

Gemstone Forecaster

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Dupont Ruby Sells for \$8.9 million

by Robert Genis

We always monitor large Burma rubies selling at the major auctions. We use these results in an attempt to divine possible future ruby price trends.

The du Pont Ruby is an 11.20-carat Burmese ruby on a brooch with emeralds, diamonds, and natural pearls. The gems are mounted on platinum and 18k gold. According to The American Gemological Laboratories (AGL), the gem is "Classic Burma", the most desirable designation for Burma rubies. The cushion cut ruby graded no heat Burma without evidence of heat or clarity treatment. It's pre-sale estimate was \$3.5 million- \$5.5 million. The gem sold for over \$8.9 million or almost \$800,000 per carat on December 11, 2019 at Christie's.



9.77 Burma ruby
Source: Christie's

Unbelievably, Christies had two large unheated Burma rubies at this auction. The second stone was a 9.77 AGL graded Burma no heat. The auction house thought so little of the stone, the reserve was only \$4K-\$6k per carat or \$40,000- \$60,000 total. In fairness, the stone is so included, it almost looks like it will break if you look at it wrong. This stone would probably be graded as Heavily Included (HI) or worse at AGL. However, the stone is a beautiful red. Everyone was surprised when the stone sold for \$795,000 or \$81,000 per carat, almost 20X the low reserve. WOW! Even Burma rubies with potential durability issues are in demand these days, especially if they are big and red. Many dealers argue these auction sales pull all no-heat Burma rubies up in price. These sales absolutely show the strength of the current Burma ruby market.



DuPont ruby (11.20 Burma) brooch
Source: Christie's

Billion-Dollar Jewelry Heist from Green Vault in Germany

by Robert Genis

The most expensive caper ever is a fascinating story. The German media has described the robbery as the biggest theft the country has suffered since World War II. In November 2019, thieves stole a vast number of priceless jewels from a German museum, where they were part of one of the most important collections in Europe. The stolen items may well be worth over one billion dollars. Interestingly, instead of a complex high tech plot with hackers with lasers like you might see in a Hollywood movie heist, this was basically a simple "smash and grab" operation.

The caper

The robbers outsmarted the Green Vault's sophisticated security system by setting fire to a power relay under the nearby Augustus Bridge at 4AM. The fire stopped the electricity, knocked out the alarm, and left the area in darkness. The surveillance cameras kept working, however, and recorded the robbery. At 5AM, two thieves entered the museum by cutting through a fence and breaking a rear corner window. Security called the police after seeing the intruders inside on the CCTV. They smashed a specially built cabinet in the Jewel Room of the Green Vault with an ax to get at the precious items.

The burglars made a quick getaway and were gone by the time the police arrived at 5:05 AM. The raid took roughly five minutes. A burned-out Audi A6 car was found nearby and is felt to have likely been the getaway vehicle. The thieves probably used a nearby entry to the autobahn to exit the area quickly, managing to escape before the police were able to set up roadblocks.

The Scene

The robbery took place at the 500-year-old Royal Castle in the eastern German city of Dresden. The items were taken from the palace's Green Vault, which was built by Augustus the Strong, the Elector of Saxony, one of the most important German rulers in the 18th century. He was later elected King of Poland.

The Green Vault is one of the oldest museums in Europe and contains many gem and art

treasures. It was first opened in 1723, and now has two sections, one modern and one historic.

The Green Vault and Royal Palace were rebuilt after they were destroyed by Allied bombing in the final days of WWII. The Baroque-era rooms where the jewels were displayed were then plundered by the Soviet Red Army. The collection was returned in 1958 and the royal residence that originally housed it was renovated in the early 2000s. The Green Vault reopened in 2006 as a near-perfect replica of the original chamber.

What was stolen

Important gems in the collection include a 648 carat blue sapphire, reported to be the largest gem sapphire in the world, worth over US\$30 million. Also, the famous Saxon White, a 49.71 near-D color diamond, worth an estimated US\$12 million. Three of 10 sets of diamonds from an 18th-century collection are also missing, totaling 111 pieces of jewelry. The collections are gold jewelry and precious stones. Other items stolen were a dagger studded with diamonds, a pearl necklace, a brooch, a sword, and dozens of other priceless items that were once owned by the Royal House of Saxony. The diamond rose set from 1719 is also gone. Fortunately, the museum's most valuable and famous gem, the 41 carat Dresden Green diamond, was on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City for another exhibition at the time of the heist. The Dresden Green is the largest green diamond in the world and reportedly worth US\$80 million.

