

Clue and \$1 Million Reward In Case of the Serial Bomber

Stephen Labaton

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Unable to track down a serial bomber who has terrorized executives and college campuses for 15 years, Federal investigators today reached out to the public for help, disclosing a tantalizing clue and offering a \$1 million reward.

The bomber last struck in June after a six-year hiatus. He sent two innocent-looking parcels from Sacramento, Calif. When opened, they maimed a genetics scholar at the University of California at San Francisco and, two days later, a prominent computer science professor at Yale University in New Haven.

The authorities say the same bomber has sent 12 similar packages since 1978, killing one person and injuring 21. And they have little doubt, they said today, that he will strike again.

Although it is impossible to say when or where more explosive packages would be sent, the authorities are particularly concerned about the month of November. The bomber has occasionally sent packages around the anniversary dates of earlier bombings, and he has struck twice on Nov. 15.

In a clear sign that officials are frustrated that the case may have begun growing stale, investigators today made public new evidence in the hope that it might develop leads: a notation on material mailed by the bomber that the Federal Bureau of Investigation said was invisible to the eye and that investigators believe the bomber wrote. "Call Nathan R wed 7 pm," it read. The F.B.I. released a depiction of the notation. Discovery in June

Officials declined to say where they had found the notation, although they said it was discovered in June shortly after the packages were opened by Professors David Gelernter of Yale and Charles J. Epstein of the University of California.

At a news conference today, the Director of the F.B.I., Louis J. Freeh, and Inspector George Clow said the notation was found on an item that the Government received in June. The bureau has analyzed three items mailed in June: the two parcels and a letter sent about the same time from the bomber to The New York Times.

"Federal investigators feel that Nathan R. may have received a telephone call from the bomber last June," Mr. Freeh said. "We are asking members of the public, and Nathan R. himself, to call our toll-free number with any information they believe might be linked to the bomber." The number the Director gave is 1-800-701-BOMB.

The letter to The Times, like the two June parcels, was postmarked in June from Sacramento. It warned of "a newsworthy event" and identified its author as "a group calling ourselves FC," although investigators say the bomber is one person. The letter also promised to "give more information about our goals at some future time." Since then, the bomber has been idle.

For years, investigators from three Federal agencies have searched with no success for the suspect they have called the Unabomber, so named because he initially struck universities and airline companies.

The bomber has been seen only once, in a parking lot moments before a bomb exploded in 1987. He has left a string of baffling clues. Often, he has left the letters FC on some of the pieces of the bombs, and he meticulously crafts the deadly packages

by constructing even the most elementary components, making it extremely difficult to trace where the parts were bought. He has also gone for years without sending packages and then suddenly re-emerged by sending several within a few months.

His motive and method of selecting victims remain a mystery. Behavioral experts at the F.B.I. have theorized that because there are no links between the victims and because many of them have been on the cutting edge of computer sciences, psychology and genetics, the bomber may select his targets more for symbolic significance than because of any personal animus.

Based on the letter to The Times and the June bombings, investigators believe the bomber may periodically pick his victims from the columns of The Times or the 600 newspapers that use its news service. At least three of his targets have been featured in Times articles in ways that characterize them as leading figures in their fields.

After the lethal packages were received in June, Federal investigators opened up a task force in San Francisco and Sacramento and assigned 45 agents and support staff members to try to solve the case. But after setting up what one official has called a whole new bureaucracy, the Government has developed few new leads.

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