

**TRUTH IN THE VAULT:  
THOMAS WARD'S  
NOTES**

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GINNIE HARPER STATICPUNK MYSTERY  
BOOK 3.5

BRITNEY DEHNERT



## FOREWORD

The following pages are excerpts from the personal notes of Detective Thomas Ward of Luxury Precinct 8 regarding the robbery of the Premier Bank on March 19, 19—.

These notes are confidential and limited to the friends of Eugenia Harper and Detective Ward. Read and share with discretion.



## PREMIER BANK ROBBERY: 19 MARCH

**E**ntry and robbery of the main vault. One deceased: Stanley London, bank security officer.

Witnesses described a gas that filled the main floor of the bank. Repulsive odor, stinging eyes, coughing, and sinus drainage. I could smell the gas on them during questioning. Description matches a gas used in the trenches during the War.

Military/Ex-military involvement?

Security system activated by teller, Jerry Johnson. Doors and windows immediately locked and authorities alerted. Witnesses fled upstairs to escape the gas. None of the witnesses went back downstairs. Their stories are consistent. These six appear to be innocent.

1) The back door leading to the alleyway was found unlocked when authorities arrived. I found

a small device under the teller counter next to the gun kept for the teller's protection. Likely this device jammed the signal from the security system. Multiple canisters were also discovered throughout the main floor and were confirmed to house the gas used to clear the bank. Canisters were triggered by remote activation, though separate from the security system. Fordman keeps the key to the main vault on his person, the vault was supposed to be bolted by the security system activation, and yet the vault was opened anyway.

2) Main vault was accessed, though little was taken. Quick count of inventory and verification with internal records confirms Fordman's assessment of what was stolen.

Why go through all this work and take so little? What was so important about the records book? Was the bank targeted specifically for the book?

3) The deceased, Stanley London, worked security at the bank. Shot once in the head. Found dead by officers on their arrival. Was found with Miriam Fordman. She claims two men with bags were exiting the bank into the alleyway when London confronted them. Says they shot him and ran. Says the two men were fully clothed and masked, so she is unable to identify them other than average height males, guessing by their size and gait.

This is where things get particularly

interesting. Miriam claims London was shot in the alleyway. Visual inspection clearly shows an entry and exit wound. The bullet entered from the back, high near the crown, and exited the front near the mouth.

## SPECULATION

1a) Inside job involving Fordman? Did he leave the key downstairs and have it returned to him before questioning? He was upstairs with the others. Couldn't have been returned without someone noticing. Was it one of our men?

1b) Was a duplicate key made?

This job was too quick and too smooth. All indications point to an inside job. But who? Fordman appears to be in the clear unless he was working with an LPD officer. Can't be ruled out. Even if a duplicate key was made, Fordman remains a suspect. Whoever pulled this off had detailed knowledge of not just the internal layout of the Premier Bank, but also the vault contents and the security system.

2) Some of the confirmed inventory were a series of letters from a German officer who pledged himself in marriage to Fordman's sister, Nancy, along with a *Eisernes Kreuz* – an Iron Cross. It is Germany's equivalent to the Medal of Honor. Is this what the robbers were looking for? This puts a dangerous spin on things.

Fordman was dodgy when questioned about

it. Holding one in his bank is not illegal, and being reluctant makes sense. The war is still fresh enough to be a sensitive subject. Still, keeping details to himself doesn't make me feel any better about any of this. Will need to keep pressing, but gently.

3a) I'm having a hard time reconstructing a scenario where a man could feasibly shoot London at that angle without being ten to twelve feet tall.

3b) There is no blood splatter in the alleyway. The walls, door, and ground are all clear other than the small amount that pooled where Miriam was sitting with the body.

Miriam is lying.

London was, with no uncertainty, *not* killed in the alleyway. So, why is she lying?

Everything else is too convenient. London was at the back door just as the robbers were attempting to escape? Miriam was near enough she witnessed the murder but was not herself targeted? The two robbers were so perfectly nondescript that there is no chance they could be identified or tracked?

No. I do not believe in coincidences.

