



Unabomber fallout hits Berkeley

Unabomber fallout Hits Berkeley Locals profit from arrest of former UC prof

By Matt Segal

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First there was OJ. and now there's TJ. Theodore J. Kaczynski, that is. He is, of course, the former UC Berkeley mathematics professor whom federal authorities believe is the Unabomber. And his legend is speeding across Berkeley faster than a white Ford Bronco on an L. A. freeway.

Take Seewantee Keislar, for example, who didn't realize until last week that she was living in a landmark. That's when reporters from around the Bay Area and all over the country started calling her. They begged to come onto her property, take a photo of her house, squeeze any bit of information out of her they could.

Keislar has the misfortune of being co-owner of the tri-plex at 2626 Regent St. The cottage in the back, labeled 2628A Regent street, was at one point the home of Kaczynski. The address listing is in the 1967-68 campus directory. It was the young professor's first year at Berkeley. He had just received a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan.

But Keislar has told reporter and anybody else who has come calling that she and her husband, Allan, bought the property in 1992 from the Krishna Copy Center. None of the parties know anything about the Unabomber. But that hasn't stopped requests for interviews and pictures. Keislar, who is also pregnant, said one television reporter cursed and threatened to hit her when she asked him to stay off her property.

So now Keislar has taken some dramatic measures. First, she contacted her husband, who is currently in Pakistan, and explained to him about the phone calls and the unexpected visitors. Next, she retained Berkeley attorney Jim Chanin to help keep people away. And lastly, she decided to charge \$500 for each photograph taken on her property.

She said more that one news organization 'ready has all ready taken her up on that offer, although she declined to name names. "Several people, because they wanted pictures, she explained. Chanin was not available for comment this week, but his law associate Sue Ochs confirmed that Keislar called their office seeking counsel.

"He (Chanin) wants to prevent her from being harassed," Ochs said. The news organizations are doing their stories and that's all well and good, but there has to be a balance. She did call here and was very distraught."

Regent Street isn't the only place in Berkeley where the fever has struck. Berkeley-based Jolly Roger press, which published the Unabomber's manifesto in book form last year, has been swamped with requests for additional copies.

"People are calling and want hundreds of books. It really has picked up," said Jolly Roger spokesperson Johanna Seppalainen.

Jolly Roger has taken orders in the last week for more than 1,000 copies of the manifesto, which went to a second printing in January. Distributors in San Francisco, New Jersey, and even England have asked for large quantities. Individuals have also called requesting single copies. Seppalainen said that Jolly Roger's owner, Kris Lawson, who is away in Hong Kong will probably be stunned. "He may not even know the Unabomber is caught. I'm sure he will be very surprised to come home and find out we've sold so many books." If you live in the East Bay though, it's hard to imagine not knowing that a suspect is in custody.



Right: Ted Kaczynski on the UC campus in the late '60s (original photo courtesy of UC Berkeley); above: 2628A Regent St.

Newspapers, radio, and television have all made the Unabomber their top story since Kaczynski's arrest. The UC mathematics department, where Kaczynski taught until 1969, has received an estimated 75 to 100 calls about the former professor. "They have been pushy, some of them have been pushy," said Marsha Snow, a math department student services assistant. Snow said things calmed down a bit after a press conference was held by the mathematics department and the university last Thursday.

About 100 media organizations jammed the Madrone Room at the student union to hear Kaczynski's former colleagues explain how the suspect had once refused to go out for pizza and beer after speaking at a local mathematics seminar.

Tom Goldstein, dean of UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism, said the media hype reminds him of the spectacle surrounding serial killer Son of Sam in New York during the 1970s. Goldstein was a reporter for the New York Times as that story developed. "You have to balance trying to find out as much as you can about this person who is only a suspect and the public's appetite for information," Goldstein said. "There's a ghoulish aspect to it... It's regrettable to see this whole thing exploited."

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