going to be a steep hill for Kaczynski to climb, to get people to relate to why he would desire to kill symbols of technological progress. In addition, he didn’t help his own cause by first attempting to kill professors from his old university, motivated at least in part by the fairly unique struggles with depression he felt there.

Kaczynski’s desire to kill had started as a wish to go out in a murder-suicide, with the aim that at least those people who he felt drove him to suicide would understand his motives. However, accepting that he was going to die anyway, and freed from a regard for his own safety, he began to feel more comfortable with taking risks. With this came a feeling of relief from the pain. He felt he should take some precautions to prolong his ability to carry out his killings for as long as possible, to fulfill this new purpose and enjoy the experience of this new found relief. But crucially, throwing his life up to chance of suicide by cop appealed to a desire within him to have the difficult questions of responsibility for what he should be doing with his life taken away from him.

He had been impatient to send out small bombs for his own personal revenge and pain relief and did so over a long period, but he failed, for many years, to get his motivations into the media. His early bombs were poorly made and often ineffective. So, the newspapers simply reported him as crazy and indiscriminate.

On writing autobiographically for the public

Ted Kaczynski always intended to write an autobiography when he felt he had the time, but even after being locked away in prison for over 25 years, he found other priorities more pressing:¹

At some later time, I hope to tell the real story of my life, especially of my inner development and the changes in my outlook that took place over the decades.

Perhaps what prevented him most was the pain of reliving a life made up of many depressing failings, and not wanting to have to expose that pain any more than necessary:²

I consider it demeaning to expose one’s private life to public view. But the media have already taken away my privacy, and there is no way I can refute the falsehoods that have been propagated about me except by discussing publicly some of the most intimate aspects of my own life and that of my family.

So, he never rose to the challenge of telling his own life story from beginning to end, and he never emphasized the experiences and lessons that were most meaningful to him.

¹ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page ix. Original link. Archived link.

² Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 3. p. 3.. Original link. Archived link.

Instead, what we can do is piece together 1000s of journal entries and notes he meticulously left lying around his cabin like breadcrumbs to try and preserve as near to an accurate picture of his life as possible, since what he knew he was risking might happen actually did happen, in that he was arrested for killing 3 people and injuring 23 others:³

With the copy of this letter that I kept in the cabin I put a note in which I wrote:

Concerning the foregoing letter ... :

Quite intentionally, I grossly exaggerated my real feelings. I did this because Dave is so inert and passive that I figured that in order to be sure of getting any action out of him I had best lay it on pretty thick.

Ted knew he was a poor social communicator and a worse orator. As a teacher, he read aloud from text books rather than attempting to engage his students by his grasp of his subject. He felt much more confident expressing himself in writing, exaggerating his thoughts and feelings to create presence in a world that failed to notice him, and in the grand violent gestures intended to convey his message in a way which could not be ignored.

Ted wrote three autobiographies in his lifetime. All are painfully honest about his social inadequacies, his inability with women and his painful relationship with his family, particularly his parents:⁴

He wrote the 1st in 1959 when he was 17 as part of his participation in the Murray experiment at Harvard. It's not very long, but he talks openly about his difficult relationship with his parents, his shyness around women, and his discontent with what he terms the social world.

He wrote his second autobiography, 20 years later, at age 37 he was back home with his parents in Chicago. After nearly a decade living in his cabin in the woods and it's almost uncomfortably intimate. It feels more intimate than Ted's journals themselves. He describes a teenage sexual encounter with another boy, talks about girls he lusts after and professors he hates. His own lifelong feelings of social inadequacy are everywhere, and this document Ted says there's a particular reason he's writing it, he's going to start killing people, and if he's captured or killed by the police, he wants people to find the document. Read his life story as he sees it.

Ted's third autobiography is called Truth Versus Lies. It's 548 pages long, written during his first years as a prisoner. In it, Ted attempts to rebut nearly every claim made about him in the wake of his arrest, but he also spends nearly half the book over 200 pages writing about his relationship with his brother David. There's a chapter titled 'My Brother's Character, another called 'My Brother's ambivalent feelings toward me'. There's even a chapter entitled 'I hurt my brother's feelings cruelly'.

On page after page Ted comments on the hundreds of letters he and David exchanged over the years, and he chronicles his own increasing rage as their close sibling relationship slowly breaks apart.⁵

David says he thought the letters were mostly just them debating ideas, talking about their parents, occasionally questioning the wisdom of a choice, one or the other was making in his life, but he sees them differently now.

David: Looking back on it, I think, gosh, you know I shouldn't have been so worried about trying to change Ted's mind, I should have been listening to his suffering because he was

³ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 70. Original link. Archived link.

⁴ Eric Benson. Project Unabom [Podcast Show]. Pineapple Street Studios. June 27, 2022. Original link. Archived link.

⁵ Eric Benson. Project Unabom [Podcast Show]. Pineapple Street Studios. June 27, 2022. Original link. Archived link.

suffering. More than he ever talked about. I should have been more attuned to the fact that he was really, deeply, deeply struggling. But I think about 25 years living in isolation without any close relationship. I think almost anybody could end up being damaged by such intense isolation for such a long time.

The Family History

Sitting in his jail cell, with no possibility of parole after having recently been turned in by his brother, Ted had this to say about his family origin story:¹

Ever since my early teens, my immediate family has been a millstone around my neck. I've often wondered how I had the bad luck to be born into such a nest of fools.

My relations with them have been to me a constant source of irritation and disgust and sometimes of very serious pain. For some forty years my brother and mother leaned heavily on me for the satisfaction of certain needs of theirs; they were psychological leeches. They loved me because they needed me, but at the same time they hated me because I didn't give them the psychological sustenance they were looking for; and they must have sensed my contempt for them. Thus their feelings toward me were, and remain, strongly conflicting. In my brother's case the conflict is extreme.

