Subject: Re: FEDEX Trying to Outdo United Parcel Smashers
Posted by Thermionic on Sat, 24 Dec 2011 22:27:52 GMT
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Having been in the tube audio business for many years, I too have seen my share of massive blunders from the likes of FedEx, UPS, and USPS, with several production and custom amplifiers damaged in transit. However, two stand out as the most heartbreaking, largely in part because they were unrepairable and unreplaceable.

One was a pair of Heathkit W-4 monoblocks in fair condition, which were sent to me for restoration. The amps were packed well, with each being thickly wrapped in bubble wrap and placed in sturdy boxes, which were then placed in individual, heavy-duty outer boxes with several inches of foam peanuts between. Despite the stellar, double-boxed packing job, one amp's corner was smashed in and about a fourth of the chassis was deformed.

The other was a rare, factory-assembled Heathkit/Daystrom AA-151 that I'd bought from a friend in California. The amp was 100% original down to the power cord, with all the factory tubes, including the Mullard EL84 power tubes and GZ34 rectifier. All tubes tested 95% of new or better.

It was a true museum piece if I've ever seen one, in A+ mint condition, with not so much as a single scratch or scuff anywhere, and zero visible age deterioration. It looked as if it had been placed in a sealed container in 1962, and kept there until I bought it in 2004. I've yet to see another amp of anywhere near that vintage that was as perfect as that one, and it was very likely the most pristine AA-151 in existence. That is, until it crossed paths with the U.S. Postal Service.....

The shipping box was destroyed at the USPS hub in Dallas, so they placed the amp in another box with a note instructing me on how to file a damage claim. It didn't matter that they'd put no cushioning material in the box, because the amplifier was so damaged anyway. It looked like the fork of a lift truck had been ran through the box and into the amp.

Thermionic