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THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW.COM

Sunday, October 13, 2002

S P O K A N E

Boy survives savage mauling from two dogs

Animals strip clothing from 10-year-old; father saves him

[Tracy Ellig](#)

Staff writer

David Block ran to save his son. The boy was naked, except for one sock. He was covered with bites. Two dogs chased him. One of the animals stuck its muzzle under the fleeing boy's buttocks, flipped him, jumped on him and prepared to seize the child's throat in its jaws.

Block screamed, charged, hurled stones and heard his son plead: "Dear Lord save my life or end it quickly."

The animals turned and faced Block. They snapped and lunged. He was a fury of flying stones and shouts. They reconsidered and backed off 30 yards and eventually fled.

His son had 50 to 70 bites, scratches, bruises and abrasions over his shoulders and buttocks from the Friday afternoon attack. He was rushed to a hospital, treated and released. He received the first in a series of rabies shots, administered in his thighs, for safety's sake.

The two dogs -- an unneutered Rottweiler-like male and a German shepherd female, both 60 to 70 pounds -- were captured Saturday afternoon about a half mile from the scene of the Colbert-area attack.

In more than 16 years working for Spokane County Animal Control, director Nancy Hill has never seen such a vicious, sustained and potentially lethal



Holly Pickett - The Spokesman-Review
 Animal Control officer Becky Nelson leads an unneutered male Rottweiler-like dog down the hall of dog cells at the Spokane County Animal Shelter after the dog attacked a 10-year-old boy, tearing off his clothes and wounding him.

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complained before.

Hill and Nelson went to the address, found no one home and no dogs. They were getting back into their truck when Hill saw something out of the corner of her eye.

The German shepherd appeared from the woods and silently padded down to them. Hill and Nelson put up a friendly front and erased all fear from their body language. They offered the dog a biscuit.

Then the Rottweiler showed up and barked territorially. Hill knew these were the dogs. They perfectly fit the description Block and his son gave.

More friendly banter. More biscuits. Nelson used baby talk. The animals were leashed and put in the back of the truck. They were taken to Block and his son for identification.

When the dogs attacked, the boy had been playing alone at a construction site near his home in the 1500 block of East Heritage Lane.

Something caught the attention of a teenager at a neighboring home, even though the area where the attack occurred wasn't in full view. The teenager rushed to Block's house and told him what he had glimpsed: dogs attacking something. He asked where Block's son was.

Block ran.

In five to 10 minutes, the dogs had ripped the boy's turtleneck, long-sleeved shirt, jacket, underwear, shorts, sweat pants, one sock and tennis shoes from his body. He had tried to flee: His shredded clothing was scattered over a 50- to 75-foot area.

attack.

"It's unbelievable," Hill said.

Hill and Animal Control Officer Becky Nelson were led to the dogs by a tip from a resident who'd seen TV coverage on the attack. The tipster considered the dogs a problem, but hadn't

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"The 90 seconds I witnessed were the most vicious, savage, ruthless mauling imaginable," Block said. "It was absolute fury."

The dogs will be labeled dangerous and impounded at the animal shelter for a minimum of 10 days -- standard procedure to see if they have rabies, Hill said.

The owner -- who hadn't been notified as of press time -- could be charged with owning a dog with vicious propensities, a misdemeanor punishable by a \$1,000 fine and or 90 days in jail, according to Hill.

If the owner does not agree to have the animals euthanized, or doesn't appeal the dangerous dog designation, then he or she will have to register the animals, keep them in a locked kennel, muzzle and leash them when they are removed from the kennel and purchase \$250,000 liability insurance for each animal, Hill said.

"It seems like the most irresponsible people have the most dangerous dogs," Block said. "We must demand personal responsibility from people who have these kinds of dogs."

Hill, Nelson and the other animal control officers who spent hours scouring the area for the dogs are heroes to Block. So too is the teenager neighbor who alerted him. But he considers his own son the biggest hero of all.

When Hill and Nelson brought the dogs to Block and his son, the boy looked at them silently for a moment and then said: "Those are the dogs that hurt me. Don't let them out. Can I get my slingshot and shoot them?"

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