The Scream: Art Crime Investigations and the Value of Theft to Art

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Tufts University

By Madeline Beck

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Introduction

On the chilly morning of February 12, 1994, two men entered the second floor of the National Gallery in Oslo, Norway. Entering via a ladder outside the building, they dropped down into the Gallery and departed with what can only be described as a Norwegian national treasure, leaving behind a note that read "thanks for the poor security." Ten years later on the balmy morning of August 22, 2004, two men entered the Munch Museum in Oslo, Norway, clothed in black ski masks and armed with pistols, ripping from the walls a different version of the same painting that had been stolen in 1994, along with another piece titled *Madonna*.

Today*, The Scream* by Edvard Munch [1863-1944] is one of the most popular paintings in the world, garnering over 500,000 visitors a year (according to Google Arts & Culture), making it the most famous artwork in Norway. The first version of *The Scream* was produced in 1893 during the Symbolist Movement, a precursor to the Expressionist Movement. This artistic movement emphasized imagination over reality, exactly what *The Scream* accomplishes. The scene depicts a figure in the foreground that is fluid and mid-scream while two men look on in the background, rooted in reality. This depiction is set against a swirling sky and is allegedly autobiographical of an experience by Munch in which his "mind was in an abnormal state" (The scream, 1893 by Edvard Munch). The piece evokes feelings of panic and anxiety perfectly encapsulating some of the key themes in Munch's *Frieze of Life*, a series of paintings (which also included Munch's *Madonna*) highlighting love, perturbation, and death. Additionally, the shared human emotions that the art summons, along with the amorphous persona of the screaming figure allows many to empathize with the piece. The Norwegian artist, Edvard Munch, produced several versions of his anxiety-inducing masterpiece, including two paintings done in tempera

and oil on cardboard (which were completed in 1893 and 1910), two colorful drawings made with pastel and crayon, and several lithographs of which there are estimated to be approximately 30. The two paintings, aside from being nearly identical, also share a provenance of theft, as both have been stolen from a Norwegian Museum within the last 30 years.

An offshoot of art crime (which also includes forgeries, fakes, money laundering, illicit trafficking, illicit excavation, cultural spoliation, and looting), art theft (see Appendix A for definition) contributes prominently to the illicit cultural property trade, which is valued at $10 billion annually according to UNESCO (Packard). In recent years, this high price tag has attracted a greater awareness to the dark side of the art world; however, the industry must also compete with the glorification of art theft as a result of Hollywood heist movies and general human interest. These movies, which often depict art thieves in dapper suits and glistening gowns cleverly outmaneuvering security lasers, have contributed to a general exaltation of art theft by the media. A heist movie lends itself to entertainment. Society takes pleasure in observing people behave with "skillful action," revels in the ability to "live vicariously through criminals" and resonates with "anti-capitalist themes" (Kalia). But, this is not the reality of art theft and is not the lens through which it should be viewed. There are seldom any billionaire art enthusiasts hoping to get their hands on a Goya to accent their villain lair; most crimes and break-ins are not "expertly committed;" and as Anthony Amore, the Director of Security and Chief Investigator at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum puts it, "The common motivator is money. In nearly every case, art is stolen for a financial gain" (Beck & Amore). The fact that art theft is still *theft* and that it can be violent and traumatizing for institutions and individuals alike is often overlooked.

Furthermore, as a result of society's glamorization of art crime, many of these criminals have felt comfortable speaking out about how they accomplished the crime they committed, with many going so far as to write autobiographies, conduct interviews, and participate in documentaries, (the route one of the thieves from the 1994 theft of *The Scream* took). So, while little is left to be unearthed about how certain works of art have been purloined, questions still remain. Both times *The Scream* was stolen, it was recovered and returned to its rightful museum, but how did that occur? What did that type of investigation look like?

This paper aims to explore how an art crime investigation is conducted, using the thefts of Edvard Munch's *The Scream* as a case study. Additionally, the change in the value of art after theft is also examined through both a cultural and economic lens, providing an answer to the question, does theft increase the value of art? The research in this paper pulls together existing information with interviews from some of the top professionals in the fields of art history, journalism, criminal intelligence, and security to provide readers with the opportunity to easily attain knowledge about art theft, specifically the thefts of *The Scream*, all within a singular, introductory document. The aim is to uncover a part of the art world that is generally not accessible to the public, due to a lack of resources and information, along with the use of confusing language and an assumed level of advanced art education. My hope is to break that down in a way that makes art theft a digestible concept because knowledge of humanity's collective cultural heritage, which is what art is, should be accessible and everyone should be made aware of the gravity associated with losing pieces of that heritage. Stolen art is not just stolen from a museum, it is stolen from all of humankind. Lost art is not just missing from a museum, it is missing from the fibers of our collective memories and from all of society. Art matters, which is why art theft matters.

Section 1: The 1994 Investigation

In 1994 a homeless man and an ex-pro soccer player stole the first version of *The Scream* (a893) from the National Gallery in Oslo, Norway. The theft occurred on February 12th at around 6:29 a.m. and took no more than 60 seconds (Dolnick). The thieves were in and out, using a ladder from a nearby worksite to climb to the second floor of the Gallery, smash a window, snip the painting from its wire, and take off in a stolen Mazda, later transferring to a stolen Audi in the case that someone had identified the car as they sped away from the museum. While the break-in did trigger an alarm, the guard on duty that night dismissed it as a fluke in the system and did not call the police until the alarm sounded again, set off by the fluttering of curtains as a result of the broken window now letting in a breeze. The guard also failed to recognize the theft as it was occurring in front of him despite having access to security monitors which displayed running footage from the outside of the building. Regardless of the initial oversights, less than three months later on May 7, 1994, the painting was recovered. Over the course of those three months, an in-depth investigation and sting operation occurred in an effort to find the lost painting along with its thieves.*

*These efforts were documented by many journalists and reporters around the world, but done most in-depth by Edward Dolnick in his book, *The Rescue Artist*, which is the primary account used in this research paper, unless stated otherwise.

1.1 The Initial Investigation (1994)

Inconveniently for Norwegian law enforcement, the timing of the theft (the painting was stolen on the opening day of the Winter Olympics, which were being hosted by Norway), in addition to the fame of the painting meant that all eyes were on Norway's law enforcement and their ability to recover *The Scream*. Their investigation would have to be quick and successful for the country's police force to maintain its reputation and dignity.

As is the case with all art robberies, when *The Scream* was stolen in 1994, the local police, in this case the Oslo police, had the first crack at investigating. On some level, the procedures involved in any theft or burglary also apply to cases of art theft. The initial steps of any thieving investigation are typically to conduct an "exhaustive forensic analysis" of the crime scene to collect physical evidence and determine "modus operandi," and then question all employees, volunteers, and others with access to the location where the theft occurred, followed by informants and sources (Beck & Amore). This being said, knowledge of certain factors like art periods and the art market and maintaining contacts within the art world are necessary for the police to ensure that investigations can operate smoothly and efficiently. Where the Norwegians started in February 1994 was with the generalized investigative practices involved in any theft.

Oslo law enforcement began by immediately examining the crime scene, looking at what was stolen versus what was not, and searching for fingerprints and other identifiable markings. Evidently, the thieves had worn gloves and had left no other traceable blemishes. The police also examined the note thanking the museum for poor security, identifying that it was written in colloquial Norwegian, meaning the thieves were likely from the region, but this was not conclusive (Dolnick). Law enforcement then turned to the surveillance tape, quickly realizing it would be of no help due to poor image quality. Calls for eyewitnesses were also put out, but none

materialized, although one anonymous tipster did alert the local newspaper of the event the morning it occurred, which is how the news was made public in the first place.

While no eyewitnesses emerged, countless false tips did, motivated by the National Galleries 200,000 kr reward for information leading to the recovery of *The Scream*. Rewards are often a factor in deciding to go public with the news of an art theft (an event that is often embarrassing to the reputation of museums and decreases the likelihood of future art loans), serving as an incentive to get thieves or anyone around them talking (Houpt & Radcliffe). Because the 1994 theft of *The Scream* was made public from the start, posting a reward for the painting was only natural. That being said, once a reward is posted, especially for a large sum, everyone under the sun begins to call in, hoping that whatever information they think they know is correct. As a result, the Norwegian police had to parse through and follow up on every claim, not knowing whether the details they were being provided might lead to a breakthrough or a dead end. These claims included one by two priests, Ludvig Nessa and Børre Knudsen, who had recently "promised to pull off a "spectacular" protest to publicize" their anti-abortion cause, Action New Life (Dolnick). Knudsen even hinted that the National Gallery would receive their painting back "if the national television station agreed to show an anti-abortion film called *The Silent Scream*" (Dolnick). The practice of holding art hostage as an act of protest is not uncommon; however, in this case, it was quickly determined that Knudsen and Nessa had zero information regarding the whereabouts of the Munch masterpiece and were simply using the theft to garner publicity for their cause.

The Norwegian police also looked into leads within the Oslo criminal community, specifically with the Tveita Gang. Here, it is important to note two patterns that are common in art theft: 1) art theft is typically a "profit-driven crime" and 2) offenders often have links to other

crimes (Nicita & Rizzolli). These facts are what drew the police to start investigating the Oslo underworld.

The Tveita Gang (who will play a larger role in the second theft of *The Scream*), was a criminal group of around 200 members that was particularly active within Oslo during the 1980s and 90s (Dolnick 160). Throughout April and May of 1994, the Oslo police began examining members of this gang, looking for possible suspects in the theft of *The Scream*. One member in particular, Pål Enger, was at the center of this investigation. A former Norwegian soccer player turned thief, Enger (along with an accomplice named Bjorn Grytdal) had previously stolen *The Vampire*, another painting by Edvard Munch, from Oslo's Munch Museum in 1988. This painting had already been recovered by the Norwegian police and both Enger and Grytdal had recently completed time in prison for their stunt. It was therefore only logical to suspect the Munch-loving thieves were involved in the current theft, especially when the painting they had stolen was worth an estimated 70 million dollars at the time (according to Dolnick). As it would turn out, the police were right to suspect Enger and Grytdal, as both were involved in the 1994 theft of *The Scream*; however, at the initial start of the investigation, law enforcement had no evidence against the two men and both had alibis. For now, the lead was a dead-end.

As a result of the pressure put on the Norwegian police force for results, and coming up empty-handed from their initial investigation, Leif Lier, the Norwegian detective in charge of the case of *The Scream*, decided to place a phone call to Scotland Yard, the metropolitan police in London requesting the help of their *specialized* art crime squad.

In the art world, London is the sun which all art revolves around; it is the epicenter. As a result, an estimated 60% of stolen artwork travels to or through the major city, which has led the 32 boroughs that make up *Greater London* to develop a robust art crime team, the Art and

Antiques Unit, composed of detectives associated with Scotland Yard who track down stolen and lost art and are better known as the Art Squad. In countries around the world, especially those in Europe where art can be found in village squares, small churches, and country estates in addition to museums, art crime teams exist as a branch of the nation's police force. However, these branches often receive little funding, largely due to the backlash that would come from taxpayers, civil servants, and the police themselves if as much time, money, and resources went toward protecting and rescuing stolen art for wealthy owners and institutions as it did to solving homicides and protecting civilians. More police involvement typically occurs if "conventional" crime coincides with art crime, exemplified by cases in which civilians are endangered by thieves as they attempt to make off with stolen artwork (as was the case with the 2004 theft of *The Scream*).

Unlike in England, Norway has "no units specializing in art and cultural heritage crime," so most art crimes are handled entirely by local law enforcement using generalized investigative skills, as discussed earlier (Runhovde 1731). Somewhat confusingly, in Norway, art crime actually falls under the category of environmental crime. So, while there are police forces dedicated to the area of environmental crime as a whole, these officers do not only handle occurrences of stolen artwork, but also issues like illegal hunting, building violations, and animal welfare. The Norwegian police therefore lack the training that specialist police investigators, like the Art Squad, receive on "look[ing] into the distribution of artwork, know[ing] which external experts to turn to, understand[ing] the forensic potential in art theft investigations, and generat[ing] investigative hypothesese suitable in the context of art thefts" (Runhovde 1732). For this reason, Scotland Yard's Art Squad was asked to assist in the investigation of *The Scream* by the Norwegians.

