

# **The Unabomber's Media Pen Pals**

January 30, 2001

Barbara Walters got John and Patsy Ramsey. Diane Sawyer got Sammy Gravano. Oprah Winfrey once got Michael Jackson. But no talking head has succeeded in snaring Ted Kaczynski for a TV chat. But it has not been for a lack of trying (not to mention a certain amount of cloying and pandering).

The Smoking Gun has obtained a variety of letters sent to the imprisoned Unabomber by media figures seeking an audience with the convicted serial killer. These pitch letters are included in files recently donated by Kaczynski to the University of Michigan's Special Collections Library (which provided them to TSG).

Most of the letters try to convince Kaczynski that he'll get a fair shake in any subsequent report. In fact, many correspondents try to deftly curry favor with the jailbird, who apparently has done only one interview (with journalist Stephen Dubner, whose story ran in Time's October 18, 1999 edition). But since Kaczynski rejected all these come-ons, he likely realized that any story on him could not be too positive—it's rather hard to avoid touching on those three murders, 22 injuries, and 17 years worth of explosive devices. Hey, but a reporter's gotta try:

Good Morning America gets "completely honest." (1 page)

60 Minutes II disses 60 Minutes. (2 pages)

Katie Couric: Also writes perky. (1 page)

20/20: Address those "misconceptions." (1 page)

CNN's Greta Van Susteren: "You are an extremely smart man." (1 page)

Larry King Live: Hey, let's do the impossible. (2 pages)

The New Yorker gets cerebral. (2 pages)

The Roseanne Show: Rosie's also a "non-conformist." (1 page)

Wired: Are you getting that free subscription? (2 pages)

USA Network: Do our job for us. (1 page)

The Oregonian: On Walden and "solitude interrupted." (2 pages)

The Denver Post: My uncle had a one-room cabin. (2 pages)

The Ted K Archive

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