Are many of these pieces priceless?

This museum holds many items of immense historic value to Saxony and the Germans. The *Guardian* quotes the Minister-President of Saxony Michael Kretschmer, as stating that "Not only the gallery has been robbed, but also the Saxonians".

What do the thieves do now?

The billion dollar question is what do the thieves do with their haul? Are these stones too hot to sell? German authorities fear the treasure might be lost forever. This would be the case if the jewelry was melted down so the gold and diamonds can be sold individually on the black market. With this method, they would only

receive 10 cents on the dollar. Not a bad day's work but they risk a long and difficult path for less reward. They would need a trusted cutter to reshape many diamonds into modern brilliant cuts. Of course, selling the stones "as is" would be a red flag to any fence.

Another theory is the job was preplanned to go directly to a major collector. Some suspect they will end up in a Russian oligarch's private collection. It's not far-fetched that a Russian collector might want these stones back. Of course, many countries have super collectors with unlimited funds. The FBI states the largest black market is the US with over \$6 billion in black market art and jewelry.

One final thought is that the thieves might ransom back the treasure to the museum. Dangerous, but a win/win for both sides.

Museum Security

The problem the museum has is that the stolen treasures are not insured. The premiums for such items are usually so outrageous, museums often self-insure. Of course, no one expects this type of robbery to actually succeed.

The police are urging the public to come forward with any information. The thieves are probably only interested in money and do not care about the historic and cultural value of the stolen treasures.

There is now going to be a review of security at all state museums in Germany. In 2017, a huge gold coin was stolen from a museum in Berlin and this latest theft is regarded as another huge embarrassment for the German Government.

Around 90% of museum thefts are linked to someone with ties to the institution, according to the Denver-based International Foundation for Cultural Property. This means the German authorities will relentlessly pursue the palace staff for clues. Authorities have appointed a special task force, named Commission Epaulette, to investigate the crime. Twenty criminologists are working on the case.

In Summary

The German police believe four people were involved in the heist. They are the two intruders, a look-out and the driver. They are offering over a half-million dollar reward for information. At press time, no arrests have been made.

Gem News: Gem Thieves

How a Trio of Beach Bums Stole 3 Priceless Gems From the Museum of Natural History INSIDE EDITION InDepth

September 21, 2019

by Sal Bono

One of the most interesting heists ever. A compelling "look back" at a famous case. You can find the movie, Murph the Surf on YouTube. If you like gem heists, this 1975 movie still works. ED

It was a crime straight out of a Hollywood movie.

Just before Halloween in 1964, three men pulled up outside New York City's Museum of Natural History. One man stayed behind in the car while the two others jumped out and scaled the walls of the museum with rope, sneaking in an open window on the fourth floor.

They made straight for the museum's most precious gems, smashing glass display cases and grabbing the Star of India, DeLong Star Ruby and the Midnight Star, along with thousands of dollars' worth of diamonds and other jewels.

The thieves made quick work of it, leaving the museum without authorities even being alerted to their presence. It wasn't until the museum opened the next day that the heist was discovered.

But what looked like the work of expert criminals turned out to have been orchestrated by a bunch of beach bums from Miami who just got lucky.

Fifty-five years later, InsideEdition.com takes a look back at the case.

Dawn Patrol

Jack "Murph the Surf" Murphy, Allan Kuhn and Roger Clark were three friends who all met on the surfing circuit in Miami.

To make a living, Murphy and Kuhn worked at local luxury hotels teaching swimming, while Clark was a painter. The three men, who were all in their mid-to-late 20s, enjoyed life but wanted more — and they didn't want to wait for it to come to them.

"They were young guys and liked to live the good life," Smithsonian writer and author David Sears told InsideEdition.com. "They kind of lived a lifestyle vicariously. In Miami, they were beach boys. So, they were consorting at these wealthy

high-end hotels, kind of servicing the clientele in various ways.”