As for Scotland Yard, they possessed detectives who were highly interested in rescuing *The Scream* for administrative and cultural purposes. Often specialized units like the Art Squad are first on the chopping block when law enforcement has to make budget and department cuts. Because art crime investigations can be conducted using solely the generalized practices of any theft investigation, the knowledge of specialized groups is often undervalued (police specialization does in fact allow art crime investigations to operate more smoothly and efficiently as supported by the 1994 investigation of *The Scream*). The Art Squad, hopeful that a victory like successfully recovering *The Scream* would preserve their unit from future dismantling, were eager to get involved in the investigation, despite the fact that it was completely outside of their typical jurisdiction. This being said, the Art Squad was able to justify their involvement because of the celebrity status of *The Scream*. In highly publicized cases involving famous works of art, the police can typically get more involved even though there may not be any clear "conventional crime" committed because the artwork's stardom leads the public to rally around the rescuing of a shared piece of cultural heritage. This was the argument the Art Squad used to convince their superiors that their expertise was needed in Norway on a case that had nothing to do directly with London. They argued that the art hung in museums worldwide was a part of humanity's collective birthright and was therefore worth saving. In the end, Scotland Yard agreed to extend its resources to their fellow Europeans, the Norwegians.

This is where Charley Hill enters the scene. A man characterized by his duality (an introverted extrovert, a carefree perfectionist), Charley Hill was an English-American cop who became one of the most successful and well-known art detectives of all time, recovering over 100 million dollars worth of lost art throughout his 20+ year career. The son of an American soldier, Charley became accustomed to new environments, new schools, and discovering new

ways to fit in early on, shaping him into the perfect detective; a chameleon fit for any situation with a penchant for flirting with danger. As part of the Art Squad, Charley was assigned to the case of *The Scream* by his boss, John Butler, who thought Hill perfect for the job, considering the English-American's success in recovering the artworks stolen from Russborough House (including Vermeer's *Lady Writing a Letter*) a year prior.

1.2 Investigative Prep

Charley Hill began investigating the theft of *The Scream* by determining the motive. Beyond the initial examination of the crime scene, the first part of any art theft investigation is trying to understand the motive of the thieves in order to design an investigation that will ultimately ensure the return of the stolen artifact(s). That is the number one goal in an art theft, securing the stolen property; catching the thieves is a secondary priority. Charley started parsing out the thieves' incentives by looking at why specifically the burglars had chosen to steal *The Scream*, looking at the price of the piece and its fame. He ultimately concluded that unless the crooks were "art motivated thieves" intent on keeping the work for their own admiration or were intending to destroy the piece, they were likely looking to turn a profit (the primary motive of art theft), the largest of which they would find through ransom as they would soon realize that the fame of *The Scream* pretty much ensured it could not be sold (see Section 3 for further explanation) (Nicita & Rizzolli). With this information in mind, the Art Squad decided that a sting operation, in which the art crime unit set up a scenario where it looked like the thieves would be able to turn a profit for the painting, would best lure the burglars and artwork into the open, allowing law enforcement to rescue *The Scream*.

With this type of operation in mind, Charley Hill, the man behind this rescue mission, began the necessary preparations to plan out the scheme. As part of the sting, Charley would be going undercover, so he started with the development of his character's pseudonym and backstory, eventually deciding to play the role of Christopher Charles Roberts,[1] an American art dealer working on behalf of the very well-endowed Getty Museum in Los Angeles, California. Working for the Getty was a strategic move on Charley's part based on the assumption that the thieves would likely try and ransom the famous artwork.

It is a rule of thumb and sometimes an official law that governments are not allowed to get involved in the ransom of national treasures. In this case, a ransom would involve the thieves holding onto a piece of art in hopes that the museum or agency that had insured the artwork (*The Scream* was not insured), would pay the thieves some sort of compensation for its return. Governments do not get involved for two reasons: firstly, it is not ethical; they cannot justify giving over taxpayers' dollars to thieves; secondly, it sets a bad precedent that encourages greater theft. Charley therefore had to think critically about who would be able and willing to pay a ransom for *The Scream*. He ultimately picked the Getty because it was a) a museum and therefore had no barriers to participating in a ransom and b) the institution's wealth and reputation for spending large amounts of money gave his made-up persona extra credibility. Charley also concocted a convincing argument behind why the Getty would be interested in the painting in the first place, expressing a desire to buy back *The Scream* on behalf of the National Gallery in Oslo who would be loaning the piece to the Getty to display along with *Christ's Entry Into Brussels in 1889*, by James Ensor, a predecessor to Munch. To ensure that his new identity

[1] For the sake of clarity, I will be referring to Charley Hill by his government name and not as Chris Roberts throughout this paper, even when describing instances when Hill was undercover.

was believable, Scotland Yard reached out to the Getty Museum who agreed to provide Hill with an employee ID and personalized stationery as a favor to Scotland Yard for helping them rescue some of their own artwork. The Getty also agreed to doctor their internal records, specifically payroll for the last seven years, to include Christopher Roberts in their system, and to add Roberts to their "in-house records," posing him as a "roving scout permanently assigned to Europe, and working directly (and exclusively) for the director" (Dolnick 54). The addition of Roberts into the Getty's records ensured that any thief researching the man from the Getty would believe that is who Christopher Roberts really was (not actually an undercover cop named Charley Hill). The detail about Roberts being a roving scout reporting solely to the director accounted for the fact that no one at the Getty would know who Roberts was if asked. Christopher Roberts looked like a real employee.

While the Getty Museum's involvement in a criminal investigation might not be believable to the average art historian, Hill trusted that the cover would be convincing enough to fool *The Scream's* thieves. These were clearly not highly skilled professional art thieves, but rather common crooks looking to get rich. Christopher Roberts' connection to the Getty would provide Hill with the credibility needed to convince the burglars that he was someone who was legitimately looking to buy back *The Scream*.

Besides creating a believable false persona, prep for the investigation also included research into Munch and *The Scream* itself. Hill spent hours poring over information regarding the life of Edvard Munch and the background behind *The Scream's* creation along with different interpretations of the piece. The reasoning behind his studying was twofold. Firstly, Hill had to ensure he could talk art in order to play the role of museum curator accurately. The possessors of the masterpiece would not be forthcoming with their trust; they would be cautious of undercover

cops and other thieves, so Hill had to be able to convince them he was the real deal in order to gain their confidence and eventually the painting. Being able to speak about *The Scream* astutely gave Hill the capacity to do just that; he could drop facts and information throughout conversations, but was also prepared if the artwork's possessors decided to grill him. Secondly, Charley had to study up on the actual painting itself, the brushstrokes, craquelure, and minute details so that he would be able to authenticate the piece when the time finally came. For Hill, the key identifier of the 1893 version of *The Scream* was the precise location of the drops of wax on the cardboard. Evidently, when Edvard Munch set about creating *The Scream* in 1893, he blew out a candle, splattering wax onto his piece in areas "close to the screamers' left elbow," and "further to the right, across the top railing" (Dolnick 88). These wax splotches came to serve as an "impossible-to-forge signature," as they would be nearly impossible to reproduce, especially if you were unaware of their existence in the first place. Charley Hill was not going to be duped by a fake (Dolnick 88).

1.3 Coaxing out the Criminals

With the preparation completed and the false leads out of the way, the sting operation was ready to be put into motion. In April 1994, two months after the theft of *The Scream* and having heard nothing from the thieves, "Scotland Yard decided it was time to coax the criminals out from hiding" (Dolnick 91). The cajoling started by spreading the word that the Getty was interested in obtaining *The Scream*. Scotland Yard tapped into their network of informants and shady professionals within the art world to circulate the Getty's interest. The Art Squad also advised the National Gallery to make a brazen announcement stating that all information about *The Scream* be directed toward the institution's chairman of the board, Jens Kristian Thune. This

announcement ended up being what eventually coaxed *The Scream's* possessors to start talking, a breakthrough that came on Sunday, April 24, 2004.

As it would turn out, Thune had a cousin by marriage, Einar-Tore Ulving, an art dealer. Ulving had recently been approached by a man whose name is unknown, but who is referred to by the pseudonym Tor Johnson, in *The Rescue Artist*, by Edward Dolnick. Johnson was a suspicious character who had been imprisoned for 12 years, after which he developed a passion for buying and selling paintings, which is how Ulving and Johnson had crossed paths. Johnson, aware that Ulving was somehow related to Jens Thune, informed the art dealer that he "knew some people… who could arrange for *The Scream* to be returned to the National Gallery" (Dolnick 95). Johnson also encouraged Ulving to "keep an eye on the newspaper" over the next few days, for evidence that his tip was substantial (Dolnick 95). Ulving quickly phoned Thune to advise him of Johnson's tip. Thune reported the information to Lief Lier and Scotland Yard. The next day, the Norwegian newspaper, *Dagbladet*, reported that the frame of *The Scream* had been found.

On Monday, April 25 the *Dagbladet* newspaper offices received a call from an anonymous tipster claiming to have information about *The Scream*. The informant gave nothing but directions to a general location to the chief crime reporter, Gunnar Haltgreen. Haltgreen picked up a newspaper photographer and the chief restorer at the National Gallery, Lief Plahter, and drove them in the direction the informant had pointed him. There, in the grass by a bus stop in Nittedal, Norway, was the frame of *The Scream* (found without fingerprints), as authenticated by Plahter. Notably the frame was empty, and the artwork itself was nowhere to be found. This discovery, which was announced to the public the next day, was both good and bad news for the police. On the one hand, it meant that law enforcement was now dealing with the real criminals,

these people were not “hoaxsters,” they had solid information about the whereabouts of the famous masterpiece. Additionally, the frame being found in Norway was evidence that the art itself was likely still in the country, narrowing down the physical location of the piece to an extent. On the other hand, the painting being removed from its frame increased the work's vulnerability and the likelihood that it could be destroyed beyond repair.

1.4 Setting the Sting in Motion

A tangible lead meant it was time for the sting operation to kick into high gear. The Norwegian police notified Charley Hill, catching him up on the key players: “Johnsen, an ex-con; Ulving, an art dealer playing the role of middleman” (Dolnick 107). With this information, Hill immediately contacted Ulving, posing as Chris Roberts, an interested representative from the Getty Museum, looking to connect. Hill claimed to be based in Brussels and gave him a phone number in Brussels by which to contact him, ensuring zero indication toward the involvement of Scotland Yard. Hill suggested that the two men meet in Oslo at the Oslo Plaza Hotel (so that the painting did not leave the country and so that the entire operation could be easily monitored by the Norwegian police) on May 5, 1994. Ulving said he would be there, suggesting Hill bring a sum of £500,000 in cash. Hill agreed.

Scotland Yard provided Hill with the cash necessary for the deal (why the Norwegian police did not front the cash, is unclear). The plan was not to hand over the money to the thieves, but to use it as bait to lure them into revealing the location of the artwork. To ensure the burglars were convinced that this was a real deal and not a police setup, the money could not be fake and they had to see it with their own eyes as proof that Chris Roberts was legitimately interested in procuring the painting. For sting operations like this one, the police have access to cash, which

they guard throughout the operation to ensure that it does not fall into the wrong hands. In addition to Hill and the money, the London police force also sent Sid Walker (a pseudonym per Dolnick) and John Butler to Norway. Walker was also an undercover cop, who for his part would be playing the role of Hill's bodyguard and would be protecting the cash. John Butler would stay behind the scenes, ensuring the operation went smoothly. At the Oslo Plaza, Hill, Walker, and Butler were all set up in different rooms on different floors and Butler's room was outfitted as a "command bunker" with the help of the Norwegian police (Dolnick 109). The plan was for Walker to arrive first with the money and for Hill to arrive last.

It is important to note, that in sting operations, the goal is to convince the crooks that this is not a setup, but the real deal. They need to feel confident that they are not being tricked. It is therefore crucial to cast undercover operatives astutely. For his part, Charley had to play into the stereotypes of an art connoisseur, because that was what the thieves were expecting. He would have to dress sharply, spend money carelessly, and strike a balance between arrogant American and intelligent art expert. A key part of persuading "the bad guys" that they are encountering a real situation is casting correctly and possessing convincing acting skills.

