What happens when a museum finds artifacts in their collection that are likely the result of theft or looting? Who should be held accountable and potentially criminally charged? What if a length of time has passed and changes in staff have occurred? To answer these questions, Darrell D. Jackson and Nicole M. Crawford have created a unique collaboration between the UW College of Law and the UW Art Museum.

As an introductory case study, they look at the iconic example of Marion True, the former curator of antiquities for the J. Paul Getty Museum. True was indicted on criminal charges for participating in a conspiracy that laundered stolen objects through private collections and created a fake paper trail of provenance.

Contraband can, has, or will find its way into knowing and unknowing museum collections, giving this interdisciplinary research the potential to go beyond the theoretical to real-world applications. Jackson and Crawford engage with museum studies while considering the practical implications of criminal law to suggest mutually agreeable dispositions within both disciplines. This research sparks new discussions in two disciplines that rarely converse.

RSVP encouraged to uwalumni@uwyo.edu