

# 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 a mystery. Your task is to read a case that was already investigated, but has since gone cold. As always, I expect you to find the clues other detectives missed.

For this case, our client is **Mrs. Abigail Winchell**. She is a wealthy, older woman whom has hired us in the past. Recently, her pet dog, **Moxie**, vanished. Of course, when she realized the mutt was missing, she called the police. But, they could not solve the case. So, she's come to us.

You will be an analyst detective on this case. Review the enclosed report. It was written by police, during their weeklong investigation. After reading it, write your evaluation. Pick the suspect you believe is guilty. Explain why you think so. To back up your choice, use actual details from the case file. Your findings will help guide field detectives, as they try to solve this case on the ground.

I'm hopeful you'll figure out **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 fielded a missing canine call. It came from an upscale neighborhood in town. We're talking mansions galore. **Abigail Winchell** is the owner of a huge house there. She also owns the newly vanished dog—**Moxie**. When we met her, she seemed frazzled. But, she but could still speak clearly. She told us her pet had been gone since last night. "I let her out to play around 5:00 PM. Then, I went to check on her about an hour later," said Mrs. Winchell. "But, she did not respond to me calling her name." Mrs. Winchell searched her property. Yet, she could not locate Moxie. **Officer Billings** and I did our own search. Likewise, we couldn't find the dog—which should be easy to spot. It turns out Moxie is an unusual mix of several dog breeds. A genetic mutation gives her bright red fur. Moxie is one of only three dogs in the world to have been born with this coloring.

After our search, we spoke more with Mrs. Winchell. We asked if Moxie might have run away. "Moxie would never stray from the house," said Mrs. Winchell. "In fact, she wouldn't even go into the front yard. Traffic from the street scared her." Mrs. Winchell noted that she has checked the local animal shelter for Moxie, every day. So far, her pet has not shown up.

As we kept talking, Mrs. Winchell showed us a porch on the mansion's south side. It's where Moxie rested and ate. We noticed water and food dishes. The food bowl was tipped over. Some pieces of her kibble had been squished. It was as if someone stepped on them. In a corner was a puffy pillow on which Moxie slept. There were also lots of play toys strewn about the space. Officer Billings noticed bits of soil on Moxie's cushion. We collected some as evidence.

Finally, we asked Mrs. Winchell to name people who might have a reason to take, or harm, the dog. We told her to stick to people who had access to her property. A few persons of interest came to mind.

Firstly, Mrs. Winchell talked about her groundskeeper, **Herbert Ellis**. He was on duty the day Moxie disappeared. He spends lots of time tending to her garden of thorny rose bushes. He also complained often about the

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dog. Moxie seemed to enjoy digging up his plants.

In addition, Mrs. Winchell lets her next door neighbor, **Amy Greenleaf**, take nature walks on the property, because it's so big. During one such trek, the woman was bitten by Moxie. Ouch.

Next, Mrs. Winchell's personal chef, **Ricky Vargas**, cooked her meal that night. Moxie was known to steal food from his kitchen. This always made him angry. He asked, more than once, that the dog be leashed at all times. But, Mrs. Winchell refused to do so.

Then, there is Mrs. Winchell's grown son, **Dalton Winchell III**. He was to have been her dinner guest that night. However, he cancelled at the last second. She feels he is jealous of her relationship with Moxie.

Lastly, there's **Emma Teller**. She is a young girl who took Moxie on hour-long walks each afternoon. Yet, the day before the dog vanished, she quit her job. She didn't give a reason for doing so.

Officer Billings and I spent the rest of the day back at the station. We played an epic game of ping pong. It ended with him slamming his paddle down on the ground, when I won. What a sore loser.

Anyway, we'll start looking into each suspect tomorrow.

Gregory Baskin, First Sergeant  
Springfield Police

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### Winchell Investigation: Day 2

Today, **First Sergeant Baskin** and I began questioning suspects in this case. Each person we talked to had access to the Winchell property on the day Moxie vanished. So, at 11:00 AM, we returned there—starting with chef Ricky Vargas. He admitted Moxie would often steal food from his kitchen. He is not very fond of the dog. He openly called Moxie a "dirty animal." Of course, Mr. Vargas says he never speaks that way to Mrs. Winchell. So, he asked that we not tell her his true feelings. Mr. Vargas also talked a lot about his job. He does all the grocery shopping for Mrs. Winchell. He even uses his own funds. Then, she pays him back later. We asked Mr. Vargas if he saw the dog on the day she went missing. "I saw Moxie several times," he said. "But, I didn't see her after the gardener left for the day." We ended our chat by eating meatball sandwiches. Ricky made them just for us. They were super tasty. The brown stains on my shirt prove it.

At 12:30 PM, we visited Mrs. Winchell's neighbor, Amy Greenleaf. When we showed our badges, and told her why we were there, she slammed the door. Not nice. We will give her the rest of the day to cool down. If she still won't talk tomorrow, we will take her into custody for questioning.

