



Police: Pets attacked Marion woman

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MARION, Ind. — Investigators have arrested a couple after determining that pet dogs — not strays, as originally believed — mauled and seriously injured an 87-year-old woman as she was sitting in her living room.

Julia Beck's daughter and son-in-law originally told police that a stray Rottweiler and another dog entered the home through a slightly ajar door and attacked Beck.

After an extensive search for the dogs, investigators with the Marion Police Department concluded that the canines that mauled Beck actually belonged to Linda A. Kitchen, 57, and her husband, Michael T. Kitchen, 48.

The Kitchens were arrested Tuesday and face preliminary charges of one count each of neglect of a dependent resulting in serious bodily injury, obstruction of justice and false informing. Both were being held in the Grant County Jail Thursday night on separate \$32,000 bonds.

The Kitchens were at home when their dogs — a Labrador and a Dachshund — allegedly attacked Beck. The dogs were taken Thursday to the Grant County Humane Society.

Beck remained unconscious and in critical condition Thursday night in Fort Wayne's Parkview Hospital.

"The woman is basically in a coma," Deputy Police Chief David Day said.

The bite injuries Beck received were consistent with those that would occur during a dog attack, Day said, but he would not comment as to what sort of neglect had occurred or what police specifically believed happened to cause Beck's injuries.

"Several areas on the body have been bitten repeatedly, mostly on the arm and leg areas. All of the injuries are pretty severe," Day said.

Beck had been sitting in her living room and was attached to an oxygen machine to help her breathe when she was attacked, police said.