

## Night of commotion ends with Tampa pig in custody

**The critter's days of destroying lawns in Sunset Park come to an end. But officials say another pig might be on the loose.**

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TAMPA - It took one helicopter, four squad cars and two search dogs, but late Wednesday authorities finally caught up with a suspect who has eluded them for a month - Sunset Park's infamous pig.

In recent weeks the critter has been chased by men with lassos, tailed by police cruisers and tracked by two animal rights advocates carrying a net.

One resident has set a trap for the pig regularly, baiting it with corn, only to have the savvy critter slip in, eat the bait and slip away, well fed and running free.

But Wednesday night he met his match, to the relief of the South Tampa neighborhood where the pig has been plowing through flower beds, shrubbery and sod like a lawn tractor, uprooting and wrecking the landscape.

Marlin Anderson, who has had a thousand square feet of his yard torn up by the pig, walked outside shortly after 10:30 p.m. to the sound of a helicopter circling above his house.

"All of a sudden, I hear barking dogs, and I think, 'What is this?' and here is this pig running down the street cutting across my yard and into the swamp," Anderson said. "He was heading for home chased by these dogs."

Following closely behind were two trappers who ran into the mangrove swamp behind the dogs. Then three police cars pulled up and a fourth one behind them blocked the intersection of Dundee and San Jose Street, he said.

Anderson said he was told they had chased the pig from a mile away.

"Then, all of a sudden you heard squealing," Anderson said. One of the men hogtied the pig, brought him out to the street where 30 people milled about watching the commotion. One man paused for a brief interview and then slung the pig over his shoulder and carried it to a cage in the back of his pickup, put the dogs in another cage and drove away.

"I'm relieved the pig is no longer ripping up my yard," he said. But he wasn't expecting such a police barrage.

There have been sightings of a second pig on the loose, so this may not be the end of the story.

Initial reports were that the captured pig was in the possession of a trapper, but he didn't know where it was

being taken, Lt. Sal Ruggiero said.

"Give credit to Officer Buddy Gray," Ruggiero said. "He tracked this pig all night long. He tracked it down, and they confronted it and took it into custody."

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