



Northwood Police Department

Person of Interest (Form S-853)

Case No.
15-1107

Date filed:
October 20, 2015

DETAILS

Full Name: *Dr. Helen M. Markham*

Dominant Hand: *Right*

Height: *5' 6"*

Age: *58*

Weight: *142 lbs*

Shoe Size: *8*

Eye: *Hazel*

Hair Color: *Gray*

Military
Experience: ☐ Yes

Own Fire arms: ☐ Yes

Prior Arrests: *None*

Outstanding
Warrants: ☐ Yes

Employer: *Northwood Observatory*

Occupation: *Director*

Address: *48 Maple Ridge Road, Northwood*

VEHICLES (use additional sheet of necessary)

Year *2008* Model *Outback* Make *Subaru* Color *Green* License Plate *NW5-4087*

STATEMENT

In space below, describe your whereabouts on the date and time of incident

Between approximately 6:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m., I completed my routine pre-event walkthrough of the main exhibit hall, confirming the Amesworth Meteorite was secure in its display case and that exhibit lighting and placards were in order. At 7:00 pm I went out and watched the kids dance and perform their play. From 7:30 to 8:00 I watched the lecture in the auditorium.

From roughly 8:15 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., I was stationed at the front entrance of the observatory greeting guests, donors, and visiting academics. During this time I welcomed VLPs, handed out event programs, and participated in a brief group photograph with the local high school astronomy club and several patrons.

I first learned the meteorite was missing when Lisa approached me a little after 9:00 pm

I understand the importance of preserving the artifact and the seriousness of this matter. I have no knowledge of who removed the meteorite and did not participate in its removal.

Dr. Helen Markham

Received by: Sgt. T. Bellamy - Badge #108

Date: October 19, 2015





Northwood Police Department

Interview Transcript (Form S-942)

Case No.
15-1107

Date filed:
October 20, 2015

Details

Interview: Dr. Helen Markham

Date: 10 / 18 / 2015 Time: 8:31 am Location: Northwood Police Station RM 2

Sgt. Bellamy: Thanks for coming in this morning, Dr. Markham. I know it's been a long night.

Dr. Markham: (tired chuckle) That's one way to put it. I've had about three cups of coffee and no sleep. My phone hasn't stopped ringing—reporters, the board, even a senator's office called. Everyone wants to know how a heavy meteorite just *vanishes* from a locked case.

Sgt. Bellamy: Let's start simple. For the record, who are you?

Dr. Markham: Dr. Helen Markham the Director of Northwood Observatory

Sgt. Bellamy: When was the last time you personally saw the Amesworth Meteorite?

Dr. Markham: Around six o'clock, before guests arrived. I do a walkthrough before every event—make sure the displays are dusted, the lights are balanced, the meteorite was right where it's been for fifteen years. The case was locked, the key accounted for, and the exhibit lighting looked beautiful.

Sgt. Bellamy: When did you realize it was gone?

Dr. Markham: Sometime after the demo wrapped up. Maybe 9:05 pm —one of our volunteers, Lisa, was cleaning the exhibits and noticed the lock wasn't seated properly and the case was empty. That's when she called me over.

Sgt. Bellamy: Who has access to the case key?

Dr. Markham: Three people—myself, our collections manager, and the head of facilities. There *is* a spare key that's kept in the main office, so technically, any staff member could enter the office during the event. It's not under lock and key like it probably should be.

Sgt. Bellamy: So the spare could've been used by anyone working that evening.

Dr. Markham: (hesitates) Yes, I suppose that's possible. We were all focused on guests, the telescope demos, the meteorite presentation ... It was busy. You'd think someone would have noticed, but here we are.

Sgt. Bellamy: Where were you during the window of time when the theft likely occurred?

Dr. Markham: Between 8:15 and 9:00, While the telescope demo was happening, I was greeting donors and a few visiting professors near the entrance. We took a group photo with the high school astronomy club — I think it's on someone's phone, but I don't have a copy.

