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Grandmother says boy had model potential

By: Shawn Charniga , The Record

TROY - The grandmother of a toddler who was mauled Tuesday by a dog owned by his babysitter's downstairs neighbor believes he had great potential as a child model.

Beverly Khan, mother of Jessica Upton and grandmother of 2-year-old Edward "E.J. Schultz, made her comment Thursday, the day an exhibition containing a photograph of the child taken before the attack opened at the Daily Grind coffee shop.

Khan said this is not the first time tragedy has visited her family, but the dog attack is still tough to take.

On Tuesday morning, the child was playing in his babysitter's yard before he was attacked by a 70-pound chow and suffered lacerations to his face and head that took three dozen stitches to close.

In 1969, when she was 2 years old, her entire family perished in a house fire, said Khan, who recently remarried and counts her three children and two grandchildren - E.J. and his older sister - as her only kin.

"Everybody has always said about both of my grandchildren, they're very beautiful children. They're superstars, they look better than most of the people on TV," Khan told The Record.

The boy's looks were enough to catch the eye of photographer Mark Lunt, who took shots of Khan's Sept. 21 wedding and later asked to use a shot of E.J. in his Daily Grind show. The family has long been told he could model, and considered it an opportunity for him to get ahead early in life.

Lunt, a Liverpool expatriate who now lives in Castleton and is more prone to photographing empty buildings in Troy than people, said he had never met the family, but ended up shooting the wedding for free on short notice.

"There was just something ... it depends on a person's point of view. There was just something magical," Lunt said of the photo.


According to Khan, the attack has been devastating to the family, who considered the child "a porcelain doll" who will now wear a web of seven scars across his face. Attorneys from Martin Harding and Mazzotti interviewed the family and photographed E.J.'s injuries Wednesday, but it's not yet clear who, if anyone, will be held responsible, she said.

The city ticketed both babysitter Deborah Brust, 44, and the chow's owner, Nina Carlton, for having an unlicensed animal, and also charged Carlton with harboring a dangerous animal. Khan said she was told the chow would be put down that day, but city Animal Control Officer Kevin McDonough said the animal will be held in the Mohawk Hudson Humane Society shelter in Menands until a judge decides its fate Aug. 3.

E.J. is recovering, Khan said, but it's not clear how well or how soon he'll bounce back from the attack.

"The day he came home from the hospital he was really groggy and crying continuously, but he doesn't talk, so he can't say 'my boo-boo hurts,'" Khan said.

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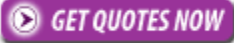
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