

# Meaningful message

*Kaczynski's profound ideas shouldn't be ignored*

Theodore Kaczynski made a mistake. What exactly that mistake was isn't clear yet.

He's being jailed as the Unabomber suspect. The current charge against him is that of possessing bombmaking materials.

Between the press and the compliance of any number of anonymous government sources, Kaczynski is likely to be charged in the "bombing spree that killed three people and injured 23 since 1978."

Let's suppose Kaczynski is the Unabomber.

If he is the Unabomber, he is a terrorist. He created terror in order to bring about political change.

The question is: Does violence dispel the credence of the ideas that prompt it?

I think not.

Obviously, killing people is unacceptable regardless of motive.

History provides examples, a fair number, of people with huge ideas and noble intentions who were able to change the social or political climate of their times without engaging in violence. Gandhi, for example.

I won't accept the supposition that Kaczynski is simply an out-of-control madman. His method might be flawed, but that doesn't mean his message is.

And the Unabomber has a message he desperately wants society to heed.

I think it would be a mistake to write him off as a lunatic. There's got to be something more. This is a man of obvious depth.

This man sits, motionless, in his cell and reads books about ancient history. He writes when he's not reading. This man is productive — some might even call him an active learner.

By any contemporary measure of intelligence, Kaczynski is brilliant. He's a Harvard graduate who received a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan.



**Kelly Johnson**

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A man with such credentials surely had the earning potential to afford many worldly comforts. However, Kaczynski had little in the way of possessions. It seems he collected ideas, not things.

A maxim goes, "Nothing is to be feared, only to be understood."

People appear to be fascinated with Kaczynski's simple lifestyle. At his meager mountain home, he ate porcupine and grew his own vegetables. He had no outhouse and didn't bother much with personal hygiene.

As basal as his life habits in the Montana wilderness were, Kaczynski's intellectual appetite was both complex and seemingly insatiable.

The New York Times reported that Kaczynski shared his knowledge about an ancient Japanese tribe with his barber. The tribe's members did not cut their hair. This man who found it curious that people of

another time and place wouldn't visit barbers has been called a terrorist. The label of terrorist immediately draws energy from the fears of society. The term is clear, but I'm not sure Kaczynski fits the conventional definition.

There's a much larger picture to behold. A key to gaining a clear vision of Kaczynski's intentions lays in the Unabomber Manifesto.

Here's a man who cared deeply about the principles he tried to convey to society. So deeply that he was willing to kill to gain a captive audience.

This is intriguing. For better or worse, I want to know about the philosophy that drives him.

He acted not for financial gain or personal fame. He acted out of conviction. That's quite different than the violence one might expect from a madman.

He's a selfless killer with a message for the masses.

He's a challenge to our sense of fairplay. He's problematic because people don't want to believe that anything worthwhile can come from killing, or in spite of killing.

Let's be clear. Kaczynski has not been convicted of any crimes.

But if he is convicted, he'll be put away.

Let the man sit in a cell for his wrong-doing; but don't let his ideas be boxed and buried as far-fetched psychobabble.

The responsible response to this exhibition of well-intentioned, but brutal, activism is to ask clear questions and seek out the answers.

If Kaczynski is the Unabomber, he made the mistake of killing. If he's not, he made the mistake of living outside of society and thinking deeply.

In any case, don't let his mistakes stop you from thinking about his ideas.

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# (Bleep)'n AOL service infuriates executive

In our bustling world of consumerism, people often have complaints. They phone big companies to express these gripes. Then they talk to people whose job it is to listen and maybe do something.

Ideally, everyone involved would be polite and reasonable. But that isn't realistic. Those making the complaints can be angry and abusive. And those who must listen can have nerves that are frayed from listening to too many grievances.

Then we can have conflict — two strangers on opposite ends of a distant phone hookup.

Something like this happened when Dennis P. L'Heureux, a corporate executive who lives in Rockford, Ill., had a dispute with America Online, the big computer service.

He came home one day and decided to go on-line and flit about the Internet.

But when his computer hooked up to AOL's computers, he got a message on his screen telling him that his service had been discontinued, giving him a phone number to call.

He phoned and was told by a woman that there was a problem with his account and his credit card, and he was suspected of having tried to buy products fraudulently.

She insisted that someone used his computer to do it. Maybe a child? she suggested.

Impossible, he said. He had only one son old enough to use the computer and at the precise time the attempted fraud occurred, the entire family was watching that son play basketball.

Hah! A likely story. That is what the obviously skeptical woman at AOL seemed to say, which angered Mr. L'Heureux. And his indignant response made her, as he described it, "very snotty."

Some time after that, his bill from AOL arrived. His 10-year-old daughter happened to be outside when the postman dropped it off.

She brought the envelope in and L'Heureux heard the child say to his wife: "What does this mean?"

That's because the envelope contained a vulgarity that I am not permitted to use in this newspaper.

But I'll try to explain without using it. It is sometimes referred to as the "F-word."

So without using the word, and by letting you use your imagination for the translation, this is how the envelope was addressed:

(Bleep)'n Dennis L'Heureux  
(Bleep)'n (his home address)  
(Bleep)'n Rockford, IL 61114

He tore open the envelope and took out his bill from AOL. And there was the same word again.