I certainly can't claim that my own role in the life of my family has been a noble one. I had good justification for resenting my parents, but instead of making a clean break with them in early adulthood, as I should have done, I maintained relations with them: sometimes was kind to them, sometimes used them, sometimes squabbled with them over relatively minor matters, sometimes hurt their feelings intentionally, occasionally wrote them emotional letters expressing my bitterness over the way they had treated me and the way they had exploited my talents to satisfy their own needs. With my brother too I should have broken off early in life. The relationship wasn't good for either of us, but it was much worse for my brother than it was for me. This is a complicated matter that I will deal with at length further on.

Mother

Ted's brother David helpfully fills in some of the blanks with his book *Every Last Tie*:²³⁴

Mom grew up in a Polish-Catholic immigrant family in southern Ohio in the 1920s. The family was poor and dysfunctional. Her mother was alcoholic, occasionally violent, and quite possibly mentally ill. Her father slaved away at a steel mill in the pre-union era, working six and a half days a week to support his family.

In Mom's fondest memories of her father, he read Polish folk tales aloud to the family. Because of his mild temperament, he'd been cast as Jesus in miracle plays in his home village in rural Poland. But that same softness of temper prevented him from standing up to his unstable wife, even when it became necessary to protect the children during her drunken

¹ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Pages 3-4. Original link. Archived link.

² David Kaczynski. Every Last Tie [Book]. Duke University Press. January 8, 2016. Pages 33-34. Original link. Archived link.

³ Alan Chartock (Host). David Kaczynski | WAMC's In Conversation With [Podcast Interview]. WAMC's In Conversation With. August 12, 2021. Original link. Archived link.

⁴ David Kaczynski. Every Last Tie [Book]. Duke University Press. January 8, 2016. Original link. Archived link.

rages. So Mom grew up shielding her younger siblings, which made her the target of her mother's anger.

Immigrants, especially Poles, were unwelcome at that time and place. Once the Ku Klux Klan burned a cross on a hill above the family's home—a home her father had bought in the better part of town, where Poles were not supposed to be.

Mom attended a one-room rural schoolhouse that became her refuge from the chaos of her home life and the xenophobia of her neighbors. Her teacher, a young woman who probably had no college education, evidently had a gift for connecting emotionally with her students. After school, she would walk partway home with a group of them, and on one such occasion a child piped up, "Wanda reads good, don't she?"

As Mom tells it, the teacher replied, "Oh yes, Wanda is a *very* good reader," and placed her arm fondly around Mom's shoulders.

This may have been the first time my mother had been praised and treated with affection. Eighty years later, as she recounted this story to a young woman she'd befriended, tears starting flowing down Mom's cheeks.

Positive attention from a teacher proved to be a pivotal moment in Mom's development: learning was her gift and her personal validation. Books would become her source of hope for the future and her escape from the squalor and chaos of her surroundings. As she grew older, she greatly admired the novels by Charles Dickens that exposed the social inequities of the industrial revolution. But that kindly young teacher, I suspect, was the original inspiration behind Mom's intellectual growth and her capacity to dream—perhaps even the main reason little Wanda was able to survive her difficult childhood with a sense of self-worth and purpose.

She's read more books than probably anyone I know.

When she married at age twenty-two, her mission in life turned to raising children. Two ideals shone clearly in her mind: her children would be well educated so they could benefit humanity, and they would be protected from the abuses she herself had endured in childhood. She intended to make sure that ignorance, bigotry, and hatred would never touch us.

* * *

For Ted's part, the deepest statement of importance I could find him relate about his mother was simply to what extent she was a good disciplinarian:⁵⁶

"My mother had me well trained to be polite to adults, and that included answering all greetings from them."

Anyone who knows my mother at all well knows that I would never have dared to do such a thing in her presence. If I had done it, she would have been horrified beyond all description; when we got home, I would have received a vicious tongue-lashing and I wouldn't have heard the end of it for months afterward.

⁵ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 11. Original link. Archived link.

⁶ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Pages 264 – 333 [Book]. Folder 2, Box 67, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 283. Original link. Archived link.

Father

David presents a beautiful tribute to the brothers' father:⁷⁸

I struggle to remember my father—so much has happened since he left the world a quarter century ago.”

In place of memories, I feel his presence as a steady emotional warmth, like a cast-iron stove heated by long-burning coals.

I can distinctly visualize his brown eyes darting from side to side—like the rapid eye movements of a dreamer—when he searched for words to express a thought, or when he immersed himself in memories.

Dad worked hard without ever trying to advance himself. For thirty years, he made sausages at his uncle's store in Chicago. He was a blue-collar intellectual. Though he didn't have much formal education, he was widely read and believed progress was possible through mankind's rational pursuit of the greater good. When I was only a small boy, he explained to me the meaning of the phrase “enlightened self-interest.”

In the 1950s, he played a key role in reforming the village school board to eliminate the influence of partisan politics. For a couple of years, a number of men and some women from our community regularly gathered at our home to discuss a progressive agenda for the school system. Dad was always patient but persistent—a voice of reason whenever feelings ran high and disagreements flared toward animosity.

Once he invited U.S. Senator Paul Douglas, a noted liberal, to speak in Evergreen Park, a Republican stronghold, on the need for federal aid to education. After the event Senator Douglas—who had had to field a number of hostile questions—approached Dad and said, “Ted, I hope I didn't get you into trouble.”

‘Not at all.’ Dad smiled; he didn't seem to mind what some of our small-minded neighbors thought.

Our parents, despite their different personalities, held fundamentally similar views, especially when it came to education, politics, and issues related to their children's welfare. They taught us about civil disobedience—explained that transcendent ethical principles could be invoked to override a bad law. They admired the civil rights activists in the South who endured arrest and jail to awaken the nation's conscience against racial injustice. At the same time, they believed that enlightened citizenship meant following the law as an individual commitment to the social compact—that finding a particular law disagreeable or inconvenient was not enough to justify disobeying it.