In 1962, Murphy got his first taste of the underworld when he helped in a Miami Beach heist that saw him swim with the loot across Biscayne Bay. The robbery was so easy, it led Murphy to start stealing from his own rich clients together with his buddies.

“They had relationships with insurance agents or the manicurists, or whatever, who would give them a tip as to when people would not be in the room, or who had just gotten a new insurance policy,” writer and journalism professor Meryl Gordon told InsideEdition.com.

They got bolder and bolder, and in early 1964, Kuhn and Murphy robbed actress Eva Gabor and her stockbroker husband, Richard Brown, of a \$25,000 diamond ring. At the time, police could not solve the case, but the incident would later prove to be the crooks’ downfall.

The three friends soon grew tired of Miami and eventually were drawn to New York City, inspired by the crime caper “Topkapi,” which centers on a massive heist inside an Istanbul museum.

They packed into Kuhn’s Cadillac and drove up to Manhattan in mid-October of 1964. There, they began casing the American Museum of Natural History, even getting a room in a hotel blocks away on the Upper West Side.

“I think they were tired of working behind the scenes as little jewel thieves, and this was their chance to make the big score,” Gordon, who covered the museum case for Vanity Fair, said.

While in New York, the men kept anything but a low profile, throwing parties in their room, getting high, spending money and living the life they were trying so desperately to be a part of.

“They’re smoking marijuana in their hotels, and this is 1964. So you want to be known,” Sears said.

Kuhn reportedly took up with a woman who lived in the hotel’s apartments, Janet Florkiewicz. Kuhn and Florkiewicz would often take trips to the museum on what Florkiewicz thought was a date but was actually Kuhn casing the joint.

The men had luck on their side. While today security at the museum is tight, at the time, it was surprisingly lax, Gordon said.

“The alarms didn’t work,” she said. “They barely had a system of watchmen coming around. The more they researched it, the more it was like, ‘This is irresistible. We just have to try it.’”

After weeks of preparation, the three friends were finally ready on Oct. 29 and the heist went

as smoothly as it could. Clark drove up to the museum and waited in the car while Kuhn and Murphy jumped out and scaled the side of the building. There, they got lucky once again: The windows were open.

“It turned out the windows, there were a series of them on the fourth floor, and the sashes were all lowered 2 inches for ventilation,” Sears said. “All they had to do once they got to that ledge was to lower the sashes even farther and jump in.”

Inside the museum, they used a simple glass cutter to open the display cases and started stuffing gems into their bags.

“There was supposedly an alarm system, but the batteries were dead,” Sears said. “Sadly, nobody expected somebody would try this. Who’s going to rob the Museum of Natural History? Until they did.”

The men made it out with the three priceless stones as well as the other jewels and sped off.

Thrilled with their success, Murphy, Kuhn and Clark celebrated like never before back at the hotel, tipping room service absurd amounts to keep the alcohol flowing and boasting about the crime.

Hours after their heist, on the morning of Oct. 30, Murphy, Kuhn and Kuhn’s reported girlfriend, Florkiewicz, boarded a plane for Miami, while Clark went to see family in Connecticut. Florkiewicz was not seated with the two men; instead she sat in another section of the plane with bag given to her by Kuhn. Inside that bag? Unbeknownst to Florkiewicz, the stolen jewels.

Run the Jewels

The luck had to stop somewhere, though, and as in the case with many robberies, the three thieves didn’t know what to do with the jewels once they had them, particularly the three most distinctive ones.

“I think they hadn’t really thought through what was going to happen after, if they pulled it off,” Gordon said. “They hadn’t worked out all their arrangements of where they would hide the jewels, where they would go, what they would do with it.”

In Florida, Murphy and Kuhn looked to fence Herman “Hy” Gordon to help them sell some of the smaller jewels. “They closed the drapes, and they began rolling the jewels on the floor, and just looking at how they were shining in the light, and kind of this amazing, ‘Look at what we got,’” Meryl Gordon said.

The three priceless gems were impossible to offload because of their uniqueness. Even breaking them down wouldn't help the thieves because it would lower their value significantly. They were stuck with the stones.

Back in New York, the Museum of Natural History was dealing with a firestorm. How could so many jewels have gone missing right under the museum's nose? While the museum blamed budget cuts for the lack of security, police rushed to solve the high-profile crime.

