Other People's Money

Story by Max Haines and Larry Zacher

A 500 Piece Mystery Jigsaw Puzzle

Read the mystery story, find the clues as you assemble the puzzle, then put all the pieces together to solve this intriguing mystery.
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Instructions

The Story - First, read the short story in this booklet. Try to follow the trail of mystery and collect clues as you go. But beware! There may be misleading information mixed in with the hard evidence.

The Puzzle - Next, assemble the 500 piece puzzle. Be on the lookout for clues that may go along with the story you have read, or totally new clues. Remember, the completed picture puzzle is different from the one shown on the front of the box.

The Solution - When you know beyond all doubt that you have solved the mystery, read the solution printed in reverse type in the centre-spread of this book. Just hold it up to a mirror to check your detective skills.

Detective Jake Burns received the call first thing Tuesday morning, July 2nd. It had been years since he had enjoyed the Canada Day long weekend with his wife Jane and his teenage son Mel. Now it was time to go to work.

Chief Cunningham gave him some skimpy details over the phone. The Lorenz National Bank had been hit hard. Apparently a well-organized gang had taken advantage of the long weekend to make their way through the city’s sewer system to a point directly beneath the floor of the bank vault. It must have been tough going, even with heavy equipment. They had drilled their way through two walls before arriving under the bank vault. The knowledgeable gang had managed to connect up to an electric source and had electricity available throughout their labours. The reinforced concrete vault floor had been blasted through by means of a controlled explosion.

That’s about all the Chief could tell Jake. In minutes the detective was pulling up in front of the Lorenz National Bank. Security Manager Chuck Arnett-Taylor was understandably agitated. The 35-year-old Arnett-Taylor was not having a good day. He greeted Jake warmly, as if appreciative that some responsibility was about to be lifted from his shoulders.

— 1 — Other People’s Money
“This is the first time in my career that we’ve been robbed,” he explained to Jake. “Well, sir, let’s start at the beginning. You arrived for work as usual today?” Jake inquired.

“Not exactly. I was called by my assistant, who told me he couldn’t gain access to the vault. I rushed to the bank and verified that the vault would not open. I then called the vault’s manufacturer, who immediately sent over their expert. He was stumped and asked my permission to force the door. I checked with the bank manager and he agreed it was our only option. It took some time, but when the door was finally opened, all hell broke loose. The vault had been welded shut from the inside and scattered about the floor were several hundred empty safety deposit boxes. When I say empty, that isn’t exactly true. The thieves took valuables and left documents such as marriage licenses and wills scattered about. We may never know exactly how much was stolen, but my guess is about $10 million.”

“Anything else that might be of help?” Jake asked.

“Yes, last night around 10 p.m. there was a huge Canada Day fireworks display in the town square beside the bank. By strange coincidence, there was also a brief power outage at that time. It lasted fifteen minutes and then the power came back on. Everyone assumed it had been staged by city officials to enhance the fireworks. Now I’m not so sure.”

Jake wasn’t so sure either. It was time to take a look at the vault. Right off, Jake could see the place was a mess. It appeared that the gang had left in great haste. Jake checked the various alarm systems. All had been cleverly bypassed by the crooks. They had even rigged the vault’s security camera to play a continuous videotape showing an empty, secure vault. Jake figured that the gang had orchestrated the power outage to give them time to rig the security camera.

Jake noticed the remnants of a snack the robbers had eaten while in the vault. These guys were some cool customers, Jake thought to himself. They ate well. He knew there would be no fingerprints on the empty can of M’Lord Hearts of Palm, Beluga Caviar, or the half-empty bottle of Chateau Kirwan Grand Cru Classe.

Jake figured the gang’s activities had been interrupted when their parked getaway vehicle became the cause of complaints to the police by several citizens because it was blocking a nearby alley. Evidently, the cunning crooks had parked over a manhole cover. Down through a hole in the floor of the van, through the manhole and into the sewer system they crawled, lugging their equipment with them. No doubt when they had planned the robbery, the alley was not in use and practically deserted. A vehicle parked there would not cause much concern under normal circumstances. Probably the one thing the gang had overlooked in their plans was the crowd that gathered for the Canada Day celebration. The blocked alley intensified the traffic problem during the fireworks display and resulted in numerous complaints by irate citizens.

Obviously a lookout, most likely using a walkie talkie, had alerted the gang in the vault. They had elected to cut bait and get out of there fast.
Other than this minor oversight on the gang’s part, Jake knew this was a well planned crime. That meant either a job with inside help or several visits to the vault by the thieves themselves. What better way to gain entrance to the vault than to rent a safety deposit box? Jake requested personnel files on all forty-eight Lorenz National Bank employees and a list of the current safety deposit box holders. This stack of paper work covered Jake’s desk and kept him busy for the next few days. The employee files revealed nothing out of the ordinary but his review of the safety deposit box holders brought results. Out of the hundreds of names of decent citizens, three individuals stood out like a row of sore thumbs.

Claude Burrows had been a bank robber all his adult life. The 61-year-old Claude, better known as the ‘Mole’ had five major bank robberies to his credit. Each one had involved gaining entry to the bank vaults by tunneling, blasting and drilling. His modus operandi fit the Lorenz job in every detail.

