



The Duke of Wellington, Kidnapped!: The Incredible True Story of the Art Heist That Shocked a Nation

Alan Hirsch

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In 1961, a thief broke into the National Gallery in London and committed the most sensational art heist in British history. He stole the museum's much prized painting, *The Duke of Wellington* by Francisco Goya. Despite unprecedented international attention and an unflagging investigation, the case was not solved for four years, and even then, only because the culprit came forward voluntarily.

Kempton Bunton, an elderly gentleman, claimed he executed the theft armed with only a toy gun, a disguise purchased for five shillings, and a getaway car inadvertently provided by a drunkard. Shortly after turning himself in, Bunton also invoked language in an obscure law to maintain his innocence, despite the confession. He did not allege that the confession was false, but rather that stealing the painting did not constitute a crime because he intended to return it. On account of this improbable defense strategy, the story took another twist, resulting in a bizarre courtroom drama and extraordinary verdict.

Over fifty years later, Alan Hirsch decided to explore the facts behind this historic case and uncovered shocking new evidence that both solved the crime and deepened the mystery.

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