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The Mona Lisa

By Nick Burnette

Now we all know that the Mona Lisa Portrait is the most famous portrait in the world. We see this in Ads, movies, and hanging in peoples homes. This portrait has been described or talked about as the best known, the most visited, the most written about, and the most sung about. But the most thing that catches people is that what they say " her eyes are following you". Well, I believe that too be true because if you let me go back to my childhood when I was 5 years old, I was with my grandparents for the weekend. My Grandparents and I went to a very close friends house of my Grandparents. While being at my grandparents friends get together, as I sat down in the living room, I looked up across from me where I was facing the hallway , was a huge portrait of the Mona Lisa. I was terrified, I did not move , or neither did I mentioned I was scared of that picture. To get to the bathroom , you had to go through the hallway. When I had to go , I held it. Another time I recall, actually that same year, my grandparents and I went to Indianapolis to visit my great uncle and aunt. Once again, I had to go to the bathroom, and this was my first time visiting my aunt and uncle. I tap my grandfather on the shoulder and said , " granddaddy I got to go to the bathroom". So the bathroom was upstairs, not knowing there was another one in the basement of the house. As I begin to follow my grand father upstairs, low and behold there was a portrait of Mona

Lisa on the stairway. It caught me off guard. I told my grandfather to switch Sides as we were walking side by side. On the way back down I was on the wall side of where the Mona Lisa hung. I told my grandfather once again lets switch sides. He looked at me with a strange look like he knew something was on my mind or something was wrong with me. I end up admitting to my grandparents that I was scared of that portrait. So every time we would visit , my uncle would have to take it down. I guess I was scared of the portrait, because once again the eyes follow you, and to me her smile was a sneaky pranky smile, and she was dressed in black. The background even kind of looked weird to me. Out of all of that in my childhood, over the years as I got older, I began to study the history of the Mona Lisa. This might sound strange, the more I studied this painting, the more I was less scared of this portrait. As I stare at this portrait in today's times I learn more about the Mona Lisa every time I Look at her.

It all started in the year of 1503 when a young man or artist I shall say who's name is Leonardo da Vinci, had the desire to paint this beautiful woman as we call the Mona Lisa. Before I go on with Mona Lisa, I will tell you about Leonardo da Vinci. Da Vinci was born in 1452 Anchiano Vinci, Republic of France. A Italian painter, draughtsman, engineer, scientist, sculptor, and architect. Mostly his fame was in painting, but he also had notebooks for anatomy and astronomy and other subjects. Back to the Mona Lisa, this painting was one of his most famous paintings in the world. Now there were rumors around saying that the Mona Lisa was Leonardo da Vinci dressed like a woman, or he painted himself as a woman. I don't think that is true, The Mona Lisa was actually a real person. Da Vinci painted a woman by the name of Lisa

Gherardini, who is a Italian noblewoman, married to Francesco del Giocondo. Lisa Gherardini is actually the model for the Mona Lisa . The description of the name Mona is spelled Monna in Italy. Monna in Italian is a polite form of address originating as ma donna which is similar to ma'am Madam, or my lady in English. The description of this painting bears a strong resemblance to many renaissance depictions of the Virgin Mary, who was at the seen as an ideal for womanhood.

I ask myself why is this picture so famous. Well after Leonardo's death in 1519, the Mona Lisa remained in France, where Leonardo spent the last of his days. It stayed with his family for centuries until it was finally put on display at the most famous museum, the Louvre Museum in Paris France in 1797. I found out that why this painting is so famous is because it an oil painting in the style of realism. The other reasons I see is the smile , the mystery of who she was. But the most interesting news is the picture was stolen. The original painting that Da Vinci did was stolen. In 1911, an Italian worker at the Louvre spent the night hiding in the cupboard. When everyone went home for the night, the worker slipped the painting out of the frame and took off with it. Now this Italian worker's name was a guy by the name of Vincenzo Peruggia. Peruggia was also a artist, and I believe that he might have been jealous of da Vinci. Perruggia has been described as the greatest art theft ever. Peruggia went home and hid the painting in his apartment in Paris, in his trunk for about 2 years. When he moved back home to Florence Italy, he kept it in his apartment there. Peruggia was very impatient and finally got caught by a owner of a art gallery in Florence, in 1913. The owners name was Mario Fratelli, who informed the police, and the

director of the Uffizi Gallery, Giovanni Poggi, that the painting was stolen by Peruggia. The painting was returned to the Louvre Museum after it had been in all the banner headlines in Italy. That's why this painting is so famous because not of the smile or eyes, but because of the theft. Some people say it was the famous artist Pablo Picasso might have been the thief. Now there was a reason that Peruggia says why he stole this painting. The first reason is that he wanted to bring the painting back to his hometown for a display or a showcase. This was his way of giving a patriotic reason for stealing the painting. A few experts had wondered if that word patriotism was the motive, Peruggia would have donated the painting to a museum instead of trying to benefit himself. Peruggia was put on trial, and the statement he made on why he stole the painting for patriotic reasons, they agreed on his testimony. He was sent to jail for one year and 15 days.

