



How to Steal the Mona Lisa: and Six Other World-Famous Treasures

By Taylor Bayouth

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A step-by-step guide for the craft of high stakes thievery

In *How to Steal the Mona Lisa*, author Taylor Bayouth meticulously describes seven heists of priceless art and artifacts: the Hope Diamond, the "Mona Lisa," the Archaeopteryx Lithographica, Rodin's "Thinker," King Tut's golden death mask, the Crown Jewels, and the Codex Leicester.

With this trusty guide, learn to:

- Camouflage a getaway car.
- Hack security systems.
- Navigate air ducts.
- Master the art of disguise.
- Pick locks, scale buildings, and more.

Illustrated throughout, this book contains all the information you need to acquire equipment, recruit partners, strategize the perfect crime, and discreetly sell off your stolen national treasures.

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Editorial Review

Review

Advance praise for How to Steal the Mona Lisa:

"In one sense *Mona Lisa* is long-form, silly comedy. In another it's a considered, clear series of attacks on convention and the concept of "value." ...**a work of sublime absurdity.**"

--**Library Journal**

"The perfect book for someone looking to pull off that seemingly impossible heist! The reconnaissance for seven world famous artifacts has been done for you, but the skills you will learn can be utilized in any high value caper. If the riches you will gain aren't enough, the laughs you have along the way are going to be priceless." --**Domenick Dicce**, author of *YOU'RE A VAMPIRE: THAT SUCKS! (A SURVIVAL GUIDE)*

"An inspiring read." --**Jeff Johnson**, author of *LUCKY SUPREME*

About the Author

Taylor Bayouth was born in Los Angeles, California, where he currently lives with his wife and daughter. On any given day you will find him creating something new—whether it's art, technology, literature, or his next museum heist.

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STEALING THE HOPE DIAMOND

APPROXIMATE VALUE

- \$250 million

LOCATION

- Smithsonian Institution, National History Museum, Washington, DC, USA

EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- Flush cutters
- Grappling hook and rope
- Bosch 12-volt
- 1/2-inch
- right-angle
- cordless drill
- GoPro camera
- CamDo GoPro Motion Detector
- Modeling clay
- Small folding step stool
- Lock pick set
- Moped capable of speeds up to 40 mph
- Backpack

ABOUT THE HOPE DIAMOND

The Hope Diamond is a large, deep-blue, forty-five-carat diamond—a rare mineral that was formed deep inside the earth over one billion years ago. It was most likely found in India in the seventeenth century, but little is known about its first owner. The blue diamond was originally found embedded in the forehead of a magnificent Buddha in Southeast Asia. How the diamond got there is a mystery to this day.

We do know that in the mid-1600s, French gem merchant Jean-Baptiste Tavernier joined the monkhood that guarded the diamond in the Ananda Temple. However, Tavernier was not interested in becoming a monk but in getting his hand on the blue diamond. One night, when the head count was particularly low, Tavernier strangled two of the monk guards and grabbed the diamond. Tavernier soon made it out of India, only to be mauled to death and eaten by a streak of tigers.

The history of the diamond doesn't end there. It's changed hands numerous times on its way from India to France to Britain and, finally, to the United States, where it lives today. The diamond has a long history of bringing misfortune and tragedy to its owners and so carries a reputed curse. However, there are strong indications that the diamond's various owners fabricated these stories to enhance the stone's mystery and appeal since, historically, increased publicity has only raised the gem's newsworthiness and value.

OVERVIEW

Stealing the Hope Diamond is a surprisingly straightforward operation, assuming you have the right information and tools. While the National Museum of Natural History is one of the most trafficked and secure museums in the world, it still must operate completely off of federal funding and private donations. This means its vault of treasures is about as secure as your local bank. Keep in mind, while budgets for museums can be in the millions, the sheer square footage means security budgets must be spread very thin. So thin in fact that entering the Smithsonian in the dead of night will be as simple as understanding just a little about its geothermal heating system and the software that controls the museum's security systems.

PROCURING A SAFE HOUSE

Getting in and out of the museum itself is surprisingly the easiest aspect of this particular job. It's navigating the streets of Washington, DC, itself, during what will inevitably be a citywide manhunt, that will undoubtedly be the most challenging part. Due to the extremely high profile of the target, it is to be expected that a ten-mile sweep of the area would go into effect immediately upon authorities being notified of a breach. Given that this particular museum is merely a few city blocks away from the iconic home of the American president, authorities should be expected to act swiftly and with force. It is for these reasons that you will need to secure a nearby safe house in which you can vanish until the heat of America's finest police force cools and allows for a safe and unimpeded escape.

