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## Mother charged in mauling

### Pit bulls' attack on son brings child abuse count

By John Aguilar, Rocky Mountain News  
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ARAPAHOE COUNTY - Four charges, including a felony count of child abuse, were filed Tuesday against the mother of a 10-year-old boy severely injured when attacked by three pit bulls in his backyard last month.

Renee Muniz, the 37-year-old mother of mauling victim Gregg Jones, also faces misdemeanor charges including child abuse, cruelty to animals and unlawful ownership of a dangerous dog.

Muniz, who couldn't be reached for comment, faces up to six years in prison if convicted of the felony. She is free on a \$50,000 personal recognizance bond.

An arrest affidavit for Muniz released Tuesday describes a family living in filth at their rented home on East Asbury Avenue in Aurora, with neglected dogs gnawing on furniture, walls, and carpeting.

A pit bull that was killed after attacking Gregg was described as having no detectable fat on its body and was determined by a veterinarian to have not been fed in at least 24 hours.

Investigators found conditions in the home to be "foul" and "in complete shambles," with an upstairs bedroom filled with "a very large amount of feces" and the garage piled high with rotting garbage.

Aurora Detective Hal Selden wrote that he was taken "aback" and that the "overpowering smell and stench (of the upstairs room) made my eyes begin to water it was so strong."

The backyard was described as being "covered throughout in feces."

The affidavit also paints the Muniz home as a kind of puppy mill or kennel.

One neighbor told police that he had seen city officials remove 20 puppies from the home two years ago, while another neighbor said she had seen anywhere from three to 14 dogs in the backyard of the home.

Five pit bulls were found living at Muniz's home at the time of the attack - three of them refugees of Denver's pit bull ban and a fourth seeking temporary shelter until it could be placed with a new owner.

That fourth dog, Dozier, was owned by a family friend in Texas, who paid Muniz \$100 to house the dog until he could find a permanent home for it, the affidavit said.

Dozier was one of the three pit bulls that mauled Gregg on Nov. 2.





Even Gregg's 20-year-old sister, Danielle Carson, told police that she was wary of Dozier, particularly after it got into a fight with one of the two pit bulls she was keeping at the house.

Carson was also charged in the mauling. She faces two misdemeanor counts of cruelty to animals and unlawful ownership of a dangerous dog resulting in serious bodily injury.

She was served with a summons Tuesday morning, said Sgt. Rudy Herrera.

But while Dozier wasn't as familiar to the family as the other dogs were, both Carson and Muniz repeatedly told police that they were shocked that Gregg was attacked by any of the dogs.

They said the animals had never shown aggression to any of the children living in the home, and Muniz told police that Dozier would even lay down with Gregg while he watched cartoons according to the document.

Johanna Jones, Gregg's aunt, told the *Rocky Mountain News* this month that Muniz lives with her five children at the Asbury Avenue address.

She declined to comment about the charges against Muniz and Carson Tuesday.

The affidavit also sheds gruesome light on the events of Nov. 2, the day Gregg returned home from Yale Elementary School, hopped the fence into his backyard, and was savagely attacked by the three pit bulls.

A neighbor told police one of the pit bulls had Gregg by the throat and was throwing him around "like a rag doll" before several neighbors scared the dogs into releasing the boy.

A firefighter at the scene said Gregg's "face looked like a skeleton that had been eaten away by the dogs" while another emergency responder said he was "unable to find veins that were available to start an IV."

Gregg spent nearly four weeks in the hospital, where he underwent reconstructive surgery on his face and amputation of his left arm.

A longtime trauma surgeon at Children's Hospital told police that Gregg's injuries were the worst he has seen and that leaving pit bulls with children is like "leaving loaded guns around."

Gregg was released from the hospital Nov. 29 and is being home-schooled.

Kathleen Walsh, spokeswoman for the Arapahoe County District Attorney's office, said Muniz is currently caring for her son and wouldn't comment about the custody status of her children.

Katrina Seymour, a spokeswoman for the Arapahoe County human services department, said she couldn't discuss whether Muniz is under investigation, but she said it is not unprecedented for a mother to keep her children, even in the face of child abuse charges.

"Until an investigation shows that it's not in the best interests of the child to stay, case worker won't remove a child from the home," Seymour said.

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