Unfortunately, Claude had an airtight alibi. Jake learned that he was presently serving six and a half to ten years in Maynard Penitentiary for - what else? - bank robbery. Jake was reluctant to take such a prime suspect off his list so he put a call in to the warden at Maynard Pen.

“Good morning Warden Dobbs, it’s Detective Jake Burns. I’m calling about one of your prison inmates, Claude Burrows.”

“Ah yes, the ‘Mole’. He’s as feisty as ever. Did you want to drop in and see him?” Warden Dobbs asked.

“What I’d really like to know is if you can confirm his whereabouts on Canada Day? Is there any chance he was outside of the prison that evening, maybe on a day pass or a work detail?”

“I don’t even have to check our records to answer your question. Burrows is not one of our best inmates. He has had his privileges suspended several times. Quite frankly the man is a loose cannon with his big mouth. It will be a long time before Claude Burrows sees the outside of these prison walls.”

“As you probably have heard by now Warden, we had a bank robbery here last week. It looks like a Burrows’ job - tunneling, dynamite, the kind of action he likes.”

“I’m sorry to disappoint you Jake, but there is absolutely no question that the Mole was here in the prison on the day of your robbery.”

“What about visitors? Can you tell me if anybody has been coming up there on a regular basis to visit Burrows. It’s possible he ran the job from inside the pen.”

Warden Dobbs responded, “I’ve checked our Visitation Record. It shows Claude Burrows had only one visit in the past three months. His sister, Emma, and her son Charles. I remember that now. It was Claude’s birthday and they brought him a present. It was a sweater his sister had knitted. It had the Burrows’ family crest woven into the pattern. Apparently, the sister had knitted one for every member of the family. Old Claude was as proud as a peacock for weeks afterward wearing the damn thing.”

—3— Other People’s Money
“Hmph,” Jake pondered. “Can you describe the sweater to me?”

“As I recall, it’s red with a yellow and red crest. The crest is a rodent-like creature pushing twigs and leaves into a hole in the earth.” The Warden chuckled, “Now that I think about it, it seems a fitting emblem for a guy nicknamed the Mole.”

“Thanks for your help, Warden Dobbs.” Jake hung up the phone and reviewed his notes from the conversation. “Hmph,” he pondered again.

The second suspect, Catherine Ann Tanner, had just been delivered to the police station by two uniformed officers who had brought her in at Jake’s request. She was another kettle of fish altogether. ‘Cat,’ as she was known to police, had been at large for years. The elusive Cat was famous for her ability to bypass complex alarm systems without leaving a trace of incriminating evidence. She loved to taunt police and, at the same time, seek credit for her meticulously executed robberies. The wily Cat always left something with the letters ‘C A T’ on it at the scenes of her crimes. The items were mass produced and untraceable. On her last two capers she had left an inscribed key chain and a monogrammed handkerchief. Jake studied the report on Catherine Ann, noting that the Cat usually worked alone, which would have been an impossibility on the Lorenz job. Jake placed the Cat’s file beside that of Claude Burrows on his desk and asked the desk sergeant to usher her into his office.

“Ms. Tanner, as you know we are investigating the robbery at the Lorenz National Bank. I understand you have a safety deposit box rented there,” Jake began.

“Yes, detective,” Catherine replied. “I lost some very valuable jewellery. Have you caught the thieves yet?”

“No, not yet - but the gang left considerable evidence behind so it should not take us long to find out who they are,” Jake responded watching Cat closely for her reaction. There was none.

“I suppose you want a description of my missing jewellery for your investigation.”

“Yes but that’s not the reason I wanted to see you. Ms. Tanner, can you tell me where you were between the hours of 9 p.m. and midnight on July 1st?”

“You don’t seriously think I had anything to do with this robbery, do you, detective?” Jake made no response.

“From what I’ve read in the newspapers, the robbery was a sloppy piece of work done by a gang of clumsy amateurs. I can’t imagine anyone leaving all that evidence behind at the scene of a crime. Very unprofessional - if you get my drift.”

“Yes, I get your drift and as we both know, some criminals think they are very clever. When committing the same crimes over and over becomes routine, they look for something new and different to add adventure to their lives. I’ve heard some even leave subtle clues behind to taunt the police. Or maybe they try a completely different approach to throw off police investigators. Parts of the Lorenz bank job were done very unprofessionally or at least made to appear so. But I can assure you the person who bypassed the alarm system and the security camera was a pro.”

--- Other People’s Money ---
"Then I guess you have your work cut out for you, don't you detective," Cat challenged with a sly smile. "In answer to your first question, I took a long drive in the countryside that afternoon. I was alone and I didn't get back home until after midnight."

Jake had the distinct feeling Catherine Tanner was playing a cat-and-mouse game with him. He sighed as she left the office. He was no closer to solving this case than before she came into his office.

