

# Whodunnit?

M Y S T E R I E S



The Whodunnit? Detective Agency Official Case File #1J-737X

## The Case of the Missing Pooch

A woman's beloved pet dog has gone missing. Foul play is suspected. Do you think you can solve the case? Carefully read the enclosed file, identify the clues, and ultimately decide **Whodunnit**.

Dear **Detective,**

We need your help to solve an important mystery. Your assignment is to evaluate a case that was initially investigated, but has since gone cold. As always, I expect you to use that brilliant mind of yours to identify clues the original detectives missed.

For this case, our client is **Mrs. Abigail Winchell**. She is a wealthy, elderly woman whom has hired our agency in the past. Recently, her beloved pet dog, **Moxie**, vanished without a trace. Of course, when she realized the mutt was missing, she immediately called police for help. But, they were unable to solve the case. That's why she's now come to us.

As an analyst detective on this case, you are to meticulously review the enclosed report, as written by police detectives, during the course of their weeklong investigation. After you have digested the information, compose a brief evaluation to identify the suspect you think is the guilty party, and why—citing details gleaned from the source material. Your expert findings will help point our field detectives in the right direction, as they work to solve this case on the ground.

I'm confident you'll correctly conclude **Whodunnit**.

Good Sleuthing,

**J. Alexander Gumshoe**

Founding Investigator

**The Whodunnit? Detective Agency**

## POLICE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL REPORT

### Winchell Investigation: Day 1

Early this morning, my partner and I responded to a missing canine call in one of the most upscale neighborhoods in town. We're talking mansions galore. **Abigail Winchell** is the owner of both the humongous residence, and the recently vanished dog—**Moxie**. She seemed rather frazzled, but could still speak clearly. She informed us her pet had been missing since yesterday evening. "I let her out to play around 5:00 PM, and then went to check on her about an hour or so later," said Mrs. Winchell. "But, she did not respond to me calling her name." Upon realizing the pooch wasn't playing in the estate's backyard, Mrs. Winchell searched her property, in full, but could not locate Moxie. **Officer Billings** and I conducted our own careful search of the grounds. Likewise, we couldn't recover the treasured pet—which should not be difficult to spot, based on the photograph Mrs. Winchell provided us. It turns out that Moxie is an unusual mix of several breeds of canine, and has a genetic mutation that gives her fur a bright red hue. According to her owner, Moxie is one of only three dogs in the world to have ever been born with this coloring.

After our search, we spoke a bit more with Mrs. Winchell—asking her if she thought perhaps Moxie had run away. Yet, she's adamant that the dog would never stray from the house. In fact, she wouldn't even go into the front yard, due to traffic from the street scaring her. Mrs. Winchell also let us know that she has religiously checked the local animal shelter every day for Moxie, but that thus far her pet has not shown up.

As our questioning progressed, Mrs. Winchell kindly showed us to where Moxie rested and ate—a screened-in porch on the mansion's south side. We spotted water/food dishes, a puffy pillow on which Moxie typically slept, and various play toys strewn haphazardly about the space. Officer Billings noticed particles of soil on Moxie's cushion, which we collected as evidence. Moxie's food dish had been tipped over, and some pieces had been squished, as if someone stepped on them.

Finally, we asked Mrs. Winchell to name those who both had access to her property on the day that Moxie went missing, and might want to harm the dog. A few persons of interest immediately came to mind.

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Firstly, she reported that the groundskeeper of her estate, **Herbert Ellis**, was on duty—tending to her garden of thorny rose bushes. He previously, and often, complained about Moxie digging up his plants.

In addition, Mrs. Winchell allows her next door neighbor, **Amy Greenleaf**, to take nature walks on the property—being that it is approximately ten acres in total size. During one such excursion, the woman was allegedly attacked, and bitten, by the dog. Ouch.

Next, Mrs. Winchell's personal chef, **Ricky Vargas**, prepared her meal that evening. He has often voiced displeasure about Moxie stealing food from his kitchen, and frequently demanded the dog be leashed at all times—something Mrs. Winchell had steadfastly refused to do.

Also, we shall consider Mrs. Winchell's grown son, **Dalton Winchell III**. He was scheduled to have been her dinner guest that night, but cancelled at the last moment. She feels he has always been rather jealous of her close relationship with Moxie.

Lastly, there's **Emma Teller**—a young girl who was hired to take Moxie on daily, hour-long walks. Yet, the day before the dog vanished, she quit her job without warning, or explanation.

