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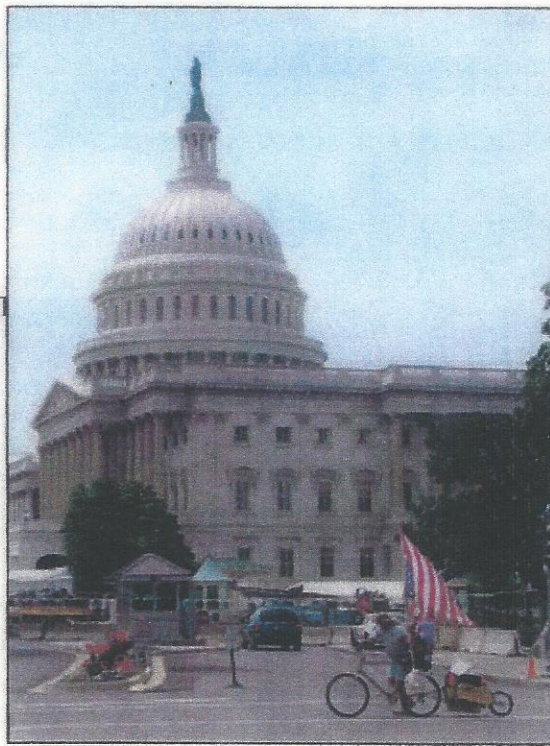
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Biking Utahn pursues a quirky D.C. protest

By
Christopher
Smith
The Salt
Lake
Tribune

WASHINGTON
-- Salt
Lake City
vagabond
Fred
Mauney
has spent
the past
few days
pedaling a
rusty
bicycle
around the
Capitol
grounds,
waving a
4- by 6-



Fred Mauney walks his bike in Washington, where the Utah vagabond is chasing his latest quest: reward money. (Christopher Smith/The Salt Lake Tribune)

foot flag that is purposefully hung upside down, trying to draw the attention of Uncle Sam -- or any passers-by, for that matter -- to his latest cause.

A rapid-talking character whose background is as colorful as it is hard to pin down, Mauney is no stranger to impromptu soap-boxing. During his off-and-on tenure in Salt Lake City, he rode a bike from Utah to the nation's capital to demonstrate against various national policies, he

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was an outspoken critic of airport security measures at City Council meetings, he paraded around the Sundance Film Festival in Park City one year with a sandwich board that read "I've got the stories, talk to me!"

Now Mauney is protesting the U.S. Postal Service's denial of his claim to a \$100,000 reward he says he is due for aiding in the identification of a man later convicted of murdering a Sandy postal worker on Interstate 15 in 1997.

"I'm standing up for the American people and standing up for postal workers," the homeless handyman and paralegal says during a break in his pedaling circuit, meant to tie into the U.S. Postal Service's sponsorship of a cycling team in the Tour de France. "They spend \$30 million a year on a bicycle team in Europe, but they won't give me what I deserve."

Mauney was a passenger in a pickup truck that came upon the early morning crime scene where 24-year-old Jose Garcia-Miramontes gunned down Lee Wayne Parker in a fit of drug-induced road rage six years ago in May. Garcia-Miramontes gave chase and fired at the vehicle Mauney was in before spinning out in the median, stealing a car and fleeing.

Based on witness descriptions provided by Mauney and others, and the abandoned auto, police arrested Garcia-Miramontes and in 1998 he was sentenced to at least 45 years in prison in 1998.

The U.S. Postal Service has a standard \$100,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of an unlawful killer of a postal employee "while engaged in or on account of the performance of their official duties."

Mauney applied for the reward after Garcia-Miramontes conviction, but in 1999 the Office of the Chief Postal Inspector denied the claim, determining that Parker was "not officially employed when murdered." Parker was in his personal vehicle on his way to work when he was killed.

Mauney subsequently sued the Postal Service in federal court over the denial, but his case was dismissed. A self-described good Samaritan, Mauney bristles at any suggestion that his demand for a reward may be viewed as selfish.

"Anybody that's against me getting this reward is selfish themselves, because they wouldn't have pulled up and tried to help," he says. "They're saying a post office employee's

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life isn't worth a plug nickel. They ought to just take those reward notices off the wall."

It's not necessarily a cause that resonates up and down the National Mall, where hundreds of yellow-shirted Fahm Gong protesters kneel in formation and a menagerie of panhandlers, Lyndon LaRouche pamphleteers and street preachers provide a daily display of America's First Amendment freedoms. And when the occasional tour group member informs Mauney that his flag is upside down, he is glad to explain the reason, pulling out documents, laminated newspaper articles, even a screenplay pitch.

After all, he has the stories.

"I was just telling the guards here at the Capitol, if they can do this to a postal worker, what about the reward if one of them gets killed?" said Mauney. "Once people know the facts of this case, they usually agree with me."

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