Fortunately, it didn't take long. The hotel employees at the place where the three men had stayed tipped off police officers about their lavish spending and how they'd been bragging about the crime.

Police raided the room the men had stayed in, which hadn't been touched, and reportedly found floor plans for the museum, books about jewels, scales, sneakers with glass in them and a few packs of heroin.

Who had committed the crime was obvious. Where they were now, less so.

But cops got a lucky break when Clark returned to the hotel room in New York City from Connecticut. There, he was nabbed by police, and within just 48 hours of the robbery, Murphy and Kuhn were apprehended in Miami as well, their victory short-lived. As for Florkiewicz, she was detained as a material witness in the case but was never charged.

Yet, there was no hard evidence pinning the three friends to the case as the priceless gems had been hidden somewhere in Florida. The three men posted bail and returned to Miami, where they were far from quiet. Murphy, in particular, couldn't stop talking to the press, according to Sears.

"He was very vocal," Sears said. "... I know that one stage he said, 'This is messing up my life. I had planned to be in Hawaii surfing, and now I've got to go to all these court hearings.'"

The constant chatter irritated prosecutor Maurice Nadjari to no end, and he made it his mission to find the jewels and pin them to the suspects. As he began looking into their past and other robberies in Miami, he came across the story of Eva Gabor and her husband, which struck him as eerily similar. And he was right: Gabor ultimately was able to identify Kuhn and Murphy as the men who had robbed her and her husband.

Kuhn and Murphy were then taken into custody while in New York City for a hearing, as was

Clark, and held while Nadjari gathered more evidence against them in the museum case.

"They thought, 'A-ha, we've got a more legitimate case that we can pin them on.' That's what brought them into custody and kept them into custody. Even though ultimately Ms. Gabor didn't want to get involved in the case, but they had them at that time, and they had them in custody," Sears said.

While locked away in Manhattan, Nadjari did what he had to do in order to get the men to confess.

Nadjari's son, Doug Nadjari, who is also an attorney, spoke to InsideEdition.com about his father's involvement in the case. Doug, who was 6 at the time of the heist, said the incident has "become legend" in his family.

"These guys were incarcerated in the 'Tombs,' and my dad knew it would be a matter of time, that they couldn't take the heat, the food, they couldn't take the lifestyle, they couldn't take the clothing, whatever it was, that sooner or later one of them would talk," Doug Nadjari said. "All three wanted to talk, but the one they determined that had the most information and who knew where the gems were was Allan Dale Kuhn."

Maurice Nadjari was able to convince his superiors to take Kuhn out of the prison and bring him to Miami in an effort to find the jewels. They were joined by a group of New York detectives.

"They whisked Kuhn out of the 'Tombs.' They had a loose deal with him, and the deal was, 'You will get a lesser plea and a lesser sentence if the gems are returned,'" Doug Nadjari explained.

Kuhn was a diva during the Miami trip, asking for a fresh wardrobe and time to watch his favorite television shows.

"Kuhn would decide, 'You know what? It's 2 o'clock. Bugs Bunny's on at 3. I'm going back to the hotel room. No, Bugs Bunny, no gems,'" Doug Nadjari said.

Maurice Nadjari and the detectives eventually took a meeting with the crooks' fence, Hy Gordon, which led them to the gems, some of which, as it turned out, were hidden inside a locker at the Northeast Miami Trailways bus terminal. Inside was the Star of India, the Midnight Star and a handful of other gems. Still missing? The DeLong Star Ruby.

Still, it was enough evidence to come back to New York and move the case forward. Maurice

Nadjari stuffed the jewels in an airsickness bag in an effort to get them on the plane without them leaving his sight.

"There was nothing more important to him. It came before eating. It came before sleeping. It came before his family. So, people say, 'My family comes first?' No. This came before everything, and it was going to be, 'Get those gems back, or bust,'" Doug Nadjari said. It paid off.

Wipe Out

On April 6, 1965, Kuhn, Murphy and Clark pleaded guilty to burglary and grand larceny. They each were sentenced to three years behind bars in the museum heist.

"I think my dad would've preferred to see heavier sentences for the defendants as a deterrent for other people who might consider these things. But in order to get the gems back, he had to make a deal with the devil," Doug Nadjari said.

