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Police probe dog mauling report

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By DARLA L. PICKETT Staff Writer

MADISON — Police continue to investigate a report of a bloodhound mix mauling a 3-year-old boy on Route 148 Tuesday morning.

Police Chief Gerald A. Coleman said the town's animal control officer has contacted the dog's owner, who has said he will make arrangements for care of the dog while the investigation is ongoing.

Robert Vanadestine says he witnessed the attack on his grandson, Joshua.

"I looked out the window and the dog had him by his knees, dragging him across the lawn and dooryard," Robert Vanadestine said. "He dragged him maybe 15 to 16 feet."

Vanadestine said he opened the window and shot a .22-caliber pistol twice.

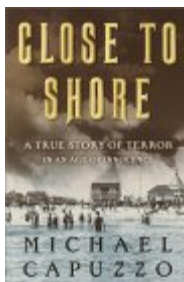
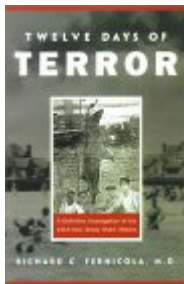
"I deliberately missed the animal because he had my grandson in his mouth," Vanadestine said. "I shot to scare him, twice in rapid succession."

The dog released his hold and took off, Vanadestine said. The boy's mother took Joshua to a doctor for treatment. His wounds were superficial, Vanadestine he said. The dog's teeth had not punctured his skin.

Vanadestine said what bothers him is that the dog has gotten loose before and bothered his family — chasing after them, nipping at his wife's heels, and bothering his grandson in the garden.

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Neighbors say the owner has more than one dog and they have gotten loose in the past, but that he had been doing a better job of keeping them contained in recent months.

Attempts to reach the owner, Steven Harsh, by telephone were unsuccessful.



Animal control officer Ken Saucier said he had contacted Harsh and said he was "very up front, truthful and acted like he wanted to do everything he could to make amends."

Saucier said Harsh said if he could not find someone to take the dog, he would put him to sleep after the 10-day quarantine period.

Saucier said the dog's actions left no evidence of bite marks on the child.

"He may have been roughousing and been a little too aggressive," Saucier said.

He said he was surprised when he called the animal shelter and they would not take the dog in because the animal would be considered a liability problem.

Meanwhile, police are still looking into the case.

"I can't tell if charges will be filed or not," Coleman said. "There is no indication the dog was ugly. He may have been playing and his actions misunderstood. We'll know more probably tomorrow or the next day." p>

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