

Tyson's ferrets starved, but no charges filed

The Clark County Nevada District Attorney will not press animal neglect charges for the mistreatment of two ferret removed from the Las Vegas property of Mike Tyson, former heavyweight boxing champion.

"We cannot prove who the caretaker was," said Donna Rosenberg of the district attorney's office in a December 10 Associated Press article. "We believe that the ferrets were neglected, but Mike Tyson was not at home—nor present during the incident. He left them in the care of other people, and it's really unclear who was really responsible."

On November 18, Caroline Jones of 24 Carat Ferret Rescue in Las Vegas, Nev., picked up at Tyson's mansion one dead ferret and another that weighed nearly half of what it should, according to Jones. Jones stated that she was told the ferrets belonged to Tyson, but the Associated Press reported on December 8 that Darryl Francis, Tyson's personal assistant, claimed the ferrets were his and that he was trying to do the right thing when he called Jones for help.

Francis told reporters the ferrets were acting strangely so he went for advice to a pet store, which gave him vitamins to put on the ferrets' food. According to Francis, the vitamins attracted ants and then the ferrets stopped eating. Francis then called Jones. In no account of these events has Francis stated that the ferrets received veterinary care during their illnesses.

When Jones first saw the ferrets at the Tyson estate, they were caged together, one dead and one pacing frantically, in the mansion's back yard without food or water. Jones stated to reporters that she was told that they had run out of food and that no one had bothered to



Robin nearly lost round one at Mike Tyson's mansion, but Caroline Jones of 24 Carat Ferret Rescue in Las Vegas, Nev., has given her another chance. Robin was rescued in November after her cagemate had already died of neglect. Photos by Caroline Jones.

purchase any more. The living ferret, Robin, was removed from the property by Jones and taken to the shelter.

This case of "he said, she said" was forwarded to the Clark County District Attorney, who investigated Jones's allegations but did not find Tyson or Francis guilty of animal neglect, which carries a penalty of \$1,000 or six months in jail. Francis was required by the district attorney to make a \$1,000 donation to Jones's rescue. He has stated to reporters that he is considering a defamation of character suit against Jones.

In an e-mail to the A.F.A., Jones stated that after an initial turn for the worse, Robin is "getting better day by day." Although Robin isn't healthy enough to go to a permanent home yet, Jones says she has a loving personality and eats like a horse.



Robin became an overnight star when her story was picked up by the Associated Press, People magazine, National Public Radio, and even newspapers in China and Italy. The National Enquirer received the story directly from Robin's rescuer, Caroline Jones.