Just after 2:00 PM, we met up with the victim's son, Dalton Winchell III. He was shooting hoops on his indoor basketball court. Lucky dude. First Sergeant Baskin embarrassed himself. He challenged the guy to a game of one-on-one, and then lost badly. After that, our host finally agreed to talk with us about his mother's missing pet. He told us that he cancelled dinner plans with his mom to stay late at work. Mr. Winchell had little else to say. He is a senior vice president at **Winchell Enterprises**. It's the computer programming company his father founded. They create applications that remove viruses from computers. We will try to verify his alibi.

Locating Emma Teller has been difficult. We went to her apartment this afternoon. There, we spoke with her roommate, **Lisa Kincaid**. Both girls are just out of high school. They work part-time jobs, while taking college courses. "Emma has not been home in a few days," Lisa said. "She went camping at **Lake Fullafish**. It's north of here. She said something about

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needing to lay low. But, Emma is always trying to find some new exotic animal. Selling them is her side job. People will pay big bucks for rare creatures. So, I think she's really up there to catch these glowing frogs she had been blabbing about." Lisa gave us Emma's cell phone number. No answer, but we left a voicemail. Hopefully, she will call us back soon.

We ended our work for the day by circling back to speak with Herbert Ellis, at around 5:15 PM. He wasn't on duty at the Winchell Mansion when we were there earlier. Mr. Ellis described his typical work day. He also gave us a tour of the gardener's outbuilding. Everything seemed on the up and up. However, during the talk, we noticed scratches on his arms. He quickly covered them with his work gloves. So, we took them as evidence. As for Moxie, Mr. Ellis claims to not have seen her on the day she went missing. That's odd. Mrs. Winchell says Moxie plays outside often. So, why wouldn't the gardener have seen her at least once that day?

Bernard Billings, Officer  
Springfield Police

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### Winchell Investigation: Day 3

Since we had a hostile witness, I decided to question Amy Greenleaf. She was taken into custody at 8:00 AM, while wearing her pajamas. From the start, Miss Greenleaf seemed agitated. In fact, she became furious when I said Mrs. Winchell's name. To calm her down, I steered our talk in another direction. I asked about her love of nature walking. She admitted taking strolls through the Winchell property. She liked that it was large and well-groomed. Miss Greenleaf said she used to take these treks once a week. Yet, she is sure that she took no such walk the night Moxie disappeared. After a while, I asked Miss Greenleaf why mention of Mrs. Winchell makes her so upset. "We have been bickering about medical bills," she said. As Amy tells it, Moxie had bitten her on the leg during one of her walks last month. Because of this, she was rushed to the hospital. According to her, Mrs. Winchell agreed to pay for the cost of the attack. But, she has not yet paid a penny. Miss Greenleaf claims she hasn't set foot on Mrs. Winchell's property since then. She fears being attacked again. I verified her injury by looking at a scar on Miss Greenleaf's right leg. I also phoned her doctor at **Sick No More Medical Center**. To finish our talk, I asked Miss Greenleaf if she saw anything suspicious in the area the night Moxie went missing. "I heard screeching tires, at dusk," she said. "When I looked out my window, I saw a dark car speeding away. But, it was likely just a dumb kid driving too fast. They think that's cool."

Milton Chambers, Senior Detective  
Springfield Police

While Amy Greenleaf was interviewed, Officer Billings and I searched her residence. Her behavior yesterday was alarming and suspicious. So, we decided to not take chances. We wanted to see if Moxie might be on the premises. But, mostly we found bad decorating. Beyond that, a pair of Miss Greenleaf's running shoes caught our eyes. They had smelly, brown stuff stuck on the treads. I dared Billings to touch it. He said it was still slightly moist. That makes us think it had been stepped on recently. So, we collected a sample for our crime lab to analyze. They'll tell us if it matches anything found at the Winchell place. We didn't see any signs that Moxie had been at the Greenleaf home. If she has the dog, she must be keeping

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the pet someplace else.

We still haven't heard back from Emma Teller. Another call to her phone went to voicemail. That means her device is still turned off. We will have to find another way to contact her.

At a bit after 4:30 PM tonight, we got a phone call from Mrs. Winchell. She reported that she had just caught Ricky Vargas trying to clean up the mess on the back porch. Mrs. Winchell says she ordered him to stop interfering with a crime scene. According to her, he did as he was told—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 evidence in this case. According to our crime lab, there are bits of soil on the work gloves of Herbert Ellis that match those found on Moxie's pillow. This could be important. But, we are not certain.

