



Every Last Tie: The Story of the Unabomber and His Family

By David Kaczynski

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In August 1995 David Kaczynski's wife Linda asked him a difficult question: "Do you think your brother Ted is the Unabomber?" He couldn't be, David thought. But as the couple pored over the Unabomber's seventy-eight-page manifesto, David couldn't rule out the possibility. It slowly became clear to them that Ted was likely responsible for mailing the seventeen bombs that killed three people and injured many more. Wanting to prevent further violence, David made the agonizing decision to turn his brother in to the FBI.

Every Last Tie is David's highly personal and powerful memoir of his family, as well as a meditation on the possibilities for reconciliation and maintaining family bonds. Seen through David's eyes, Ted was a brilliant, yet troubled, young mathematician and a loving older brother. Their parents were supportive and emphasized to their sons the importance of education and empathy. But as Ted grew older he became more and more withdrawn, his behavior became increasingly erratic, and he often sent angry letters to his family from his isolated cabin in rural Montana.

During Ted's trial David worked hard to save Ted from the death penalty, and since then he has been a leading activist in the anti-death penalty movement. The book concludes with an afterword by psychiatry professor and forensic psychiatrist James L. Knoll IV, who discusses the current challenges facing the mental health system in the United States as well as the link between mental illness and violence.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Deeds of inhumanity challenge us to discover our own deeper humanity. David Kaczynski has done so, both in his life and in this very moving memoir he has written about his family."

(Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*)

"Compelling and quietly dramatic, the author's story, which is followed by a brief afterword by psychiatrist James Knoll, seeks not to excuse his brother but rather to humanize him. As Knoll suggests, understanding the mentally ill 'with an open heart' is an activity in which not only affected family members, but also the whole of society must engage for the good of all. Powerfully provocative reading."

(*Kirkus Reviews* 2015-09-08)

"An extraordinarily deep, moving, thoughtful, and profound memoir. This brother's story is a generous shattering journey. This author truly has an 'open and fearless heart.' And the book ends with a turn that turns the personal into the profoundly political, with an afterword by psychiatrist James Knoll who writes about mental illness, mental illness policy, and violence with incredible insight and compassion, including his own responsibilities after the Sandy Hook massacre. A powerful book for our times."

(Cathy N. Davidson, Distinguished Professor and Director, The Futures Initiative, The Graduate Center, CUNY)

"David Kaczynski's reflective and resolutely unsensational memoir reveals how difficult it was to accept even the possibility that his older brother, Theodore, might be a terrorist."

(Scott McLemee *Inside Higher Ed* 2015-11-06)

"In *Every Last Tie*, Mr. Kaczynski gives a compelling personal account of his relations with his brother and the anguish he experienced upon realizing that Ted was one of the most wanted terrorists in America."

(Edward Jay Epstein *Wall Street Journal* 2016-02-04)

"This slim, intriguing book is the story of a family whose two sons lead different lives. David Kaczynski's voice is quietly thoughtful, and his writing is lovely; he ranges from family anecdote to psychological puzzle to philosophical musing while retaining an even tone. *Every Last Tie* is both a straightforward story and a complex consideration of an extremely difficult one."

(Julia Jenkins *Shelf Awareness* 2016-01-26)

"[R]emarkable for its slenderness, humility and tact. ... Kaczynski devotes a thoughtful, affectionate chapter to each member of his immediate family."

(Susan Choi *Washington Post* 2016-01-28)

"*Every Last Tie* is extraordinarily insightful—but also instructive. By analyzing his own capacity for causing pain, David brings his brother close enough to learn something from him."

(Malcolm Harris *The New Republic* 2016-02-25)

"[T]he perspective on these events is obviously somewhat different when offered directly from a family member, not filtered through the eyes of a reporter. ... [Kaczynski] succeeds at the most difficult task of a book like this, writing about his brother's victims with sensitivity and restraint."
(Michelle Dean *The Guardian* 2016-02-07)

"The book is an admirable attempt to examine Ted's early life, offering us glimpses of a more psychological humanity. Most important, David reveals the roots of Ted's affinity for nature and his increasing alienation from a world that he saw as driven by technological advancement and a digital revolution. ... [M]any of the recollections are revealingly intimate instances of a precocious but troubled boy."
(Nathan Smith *Pacific Standard* 2016-01-28)

"We already knew that the younger Kaczynski was a compassionate and ethical man—he turned in his brother, but only after he thought that the death penalty was off the table. This memoir reinforces what it took for him to lead authorities to Ted, and offers ways for the rest of us to move forward with empathy."
(Kel Munger *Lit/Rant* 2016-04-09)

About the Author

David Kaczynski is the past Executive Director of Karma Triyana Dharmachakra, a Tibetan Buddhist monastery located in Woodstock, New York. An anti-death penalty activist, Kaczynski served as the Executive Director of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty from 2001 to 2012 and has given hundreds of public talks throughout the United States about mental illness, the death penalty, and healing in the aftermath of tragic violence. He is also the author of the poetry chapbook *A Dream Named You*.

James L. Knoll IV, MD is the Director of Forensic Psychiatry and Professor of Psychiatry at State University of New York Upstate Medical University and has served as a consulting forensic expert for the ACLU, as well as for many law enforcement agencies including the FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice.

Users Review

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