The last name on Jake's list of suspicious characters who had rented safety deposit boxes was Bob Hanks. Bob was an independent maintenance contractor who had cleaning and maintenance contracts for the Lorenz Bank, the Hydro building and City Hall, including the Public Works office. Jake figured that the best source of information about Hanks would be the bank's Security Manager, Chuck Arnett-Taylor.

"Chuck, is there anything you can tell me about Bob Hanks? After all, you must know him fairly well, seeing as how he works right here in the bank."

"Know him? That man is a real pain in the backside. He is forever leaving his tools around the place, which creates a safety hazard for our employees," the Security Manager volunteered.

"Is that all?"

"That's enough. It may not mean much to you, but Bob has a number of employees and his absentmindedness about his tools creates a real problem around here. I've collected a dozen rakes, brooms and carpentry tools lying around and put them in a locker in the maintenance room. I know they belong to Hanks because he paints the handles of all his tools bright red. I guess when you're as careless as that man is with his equipment, he need's something to help identify all those misplaced tools."

Jake thanked the Security Manager and proceeded to read the report on Bob Hanks. It was rather revealing. Bob was living under an alias. His real name was Hank Roberts. As a young man he had been a small time criminal specializing in car thefts and convenience store robberies. Bob wasn't a very successful criminal. Although he was only in his mid-thirties, he had spent seven years behind bars. Since his release, he had changed his name and started his maintenance business. Through no fault of his own, his company had recently fallen on hard times. He simply had a rash of contract cancellations, resulting in a substantial reduction of cash flow. The business currently required an injection of cash.

Bob Hanks slouched into Jake's office and dropped heavily into a chair. He looked as if he hadn't slept in a week and had all the symptoms of a man in deep trouble.

Burns went right to the point, "Mr. Hanks, I understand you have the maintenance contracts for the bank that was robbed, the Public Works office and the municipal Hydro building. Is that right?"

"So that's what this is all about. Look, Detective, I'm just a guy trying to make an honest buck. You've probably dug up the old police files on me and know I have a criminal record. But that was a long time ago. I'm a different person now. I've got a
wife and two kids, a home in the suburbs, my own company, fifteen employees who depend on me — and, oh yeah — I pay my taxes. So how about getting off my back?” Hanks demanded belligerently.

Jake paused for a moment, then asked, “So how is business, Bob?”

“Business is lousy as you already probably figured out. I can’t make my payroll this month, the bank wants to foreclose and the whole world is on my case.”

Jake looked sympathetic.

“Hey, I’ve seen bad times before. I always get through. This is no different. It’s a temporary problem and I certainly didn’t rob no bank to fix my situation.”

“I have just one more question for you, Bob. What’s this thing you do with your equipment, spraying the handles with red paint?”

“That’s a crime prevention technique. There’s a lot of thieves around these days that will rob you blind. Hey, I don’t need to tell you — you’re a cop. I got untrustworthy employees, I got hoodlums on the street, I got that creep down at the bank, Arnett-Taylor—Mr. Security himself — pinching my expensive equipment. What’s this city coming to?”

Hanks paused in an effort to calm himself.

“So I got myself a few spray cans of the brightest red paint I could find and now I spray it on every one of my tools. If I see somebody raking their yard with a red-handled rake, I know they got one of mine. That little bit of paint has cut my losses way down.”

“Now Detective, I got some advice for you.”

“What?” Jake was curious.

“I’ve been around — places, prison — you know what I’m talking about. So I’m telling you a job like this Lorenz thing — it smells like inside work to me. You take a close look at those people working in that bank. Six-to-one odds, you’ll find one of the crooks working there. Keep your eyes open for a while. See who quits their job or who takes early retirement in the near future. That’ll be your thief.”

Jake thanked Hanks for the advice and dismissed him from the office.

Jake went over the evidence one more time. He stared at the photograph taken of the crime scene. His eyesight was not quite as sharp as it used to be, so Jake picked up a magnifying glass and studied the evidence a little closer. That is when he spotted three significant clues lying within the clutter of the messy vault. There was only one person for whom the three clues fit. Jake knew who had led the gang into the Lorenz National Bank vault.
Author's Solution

The leader of the bank robbery gang was Security Manager Chuck Arthur-Taylor. The three clues that [jake Brown spotted in the cluttered bank vault were lunch plates with the letters C A T on it (for Chuck Arthur-Taylor),] the claw hammer with the right edge handle (Chuck had fished it from the locker where he had stored Bob Hunk’s mrs. place mat), and the sweater with the Brontows’ family crest emblazoned on it (Chuck was Chrome Brown’s nephew; Chuck, who had an identical sweater given to him by his mother Emma).

When Chuck (Chad) had visited his uncle in prison, he had learned the names of Chuck’s old gang members. He had also gotten a few bank robbing tips from the old pro himself. Chuck became the bank’s new leader and planned his next job from inside the bank.

When Brown spotted Chuck Arthur-Taylor, who confessed to the robbery and led [jake Brown] to the loot, which had not yet been distributed by the bank members. Poor Chuck was surprisingly found guilty of bank robbery and sentenced to 15 years in prison. Penitentiary, where we can only assume he remains on good terms with Uncle Chuck.

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- 7 - Other People’s Money