* * *

For Ted, one of the most poignant memories he has of his father is a deeply sad one:⁹

One day, when I might have been about 6 years old, my mother, father, and I were all set to go out somewhere. I was in a joyful mood. I ran up to my father and announced that I wanted to kiss him. He said, ‘You're like a little girl, always wanting to kiss.’ I immediately

⁷ David Kaczynski. *Every Last Tie* [Book]. Duke University Press. January 8, 2016. Page 61. Original link. Archived link.

⁸ David Kaczynski. *Every Last Tie* [Book]. Duke University Press. January 8, 2016. Pages 64-65. Original link. Archived link.

⁹ Ted Kaczynski. *Truth versus Lies, Pages 91 – 170* [Book]. Folder 12, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Pages 52-53. Original link. Archived link.

turned cold and drew back resentfully. My father immediately regretted what he had done and said, 'Oh, that's alright. You can kiss if you want to.' But there was no warmth in his voice. Of course, I didn't kiss him then.

But the reader should be careful not to get an exaggerated idea of the coldness that my father occasionally exhibited - generally speaking I felt I had a good relationship with my parents that didn't show any serious deterioration until I was about 11 years old.

My father did become rather cold toward me during my teens.

During my middle teens I felt there was an undercurrent of scorn in his attitude toward me. [D]uring my adolescence, when visitors arrived at our house, I would often retreat to my room. According to investigators who have experience with cases that involve child abuse, withdrawing from visitors is a common reaction of abused children.

1942 – Ted is born

Theodore John Kaczynski was born on May 22, 1942, in Chicago, Illinois, the oldest child of a Polish-American couple, Wanda and Theodore, now Ted Senior.

The Hospital Experience

Did Ted suffer trauma as a baby after being separated from his parents in hospital as a baby, or was this simply a traumatizing experience for the parent to have a baby rejecting them, or neither in that this was a convenient story for a parent's inability to cope when their child misbehaved, so to blame his behavior on this experience?

I'm sure it likely was difficult to have a baby rejecting you and difficult to not show that fear in your emotions with the baby and not have it create a lasting effect in your relationship with your child, every time the child rejects them as they get older, to not read into it that they're withdrawing from them, and so there could be a shutting down there.

When you're young it's really important to form a secure attachment and if it's not formed then it can be an insecure attachment in the form of avoidance or it can be insecure in the form of the child being too clingy to their parents and rejecting the world, so there's all kinds of ways that it could have manifested.

Here are Ted's thoughts on the story:¹

I have only a vague recollection of the version of this story that I heard from my parents in childhood. In essence it was that as a baby I had been hospitalized with a severe case of hives (urticaria), and that I was so frightened by this separation from my parents that I was forever after excessively nervous about being left alone by them.

It is not clear to me why my parents thought I was unduly afraid of being separated from them. It may have been because they became accustomed to being away from their own parents at an especially early age - my mother's mother was a drunken, irresponsible slut - who probably left her children unattended on frequent occasions, and my father was an extrovert who spent much of his childhood running with gangs of boys rather than home (according to the stories he told me). In any case, as I look back on it now, I don't think I was any more anxious about being left alone than the average kid of my age. When I was perhaps six or seven years old, my mother began leaving me home alone for an hour or two at a time, and I did not find it difficult to adjust to this. At about the same age I once attended a movie with my father in a strange neighborhood far from home, and after the movie, he left me standing alone outside the theater for ten or fifteen minutes while he went to get the car. I felt a good deal of anxiety while waiting for him, but I think not more than is normal for a kid of that age under such circumstances. I certainly did not feel panicky nor did I doubt that my father would return. He told me afterward that he had left me alone in order to help me get over what he called my fear of being away from my parents.

My parents retained their belief that I had an unusual fear of being separated from them until I was thirteen years old. At that age, I was sent away to summer camp for two weeks.

¹ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Pages 23-32. Original link. Archived link.

Though I was somewhat homesick, I had no serious difficulty in adjusting to the experience, and after that, as far as I can remember, my parents never again mentioned my supposed fear of being ‘abandoned’ by them — until many years later, when my mother resuscitated the myth of “that hospital experience” in exaggerated and melodramatic form.

I was surprised when I saw that in this letter my mother described my hospitalization as having lasted only four days. She had previously told me - repeatedly - that it had lasted a week, and that I had been ‘inert’, ‘a dead lump’, for a month after I came home.

My age at the time was just over nine months.

According to hospital records, I was admitted on March 1, 1943 and released on March 6, so I was hospitalized for five days. Since the statement that I was quite myself again could not have been written later than March 12, it took me at most six days (and possibly much less time) to make an apparently complete recovery.

Did my hospitalization at the age of nine months have any lasting effect on my personality or behavior? I do not know the answer to that question. But it is obvious that if the experience tended to make me permanently fearful of doctors or of strangers, or if it made me less social, then the effect was so mild that it is not clear whether there was any effect at all.

Thus it remains an open question whether my hospitalization had any permanent effect on my personality. The aim of this chapter has not been to prove that there could not have been such an effect, but that whatever that effect may have been, it was not what my mother and brother have described.

Eric Benson, explored the importance the family placed on this separation in his podcast, first giving us David’s memory of his mother talking about it, and then his mother Wanda’s account:²

David: I remember asking mom one time you know what’s wrong with Ted? Why does he avoid people? Why does he not like people and that’s when mom told me this story that my brother had been hospitalized for, I think 10 days or so as a 9 month old infant.

Wanda: I used to pick him up out of the crib.

Eric: That’s Wanda Kaczynski talking about this incident on 60 minutes with the show’s longtime lead reporter Mike Wallace.

Wanda: He would be bouncing around and he would nuzzle his head in my neck and chortle and gurgle and pull my hair. And he was a bundle of joy.

