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Jackson 06/02/07

Pit Bull Emerges Hero In House Fire

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When fire broke out the home at 312 Cameron Street just before 8:00 Saturday morning, Pepper the pit bull proved her worth as a watchdog. "If it weren't for my dog, we probably wouldn't have made it out the house," says Justin Pickens, who lived at the house.

Justin and his sister Antaneshia were asleep at the time. They woke to hear Pepper barking, and soon after, their four other dogs chimed in. "I got up and looked, the house was on fire, the attic. Tried to get my sister. The dog really saved us," Justin says.

When firefighters arrived on the scene, the house was already 60 percent involved and filled with smoke. It took more than a dozen firefighters and four trucks about 30 minutes to get it under control. "By the time we had the first unit on the scene, we had fire coming out the windows and under the carport. It was heavily involved," says District Fire Chief W. Gardner.

The house is now smoldering ruins. Firefighters estimate it's 75% destroyed. "We lost our living room, washer and dryer, mostly everything," Antaneshia says.

But human life was salvaged out of the ashes, and the family can thank their watchdog for that.

Family members say the fire started in a telephone box near the carport in the back yard. As of Saturday afternoon, there was no word from JFD on the official cause.



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