Next, we viewed video from security cameras at Winchell Enterprises. We wanted to confirm Dalton Winchell III's alibi for the evening of Moxie's disappearance. That's when he was supposed to eat dinner with his mom. Yet, there is a thirty minute span he is not seen on camera, before Moxie was noticed missing. We asked Mr. Winchell about this. He claims to have been in the company bathroom the whole time. "I went to Tacopalooza for lunch, and ate too many fully-loaded tacos," he said. Tacopalooza is the world's biggest annual taco festival. I'm totally bummed that Billings and I couldn't go. Anyway, we wondered how long it would take to drive from Winchell Enterprises, to Mrs. Winchell's house, and back. We made the drive in 43 minutes, 57 seconds. Of course, that was going the speed limit. Mr. Winchell drives a black, **Z-Coupe** sports car. But, the security video for the Winchell Enterprises parking lot was corrupted somehow. It won't play on our computer. Just our luck. We have no way to know when Mr. Winchell's car arrived, or left, on that day.

The tests also came back on Amy Greenleaf's shoes. The brown gunk is dried dog food. Yet, given its condition, we can't tell if it's the same brand Moxie eats. We called Miss Greenleaf to ask her how dog food got on her sneakers. After some silence, she recalled an argument between her and Mrs. Winchell. It happened at the Winchell Mansion the day before Moxie went missing. Miss Greenleaf's guess is that she could have stepped on some of the dog's food then. This is strange. She told us earlier that she hadn't set foot on Mrs. Winchell's property since Moxie bit her. For Mrs. Winchell's part, she can't remember when or where her last argument with Amy Greenleaf happened. "There have been so many," she said. "She's a nasty woman. I think she provoked Moxie that day. So, I'm not going to give her a dime."

In the afternoon, Officer Billings and I made the over three hour drive to

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Lake Fullafish. Our plan was to do some kayaking, and try to locate Emma Teller. Luckily for our case (although not our kayaking), the lake was more like a pond. As such, it wasn't too hard to find Miss Teller. She was up to her knees in mud—with a frog in each hand. Officer Billings and I were soaking wet. We had just tipped our kayak for the umpteenth time. To say Miss Teller was surprised, when we identified ourselves as police, would be an understatement. Not only did she turn pale, but she dropped both frogs. "You're free!" I thought, as they hopped away.

We began by asking Miss Teller why she quit her dog walking gig. "It was too much time, for too little pay," she said. "Even when I walked several dogs at once, it's nothing like the moolah I earn selling..." We finished her sentence 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. This made the color to return to her face. "That's what you're here about? No, I didn't know that. It's been over a week since I last walked her."

The rest of our chat with Emma didn't help us much. Yet, she did take time 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 tell us it was purchased from the ranger station at 4:30 PM, on the very day Moxie disappeared.

Gregory Baskin, First Sergeant  
Springfield Police

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### Winchell Investigation: Day 5

At 11:00 AM today, we got the financial records for the suspects in this case. Amy Greenleaf is telling the truth about her money woes. She has expensive, unpaid medical bills. Being bitten by Moxie was costly. Miss Greenleaf claims Mrs. Winchell promised to pay for the medical care. But, to date, she has not. Because of this, Miss Greenleaf harbors ill will toward Mrs. Winchell, and her pet.

As for Ricky Vargas, we checked his credit card statements. One purchase stood out right away. He bought dog treats from **Puppy Food Express**. They deliver heavy bags of the stuff directly to customers. Yet, Vargas doesn't own any dogs.

Turning to Dalton Winchell III, we learned he is in major financial trouble. He has made a series of bad investments. Due to that, he is about to lose his house. He could also lose his share of Winchell Enterprises. Because his need for money is great, he has tried to get loans against an expected inheritance from his mother. But, he's been turned down by his bank more than once. Mrs. Winchell's last will and testament gives nearly all of her wealth to Moxie. But, that happens only if the animal is still alive when she dies. It would leave her son with zilch. The bank won't take that risk.

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

Emma Teller is so young, she barely has credit history. She lives paycheck-to-paycheck, like a lot of young adults. Her rare animal selling must not pay as well as we thought. But, we did start to wonder more about it. How does someone sell animals on the black market? So, we did some digging. There is a cell phone application called **Animal Exchange**. It's a group of people looking to buy and sell rare creatures. One post shocked us. The username **Dawgwlr** wrote it a couple days before Moxie went missing. "How much interest would a two year old, mixed breed puppy with the **Crimsonia-X1** gene mutation get?" That's the name for the condition that makes Moxie's fur bright red in color. There are a lot of replies from

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rare animal collectors. Many users estimated getting a high six figures for such a dog. Others offered to buy the animal right away. First Sergeant Baskin and I tried to register for an account. But, our sign-up is pending. Animal Exchange has a lengthy review process before letting a new user join. So, that's a bust. We have no way to talk to any of these people.

Bernard Billings, Officer  
Springfield Police

At this point, we must classify Moxie's disappearance as a cold case. We have been told to move on to other assignments. It's unfortunate. Yet, the resources of our department are stretched way too thin. We can't keep focusing on a missing mutt case any longer. Of course, Mrs. Winchell was not pleased by this. She's determined to find her cherished pet. It looks like she will continue searching for Moxie by using private investigators. Hopefully, another detective can figure this mess out. Until that happens, Moxie's fate will likely remain unknown.

Gregory Baskin, First Sergeant  
Springfield Police