Officer Billings and I spent the rest of the day playing ping pong back at the station—which ended with him angrily slamming his paddle down on the ground, and breaking it, when I won. He's always been a sore loser.

Anyway, we'll start looking into each of these suspects tomorrow.

Gregory Baskin, First Sergeant  
Springfield Police

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### Winchell Investigation: Day 2

Today, **First Sergeant Baskin** and I began interviewing the likely suspects in this case. Each subject we questioned had access to the Winchell Estate on the day Moxie vanished. So, at 11:00 AM, we started there—talking to chef Ricky Vargas. He admitted Moxie would often sneak into his kitchen, and steal food he cooked. He isn't fond of Moxie—openly referring to her as a "dirty animal." Of course, he assured us he never spoke that way in front of Mrs. Winchell, and asked that we not tell her his true feelings. He also pontificated at length about his job—including how he would do the grocery shopping for Mrs. Winchell using his own funds, and she would pay him back at a later date. We asked Mr. Vargas if he had seen the dog on the day in question. "I saw Moxie several times," he said, "but not after the gardener left for the day." We ended our chat with Ricky by eating meatball sandwiches he prepared. They were super tasty. The stains on my shirt can attest to that.

At 12:30 PM, we visited Mrs. Winchell's neighbor, Amy Greenleaf. When we identified ourselves, and explained the nature of our visit, she slammed the door right in our faces. That wasn't very nice at all. We decided to give her the rest of the day to cool down, and will take her into custody for questioning tomorrow, if she still refuses to cooperate.

Just after 2:00 PM, we met up with the victim's son, Dalton Winchell III, on the indoor basketball court at his home. Lucky guy. After First Sergeant Baskin embarrassed himself by challenging Mr. Winchell to a game of one-on-one, and then losing badly, our host finally agreed to talk with us about his mother's missing pet. He informed us that he cancelled dinner plans with his mother to stay late at work, but had little else to say beyond that. Mr. Winchell is currently a senior vice president at **Winchell Enterprises**—the computer programming company his late father founded. They create applications that remove viruses from computers, it appears. We will have to see what we can do about verifying this alibi.

Locating Emma Teller is proving to be more difficult than we imagined. We visited her apartment complex this afternoon, and spoke briefly with her roommate, **Lisa Kincaid**. Both girls are fresh out of high school, and

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working part-time jobs, while enrolled in college courses. "Emma hasn't been home in the last few days," Lisa said. "She took off to go camping at **Lake Fullafish**—up north. She said something about needing to lay low. But, Emma is always trying to find some new exotic animal. Selling them is sort of a side job for her. People pay serious coinage for rare creatures. So, I think she's actually up there to find these glowing frogs that she had been blabbing on and on about for the past week." Lisa provided us with Emma's cell phone number. We tried it, but got no answer. So, we left a voicemail. Hopefully, she'll call us back sooner, rather than later.

We ended our investigation for the day by circling back to speak with Herbert Ellis, the gardener, at around 5:15 PM, as he wasn't yet on duty at the Winchell Mansion when we were there earlier in the day. Mr. Ellis described his typical work day, and gave us a tour of the groundskeeper's outbuilding. Everything seemed on the up and up. However, during the conversation, we observed scratches on the suspect's arms. He quickly covered the marks with his work gloves, which we confiscated as evidence. As for Moxie, Mr. Ellis claims to not have seen her once during the day she went missing. This is strange, to say the least, as Mrs. Winchell told us that Moxie often enjoyed playing outside.

Bernard Billings, Officer  
Springfield Police

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### Winchell Investigation: Day 3

