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Pet dog attacks baby

Published in the Home News Tribune 11/27/03

By LONNIE MACK
STAFF WRITER

SOUTH BRUNSWICK: A 3-month-old boy was hospitalized in serious condition Tuesday night after he was attacked by the family pet, an 85-pound Akita.

The 14-pound boy suffered more than 20 puncture wounds below the chest area in the legs, buttocks and stomach, according to detective Jim Ryan.

"It was the most severe injury I've seen on any young child," said Ryan, who arrived at the apartment after the first police officers to respond. "It was disturbing."

The boy was transported to Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, where he was admitted to the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit in serious condition.

Ryan, who did not identify the boy or his parents, said doctors at the hospital reported the baby's prognosis is good.

The attack occurred in the living room of the family's town house on Elm Court in the Whispering Woods condominium complex off Route 1 after the boy's mother momentarily left the room to go to another part of the house.

When she returned, Ryan said, she found the baby, who had been secured in a reclining baby chair, wounded and bleeding.

The 5-year-old dog was sitting calmly nearby, Ryan said.

The baby's soiled diaper had been ripped off and was on the floor near the baby chair. The dog, Ryan said, had a history of getting into the trash to get the child's soiled diapers.

Ryan said the dog had no history of being aggressive, vicious or violent. Police speculate that it was the baby's soiled diaper that prompted the attack.

When police arrived, the baby was awake but in shock, Ryan said.

The boy's father was not home when the attack occurred, Ryan said.

The dog remained in the house with police for about an hour during the



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investigation and was calm, according to Ryan. He said the dog did not bark or growl while officers were on the scene.

The dog is now in the custody of municipal animal-control officials, Ryan said. It will be quarantined for 10 days until animal-control and health officers decide what action should be taken.

Ryan said the preliminary investigation revealed no evidence of any criminal act.

"It just appears to be a terrible incident," he said, adding that neighbors who were interviewed, including those whose children had been around the dog, indicated the dog was calm and friendly.

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