

FOUR PANELS EXPERT INFORMATION

Deals: To Catch a Thief

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by Matthew Thornton -- Publishers Weekly, 9/22/2008

To Catch a Thief

Bob Wittman, the special agent who created the FBI's art theft recovery team and, until his retirement on September 19, was its only undercover operative, inked a deal to tell the story of his career, tentatively titled *In Pursuit of the Priceless*; **Rick Horgan** at Crown beat out five other publishers for North American rights via **Larry Weissman**. Wittman has posed as a collector, mobster and professor in order to recover hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of stolen art created by the likes of Rembrandt, Picasso and Rodin, as well as precious artifacts from ancient Babylonian seals to the first edition folio of Shakespeare's plays and an original copy of the Bill of Rights. The book will recount the major cases of his career—including the still-unsolved 1990 Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum theft, at \$350 million the greatest art heist in history—taking readers inside the art world as well as into the clandestine life of an undercover agent. *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter John Shiffman will co-write, and pub date is 2010.

FSG Wins Cancer Treatise

Sarah Crichton has acquired North American rights to **Dr. Vincent DeVita's** *The Death of Cancer* for her imprint at FSG, concluding a five-house auction conducted by **Mark Reiter** that kicked off with a \$300,000 floor. DeVita, a pioneer oncologist who developed the first successful chemotherapy protocol to treat Hodgkin's disease in 1963, and who headed the National Cancer Institute under Presidents Carter and Reagan, will tell the complete story of medicine's fight against what he calls "the scariest word in the English language." DeVita will also reveal his views on the strengths and weaknesses of America's most prestigious cancer centers, explaining how anyone touched by cancer can get the best treatment available. DeVita, who after NCI was physician in chief at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, and then until 2003 director of the Yale Cancer Center, will write the book with his daughter, Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn (author of *The Empty Room*, published by Scribner in 2004). No word on pub date yet.

A Soldier's Best Friend

Nancy Conescu at Little, Brown Books for Young Readers won an auction for a photographic picture book detailing the friendship between **Maj. Brian Dennis**, U.S. Marines, and his dog Nubs; tentatively titled *Nubs: A Journey Home*, the book will be written with Newbery Honor winner **Kirby Larson** and picture book author **Mary Nethery** (Larson and Nethery have previously collaborated on *Two Bobbies*). Dennis first met Nubs, a German shepherd/border collie mix, while patrolling an Iraqi border fort; the dog was dubbed Nubs because of his ears, which had been cut off. The bond between Dennis and Nubs was solidified when Dennis nurtured the dog back to health after a near-fatal injury; subsequently, each time Dennis's unit decamped, there was a sad parting involving Nubs chasing after the marines—eventually navigating his way through below-freezing desert temperatures to track down Dennis's team 70 miles away. Dennis raised enough money to transport the dog back to San Diego, where the two live now. The six-figure sale was negotiated by **Jill Grinberg** on behalf of Larson and **Andrea Cascardi** of Transatlantic Literary, who represented Nethery; both agents co-represented Dennis in the deal. LBBYR has world rights and plans a fall 2009 publication.

Hyperion Memoirs

Hyperion executive editor **Leslie Wells** bought world rights to **Laurie Strongin's** *Saving Henry* in a deal with **Heather Schroder** at ICM. This memoir will describe the author's struggle to save her son, who suffered from a rare childhood illness called fanconi anemia, as well as the impact Henry's courage had on the many nurses, doctors, friends and family who interacted with the boy throughout the family's search for a cure. Pub date is spring 2010.

Executive editor **Gretchen Young** bought North American rights to *And Still Peace Did Not Come* by **Agnes Kamara-Umunna** and **Emily Holland**; **Peter McGuigan** at Foundry made the sale. Kamara-Umunna has spent her life gathering the stories of former child soldiers and their victims, both in her home country, Liberia, and in New York; her memoir is also a record of a nation's descent into civil war and its subsequent healing and recovery. Holland is an in-house producer and reporter for the International Rescue Committee; pub date is summer 2010.

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The Tipping Point

The *New York Times* bestselling author of *Waiter Rant*, **Steve Dublanica**, has signed for a second book with Ecco senior editor **Emily Takoudes** titled *At Your Service*; **Farley Chase** at the Waxman Agency sold North American rights. In the new book, Dublanica will go undercover to investigate the dynamics of tipping across the service industry, interviewing and at times working alongside the men and women whose livelihoods depend on this cash economy. Tentative pub date is fall 2010.

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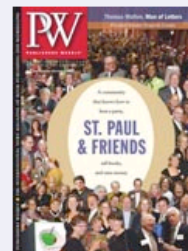


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