Since there was a hostile witness involved, I chose to personally question Amy Greenleaf, in this delicate situation. She was taken into custody at 8:00 AM, while still wearing her pajamas. From the onset, Miss Greenleaf seemed agitated. In fact, she became furious when I even mentioned Mrs. Winchell's name. To calm her down, I steered our discussion in another direction—inquiring about her love of nature walking. She admitted that she had sometimes taken strolls through the Winchell property, as it is sizeable and well-groomed. Miss Greenleaf explained that she previously took these treks about once a week, but is certain that she enjoyed no such stroll on the evening of Moxie's disappearance. Eventually, I asked Miss Greenleaf why she became upset so easily at the mere mention of Mrs. Winchell. After some careful prodding, she confessed they had been bickering over medical bills. As Miss Greenleaf tells it, Moxie had bitten her on the leg, completely unprovoked, during one of her nature walks last month. Because of this, she had to be rushed to the hospital. According to her, at the time of the incident, Mrs. Winchell agreed to pay for the cost of the attack, but has not yet done so. Miss Greenleaf noted that she hasn't set foot on Mrs. Winchell's property since Moxie chomped her, for fear of another attack. I verified her injury, not only by physically examining the scar on Miss Greenleaf's right leg, but by phoning the attending physician on duty that day at **Sick No More Medical Center**. To conclude, I asked Miss Greenleaf if she had seen anything suspicious in the area the night Moxie vanished. "I did hear the screeching of tires, at dusk," she said. "When I looked out my window, I saw a dark car speeding away. But, it was probably just a dumb kid trying to be cool by driving too fast."

Milton Chambers, Senior Detective  
Springfield Police

While Amy Greenleaf was being interviewed this morning, Officer Billings and I executed a search warrant on her residence. Her door-slamming behavior the prior day was so alarming and suspicious, we decided to not take chances, and see if Moxie might be on the premises. But, other than really bad decorating, all we found was some kind of smelly, brown stuff caked on the treads of a well-worn pair of her running shoes. Because it

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was still slightly moist, we concluded it had been stepped on recently. So, we collected a sample for our crime lab to analyze. They will tell us if it matches any material found at the Winchell residence. We didn't see any tell-tale signs that Mrs. Winchell's dog had been at the Greenleaf home. If she has Moxie, she's keeping the animal elsewhere.

We still haven't heard back from Emma Teller. Another call to her phone went straight to voicemail. So, it seems her device is still turned off. We'll have to find another way to contact her.

At just after 4:30 PM tonight, we received a phone call from Mrs. Winchell. She reported that, earlier today, she caught Ricky Vargas cleaning-up the mess left on the back porch—where Moxie usually slept and ate. Mrs. Winchell says she instantly ordered him to stop interfering with a crime scene, and he complied—muttering as he sulked away.

Gregory Baskin, First Sergeant  
Springfield Police

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### Winchell Investigation: Day 4

This was a day of test results and hard evidence in this case. According to our crime lab, there are particles of soil on the work gloves belonging to Herbert Ellis that match those found on Moxie's pillow. We're thinking this might be important, but are not certain.

Next, we checked the video footage taken from multiple security cameras at Winchell Enterprises. The idea was to confirm the alibi provided by Dalton Winchell III, for the evening of Moxie's disappearance—a night also on which he was supposed to have had dinner with his mother. Yet, there is a thirty minute span in which he is not seen on camera, prior to the time at which Moxie was noticed missing. Of course, we asked him about this, and he claims to have been in the company bathroom during this entire period. "I ate too many fully-loaded tacos, for lunch, at Tacopalooza," noted Mr. Winchell. Tacopalooza is the world's biggest annual festival of all things taco. I'm totally bummed that Billings and I missed it this year. Anyway, we naturally wondered how long it would take us to drive from Winchell Enterprises, to Mrs. Winchell's estate, and then return. We made the drive, going the speed limit, in 43 minutes, 57 seconds. Mr. Winchell drives a black, **Z-Coupe** sports car. However, the security footage for the parking lot at Winchell Enterprises was corrupted somehow, and won't play on our computer systems. Just our luck. That means we have no way to verify when Mr. Winchell's car arrived, or left, on that day.

The tests also came back on Amy Greenleaf's shoes. The brown gunk on the soles is, in fact, dried dog food. Yet, given its condition, we could not discern if it's the same brand of food Moxie usually eats. We called Miss Greenleaf to inquire as to how dog food ended-up on her sneakers. After quite a bit of silence, she confessed that there was an argument between her and Mrs. Winchell, at the Winchell Mansion, on the day before Moxie's vanishing. Miss Greenleaf's guess is that she could have stepped on some of the dog's food at that time. This is peculiar, as she explained earlier that she hadn't set foot on Mrs. Winchell's property since Moxie attacked her last month. For Mrs. Winchell's part, she can't recall when or where her most recent argument with Amy Greenleaf took place. "There have been so many," she said. "She's a nasty woman. I think she provoked Moxie that

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day. So, I'm not giving her a dime." There's no love between those two. That's for sure.

