

Earth First! denies getting a letter from Kaczynski

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ACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) As jury selection winds down at Theodore Kaczynski's trial, members of an environmental group denied receiving an incriminating letter the Unabomber suspect allegedly wrote to them.

The full text of the letter has not been released. But government evidence made public in October quoted from a copy of the letter, which was found in Kaczynski's Montana cabin after his April 1996 arrest.

"This is a message from FC. The FBI calls us 'unabom.' We are the people who recently assassinated the president of the California Forestry Association," said the excerpt, apparently referring to the bombing death of Gilbert Murray in Sacramento on April 24, 1995.

The letter was addressed to Earth First!, a militant environmental group which opposes forest logging, the government said. A spokeswoman for the group, Alicia Littletree, said the letter didn't end up at Earth First!

"Earth First! never received anything like that," she said Tuesday. "If it exists, we'd like to see it."

The government contends Kaczynski, 55, spent 18 years sending bombs to people he perceived as symbols of the technological world he abhorred. Three people were killed and 29 injured between 1978 and 1995.

Kaczynski is charged here with killing Hugh Scrutton and Murray and maiming two scientists. If convicted of Murray's death — the only one to occur after the federal death penalty was reinstated he could be executed.

The federal indictment identifies Kaczynski as "FC," the initials the Unabomber used to sign his letters and diatribes. The government contends that the initials stood for an underground organization called the Freedom Club. FBI agents discount the existence of any such group, however, saying the Unabomber was a loner.

Jury selection was scheduled to resume today. Attorneys said they are one or two days from picking the initial pool, from which the final of 12 jurors and six alternates will be chosen. Opening statements were scheduled for Dec. 29.

By the end of Tuesday, 79 candidates were tentatively approved. Most of 159 prospects questioned have said they believe Kaczynski is guilty. His lawyers have focused their inquiries on prospective jurors' attitudes toward the death penalty.

One jury candidate was dismissed after she said she could not bear to see pictures of the Unabomber killings without being haunted forever.

"I have some concern about the long-term effects," said the woman.

"I don't mean to sound like such a wuss," the woman said. "But I could imagine there would be photographs that would be etched in my mind for the rest of my life."

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