1.5 Persuading & Convincing

When Charley Hill arrived in Oslo on May 5th, playing the role of Chris Roberts, he was greeted by Ulving and Johnsen in the lobby of the Oslo Plaza. The three men relocated up to the hotel's rooftop bar. Walker, who had been keeping a close eye from a distance, was noticed by Johnsen at the bar after already being noticed in the lobby. This is where Hill introduced the two Norwegians to his "bodyguard." No smart man would travel around with £500,000 in cash without having some muscle to protect himself and the money. Hill then shifted the topic of

conversation to the Getty's alleged plan to highlight *The Scream* alongside *Christ's Entry into Brussels in 1889*. During that first interaction "there was no real agenda except to convince Ulving and Johnsen that they were indeed dealing with the Getty's man" (Dolnick 111). Hill could not be too jumpy about getting a deal in motion lest he blow his cover; instead he had to approach the two men with caution and normalcy, establishing comfortability and proving to them he was who he claimed to be. Meanwhile, Charley used that initial conversation to gauge the two crooks he was dealing with. Being able to read people is one of the most valuable tools for a detective and involves looking critically at behavior and body language, along with trusting one's intuition. The skill is necessary for deciphering motives, understanding certain situations, predicting future conduct of crooks (and thus your future actions), and adapting to varying obstacles. While everyone is different, experience helps trained detectives to look for certain behaviors and patterns. Hill, for instance, picked up on the fact that Johnsen was lost during conversations about art, proving his "art collector" persona was in fact a guise. Johnsen was a hard and true criminal, on high alert, and ready to act on instinct; Charley would have to behave cautiously around him to avoid making the felon feel uneasy or suspicious. Ulving, on the other hand, was a shady, yet knowledgeable art dealer, whose "self-importance made him vulnerable" (Dolnick 111). Charley would have to speak intelligently on the topic of art around Ulving and decided he would indulge the man in conversation about his alleged "glamorous lifestyle," which Ulving seemed to share (Dolnick 111).

When the conversation ended that evening, Johnsen requested they go through with the deal the next morning, to which Hill agreed, suggesting the group meet for breakfast in the hotel restaurant. On the morning of May 6th, Hill, Ulving, and Johnsen, with Walker in tow met at the Oslo Plaza to begin the deal. Unfortunately, also being held in the hotel restaurant the morning of

May 6th was the Scandinavian Narcotics Officers Annual Convention, which meant there were more than 200 cops in the restaurant along with the two crooks and a colleague who was the main detective on an undercover mission playing the Man from the Getty, not a coworker. The mission could implode at any moment, and Hill was stuck. He could not request a change in location without seeming on edge, which would be out of character, thus threatening to blow his cover. Luckily for Hill, he did not have to request the change of locale. Feeling uneasy about the sheer amount of law enforcement professionals in the same room as he, Johnsen decided to take a walk while Ulving and Charley ate breakfast, after which the three men regrouped in the hotel's coffee bar. It was in the new location that Charley asked Walker to show Johnsen the money, which had been reduced to £350,000 by the thieves for unknown reasons, converted into Norwegian krone, and was at present sitting in the safe of the hotel lobby. This moment was crucial since in seeing the money, Johnsen felt as though this deal was a reality. "Talking about it is one thing. Seeing it is something different" (Dolnick 117). Following his sneak peek, Johnsen instantly became more chatty and involved in the discussion, ready to exchange the artwork for the cash. That was until he spotted an undercover cop sporting a bullet-proof vest sitting at the bar.

Apparently, the Norwegian police had decided to send in backup surveillance without communicating with Scotland Yard. Their officer was hardly undercover and had been blatant about his investigating, risking to blow the covers of both Walker and Hill along with endangering the entire operation. The lack of expertise exhibited by the Norwegian police, which continued to complicate the mission, is in part because "Norwegian police officers lack the level of specialist knowledge deemed necessary to investigate offenses relating to art and cultural heritage," as concluded in a study titled *Perspectives on Police Specialization in Art Theft*

Investigation (Runhovde 1732). As mentioned previously, unlike the Art Squad, Norwegian law enforcement is not equipped to handle specific cases of art theft. This lack of expertise endangered *The Scream's* rescue mission multiple times, highlighting why police specialization in art theft investigation is necessary to begin with.

Hill, with his years of expertise recovered quickly, explaining the cop's presence as a consequence of the fear incited by the Oslo Accords (which had been signed in Oslo only months prior) that a possible terrorist attack could occur in Norway along with wanting to protect the attendees of the Scandinavian Narcotics Officers Annual Convention. In a sting operation, and covert detective work in general, there is a strategic way of lying, which Hill is skillfully displayed in this situation. When undercover officers lie throughout a sting, they lie about the big, memorable things, not the small details. This accomplishes two things. Firstly, it ensures that they will not get tripped up forgetting their lies. Secondly, "if you try to remember too much, then you won't act naturally" (Dolnick 116). The whole point of a deceptive operation, like a sting, is that it looks natural; that it looks so normal, a crook does not get suspicious, but rather feels relaxed enough to produce the outcome that law enforcement wants. If a cop lies too much it threatens the entire scheme.

Despite Hill's convincing and Tor Johnsen's own wishes that the deal be completed that morning, the presence of the officers at the narcotics conference had scared the felon away from finalizing the exchange that day. Or so Hill thought. Later that same evening, just before midnight, Johnsen and Ulving showed up outside Charley Hill's hotel. They told Charley to meet them in Ulving's car. Realizing that this was potentially a dangerous situation, Hill got into the vehicle but left the door slightly ajar. The undercover detective then let the thieves know that he would not be going anywhere with them that evening. They were joined at this point by a

stranger, a man who ended up being Bjorn Grytdal, another felon involved in the theft of *The Scream*. Grytdal was the man with actual access to the painting. Later that evening (and at the time, unbeknownst to Hill) Grytdal would force Ulving to drive him as he picked up *The Scream* and deposited the masterpiece at Ulving's summer house in Åsgårdstrand, a small town about an hour outside Oslo, and ironically, where Edvard Munch lived and where *The Scream* is supposedly set.

Ulving wanted to get the deal done that night, but Hill was adamant that it could be done in the morning. The criminals trusted Charley at this point; they had seen the money; they believed the deal was legitimate. Now Hill had the power, he could start making some demands because he possessed something the criminals wanted and were so close to obtaining. Charley reiterated that he would not be driving anywhere in the dark with these shady characters in a foreign country. Instead, he paid for Johnsen to stay in a room at the Plaza for that night, so Johnsen could ensure Charley did not go anywhere before their deal was finalized, in an effort to ease concerns. Then Hill notified Butler and Walker that the exchange would be taking place the next morning, and not in the hotel as originally planned, but rather in an unknown location, of which he had yet to learn. With this in mind, the only plan the three men had going into the next morning was that Walker would take the £350,000 and transfer it from the Plaza's safe to a room at a different hotel to safeguard the money.

On the morning of May 7, 1994 Charley Hill and Syd Walker met Tor Johnsen downstairs in the lobby of the Oslo Plaza. From there, Walker drove the three men to a restaurant in Dramman, Norway, a 40-minute drive outside of Oslo, as directed by Johnsen. Here, they met up with Ulving who was accompanied by Grytdal. The five men went into the restaurant and came up with a plan. Walker would drive Johnsen and Grytdal back to the Oslo Plaza while

Ulving would drive Hill to the location of the painting. Once Hill was in possession of the *The Scream* he would phone Walker who would hand over the money to the two crooks. Then they set off, each in their own direction.

At midday, Hill and Ulving arrived at Ulving's summer house in Åsgårdstrand. Ulving went into the basement, emerging with *The Scream.* The painting had been wrapped in a blue bed sheet and was handed over to Charley Hill along with the brass nameplates from its frame. Hill, looking for the location of the candle wax, authenticated the artwork immediately. Charley and Ulving then took the masterpiece to the nearest hotel after which Charley dismissed Ulving, sending him home while he waited with the artwork for the Norwegian police to pick him up, promising to call Walker to transfer the money. Ulving was unaware that the police would be the ones collecting Hill and *The Scream* from the hotel and in reality, Charley did not call Sid Walker, but rather John Butler, letting his boss know his location, along with the fact that the painting had been acquired.

Meanwhile, back at the Plaza, Walker was waiting in his hotel room with Johnsen and Grytdal, trying to keep the crooks occupied until the Norwegian police came up to make their arrests. The Oslo surveillance crew stationed outside the hotel keeping watch over the operation should have alerted the arrest team and John Butler of the trio's location. However, the surveillance crew had somehow missed the arrival of Walker and the felons back to the Plaza and thus assumed that they were either still at the restaurant or on their way back, but most importantly, that Walker, Johnsen, and Grytdal were not at the hotel. Further chaos ensued when two Norwegian police officers showed up at Walker's door not to make arrests, but rather holding Walker's bag of money in their plain-clothes police uniforms. The officers thought Walker was alone in the room and had been instructed to hand the money over to the English

undercover cop. The Norwegian police forces' plan was for Walker to present the cash to the criminals (who they assumed would arrive after Sid, and certainly not with him), cueing law enforcement to surge in and make arrests. This being said this plan was never communicated to Scotland Yard, so Walker was completely caught off guard. The crooks immediately began attacking the police and Sid, still in character, had to play along in order to preserve the operation and his cover. Thinking on his feet, Walker decided to run out of the hotel with Johnsen, knowing the Norwegian police had surrounded the site and could arrest the criminal as he tried to make a run for it. However, the Norwegians messed up once again, missing Johnsen as he made his exit, in the end only arresting Grytdal.

The Norwegians' lack of communication with Scotland Yard and unpreparedness can once again be attributed to their lack of training when it comes to art crime. Additionally, because the Norwegian local police is typically in charge of handling art crime cases alone, they were not used to working with another much more experienced team, like the Art Squad, which specializes specifically in recovering stolen pieces of fine art. That being said, luckily for the Norwegians, Johnsen turned himself in an hour after his escape, likely because he assumed he would eventually be caught and that if that was the case, it was better to cooperate.

In the end, four men were arrested in connection to the 1994 theft of *The Scream*. They included Pal Enger (the brains behind the operation), and William Aasheim, the two men who had actually stolen *The Scream*, as well as Bjorn Grytdal and Tor Johnsen. At the trial, Enger and Aashiem were charged with theft, and Grytdal and Johnsen with handling stolen property. Hill and Walker testified in the trial from London behind screens, keeping their identities anonymous. All four men were sentenced to prison; however, all but Enger were set free after appealing their conviction on the basis that Walker and Hill had entered Norway using fake identities, deeming

their testimonies as inadmissible. Despite Hill's belief that Ulving was shadier than he appeared, the art dealer came off unscathed, spending no time in jail. This being said, the criminals' arrests were but a secondary victory. The real triumph was the return of *The Scream* to the National Gallery, unharmed.

1.6 Section Conclusion

The 1994 theft of *The Scream* was monumental for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, the publicity surrounding the theft of a masterpiece like *The Scream* highlighted the prevalence of art theft and art crime in general, serving as a reminder to the public about the necessity to protect the pieces of our collective cultural heritage that hang in the world's museums. Today, the first version of *The Scream* hangs in the new National Museum behind a sheet of bulletproof glass and under the constant observance of guards who ensure the safeguarding of the national treasure. While the physical protection of the artwork is certainly a step in the right direction, the 1994 theft in particular also spotlighted areas that the Norwegian National Police could improve internally. Training agents to specialize in art crime investigations would certainly help alleviate a lot of the misunderstanding and logistical issues that the Norwegian police ran into and created during the 1994 investigation. Specialization, along with effective collaboration is in fact necessary if we aim to effectively combat art crime.

Another key component of effective training that this investigation underlines is the importance of having trained officers who do their due diligence throughout an investigation. Charley Hill provides an excellent example of the traits and practices an effective undercover operative needs to possess to be successful. He shows the value in conducting research before going undercover and highlights how to propitiously ascertain the motivation of thieves and

think creatively about designing an undercover mission that will ultimately achieve his goal, in this case rescuing stolen artwork. Undercover, Hill showcases how investigators need to be able to quickly think on their feet, remain calm, and thoroughly convince their counterparts that they are who they claim to be, assuring the crooks do not suspect any association with law enforcement. Hill's success comes partly from his own personality traits, but can also be attributed to experience and specialization, underscoring the importance of both factors in the field of art crime investigation.

The 1994 investigation also serves as a key example of a sting operation. This case in particular held the perfect circumstances for conducting this type of operation because of the "enticing" aspect of a sting, which in this case was used to lure the actual criminals (and the painting) out into the open. This sting operation in particular (and the majority used in art crime investigations) relied on the the most important factor of any art crime investigation: that the primary goal was to secure the stolen art; catching the criminals is a secondary concern.

Art is an important part of the shared cultural heritage of human beings and it encapsulates the human experience. For these reasons, it is important to take art crime seriously and to recover stolen artwork so that the world can once again share in the beauty of another human's creation. Ultimately the 1994 investigation of *The Scream* was successful because it accomplished just that.

