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This is 'Christ and the Adulteress'. It depicts a scene from the Gospel of John. The painting was one of Hermann Göring's most prized possessions. Once the war was over, Allied forces set about discovering who had sold this Dutch masterpiece to a Nazi.

Thread <https://t.co/nAUFnVoSFE>



Göring had acquired Christ with the Adulteress, by Dutch master Johannes Vermeer (1632-75), from Alois Miedl, a Nazi art dealer & right shit who made a lot of money stealing art from Jewish ppl & selling it on.

Göring gave Miedl 137 looted paintings for Christ with the Adulteress and showcased it at his residence in Carinhall. In 1945, Göring's vast art collection was discovered by allied soldiers led by Captain Harry Anderson (pictured).

<https://t.co/w7d81rIOSJ>



Göring had hidden art in air raid shelters, tunnels, salt mines, castles, & abandoned train cars. Once the works had been recovered, work started on tracing the real owner & punishing those who had aided the Nazis. <https://t.co/Hp4Jrwhflr>



The Allied forces questioned Miedl, who quickly confessed he had bought the work from Dutch painter Hans Van Meegeren. On 29 May 1945, Van Meegeren was arrested and charged with fraud, aiding & abetting the enemy, & looting Dutch cultural heritage. <https://t.co/x7hAKYuuT>



(c) George Rodger, Time & Life Pictures, Getty Images

He was detained in jail as a Nazi collaborator. For his crimes against the Dutch ppl, Van Meegeren was looking at the death penalty. And then it happened.

Van Meegeren confessed that although he had indeed sold the Vermeer to the Nazis, the painting was a fake. "The painting in Göring's hands is not, as you assume, a Vermeer of Delft", he said, "but a Van Meegeren! I painted the picture!"

A team of experts were brought in to examine Christ and the Adulteress, and they verified the work was a fake. If further proof was needed, Van Meegeren painted another 'Vermeer' while in jail to prove his skills. His final Vermeer was Jesus amongst the Doctors (seen here). <https://t.co/4TA5DsA9qQ>



What's more, Van Meegeren had been forging art for years & had made millions. His forged works were bought by The Rembrandt Society & exhibited in prestigious galleries & museums. This is his The Last Supper.
<https://t.co/U5Pd5igKte>



Van Meegeren painted over authentic 17thC canvases with lead-based paints he made himself. He researched what kind of brushes the Dutch masters used & made it his own. (Evidence used against Van Meegeren)
<https://t.co/OxKvzhmGIL>



The collaboration charges against him were dropped, but he was charged with forgery & fraud. In Nov of 1947, Van Meegeren was sentenced to one year in prison. One month later, at the age of 58, after years of drug and alcohol abuse,

Van Meegeren died of a heart attack in prison. <https://t.co/HXpnepSkiZ>



Van Meegeren's legacy is a complex one. He lived a life of luxury, while many suffered dreadfully in the war. He bought properties once owned by Jewish ppl. He swindled, lied, & cheated. He was opportunistic, greedy, & his loyalties were questionable to say the least.

But, his role in deceiving the Nazis has earned him almost folkloric status. According to one contemporary account, when Göring learnt that his precious "Vermeer" was actually a forgery, he "looked as if for the first time he had discovered there was evil in the world".

Today, Han Van Meegeren's "Christ and the Adulteress", (1942), oil on canvas, 39.4 x 35.4 in, is part of the Museum de Fundatie's collection <https://t.co/rzR9U82paq>

