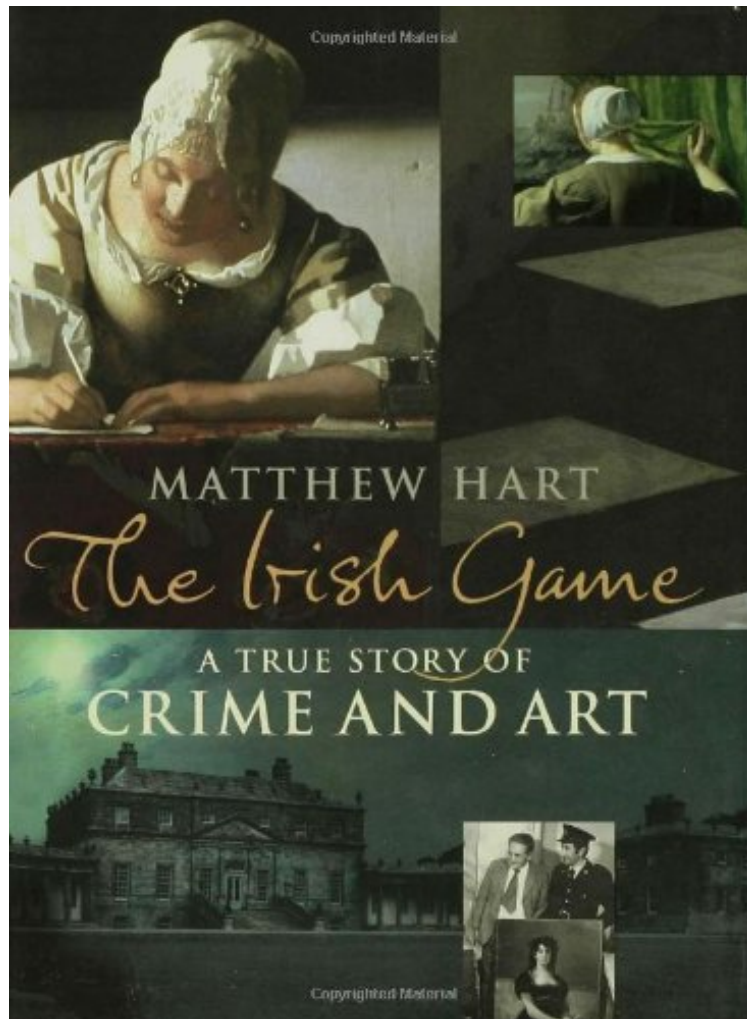


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Matthew Hart

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The Irish Game: A True Story of Crime and Art

Matthew Hart : The Irish Game: A True Story of Crime and Art before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised [The Irish Game: A True Story of Crime and Art](#):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Ho-Hum book rather slow and tediousBy Sharon ParsonsTrue story of crime and eventually punishment. I prefer stories that move along more quickly than this one did!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Better than fictionBy Michael TaylorI read this book in hard-copy a long time ago, and had to get it for the Kindle. What happens to these Grand Masters, stolen to much media fanfare? Is there really some eccentric art-lover who has them stolen to order, so that he can gloat and drool in the privacy of his vault? The answer is much more prosaic. The going rate for stolen goods that are fenced is about 11%, so if you have a stolen painting that is touted by the newspapers as worth "two million dollars", you can use it as collateral for a

\$220,000 drug/guns buy. So these paintings just disappear into an underworld demi-monde, being passed from criminal hand to hand, in token payment. Or sometimes they're turned in for the insurance, "somebody I know told me....." The world's major police forces have specialist units, who follow lead, and make sting purchases, and happily this Vermeer, "Lady Writing a Letter", is now back in the National Gallery in Dublin.....until next time? 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Lots of interesting vignettes about art theft, Irish criminals, the IRA, international art-theft detectives, but that's it. By Hugh T. McCann Interesting information that loses the struggle to become a coherent book

In the annals of art theft, no case has matched for sheer criminal panache the heist at Ireland's Russborough House in 1986. The Irish police knew right away that the mastermind was a Dublin gangster named Martin Cahill. Yet the great plunder including a Gainsborough, a Goya, two Rubenses, and a Vermeer remained at large for years. Cahill taunted the police with a string of other crimes, but in the end it was the paintings that brought him low. The challenge of disposing of such famous works forced him to reach outside his familiar world into the international arena, and when he did, his pursuers were waiting. The movie-perfect sting that broke Cahill uncovered an astonishing maze of banking and drug-dealing connections that redefined the way police view art theft. As if that were not enough, the recovery of the Vermeer by then worth \$200 million led to a remarkable discovery about the way Vermeer achieved his photographic perspective. The Irish Game places the great theft in Ireland's long sad history of violence and follows the thread that led, as a direct result of Cahill's desperate adventures with the Russborough art, to his assassination by the IRA. With the storytelling skill of a novelist and the instincts of a detective, Matthew Hart follows the twists and turns of this celebrated case, linking it with two other world-famous thefts of Vermeer's "The Concert" and other famous paintings at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston, and of Edvard Munch's "The Scream" at the National Gallery of Norway in Oslo. Sharply observed, fully explored, The Irish Game is a masterpiece in the literature of true crime.

From Publishers Weekly In this engaging account of how stolen paintings have become collateral in the international drug trade, starting with the 1974 theft of a priceless Vermeer from an Irish estate, British author Hart (Diamond: A Journey to the Heart of an Obsession) offers a convincing revisionist view of the closest thing the book has to a protagonist, legendary Irish thug Martin Cahill (aka "The General"). The case that the "slovenly, loyal, suspicious, immovable" Cahill was no mastermind, however, tends to render the narrative more prosaic than dramatic, as does the argument that most heists, including the sensational 1990 robbery from Boston's Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the 1994 theft of Edvard Munch's The Scream, involved more chutzpah and embarrassing security lapses than Topkapi-like planning. The author's primary strength lies in his character portraits—he describes one upper-class art thief as rooting around "in the issues of the day like someone picking through a bin for a hat that would fit." The dedicated Irish police who tracked these criminals and attempted numerous stings to recover the paintings deserve credit for their heroism, but they aren't particularly memorable. Still, Hart sheds light on a little-known area of modern crime that should be of interest to many general readers. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist British journalist Hart, author of Diamond: A Journey into the Heart of an Obsession (2001), continues his investigation into criminal covetousness in a set of brisk and fascinating accounts of international art heists, including the 1994 snatching of Edvard Munch's The Scream. He primarily focuses on two brazen assaults on Russborough, an isolated Irish estate with an improbably stupendous art collection, which included Vermeer's Lady Writing a Letter with Her Maid. The first occurred in 1974, orchestrated not by an archcriminal but by an inept, IRA-supporting British heiress. A dozen years later, a true outlaw, Martin Cahill, made off with the Russborough masterpieces and sent the authorities on a maddening quest. Hart vividly portrays colorful characters on both sides of the law, and vigorously chronicles complex investigations and two stunning discoveries pertaining to the so-called Irish Vermeer in a lively chronicle that arouses both wry admiration for the sheer gall of art thieves and outrage at the thought of irreplaceable art treasures in the hands of thugs, many seeking nothing more than collateral for drug deals. Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved About the Author A skilled writer and journalist, Matthew Hart is also an editor of the New York trade magazine Rapaport Diamond Report. His articles on diamonds have appeared in such publications as The Atlantic Monthly and The Financial Post. He has written for newspapers, television, and film. His books include three novels and two previous works of nonfiction, including the story of the greatest gold discovery in the western hemisphere. He lives in Toronto.