Eric: But then, baby. Ted broke out in red splotches that spread. Across his body, Wanda took him to the hospital. At that time, parents weren’t allowed to be at. Their children bedside day and night.

Wanda: But I finally came back to take him home, but they handed to me. Was not this bouncing joyous baby, but a little wild wow. That didn’t look at me. That was slumped over was completely limp.

60 Minutes: Wonder back in those days. That happened to a lot of youngsters, I mean whose parents couldn’t see them in in a hospital. Just as with Ted, and they did not become sociopaths, if you will.

Wanda: Right, but can you judge one child by another?

David: Man, I always felt Ted had a fear of, had some trust issues because of that experience, and in addition a fear of abandonment.

² Eric Benson. Project Unabom [Podcast Show]. Pineapple Street Studios. June 27, 2022. Original link. Archived link.

Eric: The hospital story became a major topic of discussion among the Kaczynski family as Ted grew more troubled and angry over the years and Ted hated it. The hospital experience that mother always likes to dredge up is very convenient for them because it's something that was beyond their control, he wrote in a letter to David in 1986.

Also quoted is Cathy c.asdfldfjkj, FBI agent who worked the case.³

Cathy: They treated him as if he was a damaged person. And this all went back to when he was an infant.

³ Eric Benson. Project Unabom [Podcast Show]. Pineapple Street Studios. June 27, 2022. Original link. Archived link.

1949 – Aged 7–10

A felt change in the parent-son relationship

David Richard Kaczynski was born on the 3rd of October 1949:¹

Wanda recalls bringing the new baby home from the hospital: “I put David in Ted’s arms and said, ‘You know, we three, you, your daddy and I, have to take care of him so that he’ll grow up to be as big and nice as you are.’ And he was hooked from that time on.”

Ted:²

[W]hen I was a bit less than seven-and-a-half years old, I had acquired a baby brother.

I considered this a pleasant event. I was interested in the baby and enjoyed being allowed to hold it.

As I remember it, prior to my brother’s birth my parents told me repeatedly that the new baby, when it came, would require a great deal of care and attention, and that I must not feel that my parents loved me any less because they were devoting so much time to the baby. When David was born I wondered why my parents had put so much emphasis on this point, because I by no means felt left out or deprived of attention.

One reads much about ‘sibling rivalry’ - the older child supposedly resents the new baby because he feels it has robbed him of his parents’ affection. I do not recall ever having had any such feeling about my baby brother. ... I think my parents were aware of the problem of ‘sibling rivalry’ and made a conscious effort to avoid this problem when the new baby came.

In those years my parents and I got all our medical care at the University of Chicago teaching hospitals, which were among the finest in America, and the doctors no doubt had talked to my parents about the way to handle my relationship with my new brother.

My feelings toward my brother in his infancy are well illustrated by a dream that I described to him in a letter that I sent him during the summer of 1982. After making some highly critical comments about his character, I wrote:

“I am going to open to you the window to my soul as I would not open it to anyone else, by telling you two dreams that I’ve had about you. The first dream is simple. It is one I had more than thirty years ago, when I was maybe 7 or 8 years old and you were still a baby in your crib. Some time before, I had seen pictures of starving children in Europe taken shortly after world war II [sic] they were emaciated, with arms like sticks, ribs protruding, and guts hanging out. Well, I dreamed that there was a war in America and I saw you as one of these children, emaciated and starving. It affected me strongly and when I woke up I made up my mind that if there was ever a war in America I would do everything I possibly could to protect you. This illustrates the semi-maternal tenderness that I’ve often felt for you.”

¹ Serge Kovaleski. His Brother’s Keeper [Essay]. The Washington Post. July 10, 2001. Original link. Archived link.

² Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Pages 38-40. Original link. Archived link.

Ted pinpoints the year his happy life first started to deteriorate was soon after his brother David was born:³

Not long after my brother's birth my mother's personality began to change. The cause may have been postpartum depression, a hormonal imbalance brought about by her pregnancy, or something else, but, whatever the reason, she began to grow increasingly irritable.

In a letter to his brother from his cabin, Ted tried to explain the felt change to David:⁴

[P]eople always squabbling, mother crabby and irritable, Dad morosely passive. Too much ice cream, candy, and treats, parents fat and self-indulgent. A generally low-morale atmosphere. But it was very different up to the time when I was, say, 8 or 9 years old. Until then, the home atmosphere was cheerful, there was hardly any quarrelling, and there was a generally high-morale atmosphere. Ice cream and candy were relatively infrequent treats and were consumed in moderation. ... Our parents were more alive and energetic. When punishment was necessary it was given with little or no anger and was used as a more-or-less rational means of training; whereas during my teens, when I was punished it was commonly an expression of anger or irritation on the part of our parents. Consequently this punishment was humiliating. The more-or-less rational punishment of the early years was not humiliating. The symptoms were relatively mild at first, but they worsened over the next several years so that, by the time I reached my teens, she was having frequent outbursts of rage that express themselves as unrestrained verbal aggression.

Later in his book he expands this point and talks about the impact on his father and the family home.⁵

[H]er face would become contorted and she would wave her clenched fists while unleashing a stream of unrestrained verbal abuse. ... Even when she wasn't having one of her outbursts, she was often very irritable and would scold or make vicious remarks at the slightest provocation. The change in my mother affected my father. He became morose and pessimistic, and when family squabbles arose, he tended to sit in his easy chair and retreat behind a newspaper or book, ignoring the sordid turmoil around him. Sometimes, however, his patience became exhausted and he would have angry arguments with my mother or with me.

