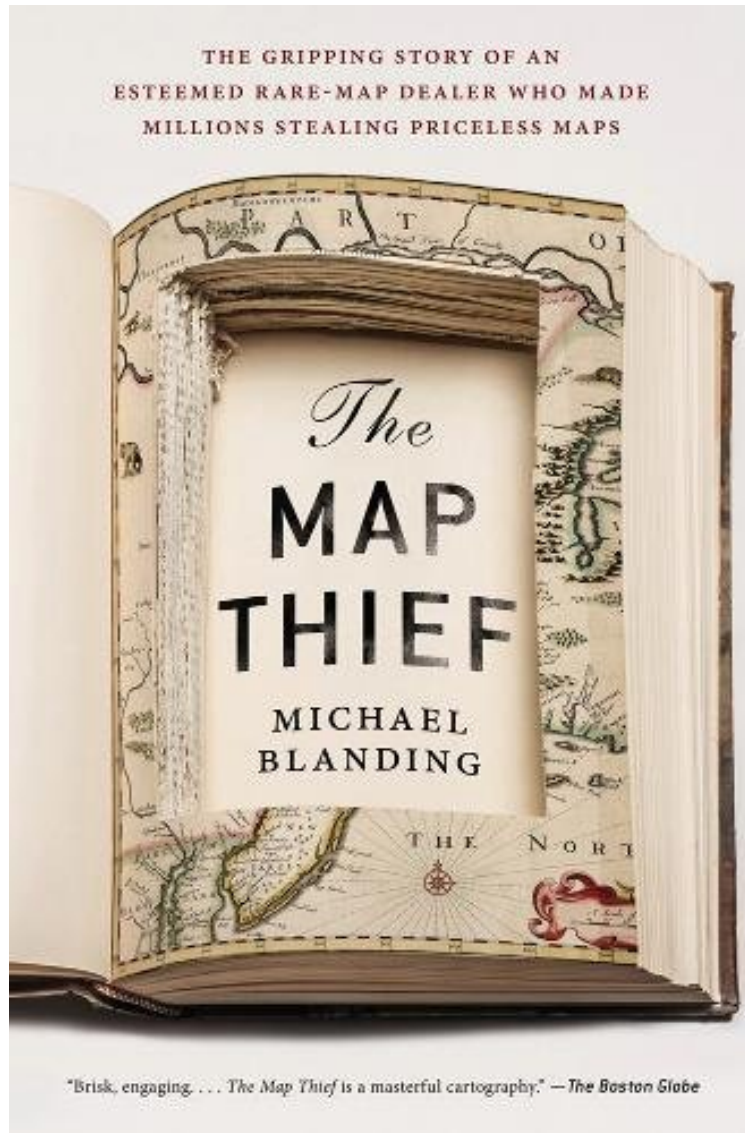


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The Map Thief: The Gripping Story of an Esteemed Rare-Map Dealer Who Made Millions Stealing Priceless Maps

