

The Unabomber Wants His Stuff Back

Kaczynski blasts government "shilly-shally" in new legal plea

August 7, 2003

August 7—Convicted Unabomber Ted Kaczynski has filed a lawsuit seeking the return of items seized from his Montana shack, claiming that the material is a boon for "serious researchers" and would "help to reveal the true facts" of his criminal case, *The Smoking Gun* has learned.

In a remarkable 150-page motion—most of which is handwritten—Kaczynski contends that federal prosecutors have ignored repeated requests for the return of his property, which was seized in April 1996. "There is no reason why the government should be allowed to shilly-shally indefinitely," Kaczynski, 61, argued in a recent U.S. District Court filing. In an August 4 "motion for decision," Kaczynski claimed that if investigators were allowed to dispose of his property, he would suffer "irreparable harm."

While bomb-making materials and some weapons were taken from Kaczynski's home, the mass murderer has focused his efforts on the return of documents, books, papers, and other assorted material that, he claims, were not connected to his 17-year bombing spree. For example, he is seeking the return of "two metal cans containing 'Secrets' box, paper clips and keys" and "one brown clasp envelope marked 'Autobiography.'" The description of those two items is contained in a 62-page government inventory of goods seized from the cabin (and which Kaczynski attached to a recent court filing).

He also included an eight-page list of books, scholarly papers, and maps that he wants back. Among the 257 books Kaczynski seeks are "Of Mice and Men," "Count Your Calories," "Harmless People," and "Mushroom Hunters Field Guide." He also wants the papers "On Being Sane in Insane Places" and "Studies of Stressful Interpersonal Disputations."

In an August 1 motion seeking the waiver of court fees, Kaczynski stated that, with the exception of a hunting rifle he valued at \$150, the seized items are of "negligible intrinsic financial value (though the documents are of great value as sources of information." But he added, "I have no idea what the property might be worth to collectors due to its 'celebrity' value."

In his bid for a fee waiver, Kaczynski listed his average monthly expenses as \$78 (postage and copy fees are the felon's main costs), noted that, as of July 23, his prison commissary account contained \$22.16, and reported that he owed "my alleged victims" \$36 million as a result of restitution orders and civil judgments.

If his legal maneuverings succeed, Kaczynski wants to have the seized possessions shipped to the University of Michigan's Special Collections Library, to which he has previously donated material, including letters sent to him by media figures seeking interviews. "Obviously I can't receive most of this property here at the prison, and it can't be returned to the place where it was originally seized because there is no one there to receive it," he wrote in a February letter to a federal prosecutor.

Kaczynski is serving a life term in the supermax penitentiary in Florence, Colorado, where inmate storage space is apparently limited.

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