The ideal location lies on the far edge of Washington's Potomac Park, which you can access through Independence Avenue. There, west of the Tidal Basin, you will find many low-rent residencies, homeless persons, and a cluster of inns and motels rarely frequented by police. Such housing not only offers good long-term cover where you can blend in, but it is also easily accessible to the museum.

You will play the role of a down-and-out junkie, a transient to any passersby—just another vagabond looking for a fix and a place to stay warm.

Here's what you need to do:

- Your attire should be mangy jeans, a soiled T-shirt, a tattered jacket, and a knit cap.

- Find a low-cost, long-stay motel that accepts cash.
- Avoid prolonged conversation and/or eye contact with anyone.
- Stay indoors and leave only if absolutely necessary.
- Make no calls and no attempts to contact anyone.

[For more information on how to develop a believable disguise see “The Art of Disguise” on page 3. Before you begin, be sure to have a three-week supply of nonperishable food, drinking water, and whatever else you need for a lengthy stay indoors.]

GETTING STARTED

There are three primary weaknesses you will be exploiting to gain entrance to the southeast wing on the second floor of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History:

1. **Dispersed layout:** Security is spread thin due to the sprawling grounds.
2. **Close proximity to escape routes:** The specific location of the Hope Diamond lies roughly a hundred yards from a museum entrance and parallels a low-traffic intersection by Fourth Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.
3. **Unguarded entryways:** An accessible heating duct that is open throughout winter.

Sometime in early February a groundsman will be instructed to remove a large metal hatch from a four-foot-wide air duct used to transfer heat from an outdoor geothermal heating system positioned on the northwest corner of the museum. Geothermal systems take advantage of the Earth’s ability to store vast amounts of heat in the soil. The heat is then transferred to a fan and pushed into large aluminum vents. This system is responsible for heating the Museum of Natural History and the lower floors of the Air and Space Museum. Once the hatch on the main entrance is removed you’ll face several low-barrier security measures, which I’ll go over in detail in the following section.

PENETRATING THE OUTER PERIMETER

Before going anywhere you’re going to need to alter your appearance so your face isn’t captured on camera. You don’t need to go over the top; it’s dark out and this particular surveillance system was installed circa 1980, definitely low fidelity. However, our approach (as usual) is a cautious one, so you will be coming in disguise. A hooded sweatshirt or baseball cap should be sufficient to hide your face. A pair of thick-rimmed glasses wouldn’t hurt either as glass tends to reflect and makes it difficult to detect eye color.

You will be arriving on your moped with all of your equipment at around 1 a.m. You are entering on the northwest corner of the Natural History Museum via Constitution Avenue; there will be a visible access road that leads south. Take it, but don’t go far. You need to get off of the road and into the trees where there is cover. Park there and hurry quietly toward a large, aluminum structure. This is the industrial heating unit that I mentioned earlier. Take cover behind the west side of the structure. You will see a sign that reads: *Museum Personnel Only*. Be careful! You are officially trespassing at this point. Get caught and you can expect to spend the next six months behind bars.

Find the panel marked *Danger: High Voltage Electrical Equipment* and cut off the panel’s hinges using your pneumatic flush cutters, then remove the screws with your 12-volt drill (see above). Once you remove the panel, you will find an aluminum grating covering a four-foot duct secured with a simple double-ball locking padlock. Remove the lock with your flush cutters and you are in.

NAVIGATING THE DUCTS

It should take no longer than ten minutes to navigate through the northeast wing and up into the southeast wing on the second floor of the Natural History Museum, where the Hope Diamond is kept. Move quickly and quietly while taking stock of any worrisome sounds coming from inside the building, such as security guards milling about.

You will know when you are there because the main duct will come to a dead end. Notice the narrowed extension at a slight grade ahead of you: There should be more than enough room to fit through, lying stomach down and head first. Start crawling.