London would be my prime suspect if he hadn't been killed, but that doesn't necessarily rule him out. Was he working with someone and

they had a falling out? Was London working with Fordman? But Fordman was upstairs and couldn't have killed him. A third party? Add a third person and things start getting too complex. This job was pulled off too smoothly to have that many people working together. Especially if one or more had it in for another. Was London working with Miriam? But what does she have to gain and why was she found at the scene? And why did Miriam smell so strongly of gas? She was near the open door at the back so she would have had some level of exposure, but her clothes reeked. Was she in the bank before the authorities arrived? If she was, she forgot to add that to her narrative. London was shot once. I found a two-shot palm pistol under the teller's counter placed there in case of emergencies, as mentioned previously. One of the cartridges was missing. Why would a bank owner keep an already underwhelming pistol nearby with only half its maximum ammunition? Was this the gun that was used to kill London? If so, how many people would have known where it was and be able to locate it and replace it with their vision obscured by the gas?

Miriam would likely have known.

I'm planning on testing the two-shot pistol tomorrow to see if it's a match for what killed London. The bullet that killed him was notched in a distinctive way. A practiced killer would repair any gun that had such a defect.

**ACTION**

The details of this case are out, but I have to keep my suspicions to myself. The inside job could have been one of the new tellers, but everyone was upstairs, so they could not have killed London. An officer could have been positioned nearby waiting for the gas to go off before working their way inside.

Pritchard was one of the first on the scene, but he noticed the pistol and missing round when I pretended ignorance. If he was involved, he would have been a fool to point it out. He's clear as far as I'm concerned. And I'm glad for that. He's a good man.

Craven has been jumpy, and Raymond has been complaining about his performance lately. One of the numbers I submitted to evidence was erased and re-written last week. Sullivan claimed it slipped through the cracks and onto the floor when she found it. How many officers at Precinct 8 are taking bribes or working with someone on the outside? I will have to go through and test for alibis.

I would have a hard time believing Seizman is in on any of this. He's too much like Harper. Truthful to a fault and overly compassionate. Though he didn't recognize Harper's worth in questioning the Fordmans after the robbery and told her to wait. Amateur mistake. Compassion blinded him to Miriam's acting. Can't let a pretty woman deceive you when you're on the job. I need to see if Miriam will react the same to Harper as she did to the officers. Harper has

a sharp eye and knows the right questions to ask.

## PERSONAL THOUGHTS

Harper is getting antsy about Ragoczy's ring. She called me on the carpet tonight. Blast if I don't enjoy when she does that. I don't know what to do with that woman sometimes. Gave me a fright Monday over a wedding announcement. No reason for my reaction. Caught off-guard in a display of unprofessionalism I suppose. I need to check in with Devons again, but his advice after the boat incident still has me riled.

The ring is stumping me.

I have a few interesting leads, but nothing concrete. Whoever this group is, they have power, but I hope there aren't too many of them. Though that would make them easier to infiltrate. So far, I've found five murders leading back to them and suspected blackmail on two more. They are likely working in the upper class, perhaps academia. Whoever they are, they are intelligent. I can't let Harper in on any of this. It's too dangerous. I can imagine the look on her face if I told her as much.

Harper has been put on an interesting story to lift people's spirits. A good deal of money was found in a car at Weaver's Mechanic Shop. I'm going to have Diggory look into it. Sounds like the mob.

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**20 MARCH**

**G**ot Stanley London's coroner report back from Mabuz. Both suspicions were confirmed. A transmitter was found in his stomach that likely matches the receivers on the gas canisters. If Miriam saw what she claimed, it seems odd she would have left out the robbers force-feeding London their receiver before killing him. However, if he was the one that activated the gas, swallowing the receiver would be a clever way to remove evidence until it could be dealt with later. Confirmed London's involvement in at least the execution of the robbery.

There was also no trace of gas in London's lungs and superficial amounts on his skin. If he had confronted the robbers as they were escaping, he would have inhaled enough of the gas to show on the autopsy. This confirms both that he was exposed to the gas and was dead by the time his lungs would have had any unprotected exposure.

Took Harper to Roy's and confirmed the gun under the teller's desk was the one used to kill London.

Gained access to London's apartment. Found key molds, raw copper, small furnace in the alley nearby, and plans for wireless transmitters. No signs yet of cooperation or accomplices. Was he working alone and someone piggybacked off his heist? Fordman found out, Miriam was a witness and is covering for her father? But who killed London? Miriam knows.

