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# Inverted Jenny stamp stolen in 1955 to be returned to Pa. owner

  Jun 3, 2016 by James Pearson

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American Philatelic Society executive director Scott D. English holds an "Inverted Jenny", a 1918 stamp stolen in 1955, that is finally being returned to its rightful



owner, featuring an airplane printed upside-down, after it was officially handed over during the World Stamp Show, Thursday, June 2, 2016, at the Jacob Javits Center in NY. The foundation contacted the FBI, which investigated.

The return of an "Inverted Jenny" stamp from 1918 will be announced at the World Stamp Show at the Javits Center.

"We are three quarters of the way to recovery", said library president Roger Brody, who said he previously thought the chances of this Inverted Jenny's return

were "slim to none".

The 24-cent stamps were numbered on the back and sold off to postage enthusiasts, and four of them wound up in the collection of a wealthy NY woman, Ethel McCoy, who paid \$16,000 for the quartet.

Kevin O'Neill, the man who consigned the stamp, had inherited it in his native Ireland as part of his grandfather's collection.

The 24 cent stamp was issued to celebrate the start of airmail service in 1918, displaying a Curtiss JN-4H "Jenny" biplane, but one 100-stamp sheet was mistakenly printed with the plane upside down. Two others were recovered in the 1980s and '70s.

The man, Keelin O'Neill, made an appointment to bring the stamp to Spink's NY office in mid-March, but he never showed up.

One of the four stamps, No. 75, resurfaced in Chicago in 1977 and was seized by the FBI; McCoy donated it to the American Philatelic Research Library.

Eveleth said that once the auction house knew it was stolen property, they turned it over to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and broke the news to O'Neill.

After her death, she had bequeathed their ownership to the Bellefonte, Pennsylvania research library.

Roaring applause followed for the tiny, unobtrusive stamp sitting under a clear, plastic cover, it's value unknown.

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U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara, who was an avid stamp collector as a boy, helped set up the legal restitution process. In actuality, Eveleth said, O'Neill got to NY and made a decision to take a detour, traveling to Florida for spring break.

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