There won't be many turns to worry about here as the duct you are in only supplies heat to the northeast and northwest wings on the first and second floors. Once you are in, however, you want to make your first *left* to go in the direction of the Gems and Minerals Hall. Once there you will have only one way to go—up. You should be able to reach the ledge above using your folding stepladder if you are over five feet tall. Give yourself a boost to get your forearms planted in the duct above. Now you can pull yourself up and into the final horizontal stretch of your journey. Your stop is going to be the second access panel on your left—which will take you directly into the geology exhibit and just around the corner from where the Hope Diamond is kept.

Remove the panel with your cordless drill. There should be twelve screws that, once removed, will allow you to easily slide the grating off, giving you direct access into the museum. Be careful though, as you will be about ten feet off the ground. Since your entrance route is your escape route, we're going to need the help of your trusty grappling hook and rope to climb back up. Attach one of the flukes of your grappling hook to something sturdy inside the vent you are in; it needs to withstand your weight. Footholds are also important here. You can find more information on crafting and using a grappling hook in Part I.

EXPLOITING THE SMITHSONIAN'S COMPUTERIZED SECURITY SYSTEM

Don't get ahead of yourself here. Before you go for the diamond, you'll need to take care of security. Before you can prompt the Hope Diamond's display case (and vault) to unlock, you need to trick the security system into *thinking* the museum is open. To do this you'll have to exploit the museum's computer system, which manages lighting, surveillance cameras, outer perimeter locks, and other automated systems. The terminal is always on and when given the correct user credentials, it will give you access to nearly everything.

The closest terminal is on the north wall of Geology Hall and is labeled *Security*. You will need to pick this lock, which should be relatively easy as it is a standard pin and tumbler lock (see page 11 for more details on lock picking). Here you will find a computer terminal not unlike your typical personal computer. It runs a commercial software and is secured by a username and password. Unfortunately, you're missing details pertinent to hacking the system, like user credentials and the operating system the computer runs on.

To get around this, you will set up a recording device to gather information and will return the *following* day to retrieve it. While this might seem extremely risky (breaking into the Smithsonian *twice*), remember how easy getting here really was: There are no walls or fencing to penetrate, the grounds are big and therefore undersurveyed, and finally, with simple tools and a ducting map, security is basically a nonissue. What you are doing here today is installing a GoPro portable camera outfitted with a third-party motion sensor (this will preserve battery life and storage space) to capture login information for your *future* use. To do this, attach the motion sensor to your GoPro and use your folding step stool to reach the ceiling. Use a lump of

modeling clay to hold the camera in position and angle it to capture keystrokes on the terminal keyboard below. Make sure to double-check the angle so there are no obstructions.

You're done (for now). Take a quick survey to ensure everything is as you've left it. Close the door behind you. Use the rope ladder you've conveniently left for yourself to reenter the main air duct. Pull up the rope and slide the panel back shut. Traverse the ducts by following your map in reverse. Exit the geothermal heating unit and replace the panel. Once you are in the open, find your moped and keep a wary eye out as you drive back to your safe house. If all has gone to plan there should be more than enough time to escape unnoticed.

THE FOLLOW-UP

You don't want to wait long before making your reappearance. This particular system requires users to create new passwords every week, and even with the help of the motion-sensor attachment, the batteries on your GoPro won't last long. I recommend coming back within one to two days to avoid capturing login credentials that have since expired.

You're coming back the same way as before. You may be asking yourself, "What about my face—has it been captured on record?" Sure, on a digital drive *somewhere*. But in all likelihood no one has seen it. There simply aren't enough staff to review video from every camera and for every minute of the day. Assuming you did nothing wrong—no alarms were tripped, nothing reported as missing, and everything left as it was—the videos will *not* be reviewed.

Once you're through the maze of ducts, back down into the Geology Hall, and through the security door; remove the GoPro from the ceiling (yes, you will need your step stool) and review the video. This should be relatively easy thanks to your motion-sensor attachment, which has ensured only the action has been recorded.

Watch for a staff member who has logged into the console; this is where you will obtain your access code. Given the correct angle, you should have enough resolution to zoom in and see the keys clearly. You have at least *three* attempts at getting the username/password combination correct. Try not to blow it or you're looking at a narrow (and diamond-less) escape.

