

# Art thief released from prison

## Claims new data on Gardner probe

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GLOBE STAFF

Shortly after he was released from prison yesterday, convicted art thief Myles J. Connor Jr. said he will try again to broker the return of the \$300 million in masterpieces stolen in 1990 from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.

An FBI spokeswoman said agents were interested in talking to Connor about his statement that he has new information, but Connor said he's going to try to get the 13 paintings, including a Vermeer and three Rembrandts, back on his own.

As he left federal court in Boston after being freed by a judge, Connor, 62, of Blackstone, said that hypnosis has helped him recover memories he lost after a 1998 heart attack and that he now remembers the name of a middleman who allegedly arranged the theft on behalf of a secret buyer.

Connor wouldn't name the man, but said that he lives in Massachusetts and that he plans to contact him in an effort to retrieve the artwork.

"We would be interested in talking to Mr. Connor about this information," said Gail Marcinkiewicz, a spokeswoman for the FBI, adding that agents are interested in information from anyone about the disappearance of the artwork.

But Connor said he will pursue

his own leads, now that he no longer has restrictions on where he travels or whom he talks to.

"I think I can use my connections and powers of persuasion to make the case that has to be made," said Connor, who added that he doesn't know who commissioned the theft, but believes it was an eccentric collector who probably still has the artwork.

In March Connor was arrested for allegedly driving the getaway car for a friend who robbed a Natick jewelry store. The arrest led federal authorities to take Connor back into custody for allegedly violating the conditions set when he was released in June 2000 after serving 11 years in prison on drug and stolen art charges not related to the Gardner theft. Connor was in prison when the Gardner artwork was stolen.

Yesterday, US District Judge George A. Toole Jr. released Connor; last month a Middlesex jury had acquitted Connor of charges relating to the Natick robbery.

In 1997, Connor and a former associate, William Youngworth III, told authorities they could broker the return of the stolen Gardner paintings if they were provided full immunity from prosecution, and state charges facing Youngworth were dropped.

They implicated two men in the theft: Robert Donati, a mob associate from Medford who was the victim of a 1991 gangland slaying, and David Houghton, a Malden auto mechanic who died the following year of a heart attack.

Hopes for a deal collapsed,

however, when paint chips Youngworth provided the FBI were shown not to come from one of the three stolen Rembrandts as Youngworth contended, but probably from another painting done during that period.

Brockton lawyer Martin K. Leppo, who represents Connor, said his client had provided accurate information about the theft, but was unable to offer much help after his memory loss.

Yesterday, Connor said that his memory has been coming back and that he plans to undergo hypnosis again in an effort to remember more, with his eye on the \$5 million reward being offered by the Gardner Museum.

LOTTERY

Wednesday number 1318

WEDNESDAY PAYOFFS

(based on \$1 bet)

EXACT ORDER

All 4 digits	\$3,330
First or last 3	\$466
Any 2 digits	\$40
Any 1 digit	\$4

ANY ORDER

All 4 digits	\$277
First 3 digits	\$155
Last 3 digits	\$78

MASS CASH

Dec. 8 2 8 10 13 29

Jackpot: \$100,000; three winners

MEGABUCKS

Dec. 7 6 12 26 37 38 40

Jackpot: \$400,000

MEGA MILLIONS

Dec. 6 6 10 26 30 33

(Megaball 16)

Jackpot: \$16,000,000; no winners

PREVIOUS DRAWINGS