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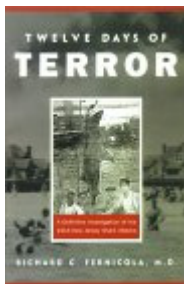
**Would-be police dog kills boy, 4**

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BY PAUL HAMMEL AND JEFFREY ROBB



MARTELL, Neb. - A police dog in the final stages of training mauled to death a 4-year-old boy Sunday at his parents' kennel southwest of Lincoln.

The German shepherd apparently escaped from his kennel after a gate was not securely latched after a feeding Sunday morning.

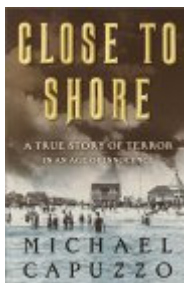


Killed was Colter B. Kumpost, whose fourth birthday was 10 days ago.

The boy's parents, Randall and Mary Kumpost, have operated a kennel since 1985. It trains German shepherds for police work.

Ajax

The dog, a 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-year-old male named Ajax, had been scheduled to be delivered today to the Lincoln Police Department, according to Lancaster County Chief Deputy Sheriff Bill Jarrett.




A Web site for the kennel described the dog as a "very strong, high drive, powerful male."

Among other traits, the Web site said, Ajax has a good grip and is neutral to gunfire.

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The site said: "He is a very confident dog, and socialable (sic) ... He is

 priced to sell!!!!!!!!!!!!!"



The dog is being held at Capital Humane Society. Authorities did not know Sunday evening whether the dog would be destroyed.



The attack occurred about 10:30 a.m. Sunday.

Lancaster County Sheriff Terry Wagner said the 4-year-old had been playing on the porch of the family's rural home when he was discovered to be missing.



Family members found Colter lying on a rock driveway, about 50 feet from the home, with the dog standing over him.

The Kumposts' farm

The dog mauled the boy's right shoulder and chest, biting him deeply enough to cause internal injuries, Jarrett said.

Rather than wait for a rescue unit to arrive at the home, about 15 miles southwest of Lincoln, the boy's parents began driving him to BryanLGH Medical Center West. They met a Lincoln ambulance en route.

Gregg Fisher, fire chief for Lancaster County Southwest Rural Fire District, said paramedics were able to restore the boy's pulse, but he was pronounced dead at the hospital about 1:44 p.m.

Jarrett said he had no idea what might have prompted the dog to attack the boy.

"It depends on what he was being trained for," he said.

An investigation was continuing, Jarrett said, but he did not expect criminal charges.

Capt. David Beggs of the Lincoln Police Department said that, typically, dogs used by the department are trained for tracking and sniffing drugs, as well as protecting their handlers.

He said the department was in negotiation to acquire the dog, which had been imported from Germany in January. Those negotiations are probably over, Beggs said.

Beggs and Wagner said it was the only fatal dog attack in Lancaster County that they could recall in at least the past 20 years.

A Web site for Crown Kennels said the victim's father is a Lincoln veterinarian and his wife specializes in animal behavior and rehabilitating aggressive dogs. The couple also have a 15-year-old daughter and a 13-

year-old son.

The kennel has sold dogs to the Nebraska State Patrol, according to the Web site. Authorities said the kennel had 12 dogs - German shepherds, Labrador retrievers and Rottweilers - on Sunday.

Yellow police tape cordoned off an area just south of the family's rural home as distraught family members gathered Sunday on a sidewalk. Nearby were several wooden obstacles used in dog training.

A 6-foot-high chain-link fence surrounds the farmstead with a warning sign that reads: "This area used for police service dog training."

Another sign nailed to a tree pictures a dog baring its teeth. It reads: "Warning: Guard Dog."

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