Section 2: The 2004 Investigation

Unlike the recovery mission that occurred in 1994, there is less public information available regarding the return of *The Scream* and *Madonna* which occurred in 2006. What we do know is as follows. A little over ten years after the 1893 version of *The Scream* was stolen from the National Gallery in 1994, the 1910 version of the artwork was stolen from Oslo's Munch Museum, along with another Munch painting titled, *Madonna*. The art was stolen on August 22, 2004 at approximately 11:20 am. At the time, there were around 70 visitors in the museum, along with four guards. Two men in all black wearing balaclavas and hoods, entered the museum via the side door of the cafe, bypassing the guards at the front. One was brandishing a Smith & Wesson .357 Magnum pistol (Fleishman). They made their way through the museum, eventually ending up in front of *The Scream* and *Madonna*. As they proceeded toward the paintings, the thieves ordered several visitors to get to the floor and pointed the gun at one of the guards, commanding him to get on his hands and knees. Once in front of the artwork, the crooks were able to easily remove *The Scream* and *Madonna* from the walls, pulling down hard on the artwork to snap the wires that held them in place. They then made off with their loot in broad daylight.*

*The 2004 theft of *The Scream* and *Madonna* and the subsequent art crime investigation were documented by many. For the purpose of this paper, the fourth episode of Ovation's documentary series *The Art of The Heist*, titled, *In Search of The Scream* is used as the primary account.

2.1 The 1994/2004-06 Investigations Compared

It is natural to compare the 1994 investigation of *The Scream* with that of the 2004-06 investigation as both feature the theft of the same famous image (just different versions) from an Oslo museum, taken by people who were tied to the same criminal gang (to varying degrees). That said, every art theft, and thus investigation is different, and that diversity is important to keep in mind when evaluating and understanding the investigations. Below are some of the key differences between the two investigations into the missing *Scream*.

Firstly, it is salient to note that the 1994 theft of *The Scream* was a burglary while the 2004 theft was a robbery (see Appendix A for definitions). This means that there were eyewitnesses to the 2004 theft as opposed to the one in 1994 (these eyewitnesses actually helped law enforcement identify the driver of the thieves' getaway car after describing his likeness to a sketch artist). Secondly, according to the information available, the second theft did not involve a sting operation, however, it did involve undercover operatives and possibly a raid. It is hard to explain exactly why this is, as we do not have details regarding how the paintings were actually found. The Norwegian police department has chosen to keep this information private, likely because the theft is allegedly linked to other criminal behavior, in this case specifically an armed robbery, but more on that later. Thirdly, there was no known assistance from outside law enforcement, like Scotland Yard. According to the information made public, only the Norwegian police were involved in the 2004-2006 investigation. This can potentially be explained by the fact that the Norwegian police were able to quickly piece together the likely suspects involved in the theft and did not need to request outside assistance from a specialized unit like the Art Squad. Lastly, because this investigation was handled solely by the Norwegian police, the primary focus

was on arresting the criminals, followed by recovering the paintings for two reasons. 1) The robbers had been armed and endangered civilians during the theft and the police also believed that the crime was linked to a previous armed robbery. 2) Because the Norwegian police do not have a unit that specializes in art crime specifically (as of 2011), they are not trained to prioritize the reacquisition of artwork over arrests, dissimilar to specialized units, like the Art Squad, which are trained to approach investigations with a primary focus being on the recovery of stolen artwork. Keep this information in mind as you read about the 2004-2006 investigation that occurred in order to retrieve *The Scream* and *Madonna*.

2.2 The Initial Investigation (2004)

Showing up immediately after the thieves had escaped on the morning of August 22nd, the Norwegian police began their investigation by piecing together the crime starting by interviewing the witnesses. While not much was provided by way of physical identifiers given the thieves' disguises, the police were able to ascertain how the robbery occurred as well as information regarding the getaway vehicle and its driver. According to the testimony of eyewitnesses along with photographic evidence, the police discovered that the criminals (both men) had been picked up by another man in a black Audi. Furthermore, photos helped law enforcement obtain the license and registration number for the car, along with the possible identity of the getaway driver himself. After thoroughly examining the crime scene for fingerprints, or other identifiable markings and coming up empty-handed, the police followed a trail of splintered wood left by the crooks. Apparently, the robbers had assumed there might be a tracking device inside the frames in the case of a theft (there was not), so they had decided to take the paintings out of their enclosures, breaking the frames into pieces, and throw the

remaining splinters out the window as they drove off, leaving a path that eventually led to the getaway car.

The getaway car was found the same day as the robbery, abandoned next to a tennis court in Oslo. The thieves had likely transferred the paintings and fled into one of two cars that had been waiting for them at the location. When police found the original getaway vehicle, they quickly discovered that the interior had been sprayed with a dry fire extinguisher to rid of any forensic evidence (no fingerprints had been found on the pieces of the frames either). The car was virtually empty except for the pistol, which was immediately sent off for forensic testing in an effort to identify the crooks and hopefully find the paintings.

That same day as the theft, August 22, 2004, Johnny Brenna, a police officer and detective working for the Oslo Organized Crime Unit, received a call from a known informant. The informant's name was Petter Rosenvinge. A skilled weapons maker and mechanic, Rosenvinge was associated with the Oslo underworld, providing criminals with goods, but from what Brenna could tell, not directly involved in any crime. Relying on informants to provide law enforcement with information is a common practice. The police will often rely on an entire network of informants who have relations within the criminal web. These people are generally granted legal immunity in exchange for giving the police information that will help them reach their goal, whether that is finding a stolen painting or making arrests. Rosenvinge called asking for information regarding the getaway car, suspicious that it could be a vehicle he had been repairing after hearing about the crime and the car on the news. Brenna got the details from Rosenvinge regarding the appearance of the automobile and compared them with details he received from his associates, eventually concluding that these were in fact the same vehicle. Rosenvinge claimed that he repaired the car for a criminal associate without knowing its use and

that he was “furious the car was now the center of a major police investigation” (Lee & Norman).

The police later concluded that Rosenvinge knew more about the car’s use than he was originally letting on, and as a result of his deeper implications to the crime, Brenna stopped using Rosenvinge as an informant so that he could testify in court. It is likely that Rosenvinge quickly realized that the police were onto the criminals and had decided to try and save himself by becoming an informant to gain immunity. However, this plan fell through and Rosenvinge was sentenced to four years in prison at the trial that occurred on May 2, 2006.

That being said, before discovering his deep involvement in the scheme, Rosenvinge proved to be a helpful source for the Norwegian police, most notably giving Johnny Brenna the names of several known criminals, members of the Tveita gang, who were allegedly involved in the crime, including Bjorn Hoen and Petter Tharaldsen. A few weeks prior to the theft, Petter Tharaldsen, also a mechanic like Rosenvinge, had called a man named Thomas Nattas, an acquaintance who he knew through their mutual hobby of drag racing. The following information regarding the conversations between Tharaldsen and Nattas was provided by Thomas Nattas. Tharaldsen, aware Nattas had an old bus parked on his property in Drøbak Norway (about a 30-minute drive outside of Oslo) for the purpose of traveling to different drag races, inquired as to whether he could store an unknown object in the vehicle. Nattas responded, saying he still had the bus, but Tharaldsen could not store anything there. Weeks later, Tharaldsen called again, asking Nattas where he was, Nattas responded that he was in Germany for a race, which is where the conversation allegedly ended. Days later, Nattas heard about the robbery of *The Scream*. He called Tharaldsen asking if anything was hiding on his property he should be worried about. Tharaldsen responded that there was not. But Nattas, distrusting

Tharaldsen, decided to go out and check on his property after returning home from Germany. When Thomas Nattas entered his bus, there in the back on two bunk beds, were *The Scream* and *Madonna*. Nattas did not call the police. He was aware of Tharaldsen's connection to the Tveita gang and fearful of what going to the police would mean for the safety of himself and his family. Would the gang come after them? Instead, Thomas Nattas called Tharaldsen and requested the artwork be removed from his property as soon as possible.

2.3 Looking into Leads

At this point, the Nattas/Tharaldsen situation was unknown to The Norwegian police. Instead, law enforcement was busy following up on several leads, including one regarding Pål Enger. Just like during any theft or criminal investigation, the police have to follow up on all sorts of leads on the off chance that they offer a clue toward finding the thieves and in this case, the painting. As mentioned previously (see Section 1.1) a reward is often offered in the case of stolen property to hopefully encourage the criminals or those around them to start talking, motivated by the money and in the case of an artistic masterpiece, their inability to sell the artwork and turn a profit. Rewards also increase the number of false leads. Having little luck with their investigation, Norwegian law enforcement advised the city of Oslo to offer a 2,000,000 kr reward (roughly 190,000 USD) to whoever could "provide information that enabl[ed] police to return *The Scream* and *Madonna*" to the Munch Museum (*Reward Offered for Scream Return*).

As previously stated the government does not typically get involved with rewards because of the precedent that it sets (see section 2.2). However, this robbery was a special exception. When Edvard Munch died in 1944, already a distinguished artist, he willed his private

collection of artwork to the city of Oslo. The city then chose to open the Munch Museum in order to display the artworks to the public. The important distinction here is that the City of Oslo was the rightful owner of the stolen art, which is why the local government was involved in offering the reward for its return.

One of the leads the Norwegian police made sure to follow up on (although prior to the reward), was the involvement of Pål Enger. By 2004, Enger had been imprisoned twice for crimes involving the theft of Munch paintings, including stealing *Vampire* from the Munch Museum in 1988 and the first version of *The Scream* from the National Gallery in 1994 (as mentioned previously). Additionally, Enger had ties to the Tveita gang, along with the other criminals the police informant had provided and had been present at the Munch Museum as a visitor, a week before the crime. The ex-soccer player turned criminal was an obvious starting suspect, however he was a dead end. While Enger claimed he knew who was involved in the theft, he would not give any names but did offer to help the police using his contacts in the Norwegian underworld. However, the authorities did not have any evidence against Enger and did not take the felon up on his offer, believing his claims to be baseless. A more substantial lead was pieced together by the police prosecutor, Morten Hojem Ervik, who tied the theft of the Munchs to a recent bank robbery.

2.4 Links to Other Crimes

As mentioned in Section 1.1, art theft is often linked to additional crimes (like drug trafficking and money laundering), where famous paintings can be used as collateral or as payments in a transaction. In the case of the 2004 theft of *The Scream* and *Madonna*, the robbery was used in an attempt to divert attention away from a previous crime.

Approximately four months prior to the theft of the Munch paintings on April 5, 2004, Norway's Central Cash Services (NOKAS) was robbed in Stavanger, Norway. The bank was raided in broad daylight by eleven men wearing black clothing and bulletproof vests. After destroying the security glass that protected the money, the thieves made off with approximately 57 million kr in cash, but not without encountering a shootout with the police. Norwegian law enforcement suspected that the Tveita gang was behind the thefts.

The Tveita gang (who were also minimally involved in the 1994 theft of *The Scream* via Pål Enger) was a group of Norwegian criminals originating from the Tveita neighborhood within Oslo. The gang was especially active in the 1980s and 90s before its ringleader, David Toska was imprisoned in 2005 (after admitting guilt for his involvement in the Stavanger robbery). The criminal group initially started off with smaller thefts and petty crimes, eventually gaining over 200 members, emboldening them to commit more large-scale illicit activities, including armed robbery. Based on the following evidence, Morten Ervik suspected that David Toska had ordered the Munch paintings to be stolen in an effort to divert police resources away from the investigation of NOKAS and of himself. Firstly, Petter Tharaldsen (the man who had hidden *The Scream* and *Madonna* in Thomas Nattas's bus) and Petter Rosenvinge (the police informant and getaway car mechanic) were known associates of David Toska. Secondly, the pistol found by the Norwegian police in the getaway car and brandished by the thieves in the Munch Museum was traced back to a private residence in Sarpsborg, Norway, where it had been stolen in a robbery along with four other firearms. The robbery had occurred suspiciously close to the home of Petter Rosenvinge. Additionally, a separate weapon taken from the home was spotted on the surveillance footage obtained from the NOKAS robbery, suggesting that both crimes were the work of the same group of felons. Finally, cash that had been penetrated by glass particles was

found in the home of Petter Tharaldsen when police searched the residence following Tharaldsen's arrest for an unrelated crime. This money linked the money to the NOKAS robbery, where the protective glass surrounding the cash had been broken by the robbers, piercing the bank notes. Ervik believed that Tharaldsen was paid for his role in the Munch robbery, using cash stolen from the NOKAS robbery, further demonstrating that it was the same gang committing both the crime in Stavanger and at the Munch. While Morten Ervik's theory was never confirmed (due to a lack of substantial evidence), it is widely accepted amongst the Norwegian police and public.

2.5 Collecting Evidence

With their key players in mind, the Norwegian police began listening in on the phone calls of people like Petter Rosenvinge, and other members of the Tveita gang. This is how the authorities found out about the involvement of Thomas Nattas. Johnny Brenna, alerting Rosenvinge that he could no longer act as a police informant, tipped off the Tveita gang that the police were onto them. As a result, the gang made plans to move the paintings to a more secure location, calling Nattas to let him know, but being sure to keep their conversations inconspicuous. These calls that occurred between Nattas and the gang were supposedly the same ones being tapped by the police. What's more, Thomas Natta's involvement with the gang was further confirmed when law enforcement trailed a car belonging to one of the suspects in the Tveita gang to Natta's farm.

