

Spying for charity



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In August, Arizona's own world-famous Brenda Priddy & Company—whose spy photography and CGI renderings of future models you have seen in all the major publications—decided to have some fun, by putting the new top-secret 2009 Jaguar XF Prototype up for sale on eBay. Well, okay, not the Jaguar itself, but rather the tantalizingly rare (and fun) "spy parts." And, typically for Priddy's efforts (Brenda is, among other things, a key player in having defibrillators installed in airports nationwide), the proceeds are going to charity of the winning bidder's choice.



Priddy auctioned a bag of camouflage from the not-yet-out 2009 Jaguar XF, a small bundle/wad of silver and black super-sticky duct-tape. And it is AUTHENTIC. They personally witnessed as an engineer peeled the tape off a prototype and threw it away in a garbage can at a remote gas station in the desert. Priddy then sent her trusted assistant (her daughter) dumpster diving to retrieve the valuable adhesive disguise—presumably a fine English import.

In total, the auction was set up to include the following:

- 1 small pile of authentic (well-used) Jaguar XF camouflage tape

- 1 12x18-inch ORIGINAL/SIGNED Jaguar XF color enlargement (not permitted to be used for publication)

- 2 rare limited edition we-can't-tell-you-or-we'll-have-to-kill-you-purple "espionage" pens from Brenda Priddy & Company

- If the winning bid were to go over \$75.00, they would throw in an official Brenda Priddy & Company "Espionage" hat

- And if it were to go over \$150.00, they'd throw in yet another 12x18 ORIGINAL/SIGNED Jaguar XF prototype color enlargement. The higher the bidding went—the more generous Brenda got.

And on top of all the goodies, Priddy paid all the eBay fees and even the shipping. (However, just to be on the safe side, the deal specified that if the eBay FEES were to end up over \$250—e.g. if the wad of tape itself were to sell for thousands—they would "assume the buyer has a LOT of money and the buyer will graciously pay any fees over the first \$250"... but of course even that was followed by "sound fair?" In an era of poison tea espionage in Europe, these folks obviously stand out as very nice spies.

The winning bidder got to choose where the purchase price

money would go, making a donation (in the amount of the high/winning bid—or more) direct to a charitable organization. (The organization was to send proof of the donation, plus a copy of their e-mail confirmation upon receiving funds from the buyer.) Organizations to choose from included:

- Peace Corps
- Make A Wish Foundation
- American Cancer Society
- Broadway Community
- Muscular Dystrophy Association
- Shriner's Hospitals for Children
- Fisher House
- March of Dimes
- American Heart Association

... and more. Or the winner was free to suggest another (and did).



So the come-on was clear: just think—you'll likely be the only one on your block with a bag of used duct tape...er...priceless camouflage from a prototype future Jaguar. And every last penny of the winning bid goes to a charity.

The payoff is good for everybody. The spy photography trade is of great interest to the enthusiast public, of course. But it's also a finely-honed game of cat and mouse, in which both the manufacturers and the spy photographers stand to gain, but in which

the manufacturers' engineers feign great disdain at being caught in the act. Once they get wind of the generosity of this charity auction, however, they will surely realize they are dealing with a spy photographer who has a heart of gold. And all Brenda's hours staking out the absolutely hottest (and coldest) spots on earth will be worthwhile.

THE RESULTS: Bidding was fast and furious

over 10 days. The first 24 hours or so saw bids start at \$10 and run up to \$105, ensuring the inclusion of a bonus hat. Then things sat tight for about five days, followed by a flurry bringing the high bid up to \$318. On the last day, duct tape fever kicked in at full octane, and the eighth bidder to enter, just checking in on that last day, prevailed (over a ninth). All in all, nine individual bidders entered 27 bids, with the winning bid coming in at \$405. This means they not only got the hat, but also the second 12x8 enlargement. And free shipping and eBay fees thrown in. The winner specified a donation to the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund, for children with leukemia and other cancers, headquartered in Jacksonville Beach FL and with offices also in East Rutherford NJ. ■