But my father's moroseness was not exclusively an outcome of the family situation. I believe that he had deep-lying negative feelings about himself, about people, and about life in general. When he was in his mid-sixties and more ready to express his feelings than he'd been when he was younger, he took a car-camping trip by himself. On returning he said, 'I can't be alone, because I don't like myself.' He tended to see other people as dirty or sick. For example, when I visited my parents in 1978, my father described his employer, Win PI., to me as a pathologically compulsive talker. Later I got to know Win PI. myself, and I found that he was rather talkative, but by no means abnormally so. My father also used to speak of some of our relatives and other people in terms that exaggerated their failings and portrayed them as sick or repellent.

* * *

³ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 41. Original link. Archived link.

⁴ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 41. Original link. Archived link.

⁵ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Pages 46-48. Original link. Archived link.

Ted talked about the ‘mental abuse’ he had suffered from his parents, who, exasperated with his behaviour, decided to label him ‘sick, a ‘creep’ and ‘mentally disturbed.’⁶

Throughout my teens I was the target of frequent verbal aggression (often unprovoked) from both my parents, especially my mother. The insults that cut me deepest were the imputations of mental illness or gross immaturity. I think it was my father who started these when I was about twelve years old. The rejection I experienced from my peers at school, in combination with the deteriorating family atmosphere, made me often sullen and cranky, and my father, characteristically, interpreted this in terms of psychopathology. He began calling me “sick” whenever he was annoyed with me. My mother imitated him in this respect, and from then on until I was about 21 years old, both my parents would apply to me such epithets as “sick”, “immature”, “emotionally disturbed,” “creep,” “mind of a two-year-old,” or “another Walter T.” (Walter T. was a man we knew who ended up in a mental institution.) It was always in an outburst of anger that my mother called me these things, but my father sometimes did so in a tone of cold contempt that cut worse than my mother’s angry shouting. Neither of my parents ever suggested that I should be examined by a psychologist or psychiatrist. My mother never actually thought that there was anything wrong with me mentally, and I doubt that my father saw me as any sicker than he saw many other people. In saying cruel things to me my parents were only using me as a butt on which to take out their own frustrations.

Ted also noted however:⁷⁸

I was compared to Walter T. only twice, and in at least one of those cases it was my mother who made the comparison.

Though the imputations of mental illness were what hurt me most, they comprised only a small part of the constant verbal bullying to which I was subjected day in and day out. My mother was continually shouting, scolding, insulting, and blaming me for everything that went wrong, regardless of whether I could have been responsible for it. During the summer before I entered Harvard, she made an appointment for me to see a professional photographer for a picture that the university wanted for its records. When the day of the appointment arrived, as it happened, I had a pimple on the end of my nose. My mother angrily scolded me for it. “Look at you! Now you’ve got a pimple on your nose! You’re going to look terrible in your Harvard photo! ...” And on and on, as if it were my fault that I had a pimple.

In another case my mother drove me and some other members of the high-school band to a music lesson. On the way back, the other boys, who were older than I was, talked a good deal about cars and driving. It made me feel small, since I was still too young to drive. After she dropped the other boys off, my mother began scolding me angrily: “Why don’t you get a driver’s license like the other kids so I won’t have to be driving you all over the place all the time?” I quietly pointed out that I was only fifteen years old and couldn’t get a license until I was sixteen. Instead of acknowledging that she was wrong and apologizing, my mother answered in an angry tone, “Well then, get a license as soon as you are sixteen! ... [etc.]

Once when I made a negative remark about someone’s competence, my father answered in a cold and sneering tone, “You’ll never be half as competent as he is.” My father did not

⁶ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Pages 46-48. Original link. Archived link.

⁷ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Pages 264 – 333 [Book]. Folder 2, Box 67, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 294. Original link. Archived link.

⁸ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Pages 46-48. Original link. Archived link.

typically lose his temper openly. Yet he sometimes did so; in a few cases, he shouted at me, “I’ll smash your face!” I didn’t believe he would really smash my face, but still it was frightening to hear him say that.

These are only a few examples of the kinds of things that went on constantly.

Physical abuse was minimal, but there was a little of it. A couple of times my father threw me on the floor in the course of family squabbles. My mother occasionally would flail at me with her fists, but by that time I was old enough (and my mother was weak enough) so that she didn’t hurt me.

Happy memories

In a rare interview from prison, Ted opened up about how meaningful his relationship to David was.^{9,10}

We used to, very often we used to go out and play catch, or one of us would hit the ball with the bat and the other one would catch it. And I remember one time when we were throwing that ball. We were as far apart as we could get and still reach each other with the ball. We were throwing that ball as hard as we could, and as far as we could. And, of course, the ball was thrown very inaccurately, because we were trying so hard to throw it. And so we would — we were making these running, leaping catches. We made more fantastic catches that day than I think we did in all the rest of our years together. That was more fun.

I would say it’s the most — the deepest personal relationship that I ever had between — oh, let’s say between my teens and about 1990, when I finally broke off with him.

Over many years we shared a great many values. And it’s not clear to me to what extent this was simple imitation of me on his part. And if it was simple imitation on his part, you wouldn’t really call it a similarity. But there are some similarities apart from that. I think we’re both basically quiet, somewhat introverted types. Both a little on the shy side. Another similarity between us would be that generally speaking, I think he’s a very honest person.

Ted’s Kindness

The happy memories in the family from childhood were as much a result of Ted’s initiative as anyone else’s also. There are many memories of Ted’s kindness which David finds some solace in retelling.¹¹

Ted could be critical, but he could also be kind. When I was about three, our family moved from a dingy duplex in Chicago’s Back of the Yards neighborhood (the Yards being the famous Chicago stockyards) to a house in Evergreen Park, a new working-class suburb on the city’s southwest side. It was our first house. When summer came, I used to delight in pushing open the screen door and going out to play in our spacious backyard. It never rained that summer (in my memory, at least). I met other boys and girls my own age. I was discovering a new world and having a ball. The only frustration came when I tried to reenter the house, because I was too short to reach the door handle to pull open the screen door. I would often stand on the back patio—a tiny exile—calling for someone, Mom or Dad or Ted, to let me in.