It was September 23, 2004. Despite their ability to narrow down the suspects and listen in on specific phone calls, the police had been unable to discern what exactly the gang was trying to move from Nattas' property, initially believing it to be drugs, not the paintings. A police car had

been sent out to do surveillance and gather evidence by following the vehicles of one of the suspects in the Tveita gang. What the police did not realize was that the suspect's car would be going to Nattas' farm to take part in transferring the stolen paintings. When they arrived at the farm, the police stayed back at a distance, attempting to remain undetected. They witnessed the first car (the one they had been tailing) pull up to Natta's property, where it was joined shortly after by a second automobile. It was difficult for Norwegian law enforcement to see what was going on due to the distance and darkness (allegedly, this event occurred in the evening while it was getting dark, although the time of day has been disputed). Out of fear of being discovered and unequipped to make arrests, the officers doing surveillance decided not to get any closer. For this reason, they were unable to put two-and-two together and recognize that it was the Munch paintings being removed from the property into one of the cars. When the two vehicles finally drove off, the singular police car had to choose which automotive to follow. Because they had been unable to see which car the items had been placed in, the choice was a complete guess, and the guess was wrong. The police followed after the car that ended up being a decoy for the authorities, while the Mercedes containing *The Scream* and *Madonna* sped off. Interestingly, this same Mercedes was spotted outside the home of David Toska's fiancée several days later by Oslo law enforcement, further linking the theft of the Munch Museum to the Tveita gang.

The information regarding the fact that it was the paintings that were transferred on September 23, 2004, came out later (likely during the 2006 trial). At the time the police had no information about what the gang had taken from Nattas' farm.

2.6 Arrests & Criminal Trial

It was not until 8 months after the robbery of *The Scream* and *Madonna* that the police felt they had built up enough evidence to make arrests. These arrests were unrelated to the actual thefts of the paintings, the locations of which were still unknown to law enforcement. Instead, all of the known arrests were made in connection to the getaway car. Petter Rosenvinge was arrested for selling the getaway car to Bjorn Hoen. Petter Tharldsen was arrested as the suspected getaway driver, being identified as such by eyewitnesses. Bjorn Hoen was arrested on the suspicion that he was the leader of the operation (working on behalf of Toska), having bought the getaway car from Petter Rosenvinge. Law enforcement held out hope that the arrests would help break up the Tveita gang, or at least the branch of the gang involved in the robbery, eventually leading to the recovery of the Munch paintings, likely through information that would be revealed by the criminals during trial or while in custody.

On May 2, 2006, six defendants that police believed were involved in the theft of the Munch Museum were tried. However, they were not tried for robbery or possession of stolen property. Because the police were still unsure of the exact location of the paintings or what exactly had happened to them (at one point it was believed the paintings were burned in a fire), they did not have enough evidence to press charges against anyone for the theft of *The Scream* or *Madonna*. Instead, the charges, like the initial arrests, were all in relation to the gateway car. Additionally, the trial was complicated by the fact that the police had no forensic evidence to provide the jury, only interviews, video surveillance, telephone tappings (of which they had over 60,000), and eyewitness accounts (Gibbs).

According to a 2008 study by researchers Kimberly Schweitzer and Narina Nuñez forensic science, specifically DNA traces, are the most persuasive form of evidence in a criminal

trial (*What Evidence Matters to Jurors? The Prevalence and Importance of Different Homicide Trial Evidence to Mock Jurors*). Other proof, like eyewitness testimonies, are less convincing due to the human error and bias that is invariably present within them. In cases like the 2006 trial of the Tveita gang members, the police prosecutors had to sell the jury and the judges hard on the fact that the six men they were prosecuting were involved in the illegal possession of the getaway car. In the end, three of the six defendants were found guilty (Rosenvinge, Tharaldsen, and Hoen). Rosenvinge was found guilty of knowingly selling the getaway car to the thieves. He was sentenced to four years in prison. Tharaldsen was found guilty of driving the getaway car away from the scene of the crime on August 22nd. He was sentenced to eight years in prison. Hoen was convicted of "procuring the Audi for criminal purposes and trying to negotiate a sale for pictures after the robbery," and was sentenced to seven years in prison (Gibbs). Despite what the prosecutors believed, Hoen could not be pinned as the "plot's main organizer" due to lack of evidence against him (Gibbs). Tharaldsen and Hoen were also fined a collective $121 million, "the combined insured value of the paintings," which they were ordered to pay to the city of Oslo (Gibbs). The hope was that this financial pressure would convince one of the convicted men to "reveal the whereabouts" of *The Scream* and *Madonna* (Gibbs).

Thomas Nattas, Morten Hugo Johnsen (who "had been charged with storing the getaway car"), and Stian Skjold, the other three defendants, were all acquitted (Gibbs). All three men escaped conviction due to a lack of evidence on the part of the prosecutors. This being said, while Skjold was acquitted, he did admit to transferring the paintings in black garbage bags from Thomas Nattas' bus and into the trunk of a waiting vehicle. Skjold "testified that he had been hired to make the switch but that he did not know by whom and was never paid" (Gibbs). It was

further assumed Stian Skjold was also one of the men who originally stole the paintings in the first place, but this was never substantiated.

A few months after this trial and just over two years after the paintings were stolen, on August 31, 2006, the Norwegian police announced that *The Scream* and *Madonna* had been found. The police refused to give any more details besides the following information. One, the paintings had come into the possession of law enforcement officials that afternoon "after a successful police action" (Oliver); two, no reward had been paid; and three, the damage to the artwork was minimal (contrary to popular assumptions regarding the condition of the art). While "all documents in a police investigation in Norway are exempt from public inspection…for the sake of the people involved and for the sake of keeping the police's tactical work hidden," why the particulars of the 2004-2006 investigation have not been announced remains unclear (Beck & Didriksen). What we do know is that the amount of public knowledge regarding the investigation of the 1994 theft is rare; it is much more customary for this type of information to remain concealed, as was the case in the 2004-2006 investigation. The following reasons are speculative possibilities as to why these particulars were not revealed.

Firstly, because the Norwegian police believed that the case of the missing paintings was linked to the NOKAS crime, revealing information about how the paintings were found could have jeopardized the ongoing criminal trial of the armed bank robbery (the last of the NOKAS suspects were not tried or convicted until 2010).

Secondly, law enforcement did not want to give the public any ideas, motivating them to steal art in the future. If for instance (and this is all speculation), if someone from the Tveita gang came forward and took the state up on its offer to "seek a milder prison sentence in appellate court for any convict who [would lead] the authorities to the missing Munchs," the state would

be disinclined from revealing that to the public (Gibbs). According to Micheal Finkel, author of *The Art Thief: A True Story of Love, Crime, and a Dangerous Obsession*, "art crime is one of the few types of crime where you could actually return the stolen goods in exchange for almost no punishment" (Beck & Finkel). While this is in fact true, it is not something that law enforcement is eager to disclose to the general population, again out of fear that it could inspire an increase in museum thefts.

A third reason that information regarding the recovery of *The Scream* and *Madonna* was not divulged may have something to do with the embarrassment experienced by law enforcement. The Norwegian police had already made several errors in the hunt for the stolen artwork, notably missing *The Scream* and *Madonna's* relocation from the Nattas property in September of 2004. If other mistakes had occurred or the police were unable to catch the thieves who committed the crime (it is still unknown if they were caught), they may not have wanted to publicize these facts in order to maintain a reputation of authority. On a related note, the publication of *The Rescue Artist*, by Edward Dolnick, a nonfiction account detailing the work of Charles Hill in the 1994 investigation of *The Scream* (see Section 1), may have influenced law enforcement not to publicize how the paintings were found. Collaboration in law enforcement is something that the art world is still striving to achieve; thus, having to call in an outside party like Scotland Yard was somewhat embarrassing for the Norwegians; and Dolnick's book in particular painted the Norwegian police as relatively unhelpful and unprepared during the entire recovery operation. Perhaps to avoid such scrutiny and the disclosure of gaps within the Norwegian law enforcement system, the police decided not to release information on where or how *The Scream* and *Madonna* were found. Speculation aside, at the end of the day, the

Norwegian police were able to reacquire the paintings from the thieves, achieving the ultimate goal of any successful art theft investigation.

2.7 Section Conclusion

The 2004 theft of *The Scream* and *Madonna* followed by the subsequent art crime investigation highlights the need to protect our cultural heritage. Today, *The Scream* is housed in the recently refurbished Munch Museum, along with two other versions of the scene (a drawing and a lithograph). All three versions are exhibited in a triangular room behind closed doors and bulletproof glass. One set of doors displaying a singular version is open for half an hour at a time on a rotating basis. The lithograph is on display two times more than the painting and drawing, being the least valuable of the three. Clearly, the 1994 and 2004 thefts of *The Scream* taught the art world that prevention is the best way to combat art crime. The safeguarding of national treasures is an important aspect of that prevention. The security surrounding *The Scream* has certainly increased following the thefts of the paintings and the current popularity of eco-vandalism, reaching a level of protection that is considerably more extreme than that for other works of art.

While vandalism has always been an issue in museums and art has always gone hand-in-hand with activism, the recent rise in eco-vandalism poses a genuine threat to artwork around the world. In October of 2022, Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, Monet's *Grainstacks*, and Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* all fell victim to acts of environmental vandalism as people around the world attempted to "raise awareness of the climate emergency and to stop new fossil-fuel projects," ahead of the United Nations climate summit in November 2022. While none of the paintings listed above were damaged in the acts of protest, the actions still raised alarm

amongst museums worldwide, who tightened security around their most famous and valuable works as a result.

Today, both versions of *The Scream* have their own guard stationed within a close vicinity to the painting and their respective institutions have also increased security in general, installing higher quality cameras, alarmed doors, and even adopting closed concept layouts, making it more difficult for thieves to escape. While these precautions offer solid protection for the artwork in terms of both theft and vandalism, it is important that museums remain places where people are still able to enjoy themselves and escape into the art. Museums are not banks; what is housed within them is meant to be displayed and accessible to the public, not secured in a vault. For this reason, solely increasing physical security measures is not enough. Police specialization, collaboration, and public education on the reality of art crime are additional aspects that are necessary to prevent and combat the theft of art. The 2004-06 investigation of *The Scream* and *Madonna* in particular highlights the need for all three of these things which, if in place, could have made things go more smoothly and efficiently. However, law enforcement was ultimately successful in returning the paintings back to the Munch.

In speaking of the 2004 theft of *The Scream*, it is also important to point out the factor that differentiates this theft from the one in 1994: violence and trauma. The criminals involved in the 2004 robbery chose to brandish a firearm and incite fear within museum goers and staff, showcasing the violent nature of art crime. No matter how much the media and Hollywood glamorize it, these crimes are just that, crimes. In this case, the theft of the paintings was also tied to a larger, more aggressive crime, something that is typical in cases of stolen artwork, but relatively unknown to the general public. Art theft and art crime can be violent violations of the law and dangerous situations putting a lot of people in harm's way. While most are not violent

crimes, violence is certainly not removed from the realm of possibility, which is very important for people to understand. Other key differences between the 1994 and 2004-2006 investigations, like the use of a sting operation vs. a generic investigation, links to a separate crime, etc. are also highlighted in this section to display the diversity of cases within art crime and as a result, the diversity of investigations. Art crime is dangerous and diverse, but we can help safeguard our collective cultural property through specialized knowledge and practices.

Section 3: Theft & the Value of Art

Part of what I find so interesting about art theft, in general, is how it can impact the value of an artwork: in the case of *The Scream,* increasing its open market value. However, to understand how theft impacts the value of art, it is important to first understand how art is valued to begin with, and be able to comprehend the art market in general.

3.1 The Value of Art & Publicity

According to Simon Houpt in his book, *Museum of the Missing*, fine art values have "skyrocketed" since the late 1950s. This shift occurred as public art auctions garnered greater popularity, driving up the price of art through bids. Houpt's claim is supported by the fact that auction houses went from handling less than $25 million worth of sales in 1958 to around $5 billion in sales as of 1989. As a result of these lucrative prices, art theft has become a "growing concern in many nations," which, since 1969, have begun to create specialized police forces focused on the subject of art crime (DeGraw).