Michael Blanding

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Michael Blanding : The Map Thief: The Gripping Story of an Esteemed Rare-Map Dealer Who Made Millions Stealing Priceless Maps before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Map Thief: The Gripping Story of an Esteemed Rare-Map Dealer Who Made Millions Stealing Priceless Maps:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Map Quest by a thief By William Garrison Jr. "The Map Thief by Michael Blanding (2014). The earlier reviews have pretty well covered the plot of this book: a seller of old maps, who has fallen heavily into debt to pay for his lavish lifestyle, stole old maps from old books in old universities for re-sale to those who collect very, very expensive historical maps. Besides discussing how the thief was caught, the author adds much to this book by detailing some of the political shenanigans of early 16th Century cartographers: drawing fictitious boundaries on New World maps to support their nations political goals of claiming larger swaths of land than what their explorers had actually discovered. Besides detailing the swashbuckling, good-time party-man, back-slapping personality of the map thief, this book could almost stand alone as a book discussing the historical development of maps regarding the New World. This isn't a book about how to lay out strands of chain-links in how to map as a budding land surveyor, but it is an informative look at the development of cartography of New World maps. Why, two books for the price of one! An insight to the lack of security at many big-name libraries. The author was able to arrange only one meeting with the thief, before he clamed up for good -- the author speculates that perhaps the thief didn't want to become liable for more prison time if he were to reveal that perhaps he hadn't been fully forthcoming in his admissions as to what more he might have purloined. Although the thief admitted to stealing some 110+ maps, several librarians thought that he might have stolen more -- as many other maps disappeared from their libraries shortly after the thief had visited them. A good enjoyable, interesting and informative read by a determined author who doggedly wrote a fine book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Stealing as a Passion! By American Express WOW! Never knew the "map stealing" was such a big industry! Intriguing book about a flawed character who gets trapped in his misguided pursuit of stealing maps and selling them. Good lessons for those who might be tempted by greed. Our book club discussed this book and brought out many aspects of the map industry. Had us wondering how many ancient and valuable books have been desecrated by people stealing maps from them. Give this one a try for a subject you probably have never thought much about. The pictures of old, old maps are most intriguing also.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An intensely intriguing and emotional crime story By Michael Karpovage Excellent story and insight into how/why E. Forbes Smiley III not only betrayed himself but how he screwed those that had put their trust in him and made his career successful. Hat's off to rare maps collector Graham Arader for calling a spade a spade and recognizing early on that Smiley was nothing but a sweet talking, criminal con artist at heart. Unfortunately, nobody listened to Arader until it was too late. Author Michael Blanding's many interviews and research into the crimes, plus doing his historical homework on the rare stolen maps themselves, made this an intensely intriguing and emotional book to read. As a map illustrator and map lover myself, I really liked how Blanding paralleled the map histories with Smiley's crimes to give them context and importance in history. It angers me that Smiley got off so easily at sentencing, too, while the dealers suffered the worst financial hits. Smiley's Martha's Vineyard house should have been seized by the government and sold to pay off the restitution to those he hurt financially. The punishment doesn't do justice to the crimes Smiley committed and in my opinion not much of a deterrent for others, including Smiley himself, to re-engage in these thefts.

The story of an infamous crime, a revered map dealer with an unsavory secret, and the ruthless subculture that consumed him Maps have long exerted a special fascination on viewers both as beautiful works of art and as practical tools to navigate the world. But to those who collect them, the map trade can be a cutthroat business, inhabited by quirky and sometimes disreputable characters in search of a finite number of extremely rare objects. Once considered a respectable antiquarian map dealer, E. Forbes Smiley spent years doubling as a map thief until he was finally arrested slipping maps out of books in the Yale University library. The Map Thief delves into the untold history of this fascinating high-stakes criminal and the inside story of the industry that consumed him. Acclaimed reporter Michael Blanding has interviewed all the key players in this stranger-than-fiction story, and shares the fascinating histories of maps that charted the New World, and how they went from being practical instruments to quirky heirlooms to highly coveted objects. Though pieces of the map theft story have been written before, Blanding is the first reporter to explore the story in full and had the rare privilege of having access to Smiley himself after he'd gone silent in the wake of his crimes. Moreover, although Smiley swears he has admitted to all of the maps he stole, libraries claim he stole hundreds more and offer intriguing clues to prove it. Now, through a series of exclusive interviews with Smiley and other key individuals, Blanding teases out an astonishing tale of destruction and redemption. The Map Thief interweaves Smiley's escapades with the stories of the explorers and mapmakers he knew better than anyone. Tracking a series of thefts as brazen as the art heists in Provenance and a subculture as obsessive as the oenophiles in The Billionaires Vinegar, Blanding has pieced together an unforgettable story of high-stakes crime.

