

# Stupid eBay by Francis Ferguson

## Number Three in a Continuing Series

After 21 years of experience on eBay – nothing should surprise me. Sadly, the wild and woolly world of the internet affords the unscrupulous “dealers” a platform to hawk their wares to those that do not know better. P.T. Barnum would have just chuckled at some of the things I have seen over the years. I visit eBay almost every day to look for items on my hit list. The odd/strange/weird things that I find, I often will mark for future reference to see what has happened. So, let us dive into what is on my list of late.



Figure C1

This is really special. The seller describes it as a partial sheet [Figure C1]. Well that is true to some degree as the other 86 stamps are truly not there. The price of \$4.75 with free shipping is a pretty good stretch from the CV of a single stamp of 25¢ -- that fantastic price is out in space when you realize that finding a whole sheet of this stamp in a discount postage box is a common item at almost every stamp bourse. The seller has been around since May of 2014 and poking around in the sold listing shows they have little experience selling stamps. This item has been listed at least 6 times and is currently an active listing. Rush to your computer and buy this rarely seen block of 14!

The stamps pictured in Figure C2 are all extraordinarily common, with no real worth beyond someone who is attempting to fill a hole on a page of used common U.S. modern postage. A penny or two a piece would be a reasonable offer. The seller is asking \$4.99 with free shipping. Oh, if this makes it any more palatable – all the proceeds go to charity. Of the NINE sets of these offered since this listing started 4 months ago, 5 sets have sold. On a good day these stamps are not even worth 25¢ let alone nearly \$5.



Figure C2



Figure C3

This listing warms the cockles of my heart. Originally, I was interested in the listing [Figure C3] because of the description: “US Plate Block of 8 - Scott # 655 - Thomas Edison -MNH - (1929) scri37”. Do you see a plate number anywhere on this block of eight? I certainly don't. This listing has been around since early last fall which is about when the seller

became an eBay seller in September of 2018. The seller has a lofty rating of 7. The sale price is \$19.99 with free shipping. Considering the CV of a single MNH stamp with decent centering is \$1.50, this really is a stretch. This “Plate Block” was listed at least 6 times before the listing was not renewed.



Figure C4

There are so many things wrong with this listing [Figure C4] it is difficult to type this without crying. For \$2,000 you can own this “US Stamp DOUBLE ERROR/EFO Sc# 842 Blind Perf Joint Line Strip of 3, SMALL HOLES” with free shipping. It is not an error in any way. Blind perforations happen frequently on Prexies and have no value beyond curiosity. While the Scott's catalog does have a dash after “small hole listing” – I am doubtful that this is actually a small hole variety. Without any expert paper behind this, the listing is a wish and

a dream. The seller has been around since June of 2013 and enjoys a 97% rating and this listing is currently active.



Figure C5

What a great stamp. Not. The seller who has been around since August of 2014 is asking \$7 for this stamp [Figure C5] with the outrageous price of \$3.99 for shipping/handling. The seller does not even bother to identify the stamp, just noting “ONE CENT FRANKLIN MISPERF \$7” as the listing. Does this stamp have any real value? That would be a no. The correctly identified stamp could be one of NINE different Scott’s numbers. I am not gambling on this one, nor should you. It is currently an active listing running for another 30 days. The visual distortion of this stamp that was taken with a camera is just annoying – use a flat-bed scanner or learn to use the camera properly!

This listing just makes me shake my head in amazement. The listing [Figure C6] has been active for at least 2 months and is currently active. The listing reads “2 US stamps - 8 cents Christmas - Giorgione, National Gallery Of Arts”. The seller does not even bother to list the correct Scott’s number of 1444. The CV of this stamp is irrelevant as sheets of these can be found at any stamp show in discount postage boxes for a large margin below face. The seller who has been active since April of 2014 wants \$4.99 for the pair with \$3.82 for shipping and handling. No returns are accepted. This misleading seller enjoys a 12-month feedback rating of 95.7%. I would suggest the seller should stick to other items and not stamps.

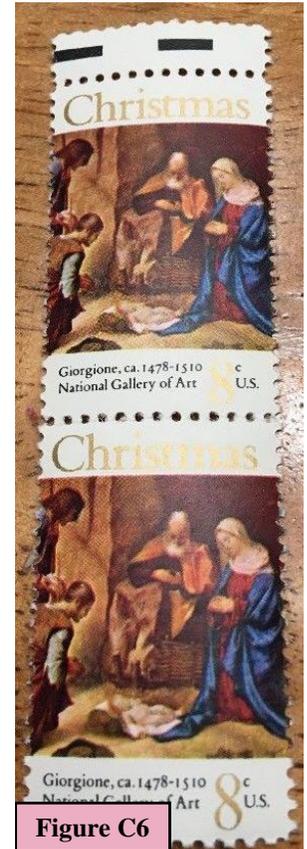


Figure C6



Figure C7

I have kept the best one for last. This highly successful eBay seller with a feedback rating of just short of 95,000 listed this item [Figure C7] a couple of weeks ago. It actually sold for \$134.32 against a CV of \$2,000. The listing reads “Highly popular issue! | Beautiful fresh appearance. | Sharp detailed impression. | Completely satisfying and pleasing appearance! | Fault free and sound in every possible respect unless otherwise noted or shown in photos!” Well -- that is fictional writing. The stamp as one can see, is seriously faulted -- with numerous serious problems. Those problems include two rounded

corners, a good size tear, a thin spot on the back, a scrape on the front and missing perforations. That said – in used condition this is an extraordinarily rare stamp. There is no expert paper behind this, so we will take it at face value. I also found it a little odd that nowhere in the listing was the correct Scott’s number used. That is very strange for such a well-versed eBay seller of many years.

In summation, I have always viewed the ability to obtain material on eBay and other sites with some degree of a jaundiced eye. I question what I see, especially if it does not make sense. While I will agree some of these listings are amusing in the attempt to separate you from your money, others are borderline fraud -- with misrepresented material at fantastic prices mixed with completely sound listings offering good material at decent prices. Where does this all end? P.T. Barnum knew the world well -- and frankly I have to agree with him. The world wide web will continue to be a difficult to police area ripe for exploitation and deceit – while there can be found those that are good with a moral compass that points in the correct direction.

Your thoughts are? I would like to hear them!