Hy Gordon, who was not involved in the initial heist but was responsible for fencing some of the gems, got 10 years behind bars. He died in 1970 of a heart attack.

Florkiewicz, as mentioned above, was treated as a material witness in the case and was never charged.

The DeLong Star Ruby was eventually recovered months later and returned to the museum, where all three priceless stones are on display to this day, with better security.

Following his release from prison, Clark moved to New England and lived a quiet life, dying in 2007.

As for Kuhn and Murphy, they returned to Miami and their thieving ways. Kuhn served a year in a California federal prison after being convicted of conspiring to receive and transport stolen securities in 1968. When he got out, he became a law-abiding citizen and lived in California until his death in 2017.

Murphy eventually found himself embroiled in a more serious crime: murder. He was found guilty of killing two young women dumped in a Florida canal in 1967. He narrowly avoided the death penalty in what became known as the Whiskey Creek Murders and was sentenced to life in prison. While in prison, Murphy became a pastor, leading Bible studies programs at the facility.

In November 1986, he was granted parole. Nowadays, he still preaches, going to prisons

around the country to spread the word of God. He declined to speak to InsideEdition.com.

"He's such a complicated figure, because on the one hand, he's incredibly charming. On the other hand, he can give you one of those 1,000-mile stares, and you're thinking, 'Whoa, I would not want to be alone in a scary situation with him,'" Meryl Gordon recalled.

The three men lost touch after Murphy's conviction. Kuhn and Murphy reunited for Vanity Fair in a 2014 article written by Meryl Gordon looking back at the 50th anniversary of the heist. "I think that they were proud of being part of history, and again, while Jack went on a darker path and later served 25 years for murder, at least this was a more innocent part of their life in which nobody got hurt, nothing bad particularly happened, and they enjoyed being the toast of the town," she said.

For the Nadjari family, the case was a career-making one for a celebrated prosecutor.

"There's a picture of the Star of India that's been on the piano in my folks' living room since 1964," Doug Nadjari said.

Gem Scams

The Detroit News

November 14

by Robert Snell

We have known Joseph DuMouchelle for years. Always seemed like a straight shooter, but recent financial issues may be his downfall. Looks like he was robbing Peter to pay Paul. ED

A jeweler to the stars who once auctioned the engagement ring President Donald Trump gave to ex-wife Marla Maples was arrested Thursday and accused of orchestrating a \$16 million diamond caper, according to federal court records.

Joseph DuMouchelle, 58, owner of DuMouchelle Fine & Estate Jewelers in Birmingham, was released on \$10,000 unsecured bond after making an initial appearance in federal court Thursday in connection with what the FBI describes as a complex financial crime involving millionaires, blue bloods and rare diamonds.

The criminal case accuses DuMouchelle, a scion of the influential family that founded DuMouchelle Art Galleries in Detroit, of engaging in wire fraud involving the purported sale of a

rare 77-carat diamond dubbed the "The Yellow Rose."

A handcuffed DuMouchelle, dressed in jeans and a blue pullover, said little beyond answering basic questions while in court. His court-appointed lawyer, Colleen Fitzharris, declined comment to reporters.

The diamond is portrayed in a federal criminal complaint as a means for DuMouchelle to escape mounting financial problems, including money owed to a North Dakota business colleague.

The alleged crime dates to January when the man, Thomas Ritter, tried to get DuMouchelle to repay a \$430,000 debt, according to the FBI.

That's when DuMouchelle pitched a deal that entailed buying "The Yellow Rose" diamond from a Texas family, selling at a profit and splitting the money, according to an FBI affidavit filed in federal court Thursday.

The emerald-cut gem, set in platinum with more than five carats of yellow and white baguette diamonds, would cost \$12 million but could be sold for \$16 million, DuMouchelle said, according to the court filing.

Ritter agreed to the deal and was supposed to receive 75% of the profit.

DuMouchelle's gemologist wife, Melinda "Lindy" Adducci, appraised the diamond and emailed the appraisal to Ritter, according to the FBI.

DuMouchelle, meanwhile, emailed instructions purportedly from Richard Drucker of Gemworld International, Inc. on how to wire money to a Bank of America account to buy the ring, the government said.