From Booklist With antiquarian objects such as centuries-old letters and maps fetching higher and higher prices at auctions these days, an entire criminal subculture has developed that matches the ingenuity of more established art thieves in snatching these items from libraries and museums. Himself an ardent cartography enthusiast since childhood, seasoned journalist Blanding takes a closer look at one particularly infamous map thief, E. Forbes Smiley III, and the series of heists Smiley engineered that eventually landed him in prison. Smiley was already well known in

antiquarian circles as a charming and knowledgeable map collector who frequently donated maps to the very libraries he was stealing from until he was nabbed in 2005 after a Yale librarian noticed an X-Acto knife blade on the floor. Blanding juxtaposes the story of Smiley's high earnings career and subsequent fall from grace into theft with the history of the map creators themselves. His book is as much a riveting true-crime tale as it is a fascinating peek inside the little-seen world of mapmaking and collecting. --Carl Hays THE MAP THIEF is a gripping, suspenseful tale, told by a veteran investigative reporter. And yes, it comes with maps. Minneapolis Star Tribune Blanding tucks great little historical trivia into his cohesive narrative an enjoyable exploration of an obscure aspect of history. Miami Herald Brisk, engaging Maps project wishful thinking. THE MAP THIEF is a masterful cartography of a man who fell victim to such wishful thinking, destroying his life. The Boston Globe Brain kale...Bizarre, fascinating, and 100 percent true. Mental Floss Truth is much stranger than fiction In the normally dry world of cartography, Smiley's story makes for a riveting read. Town Country An enthralling look at a famous case. Boston Common The best glimpse yet of the social-climbing sneak thief who stole millions of dollars in rare maps from Yale University and other institutions a decade ago. New Haven Register Blanding delves deep into both Smiley's world and the history of mapmaking a fascinating story of ambitions high and low. Kirkus s Well-researched A highly readable profile of a narcissist who got in over his head and lost it all. Publishers Weekly A gripping mix of true crime, cartographic lore and bookish obsession, THE MAP THIEF is a book that map and book lovers will devour, even as they cringe at the crimes described. Shelf Awareness In this cartographic caper, Michael Blanding slips into the antique map trade and takes a magnifying glass to the mind and motivations of a curious character named E. Forbes Smiley III, a New England polymath with a special talent for taking razors to rare books. The setting and the character belong in a novel, and this engrossing book reads like fiction. Nina Burleigh, author of the New York Times bestseller The Fatal Gift of Beauty: The Italian Trials of Amanda Knox "The Map Thief isn't just a perceptive, meticulously researched portrait of an exceedingly unlikely felon. It's also a tribute to the beautiful old maps that inspired his cartographic crimes--and shaped our modern world." Ken Jennings, author of Maphead: Charting the Wide, Weird World of Geography Wonks Old maps tug powerfully at the imagination, and not always in healthy ways. Nothing makes that clearer than the strange, unsettling case of Forbes Smiley, whose story Michael Blanding has pieced together in captivating detail. This is an unforgettable and cautionary tale, told by an expert investigative reporter who writes with the narrative flair of a novelist. A great read! Toby Lester, author of The Fourth Part of the World: An Astonishing Epic of Global Discovery, Imperial Ambition, and the Birth of America Disgraced map dealer Forbes Smiley once said that he hoped that the stories about his thefts would go away. That might be so. But thankfully Michael Blanding decided otherwise, and he tells a powerful story about the nature of crime, greed and art. Smart, suspenseful, and engaging, this book is a fascinating read. Ulrich Boser, bestselling author of The Gardner Heist This is a terrific book. The portrait of Forbes Smiley here is one we rarely get of cultural heritage thieves complete and even-handed, without being either credulous or vindictive. The Map Thief, aside from being wonderfully readable, is a valuable addition to this area of study. Travis McDade, author of The Book Thief: The True Crimes of Daniel Spiegelman Michael Blanding not only tells the spell-binding tale of a clever and obsessed thief, but he also adds to the field of research into people who commit crimes involving rare and precious items. All the while, Blanding examines the crimes with the acumen of a seasoned investigator and the skill of a talented writer. Anthony M. Amore, co-author of Stealing Rembrandts: The Untold Stories of Notorious Art Heists About the Author Michael Blanding is an author and journalist with more than fifteen years of experience writing long-form narrative and investigative journalism and has written for The Nation, The New Republic, Consumers Digest, and The Boston Globe Magazine. He lives in Brookline, Massachusetts.