

Reward offered to retrieve Rembrandt

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By Robert J. Anglin
Globe Staff

The owners of a 1632 Rembrandt painting stolen from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts two weeks ago are attempting to ransom it.

The attempt to get it back came to light when a private investigative agency working on the case placed an advertisement in yesterday's editions of *The Globe*.

The portrait of Rembrandt's sister is insured by the owners for \$750,000, it was learned yesterday. Previous estimates of its worth were from \$500,000 to \$1 million, but museum officials have described it as priceless.

The advertisement simply offered a reward "by the owners for information resulting in the safe recovery of Rembrandt's Portrait of Elsbeth van Rijn." It assured that all replies would be totally confidential.

A spokesman for First Security Services Corp. of Boston, the agency that placed the ad, would not comment beyond a short prepared statement.

"We have been retained by



The MFA's stolen Rembrandt

agents of the owners of Rembrandt's painting of Elsbeth van Rijn, recently removed from the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. It is our intention to negotiate with anyone who may be helpful in the safe recovery of this art work.

"All negotiations will be handled in a totally confidential manner,

and at this time we are not prepared to comment further," he said.

The amount of the reward was not specified in the advertisement, or in the agency spokesman's statement. Museum officials would not comment on the offer.

The painting was stolen April 14 at about 12:30 p.m. by two men who held one museum guard at gunpoint, struck another and fired three shots before fleeing in a car driven by a third man.

At least three private investigative agencies are involved in efforts to negotiate the safe return of the masterpiece. Each is working independently of the others, reportedly on the promise of a high fee for the recovery of the painting.

The painting was one of seven Rembrandts in the museum's collection. It was on loan from the family of the late Robert Treat Paine 2d, a leading museum benefactor and a descendant of Robert Treat Paine, a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

It is not known what company has the portrait insured. Museum director Merrill C. Ruepell said shortly after the theft that any in-

REWARD FOR MISSING REMBRANDT

A reward is offered by the owners for information resulting in the safe recovery of Rembrandt's Portrait of Elsbeth van Rijn, recently taken from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

All Replies Are Totally Confidential
Contact Owner's Representative
Telephone Boston 617-227-2099
or write
P.O. Box 37, Boston, MA 02101

Ad first ran in yesterday's *Globe*.

insurance on it was carried and paid for by the owners.

A source close to the investigation said that such insurance "is difficult to obtain and very expensive." He estimated that the annual premium could be around \$25,000.

Such a work is difficult to insure, he said, because by hanging in a public gallery, it is in a high-risk, high-exposure situation."

He said there was also a risk of destruction by spectators despite the presence of guards at the museum.

Boston police and FBI agents are working on the case, but reported no new developments.