Sgt. Bellamy: So no hard timestamp placing you there.

Dr. Markham: Not unless one of those photos surfaces. I was everywhere that night – talking, shaking hands, thanking people for their support. I didn't have time to stand still, let alone steal my own exhibit. (sighs)

Sgt. Bellamy: Can you explain what the Amesworth Meteorite means to the observatory?

Dr. Markham: (pauses, voice softens) It *is* the observatory, Sergeant. It's our heart. That meteorite put Northwood on the map. Without it, we're just a small-town stargazing club. Losing it... I can't even begin to measure the damage. We'll lose trust from the community, credibility with our research partners, maybe even our grants. People will start to wonder if we're careless.

Sgt. Bellamy: That's a lot of pressure.

Dr. Markham: It is. (leans forward) But sometimes – sometimes tragedy pulls people together. You know how this town is. If they think the observatory's in trouble, they'll rally. Bake sales, fundraisers, "Save Our Star" campaigns—you name it. I just wish it didn't have to come from something like this.

Sgt. Bellamy: Understood. One more question: you've mentioned before a person online – StarGazer424 – who's been critical of the observatory. Do you think they're connected?

Dr. Markham: They've been a thorn in my side for months. Post after post about how meteorites "belong in the wild" or "with collectors who appreciate them." It's infuriating. But stealing it? That would take more than a few angry comments. Still... I wouldn't rule it out.

Sgt. Bellamy: Alright. That's all for now. We'll contact you once we've reviewed the photos and the evidence transfer.

Dr. Markham: Please keep me updated. The Amesworth doesn't just belong to us—it belongs to *Northwood*.

Conducted By:

Sgt. T. Bellamy

Sgt. T. Bellamy
Badge #108

Transcribed By: Shawn Nguyen

From: Dr. Helen Markham hmarkham@northwoodobservatory.org
To: Marty Holbrook mholbrook@northwoodsecurity.com
Date: Wednesday, October 14, 2015
Subject: Security Coordination for Saturday's Stargazer Event

Hi Marty,

I wanted to reach out regarding security coverage for the Stargazer event this Saturday evening (October 17). Normally, these gatherings are straightforward — families, amateur astronomers, and the local science club all enjoying a calm night of stargazing. However, this year I'm more apprehensive than usual.

Over the past month, our social media accounts have been receiving increasingly pointed messages from an individual (or group) identifying themselves as "StarGazer424." Their posts have been critical of the observatory for displaying the Amesworth Meteorite. While there haven't been any direct threats, the tone has become more agitated, and I worry they may attempt some form of disruption during the event.

I'd like to be sure that we take every reasonable precaution. Rick Hanlon is scheduled as the on-site guard that evening, and while Rick knows the building well, I'm a little concerned about his—let's call it—casual approach to security. He's a good person, but not exactly meticulous. Could you remind him to conduct complete patrols, particularly in the exhibit area and around the east service entrance? The meteorite will be on display until about 9:00 p.m., and I'd like eyes on that room at all times.

Here's what I propose for logistics:

- **Shift Coverage:** Rick on duty from 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. with check-ins every 30 minutes via radio.
- **Access Points:** Limit guest entry to the main doors on the south side; all other exterior doors should remain locked.
- **Lighting:** Ensure exterior walkway lights are fully operational. The last thing we need is dark corners near the east stairwell.
- **Emergency Contact:** I'll have my phone on me all evening, and Maya Ortiz will be at the registration desk keeping an eye on the main door.

I know I'm probably being overly cautious — nothing serious has ever happened at one of these events — but something about this year feels different. Between the social media chatter and the larger expected turnout, I'd just feel better knowing we're covered.

Thanks, Marty. I appreciate your help keeping everything running smoothly.

Best,

Helen

Dr. Helen Markham

Director, Northwood Observatory