In the afternoon, Officer Billings and I made the over three hour drive up to Fullafish Lake. Our plan was to do some kayaking, and see if we could locate Emma Teller. Fortunately for our investigation (although not our kayaking adventure), the lake was more like a pond. As such, it wasn't too difficult to track Miss Teller down. She was up to her knees in mud—with a frog in each hand. Officer Billings and I were soaking wet, after having just tipped our kayak over for the umpteenth time. To say Miss Teller was surprised, when we identified ourselves as police officers, would be an understatement. Not only did her complexion turn pale right away, but she dropped both frogs. "You're free!" I thought silently, as they quickly hopped away.

We began by asking Miss Teller to state the reason she abruptly resigned her dog walking gig last week. "It was too much time, for too little pay," she said. "Even when I was walking several dogs from the neighborhood at once, it's nothing like the big moolah I earn selling..." We finished her sentence for her, by saying the phrase "exotic animals." Her reply was, "That's illegal. I don't know what you're talking about." After that, we asked her if she knew Moxie was missing. For some reason, this caused the color to return to her face. "That's what you're here about? No, I did not know that. It's been over a week since I last walked her."

The remainder of our conversation with Emma didn't result in the learning of any information of substance. Yet, she reluctantly took a moment away from her frog-finding task to show us her campsite. No sign of Moxie. We also verified her camping permit. The date and time stamp suggest it was purchased from the park ranger's station, at a little past 4:30 PM, on the day Moxie disappeared.

Gregory Baskin, First Sergeant  
Springfield Police

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### Winchell Investigation: Day 5

At 11:00 AM today, we received the financial records requested for all suspects in this case. Amy Greenleaf appears to be telling the truth about her money woes. She has expensive, unpaid medical bills—resulting from being attacked by Moxie. To date, Mrs. Winchell hasn't made any of the payments she promised to submit. Because of this, Miss Greenleaf harbors a lot of ill will toward Mrs. Winchell, and her pet.

As for Ricky Vargas, we checked his credit card statements, and found a recent purchase with **Puppy Food Express**. It's a company that delivers heavy bags of dog treats directly to customers. Yet, Vargas doesn't own a single pet, let alone a dog.

Turning our attention to Dalton Winchell III, we now know that he is in some major financial trouble. He has made a series of bad investments, and is about to lose his house, plus his share of Winchell Enterprises, to debt collectors. Being that his need for money is great, he has tried to take out loans against an anticipated inheritance from his mother. But, we've learned that he's been turned down by his bank repeatedly, due to the fact that Mrs. Winchell's last will and testament gives nearly all of her immense wealth to Moxie, if the animal is still alive when she dies—leaving her son with zilch.

The monetary records of Herbert Ellis show that he is slightly behind on his loan payments for a dark blue **Shevy Cruz** truck. There's nothing else worth noting about his finances.

Being that Emma Teller is so young, she barely has any credit history at all. She is living the paycheck-to-paycheck existence that a lot of young adults have. I guess the selling of rare animals doesn't pay as well as we thought. But, that did get us thinking. How does someone go about selling animals on the black market? We did some digging, and discovered a cell phone application called **Animal Exchange**. It's a whole community of people looking to buy and sell all kinds of strange creatures. One post stood out to us almost immediately. It was written a few days before Moxie went missing, by a person with the username **Dawgwlr**. "Can anyone tell me

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how much scratch a seller might get for a two year old, mixed breed pup with the **Crimsonia-X1** gene mutation?" That's the official name for the condition Moxie has that makes her fur so bright red in color. There are a lot of replies from rare animal enthusiasts on the app—many estimating the possibility of getting a high six figures for such a dog, and others offering to buy the animal right away. First Sergeant Baskin and I tried to register for an Animal Exchange account, but our sign-up is pending. It seems they have a lengthy review process before allowing a new user into the community. So, that's a bust. For now, we don't have an easy way to identify, or talk to, any of these people.

Bernard Billings, Officer  
Springfield Police

At this point, we must classify Moxie's disappearance as a cold case, and move on to other assignments. It's unfortunate, but the resources of our police department are stretched far too thin to continue focusing on a missing mutt case any longer. Of course, Mrs. Winchell was not pleased with this decision. She's determined to find her cherished pet, and stated that, moving forward, she will continue looking for Moxie with the help of private investigators. So, hopefully, another detective can figure this mess out. Until that happens, Moxie's fate will likely remain unknown.

Gregory Baskin, First Sergeant  
Springfield Police



