



U.S. Department of Justice

*United States Attorney's Office
District of Delaware*

*The Nemours Building
1007 Orange St., Suite 700
P.O. Box 2046
Wilmington, Delaware 19899-2046*

*(302) 573-6277
FAX (302) 573-6220*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Friday, October 2, 2009
www.usdoj.gov/usao/de

David C. Weiss
United States Attorney
(302) 573-6277

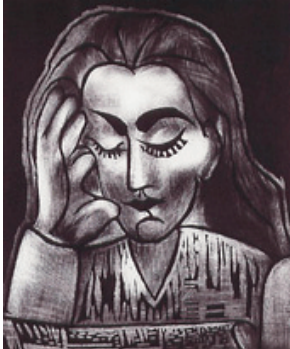
**FLORIDA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT
OF PICASSO AND CHAGALL ETCHINGS**

Defendant Marcus Patmon Enters Guilty Plea to Felony Offenses

United States Attorney David C. Weiss and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Supervisory Special Agent Tricia A. Gibbs announced today the entry of guilty pleas by defendant Marcus Patmon to a three count criminal Information charging him with mail fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1341 (Count I); attempted wire fraud, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1343 and 1349 (Count II); and interstate transportation of stolen property, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 2314 (Count III).

Under Count I, Patmon admitted to defrauding a California art dealer, C.E.B., in the sale of a stolen Pablo Picasso etching known as "Faune Devoilant une Femme." Under Count II, Patmon admitted to an attempt to defraud C.E.B. in the sale of another stolen Picasso etching known as "Le Repas Frugal." Under Count III, Patmon admitted to transporting in interstate commerce a stolen lithograph by Marc Chagall entitled "The Meeting of Ruth & Boaz." Patmon acknowledged stealing all three works of art, as well as a third Picasso etching known as "Jacqueline Lisant."

According to facts set forth at a guilty plea hearing today, on May 22, 2008, at approximately 3:42 am, the Gallery Biba, in Palm Beach, Florida, was burglarized. Two Picasso etchings, valued at approximately \$450,000, were stolen: "Jacqueline Lisant" and "Le Repas Frugal", pictured below.



“Jacqueline Lisant”



“Le Repas Frugal”

On July 14, 2008, C.E.B., an Oakland, California art dealer, contacted the Palm Beach, Florida police department after receiving the stolen etching “Le Repas Frugal” by FEDEX on July 12, 2008. The sender was defendant Marcus Patmon, Miami, Florida. Patmon sought to sell “Le Repas Frugal” to C.E.B. for \$395,000, claiming he had inherited the etching from his grandparents. C.E.B. became suspicious of Patmon when he told her that another copy of “Le Repas Frugal” had been recently stolen from a Palm Beach gallery. Forensic examination (including measuring the exact dimensions of the etching paper cuts) confirmed that the etching Patmon sent to C.E.B. was the one stolen on May 22, 2008.

C.E.B. also reported that on March 28, 2008, she paid Patmon \$58,000 for a Pablo Picasso etching entitled “Faune Devoilant une Femme”, pictured below.



“Faune Devoilant une Femme”

C.E.B. received “Faune Devoilant une Femme” on March 19, 2008. Patmon again claimed that he had inherited the etching from his grandparents. Authorities later determined that this etching had been burglarized from Galerie Lareuse in Washington, D.C. on December 10, 2007, along with a lithograph by Marc Chagall entitled “The Meeting of Ruth & Boaz.” It is pictured below.



“The Meeting of Ruth & Boaz”

In July 2008, an FBI undercover agent (UCA) contacted Patmon. The UCA posed as an art dealer working with C.E.B. to sell “Le Repas Frugal” to third parties, including one in Delaware. Between July and August, the UCA, calling from Delaware, had several conversations with Patmon, in Florida. During these conversations Patmon confirmed sending “Le Repas Frugal” and “Faune Devoilant une Femme” to C.E.B. The UCA told Patmon that publicity concerning the Gallery Biba burglary would hinder his ability to sell “Le Repas Frugal” and suggested that Patmon hire a lawyer to clear title to the etching, since Patmon claimed it was not stolen. This way, they might be able to sell it for several hundred thousand dollars. Otherwise, they would not be able to obtain such a price. Patmon decided

not to clear title to the etching, refused to go to the police, and instead requested that the UCA find a buyer for “Le Repas Frugal” for \$150,000. At the same time, Patmon referred to the movie “The Thomas Crown Affair,” and asked if the UCA was an insurance investigator. (“The Thomas Crown Affair” was a major motion picture about the investigation of a museum burglary in which a valuable Monet was stolen.) Patmon agreed he would pay back C.E.B. \$58,000 (the amount C.E.B. paid for “Faune Devoilant une Femme”) from the proceeds of the “Le Repas Frugal” sale.

On September 5, 2008, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement executed a search warrant at Patmon’s residence, in Miami. In the apartment, behind a sofa, police found “Jacqueline Lisant.” On September 8, 2008, Patmon called a Palm Beach police detective and said he wanted to come clean. On September 9, 2008, Palm Beach detectives interviewed Patmon at the Palm Beach police department. He admitted burglarizing the Gallery Biba, stealing “Jacqueline Lisant” and “Le Repas Frugal,” and sending “Le Repas Frugal” to C.E.B. in California.

Patmon, 38, is a resident of Miami, Florida. He faces a maximum statutory sentence of twenty years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, three years supervised release, restitution, and a \$100 mandatory special assessment.

U.S. Attorney David C. Weiss said, “This investigation and prosecution demonstrate our commitment to addressing the problem of the illicit sale of stolen art, a multi-million dollar international criminal enterprise. I applaud our law enforcement partners, the FBI Art Crime Team, the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and the Palm Beach Police Department, for the thorough investigation that exposed this scheme. Our office will continue to vigorously investigate and prosecute art crime in the future.”

This case is being prosecuted by David L. Hall, Assistant United States Attorney. For further information, contact Assistant United States Attorney David L. Hall at (302) 573-6277.