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**21 MARCH**

**D**iggory found the owner of the car from Weaver's. Turns out it belonged to Corelli's second in command. Apparently, his wife sold it unknowingly.

Held London's Funeral. Harper was in attendance and reported. I asked her to question Miriam. I need more answers from her but I don't know who I can trust at the precinct. I don't know who is in on this, may be taking bribes, and frankly, I trust Harper more than most of them to get the truth out of someone reluctant. If there's truth to be found, she'll get to it. For better or worse.

Pritchard found the missing money and the bank records book in the bank's safety deposit box room in an unrented box that had a missing key.

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**22 MARCH**

The bank records book is missing several pages from meetings held a year ago. This is equal parts confusing and concerning. What was going through the mind of whoever took those pages? Was it panic? The rest of the robbery was too well planned and executed to imply the robbers were amateur enough to panic that close to success. Was it intentional? There were gold bars within reach, what value could there be in old meeting records? Either the robber's actions were irrational and incongruous, or I am missing something important. I can't shake the feeling *Libertas in Veritate* is somehow involved.

Harper and I covered some tactics on Miriam's interrogation. That makes it all sound too official. Unfortunately, the official channels aren't trustworthy for the time being. Harper's good; I probably didn't need to give her any tips, but this has to be clean. We can't have anything else "slip between the cracks" as I've been

hearing lately. She's going to check for the deposit box key and see if she can get any other information out of Miriam. Jacks will be with her which is fortunate – that woman's memory is impeccable – but Harper is good with that autophone of hers. It's come in handy before.

I'll have to buy us some time. The chief is getting impatient. As if he doesn't have enough on his hands, now I'm going around standard typical procedure to double up on Miriam. He says it's a waste of time. Wants me to close the books on this and move on to "more important cases." Something doesn't sit right with me. We don't work together too frequently, but he seems off. Is he concerned about the possibility of corruption in the precinct? Is he in on it?

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**23 MARCH**

**H**arper to the rescue. I knew she would be able to get Miriam to talk, and talk she did. To be honest, it was more than I expected. I won't ask for all the details of how she went about it, but she and Miss Jacks got a full confession out of Miriam last night. We were able to lock her up, and we can continue forward. The chief seems relieved as well and is finally getting off my back.

Yet another relief, the *Eisernes Kreuz* seems to be a red herring. Fordman's hesitancy was nothing more than caution and admittedly some embarrassment. There is no indication that it is or was the target of the robbery.

Miriam received a note, untraced by the guard, that said "Deus ex machina." Who sent it? Is it the same group/person that killed Ragoczy?

Chief held a press conference today. I'm

having a hard time justifying his shifts in mood over the course of this investigation. Upset over a bank robbery in his town, sure. But there's something about it that feels personal. I'm starting to wonder if he's involved or is at least aware of the phony numbers in the evidence logs and if this has something to do with it. Was he in on it? What was his connection to Miriam and/or London? Is he behind this or is he the one getting played? Either way, it's good he's relaxed a bit after catching Miriam. I need some room to work on this without someone breathing down my neck.

Pritchard asked me today about London's possible accomplice: when we searched London's apartment, he found burned morsie paper in London's oven and a few unmarked morsies in one of London's trouser pockets from an unknown sender. I asked why these details hadn't been in his report, and he told me he gave them to Cravon to put in the report. Raymond had loaned me Cravon for the search on London's apartment when the chief called Pritchard in for an emergency. In the switch, Pritchard gave the information to Cravon to write up for me. I never saw any of it, which suggests destruction of evidence. Another mark against Cravon.

Met with Harper after the press conference. I told her more than I would have liked, but she has a way of getting what she wants out of me. She's onto Cravon and the evidence numbers

manipulation. Don't know what she'll turn up, but I trust her. She was of course concerned about the note that was sent to Miriam. I alleviated her worry, but it's getting to me too. There's something bigger going on, and we're only seeing part of the picture. I don't know if there's anything I can do to prevent this Deus ex Machina from descending. I can only hope there's something I can glean from it when it does.

