

CASE RESOLUTION ANNOUNCEMENT

For Immediate Release:

After a careful study of the case file, by our investigators, The Whodunnit? Detective Agency can now report The Case of the Missing Pooch has been solved. We've concluded the party responsible for Moxie's disappearance is **Dalton Winchell III**—the victim's only son. A short time ago, he was questioned by police. During the interrogation, he admitted taking Moxie. His full confession follows.

"I, Dalton Winchell III, hereby admit to dognapping Moxie—a pet owned by my mother, Abigail Winchell. On that day, I cancelled our dinner plans. That way, I could say I was elsewhere when Moxie went missing. Over the past week, I practiced driving different routes to my mother's house. That night, I used the fastest one. I made it to my mom's house, and back to my place of work, in less than thirty minutes. Since Moxie and I always got along well, she didn't make a peep when I deftly scaled the high hedges in the backyard. Once there, I attached a leash to her collar, and guided her through a rear gate. Then, I returned to Winchell Enterprises as fast as possible. I had corrupted the digital file for the parking lot video with a powerful virus. No one would be able to tell when I came and left that day. With Moxie still in my car, I removed her tags and collar. I had to make sure her owner couldn't be identified. The next morning, I delivered her to an animal shelter in a neighboring county. I knew it would be unlikely my mom would check if Moxie had been caught as a stray so far away. The Unloved Pets Animal Sanctuary is where you can find my mother's dog. Please know that I usually don't do bad things. I really don't! I was just so upset to learn I had been written out of the family estate. I apologize for my actions. Mother! Please forgive me!"

There were many clues that pointed to Mr. Winchell being the culprit. First, he had the most to gain. With the dog gone, he would inherit his mother's fortune, instead of Moxie. In addition, it was very suspicious that he cancelled dinner with his mother the same evening Moxie vanished. It was also not possible to verify his alibi—because of the corrupted security video from the parking lot of Winchell Enterprises. What's more, due to the nature of the company's business, Mr. Winchell likely had the expertise to make sure it was damaged. Also, he owns a dark colored car—just like

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the one Mrs. Winchell's neighbor witnessed speeding from the scene, on the night Moxie was abducted.

Of course, our detectives considered other suspects. Herbert Ellis was a person of interest. He did not like that Moxie dug up his plants. Plus, he had scratches on his arms—suggesting he may have gotten into it with Moxie. But, Mr. Ellis works with thorny rose bushes. That is the far likelier explanation for the state of his arms. Yes, the soil particles on Moxie's pillow matched those found on the gardener's gloves. However, he works in the same soil in which Moxie plays. Mr. Ellis also drives a dark colored vehicle. Yet, it was a car reported speeding away—not a truck.

Chef Ricky Vargas was another obvious suspect. He was furious that Moxie would steal food from his kitchen. He also bought dog food, even though he doesn't have any pets. However, Mrs. Winchell often had Mr. Vargas do her shopping with his money, and then paid him back.

Amy Greenleaf certainly had a reason to dislike Mrs. Winchell, and her dog. After all, we confirmed that she was bitten by the animal. Not only that, but Mrs. Winchell now refuses to pay the resulting medical bills. In addition, pieces of dog food were found on Miss Greenleaf's sneakers. Thus, it seemed plausible she stepped on it while taking Moxie from the porch—even though she claims it happened during an argument with Mrs. Winchell. Yet, due to the attack, Miss Greenleaf is afraid of Moxie. So, it's unlikely she would willingly get close enough to do anything.

Finally, we looked at former dog walker Emma Teller. It was peculiar that she quit her job the day before Moxie went missing. It's stranger still that Moxie just happens to be a rare animal, while Emma sells them to make money. She even appears to have inquired about how much she could make by selling Moxie on the black market. However, her camping permit shows she was more than a three hour drive away, much too close to the time at which Moxie went missing.

Mr. E. Solver

Director of Communications

The Whodunnit? Detective Agency