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UM STUDENTS WIN COVER OF NEWSWEEK WITH EXCLUSIVE UNABOMBER PHOTOS

By Betsy Cohen for University Communications

MISSOULA --

Being in the right place -- outside a federal building men’s room -- at the right time landed four University of Montana—Missoula journalism students a $26,000 contract and the cover of Newsweek.

Graduate students Steve Adams and Derek Pruitt, senior Gregory Rec and junior Bruce Ely got the shots the whole world wanted: photos of alleged Unabomber Ted Kaczynski on the day of his arrest.

On the afternoon of April 4, the students started down Highway 200 for the 83-mile trip from Missoula to Lincoln, Mont., after they heard the Unabomber suspect was being detained in Lincoln. En route they spotted a white Bronco speeding away from Lincoln and toward Helena. A straggly-looking man among the passengers caught their eye. Acting on a hunch, the students decided to follow that Bronco.

They weren’t without doubts. "I honestly believed that we’d get to Helena and four FBI guys would get out and go to dinner and laugh at us for following them the whole way," Rec said.

But as luck and perseverance would have it, their hunch was right and the four students were the only media on hand to photograph the FBI escorting Kaczynski into Helena’s federal
building. Once in the building, another hunch -- they figured "if we all had to go after our drive from Lincoln, the Unabomber did, too" -- led them to the men's room, Rec said. They heard voices inside the locked bathroom and waited until the agents brought Kaczynski out, yielding a photo that graces the cover of the April 15 Newsweek.

Another of the students' shots, taken as the agents and Kaczynski headed into the building, is the lead photo in the magazine's coverage.

When national media learned about the photos, the students were inundated with calls. "They were just feeding on us like sharks," Rec said. To avoid competing against each other, the four friends decided to sell their film as one package. They hired media distributor Gamma Liaison as their agent and landed a $26,000 contract with Newsweek.

So what do the foursome plan on doing with their cash?

"Pay off student loans," said Rec.

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**Note:** Writer Betsy Cohen is a journalism graduate student at UM.

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