As mentioned previously (see section 1.2), the majority of art thieves are looking to turn a profit. They hear about art going for inordinate prices and they begin to view the masterpieces hanging in museums as "multimillion-dollar bills… calling to them from the walls of poorly guarded" institutions (Houpt & Radcliffe 20). The line of logic crooks subscribe to is as follows: the higher an artwork's estimated value, the higher price at which it can be resold. These thieves believe that even if they cannot resell a piece for what it would command on the open market without the taint of crime, they will at least be able to garner a high profit; even a fraction of

what some artworks are valued at is still a lot of money. However, this logic actually does *not* apply to masterpieces, which is where thieves who steal famous works of art go wrong.

In general, art is valued based on two factors, "the estimation of fair market value" (i.e. price) and the "cultural value and significance of a particular work" (i.e. cultural significance) (Art Valuation). When valuing art, an appraiser will take both of these elements into consideration, examining characteristics such as "the current popularity of the artist and prices of their other works recently at sale" (Burmon). One factor, related to popularity and cultural significance that has proven to raise prices and value is fame. According to Merriam-Webster, fame is "the fact or condition of being known to the public." *The Scream* in particular is one of the most famous icons of the modern era. Not only is the painting widely publicized, but its expression has been immortalized in film and even as an emoji. As the definition states, fame is accrued through publicity; theft helps increase this publicity.

The most famous case in which theft increased the fame of an artwork features the *Mona Lisa*. Prior to its theft in 1911, the *Mona Lisa* was already considered one of the most famous paintings in one of the most famous museums in the world. It had been a treasured possession of the French monarchy starting in the 1500s up until the French Revolution (Charney). Following the French Revolution, Da Vinci's Renaissance masterpiece was moved to the Louvre where it captivated the eye of the French public and visitors alike (Charney). That said, the heist of the *Mona Lisa* launched the painting to greater heights, in part because of publicity; the theft made international news! As we know, the media loves to glorify and glamorize art theft, following along closely to understand the motives behind the robbery of a beautiful piece of shared cultural heritage. In part because of the public's fascination with the missing *Mona Lisa*, the painting today receives approximately 80% of the Louvre's 10 million annual visitors according to

Google Arts & Culture. The publicity garnered by the theft, has thus contributed to the piece's increased fame, and thus value. The theft did not bestow the art with monetary or cultural value, but it did *enhance* the value that existed prior to the theft.

Figure 1.

Theft → Garners Publicity → Increases Fame

Fame + Scarcity → Increases Cultural & Monetary Value

What is interesting about art stolen from a museum is that it is *already* considered famous, that is why it is hanging in institutions like the National Gallery in Oslo, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Louvre. These institutions have recognized certain pieces as being of cultural value and as a result, thousands of people have already seen and been impacted by this art. A masterpiece hanging in a museum already has a certain level of fame and known value which is *why* thieves are choosing to steal it in the first place. The crooks are either convinced they will be able to sell this art for a high price because it is famous, or that they will be able to successfully ransom the painting back to the museum, aware of the fact that the authorities are more interested in recovering the artwork than arresting the thieves.

The thieves who try to sell famous stolen paintings are the most naive, as they fail to recognize two art world principles. Firstly, that the publicity surrounding the theft of a famous painting means that people all over the world are not only aware of what the missing masterpiece looks like, but also that it is just that, missing. Authorities will be looking for the art. Secondly, that it is nearly impossible to sell a famous, stolen painting, but more on that later (see section 3.3). When crooks are ignorant about or overlook these factors and go ahead with trying to sell stolen works from museums, this is often when they are caught. The thieves who stole a

self-portrait by Rembrandt van Rijn from Sweden's National Museum on December 20, 2000, for example, were caught by the Danish Police with the help of Robert Wittman of the FBI's Art Crime Team whilst attempting to sell the famous artwork (Wittman & Shiffman). Ignorance of the art market often plagues people who dream of selling famous paintings for huge profits and is what misled the thieves who stole *The Scream* in 1994 and possibly in 2004 as well. These crooks had almost no chance of turning a profit because *The Scream* falls into the category of well known paintings that are already hanging in museums, prior to its theft.

Being a "masterpiece," *The Scream* was already considered famous before it was stolen. The painting had also traveled the world on an "extensive international tour" in the 1950s, a time when people were experiencing a shared sense of anxiety as the aftermath of the World Wars and the beginning of the Cold War loomed large (A Scream Through Culture). As a result of the trying times, many resonated with the painting's messaging, increasing its popularity in the process. *The Scream* was also featured on the cover of Time Magazine in 1961, and in 1984 was borrowed by celebrity artist Andy Warhol for his colorful lithographs titled, *The Scream (after Munch)*. Warhol's influence in particular cemented "the motif's celebrity status," highlighting the fact that the image had the potential to be a "mass-produced consumer product on a par with Mickey Mouse or a can of tomato soup" (A Scream Through Culture).

Understandably, *The Scream* was already a famous and recognizable image, yet the thefts increased the pieces' stardom, as evidenced by growing museum attendance in their wake. "In the immediate days after *The Scream* and *Madonna* were lifted in August 2004,...attendance at the Munch Museum shot up" (Houpt & Radcliffe). Additionally when the museum decided to display the damaged artworks before their repairs, the institution saw a "massive spike in attendance. Museum officials even said that "about 5,500 people dropped in between Wednesday

and Sunday" (*Fans Flock to Munch Museum to See Damaged Scream, Madonna* | CBC News), more visitors than the entire month of September, "when the two masterpieces were still missing" (*Fans Flock to Munch Museum to See Damaged Scream, Madonna* | CBC News). Clearly, the thefts of *The Scream* enhanced its already obvious celebrity, a fact that is further indicated by the increase in value of the artwork as a result of the increased fame.

3.2 The Price of Fame

In 2012, one of the two drawings of *The Scream* and the only version of the subject held in a private collection was sold for $199.9 million at Sothebys. This was eighteen years after the initial theft of *The Scream* from the National Gallery and six years after the recovery of *The Scream* and *Madonna* which were taken from the Munch Museum. At the time, this was the highest price ever paid for a piece of artwork sold at auction. This dollar amount was abundantly higher than what *The Scream* had been valued at almost eighteen years prior (around 70 million dollars). Why this is notable is not because the value increased; it is natural for art to accrue value with time. It is notable because that is the only benchmark we have for projecting the economic value of the two stolen *Screams*.

Interestingly, the two versions of *The Scream* that were heisted were not insured against theft. In both cases, it was decided that *The Scream* was invaluable. Jorunn Christophersen, head of information at the Munch Museum, stated that his museum's version of *The Scream* was "not insured against theft because the city of Oslo [had] decided it [was] simply too expensive" (Kinsella). They had "insured against fire and water damage but not against robbery" (Kinsella).

Many have argued that the decision not to financially secure *The Scream* was a massive misstep. However, in Antonio Nicita and Matteo Rizzolli's paper, *The Economics of Art Thefts:*

Too Much Screaming over Munch's The Scream? the two professionals contend that it actually makes more sense that the paintings were not insured. Nicita and Rizzolli argue that precaution can increase the incentive to steal because it draws attention to the work's high value. More specifically, "insurance may actually increase the incentive to steal works of art for the purpose of ransom" (Nicita & Rizzolli 291). The insurance company may be tempted to buy back the piece from the thieves, as long as the cost of ransom is lower than the cost of liquidating the insured price. As mentioned previously (see section 1.2), ransom sets a bad precedent that encourages greater theft because it offers thieves an avenue for profit.

Arguments aside, the bottom line is that there is no way to *definitively* estimate the exact current market price of the stolen versions of *The Scream*, because they are not up for sale and are considered priceless, making it impossible to accurately set an insurance value. That said, Norwegian prosecutors did fine two of the men involved in the 2004 robbery of *The Scream* and *Madonna* an amalgamated $124 million, the total projected value of two stolen artworks combined (see Section 2.6 for further details) according to *Art of the Heist, In Search of The Scream*. Additionally, the drawing of *The Scream* (that is less famous than the two stolen versions) was sold after the thefts for nearly 120 million dollars, 40 million dollars higher than the original starting bid price of 80 million dollars. With this information, and following the line of logic presented in Figure 1, along with the belief that an artwork's "prestigious provenance" can "increase its desirability and market value," it can be concluded that both stolen versions of *The Scream* are worth *over* $120 million each (Libguides: Collecting and Provenance: Introduction to Provenance Research). While it is a general rule of thumb in the art world that paintings are worth more than drawings, the stolen versions of *The Scream* are valued higher

than the sketch that was sold to private collectors not only because of their medium, but also as a result of their provenance, which increases the paintings' value. But why is this?

In 1999, Christ Gosden and Yvonne Marshall published their theory of cultural biographies. The theory states that "as people and objects gather time, movement and change, they are constantly transformed, and these transformations of person and object are tied up with each other" (Gosden & Marshall 169). The basis of the theory is that the interaction between people and objects has an impact on both parties. For the purpose of this paper, the theory helps explain how objects become invested with meaning. In the case of *The Scream,* this meaning can be interpreted as the painting's cultural value. According to Gosden and Marshall, objects become "invested with meaning through the social interaction they are caught up in" (170) (social interaction being the objects' biography and provenance, any happenings an item was caught up in, who owned it, where it originated, etc.) These social interactions lead objects to "accumulate histories, so that the present significance of an object derives from the persons and events to which it is connected" (Gosden & Marshall 170). As a result, the two paintings of *The Scream* which were stolen from their rightful museums, hold greater meaning (aka cultural value) than the drawing of *The Scream* in private ownership because the stolen versions are connected to theft, an event that the public, for whatever reason, is extremely fascinated with. Effectively, the histories of the stolen *Screams* have been deemed more noteworthy by the general population than the histories of the versions that have existed in private ownership and have not been stolen. Consequently, we can assume that the stolen versions of *The Scream* are culturally more significant and monetarily more expensive than the other versions because they are attached to events regarded as more noteworthy and exhilarating.

This being said, a number cannot be calculated in correspondence to said value because the cultural significance of the pieces, especially now that they have been stolen and returned, is considered invaluable to the country of Norway, and the world at large. Additionally, because art is primarily sold through auction, we won't have a specific price unless the artwork is actually put up for sale and bid on. In any case, a painting's value on the open market does not necessarily correlate with its value on the black market, a factor art thieves often overlook. In fact, the more famous a piece of art, or any stolen object for that matter, the less it will go for on the black market. While this logic may seem counterintuitive, it is the reality of the art industry.

3.3 The Black Market

In the art world, there are two marketplaces where goods are sold, the open market, in this case referring to the sale of art through legitimate and publicly known means, and the black market, where art is sold and traded out of the public eye illegally. Most would assume, including the majority of art thieves, that the more famous a piece of art, the more valuable it is, and thus the more it will garner on the black market. What they do not realize is that the markets work inversely. "Most of the time, fame and a high valuation" actually "push down the worth of a painting in the illegitimate market, since they make it harder to fence" (Houpt & Radcliffe 101). This is due to the notoriety of the piece itself and the publicity that typically accompanies the theft of a masterpiece. When a piece of art is widely recognizable and the fact that it has been stolen is commonly known, it is impossible to sell the art openly. "You can't put [the art] on your wall," or show it off like a "status symbol" without the risk of getting in trouble with law enforcement (Radcliffe & Thompson as cited in Siemaszko). For this reason, masterpieces are very hard to sell because few want to buy them and take on that risk.

Figure 2. **The Open Market**

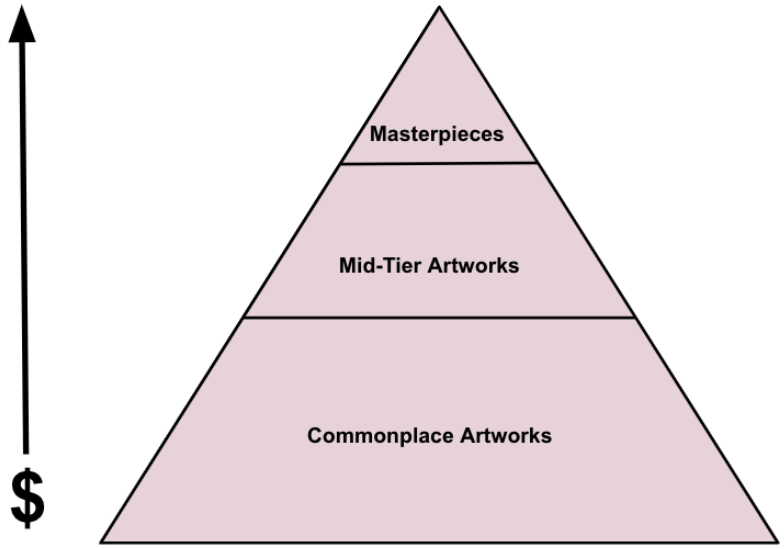

Figure 2 displays the value of paintings on the open market. In the bottom tier are what I have termed "Commonplace Artworks." These are all the works that are not done by well-known artists and are being bought and sold in the open market but are not necessarily being displayed in a museum. The majority of art thus falls into this category of "Commonplace Artworks" which is why these works are the least valuable and priced lower in comparison to the other tiers. The second section of the pyramid is the "Mid-Tier Artworks." These are works that might be sold at auction or displayed at a museum but they are not widely recognized or famous. Sometimes famous artists may even have mid-tier artwork. This category of art is the second-most common in terms of amount, and is thus the middle of the road in terms of price. At the top of the pyramid and in the smallest section are the masterpieces, the paintings that everyone knows (like the *Mona Lisa*, *The Scream, Starry Night*) and of which there are very few, making them the most expensive art on the open market.