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**24 MARCH**

**T**here are no coincidences. Harper's digging into the evidence numbers turned up Cravon being manipulated by Morton. I had my doubts, but I'm glad I went with my gut on this one. Turns out the bank robbery was supposed to be another instance of mismatched numbers to line his pockets. They've been working together like this for some time, but Miriam caught wind of the bank heist and tried to profit on it. Looks like she wasn't aware of the bigger picture and opened up a can of worms.

We have a plan. We have the morsie frequency that sends Cravon his instructions. Harper is sticking her neck out by being our direct contact with Morton. She is going to plant an interceptor at the chief's home. The next time he sends a message on that frequency, we will have a copy and our proof. We have a confession from Cravon, but he's been manipulated before. Having that transcript will be the final nail in the

coffin. We move in, find the morsie with the matching frequency, prove his usage through fingerprinting, and we're done. We have a lookout in place to watch for Harper. Once she's in the clear, we can move in.

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**25 MARCH**

**M**iriam was found dead in her cell last night. Some vile god descended, but it didn't bring the ending Miriam was hoping for. Someone benefited from this, but who? Despite his involvement in the robberies and books, I can't figure out how or why he would have been involved in her murder.

If he is involved, does it stop there? Is he the one pulling the strings or is he yet another pawn in someone else's game? If he was desperate enough, I could see him maybe going out of his way for extra cash, but murder? Not an assassination like what happened to Miriam at least. He has to know people with how long he's been on the force. Would he use any of the connections he's made for something like this? Could he be manipulated to do so? I don't want to think it, but I've seen better men stoop lower.

This feels like a part of something bigger. The next few days should be telling.

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**SUPPLEMENTAL**

As expected, little went according to plan. Harper set the interceptor, but she never came out. Afterwards, she told us Morton brought in a third party, likely mob-related, who shot Cravon. Thanks to Harper's quick work, we intercepted his message to the man and moved in. Our lookout at the house failed – late night and afternoon sun caught up to him. Harper didn't come out after her meeting with Janice Morton, but we didn't know because the lookout fell asleep. Took all I had to remain professional with him after we realized she was in the basement of that house when we got there with the warrant from Devons. Morton caught on to Harper's involvement and took her hostage. I haven't been that on edge in a long time. Raymond kept me from negotiation with Morton, almost kicked me off the scene. Before Raymond caused a disaster with his awful communication style, Seizman took over communication with Morton. He's a good man. It was 24 hours of problem-solving, and we

never did crack Morton. He knew every strategy we'd employ, and there was no way for us to get down there without Harper likely dying in the process. In the end, she got herself out.

Harper made us think Morton had attacked her, possibly killed her. Raymond had to hold me back before I jumped headfirst into that cellar. Glad he did. Morton brought Harper to the foot of the staircase. She's a good deal smaller than Morton; I could have hit him in the shoulder, very likely shot the gun right out of his hand, but I didn't want to. Harper – that woman's mind is always active – came up with a plan and enacted it. She indicated a target and initiated a count-down. It isn't how we usually would have handled it, but it was the best choice at the time. She ducked, and I had a clear shot at his chest. Morton wasn't expecting it, and Harper is stronger than she looks. I've seen men shot in the chest. I've been shot in the chest. It is not a guaranteed lethal shot. Even after two or three rounds, with prompt, professional medical attention and a little luck, a man Morton's size could survive. But I couldn't take that risk. He had fallen too far. He had too many connections. He laid his hands on Ginnie. I took the necessary shots.

City Council will be looking to appoint a new chief as soon as possible. Raymond will put his name in; I'm certain of it. I don't think I will. I'm not suited for it. Besides, I've got too many loose

ends to tie up here. The Premier robbery is solved, corrupt officers from Precinct 8 are arrested, but there is always the mob power struggle, and, of course, the *Libertas* group connected to Ragozy's ring and likely Miriam's strangling...

## AFTERWORD

Thank you for reading Detective Thomas Ward's personal notes on the Premier Bank robbery. We hope you enjoyed his inside look at this case. These notes were organized and edited by Britney Dehnert but mostly written by Ward's original creator, J.P. Dehnert.

For more exclusive information, downloadables, and stories from Ginnie's world, visit her fan page at [www.britneydehnertbooks.com/ginnie-harper-mysteries](http://www.britneydehnertbooks.com/ginnie-harper-mysteries).

