



As PM defends Mugliett, livid Dalli talks of air tickets 'investigation'

LAWRENCE Gonzi's contrasting treatment of the resignations offered by Jesmond Mugliett last week and that of former minister John Dalli three years ago have revealed major divergences over the Prime Minister's handling of the two affairs.

Last week, the Prime Minister turned down Mugliett's offer of resignation over his alleged role in the ADT scandal. But while similarly dismissing corruption claims against Dalli three years ago, Gonzi nonetheless accepted the resignation of his former leadership rival, arguing that he could not tolerate having "a minister under investigation."



Jesmond Mugliett's (L) resignation was rejected by the Prime Minister, but John Dalli (R) says his own resignation was accepted on the basis of an 'investigation' into airline tickets, which was not an investigation at all



But MaltaToday confirmed yesterday that the Auditor General's "investigation" into the airline

tickets purchased by Dalli's foreign ministry in 2004 – believed to have been the basis upon which Gonzi

accepted Dalli's resignation in the first place – was not the focus of the National Audit Office's audit at all.

On the contrary, this newspaper can confirm that Auditor General Joe G. Galea is not investigating the practice of the former minister's procurement of airline tickets, but simply carrying out a comprehensive analysis of all ministries' purchasing procedures.

This audit into the procurement of airline tickets therefore could not have been the investigation Gonzi had in mind. For his part, Dalli has always insisted that Gonzi had the fabricated Joe Zahra report in mind when he passed the "minis-

ter under investigation" remark.

Speaking to MaltaToday yesterday, John Dalli said the airline tickets issue – namely, the purchase of Lm40,000 in air tickets for the foreign ministry from Tourist Resources Ltd, a company connected to his family's business interests – was "the excuse used by the prime minister to accept my resignation, short of not being accused of any wrongdoing."

"I know I have done nothing wrong, and that I did not abuse of public money in the procurement of the air tickets, which is why I suggested Lawrence Gonzi to order an audit into the matter," Dalli said. **More on page 5**

Ulysses Lodge – 'one villa bad, 23 villas good'

JAMES DEBONO

THE Malta Environment and Planning Authority turned down in 1995 an application to develop a single villa and a swimming pool in the same area where MEPA has now approved 23 villas and a corresponding number of swimming pools, this newspaper can confirm.

The 1995 decision against the development was re-confirmed by MEPA in October 1996, after the original developers asked for a reconsideration, and proposed conducting an Environmental Impact Assessment –

the same study which has since become a requirement according to EU Directives, but which was waived in the case of the 2007 decision.

While the development proposed in 1995 covered a floor space of 423 square metres, the development approved in 2007 covers a massive area of 7,600 square metres.

By the time of going to press, MEPA did not reply to questions about how it was possible to turn down a development permit for one villa, only to later approve a permit for 23 villas on the same site.

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Police in Paceville attack jailed for four months

POLICE Sergeant David Sant, 46, was yesterday jailed for four months for the assault of Catherine Sophie Pernot Sprangers and slightly injuring her when he kicked her in the chest.

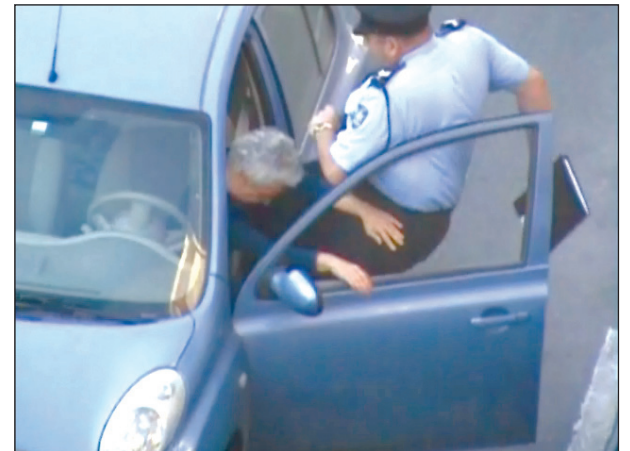
The assault became the week's sensation when MaltaToday Midweek published the stills from the exclusive footage of Sant kicking the French resident in her car, leading to the police officer's arraignment in court.

The incident, which occurred on 10 May outside the Bay Street mall in Paceville, was witnessed by onlookers and the footage, available on the MaltaToday website, found its way on YouTube within just days, attracting its

fair share of comments from shocked viewers.

In the four-minute video clip, taken from a balcony of an apartment on St George's Road, St Julians, Sant is seen planted in the way of the agitated lady, who is trying to shut her car's door. The French lady had attracted police attention by hooting repeatedly at a coach which had blocked the road. A few seconds into the video, Sant is seen reacting to the lady's attempts to grapple with him by lifting his knee into her chest.

After the lady's second attempt to remove the policeman from his position – by grasping him by his trouser pockets – Sant violently reacted by knee-



Brute force - Police Sergeant David Sant seen kneeling Catherine Sophie Pernot Sprangers, a French resident, in her chest. Sant was yesterday sentenced to four months' imprisonment.

ing the lady in her upper torso and neck, and then forcefully pushing her away with his arm.

Visibly stunned, the

woman slumped bodily onto the passenger seat and lay there motionless for at least three minutes.

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