

Pack of greyhounds attacks man, dogs

An 80-year-old man is knocked down as the pack tears into one of his Yorkshire terriers.

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SEMINOLE - From her front window, Elaine Maraia saw the greyhounds attack.

Richard Graeber, 80, was out for a late-morning stroll Thursday with his two Yorkshire terriers and a miniature collie when the pack of dogs targeted the small dogs. The greyhounds knocked Graeber down when he tried to fight them off.

Maraia called for her 18-year-old son, Tyler, to help.

He found Graeber across Houston Lane in a ditch, struggling to free his pet from one of the greyhound's jaws, crying, "Help me, help me, my dog's dying. ... They're killing my dog. They're killing my dog."

"I jumped in the ditch," the teen said. "There was a little Yorkie in between these greyhounds and he was being ripped apart. ... They were kind of just pulling, like a tug-of-war situation."

As Graeber and Maraia wrestled with the two greyhounds in the ditch, one of the others ran off as another circled.

"He got the black dog off, and the other dog flung the little Yorkie around like a rag doll," Maraia said. "You couldn't even tell it was a dog."

Then Graeber stabbed the remaining dog in the neck with a pocket knife and "yanked his dog free," Tyler Maraia said.

The greyhounds retreated and the two men carried the Yorkie to Maraia's front yard and laid him down.

But they knew he was dead.

Maraia helped Graeber clean the blood off and, after paramedics treated the older man for bites to his hands, they went to look for his other dogs, which had run away. Family members later took Graeber to the hospital.

Maraia said Graeber's wife "became pretty hysterical" when she arrived. She kept crying, "My little Cha Cha."

The greyhounds - Iris, Dakota, Rachel, Max and Tootsie - belong to Mike Eisbacher and his wife, Katherine Koufas-Eisbacher, who have worked with greyhound rescue for 15 years.

"I'm so sorry it happened," Eisbacher said Thursday. "I've just been crying all afternoon. ... A pall has come over this

house. I've never been involved with something like this. ... I'm so humiliated. I feel so bad for the man."

Eisbacher said the dogs are not vicious, but greyhounds were developed to hunt small prey.

Eisbacher said he's not sure how the greyhounds got out. His best guess is that they saw Graeber walk his dogs by the house and started jumping against the door, which has a lever-style handle. Eisbacher said he thinks one of the dogs hit the handle and the door popped open.

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