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## Girl healing from attack

Surgery required for severe dog bites

By Michael Malik, Rocky Mountain News  
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A 7-year-old Denver girl is recovering from surgery to repair her face after a dog attacked her Sunday evening.

There are conflicting accounts of what happened to Breajai Barnes, who doesn't remember the attack.

Her mother, Jessica Guzman, said the little girl was playing outside after dinner with her siblings when a German shepherd mix escaped from a neighbor's yard in north Denver, knocked down her daughter, and bit her face, head and leg.

"I went to the door and there was blood gushing from her head," Guzman said. "I didn't realize it was a dog. I guess I didn't even know what had happened."

A neighbor saw the attack and pulled the dog off of Breajai.

The keeper of the dog, Rasheeda Lilley, 26, offered a different version of events.

Lilley said several kids, including Breajai, were playing at her house when she told them to leave because she was going to let the dog out of its cage.

"I told the kids he's not a friendly dog," said Lilley, who has children of her own.

Once the kids left, the dog was let out. Lilley said she didn't know Breajai had come back in through the front door.

Breajai "took three steps in my house saw that my dog was out and ran out the house. My dog ran after her."

Lilley said the dog came back to her after it attacked Breajai. She put it back in its cage and called 911 to report that the animal had bitten someone, Lilley said.

"I am so sorry for what happened," she said.

Breajai's energy is slowly returning and she can't wait to get back her favorite sport, swimming.

"I don't swim anymore because of my face," she said. "But when my face heals up, I'll be able to swim."

The dog was taken by Denver Animal Control and will most likely be put down, said Doug Kelley the shelter's executive director.

"We're concerned with that severe of a bite - multiple bites - and a situation where it appears the dog was attempting to maim or kill," Kelley said.

The dog is in quarantine to be monitored for rabies. Because of that status, the dog can't be put down until Aug. 17 at the earliest.

Lilley said the dog belongs to her ex-boyfriend. She was cited for having an unlicensed dog, a dangerous dog and for having a dog that isn't neutered, Kelley said. Each of the charges carries up to a \$1,000 fine or a year in jail.

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