⁹ Stephen J. Dubner. Running to Do Evil [Podcast Interview]. Freakonomics. April 25, 2013. Original link. Archived link.

¹⁰ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 21. Original link. Archived link.

¹¹ David Kaczynski. Every Last Tie [Book]. Duke University Press. January 8, 2016. Page 4. Original link. Archived link.

One day I saw Ted fiddling with something at the back door. He was ten or eleven at the time but always an ingenious person. To this day, it mesmerizes me to watch someone drawing or performing some careful manual task, which I ascribe to my early interest in my brother's activities. He had taken a spool of thread from Mom's sewing kit, and a hammer and a nail from Dad's tool kit in the basement. I watched as he removed the last remnant of thread from the spool, leaving only the bare spool. Then he inserted the nail through the hole in the center of the spool and hammered it onto the lower part of the wooden screen door. When he was finished, he said, "Dave, see if this works!" All of a sudden it dawned on me what he had done: he'd crafted a makeshift door handle for me.

Even after I grew taller and no longer needed it, the spool remained attached to the door for some time—a lingering reminder of my brother's kindness. Tender memories like this one (and there were more than a few) soothe the stings that inevitably come in a sibling relationship. Growing up, I never doubted my brother's fundamental loyalty and love or felt the slightest insecurity in his presence.

David:¹²

Sometimes he would tutor me in mathematics cause he was very, very gifted in mathematics. I'm remembering, one time he was... I was probably in fourth grade and he's trying to show me how to do algebra and I'm thinking, I don't really understand this. And my parents are saying, "You know, Teddy, I don't think David really understands." And Teddy says, "Yeah, yeah, he does. You understand, don't you, Dave?" And I said, "Yeah... I think so." (Laughs)

Ted's Coldness

Often though David simply found it hard to know what Ted was feeling:¹³

Which is not to say that I always felt worthy in his presence. It never seemed a challenge to win our parents' approval. Although humble about their own virtues and accomplishments, Mom and Dad seemed to glory in their two boys. I'm sure it was Ted who first clued me in that Mom and Dad's approval ratings were not objective. He sometimes faulted me, too, for being overly subjective. I remember asking him once, "Aren't we lucky that we have the best parents in the world?" He replied, "You can't prove that."

Sometimes I suspected Ted was judging me, even when he said nothing. I wondered if I had done something wrong that I wasn't aware of. Once when he caught me in a fib, he said, "You liar!" and stalked off in contempt. I worried that I had disappointed him terribly, perhaps beyond hope of redemption. Later, when he said nothing about the incident, I found myself studying his face trying to detect some change, but never able to penetrate the veil covering his inner thoughts and feelings.

Perceived Resentment

Ted also has mixed memories of David, though in his book he uses them to paint a story of these experiences resulting in bitter resentment on both sides:¹⁴

¹² David Kaczynski. *Every Last Tie* [Book]. Duke University Press. January 8, 2016. Page 4-5. [Original link](#). [Archived link](#).

¹³ Ted Kaczynski. *Truth versus Lies*, Pages 91 – 170 [Book]. Folder 12, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Pages 115-118. [Original link](#). [Archived link](#).

¹⁴ Ted Kaczynski. *Truth versus Lies*, Pages 264 – 333 [Book]. Folder 2, Box 67, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 306. [Original link](#). [Archived link](#).

My brother's admiration for me was complicated by a marked strain of resentment, which seems to have had its origin in several factors, including his sense of inferiority to me, the fact that I often treated him badly when we were kids, and jealousy over the fact that our parents valued me more highly than they did him. The conflict between his love and admiration, on the one hand, and his resentment, on the other, was shown in the inconsistency of his behavior toward me.

Once my brother was past his infancy, conflicts developed in my own feelings toward him. Initially, I think my resentment probably grew out of the way our parents handled our relationship. Whenever any squabble arose between my brother and I, whenever anything went wrong while we were together, I was automatically blamed for it.

When my brother was 4 years old and I was 12 (if I remember correctly), my father gave each of us a glass bottle with a squirting attachment so that we could 'fight' by squirting each other. This was fine until my brother climbed up on a chair and then fell with the bottle in his hand, cutting himself very badly [when the bottle broke], (It is still painful to me to remember this incident.) Blood came gushing from my brother's hand at an amazing rate. I screamed and howled for my parents, who came running. They took my brother in the house, but quickly decided that he was bleeding so badly that they would have to rush him to the hospital.

Because I had a strong affection for my brother, I was very upset about his injury. At one point, the doctors feared that two of his fingers might be permanently crippled ... But fortunately it turned out alright ... at that time I offered to give my brother my coin collection, which was my most prized possession.

Since my brother climbed up on the chair on his own initiative, and since I was 10 feet away from him when he fell, there was no reason why I should be blamed for the incident. Nevertheless, the doctors told my parents that my brother kept mumbling, 'Don't blame Teddy! Don't blame Teddy!'

The reason is that he knew that whenever anything bad happened when he and I were together, I always got blamed for it. The same thing was true all through my earlier teens: Whenever I got into a screaming match with my brother, or any other conflict, my parents immediately blamed me. If I tried to explain my side of the dispute, my parents would usually cut me short by saying, 'It doesn't make any difference. You're older. You should be more mature. ... Just as I often got into screaming matches with my brother, my parents often got into screaming matches with me. Apparently it never occurred to them that they should 'be more mature.'

This was not the result of favoritism on their part – actually, I was always the favorite son. It was the result of simple laziness. To listen to both sides of a dispute between my brother and I, and attempt to make a fair judgement, would have taken an effort. It was easier to automatically blame the older child and throw on him the burden of keeping the peace.”