The black market operates a little differently. When art sells on the black market it typically goes for around 10% of its actual worth, but as previously mentioned, the more famous the artwork and the more prominent its theft, the less likely a thief will be able to sell it at all. Part of the difficulty involved in selling stolen art today can be attributed to the advent of the internet. The internet has allowed news to spread more rapidly and to more people, allowing art and art thefts to achieve a level of fame and publicity previously unheard of. Additionally, the world wide web has paved the way for online databases like the Art Loss Register and apps like Interpol's ID Art, along with the digitization of museum collections, all of which are resources that aid in identifying stolen artwork and ultimately in its rescue. The accessibility of these resources along with heightened public awareness resulting from internet usage has made it much more challenging to sell stolen art. As a result of how difficult it is to peddle masterpieces, these stolen works are typically used as collateral or find their way back to the open market (if they are not destroyed) as thieves attempt to sell the works, ransom the paintings, or collect a reward if one is being offered. In both thefts of *The Scream*, the thieves were unable to sell the artwork (that we know of) before the police recovered the paintings.

Table 1. Value of Stolen Paintings on the Open Market vs. the Black Market

	Open Market	Black Market
Masterpieces	$$$$	$0
Mid-Tier Artwork	$$$	$$
Commonplace Artwork	$$	$

Table 1 compares the price of art on the open market vs. on the black market. The same categories used in Figure 2. are used again here. As explained in Figure 2, Masterpieces are the most expensive art on the market, Mid-Tier Artwork is the second-most expensive, and

commonplace art is the least expensive. That said, masterpieces are nearly impossible to sell on the black market and only hold value if they are used as collateral or if an institution is willing to pay a ransom (which the majority of the time they refuse to do). Mid-tier and commonplace artwork, on the other hand, can be sold on the black market because they are very easy to forge and are also less well-known. However, the price of this artwork is inevitably a small fraction of the works' legitimate value.

The majority of criminals dealing in the world of art are aware of how the black market functions. They understand that art is "relatively easy to steal," but "very very hard to exchange for cash" (Beck & Finkel). We therefore must conclude that those who steal masterpieces from museums are ignorant about how the illicit trade of art is conducted and priced. If it was easy to sell prominent artwork, art theft would be much more common.

3.4 Section Conclusion

To review, masterpieces like *The Scream* are nearly impossible to sell on the black market, becoming almost worthless. Because masterpieces are so recognizable and their thefts are so publicized, it is impractical to display the artwork in any capacity where someone might recognize the piece and then report it. The risk of running into legal trouble is too great. However, an artwork's monetary value on the open market differs from its value on the black market. In fact, theft tends to increase the value of art on the open market.

It is interesting to consider how art theft contributes to the art's worth. The fame that these works garner as a result of the publicity surrounding thefts ends up increasing the artworks' value both culturally and theoretically, and presumably monetarily (this cannot be stated as fact as most famous works from museums are not sold). The theft of art contributes to a stolen

artwork's history, ultimately adding to the piece's cultural biography positively, attaching a story to the piece that is rare and is considered exciting to the public. It is also interesting to think about the power of society and the implications that glorifying art crime can have. If for instance, the general population did not perceive art thefts as fascinating or exhilarating events, but rather as the violent crimes that they are, would theft actually have an inverse effect on value? And consequently, would art theft be less common? In the end, value is determined by what captivates the global community's interests. We must therefore think critically about how art theft is being portrayed and the consequences those portrayals can have. Society needs to do a better job of accurately recounting instances of art theft while being cognizant of the language we are using to describe them. The glamorization of art crime has both cultural and financial effects.

Conclusion

Art is meaningful to us as a society because it is a one-of-a-kind expression of the human experience, be that emotions, beliefs, mundane life, beauty, etc. Through art, we connect beyond words, sharing in the awe experienced when admiring the compositions displayed in front of us and in the wonder that a living person was able to create something so unique and individual. Art also has the ability to shape culture and often "reflects the values, beliefs, and aspirations of a society…through its various forms" (Bushan). Everyone is tied to art in some capacity and it serves as one of the few things that we share as humans: our ability to create art, to enjoy art, to be inspired by art. Museums are the institutions that facilitate this sharing and that house these pieces that make up the communal cultural history of humanity. They are not places to hide the world's treasures, but rather places to display them, and how lucky are we that anyone, from anywhere, can walk into one of these establishments and immerse themselves in some of the world's most beautiful and precious artifacts.

This objective to display is often counterintuitive to protecting the valuable art which museums showcase. These institutions, therefore, must invest in the good of humanity, trusting that visitors intend to ensure the enjoyment of all museum-goers, and will not act impulsively on financial motives. When someone chooses to violate this trust and steal art from a museum, especially a masterpiece, a work that speaks to so many people around the world, they are not only robbing a museum of its property but robbing the entirety of humankind from access to its collective cultural heritage. That is why combatting art crime matters. It is not a limited issue: the theft of one painting affects everyone. All of humanity falls victim to the loss of art.

There are two optimal ways to combat and protect the world's cultural property, beyond security measures. The first is through knowledge of art theft. Providing the general public with the basics in a manner that is accessible and easy to understand is where we must start. People should know that art crimes, and thus art crime investigations, are prevalent and very diverse. They should be aware of how the art market operates, what different types of art crimes look like, and the impact of art loss so that as a society, we can begin to encourage the world to take art crime seriously.

Today, art crime investigation, as a field, is severely underfunded. This is evidenced by Norway's art crime division being classified under the category of "environmental crime" and by the fact that there are currently few to no agents working full time on the art crime team at the Federal Bureau of Investigation or at Scotland Yard. If we want to protect the world's treasures, society needs to start reframing how we think about and portray art crime. In democracies around the world, the government focuses its time, money, and power on issues that its people are interested in seeing solved. These administrations are taking cues on the views of their citizens from the media and internet, so when society continues to glamorize art crime by painting it to be an alluring Hollywood stunt in movies, online, or in print, we are showing the powers that be that we do not view art crime as a legitimate issue. As a result, the funding, resources, and energy needed to help combat this illegal conduct are not provided or increased. What humankind needs to come to understand is that art crimes, in addition to the threat they pose to priceless treasures, can be traumatic and dangerous and are often linked to other traumatic and dangerous forms of illicit behavior. The FBI categorizes art crime under the term "violent crime," which is exactly how society, along with global authorities, need to start thinking about and portraying art theft if we want these issues to be funded and addressed properly.

This ignorance toward the value of combating art crime leads to greater questions regarding the value people place on art itself. If we as a society cared more about art, would we in turn care more about tackling art crime? In the United States alone, funding for public art education is consistently slashed. In June of 2024, the governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis, went so far as to veto $32 million dollars in state funding for arts and culture organizations (Brutus). Whole swaths of the global population never step foot into museums. When Donald Trump became president of the United States in 2016 he became the first president to formally propose the elimination of the National Endowment for the Arts and spent the entirety of his tenure arguing that "no federal money should be going to the arts and that it was not up to government to decide what art was important anyway" (Bowley). As a whole, art is undervalued, when in fact it should be the opposite. Art is so unique that you would think it would be one of the greatest treasures of mankind and valued as such by society. People around the world need to start seriously caring about art and what subsequently happens when that art is stolen. That care starts with education and funding.

Building off of the need for education, the second optimal way to combat art crime is through police specialization. Ideally, law enforcement in every country around the world would have a branch of officers who specialize in art crime investigations and who collaborate on an international level. Officers who specialize in art crime investigations are better equipped to recover stolen artwork and catch the criminals. They are able to invest time into building a network in the underworld and the art world, and understand that the primary goal of any art recovery mission is first and foremost rescuing stolen artwork. That said, if this type of specialization is ever going to get the funding it needs to come to fruition, the world will first have to start prioritizing art crimes and treating them as real, often violent, crimes.

A third way to combat art theft is to invest in fame. Art acquires fame through the attention it garners from the public; the more people who know and care about a work of art, the more famous it is. Fame does not sell on the black market. As a result, art at that level of stardom often makes its way back to the open market relatively quickly. If not, the works "turn up after a generation or so has passed," once "the scariest member of the thieving gang has passed on or lost his fearsomeness and all involved have finally come to the realization that despite their best efforts, they simply cannot monetize their stolen art" (Amore 120). That said, it is impossible for all artwork to receive an equal level of public attention, and it is not feasible for museums to solely purchase masterpieces as they are too expensive. So despite this being an effective way to prevent art theft, it is not necessarily the most realistic method, and therefore not considered optimal.

As a society, we have the power to create value culturally, and subsequently financially. Value is generated as a result of where our collective interest and money is focused. That interest is produced by organizations and forums that allow the public to converge over their mutual ambitions and it is controlled by the leaders of these groups that gather and embody the voices and power of all those people and their shared beliefs and goals. As a population, we must find a way to turn the focus of civilization toward teaching the general public to appreciate and treasure art, and in turn care about art crime, in order to combat the problems we face today. Art serves as evidence that humanity is a living, breathing, organism, capable of feeling every emotion, of creating beauty, and of simply being; thus art must be properly safeguarded so that it can continue to do just that.

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Appendix A

Vocabulary

Appraiser: according to Investopedia, the term appraiser refers to a professional who determines the market value of an asset. In the art world, an appraiser helps set the price or monetary value of art, which can be used in the context of the sale or art or in the process of insuring art.

Art Theft: according to Dr. Kate Melody Burmon, art theft is "a crime in which a person intentionally and fraudulently takes another person's fine art property – including paintings, photographs, prints, drawings, and sculptures; decorative arts; antiquities; ethnographic objects; Oriental and Islamic art; and miscellaneous items, such as selective armor, books, coins, and medals – without permission or consent and with the intent to convert it to the taker's use (including potential sale)" (22).

Burglary: burglary is defined by the United States Department of Justice - Federal Bureau of Investigation as "the unlawful entry of a structure to commit a felony or theft. The UCR Program has three subclassifications for burglary: forcible entry, unlawful entry where no force is used, and attempted forcible entry."

Collateral: as stated by Merriam Webster Dictionary, collateral is property pledged by a borrower to protect the interests of the lender. Art crime is often linked to other crimes such as money laundering and illicit arms and drug trafficking, artwork is typically used as collateral to commit these other types of crimes. Someone lending a thief money or giving them drugs will be able to take possession of the artwork if the thief does not pay them back.

Craquelure: according to the National Gallery in London, craquelure is "the network, or pattern, of cracks that develops across the surface as the paint layers age and shrink." This pattern is

distinct and very difficult to replicate, so it is often a feature that detectives and professionals use when attempting to authenticate a stolen piece of art as the original as opposed to a fake.

Fence: according to Merriam-Webster, a fence is a "receiver of stolen goods." In the art world, fencing artwork involves selling art to a dealer who knowingly purchases the stolen goods to later try and turn a profit by convincing future buyers that the art has legitimate provenance.

Informant: according to the U.S. Department of Justice an informant is typically "someone who has contacted the criminal justice system because of a criminal lifestyle, but is granted immunity from appropriate criminal justice sanctions in return for giving the police information about persons in the criminal underworld or participating with undercover police in illicit drug transactions that produce arrests of the unwitting participants. Although in theory the police maintain that informants are not made immune from prosecution should they break the law in the course of their informant career, in practice, much of the lawbreaking of the informant is overlooked in the interest of maintaining him/her as a valuable information source." According to the Norwegian Police Directorate," An informant "can be someone who actively collects information for the police following clear instructions from the police. The informant can also be used as an infiltrator and/or provocateur" (Beck & Didriksen

Ransom: according to Merriam-Webster, a ransom is a consideration paid or demanded for the release of someone or something from captivity. In the case of art theft, thieves will hold a painting hostage, demanding the rightful owner (an individual, museum, insurance company, etc.) pay them a sum of money (usually less than what the painting is actually worth) in exchange for the return of the piece. As a rule of thumb, national governments do not get involved in the ransom of cultural objects.

