



Passion for Fashion (123)

8th December 2020

Viewing:

For more information on viewing appointments, please call the office.

Lot 46

Estimate: £2000 - £3000 + Fees

A rare pair of spats autographed by Al (Scarface) Capone, 1920s,

of tan wool with side buttons and leather straps, one signed in ink 'Alphonse Capone', each 22cm, 8 1/2in wide; together with a handwritten note by a relation of John McCann explaining their provenance (3)

Provenance: These were given by Al Capone to John McCann. McCann had fled Ireland for America in the 1920s, to avoid arrest by the Black & Tans (constables recruited into the Royal Irish Constabulary during the Irish War of Independence) for rebellious acts. A trained engineer and car mechanic, he worked on the armoured Cadillac Sedan commissioned by Al Capone in 1928. Family tradition has it that the spats were left inside the car and when McCann retrieved them from the interior and returned them to the gangster - he duly autographed them and gave them to the mechanic as a souvenir

In September 1936 the spats were sent to Ireland to James McCue, his brother, for safekeeping and have passed through the family by descent to the present day. The handwritten note is by John McCann's great-niece; it states that 'when Capone went to prison in 1931 the car was seized and was later used to transport President Roosevelt'.

Spats were commonly worn by gentlemen in the late 19th century until the 1920s to protect their shoes from mud splatters on the sidewalk.