There are also secrets behind this painting of the Mona Lisa. Researcher French engineer Pascal Cotte and debuts in the United States where he did a showcase of the Mona Lisa. The exhibition was called "Da Vinci: An Exhibition of Genius." Cotte, founder of Lumiere Technology, scanned the painting with a 240-megapixel Multi-spectral Camera he invented. Shedding light on how the artist brought the painting to life and how she appeared to da Vinci and his contemporaries. Cotte stated that the Mona Lisa appeared slightly wider and the smile is different and the eyes are different. The inferred images also revealed da Vinci's preparatory drawings that lie behind layers of varnish and paint. If you look at the left hand you can see the position of the finger which Leonardo changed his mind for another position which he hesitated. There are

certain revelations on this painting which includes the Lace Mona Lisa's dress. The veil had a transparency which shows that da Vinci painted a landscape and then used transparency tricks to paint the veil atop it. The elbow was repaired from damage due to a rock thrown at the painting in 1956. He also stated that the Mona Lisa was painted on uncut poplar board, contrary to speculations. Cotta stands back and look at the enlargement of the painting and sees her beauty and mystique are apparent. Other hidden secrets about the Mona Lisa is now it has its own room in the Louvre Museum in Paris. When the Louvre launched a 4 year , \$6.3 million renovation in 2003, the painting now has its own room. In that room is a glass ceiling that lets in natural light, an shatter proof glass display case maintains a controlled temperature of 43 degrees F. this brings out the true colors of da Vinci's original paintings. Back to the painting being stolen. Many believed that Picasso had something to do with the painting being stolen . they briefly arrested poet Guillaume Apollinaire, who had once said the painting should be burned. I would've agreed with him if I would've known that at 5 years old. But out of all the bad mouthing and the stealing of the this painted, it made the Mona Lisa famous. Also the Mona Lisa receives fan mail. When the painting arrived at Louvre , the painting had plenty of love letters and flowers from admirers. She even has her own mailbox. There is also a dark side of the Mona Lisa that people do not know about. A few vandals have tried to harm the painting , as I said before in 1956, a person threw acid at the painting, and another individual threw a rock , as I mentioned earlier where the elbow was on the painting. But the painting cannot be bought or sold, according to the French heritage law.

Now when I look at the Mona Lisa after all of what I Learned about this painting, I'm no longer scared of the picture, because now not only did the Mona Lisa stare at me while I needed to go to the bathroom or stare at me across the room at the get together, but I believe that she needed my attention. When I got older me and this painting had a conversation. Now I was not talking to the picture as like I am talking to myself. I've learned so much from the Mona Lisa from the history I learned in school . I stared at this painting so many times that I see she seemed like she could be the most sweetest person in the world, as you can see she made Leonardo and her own self famous. With that famous smile or smirk that could be sneaky or just a sweet smile. Her eyes that follow you back and forth as if she is curious on where you are going telling you to sit down somewhere. I can imagine the Mona Lisa saying to me, why are you afraid of me , you learned about me in school and the artist who painted me. You know my painting traveled all over the world. I look back wonder that she is right, why was I afraid of her. I can recall my uncle, who owned that painting in his home , who knew at that time I was afraid of the Mona Lisa, before he would take it down from the wall, he would say since I was a handful when I was a kid, I don't know why you scared of the painting, I imagine she wouldn't want to take you, you a handful, so she wouldn't want you.

So as I look at this painting, I will always remember on how we first met and on how turned from scared to interested in this masterpiece. The Mona Lisa will live forever in this world because people admire the beauty of it, the story behind it , and also artist who painted it. I can truly say that me and this painting are the best of friends and when I purchase my home soon I will

not only have a portrait of me and my girlfriend or if the lords willing soon to be wife above the fireplace , I will make sure that the Mona Lisa will hang somewhere in my house. I also learned that she is Italian. My dad is half Italian so somewhere in me I have it too. So when people come visit this dream home of mine, maybe they would give the portrait their attention and hopefully they could see in their eyes what is behind the Mona Lisa.