



Crime & Punishment

James Alan Fox on criminal behavior and the justice system

MURDER AND MAYHEM

Feds auctioning Unabomber manifesto

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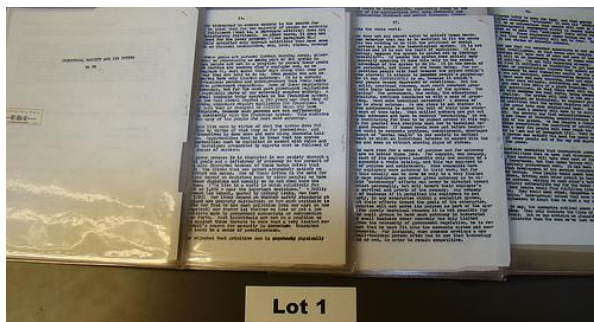
In this space just last week, I [wrote](#) critically about a Las Vegas gallery that is planning to exhibit various pieces of artwork produced by John Wayne Gacy and other notorious serial killers. Well, it gets worse: now the Federal Government is getting into the murderabilia business.

Compelled by a court order, the General Services Administration (GSA) today is launching an [online auction](#) of personal items that belonged to Unabomber□ Theodore Kaczynski, the reclusive misfit who killed three victims and injured several 23 others during an 18-year-long campaign of murder. Included on the auction block are his driver's license, birth certificate, academic transcripts and personal checks, which were recovered from the secluded Montana cabin where Kaczynski lived (the same structure that that drew large crowds when displayed at the Newseum in Washington, D.C.)

Of course, the prized centerpiece to the sell-off is the original 35,000 word manifesto that Kaczynski negotiated by threat of violence to have published in the Washington Post. Both the handwritten and typed versions will be sold to the highest bidder.

The auction has been mandated as part of \$15 million restitution order for Kaczynski's victims and their families. Although the objective is certainly laudable, hawking macabre property to those fringe collectors who wish to own a piece of infamy is hardly the appropriate way to raise money.

Rarely do serial killers have the financial means to contribute as restitution to the innocent people they harmed. For this reason, it is the government's place to establish and fund victim compensation programs. The GSA, and the rest of us by association, should not have to be disgraced in furthering the celebrity of undeserving people like Kaczynski.



TheUnabomber manifesto on the auction block