Ritter later received an email from DuMouchelle indicating the ring was purchased for \$12 million on Feb. 6.

The investigation later led to Texas resident William Noble, who said he sold a \$950,000 13-carat emerald-cut diamond to DuMouchelle on consignment last year. If DuMouchelle sold the diamond, Noble would be paid \$950,000 and a share of any profits, according to the FBI.

Eventually, Noble asked for the diamond to be returned but DuMouchelle did not respond, according to the government.

Noble asked again and DuMouchelle said the piece had sold with a \$50,000 profit, the FBI said. Noble received \$100,000 as an initial

payment but a \$450,000 check bounced, according to the court filing.

On July 31, 2018, while Noble was on vacation, DuMouchelle arrived at the Texas man's store unannounced and left with 29 pieces of jewelry that were to be sold at a show.

"DuMouchelle subsequently listed the items through his online auction at a fraction of the cost of what Noble consigned them for," the FBI agent wrote in the court filing. "When Noble confronted DuMouchelle, he said it was all a mistake and he would correct it. Noble demanded return of the items."

DuMouchelle eventually returned 27 of the 29 pieces, a move that salvaged the business relationship with Noble, who sent more items for DuMouchelle to sell, according to the government.

Noble later demanded DuMouchelle return the additional pieces but, instead DuMouchelle refused or sent phony shipping numbers for the jewelry, the FBI said.

"By the end of 2018, DuMouchelle had approximately \$12.5 million of Noble's items," the FBI agent wrote.

In February, Noble learned his merchandise was being sold by DuMouchelle for 20 cents on the dollar, the government said.

DuMouchelle denied selling the merchandise but told Noble he had a customer interested in buying "The Yellow Rose" diamond for \$12 million.

He asked Noble if he would take \$10 million for the sale and wire \$2 million back to DuMouchelle. Noble "felt this was improper and possibly illegal," so he declined the sale, the filing says.

That same month, Noble received six pieces back from DuMouchelle and a wire transfer of about \$4.25 million for several pieces that DuMouchelle said he'd sold on Noble's behalf.

The investigation revealed that DuMouchelle's transfer to Noble was with proceeds from the \$12 million Ritter had sent for the purported purchase of the yellow rose diamond.

Noble has made attempts since February to reach DuMouchelle and sent an employee to Detroit for two weeks to seek return of his items to no avail.

In April, DuMouchelle sent Ritter an email with a copy of the contract for the purchase and sale of the diamond. The contract revealed it was sold to "Jennifer H. Rands Trust" in Bloomfield Hills for \$16.5 million.

DuMouchelle told Ritter that three wire transfers had been made by the purchaser.

A review of the bank account did not turn up any deposits or wire transfers associated with the purchaser, the filing reads.

In an interview with the government, Noble said he did not send the diamond to DuMouchelle nor did he agree to sell it.

Ritter traveled to Detroit in April to see the diamond for himself. He was told by DuMouchelle that it was being housed at a Brink's facility in Detroit and that the person in charge was on vacation so they could not see the diamond.

The filing also contains allegations of wrongdoing by DuMouchelle involving Jonathan Birnbach of JB International LLC in New York.

Birnbach had been buying and selling jewelry with DuMouchelle for about a dozen years and last fall entered into a consignment arrangement with him on jewelry from estates to be sold at auction.

Birnbach sent DuMouchelle about 12 wire transfers to purchase items at auction. To date, Birnbach has only received \$500,000 from DuMouchelle. He's owed \$2.5 million to \$3 million, according to the filing.

The alleged crime unfolded while DuMouchelle underwent financial problems.

DuMouchelle and his wife filed Chapter 11 bankruptcy Oct. 11, listing almost \$2.3 million in assets and \$23.4 million in liabilities.

His property included a 2018 Dodge Challenger Demon worth \$125,000.

The car, however, disappeared Oct. 6, five days before DuMouchelle filed bankruptcy, according to court records.

The Demon was "stolen in St. Clair Shores in Fishbones parking lot," according to bankruptcy records.

DuMouchelle has drawn headlines in recent years for different reasons.

Three years ago, DuMouchelle sold the 7.45-carat diamond engagement ring Trump gave to his second wife, Maples, an actress and TV personality.

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