

DAILY NEWS

Handyman sues after dog bite

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Socialite Helen Downey just may have the worst doggone luck when it comes to her pooches.

Handyman Wilfredo Hernandez sued the former daughter-in-law of famed crooner Morton Downey Monday after he allegedly got chomped inside her E. 78th St. penthouse - where a former Downey dog named Fearless once took a 21-story death plunge.

"She might live above all the tenants in her upper East Side apartment, but she's not above the law," said Eric Richman, a lawyer for Hernandez. "She should have muzzled or leashed that dog to show some type of responsibility for the other people in her building and she did nothing."

Hernandez was on his way to take out the trash from Downey's penthouse apartment on Oct. 14 when the mixed-breed dog allegedly dug into his thigh.

The bite occurred, Richman said, just weeks after the dog snapped at another resident in the posh building.

"For a dog to be left off its leash two weeks after a person was bit is not only irresponsible, it's illegal," Richman said.

Downey could not be reached for comment.

In September 2000, another of Downey's pets made news when a tiny Maltese named Fearless dropped to his death while a contractor made repairs to the 21st-floor terrace.

"There's definitely something going on with her and her dogs," Richman said.

The lawyer said he didn't know the name of Downey's current critter.

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