The letter began:

"Dear (Bleep)'n Dennis L'Heureux.

"America Online values you as a customer and wants to reinstate your membership as soon as possible."

It went on to urge him to pay the amount in question because of the credit card dispute.

And it was signed by one "P. Maxwell, Credit Department."

But in the invoice that he was supposed to send in with his check, he was again referred to as the (Bleep)'n Dennis L'Heureux.

L'Heureux says he was shocked and outraged. So he



**Mike Royko**

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showed the letter to Rockford's postal inspector, who called it to the attention of AOL.

Someone from AOL phoned L'Heureux and said the company was sorry and that the letter should not have been sent with that language.

That didn't placate L'Heureux. Obviously the letter should not have referred to him and his home as (Bleep)'n. But he wanted to know who sent it and what was being done about it.

So he sent a letter to Steven Case, president and CEO of America Online, and one of the best-known deep thinkers in the world of cyberspace, cyberbusiness and cybermoolah.

After describing how appalled he was, he asked Case, "... I'm not sure if you have a family, but if you do, how would you feel if your 10-year-old daughter scanned the day's mail to find an envelope addressed to (Bleep)'n Steven Case, her Dad? Well, this is exactly what has happened in my household and I am not amused in the least."

And he concluded his letter with, "I demand an explanation ... and a formal apology for the way I have been treated."

He has not received an answer to that and several follow-up letters to Case.

So he asked me to make inquiries, because the Tribune Company owns a piece of AOL and that's where my column appears on-line.

After several days of leaving phone messages, someone from AOL's public relations department finally called back and babbled and babbled, but finally admitted that they didn't know how or why L'Heureux was referred to as (Bleep)'n.

But I'll make a guess.

During L'Heureux's confrontation with the complaint lady, she called his account up on a computer screen. Then when she got mad, she simply typed in the (Bleep)'n, making it part of his name and address. What does a computer know about (Bleep)'n stuff like that? It just does what it is told.

And, who knows, the way computerized lists are sold, swapped and passed around, L'Heureux might forever and ever be known as (Bleep)'n L'Heureux.

Lucky for AOL and Mr. Case that it didn't happen to Ted Kaczynski.

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# Final thoughts

*Graduation brings realizations, reflections*

As I look back on five years of college, I realize a couple of things.

1) People with my IQ should NOT take science classes.

2) I haven't learned much of anything useful here, except how to be on time and how to turn in assignments and how to pass tests on a minimal amount of sleep.

3) The single best time in my life was when some friends and I glued a dildo to the license plate of a car.

I swear we did.

4) I am going to miss college just as France missed Germany after World War II.

But rather than bore you with another "Fare-Thee-Well, I'm graduating column," here is my last selection of Random Thoughts. Enjoy!

— My last book buy-back. I spent around \$150 in January, and I received \$26 in return. There's nothing like getting \$1 or sometimes even \$2 per book.

— Six people is not a protest, it's a volleyball team. Well, at least they are standing up for what they believe in, even if they do sound ridiculous in interviews.

— From the "But I can act" Department: Ricki Lake and Shirley McLaine together? In one movie? Who's the wise ass who thought up this one?

— So why is it that the national media picked on Lawrence Phillips on draft day, even after his interview? For some reason, I hope he does well. If he turns his life around and contributes to the St. Louis community, I hope he has a long, successful career.

— My question remains, why rag on Phillips, who has some sense of



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humility when scum like Christian Peter can go in the draft? All I can say is that New England made a good move dumping him.

— Monday was Earth day, in case you missed it. I know I did. Can't we keep the environment clean and skip the carnival every year? Didn't some people have a better way to spend Monday afternoon?

— Why is it every time I open a national news magazine I find an ad about toenail fungus?

— Madonna is pregnant. Think she'll release a video of the birth? At least the child will get firsthand knowledge of how to combat STDs.

— Can't we just give the NBA title to the Bulls now and save ourselves from two months of waiting and blowout playoff games?

— I read the other day in Time that well-cooked steak kills. So let

me get this straight. If I eat it raw, I might get Mad Cow Disease. If I cook it too much, I might die. Is it just me, or do you think someone might have put the chicken farmers up to these studies?

— I also read that dark beer is healthy for you. Possible new Guinness slogan: "With Our Beer, You're In The Clear?"

— It's evangelist time on campus again!!! What in the world are these men thinking? "Think I'll go down to campus, insult some heathens, preach a little Old Testament and head to Bruegger's for a bagel." GET A LIFE.

— OK, don't get me wrong, but if people don't like America, why do they stay? I'm not saying that if you don't agree with everything in mainstream society or you think America has its down points, you should leave. What I am saying is that if I was from, oh, say Finland for instance, and I basically resented American culture and the standard of living in this country, I think I would head back home.

— The whole Berringer thing makes me just want to ask why. It reaffirms for me the notion that the world isn't fair.

Well, it's over. Hopefully you all have been entertained, and maybe I even made you think once in awhile. Even though I want out of here like no one but another graduating senior would believe, I have enjoyed it, and in the end am pretty damn glad I showed up.

Like Dennis Miller used to say, "I am outta here."

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