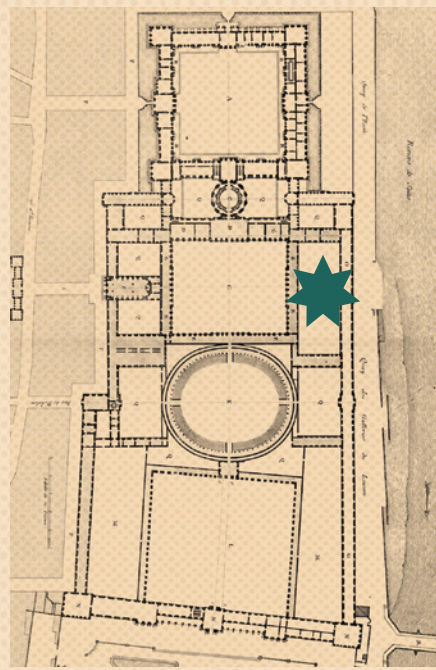


THE HEIST, STEP BY STEP

PERUGGIA STOLE THE PAINTING WITHOUT ANY ACCOMPLICES AND WITHOUT RAISING ANY SUSPICIONS



FLOOR PLAN OF THE LOUVRE WITH THE LOCATION OF LEONARDO'S PAINTING MARKED.

1. ENTERING THE MUSEUM

Although he had finished working at the Louvre several months earlier, Peruggia entered the museum bright and early on Monday, August 21, acting totally natural and dressed in a white worker's uniform.

He was a familiar face to the guards from the days when he had been adding glass panels to the works of art, so he did not raise any suspicions.

2. STEALING THE PAINTING

Peruggia made his way through several galleries before arriving at the Salon Carré. There on the wall was the *Mona Lisa*, vulnerable and without any surveillance. The carpenter had no trouble taking the painting down, since he was familiar with the hanging system. He took it to Visconti's spiral staircase, where he dismantled the frame and removed the glass panel. Then he placed a cloth over the painting for protection and calmly headed out.

3. LEAVING THE LOUVRE

Without attracting any attention, Peruggia made his way home with one of Leonardo da Vinci's masterpieces under his arm.

It was 8 a.m., and a humble, illiterate carpenter had just managed to commit the greatest art theft in history at the time.

4. CONFUSION AT THE MUSEUM

No one noticed that the painting was gone until the following day. It was Louis Bérout, a French artist, who was working on his own version of the *Mona Lisa*, who reported that the painting was missing.

At first, the Louvre's security staff did not believe that the painting could possibly have been stolen. Confusion reigned, but eventually they realized that Leonardo da Vinci's work had indeed vanished from Paris's most famous museum.

POLICE INVESTIGATION

THE MOST FAMOUS ART ROBBERY IN HISTORY

The museum reported the robbery at 11 a.m.

The incident soon made the front pages of every newspaper, and the police cordoned off the building in a desperate search for the painting. But it had already been several hours since the portrait's disappearance, and nobody knew exactly what had happened.

THERE WAS A GREAT SENSE OF DISQUIET IN THE ART WORLD

UNDER SCRUTINY

Peruggia was named as one of the prime suspects. He had worked for the museum and had a police record for some minor robberies committed during his early years in the French capital. He also had left the imprint of his left thumb on the frame.

Yet luck was on his side on this occasion because at the start of the 20th century, police took fingerprints from a person's right hand only, so the imprint of Peruggia's left thumb was of no help to them at all.

The investigation went around in circles following useless leads. Even the poet

Guillaume Apollinaire and his colleague artist Pablo Picasso found themselves to be suspects of the robbery.

AFTER BEING STASHED AWAY FOR TWO YEARS, THE MONA LISA BECOMES THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS PAINTING

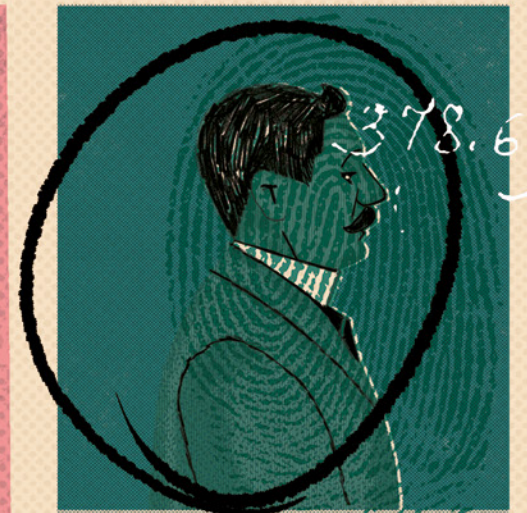
The theft also prompted a number of forgeries of the famous portrait, which were intended to be sold to multi-millionaires.

In actual fact, however, the *Mona Lisa* spent two years stashed away in a humble Paris apartment. Vincenzo Peruggia, who was no doubt scared and unsure of what to do with the great work of art, kept it closely guarded under his bed—and continued leading his simple and unpretentious life as if nothing had happened.

Many art lovers went to the Louvre just to gawk at the empty space where the painting had once been. The museum even boasted a record number of visitors.



PABLO PICASSO WAS ONE OF THE SUSPECTS, AS WAS THE POET APOLLINAIRE.



A PARIS POLICE PHOTOGRAPH OF VINCENZO PERUGGIA, PERPETRATOR OF THE THEFT OF THE MONA LISA.