Once you have logged into the system, the interface should be intuitive. Find the *security cameras* interface and take a quick peek at the CCTV (closed-circuit television) feeds to ensure guards have not become aware of your presence. If all looks normal, navigate to the *scheduling* interface; here you will be able to alter the museum's hours of operation. Remember, once you save your changes, get ready to act *fast*. The interior of the entire museum is about to light up like a shopping mall. Once this happens you will have only a few *minutes* to get the Hope Diamond and escape.

[You may want to take some time to ponder the Hope Diamond's lurid past. For instance, Louis XIV, the Sun King of France, who purchased the diamond, later perished of gangrene. Louis XVI, who inherited the diamond, literally lost his head during the French Revolution.

In 1910, the wealthy Evalyn Walsh McLean purchased the diamond from Pierre Cartier. Her mother-in-law died shortly thereafter; her first-born son died in an auto accident at the age of nine; her husband ran off with another woman; and her only daughter died of a drug overdose at the age of twenty-five.

Evalyn died soon after her daughter's death. The list goes on. Depending on what you believe, you may or may not be sitting by the flickering lights of the museum's computer terminal wondering if you too will soon

be added to the Hope Diamond's long list of unfortunate owners. Will you be maimed like Princess de Lamballe? Hanged like Kulub Bey? Shamed like Lord Francis Hope, who was left old, without a family, and in financial ruin? Or will you enjoy the wealth, longevity, and happiness as the blue diamond's new hopeful holder?]

GRAB AND GO

The Natural History Museum is now open for business, which means the Hope Diamond's display case has erected itself, thereby opening up your target for the taking. The chance that this tripped a silent alarm is extremely likely, and if not, any security guard within eyesight of the northwest wing will phone the breach in immediately. Remember: Opening the museum also means that the perimeter doors are unlocked, allowing you access to your moped within forty-five seconds.

The case protecting the Hope Diamond is not meant to withstand much force, which is why two guards are assigned to watch over the Hope Diamond during the hours the museum is open to the public. The guards are responsible for protecting the vulnerable diamond when it is unsheathed, and should the diamond become threatened in any way, they are responsible for subduing the threat. At this hour, with no visitors and no staff, there will be no one to stop you. But time is running out—so act fast.

Make your way over to the pedestal. It should require only a moderate blow of force—a strong kick will do—to knock the glass encasement, diamond and all, off the pedestal and onto the floor. The minute this happens alarms will begin to blare. Snatch up the diamond (don't worry about it breaking, diamond is one of the hardest elements we know of) and head back to and up your trusty rope ladder. Leave the ladder behind this time, and exit back through the duct system. Find your moped and take to the side streets, the darker the better. You have less than *five* minutes to get back to your safe house.

[If you're wondering why you're not simply exiting through a door, the answer is simple: Entrances and exits will be the first thing secured once authorities arrive. By the time someone thinks to check the air-conditioning unit, you will be safe in your motel room.]

BEDDING DOWN

During the preheist planning period you will have stocked your hideaway with enough food, drinks, and entertainment to last you two to three weeks, roughly the length of time a heist of this scale will keep the attention of the city officials. The search will consist of an initial sweep of the area with on-ground patrol, helicopters, checkpoints, and heightened airport and border security. Following the two-to three-week period, investigation protocol will relegate the case to desk detectives, a safe time to securely make your escape out of Washington, DC.

Reserve a rental car online under your false identity; you want something generic. You want to do nothing to call attention to yourself; minimal face time is, as always, critical. Interstate 270 is your best bet: a straight shot west, and away from the densely populated east—toward freedom.

True freedom, of course, has no borders. Freedom is won slowly, meticulously. No matter how fast you push the engine of your rented escape vehicle, the key to your freedom is *patience*. So take it slow and enjoy dreaming about your new life, the life that's yours once you're able to liquidate your priceless gem into cold, hard cash. But bear in mind: There is a long and dark history of those who have possessed the blue Hope Diamond before you. You never know what lies ahead.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Wayne Sutphin:

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children until finally adult are different content. We all know that that book is very important normally. The book How to Steal the Mona Lisa: and Six Other World-Famous Treasures ended up being making you to know about other expertise and of course you can take more information. It is extremely advantages for you. The reserve How to Steal the Mona Lisa: and Six Other World-Famous Treasures is not only giving you more new information but also to be your friend when you experience bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your reserve. Try to make relationship with all the book How to Steal the Mona Lisa: and Six Other World-Famous Treasures. You never really feel lose out for everything should you read some books.

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