

POLICE FINALLY ARREST MAN WHO LET THE DOGS OUT!



IT'S A QUESTION THAT HAS CONSUMED THE NATION as much as "Who killed JonBenet?" and "Who shot J. R.?" and it may finally have an answer. Now, after more than two years of 'round-the-clock police work and heightened public anxiety, Florida authorities believe they know "who let the dogs out."

"Beyond a reasonable doubt, **Cyrus Melman** let the dogs out," claims Gatoraugus County prosecutor **Flans Gelbart**, referring to the now-infamous incident in June 2002 during a lawn party in the small coastal retirement community of Boca Melanoma.

BUSTED: Florida police arrest **Cyrus Melman**, suspected of being the man "who let the dogs out."



On that balmy, coconutty Florida afternoon, a "Sweet Sixteen" lawn party was being held in honor of **Frieda Israelstein**, daughter of billionaire philanthropist **Hyman Israelstein**, inventor of the non-adhesive one-piece cigar band. The party was suddenly interrupted by two unwelcome intruders: "**Scruffy**" and "**Ruffy**" **Potemkin**, a pair of Golden Retrievers belonging to **Mitch Potemkin**, a world-renowned herpetologist who lives across the street. The sight of these big, unfamiliar dogs apparently frightened partygoers to the point that most of the two dozen or so attendees ran to their cars and SUVs, fleeing the scene. No one was bitten, but the party was ruined. Over a thousand dollars' worth of catered food was left to rot in the sun.

"The party was nice, the party was jumpin'," recalls **Edna Wasserpistil**, a friend of the guest of honor's, "and everyone was havin' a ball. And then out of nowhere come these two dogs—BIG dogs—running onto the lawn and causing havoc. The dogs started barking and everyone started running around, screaming, 'Who let the dogs out? Who let the dogs out?' It was horrible, I tell you—horrible!"

THE BIG BREAK IN THE CASE came when local pharmacist **Biff Tejaratchi** called police and said that one of his customers had been acting suspiciously. "This guy kept coming in for his Zoloft," the gentle Iranian pill doctor recalls, "and every time that other shoppers would be talking about the unsolved who-let-the-dogs-out case, he'd just wink at me and say stuff like, 'I know who let the dogs out—oh, yes, indeed I do,' and other things like that, so I got to thinking that maybe this was the guy who did it, you know?"

Tejaratchi's suspicious-acting customer was the aforementioned Melman, an unemployed body surfer and seashell collector. When police raided Melman's trailer home in nearby Del Coca Vista, they found hundreds of newspaper clippings related to the case that had been meticulously arranged in photo albums, fecal samples on his

boots which forensic technicians have matched to samples taken from Ruffy and Scruffy, wood splinters that match those taken from the gate in Potemkin's backyard, and a giant banner hung on the wall onto which Melman had scrawled **I'M THE MAN WHO LET THE DOGS OUT.**

Prosecutor Gelbart, whose dentures, interestingly enough, are fashioned entirely from crocodile teeth, feels he has a slam-dunk case: "We have evidence that we will present before the court which proves that Mr. Melman used a hammer to break the lock on Mr. Potemkin's gate, and then he let the dogs out. He let those dogs out knowing the danger they might cause if they ran across the street and into Miss Israelstein's backyard. He let those dogs out HOPING they'd hurt someone. And so it is the state's opinion that he be caged like a dog, just so he knows what it feels like." Gelbart, who broke into a high-pitched chuckle immediately after making the last statement, plans to charge Melman with Reckless Endangerment, Menacing, Criminal Trespassing, Criminal Mischief, Harassment, Stalking, Breaking, Entering, Breaking and Entering, Felonious Assault Upon a Lock, Reckless Disregard for the Feelings of Others, Misdemeanor Creepiness, Unnecessary Flailing of Arms, and Public Nonsense. If convicted on all counts, Melman faces upwards of eight hundred and fifty-five years in prison. "We want to calm a worried public that was traumatized by this event," says Gelbart, "and ensure that no one will ever have to say, 'Who let Cyrus Melman out?'"

"THE U.S. CONSTITUTION makes no specific prohibition against letting dogs out, and we're prepared to argue this point in court," says **Marmosetta DuPlessis**, Melman's court-appointed defense attorney. DuPlessis, a ruffled woman with Bride of Frankenstein hair, a whistling 's,' and LOVE/HATE tattooed onto her knuckles, will argue that Melman's abuse as a child, during which his stepfather would insert baseball cards into the little boy's rectum while forcing him to recite batting statistics, caused a mental disorder called "Revenge Psychosis." The illness is traditionally a fool-proof legal defense against criminal prosecution for anyone who, as an adult, commits crimes in retaliation for a bad childhood. "The victim here isn't Miss Israelstein," DuPlessis sneers. "It isn't the partygoers. It isn't even the dogs—they're back in. The victim is Cyrus Melman. Society let him down. We all let him down. We all, as a society, let the dogs out."

RELIEVED:

The dogs' owner, **Mitch Potemkin**, was on vacation when the dogs were let out. He says he's glad that **Scruffy** and **Ruffy** are back in his care. "Thank God nobody got hurt," he adds, "and that they're finally bringing that bastard to justice."

