

Deal for stolen Rembrandt made in jail cell

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Myles J. Connor Jr., a convict who once shot a policeman and later turned to theft of art works, dictated from his cell in Charles Street Jail the terms for the return of the stolen Rembrandt last weekend, according to highly placed officials in law enforcement.

The 32-year-old Connor, who

was once a rock and roll performer, arranged for the recovery of the virtually priceless painting to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and, as a result of the "deal," he avoided a sentence to a Federal penitentiary, *The Globe* was told yesterday.

The Rembrandt portrait, taken from the museum by two gunmen last April 14, was recovered Friday night in the parking lot of a Boston

restaurant by an assistant Federal prosecutor and a State Police major, who said they met with an unidentified man wearing a ski mask.

The recovery highlighted an unusual series of events in which Connor, a resident of Milton, was transferred from Federal to state custody. On Friday, before he was taken from Charles Street Jail by deputy US marshals, Connor faced a possi-

ble 10-year Federal prison sentence and nearly four years in a Massachusetts state prison.

On Monday, after the Rembrandt had been returned to the Museum of Fine Arts, Connor began a four-year sentence in the Walpole state prison, thus avoiding confinement in a Federal institution. Federal court offi-

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cials and state investigators have refused to discuss Connor's role in the painting's recovery.

Sources said Connor, described in a police bulletin last April as "extremely dangerous," had attempted to negotiate for return of the Rembrandt since his arrest as a fugitive last Sept. 12, but Federal officials had refused to accept his terms because he would not identify those who participated in the actual theft.

In recent months, according to several officials close to the case, State Police Maj. John F. Regan conferred with Connor about the return of the painting. As a result, it was placed in the trunk of Regan's car Friday night.

Connor, an ex-convict at State Prison who entertained in Greater Boston nightspots with a group known as "Myles and the Wild Ones," was arrested in 1966 after a gun battle in a Back Bay apartment with State Police Lt. Col. John R. O'Donovan who was wounded.

Connor had nearly four years to serve on a 12-to-20 year sentence in the shooting of O'Donovan when he was paroled in 1972.

Then, in July 1974, Con-

nor was arrested by FBI agents in connection with the theft of \$165,000 in paintings, including the works of Andrew Wyeth, from the Woolworth estate in Monmouth, Maine.

On April 23 of last year, a week after the Rembrandt was stolen from the museum on Huntington avenue, Connor failed to appear for trial in US District Court in Boston in connection with the theft of Wyeth art. He was accused of receiving stolen property in interstate commerce.

Connor remained a fugitive until Sept. 12, when FBI agents seized him in the parking lot of a South Hadley restaurant.

Regan said at a press conference Saturday morning that he had received a telephone call at

his home Friday afternoon. He said the caller asked if he were still interested in recovering the Rembrandt.

Regan said that as a result of that telephone call and subsequent calls later in the day, he and Asst. US Atty. David P. Twomey, who was to prosecute Connor in the Federal court, went to the parking lot of an unidentified Boston restaurant about six o'clock Friday night and were approached by a man in a ski mask.

They were told to go into the lounge of the restaurant where, about 10 minutes later, they received a telephone call directing them back to Regan's parked car. They found the Rembrandt, wrapped in a sleeping bag, in the trunk.

On Monday, Connor pleaded guilty to charges in connection with the theft of the paintings in Maine and US District Judge Andrew Caf-

frey imposed a four-year Federal sentence to be served concurrently with the amount of time Connor must spend at Walpole for shooting O'Donovan.