My brother's effort to save me from blame shows the generous aspect of his feelings toward me. The resentful aspect is illustrated by the following incident. When I was thirteen years old and my brother was five, it was discovered that I had a cyst in my upper jaw that would have to be removed surgically, and in preparation for that operation an oral surgeon extracted one of my upper incisors. As I reminded my mother in 1991, “when I came home with my tooth pulled out, Dave jeered at me for it.”

He also showed his resentment by teasing me frequently. For example, he would tell me some lie or tall tale, and then when he had me believing it he would laugh at me for having been taken in. His teasing aroused my own resentment, which led me to harass him verbally,

and that in turn increased his resentment, in a vicious cycle. In addition, he had certain personality traits that irritated me. He was an other-directed kid: He ran with a group of boys among whom he seemed to lose his own identity completely, imitating all their ways without holding back anything of himself. Again, he sucked his thumb until he was eight years old. I used to get disgusted watching him at it, and I would rag him about it unmercifully. My mother would occasionally reprimand me for my harassment of my brother or him for his teasing of me, but neither of my parents ever made any serious or consistent effort to bring our constant quarrelling under control.

The worst of it was that at this time I was suffering psychological abuse from my parents and from my schoolmates and, being unable to retaliate against them, I probably took out much of my anger on my brother, who was a convenient object for that purpose. Of course, my brother was not so defenseless against me as I was against our parents, since he could turn to them for support and protection. In fact, my brother and my parents often tended to form a common front against me.

Considering our conflicts and the family situation in general, it's surprising that Dave and I retained as much affection for one another as we did. At the age of seventeen I wrote:

"My brother and I quarrel a lot, but when we're not quarrelling we're pretty friendly and considerate of each other."

And in 1986, I wrote my brother:

"[W]e had conflicts that resulted in resentment, but [on my side] that resentment was relatively superficial rather than deep and lasting."

These passages only hint at the strength and tenacity of my affection for Dave and the way it survived the sometimes bitter anger I felt toward him. But I truly believe that my resentment over our childhood conflicts had dissipated by the time I reached adulthood, and that it left little or no lasting residue in me. (With certain resentments that arose during our adult years, it was a different matter.)

On my brother's side, I think the resentment ran much deeper, but it did not interfere with the excessive adulation that led him to adopt me as a role-model and as a source of values and aspirations. A couple of times during my later teens my mother asked me in an awed voice, "What is this power you have over Dave?" I wasn't able to give her an answer, because it wasn't a power that I exercised consciously or intentionally. When my brother was maybe eleven or twelve years old, he used to show off by jumping up and touching the light on the kitchen ceiling. I used to kid him by saying, "No, you can't do it! You won't make it!", and whenever he jumped after I had said that, he would fail to touch the light. He used to attribute this to his own "suggestibility", and he seemed to take a masochistic satisfaction in it. Eventually, though, he did assert his will and show that he could touch the light even when I told him he couldn't.

This psychological subordination of my brother to me must have contributed in a very important way to his resentment, the more so since I was quite conscious of my own superiority in that respect and, in those days, I probably did not do a very good job of concealing it. As I wrote in 1959:

"I feel superior to my brother in intellectual capacity, and very much in strength of will, even considering the age difference."

Another source of my brother's resentment against me was the fact that my parents valued me far more than they did him. In a psychological sense I was the most important member of the family ... My brother and my mother both leaned on me heavily for the satisfaction of their psychological needs, and to some extent my father did so too: When I worked at

Foam Cutting Engineers, one of my co-workers, a woman named Dotty, said to me: “Your father talks about you all the time. I think you’re the favorite son.”

* * *

In a letter to his mother Ted wrote:¹⁵

“It’s certainly true that Dave had reason to resent me — I sometimes dominated him physically and often harassed [sic] him verbally. In part this was because I was the defenseless victim of insults both from my parents and from the kids in school, so that I had a lot of frustrated anger that I tended to take out on Dave, especially since he had a type of personality that I probably would have found irritating in any case.”

Similarly in an early autobiography, he stated:¹⁶

“[T]here was a period of several years during my teens when I had a great many squabbles with my brother. ... I used my superior size and strength to dominate him with very little regard for his feelings.”

I don’t think I ever did anything to inflict physical pain on Dave, as by hitting him or twisting a limb. I merely dominated him by holding him down or overpowering him in some other way.

Finally, here’s how Ted discussed the issue in letters to David:¹⁷¹⁸¹⁹

I remember that when we were kids I sometimes would take advantage of my greater size and strength to dominate you physically. Also I sometimes harassed you verbally ... I now regret that I behaved that way. So I now offer you an apology for it; though I suppose this apology very likely is a matter of indifference to you anyway. ...

[I]n thinking about these things, during the last few years, I’ve become more aware of the fact that the shit that I had to take from our parents I tended to pass on to you, so that you have somewhat the same reason to resent me as I have to resent our parents. I have already apologized to you for this, and I now repeat the apology. I very much regret having bullied and insulted you the way I often did. I wouldn’t blame you if you hated my guts for it. It’s an indication of the generosity of your character that you’ve shown very little resentment toward me.

I would note, though, that my position with respect to our parents was worse than your position with respect to me. Our parents were the last authority in the case, so that in conflicts with them I always lost. I generally ended by getting sent up to the attic where I could do nothing but sit and be gnawed by frustrated anger. You, on the other hand, in your conflicts with me could often turn to our parents for support and by that means were sometimes able to carry your point. I had nowhere near as much power over you as the

¹⁵ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Pages 91 – 170 [Book]. Folder 12, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 151. Original link. Archived link.

¹⁶ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Pages 91 – 170 [Book]. Folder 12, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 151. Original link. Archived link.

¹⁷ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Pages 264 – 333 [Book]. Folder 2, Box 67, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 311. Original link. Archived link.

¹⁸ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Pages 91 – 170 [Book]. Folder 12, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 151. Original link. Archived link.