Robbery: according to the United States Department of Justice - Federal Bureau of Investigation, a robbery is defined as, “the taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.”

- “Thus, the differences between robbery and burglary generally relate to whether or not a structure or person is present, as well as the possible use of force or fear” (Burmon 22).

Sting Operation: according to the U.S. Department of Justice a sting operation is a type of tactic used by law enforcement to catch criminals (however, when it comes to art theft, the priority is recovering the stolen artwork, catching criminals is secondary). It contains four basic elements:

1. “an opportunity or enticement to commit a crime, either created or exploited by police”
2. “a targeted likely offender or group of offenders for a particular crime type”
3. “an undercover or hidden police officer or surrogate, or some form of deception (deception can include disguises, the incorporation of professional thieves who are either current or former offenders working with the police, surveillance, etc.)”
4. “a “gotcha” climax when the operation ends with arrests” (Newman and Socia).

Appendix B

Research Conduct Overview

The research in this paper is a collection of articles, books, and public information along with details gleaned from interviews with law enforcement and art world professionals and observational notes from my own personal visits to the Munch Museum and National Museum in Oslo, Norway. The two main accounts of the two thefts of The Scream were Edward Dolnick's *The Rescue Artist: A True Story of Art Thieves, and The Hunt for a Missing Masterpiece* and Ovation's *Art of The Heist*, season 1, episode 4, *In Search of The Scream*. The interviews were conducted over email. Twelve professionals/institutions were emailed, of those twelve I received responses from four. Three of those responses were answers to my interview questions, and one of the responses was images and documents to assist in my research. The interview process looked as such:

1. An introductory email explaining my research and asking for consent to interview (a consent form was attached to this email (along with a GDPR for interviewees in Norway) and I asked that this form be sent back to me, signed, via email, if the participants were willing to be interviewed.
2. Once the consent form was received a second email was sent with my questions.
3. Interviewees sent back their responses to my questions via email.

Interviews were conducted between June and August of 2024. Below are the questions asked of individuals along with sample emails that were sent to participants, if you are interested in replicating my research process.

Interview Questions

For Professionals at the National Gallery in Oslo

- Please walk me through the theft of *The Scream* in 1994.
- Please walk me through each step of the process in the art crime investigation that was conducted to retrieve the piece after the theft.
- Was your version of *The Scream* insured, if so, for how much before and after the theft?
- If you are willing, and without revealing anything about current security, please tell me about the security measures the museum had in place at the time of the theft.

For Professionals at the Munch Museum

- Please walk me through the theft of *The Scream* in 2004.
- Please walk me through each step of the process in the art crime investigation that was conducted to retrieve the piece after the theft.
- Was your version of *The Scream* insured, and if so, for how much before and after the theft?
- If you are willing, and without revealing anything about current security, please tell me about the security measures the museum had in place at the time of the theft.

For Criminal Intelligence

- If you had to break down an art crime investigation, specifically in the case of a stolen painting, what would be the main steps? Please explain those steps in detail.
- In the specific case of *The Scream,* what was different between the investigation conducted in 1994 and the one conducted in 2004?
- What is a common misconception about art crime investigations?

For Art World Professionals

- Do you believe that theft has an impact on the value of a piece of art (culturally, historically, economically)? If so, in what ways?
- How does theft impact the price at which a piece of art is insured?
- How does a piece's provenance contribute to the price of art?
- How does one appraise a piece of art as valuable and popular as The Scream?

Sample Emails

Sample Email #1

To whom it may concern,

My name is Madeline Beck and I am a student at Tufts University. This summer I am conducting research on art theft and how it contributes to the value of artwork, using the thefts of The Scream, by Edvard Munch as a case study. I am reaching out to ask if you would be willing to answer a few questions I have pertaining _____ [insert art, theft, crime, Munch, etc.] If you are willing to participate please fill out the consent form attached to this email and send it back to me. Once I have received your consent form I will send you my questions within a week via email. Your expertise in the area of _____ [insert crime, art, etc.] would prove valuable to my research, please consider assisting in my research.

Best,
Madeline Beck

Sample Email #2

Thank you for consenting to participate in my research. Below are the questions I would like you to answer. Remember that you are welcome to not answer any questions that you are not comfortable answering. You may also opt out of answering completely. Please send your answers back to me via email.

[Questions based on persons area of expertise will be inserted here]

Sample Email #3

Thank you for participating in my study! Your answers have been received by the research team.

Sample Email #4

Dear [insert name],

I am following up to remind you to please fill out the survey questions sent to you last week regarding the art crime investigations and the value of theft to art. Please send me your answers via email as soon as you are able. If you are no longer comfortable participating please let me know.

Best,
Madeline Beck

Appendix C

Figures & Tables

Figure 1.

Theft → Garners Publicity → Increases Fame

Fame + Scarcity → Increases Cultural & Monetary Value

Figure 2. The Open Market

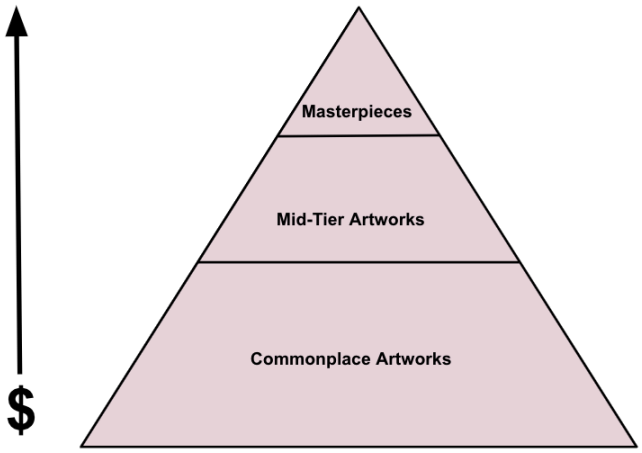


Table 1. Value of Stolen Paintings on the Open Market vs. the Black Market

	Open Market	Black Market
Masterpieces	$$$$	$0
Mid-Tier Artwork	$$$	$$
Commonplace Artwork	$$	$

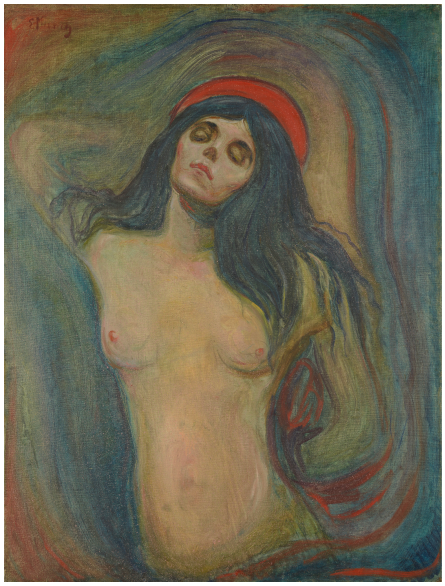
Appendix D

Images

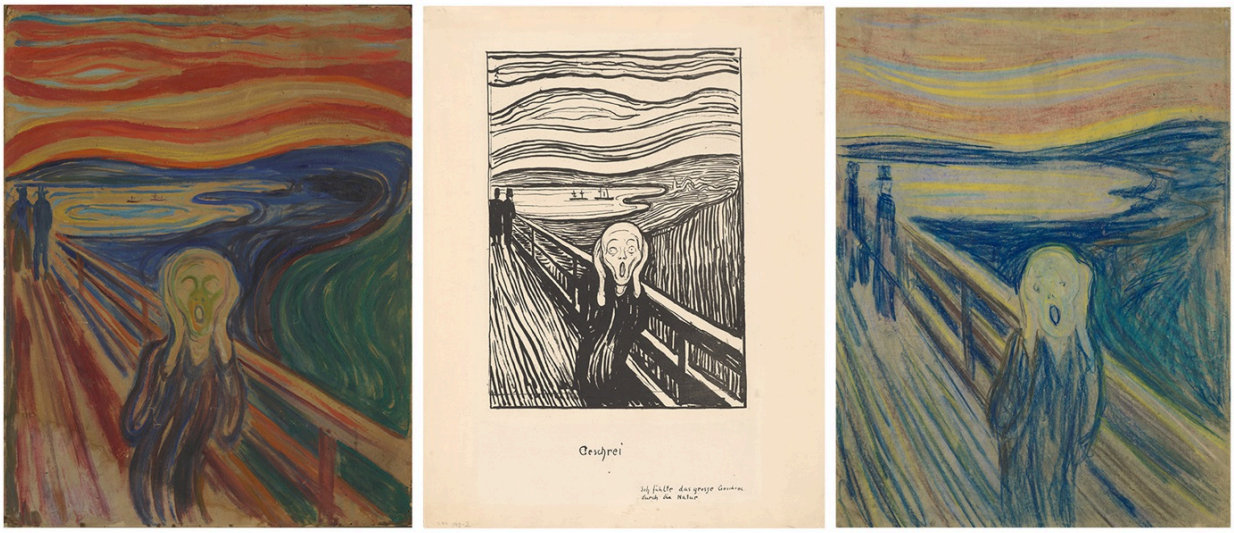
Photo of a Young Edvard Munch (1863-1944).
Photo © Fine Art Images/Heritage Images/Getty Images

The Munch Museum's 1910 version of *The Scream* which was stolen in 2004 and recovered in 2006
Tempera and oil on cardboard
Photo © Munchmuseet

The National Museum Oslo's (formerly the National Gallery) 1983 version of *The Scream* which was stolen and returned in 1994.
Tempera and oil on cardboard
Photo © National Museum



The Munch Museum's version of *Madonna* (1894) which was stolen in 2004 and recovered in 2006.
Oil on Canvas
Photo © Munchmuseet



The Munch Museum's three versions of *The Scream*.
Tempera and oil on cardboard, 1910/ Lithograph, 1895. / Crayon on cardboard, 1893.
Photo © Munchmuseet

Drawing of *The Scream* sold at auction by Sotheby's in 2012 for 199.9 million dollars.
Photo © NPR

Photo of a ladder propped up against the window of the National Museum, used by the two thieves to break in and steal *The Scream* in 1994.
Printed in an issue of Dagnngen newspaper in February 1994
Courtesy of the National Gallery's Library and Archives Team.

Poster from the National Gallery's gift shop with the sign "stolen" underneath, hung where T*he Scream* had formerly been, next to the window the thieves broke-in through in 1994.
Printed in an issue of Dagens Nyheter, a Swedish newspaper on February 13, 1994
Courtesy of the National Gallery's Library and Archives Team.

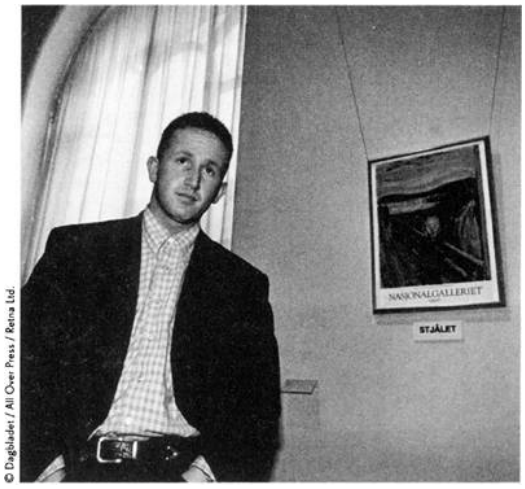


Photo of Pal Enger, one of the thieves who stole *The Scream* from the National Gallery in 1994, standing beside the replacement poster in the museum, where the famous painting was previously hung. The picture was taken before Enger's arrest.
Printed in an issue of Norwegian newspaper, Dagbladet and featured in *The Rescue Artist* by Edward Dolnick.

Photo of Charley Hill, the art detective who recovered the 1893 version of *The Scream* following its theft in 1994.
Photo © Richard Ansett

Photo taken by a bystander depicting one of the robbers approaching the getaway car in the 2004 robbery of *The Scream* from the Munch Museum.
Photo © Registrar Trek

Photo of the Munch Museum's *Madonna* and *The Scream* on display in 2006 just after their recovery and prior to their repairs.
Photo © Getty Images

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To the Laidlaw Foundation, thank you for providing me with the opportunity to explore the topic of art crime. I never thought research could apply to humanities until I was introduced to this organization (shoutout to Dr. Proctor). Laidlaw has opened my eyes to the broad spectrum of research, allowing me the opportunity to investigate a topic of my interest and to further enrich that experience through travel.

Finally, thank you to anyone who has taken the time to read this. I hope you find this paper as fascinating as I found it to write. And remember! If you know anything about the whereabouts of stolen artwork or have been stolen from, please report it to the proper authorities and the Art Loss Register, it is important to get the word out there and publicize it! The world wants to recover its cultural heritage!