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El Segundo officer kills loose dog after alleged attack

Owner of ridgeback mix, which allegedly menaced a terrier and the policeman, says her pet "didn't even get a fair chance."

By Andrea Sudano
DAILY BREEZE

An El Segundo police officer shot and killed a 50-pound dog Tuesday after the animal attacked another dog and reportedly menaced the officer.

Responding to a vicious animal call, the officer fired six rounds at the ridgeback mix, a pit bull look-alike, when it aggressively approached him in the 500 block of Sycamore Avenue, Chief Jack Wayt said.

"As (the officer) arrived, the dog attacked him," Wayt said. "It came at him. Then he had very few options."

The dog died at the scene. An investigation into the incident is pending, he said.

Cheryl Frick, a 17-year resident, was walking her dog just before 8 a.m. when the canine approached and attacked her pet, she said.

"I fought and fought and kicked and kicked and screamed," she said. "I was not going to watch my dog get killed in front of me."

Frick fended off the animal and scooped up her 12-year-old terrier mix, Gypsy. With the larger dog following, she ran to a nearby house where a neighbor called animal control, she said.

"If the neighbors hadn't called," Frick said. "It was the most awful experience that you could ever have. ... I didn't want to see my dog torn apart."

Around the corner, Krista Draeger didn't think much when Dylan, her 3-year-old ridgeback mix, wasn't in her usual spot on the couch that morning.

But moments after Draeger realized the gate of the Loma Vista Street home was open, police officers arrived to explain what had happened.

Draeger said her dog was friendly and never behaved violently. She didn't believe Dylan would attack an animal or human because the dog was skittish and easily startled by loud noises.

"She got out on the wrong day," Draeger said. "She's never harmed any other dog. I used to take her

to the dog park."

Gypsy was in the care of neighbors Wednesday, Frick said from her office. Veterinarian's instructions included observing the aging dog's breathing.

Police will likely file charges against Dylan's owner for letting the dog run unleashed, Wayt said.

"It's against the law to have a dog running loose," he said. "The owner was not present, it was off-leash."

In the meantime, Draeger questioned whether the police handled the situation correctly.

"The cop was never touched by my dog," she said. "She didn't even get a fair chance. They didn't use pepper spray."

Wayt said the officer followed protocol.

"Nobody is happy about it," he said. "The officer did what he thought he had to do. He acted within policy. We're still investigating, but it looks like he had to do it."

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