¹⁹ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Pages 34-36. Original link. Archived link.

parents had over me. I want to emphasize that I say this not to excuse or minimize the way I sometimes abused you, but to help make it clear to you why I have such a deep resentment against our parents. ...

I suppose it would be superfluous to again express my regret over the way I used to treat you when I was in my teens. But it's something I haven't forgotten. Nor am I likely to forget it.

Earliest Friendships

Ted harbored detailed memories of all his childhood friendships:²⁰

I myself have a vague memory of being a little shy up to the age of five or so ... my real problems began in early adolescence ... when I did indeed have social problems. As a result of these problems I began to take a perverse pride in being unsocial.

As far as I can remember, I have always been socially reserved, and used to be rather unpleasantly conscious of the fact. For example, I remember that when I was very little, 3 or 4 years old, I was very concerned over the fact that when my mother bought me an ice cream cone, I was always afraid to take it directly from the lady's hand; my mother had to take it from her and give it to me.

I learned to whistle and to swim later than most of my companions. ... And it often bothered me that I was less socially active than the rest of the boys, which I think was partly due to shyness and partly due to a certain lack of interest in some of their activities. I've always kept to myself a lot ... I probably was still under the influence of my mother's theory that I was bored with other kids because I was smarter.

From age one to three I developed a close friendship with Adam Ks., a boy about eight months older than I was. The attachment left a long-lasting impression on both of us. Adam was the son of the couple who occupied the first floor of the house of which my parents and I had the second story; when we moved to another house I was separated from him.

In the new house we again occupied the second story, and with the little girl downstairs, Barbara P., I formed another strong attachment, though it was not as strong as my attachment to Adam. During this same period (age 3 to 4) I had at least one other frequent playmate, whose name, if I remember correctly, was Jackie.

Shortly before my fifth birthday we moved to a house on Carpenter Street (the first house that my parents owned), and from that time until I entered Harvard I always had several friends. My friends on Carpenter Street included Johnny Kr., Bobby Th., Freddie Do., Jimmy Bu., Larry La., and Mary Kay Fy. As long as we lived on Carpenter Street, I attended Sherman School, a unit of the Chicago public-school system. All of my friends on Carpenter Street either attended the Catholic school or were a year older than I was, so that they were in a different grade. Consequently my school friends were not the same as those with whom I played near home. My school friends included Frank Ho., Terry La C., Rosario (an Italian kid whose last name I do not remember) and Peter Ma.

I not only had friends but, on a few occasions, exercised leadership. For example, I once came up with the idea of putting on a "carnival," as we called it. I persuaded Johnny Kr. and Bobby Th. to help me arrange games and simple entertainments, and after advertising

²⁰ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 38. Original link. Archived link.

the event by word of mouth for several days we made up tickets by hand, sold them to neighborhood kids, and made a modest profit.

Thus there is no truth in my mother's portrayal of me as abnormally solitary from early childhood. There was no need for her to "invite children from the neighborhood over to play," nor did she ever do so during these years as far as I can remember.

Sexual Development

One sad window into Ted's life is the importance with which he describes the few sexually intimate experiences he's had, and so the relative importance with which memories of sexual development have lasted for him, along with the parental discipline hemming in such experiences.

Content warning for the recounting of his childhood sexual development.

Firstly, we get a re-telling of one of the earliest sexual experiences, told from the perspective of being 57 in prison:²¹

As to the real reason why I stopped snuggling up to my aunt: Josephine was a good-looking woman; though she was over forty at the time of my brother's birth, she'd kept herself in shape and was still attractive. I don't know whether it was normal or precocious, but by the age of about seven I already had a fairly strong interest in the female body. Not long after my brother's birth, my family and I visited the apartment where Josephine lived with her mother (my paternal grandmother). My aunt and I were sitting on a couch, and, attracted by her breasts, I slid over against her, put my arm over her shoulder, and said, "Let's play girlfriend." Josephine laughed and put her arm around me, and I had the decided satisfaction of feeling her breast against my body.

My aunt just thought it was cute, but my mother was sharp enough to see what was really going on. After a short interval she said, "I think I'll go to the store and get some ice cream" (or maybe it was candy or something else), and she invited me to come with her. I declined, but she insisted that I should come. As soon as she got me out of the house she gave me a tongue-lashing and a lecture on appropriate behavior with ladies. It will not surprise the reader that, from then on, I kept my distance from Josephine.

The second was written in an autobiography he wrote at the age of 37:²²

I might have been about 9 years old when the following incident occurred. My family was visiting the [White] family. The [Whites] had a little girl named [Nancy], about my own age. At that time she was very pretty. I was horsing around with her, and by and by I got to tickling her. I put my arms around her from behind and tickled her under the ribs. I tickled and tickled, and she squirmed and laughed. I pressed my body up against hers, and experienced a very pleasant, warm, affectionate sensation, distinctly sexual. Unfortunately, my mother caught on to the fact that our play was beginning to take on a sexual character. She got embarrassed and told me to stop tickling [Nancy]. [Nancy] said, 'No, don't make him stop! I like it!' but, alas, my mother insisted, and I had to quit.

²¹ Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Page 13. Original link. Archived link.

²² Ted Kaczynski. Truth versus Lies, Title page – page 90 [Book]. Folder 11, Box 66, Ted Kaczynski papers, University of Michigan Library (Special Collections Library). Original link. Archived link.

1952 – Aged 10–16

Evergreen Park, Illinois

In 1952, three years after David was born, the family moved to southwest suburban Evergreen Park, Illinois; Ted transferred to Evergreen Park Central School. After testing scored his IQ at 167, he skipped the sixth grade. Kaczynski later described this as a pivotal event: previously he had socialized with his peers and was even a leader, but after skipping ahead he felt he did not fit in with the older children and was bullied.

[The rest of the book has not been archived on this website, see the source link here for the full document.]

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